COLONIZING THE GAZA STRIP
two phases of governance: a critique of the idea of state

by
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“Any historical narrative is a particular bundle of silences.”
- Michel-Rolph Trouillot

“What is required, in my view, is a working through of the idols, striking them, as Nietzsche might put it, with a hammer not in order to smash them, but to make them sound, and resonate, and divulge their own hollowness… That ignorance, a certain kind of willful unknowing, is central to the concept of landscape, seems undeniable.”
- W. J. T. Mitchell
INTRODUCTION

“All communities are ‘countries of words’ insofar as the rituals of inscribing borders, picturing territories and populations, and thematising issues salient to those terrains and the communities believed to occupy them occur within discourse. In both oral and literate societies, the community is not a ‘thing’ in itself but a way of speaking, and thinking, about others who are ‘like us.’”
- Glenn Bowman, “A Country of Words”

Over the past four years of consistent engagement with the “Palestinian-Israeli” conflict I have come to realize that in more ways than one this is not the conflict that it seems to be. For one, this is not so much a conflict between “Palestinians” and “Israelis”- both modern constructed classifications- so much as the imposition of one way of life, limited to a privileged few- on various planes- at the cost of others. Only the details within this narrative are unique to the land called “Palestine” and “Israel,” the wider dynamics are mirrored in many places across this globe. In this trend, the path of “progress” pushes aside “backwardness,” the industrial plantation battles the family farm, the “modern” city seeks to replace the “traditional” village, “private property” is enforced over and against shared or collective ownership, “democratic” forms of governance are deemed to replace clan and religious structures. Many of these tropes can be identified in the rhetoric of a “nation-state” project. If this is the case, then the deemed conflict between religions- Judaism and Islam-, between two peoples- “Palestinians” and “Israelis”- are only popular containers amongst a wider set of conditions that formulate this conflict: deeply shaped by a global hegemony of the dominating economic core over its periphery.

The process that has made possible this deemed “conflict in the Middle East” is rooted in a tradition of colonialism, more specifically settler-colonialism, and is conditioned further by its placement in the chronological shadow of the Second World War and widespread persecution of Jews. I want to shine as if with a flashlight on a “dark” corner of this narrative to maybe hear a perspective not usually highlighted. In “Discourse On Colonialism,” Aimé Césaire points out that these ghastly acts of destruction of human life were nothing new in the memory of our human story. Their prevalence depended on whose memory you sought out. The same ordered acts of exploitation, torture and cruel death implemented on Jews in the 20th century had been in practice by Europeans seeking “divinely ordained” expansion from their European sanctuary since the 16th Century. Here one society’s set of principles of order, wiped out that of another. The European perpetrators considered violence a legitimate means to their “civilizing,” “benevolent” acts. Nazi Germany brought these violent habits back to the continent of its origin. The “developed” world stood aghast- having never witnessed these practices before its very eyes. Subsequently, Adolf Hitler became a trope of a man of monster qualities, ignoring the fact that his many ideological forebears escaped such judgment by simply keeping these “civilizing” methods out of site of those in whose name they were carried out. Maybe we should keep shining the flashlight around.

The Zionist project bears the mark of such a colonial tradition. Though the times have changed and with them the rules set about by an ever more intertwined world. Exploitation, torture and death continue to be practiced in this tradition of colonialism, though in the rubric of the more sensitized manner of our times. At this level of baseness, the performance of comparison between various moments of the colonial doesn’t serve its usual function of explication and would only trivialize the said acts. In the human past a process of ebb and flow of kingdoms and empires was the norm. In recent times these kingdoms are attempting to warrant the durability of their rule by more mechanized processes, painting their dominion as eras of incomparable “peace” and “justice.” This study is a critique of the unequal nature of this process with its logic of the modern nation-state and all that entails regarding a legal regime and an economic and politico-moral imaginary.
The “Gaza Strip” is a constructed categorization much like “Israel,” “Palestine,” “Europe,” the “Orient” or “Occident.” I will limit the bulk of my analysis to the geographically invented space of the “Gaza Strip,” which like so many geographical categories was brought about by violence. In the course of searing its geographical and historical landscape, the Zionist project would introduce the Gaza Strip as a globally established category proving that, “[n]aming is a powerful weapon of the cartographic propagandist.”\(^1\) In 1947 the Israeli military plan D entailed direct orders for its army to empty Arab villages of their inhabitants, leading to the forced expulsion of over 600 villages and their over 700,000 inhabitants.\(^2\) Zionist military orders sought to ascertain that no written traces remain in order to undermine the project’s “legibility”\(^3\) in the historical archive. Following the ethnic cleansing, the fleeing inhabitants were spatially ordered into refugee camps and proximate cities and countries. Within the historic lands of “Palestine” the Zionists divided remaining exiled Palestinians between two new geographical entities, the “West Bank” and the “Gaza Strip.”\(^4\) Within a matter of weeks over 250,000 refugees were repatriated in a newly demarcated space: the Gaza Strip. What occurred during those years of population relocation followed by an Egyptian administration followed by Israeli rule of the Gaza Strip is outside the scope of this thesis and has been well documented elsewhere.\(^5\) Many dimensions of Gaza’s social, political and geographic landscape would be altered significantly following Israel’s annexation in 1967.

I will address two different phases of governance of this discursive spatial and enclave. In chapter one, I will highlight the Zionist projects razing of the land called Palestine as a prelude to assessing the reshaping of landscape under the governance of two rivaling Palestinian parties. Palestinian politically driven transformation in time and space cannot be assessed in isolation of the initial colonial Zionist re-ordering. Chapter two takes into its scope the post-Oslo era starting in 1994 until the Hamas takeover in June of 2007. Here I will highlight Fateh’s re-ordering of the Palestinian imaginary and refashioning of space in the Gaza Strip. In chapter three, I will focus my analysis on the period following Hamas’ taking power after being denied its legitimate claim to control. I will look closely at how these two political movements transformed themselves during their transition from emphasizing liberation struggle to aspiring to governance.

Though these divisions follow common political markers the three historical phases I will highlight are deeply intertwined. Thus, while Fateh did receive partial authority following the Oslo accords the Zionist entity maintained the same control over borders, sea and airspace since 1967. Meanwhile, Fateh though losing parliamentary elections in 2006 held onto its control of security forces until June 2007. Hamas meanwhile has internal jurisdiction within the Gaza Strip since June 14 2007, yet remains constrained by Israeli control of borders, airspace and sea as well as Fateh’s influence from the West Bank where Hamas activists are arrested and tortured.

I realize the danger of limiting my scope of analysis to the Gaza Strip and thereby risk the contiguity of the remaining “Palestinian Territories.” I will limit my study in this manner initially due to the need to bracket my study and the limited study of Gaza. I consider my work a thought experiment that does not so much seek to suggest alternatives to the searing transformations that have occurred but mark possible moments of a different imaginary. My analysis of Palestine in the first chapter and then the focus on the Gaza Strip in the second and third chapters will lead to a broader analysis in the concluding chapter where I move beyond the Gaza Strip and Palestine as my unit of analysis to speak of the global economic periphery.

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4 This arrival of thousands of exiled refugees created unprecedented divisions between refugees and citizens. Post-1967 the Israeli occupation occasionally even received support among landed Palestinian elite who opposed the “unrest” created by refugees (Lesch, 1985: 55).
as a whole. Furthermore, my spatial bracketing aids in revealing the discursive nature of all spatial categorizing, not merely nation-state containers. I will seek to sound out the process of invention of this space- only one small corner of what Conrad called “the dark places” of the “Orient.” In my doing so I have found that the nature of “darkness” comes not from a claimed inherent “evil,” backwardness or unknown nature. Rather, I recognize an imperialist desire to portray these spaces as such, while keeping in the dark, acts of imperial re-mapping and capitalist exploitation in the spirit of European colonialism.

In concluding my introduction I want to add a short note on language. As much as I will be addressing the discursive nature of territorial containers and their commensurate national narratives I want to acknowledge the discursivity of language itself. As Ferdinand de Saussure posited language is made up of linguistic signs that are a “form, not a substance,” their meaning being only “contrastive, relative and negative.” I find difficulty in using words such as “Palestine,” “Israel,” “justice” or “legal” in light of the realization of their discursive nature. Likewise, it is difficult to recount, to write the past using words. So when I am assessing history- the act of looking back- I must hold an a priori stance, to look with humility, with the acknowledgement that I am looking through my own (subjective) eyes, and through the interpretive eyes of authors and story tellers- of “history.” A vital question one must ask of historiography is why write? What intensions and desires hide behind the act of leaving behind the document? Hegel considered the “state” as the principle actor in “the production of such history in the very progress of its own being.” I will attempt to write not on behalf of the state- or a people- but the multitude, I will aim to undermine the setting in stone the justification for the longevity of the “state” and question the givenness of the commensurate relationship of state and history. My first act in writing this essay is to bow to its discursive nature. I seek to depict the process- through an archeology of space and time- of how narratives and spaces become shrouded in a heart of darkness. In the spirit of Edward Said and joining Paul Rabinow with the aim to “anthropologize the West: show how exotic its constitution of reality has been; emphasize those domains most taken for granted as universal (this includes epistemology and economics); make them seem as historically peculiar as possible.”

These notes will not follow a strict chronological order, as I pick and choose from various sources- oral and written. I will write a partial text with the aim of giving a partial voice to what I deem as silenced. I will shine my light on non-events, thereby naming them as events. The neglect of these realities have brought the inhabitants of the “Gaza Strip”- and “Palestine”- to their present captivity: a captivity in time and space.

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7 Saussure, 1983: 157; 165.
8 Cited in White, 1990, 29.
10 Whitelam, 1996: 36.
Chapter 1:
THE ZIONIST RAZING OF PALESINE: AN ORDERING OF TIME AND SPACE

“[L]andscape is quite capable of becoming an idol in its own right— that is, a potent, ideological representation that serves to naturalize power relations and erase history and legibility.”

- W. J. T. Mitchell, Landscape and Idolatry: Territory and Terror

“The very thing that renders the landscape biblical, its traditional inhabitation and cultivation in terraces, olive orchards, stone buildings and the presence of livestock, is produced by the Palestinians, whom the Jewish settlers came to replace. And yet the very people who cultivate the ‘green olive orchards’ and render the landscape biblical are themselves excluded from the panorama. The Palestinians are there to perform the scene and then disappear.”

- Rafi Segal and Eyal Weizman, The Mountain: The Principle of Building in Heights

“The spatial practice of a society secretes that society’s space; it propounds and presupposes it, in a dialectical interaction… From the analytic standpoint, the spatial practice of a society is revealed through the deciphering of its space.”

- Henri Lefebvre, The Production of Space

The deep-seated conflict over ‘Palestine’ is rooted in a debate over beginnings. In order to start unpacking the debate do we ‘return’ to the ‘events’ of 2000, 1967, 1948, 1936 or earlier? I want to propose another starting point. I will not begin with a time marker or event, moreover rather than having people as the only ‘subjects’ at our starting-point I want to suggest a wider inter-subjectivity. I will try and approach the history of Palestine by writing history other-wise. Towards this end I suggest making the relationship between human and land my starting-point. Hereby I hope to overcome the trend of making the human— whether in terms of a liberal individualistic conception or as the discursive collective— the center of analysis. For “[e]verything comes up out of ground-language, people, emu, kangaroo, grass. That’s Law.” I will take a relationship as my point of departure. This relationship entails the landscape of a space- demarcated by many names over the years we have record of it— with animals, flora, rocks and humans among other things. My meanderings will take me down a path of cross-pollinations of history— as History and memory, both collective and individual. Towards these ends I will use Lefebvre, Harley, Gregory and Weizman as interlocutors in the explorations of space and its transformations. Here I will take into consideration that the “organization of space… can be conceived of as a text,” and that “as such, it “talks about” or “works over” states of affairs which are imaginary.” I will assess the ramifications of these “words,” which— like any words— have imbedded in them a potentially violent, destructive force. Following, I will engage Whitelam, Bowman and Swedenburg in assessing the narration of Israel as a Zionist nation-state construct. These explorations will lead me to identifying the Zionist reformulation of a space as a liberal state of exception that engenders an avowed divinely ordained “suspension of the ethical.” In this modern era we have not yet reached a “desanctification of space.” Such a state of exception

11 The Economy of Debate highlights the dynamics of the contest over who is part of the debate over beginnings and who has the last word. The powerful are privileged to determine their tale as “event” while silencing their opponents telling as “non-event.” Cohen, 1994.
14 Emanuel Levinas writes, “self is not a substance but a relation” (cited in Rose, 2008: 162).
15 Harvey, 1989: 216.
16 Foucault, 1984: 2.
is not a special type of law, rather it is a “suspension of the juridical order itself, it defines law’s threshold or limit concept.”

The landscape that I refer to- most recently conceived of and remembered as “Palestine”- was integrated into a region under the Ottoman Empire before much of it was re-configured as “Israel” by the imaginings and practices of a political- at times secular at times religious-project: Zionism. Prior to the arrival of Zionism and European colonialism the naming of the land by rulers, religious leaders or travelers had been of little concern to the inhabitants. In the middle of the 20th century the ideology of nation-state was transposed onto the landscape. In the ensuing program of so-called state-building, the agents of the Zionist nation-state razed, re-ordered and transformed the landscape according to a foreign imaginary, uprooting plants, animals and people in its way. I will assess the transformation of space as a political tool in regulating the production and re-creation of history. I will ask not what history is but how it is made (time) and how this production re-makes landscape (space). Towards this end I will begin by highlighting the rootedness of the Zionist vision for the land of “Palestine” in a “Western” project of modernization and progress. Following, I will analyze the Zionist depiction of the local Arab inhabitants of the land as “savage”- later to be transformed into the image of the “terrorist.” I will ask what role such a portrayal played in the framework of the Zionist “civilizing” mission with the aim of formulating a national narrative (time) within the confines of a Zionist nation-state (space). This formation was formulated so as to be legible within the global nation-state regime, while ascertaining illegibility for those projected as lying outside the demarcated space- Palestinians. I will then assess the Zionist re-creation of the Palestinian landscape over the past century based on the Zionist conception: “a land without a people for a people without a land.” Though this thesis will focus on the Gaza Strip as its geographical unit of analysis, this chapter will go into some detail into the Zionist national narrative and its restructuring of the landscape of Palestine as whole before focusing more particularly on the Gaza Strip. The Gaza Strip plays a particular role within Zionist national narratives as it is deemed a lesser priority in contrast to the coastal areas North of it and especially the hills of West Bank, or “Judea and Samaria” as articulated within the Zionist narrative. Though the Israeli administration’s approach to control and governance of the Gaza Strip has evolved since its annexation in 1967, most significantly in 1994 and 2005, the Zionist national narrative and its claim to the deemed “biblical Israel” continue to act as the justification for ongoing control over the Gaza Strip.

In the space of Palestine, Zionism formulated associated images and symbols of considerable force seeped in the religious (Judaism), the historical (the Holocaust) and the political (nation-statism). The project “overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects,” making space “directly lived through its associated images and symbols.” Hereby history itself is re-cast, the geographical region of “Palestine” becomes the “holy land,” Zionism a legitimated civilizing project. Meanwhile, the uprooting and expulsion of thousands of inhabitants is deemed an ecological endeavor to save the land buttressed by claims of the likes of Winston Churchill: “the injustice is when those who live in a country leave it to be desert for thousands of years.” Space reflects a history while it also designates possible future histories,” writes Lefebvre. This relationship of space to history reveals the power entailed in the control over space, re-arrangements have the power to be life destroying. The production of space is a historical process with actors, utilizing such tools as maps, urban planning, architecture, archeology and agricultural centralization, making up “relations of power so as to bring about new spaces for the deployment of power.”
production of history is spatially grounded in the re-making of landscape where any economy of debate is drowned out, the interlocutor is deemed absent. For Deborah Rose’s Aboriginal interlocutors- likewise silenced within an economy of debate- a history without trees is death: “[w]e’ll run out of history, because Whitefellas fuck the Law up, and they’re knocking all the power out of this country.” For the inhabitants pushed out of Palestine it is no different, “they took the space with the power of the sacred and with the sacredness of power, with the imagination and with geography… Palestine has been pushed to the edge of history.” Yet for Palestinians- as is the case for Jews- “the past is neither distant nor over.”

1.1. ISRAEL: THE MODERN CITY; PALESTINE, THE BACKWARD VILLAGE

“One thing is certain, and that is that the land will belong more to the side that is more capable for suffering for it and working it… That is only logical, that is only just, and that is how it should be in the nature of things.”
-Aaron David Gordon, “An Irrational Solution”

“The high-modernist aesthetic and ideology of most colonial agronomists and their Western-trained successors foreclosed a dispassionate examination of local cultivation practices, which were regarded as deplorable customs for which modern, scientific farming was the corrective.”
- James C. Scott, Seeing Like A State

The village - with its special arrangements of houses and orchards, its open meeting places, its burial ground, its collective identity - was built into the personality of each individual villager to a degree that made separation like an obliteration of the self.
- Rosemary Sayegh, Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries

The Zionist vision entailed an aspiration of joining the modern European way of life. In their experience of rejection the Ashkenazi (European Jews) projected their desires onto the land of Palestine, and what had been formulated as biblical Israel in their minds was transformed into a yearning for a Jewish nation-state in the image of the European state. Raja Shehadeh writes of the ‘pornographic’ nature of the exilic desire for an envisioned landscape. Here the protagonists- both Israelis and Palestinians- lose sight of the landscape as land-scape and project their collectively constructed desires onto the physical space as “homeland,” “national state,” and entailing sacred significance. For Zionists the landscape is to provide a homeland to return to from exile, while their biblically constructed relationship to the land provides the impetus to the specificity of their tie to precisely that space. This desire is placed within the framework of modernization and its

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24 Cohen, 1994. See The Proclamation of Independence of State of Israel: “The Land of Israel was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and national identity was formed. Here they achieved independence and created a culture of nation and universal significance.” Cited in Whitelam, 1996: 122.
25 Rose, 2008: 162.
26 Mourid Barghouti cited in Gregory, 2004: 135. For the Bedouin tribes of the Jordan this process is described as the “age of government” that came with all the violent transformative dimensions of the nation-state project. For them the passing of the “age of shaykhs” commemorates the “end of history” (Shryock, 1996). In Botswana this process of colonization with its categorizing, totalizing history-writing trend is identified as “the papers that killed us.”
28 Bowman, 1999: 54ff. Ghazi Falah describes Zionism heritage thus: “When the Portuguese colonized, they built churches; when the British colonized they built trading houses; when the French colonized they built schools. In the case of Palestine, I would submit that when the Israelis colonized Palestine, they destroyed most of what they found, and claimed they made the desert bloom.” Ghazi Falah, Transformation and Designification, 105, cited in Abu Lughod et al, 1999.
coupling with colonialism, resulting in an archaic blend of settler-colonialism. In the process of realizing this dream, “[t]he Israelis traveled from the quest to impose on the landscape their Zionist identity to its converse- its privatization, at the price of turning the landscape into a desert of concrete and asphalt.” The Zionist national narrative was constructed upon a centuries-long Western gaze towards the biblical lands as the origin of Judeo-Christianity, based on the traditions of the Jewish Bible, deemed the “taproot of European and Western civilization.” The European nation-state, based on a constitutive Judeo-Christian collective identity and inherently tied to a biblical landscape, becomes the rationale and subsequently the vehicle for the re-shaping of that very landscape according to a modern European visage. In a diabolic circularity each conception thus claims to verify and legitimate the other. Yet, the city revealed itself as the most effective form to perpetuate modernism as a system of values. Thus the Zionist project eventually prioritized its modern vision over its religious raison d’être and justification for return to a “promised land.” Scott writes that high modernism predominantly emphasized the future, while considering the past an impediment, “that must be transcended.” This prioritization meant that labor Zionism neglected Palestinian labor until 1967 at which time Palestinian labor was prioritized over Jewish labor for its cost effectiveness. Up until that period the victim of Zion’s mimesis of high modernism were the Ashkenazi Jews. Zionists used modern means- modernization/urbanization- for their religiously justified ends: their existence on/relationship with the land, was made legible in modern terms of an ordering colonization. This twisted amalgamation -divinely ordained colonization- mirrored a Christian discourse of legitimization of conquest, expansion and erasure used for centuries largely by European empires.

For both Christian and Jewish expansionists the landscape acted as a signifier, a portrait presenting and representing the “high point of human achievement,” and “a physical landscape of extraordinary complexity, power and splendor” was certainly able to act as the tabula on which to exhibit power. This urban “splendor” needed human hands to build it and here Palestinian villagers, having lost their land and thus their occupation, would reappear in the backdrop of the Zionist scene as migrant workers. Already, in 1945 45% of male labor was employed in cities, which was weakening village structure. After Israel’s 1948 expulsion of Palestinian villagers hundreds of thousands found themselves without land- and thus without work- and with no real alternatives many Palestinians found employment in the wave of a Zionist urban boom. Current Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu sees the Arab population as “separate” from the land on which they live and once lived. According to such a narrative Palestinians remain “unattached to the land on which they live both emotionally and legally,” and “possess a transitory and itinerant character,” which makes them prime candidates for wage labor to materialize the Zionist urban myth. Biblical scholar G. Garbini put it this way, “[t]he ancient Near East, with its civilization and its history, has been rescued from the oblivion of time by just over a century of European

30 Zionism’s colonialism proves anachronistic because it breaks even those rules set by the new colonizers set for themselves. European states had largely limited their expansionist endeavors to an economic form of neo-colonialism in the rubric of providing national independence to the colonized. See also section 4.1.1.
32 Whitelam, 1996: 11.
33 Joseph Massad points out that it fit the Zionist narrative better to replace the Jewish historical memory with a geographic memory, which meant that prophets replaced kings in an adapted Biblical narrative (Massad 2006: 38).
34 Levine, 2005: 256n. 2.
35 Scott, 1998: 95. Zygmunt Bauman described this trend of prioritization, “[m]odern science displaced and replaced God; it also created a vacancy: the office of the supreme legislator… it was now up to mortal earthlings to bring it about” (cited in Scott, 1998: 87).
36 Harvey, 1989: 23.
37 Lybarger, 2007: 37f.
38 Strawson, 1998b.
The Zionist narrative buttressed the legitimacy for its very existence by formulating the European city on the “backward” terrain of Palestine. Here they claimed to “make the desert bloom,” while settling in a “land without a people, for a people with a land.” The master story of the Jews as “returning,” rather than conquering or settling in light of a biblical past- and doing so with a modern trajectory- efficiently informed the perspective of the likes of Lord Balfour. Two years after formulating his critical 1917 declaration he noted in a memorandum, “Zionism, be it right or wrong, is rooted in age-long traditions, in present needs, in future hope, of far profounder import than the desires and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land.” The memory of “700,000 Arabs” lacked the legitimacy of their Jewish neighbors because they lacked the latter’s extensive written record. In his account of the most successful but silenced slave revolt in history Michel-Ralph Trouillot exposes the historical traces of the written record of Haiti to be “uneven.” The equivalent absence of modern requirements enabled the whitewashing of Palestinian traces on the land.

“On 9 April 1948, Jewish forces occupied the village of Deir Yasin. It lay on a hill west of Jerusalem… As they burst into the village, the Jewish soldiers sprayed the houses with machine-gun fire, killing many of the inhabitants. The remaining villagers were then gathered in one place and murdered in cold blood.”

Today the land of Deir Yasin is a fashionable suburb of west Jerusalem. In accordance with a logic of biblical chronology, the 1948 Israeli Proclamation of Independence referenced a “re-establishment” of a national home in Palestine for the Jewish people. The concurrent story- cyclically rooted in the first- declared that the Zionist project would bring Europe to these regions of the periphery, and thereby succeed in bringing civilization to the desert. The tie between the ancient justification for Israel’s existence on the land of Palestine and its manifestation of the European nation-state in the dark world of the Near/ Middle East allowed for its exceptionality and the Zionist project’s longevity despite its blatant colonial expression. The modern process placed the Zionist settlers in the center of the landscape’s narrative, erasing the prior inhabitants. Meanwhile, the aura of such a “territorial refashioning” sought to leave no space for questioning of whom the landscape remembered as its neighbor. In this context Deborah Rose seeks to shift the emphasis of history writing to writing it “other-wise” and “Earth-wise” whereby the land becomes a protagonist. Much like her Aboriginal interlocutors, the indigenous inhabitants of Palestinian lands- Arab and Jew- speak of a central relationship between human and land that is silenced in the erasures of both protagonists’ land. Zionism’s fast track of modernization neglected the possibility of considering such “development” a “weed,” rather than a remedy

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41 Trouillot, 1995: 47.
43 Whitelam, 1996: 122.
Whitelam writes, “[a]ncient Israel, as a nation state, or incipient nation state, provides a direct link with Europe as the very essence of civilization.” Whitelam, 1996: 47f. While Sasson explained that “the struggle for national self-determination is the key element in Israel’s imagined past” cited in ibid.
45 Abu El-Haj, 2001: 22; Mitchell asks, “how can the landscape itself be said to have a “perspective”? Does this not suggest, quite literally, that the landscape sees as well as being seen, that it looks back in some way at its beholders, returning their gaze…” Mitchell, 1999: 238f.
47 Deborah Rose collected Aboriginal narratives, which in the usual course of Western historiography are silenced from within the economy of debate. “The words themselves,” Rose writes, “break the frames of western historiography, but their intention is to break colonizing frames of complacency, conquest and erasure.” Rose, 2008: 157.
48 Scott, 1998: 13. Scott gives the example the forest as habitat disappearing and being considered an economic resource. Thus fauna serves an utilitarian purpose where fauna that preys is considered a “weed” or “pest,” wanted
from the landscape’s perspective.

The tale of Khirbet Hiza’a recounts the memories of a Zionist soldier following the ethnic cleansing of the inhabitants on their land. He recognizes the severed relationship.

“And here are the checkerboard fields, plowed and turning green, and the deeply shaded orchards, and the hedges that dissect the area in tranquil patterns... and behold, the grief of orphanhood is descending on all of them like an opaque bridal veil. Fields that will not be harvested. Orchards that will not be watered. Paths that will be desolate. And a kind of loss—and ’twas all for naught. Thorns and brambles straggling over everything. And a parched yellowness, the wail of the wilderness.”

Towards the ends of implementing the “creative destruction” of a colonial modern way of life, the Zionist project portrayed the local inhabitants as culture-less, history-less, state-less, in short, savage, invisible and out of place on an “empty” land.

1.2. ZIONISM’S TROPE OF THE SAVAGE

“They sat in silence, and with tireless patience watched our every motion with that vile, uncomplaining impoliteness which is so truly Indian and which makes a white man so nervous he wants to exterminate the whole tribe.”

– Mark Twain, The Innocents Abroad

“For Europe we shall be a part of the wall against Asia... the vanguard of culture against barbarism.”

- Theodor Herzl

Zionism swept into the landscape of Palestine with a dialectical rhythm of remembering and forgetting the past. Thus, formulated this new space for the deployment of power it made the present and future of one nation while unmaking that of an other. The Zionist project reordered the landscape according to its desires, the legitimacy of which came on the tail end of unimaginable violence perpetrated against Jews in Europe in light of which “[n]o one questions the use of violence in self-defense.”

Aime Cesaire complicates the Nazi’s use of violence, writing of Europe’s colonizing peoples, “before they were its victims, they were its accomplices; that they tolerated that Nazism before it was inflicted on them, that they absolved it, shut their eyes to it, legitimized it, because, until then, it had been applied only to non-European peoples.” Having been the victims of these European tactics of conquest the Zionist project was morally safeguarded to emulate the same spirit of colonization in Palestine.

“A spatial practice must have a certain cohesiveness, but this does not imply that it is coherent.” In the Zionist project cohesiveness is tied to an idea, this is the illusory idea of state and its illusory double of the cohesion of nation and state: the modern nation-state.

The idea driving the endeavor of nation-state harks back to an intellectual seed of the philosopher Thomas Hobbes: the conception of a “people,” and the ideologically correlated conception of territory. Thomas Hobbes, the great spokesman of the idea of the state, juxtaposed the “People” against Spinoza’s conception of the “Multitude.”

animals are “livestock,” the unwanted “predators”, some people thus become “citizens” while others are deemed “terrorists” al according to their utilitarian use. See further on the discursivity of “weed” in section 4.2.3.


50 Harvey, 1989: 16. “The Israelis are stealing our cultural, human and even religious heritage, in a desperate attempt to prove that the Palestinians are nothing but a collection of refugees.” Jamil Salhut, Social Content in the Palestinian Folktale (1983) in Benvenisti, 2000: 261. See also Handler in section 1.2.

51 Trouillot, 2001: 127; Also see Fabian, 2003: 490.


54 The idea is anything but coherent, Eyal Weizman describes the dialogical co-existence of “ordered process of planning” and a “structured chaos” where dispossession is carried out at the hands of violent civilian settlers (Weizman, 2007: 5).

the fabricated unity of “the people” as “common sense,” and its subversion- the unquantifiable conception of “the Multitude”- as heresy.

A contemporary of Hobbes, John Locke, considered the work of human’s hands to become their possession including the land they labored on, thus devising the concept of ‘private property.’ Locke believed that human beings seek naturally to “subdue nature and to turn her bounty into private property.”\(^56\) Those that did not show this natural inclination to “improve or conquer nature,” Locke deemed as “savages.”\(^57\) Furthermore, nations are said to own their cultures and to own their past in line with a logic of “individual possessiveness.” This terminology seeks to describe Locke’s conceptualization of property- once deemed common ownership- as privately possessed in accord with a Christian objectification of “the work of one’s hands” deemed as private property. The individual thus annexes natural objects and makes them “extensions” of one’s self. Thus, in the “individualist worldview there is an almost mystical bond uniting the agent with the things he acts upon.”\(^58\) The reverse of such logic leads to a nation or group that appears not to preserve its cultural or historic memorabilia- even if that is due to being coerced into silence- to be deemed savage. If “being depends upon having,” and an individual comes to be defined by what they possess and they possess nothing, then they are nothing- the same goes for the group that possesses nothing, they are nothing.\(^59\) Ironically, Zionism was responding to this very same European trend of thought, Aaron David Gordon, an early Zionist leader would write, “[e]very alien movement sweeps us along, every wind in the world carries us. We in ourselves are almost nonexistent, so of course we are nothing in the eyes of other people either.”\(^60\) In the spirit of John Locke, Gordon would go on to conclude, “there is no other right to the land and no other form of possession of it than the right and the power of possession through labor.”\(^61\) During the Ottoman period a land system was in use called mush’, a rotating method of cultivation of collectively owned land. Though Ottoman law initially provided legal cover for such a method as Matruka- meaning abandoned and was technically state land but was assigned for public use for farming, markets or roads.\(^62\) Despite the 1858 Ottoman Land Code that banned this communal system of land use, a majority of farmers continued to utilize the mush’ system. In the 30s the British conclusively banned the method claiming it was a “primitive form of agriculture,” and a “major impediment to progress of agriculture and of Arab villages generally.”\(^63\) Similarly, miri land was considered a temporary loan of land from the state for private use. Mawat land was considered “dead” and was undeveloped or unused usually lying where “the loudest noise made by a person in the closest place of settlement will not be heard.”\(^64\) All categories of matruka, miri and mewat land were transformed into a uniform category of private property. This enforcement of private property reflected British policies elsewhere, where they had been used to ascertain legal control over colonial space. The following description by a British colonial officer writing about India in the early 20\(^{th}\) century clarifies the point. “[T]o give them private property would only bind them with stronger ties to our interests, and make them our subjects.”\(^65\) The colonizers- whether in India or Palestine- sought the hegemony of a liberal conception of property, which imposes the basis for their “order of things.” The 1858 Ottoman land law changes did have an immediate effect in that pockets of hired labor appeared. As private property became a possibility, big landowners

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\(^58\) Handler, 1988: 153.
\(^60\) Cited in Sternhell, 1998: 48. Gordon then explains: “It is not our fault that we have reached this point, but that is the fact: that is what exile is like.”
\(^61\) Cited in Sternhell, 1998: 70.
\(^63\) Kimmerling and Migdal, 1993: 18.
\(^64\) Cited in B’tselem, 2002: 50.
started buying up smaller plots on the outskirts of villages as farmers were unable to pay the required taxes.  

These totalizing conceptions made space more coherent, allowing for a centralized articulation that would help blaze the trail for the contemporary nation-state. An address of the current Zionist nation-state-building process must reference its roots. The central schism took place in 1948 at which point the peak of potentiality of the making/unmaking of Palestine as a unified nation occurred in dialectic manner. This moment calls for an excursus into the realm of nation-statism. Derek Sayer considers the state an “ideological project, not an agency with such projects,” he goes on to explain that the “[s]tate is the mask, not what hides behind the mask.” Sayer is building on the analysis of Philip Abrams who saw the necessity to unveil the mask-like nature of the state.  

"[t]he state is then, in every sense of the term a triumph of concealment. It conceals the real history of relations of subjection behind an a-historical mask of legitimating illusion… The real official secret, however, is the secret of the non-existence of the state…[I]t is the just the centrality of the struggle that the idea of the state… contrives to mask…In sum: the state is not the reality which stands behind the mask of political practice… it is itself the mask.”

Despite this mask-like nature of “state” this fictitious unity bears a double deception in that the acts of fictitious state-institution agents are deemed “legitimate” over and against the non-state illegitimates. This theme of legitimacy will reappear throughout the analysis of the razing of Palestine. In my effort to write its ‘history’ other-wise it is such a starting point of “legality”/”legitimacy” that I will seek to destabilize. I aim to prioritize the relationship existent between the earth and its inhabitants, rather than the legalities of the international framework of the nation-state. It is only in the daze of totalizing endeavors as state-making and colonization that such conceptions of legality can be conjured up, and sold to a populace drunken on fear. Johannes Fabian depicts time, like space, as an “ideologically constructed instrument of power.” It is within the rubric of time that the Zionist project voiced a national narrative and simultaneously wiped away its other’s history from global consciousness. In light of this reality the Zionist project was able to speak of a “Palestinian economy” or “Palestinian agriculture” but never mention the inhabitants as “Palestinians.” The Zionist Palestine Exploration Fund meanwhile was created for the sake of “investigation… of the Holy Land,” but without mention of its people. Through these silencings and bracketings, time is violently altered by the fact that, “Palestinian history is effectively silenced by this tyranny of biblical time, which has been perpetuated by Western scholarship.” The necessity arises to learn to think outside the shackling linear boundaries of the nation-state. The violent Zionist project sought its legitimacy in a Western notion of bringing civilization to another of Europe’s outposts- a ‘rational’ endeavor drawn out of the hegemony of knowledge while silencing the ‘irrationality’ of its racist national zeal.  Theodor Herzl, the founder of political Zionism, considered that a Jewish state in Palestine would form “part of a rampart for Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization as opposed to barbarism.”

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67 See chapter IV.I.A.  
71 Whitelam, 1996: 45. Also see Trouillot, 1996.  
73 Here the constructed nature of Europe itself must be highlighted, far from being monolithic, the European project is part of a production of space and time. Mignolo points out that “Orientalism” and its matrix of power is but a “second round of world-power transformation,” and likewise a construction, rather than a monolithic reality (Mignolo, 2005: 40). Edouard Glissant points out, “the West is not the West, it is a project, not a place” (Trouillot, 2003: 22).  
74 Gregory, 2004: 79.
indigenous enemy was a required actor in the modern discourse of Zionist conquest. According to the biblical position of the Jews they were returning to what must be an empty land for them to re-inhabit. Yet, for the sake of the modern discourse of nation-statism an enemy was needed to unite the “us.” The utopia of the “savage” furthermore, “made sense only against the absolute order against which it was projected,” leading to the possibility of “fictional ideal states.” According to the Zionists, they reflected their claimed European roots over and against the indigenous inhabitants otherness and savageness. The world had witnessed “[a]s Christendom became Europe, Europe itself became Christendom,” it was now time for a facsimile: as Judaism becomes Palestine, Palestine becomes Judaism. The concentration of political power in the name of the Jewish god presaged the advent of internal order. Without the existence of the savage- later to evolve into the “terrorist”- to dominate, the West and here “Israel” are inconceivable.

The transformation of the Zionist other to “terrorist” occurred at a moment when its nationalist legitimacy was being challenged by a new opponent and a new form of violence. One such moment took place on 6 April 1994 when a Jewish settler entered the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron and shot dead 38 worshippers in cold blood. 41 days later, following the mourning period, Hamas struck back, with its first military attack that targeted Israeli civilians. For the Israeli narrative, the murdering rabbi- who was eventually himself beat to death- became a national hero, the revenging Hamas became the violent “terrorist.” This naming process created an “identification effect” that created a shared conviction between Jewish Israelis who now felt a common enemy, while recognizing themselves as “the same.” The state-making process here necessitated an exclusion process in order to cement its selective inclusion. Paulo Virno posits that in contrast to anguish- a discomfort with a general unknown- fear is a fabricated sensation contrasted with the discursive sense of “home,” and a feeling of security within one’s group. Towards formulating such a sense of “home” and its contrary “terrorist” threat, Netanyahu claimed, “[t]o combat terrorism, Israeli military and security forces must have access to every part of the territory, including the urban centres from which the terrorists may strike and to which they may return for safe haven.” Such a security stance allowed for Israel’s practice of extra-judicial killings, which actualized a “‘capacity to be killed’ inherent in the condition of the colonized: the Palestinians.” Trouillot’s depiction of Western colonial nature illustrates the Zionist enterprise well,

“[t]he symbolic process through which the West created itself thus involved the universal legitimacy of power- and order became, in that process, the answer to the question of legitimacy… the modern state and colonization posed- and continue to pose- to the West the issue of philosophical base of order.”

The seeming rationality of the Zionist project would quickly reveal its destructive nature. This is not so much ‘irrationality’ as the manifestation of a dark side of the knowledge/ power construct of modernity that implodes the rational/ irrational binary. I will try to entertain the idea of ethnography with a new point of entry by assessing the Zionist projects razing of a landscape and replacing it with its own vision for the use of space. To stand at this perch and retain an amoral stance would be akin to positivist historiography that seeks to sever the past

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75 Trouillot, 2003: 20. This Zionist logic reflected the 20th century utopian urban planner Le Corbusier who wrote, “we must refuse even the slightest concession to what is. The mess we are in now” (Scott, 1998: 106).
77 See chapter 3 for further analysis on the legitimacy of violence.
78 Trouillot, 2001: 126; 131.
79 Virno, 2004: 29ff.
81 Hanafi, 2006: 98.
from the present. In “City of Walls” Teresa Caldeira speaks of the “unbounded” nature of Brazilian slum dwellers. These fall outside of any safety net or system of protection their unbounded bodies are “permeable… open to intervention, on which manipulations by others are not considered problematic… [and] unprotected by individual rights.” In contrast David Cohen depicts the Holocaust as a type of “bounded” history, one, which is recognized and referenced in the written records of historiography. In juxtaposition, the unbounded nature of the Palestinian past- silenced and censored- releases the unboundedness of the Palestinian’s body in a diabolical merger. In an attempt to counter such trends, our point of entry must begin with listening and exploring the how of the making of such a condition of unboundedness- the rejection to do so has left a violent mark.

1.3. THE USE OF MAPS: Silencing, Bio-Politics

“Our land was being transformed before our eyes, and a new map was being drawn. We were not supposed to look, only to blindly believe in the hollow language of peace proclaimed by Israeli leaders, a peace that amounted to mere words, rhetoric that meant nothing.”

- Raja Shehada, *Palestinian Walks*

“[N]o medium could effect such total obliteration better than cartography, for maps, by their very nature have a ‘genius for omission.’”

– Philip C. Muehrcke, *Map Use*

I have not drawn any precise maps to define what we have in mind for an agreement with the Palestinians. But I do know that I represent a very broad national consensus when I declare…

that Israel will not give up control of airspace and water resources, that it must keep strategic zones that it considers vital.

- Benjamin Netanyahu

When members of the Israeli government host political guests they are first sent to a memorial site: Jerusalem’s Holocaust museum Yad Vashem. At the museum they are introduced to a “system of signs” alluding to the state of Israel as the only possible answer to atrocities of the past. In Yad Vashem death is portrayed as extra-linear, the lives of the deceased live on in the current Zionist milieu, for the local Arab inhabitants of Palestine it is no different. Thus, skipping 2-3000 years of secondary ‘history’ in a sweeping “totemic” act, the Zionist project engages in an act of mythification whereby the past is glorified allowing for the forgetting of the present. Palestinian history moreover would be “silenced by the invention of ancient Israel in the image of the European nation state.” Such habits beg the question, how is death utilized, how remembered, how historicized and eternalized to a specific end? Yad Veshem surrounded by sites of razed Palestinian villages pays tribute to the death of Jews while violently silencing the appropriation and refashioning of the very land the shrine is constructed on.

Cartography and archeology become the *lieux de memoire*, where “memory attaches itself to sites, where history attaches itself to events.” Through these sites the Zionist project deems to preserve “(arti)facts” only that which they “discover” in line with a desired Zionist

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84 Caldeira, 2000: 368.
90 Whitelam, 1996: 36.
past, while exiling the life in its path. Thus, while institutions like Yad Vashem engage in a selective act of repressing and forgetting, the exercise attempts to eradicate the existence of a Palestinian presence. One exhibition on Yad Vashem’s website invites the visitor to “enter and “bear witness,” it is a simultaneous invitation to remain silent. The open page to the exhibit entitled, “The Untold Story,” depicts a crumpled note that read, “we are about to die, five thousand people, they are cruelly shooting us.” The truth is that while the Holocaust is a cruel event, it has become a story that is “told”- not untold. While over 50 million documents recall the Jewish Holocaust no mention is made of the violence carried out in 1948 against the local inhabitants of Palestine. An image of an early Palestinian political leader Hajj Amin el-Husseini smiling and shaking hands with Heinrich Himmler is invoked as an image of consent and deference to violence perpetrated against Jews in the past with an aim of quashing any problematizing of current Jewish violence. In typical nature of the state archive no documentation exists of the destruction of Arab villages. Zionist leadership strictly warned its military apparatuses of leaving behind no trace of the killing of its inhabitants. The image further buttresses the Zionist project as vindicated by a mythical eternal Jewish persecution.

Figure 1: Hajj Amin el-Husseini meets Heinrich Himmler. Source: Yad Vashem

Zionists arriving in Palestine in the first half of the 20th century came prepared to execute their political vision. The first ordering they engaged in was the transformation of the space they arrived in. Already in 1865 the Palestine Exploration Fund was formed with the aim of investigating the archeology, geography, geology and natural history of Palestine. The ensuing historical geographies and material remainder were fetishized as facts. One map utilizes multiple layers, the first of which marks archeological sites as one layer and contemporary facts on ground on another layer. By marking archeological sites in a larger temporal-geographic grid, they were deemed to justify the existence of the latter layer.

93 Swedenburg, 2003: 49f.
94 Yad Vashem, 2010.
95 Swedenburg, 2003: 43ff.
96 Swedenburg, 2003: 46.
97 Imman Handy, presentation at American University in Cairo, Israel and the Palestine Question, March 25, 2008; “No one was punished for these acts of murder. Ben-Gurion silenced the matter” (Esmeira, 2007: 32).
Thus the logic applies, that when “memory is held in place by trees, how better to eradicate it than to chop them down?”  

The Zionists determined to use archaeology, cartography and architecture to ascertain their vision to eradicate trees and memories through a drastic razing of landscape. Prior to 1948 the Zionists’ attempt to purchase land from the local inhabitants was not met with widespread success. The withdrawal of the British presence in Mandated Palestine was the moment Zionist leaders utilized to push further into the Palestinian frontier and mark territory that they deemed a part of “Eretz Israel.” Under the pretense of war the Zionist forces uprooted and exiled over 700,000 local inhabitants, often razing their towns and villages behind them or replacing their homes and land with Jewish families. As a reminder and celebration of this tradition, the door of Tel Aviv’s first mayor Meir Dizengoff’s home was adorned with a Torah verse from Amos 9: 14 that reads, “I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel, and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them.”

Following the establishment of the state of Israel the Zionists were able to ensue a legal process of “dispossession of Arab landholders while simultaneously masking and legitimizing the reallocation of the land to the Jewish population.” Land purchases had amounted to only 6% Jewish ownership of Mandated Palestine. By the 1960s this was increased to 94% for which the Zionist project utilized laws as legal-political tools for appropriation. The main strategy towards this end was the Knesset’s introduction of the “Absentees Property Law” of 1950. The law stated that all property owned by those deemed “absentees” - Jews were summarily exempted - was to be passed over the “Custodian of Absentee Property:” the state of Israel. Furthermore, the law denied absentees the permission to sell their land. In 1953 Israel enacted the Land Acquisition Law, with the aim of retroactively legalizing ad hoc land seizures. The utilized “legal” methods reflected the tradition of the British Empire of “declaring indigenous land to be terra nullius and thus ripe for colonization.” In 1970 the Ottoman Land Law of 1858 was appropriated, which aided the Israeli state in appropriating a

101 Rose, 2008: 166.
103 Kedar cited in Gregory, 2004: 86.
Thus, land that wasn’t farmed for three consecutive years was deemed as *makhlul-* abandoned- allowing the sovereign to take possession of the land or transfer its rights to another person. The Ottoman rationale for this dimension of that law was to create an incentive to ensure that maximum possible land was farmed, and then taxed. For the Zionist state such laws could be appropriated to expand their annexation of non-Jewish owned land. In this way the Zionist state reassigned more than one-quarter of the West Bank to its settlers with the justification that it was “state land.” The Ottoman categorization of “dead” land was appropriated within a Zionist vision as confirming the absence of inhabitants on the land. Buried under the Zionist vision of modern urbanization, the land truly meets its death. The seizures of Palestinian lands began *ad hoc* immediately following the 1948 expulsion of Palestinians from their villages. This trend of property confiscation followed by the enactment of a legal regime that would “legalize” the crime. Western legal logic was applied to transform the landscape of Palestine in its transition from Ottoman governance to a Zionist state. Coupled with the implemented conceptions of private property ownership came the private membership in a political club- the nation-state- which “legalized” such processes of ownership. In exchange for membership the political subject became the ownership of the state.

Attempts at raising attention to Israeli state forms of ethnic cleansing have revealed the complex legal system existent to silence the past. In 2000 Teddy Katz was taken to court for the conclusion of his 1998 MA thesis that a massacre had taken place in the village of Tantura in 1948. The legal battle that was to ensue revealed not only the power of the written word in form of history over the spoken as memory, but also the monopoly of the Zionist state over knowledge production. Moreover, any form of historical knowledge beyond the hegemony of the accepted written record was simply deemed unacceptable. Within the Israeli legal system a paper is not a legitimate source of evidence unless its author is available for judicial cross-examination. According to Article 36 of the Evidence of Ordinance one exception exists to the rule: “if a state institution produced the written papers.” The art of memory… is very much something to be used, misused and exploited, rather than something that sits inertly there for each person to possess and contain. A state cannot exist without an archive to verify and “affirm its fiction to itself.”

Yet, these moments of silencing are not only limited to the archives. In the village of Husan, 7km West of Bethlehem, 1948 is still reoccurring today. Since the early 70s the Zionist state has justified the annexing of most of the farmland belonging to Husan and the surrounding five villages of the Arqub area. After constructing expansive colonies on the villages’ razed farmland the Zionist state has now begun the process of fencing and walling off of the Palestinian residents on behalf of the “security” of the Jewish settlers. Furthermore, the Israeli government has recently released its plans to seal off the village area connecting it with nearby Bethlehem through a tunnel. Only Israeli-issued identification card holders from within the villages will be permitted to enter and exit the tunnel. As life becomes unsustainable inside the villages without access to annexed land the young generation is migrating to out-lying cities, according to Israeli law thereby forfeiting their local identification cards and their access to their villages. All the while the process of slow ethnic cleansing remains “legal.”

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107 See at further land legal transformations in section 1.2.
110 Esmeira, 2007: 236: Legitimate state institutions include, “state, municipality, a business or anybody who provides a service to the public.”
112 Stoler, 2002.
Figure 3: This tunnel will connect/sever Husan from Bethlehem

The “legal” space for blatant land appropriation in the ebb of war was opened by the outbreak of violence between the Zionist colony and the neighboring Arab states had created the impetus for claims to judicial exceptionism. Yet the moment was temporary. In order to expand its newfound control over space the Zionist project turned to the tools of urban planning and cartography. Eyal Weizman writes, 

“[a]rchitecture and planning were used as a continuation of war by other means. Like the tank, the gun and the bulldozer, building material and infrastructure were used to achieve tactical and strategic aims. It was urban warfare in which urbanism provided not only the theatre of war but its weapons. This civilianization of military organization in fact became the militarization of many spheres of life. War was only over because now it was everywhere.”114

While archeology acted as the justification, architecture and cartography became the scientific partners of Zionism’s physical expansion into the landscape of Palestine. Towards its colonial ends cartography proved invaluable with its assumptions, “that the objects in the world to be mapped are real and objective, and that they enjoy an existence independent of the cartographer… that systematic observation and measurement offer the only route to cartographic truth; and that this truth can be independently verified.”115 Maps had already played a central role in bringing about the departure of the British imperial presence in Mandated Palestine. In the numerous land divisions demarcated by both UN and British-lead commissions the Zionists had usually agreed to the delineation—though always temporarily. Reflecting on partition of Palestine, David Ben-Gurion would say, “[w]e shall accept a state in the boundaries fixed today, but the boundaries of Zionist aspirations are the concern of the Jewish people and no external factor will limit them.”116 As the British departed the Zionist’s malleable sense of a border was revealed,117 and the West Bank’s signification as the

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117 “The frontiers of the Occupied Territories are not rigid and fixed at all; rather, they are elastic, and in constant transformation. The linear border, a cartographic imaginary inherited from the military and political spatiality of the nation state has splintered into a multitude of temporary, transportable, deployable and removable border-synonyms” (Wiedman, 2007: 6f.). “For the PA leadership and the international community, the boundary is a de facto border; for Israel, it is a frontier. A border is a fixed line separating two proper sovereign political entities. A frontier is more ambiguous and flexible, moving as demography moves” (Li, 2006: 50). “Control of the external wrapper is essential for the Oslo strategy, because if the Palestinians control even one border crossing—and gain the ability to maintain direct relations with the outside world—the internal lines of separation will become full-fledged international borders, and Israel will lose its control over the passage of people and goods. Puncturing the external
heartland of their Biblical vision- as “Judea and Samaria”- is used as justification for the Zionist fixation on expansion into the territory. Maps, furthermore, “merged the needs of a sprawling sububria with national security and political ambitions to push ever more Israelis into the West Bank. ‘This ‘Biblical’ heartland of the West Bank was seen as sacred territory and as a defensible frontier, a border without a line.’”\(^{118}\) Being the “Western” project that it is, Zionism utilized the tools of mapping as a “silent arbiter of power,” that has the potential and the potency of passing unnoticed.\(^{119}\) Like so many colonial expeditions of the past,\(^{120}\) the Zionist maps revealed only what was of interest and thus fulfilled a nationalist function of abstracting and summarizing while silencing the acts of razing and re-creation of the landscape in its way.\(^{121}\) The construction of “security roads,” “settlements,” “military zones,” “nature preserves,” “checkpoints” and “security fences” created after Oslo provide one such site of razing. These lines appear orderly and reasonable on a map of the “occupied territories,” on the ground they have turned the West Bank into a complex grid of Zionist control over the local inhabitants made “legal” in the Oslo process.

“‘It’s too dangerous,’ they said.
We asked them why.
‘The settlers,’ they said. ‘if you’re walking and they drive by they swerve and hit you. They ran over Mazen. And if an army jeep comes they shoot. No one uses that road.’...
These were the beginning of new times, a new relationship to the land and the destruction of the hills as I knew them.”\(^{122}\)

In “Modern Western Society,” J. B. Harley writes, “maps quickly became crucial to the maintenance of state power- to its boundaries, to its commerce, to its internal administration, to control of populations, and to its military strength. Mapping soon became the business of the state: cartography is early nationalized.”\(^{123}\)

The new de facto division following the Zionist land grab of 1948 that caused the fragmentation of Palestinian society along geographic lines. Many of the Arab villages within the new borders of the Zionist state were razed to the ground in an attempt to leave behind no trace. Often the Zionists then re-planted these spaces with trees turning such areas into protectorates. A five-star hotel in West Jerusalem is located on the site of Deir Yasin, the razed Arab village that acts as a symbol of 1948. A nearby “peace” park consumes the village’s former land. Neither place is marked. Elsewhere the trees were razed on account of new Jewish-inhabited urban centers. Between 1987 and 1991 alone, Israeli forces uprooted at least 120,000 trees as collective punishment against the Palestinian Intifada- an expression of rejection of Zionist colonization.\(^{124}\) Every step of expansion was backed and confirmed by the maps, reading these maps as objective inscriptions establishes truths divorced from history and time. A contemporary example is the slinking line on a map running vertically between Israel and the West Bank provides an impression of order and seems commensurate with the idea of a “security fence.” The Israeli government’s website claims they take into account “humanitarian, archaeological and environmental concerns.”\(^{125}\) Yet, visiting those sites

\(^{118}\) Weizman, 2006, 17.
\(^{120}\) Colonizers also utilized maps to divide “Latin America” (Mignolo, 1995: 219ff.), and “Africa” (Mmonnier, 1991: 90).
\(^{121}\) Scott, 1998: 87.
\(^{122}\) Shehadeh, 2007: 164-166.
\(^{123}\) Harley, 1989: 12.
\(^{125}\) Securityfence.gov.il.
confirms a different reality, the concrete wall has consumed almost 10% of the land of the 1967 armistice line and has displaced or severed thousands of Palestinian farmers from their land.

Figure 4: Order and Security: Revised Route of the Wall. 30 April 2006.

Language itself is another site of contestation, where the Zionist project has long had the upper hand managing to retain the closure of a debate. When former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon identifies a Palestinian refugee camp as a “habitat of this terror,” while codifying razed Palestinian villages as “peace parks” and “natural protectorates” the Zionists are winning the war of words. A further site of contestation is the codification of Palestinians themselves. Thus, the first time a Zionist leader labeled the local inhabitants “Palestinians” rather than “Arabs” was in an effort to distance them from their Arab neighbors who posed an impending threat at the time. Israeli rhetoric altered the designation for Yasir Arafat and his PLO associates from “terrorists” to “negotiation partners” in one crucial moment: when the PLO finally gave in to their demands to acknowledge the legitimacy of the state of Israel.

The Zionist project’s razing and relentless refashioning of Palestine’s landscape maintains its main goal of creating “facts on the ground.” The emphasis on the domination of space culminated in Oslo. This “peace” agreement transformed the very raison d’être of the PLO movement that had been resisting Zionism’s colonial existence. Edward Said described the agreement to the Oslo Accords as consenting “to forget and renounce our history of loss and dispossession by the very people who have taught everyone the importance of not forgetting the past.” In the battle over the past, this Palestinian acquiescence proved to be a critical turning point in deepening the fluidity of the Palestinian claim to the past while affirming the

fixity of the Zionist narrative. This “act of surrender” in the hope of reaching closer to legitimacy through the attainment of a Palestinian state accelerated the deemed “legal” razing of Palestine. Yet, simultaneously The PLO’s desire for legitimacy embarked them on a separate path of refashioning of landscape.

“[T]he emergence of nationalism in Palestine is an integral part of the Westernization story. It is written into the story of modernization that a society will be nationalized under the influence of Western modernizer, only to rebel against the modernizer in the name of Western ideals such as the right to independence and freedom.”
- Ilan Pappe, *A History of Modern Palestine*

“…becoming excited not by what is there, but by what its image has come to signify for you … the pornography of national symbolism.”
- Meron Benvenisti, *Sacred Landscape*

Waiting for a bus to fill up for the ride from Hebron to Jerusalem can include a long wait. After all, only a few of Hebron’s citizens possess an Israeli-issued ID card that permits them entry to Jerusalem. After we had finally filled all the seats and were just beginning on our way one of the passengers- a spirited white-haired man- asked his somewhat uncomfortable fellow passengers who had created the Palestinian flag. “The British” eventually came the answer from the man himself after no one had been able to appease his query.

All communities are “countries of words’ insofar as the rituals of inscribing borders, picturing territories and populations, and thematizing issues salient to those terrains and the communities believed to occupy them occur within discourse.” The “Gaza Strip” - like so many geographical categories- was brought about by violence. In the course of searing its geographical and historical landscape the Zionist project would introduce the Gaza Strip as a globally recognized category proving that, “[n]aming is a powerful weapon of the cartographic propagandist.” The absurd discursivity of the “Gaza Strip” as a spatial entity, highlighted in chapter one in light of an imagined Zionist narrative and practices of erasure, is doubled here by the PLO’s presentation of a desired “state” as the “chosen instrument of change” framed by a discursive Palestiniananness. These two modes of the discursive are inextricably linked by the PLO’s provision of a locus of identification for all those who “felt that their lives had been violated, disrupted and displaced as a result of Zionism’s successes.” Here the PLO narrative acts as a mythico-history that reconstitutes a “moral order of the world,” by presenting itself as a project in opposition to the Zionist enemy as well as an unlikely source of such resistance and identification. This dream built on the conception of the Palestinian as the “figure of lack,” striving in the image of the colonial other in a circuitous cycle of a “mimetic mode.” I will assess the transformation of space as a political tool and its relationship to time in the production and re-creation of history. I will ask not what history is but how it is made (time) and how this production re-makes landscape (space). I acknowledge that there is a danger in limiting my analysis to the Gaza Strip, yet I will engage the risks of undermining the contiguity of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in order to highlight the fabricated nature of territorial categories. I aim to provide signposts for thought beyond the hegemonic conception of a territorial state.

Dipesh Chakrabarty considers Europe to be the “silent referent in historical knowledge itself.” The concept, coined in Europe, has become an educational standard almost globally, synthetically placing Europe at the center of time and space. Yet, Chakrabarty lays the fault for the European hegemonic influence not only on modern imperialism, for “(third-world) nationalism have, by their collaborative venture and violence” made that very construct

129 Bowman, 1994: 3.
131 Sayegh, 1997: x.
133 Malkki, 1995: 55.
universal. In its battle for legitimacy both internal and external the PLO has mimicked the modern idol of the nation-state, thus partaking in the “distribution of human species into groups, the subdivision of the population into subgroups, and the establishment of a biological caesura between the ones and the others.”

By imitating its colonial occupier-paradoxically also the source of their legitimacy- the PLO engages in its other’s practices of spacializing control, a division of spatial landscape into compartments. Though the PLO never achieves its aim of political sovereignty, they practice sovereignty within the space of the Gaza Strip in what Achille Mbembe deems, “the capacity to define who matters and who does not, who is disposable and who is not.” The organization of space thus can be conceived of as a text that “talks about” or “works over,” “spatial representations” that are both “product and producer.”

In this chapter I will assess the role of the PLO- and specifically Fateh as the hegemonic party therein- in reshaping the landscape of the Gaza Strip in terms of time and space. I will assess the trajectory of the transformation of the PLO- with its gaze set westward- from a liberation struggle to a nation-state project. I will ask, in line with Chakrabarty, if their actions legitimize the endeavor of both their occupying power and the global statist project. I will engage with Western political philosophers Hobbes and Weber on the legitimacy of governance within the nation-state paradigm, and then drawing on Laclau, Mouffe and Poulantzas relating the role of classes in the formation of states.

Intermittently I will draw upon personal participant-observation carried out in the Gaza Strip and interviews with PLO members and their critics. I will then assess the PA’s rhetoric of the “savage” aimed at buttressing its position vis-à-vis its constituency. I will subsequently highlight this “liberation movement’s” transformation of the spatial landscape of Palestine in relation to force (police, prison, security, citizenship) and economy (private property, trade flows, border control) drawing largely on interviews and engaging existent analysis. Towards these ends I will sound out the utility of binaries such as realism/ utopianism, sanity/insanity, legality/criminality, legitimacy/illegitimacy, as discursive formations- mere habits of thought- with which the PLO have painted their rule of the Gaza Strip.

2.1. FROM VILLAGE TO CITY, PEASANT TO CITIZEN: The Nationalism Myth

“A human without a nation is without purpose.”
- Abu Karim, Gaza City, 2007

“The nation fills the void left in the uprooting of communities and kin.”
- Homi Bhaba, Nation and Narration

“Nationalism as a concept is seen as encompassing the lives of everyone in a given land; in reality, it is a story of the few not the many, of men not women, of the wealthy not the poor.”
- Ilan Pappe, A History of Modern Palestine

We cannot speak of a unitary development of nationalism in the Ottoman region of Palestine for there was no entity named “Palestine,” nor a group called “Palestinians.” The nationalism construct emerged in urban centers facing much contention. Meanwhile, following the breakup of the Ottoman Empire, religion, rather than an idea of a nationalist group structure

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137 Mbembe, 2003: 27.
138 Harvey, 1989: 216.
143 Halbwachs, 1992: 51ff.
proved to be “the only idiom able to unite a peasantry fragmented by regional, factional, kin and clan allegiances… the very name ‘Palestine’ was new and uncomfortable.”\textsuperscript{144} While Zionism came from afar to appropriate land, “the Palestinians came from the opposite direction, from intimate communion with the land to perceptions of a homeland in abstract ‘nation-building’ terms.”\textsuperscript{145} This process entailed the reappropriation of the colonial model of the state in “the sphere of the imaginary,” thus the state’s aim of overcoming old hierarchies was reversed, consolidating those the colonial state had initiated.\textsuperscript{146} The Zionists’ destruction of hundreds of villages caused the loss of old forms of identification and belonging, while a new sense of commonality emerged, that of the refugee.\textsuperscript{147} As the Gaza Strip’s population increased by adding over 220,000 “refugees” to the existent 60,000 “residents” a new rift emerged between the two communities, which formulated divisive identifications of “residents” and “refugees.” The nationalist paradigm would go on to formulate divisions between supporters of a-sulta/the authority (PNA), over and against all those that opposed its formulating treaty. 

In a letter written in 1918 Jerusalem intellectual Khalil Sakakini describes King Faysal as the herald of Arab Nationalism and the one who “made us raise our heads high and awakened our hopes from their slumber.”\textsuperscript{148} This depiction is one side of the debate of the post-Ottoman Empire, which pits Euro-centric nation-statism against a vision for a supra-nationalism of an Islamic \textit{umma} in the vein of the Ottoman Empire. The latter stream sought to base a new national identity, at least loosely on an Islamic heritage, while the modernist trend advocated that Islam had been corrupted and needed to adapt to modern trends in order to achieve past civilizational greatness. The idea of Arab Nationalism emerged as a reaction to the rise of Turkish nationalism of the Young Turks, appealing to a glorious Arab past and seeing itself as the replacement of an ailing Ottoman Empire.\textsuperscript{149} The division was largely driven by a fragmented vision of leadership, with an old guard inspired by a local nationalism seeking an independent Palestinian state. The young guard was driven by Arab Nationalism committed to Palestine as a part of an Arab entity, Greater Syria in a sense replacing the Ottoman Empire.\textsuperscript{150} The old guard, seeking to retain their place in society, was more powerful and in their espousal of nation-state nationalism were living proof of the hegemonic impact of western civilization. Meanwhile Arab unity in Damascus began to disintegrate as regional interests increasingly emerged. Faisal’s prioritizing of Syria at the cost of the Palestinian community as he courted Zionist interests at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference significantly destabilized Faisal’s vision of Arab unity.\textsuperscript{151} Even prior to the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire European colonizers had stood awaiting their share of a pie they desired. Ultimately, it was the French and British dismemberment of the Levant that crushed any vision of Arab Nationalism. July 1920 ended a dream of Greater Syria as the French disassembled Faisal’s government and consequently forced each of the regional participating parties to align with Western conceptions of nationalism. Many local political leaders only begrudgingly and painfully resigned themselves to a vision of local nationalism, their aspirations for a pan-Arab entity having been still-born due to England and France’s opposition to such an idea. Sykes and Picot’s crude lines on their map demarcated the Arab vision by force. 

Fragments of this debate reappear in the post-nakba Palestinian political scene. The PLO was constructed in 1964 with strong backing from Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasir with the intention of aiding in his battle for regional sovereignty. Despite some of its members having their roots in the Muslim Brotherhood they revealed “no visible Islamic

\textsuperscript{144} Bowman, 2003: 322.  
\textsuperscript{145} Benvenisti, 2000: 8.  
\textsuperscript{146} Mbembe, 2001: 40.  
\textsuperscript{147} Nassar, 2002: 35.  
\textsuperscript{148} Muslih, 1988: 186.  
\textsuperscript{149} Muslih, 1988: 212.  
\textsuperscript{150} Muslih, 1988: 176.  
\textsuperscript{151} Muslih, 1988: 203.
coloration” in order to adapt to the dominant political milieu of the time.152 Yet, the new young leaders who would early on take over the leadership of the PLO had other intentions with their own desires of legitimization. The defeat of Israel’s Arab assailants in 1967 provides the PLO with the position of power from which to negotiate in order to fulfill their nationalist aims.153 Taking the helm was Abu Ammar, who embodied the “mystery of the process of transubstantiation whereby the spokesperson becomes the group that he expresses.”154 His ability to bring the Palestinian cause to the world’s attention portrayed his position in speaking “of a group, on behalf of a group.”155 As spokesperson Abu Ammar “surreptitiously posits the existence of the group in question, institutes the group, through the magical operation that is inherent in any act of naming.”156 During the late 60s and 70s the PLO became a symbol of resistance both regionally and beyond with a significant network of funding and international volunteer fighters supporting their cause.157 The PLO became a symbol for resistance not just among Palestinians, but for the region. The battle of Karameh in 1968 pushed the PLO onto the regional political scene. Despite inciting heavy losses the roughly 300 PLO fighters managed to stand their ground and succeeded to achieve a Zionist retreat. Karameh is both the name of the village that was defended and the Arabic word for honor. Throughout the Arab world the fighters were seen to have “defended Karameh on behalf of them all.”158

By 1969 the PLO Revolutionary Council made use of this power by altering their intentions of “liberating Palestine” to the “establishment of a secular, democratic state” in a part of Palestine.159 This alteration follows a predicted trajectory of “liberation” struggles whereby the nation-state is the only possible outcome. The legal doctrine of uti possedetis reinforced this trend by ensuring that the nation state form was “the only way to enter the world beyond and be recognized as a rightful player in it.”160 By the time Egypt’s image is shattered in the 1973 war the PLO experiences an upsurge of popularity and makes public its commitment to an aim of Palestinian statehood. Reflecting on the 1974 PNC Council Edward Said described a new notion that was put forward claiming that Palestinian nationalism could be recuperated immediately by a “Palestinian national authority” under whose authority any portion of “liberated land” would go. Said reflected, “[t]hus a new trajectory was established toward the idea of partitioning Palestine.” The PNC members who espoused the new plot remained vague, never speaking of “partition” and continuing a narrative of “liberation” though replacing the use of “military” and “armed struggle” with rhetoric of a “political” solution.161 In the Order of Things Foucault muses over his laughter over “all the familiar landmarks of my thought - our thought, the thought that bears the stamp of our age and our geography - breaking up all the ordered surfaces and all the planes with which we are accustomed to tame the wild profusion of existing things.”162 The “unfamiliar” juxtaposed to this stance is that which questions and resists the “familiar landmarks” of our time. The young leaders gathering at the 1974 PNC meeting revealed their inability to continue espousing the “unfamiliar,” ceding to the constructed trope of “realism” in form of state-building and

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153 Cobban, 1984: 36.
156 Bourdieu, 1985: 741.
158 Cobban, 1984: 42.
159 Cobban, 1984: 16ff. The PLO would hold to a demand for state, “no matter how small” for the sake of the “integrity of national movement” which had never existed, at the cost of the land. This transformation reveals a cyclical logic based in foreign ideals. The desire for state is justified for the sake of the nation; this desire is what destroys the latter.
162 Foucault, 1970: xiv.
breaking with their previous revolutionary “utopianism.” Its political aspirations lead the PLO to give in to the modern legal temptation of territory- “the crucial diacratic of sovereignty”- over soil.

According to international legal logic, “the only way to decolonize was through self-determination as a nation state.” Thus, the liberation movement’s call would transform itself from a vision of national liberation and its anti-colonial movement to one of nation-building and modernization, striving for liberal democracy rather than rebelling against a system of domination. In this stance the PLO stopped thinking the externally deemed “unfamiliar”- after all the refugees sought for return to their land not a state- while developing a vision compliant with the familiar, which entailed the foreign imagining of a nation-state accompanied by economic opportunism that appeased the local economic elite. The legal labeling of the Palestinian exiles as “refugees” automatically places them- their exile, their existence and their hoped for return- within the rubric of territorialism and nation-state as the “familiar” solution within the “national order of things.”

Achille Mbembe expounds on this process, “[i]n the postcolony the commandement seeks to institutionalize itself, to achieve legitimation and hegemony, in the form of fetish. The signs, vocabulary, and narratives that the commandement produces are meant not merely to be symbols; they are officially invested with a surplus of meanings that are not negotiable that one is officially forbidden to depart from or challenge. To ensure that no such challenge takes place, the champions of state power invent entire constellations of ideas; they adopt a distinct set of cultural repertoires and powerfully evocative concepts; but they also resort, if necessary, to the systematic application of pain.”

The endeavor of convincing the public through rhetoric and violence set the PLO on a slippery slope towards secret negotiations at Oslo where any semblance of legitimacy was lost once and for all by the blatant revelation that the liberation of Palestine- return- was no longer a priority. This shift in prioritization points to a central motif, a growing class rift intensified by the lure of potential statehood and the subsequent criminalization process of a deemed legitimate leadership. The nation-state acted as a powerful mobilizing force, which begs the question, how to mobilize without communal identification. Yet, the definitive problem that arises from such pragmatic thinking is that the prioritization of national struggle has the tendency- as proven in the Palestinian case- to sideline class struggle. As elites become the ruling class representing an external power- whether a locally based colonizer or distanced economic imperial power- the drive of the popular struggle is co-opted by the desired prestige of a “pragmatic, pro PLO urban elite,” which one Fateh member labeled the “economic party” within Fateh. Here, state is not reducible to government; rather the makeup of state power includes individuals who are part of an economic elite.

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166 Massad, 2003: 105.
171 Trouillot, 2001: 127 n.5.
Figure 5: Yafa was renamed as Yafo, and the lemon tree is gone from that backyard, but it’s so deep-rooted in her mind, its fragrance so overwhelming, that it’s hard to image what that famous handshake on the South Lawn of the White House could have meant to her. It is hard to imagine any connection between these two images that were mutually superimposed: the lemon tree of memories and the CNN-made image of the two political leaders, representing Yafa and Yafo, respectively, hoping, with a semi-nudged handshake, to draw some defining lines between the one homeland and the two states, totally leaving out the sweet ‘n sour question of lemon trees. 172

The first Intifada- starting in 1987- entailed a process of self-nationalization that is necessary for mobilization for resistance of occupation yet also brings about a crisis of legitimacy. 173 As the government-in-exile lacked control over any form of state apparatuses required to disseminate nationalism and ideas of statehood and thus had to rely on inside leadership and the masses to carry out this task. 174 Despite strong coordination existing between the outside and inside leadership, Ziad Abu Amr claims that the Intifada “bails out the PLO.” 175 The exiled organization soon thereafter capitalizes on the moment for territorial sovereignty. At the 19th session of the PNC, the PLO renounces “armed resistance” and recognizes UN resolutions 242 and 338. In November of 1988 the PLO announced the independence of the Palestinian state on 1967 borders. This moment represented a culmination of acceding to the “familiar.” When Arafat claimed the importance of acceding to “international legality,” it proved that “the liberation idea [had] slipped from sight except as a historical cum rhetorical gesture.” 176 Yet, until this assimilation to global legal norms was combined with a recognition of the state of Israel’s right to exist, this step lead the latter to openly admit that the PLO had to be destroyed “utterly because of its representative status.” 177

Nicos Poulantzas claims that such a process entails an “effect of isolation” whereby in a diametrical opposition to the illusory unification of the “state”-project individuals are removed from within their social groupings and atomized. Thus the state is to conceal any class association in order to buttress the conception of the individual as part of a unified economic whole under the nation-state’s shroud. Poulantzas writes, “the juridical and ideological structures produce… the effect of concealing from those agents in a particular way the fact that their relations are class relations… In this way the capitalist state constantly appears as the strictly political unity of an economic struggle, which is in itself a sign of this isolation. It represents itself as the representative of the ‘general interest’ of competing and divergent economic interests

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173 See chapter 4.1 for further analysis of the first Intifada.
175 Abu Amr, 1990: 5.
177 Said, 1989: 10. This Israeli stance was only unequivocally revised when they deemed the PLO to no longer represent the Palestinians (see Massad, 2006, 98 and § I.A).
Oslo unraveled economic dynamics that are a result of political pseudo-“‘independence’ built on the remains of a power structure imposed from the outside.”

The language game of the couplet of the sought after “nation-state” further embeds the deceit of the ruling elites who act in their own and the capitalist core’s interests as a deemed “national” project. Thus Nabil Shaath, a member of the PLO economic elite, would be able to paint Oslo as bringing “complete parity” between Israelis and Palestinians. In reality the outcome of Oslo provided the likes of Shaath with economic opportunities similar to those of Israelis, but for the average Palestinian there was no parity to speak of. On the contrary, the state’s constant gaze towards the economic core creates a dependency- the periphery states on core states, and the majority of the population as periphery on the core of the urban elite. This in turn necessitates a locally perceived legitimacy through consent. The stark distinction here to consensus is the dialectical relationship of coercion and consent. In the state-game, consent is a necessary component. This is where violence enters the picture. The agents of the state utilize the “entity’s” perceived legitimacy to use violence in order to ascertain the very consent needed to buttress its illusory legitimacy. In this permanent tension between centrifugal dependency and centripetal use of force the true nature of the beast of the “state” is revealed, confirming that “as the past is not past, so the ‘postcolonial’ continues to be colonial.”

2.1.1. LEGITIMIZATION AND OSLO: Economy of A Debate

“Oslo could lead to a Palestinian state or a catastrophic liquidation of the Palestinian cause.”
- Abu Mazen

“The symbolic power of agents, understood as the power to make things seen- theorein- and to make things believed, to produce and impose the legitimate or legal classification, in fact depends… on the position occupied in the space.”
- Pierre Bourdieu, The Social Space And the Genesis of Groups

There was much rejoicing on the Palestinian street when PLO fighters returned to Gaza in the summer of 1994 following the Oslo negotiations. Even those in the starkest opposition to the principles of Oslo sensed a certain pride and respect as they watched “Palestinian” soldiers parading a previously- Israeli deemed- illegal Palestinian flag. Such mythic moments caused rise to notions of statehood with widespread- though short-lived- affects of unity. A certain imaginary was achieved. But the celebration was short-lived. The divisive nature of the intended state-building process was soon to follow as Fateh consolidated its power and in so doing sought to wipe out any opposition. Israel had succeeded at deepening its legitimacy

178 Poulantzas, 1968: 130; 133.
179 Trouillot, 1990: 23.
180 Trouillot, 1990: 23ff. What if the correspondence between statehood and nationhood… was itself historical? Indeed, there are no theoretical grounds on which to assert the necessity of that correspondence (Trouillot 2001: 127).
182 Trouillot, 1990: 22; 188.
183 Gregory, 2004: 6f; Trouillot, 2003: 22. These twin concepts express the division between two desires, on the one hand to join a global regime of neoliberal markets which leads to a centrifugal economic dependency on external bodies due Palestine’s existence on the periphery of the capitalist world. On the other hand, a centripetal dynamic conveys a stance that is “inherently inward-looking to exercise primary control and derive their momentum from dynamics of coercion and consent within that space” (Trouillot, 2003: 22).
in the eyes of the on looking world- by having the PLO recognize its right to exist.\textsuperscript{185} Meanwhile, the PLO exchanged its right to legitimate resistance with a promise to engage in negotiations,\textsuperscript{186} while acceding to Israel’s meager recognition of it as the “representative of the Palestinians.” Not only had Israel succeeded in reaching an agreement that lacked even a semblance of equal exchange, it also managed to recognize the PLO’s legitimacy to represent a “people” at the precise moment that it had stopped representing a majority of Palestinians.\textsuperscript{187} Part of the PLO’s failure in accepting the familiar trend of representation entailed its neglect of representation being in flux. This undermines the very raison d’être of a modern nation-state, whereby in Hobbes’ formulation the sovereign is to represent public consent. Bit by bit the PLO found themselves faced with a people, which did not conform to its image of it. “Almost before anyone knew it, a unique way of doing things had taken hold in the territories along with a new vision of the population as a self-propelled body that was both leading and waging the struggle against Israel on its own.”\textsuperscript{188}

Max Weber depicts the government as the authority that holds a monopoly on the “legitimate use of physical force.”\textsuperscript{189} In the milieu of fractional rivalry and a search for political authority the PLO intended to use the state as a tool to legitimize its use of violence. Yet, suddenly the weapon that had been pointed outward in a stance of resistance was turned inward as the PA under the Oslo scheme was designated to maintain security over an occupied people devoted to liberation. The PLO returned to a still occupied Palestine in the form of the Palestinian Authority in a counter-intuitive mode, not to lead a revolution, but to end it.\textsuperscript{190} General Nasir Yusef would promise that his first “urgent task” would be to contain the spread of arms, to which Hamas responded that they would not disarm “as long as the occupation continues.”\textsuperscript{191} This facet would frame the transition of the revolutionary movement to governing a para-state. The process that provided the PLO its authority to monopolize violence also undermined the violent underpinnings of its raison d’être and thereby de-legitimized the movement in the eyes of the “people” it claimed and sought to represent.

The question of legitimacy needs to be explored deeper at this juncture. Hobbes’ conception of the legitimacy of a sovereign in the nation-state is tied to a duty towards a constituency. A representing sovereign is to enter a contract by which the first must provide the latter with security. In the Palestinian state of exception under occupation, the Hobbesian conception of sovereignty is absent due to Oslo’s terms whereby Israel retains true sovereignty as a colonial entity and the PLO receives only a semblance thereof. Without complete sovereignty the PLO was not able to return its expected duty of providing security or protection of its “citizens” whether it be physical security or in forms of economic or social security. Yet, in Foucault and Agamben’s conception of sovereignty through the utilization of tools of control, Gazans became vulnerable to the PLO as sovereign.\textsuperscript{192} Though the PLO lacked sovereignty over territory, they did practice a state-like sovereignty over the Gazan population through the institutions of security forces, prisons and courts. Representation, a further central tenet of

\textsuperscript{185} The root of the word “category” is \textit{kategoresthai}, meaning to “accuse publicly,” for this the spokesperson/subject needs a platform, for the colonized it is the emulated image of the colonizer, for the Palestinian it is the state (Bourdieu 1985: 729). The Westernization story here entices the very post-colonial desire (Pappe 2004: 6).
\textsuperscript{186} The use of the discourse of ‘negotiations,’ a central tenet of liberal peace, despite Israel’s neglect to engage in negotiations calls attention to Israel’s place of domination. Despite the peaceable language, Israel continues to break all rules of negotiation by proceeding in its national vision, annexing Palestinian land and uprooting all life in its way. In this vein the program of the 13th Palestinian government document reads, “[t]he formation of a democratically-elected leadership that enjoys popular and factional support, as well as regional and international recognition” (PNA 2009: 8).
\textsuperscript{187} Massad, 2006: 98.
\textsuperscript{188} Bowman, 1994: 31n.50.
\textsuperscript{189} Cited in Held 1983: 111.
\textsuperscript{190} Robinson, 1997: 177.
\textsuperscript{191} Weinberger, 1995: 20.
\textsuperscript{192} See Mbembe, 2003: 1n.1.
political sovereignty, proved void in various instances. It is the deeply flawed foundation of Oslo- empowered by their occupier not their “people”- that provided the PLO with representative power on behalf of “Palestinians.” Another such moment of revelation is the 2006 elections whereby the PLO lost its electoral representation during internationally monitored elections, yet retained sovereignty- in the Foucauldian sense- over the Gazan street until Hamas took it by force. This state of exception within which sovereignty is practiced in the Gaza Strip brings about perpetual contest over power, which the very process of suffrage and sovereignty are meant to overcome. Any semblance of a contract between a people and a sovereign is devastated while providing the impetus for the image of a “failed state,” where such a “condition” is considered an internal/domestic problem, which like a sick body needs curing.193 This stance is a red herring that distracts from the systemic role of external players in bringing about internal fragmentation, and more importantly the impossibility of application of a nation-state narrative in the Palestinian context. The true losers in this process are the Gazans who, having been lured into a striving for state, receive in exchange only a dictatorial power without the ability to return the function of a sovereign, while continuing to live under the occupation of a territorial colonial sovereign. Hobbes claimed that “covenants without the sword are but words,” in Gaza two swords oppose each other and still impose their respective bearer’s will on a population. The provision of law as a limitation of power of both swordsmen is suspended under the condition of the Gaza Strip as a state of exception.194

At stake in the Oslo accords was not the formation, but the disintegration of state. In this sense Abu Ammar and the PLO became the entirely real substitute for an entirely symbolic being- a unified Palestinian nation, which did not exist.195 “The existence of a Palestinian government created a divide, Abu Ammar created a phony (mushawih) version of a nation,” says Gazan mental health physician and independent political leader Iyad el-Sarraj. For the Palestinians the ensuing start of a pseudo-state building process entailed the centralization of political power, the influence of trans-national bodies like the IMF and World Bank and adapting to their rules and conditions, the legitimization of violence - within the Palestinian areas- of a single party rivaling other opposition, and the challenge of forming moral and legal legitimacy of political power and military force. The application of this foreign Nomenklatur- police force, courts, prisons etc- had the direct repercussion of deep division within Palestinian society. Overnight PLO-affiliated resistance fighters and fida’yeen became policemen and soldiers who acted as Israel’s subcontracted security force thus discarding arms of resistance for arms of vassalage. The difference between state agent and resistance fighter is often a slight one.196 In the moment of Oslo, Fateh’s banner depicting the message of the liberation struggle- under which the resistance had fought for years- including arms and the entirety of historic Palestine became anachronistic revealing the schizophrenia in the movement’s core values.197

193 Hill, 2005: 149.
194 Agamben, 2005.
197 Abu Amr, 1990: 5.
The PA took on the responsibilities of a municipality without the reward of territorial sovereignty or recognition as a player in the international playing field of nation-states. Neve Gordon refers to this trend as “outsourcing,” whereby Israel is able to “abdicate social and moral responsibility… by dodging legal prosecution and evading the ‘shaming technique’ utilized by human rights organizations.”198 Meanwhile, the Israeli demand for the pre-condition of the Palestinian Authority as a transitory entity mirrored Israel’s constant transitory legal games. Israel had established a territory whose outline would remain legally in flux, now the Zionist state donned the very legitimacy of the PLO a legal temporality. Israel had succeeded yet again in retaining the ambiguity of its juridical position vis-à-vis any Palestinian spatial entity, trying to paint itself as “not quite an occupier,” while the Palestinians remained just “somewhat less than sovereign.”199 All these changes occurred with what an Israeli commentator considered, “indications that the agreement is built on a tacit assumption that it will never be carried into effect… Israel supports a process intended to prevent any chance of a democratic Palestinian entity.”200

The Oslo agreement initiated a process whereby many Palestinians “found that enemies had become allies while others discovered that former allies were now antagonists. Between Oslo and 28 September 2000 those in and affiliated with the PNA in large part acted as though the antagonism with Israel had ended.”201 PLO advisor Hanan Ashrawi claimed that at least Oslo had “put Palestine on the map.”202 The Bantustanization of Palestine and the self-destructive nature of the pseudo-state-building process that emerge beg the question: on whose map was Palestine placed? And more importantly, of what significance is a place on this map?

2.1.2. OTHERING: Nationalism’s Need for A Savage

“[T]he ultimate expression of sovereignty resides, to a large degree, in the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die.”

- Achille Mbembe, Necropolitics

They use verses from Quran to justify verses, used them out of context. They convince their members with such certainty that they can tell members to kill and they will do it. Convince them that there is no punishment and the Imam at the mosque will be punished in their place. They are prepared to kill with ease. These aren’t the people that represent the religion. Does the hadith say burn cars, kill, kidnap? They lie. In the first Intifada I said those that enter

199 Li, 2006: 50.
elections commit haram shara3an, they condemned those that voted in the elections., then they changed their position so that those that don’t vote are kuffar (heretics).  

In “Hegemony and Socialist Strategy” Laclau and Mouffe posit the position of antagonism as a main cause of a deemed constitutive identity. Thus, a required act of antagonism by an other is necessary to solidify oneself as the other of that antagonist. While liberation was their raison d’être, Israel had acted as that antagonist for the PLO. The movement now needed any opposition as antagonist to justify its having entered the negotiation process presented as a “path to peace,” as well as to consolidate its internal legitimation. Those that did not recognize this violence as authority were outlawed and deemed savage in an all too familiar mode. The primary target in such suppressive tactics were Islamists who opposed the underpinnings of the Oslo process and continued their program of militant resistance, political mobilization- primarily Hamas and Jihad Islami- in spite of the PA. This relationship of domination and power, allowed for “[p]erceptions of a violence afflicting a diverse range of persons [to] give rise to a concept of a ‘national enemy’ and, through that concept, to the idea of solidarity with those whom that enemy opposes.” According to one Israeli analyst the new PA forces were “expected to frequently descend upon the mosques affiliated with Hamas, in order to detain on the spot and interrogate everyone with a beard… to emulate the [Israeli] Border Guards.” Thus as the PLO developed in the image of its colonizer it took on its colonizer’s enemies as its own. On October 11 1994 after Hamas operatives abducted an Israeli border guard, PA security agencies aided the IDF in locating the kidnappers while arresting over 400 Hamas members. The incident caused widespread questioning of the PA’s legitimacy. Terrorism suddenly became a frequent element of PLO rhetoric against their opposition, leading to crisis of identification as opposition groups increasingly identified the PA at best as dictators, at worst, as occupiers. The PLO’s colonial emulation perpetuated the already existent trend of deepening division.

II. A RE-ORDERING OF SPACE: Fateh’s Panopticon

“The aspiration to such uniformity and order alerts us to the fact that modern statecraft is largely a project of internal colonization… The builders of the modern nation-state do not merely describe, observe, and map; they strive to shape a people and landscape that will fit their techniques of observation.”

- James Scott, Seeing Like A State

“As far as we are concerned, we are a Palestinian State.”

- Arij Al-Awda, Palestinian Legal Affairs, Ramallah Governorate

At the secret negotiations in Oslo PLO representatives had engaged with their colonizer in a violent re-mapping of Palestine. Here spaces were separated, categorized, named and seared from each other in the search for “peace” and “sovereignty.” The first would remain a pipe dream while attainment of sovereignty would remain a rhetorical mirage. Meanwhile, Israel retained sovereignty over most land, while the unequally shared authority of remaining areas remained within the rubric of prioritization of Israeli “security.” Behind closed doors space was re-allotted to PLO forces most of whom were still in exile. The division of space into areas A, B, B-, B+, C and H1 and H2 entailed a crass prioritization of urban centers of power over the land of Palestinian farmers. Possibly the harshest critique voiced against the Oslo Accords was its silence on the issue of refugees. Postponing this core matter to a later date revealed again the secondary nature of refugee land over the territorial and urban vision for a nation-state. This trend emulated the modernization theory driving the Zionist project. The

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203 Eid, Interview with author, 26 March 2007.
204 Laclau and Mouffe, 1985.
divisions within Palestinian society again came to the fore at this juncture as the lure of the lucrative economic nature for a select Palestinian urban elite became a driving force in the realization of the agreement. Further rhetoric of “long-term economic development” in a hope of addressing the crime of annexed Palestinian farmland continues to reveal itself to be a liberal fiction. Furthermore, the fighters that returned to Palestine drunk on visions of accomplished statehood would soon engage in a panopticon of security and control on the local population from whom the movement had largely become estranged.

2.2.1. BORDERS, POLICE, COURTS, IDS, PRISONS: State of Exception As Rule

“Sovereign is he who decides on the state of exception.”
- Carl Schmitt

Leaving Gaza requires one to walk through a long tunnel made up of turnstiles, X-ray machines, gates, cages and passport controls. This past Wednesday I found the tunnel ending abruptly ahead of me, a crudely fashioned wall bared me from the usual way of entry, instead an opening to the right lead to a place unknown. I turned the corner and found myself in an Orwellian passage leading to a huge building with four automatic doors that were shut tight. Along this fenced in passageway runs an anachronistic, medieval ditch, beyond it a mound made of rubble and dirt of the once magnificently fruitful region of Beit Hanoun. Today, much of the town lies in disrepair and its surrounding land remains green but empty of the life that once grew there. The caged passages are adorned with security cameras and buzzing speakers reminding every passer by that yes, someone, somewhere is watching. Along the way I met a Palestinian businessman who owns a clothing factory in Gaza. Mohamed had a bad back. He was leaning against the fence and breathing heavily. I asked if he needed any help and walked next to him slowly, when suddenly he took a hold of my hand, making use of the extra support, we had about 300 meters left to go.

At the sliding gates that opened to a yet unknown world to us, stood nine other such businessmen. I noticed one of them looking around for a video camera to ascertain if we had been spotted waiting there. An odious sign informed the travelers that bags would be searched. The sign apologized in advance for any inconvenience. In big letters it then read, “no weapons allowed”, security, it seemed to imply was the purpose for this momentous experience.

Under the guidelines of Oslo liberation fighters were to be turned into policemen, secret police agents and state bureaucrats were to create “public order” and a plethora of further security organs were to provide “internal security.” The PA began building its institutions and functioning more like a state than its cosignatories had expected. The new PA apparatuses would begin to work as “police borders, producing its people, constructing its citizens, defining its capitals, monuments, cities, waters and soils, and by constructing its locales of memory and commemoration, such as graveyards and cenotaphs, mausoleums and museums.”

One of these measures was the issuing of ID cards and the statistical institution that went along with this process, “investigative modalities,” which would help the PA in its ruling endeavors. Despite the construction of ministries in PA governed areas Israel was the one to issue identification cards. The Israelis merely added a border with the Palestinian flag around the previously Israeli-issued ID which otherwise remained the same. Meanwhile, the Palestinian passport could only be issued with a registered Israeli ID. Residents living outside of Palestine received a Palestinian passport only if they have an Israeli ID. Thus while such policies of issuing IDs along with birth and death registers and further statistic gathering institutions now lay in the hands of the Palestinian PA they occurred in coordination with Israel, in fact it was Israel that legitimizd the process. In the Interim Agreement of 1995 the

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209 Author’s blog entry, 20th February 2007.
PA agreed to report all population number changes, and changes in places of residence to Israel. This had been an improvement over Israel, the USA and Arab states opposition to a Palestinian census with the aim of silencing the reality of the existence of a Palestinian nation rather than “just a collection of people.” The Palestine Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) established following Oslo based its first “current status report” on 1967 Israeli census data. Though the PCBS would go on to conduct various ambitious censuses to counter Israeli statistics, these were limited to the framework of a state-building process thus excluding Palestinians that the Zionist colonizers prevented from returning or living in Palestine.

A new regime of movement developed under the auspices of the PA whereby corporatist connections were required in order to receive permits for exit and entry permits from and into the Gaza Strip. In the spirit of their Zionist colonizers PA officials rejected permits to whom they deemed a threat to “national security,” the deemed savage- as well as those- individuals, families or factions- that were not to their liking.

Revolutionary forces rarely make strong candidates for governance, which Abu Ammar revealed quickly. In February 1995 the PA head would set up “special state security courts” independent of a judiciary system, that allowed secret evidence, entailed no appeal procedures, and were judged by PLO military personnel appointed by the PA while verdicts were prerogative of Arafat. A December 1996 Human Rights report claimed that torture was widespread in PA prisons and that ten inmates had died while in custody of the one year old PA, some of these due to torture. Repercussions for interrogators remained mere rhetoric, recalling similar trends during trials of Israelis charged with crimes against Palestinians. In other cases the PA simply did not execute their own court’s decisions, withholding any justification in an uncanny repetition of their colonizer’s paradigm of a judicial state of exception. The PA’s act of extra-judicially incarcerating opposition activists and torturing them was an implementation of the occupier’s imaginary, their torture practices mimicking the very ones Fateh members had undergone at the hands of the Israeli administration. Gazan physician Iyad Al-Sarraj recalled overhearing an interrogation in a PA prison carried out by a Palestinian officer in Hebrew.

At Oslo the PA moreover agreed to cooperate with Israeli security desires by transferring suspected resistance fighters to Israel.

Abu Ammar furthermore personally appointed associates close to him, many of who had been pegged with corruption charges, a case in point was the appointment of Khaled Qudra as high court judge after being ousted from his previous post due to fraud charges. The confrontation between the PA and the opposition to Oslo came to a head on “Black Friday” 18th of November 1994 at the Palestine mosque when the PA forces killed 13 people during a protest against arrests of PA opposition members. One of the new PA apparatuses was the Preventative Security Forces (PSF)- a uniquely homogenous force made up primarily of local hires- whose main mission was internal surveillance against opposition to the Oslo accord. Following the black Friday massacre one PSF member was recorded saying, “from now on they should know that there is only one authority.” Implied here were families, clans or

212 Zureik, 2001: 217f.
213 Said, 1996: 17. Scott describes the process of naming as allowing a state project to identify its citizens in order to “create a legible people” (Scott, 1998: 65).
217 PHRMG and B’tselem, 1996.
220 Parsons, 2004: 162.
221 Parsons, 2004: 164.
opposition factions that traditionally had imposed their authorities over various spaces within the Gaza Strip. Though the formation of the PSF was not agreed upon within the Declaration of Principles signed at Oslo, Israel gave the PA free reign to set up the PSF in exchange for the apparatus’s provision of information on Palestinian Islamists. In a speech on the 18th of September 1994 Rabin would reveal to the Israeli cabinet that the PA security personnel operated “with Israel’s knowledge, and in cooperation with Israel’s security forces to safeguard Israel’s security interests.” In Oslo II Arafat went so far as to agree “to act systematically against all expressions of [Palestinian] violence and terror.” This treaty, confirmed at the 1998 Wye Memorandum Agreement, brought about the possibility for Israel’s suspension of human rights in a desired eradication of “terror.” In line with such logic the PA forces responded with ruthless suppression after a series of Hamas and Islamic Jihad attacks across Israel in 1996.

In this process of legitimation, force is said to be a necessity, and thus rituals of force would become commonplace. Hereby, the fetish of the PA’s commandement “overrides binaries of resistance/passivity” and becomes everyday “common rituals” that ratify the commandement, obeying no logic besides its own. Israeli-wanted Fateh activists would be charged with the “special task” of “putting down any sign of opposition [to the DOP]... aimed at creating proper respect for the new regime.” Through this cyclical process Israel approved of deemed “wanted suspects” to legitimate the very regime that they had been the legitimating partner in and would later make illegitimate at will.

In order to consolidate his rule Abu Ammar sought the loyalty of clan leaders across the West Bank and Gaza, a tactic the Ottomans and British occupation had used prior to him. In this way the PA paid their allegiance with personal favors sowing a deep-seated cronyism, the effects of which are being reaped until today. In 1998 the head of the Preventative Security Force Rasheed Abu Shbak created “firqaat al-mot”- the death squad- made up of security force members. In August 1995 B’tselem reported that individuals had reverted to individualistic or clan-based (rather than political) solutions for their needs and aspirations. firqaat al-mot acted purely out of personal interests of those PA political leaders whom they were loyal to. As members of firqaat al-mot oversaw the main trade terminal between Israel and the Gaza Strip Palestinian businesses had to either pay them off or else have their imports and exports delayed and cancelled at will. The PSF furthermore would take on the multi-faceted role of “combating terrorism, countering the opposition parties and gathering intelligence on Israel,” while “monitoring imports and exports to and from the PA via economic monopolies” as well as overseeing tax levies on select economic sectors. In this way much of the private sector of the Gaza Strip came under the control of PA corporatism.

2.2.2. ECONOMY/AID: A Neo-liberal Lure

“[I]ntensive exploitation of a scarce resource served, at least at times, as the motor for deepening inequalities, expansion and enhancement of state power.”

- Achille Mbembe, On the Postcolony

The Paris Economic Protocol (PEP) signed on April 1994 between the PLO and Israel set the general economic trade policy still applicable today: “Palestinian imports and exports are granted equal treatment at the Israeli ports of entry and exit except from security measures.” The final clause is penned and implemented in the spirit of Oslo with the centrality of a legal

225 Usher, 1996: 27.
231 Ibrahim, interview with author, 29 November 2008. Cairo, Egypt.
232 Parsons, 2004: 156f.
state of exception, whereby Israel is able to suspend the agreement at any moment due to what it deems a “security concern.”²³³ By agreeing to such measures the PLO legitimized Israel’s veto power on all economic trade, thus while Israel is the primary culprit in the downward spiral of the Palestinian economic conditions, in Oslo the PA acceded to such conditions with the hopes of a state, which entailed the aspirations to the attainment of personal interests.²³⁴ The following description by a British colonial officer writing about India in the early 20th century could just as well have been written in reference to the PA. “[T]o give them private property would only bind them with stronger ties to our interests, and make them our subjects.”²³⁵ The colonizers—whether in India or Palestine—sought the hegemony of a liberal conception of property, which imposes the basis for their “order of things.” Oslo thus cements Israel’s process of transforming Ottoman legal land categories into state-tied categories of public and private land. Arafat sought a comprador bourgeoisie to back Oslo, enabling export-imports, thus conclusively dooming the agricultural sector, which had traditionally been the biggest Palestinian income generator.²³⁶

The agreement thereby had simply formalized the realities on the ground, “the status of the Palestinian people as a cheap labor force for Ashkenazi Israel.”²³⁷ In line with the logic of “private property” the Israeli colonizers gave the PA the mirage of a state and the tools for an economic elite to partner in neoliberal profiteering. Hereby, the colonizer transitioned to a form of neocolonialism whereby agents undertook the work of the colonizer with shared profit. During the early post-Oslo years PA officials and their affiliates were able to maximize their benefits under the agreement by forming partnerships with Israeli agents that would expedite such “security measures” on behalf of their Palestinian business partners. One example hereof was the PA owned Palestinian Commercial Service Company (PCSC), which held majority shares in the 34 major Palestinian companies. In 1999, the company held assets worth $345 million or 8% of total GDP.²³⁸ The PA agreed through an Israeli envoy to a deal between Israeli cement firm Nesher and the PA-controlled cement monopoly.²³⁹ It was according to this logic that some PA officials dreamt of the Gaza Strip as the “Singapore of the Middle East,” to be created with an excess of cheap exploitable labor and with the aid of a myriad of international development deals awaiting their chance to capitalize on “peace” in the Middle East. In the Oslo transition the PLO did not so much take on the ideology of neoliberalism, but accepted the conditions asked of them in order to achieve the political gains they sought.

In the Oslo Agreement the PLO very naively agreed to the establishment of among other things, a “Palestinian Electricity Authority, a Gaza Sea Port Authority, a Palestinian Development Bank, a Palestinian Export Promotion Board, a Palestinian Environmental Authority, a Palestinian Land Authority and a Palestinian Water Administration Authority.”²⁴⁰ Yet, having already legitimized Israel’s control over land, sea and borders, the Oslo co-signatories jointly made all these Palestinian institutions obsolete. The flawed logic pointed to the extent of the temptation of nation-statism, whereby the PLO agreed to a water authority while Oslo entails a clause that Israel control all water and an export promotion board when Israel retains all control of water, sea and borders to and from the Gaza Strip. Were these core institutions of economic imaginary of nation-state required for better exploitation? What is the purpose of such institutions without political sovereignty to control their own borders and implement decrees? Meanwhile these many new ministries and agencies along with the

²³³ Agamben describes the paradox of sovereignty in being at the same time outside and inside the juridical order, thus the “law is outside itself” (Agamben, 1998: 15).
²³⁴ Abed, 1999: 44ff.
²³⁸ Farsakh, 2000: 25.
²⁴⁰ DOP: VII, 4.
security apparatuses turned the PA into an employment office, where 65,000 jobs were created mostly in security and thereby becoming the largest employer of Palestinian labor.\(^{241}\)

Such Oslo logic revealed the shortsighted nature of the PLO’s decision-making process, as the desires of an economic elite continued to take precedence over any other considerations.

One of the most critical economic dimensions of Oslo was the withdrawal of Israeli forces from within the territory of the Gaza Strip and Jericho. This move entailed two vital economic consequences. One, it would buttress the Israeli narrative that the colonial-settler state would thereby rescind legal responsibility for these districts. Furthermore, it would legalize a reduced economic responsibility for Gaza and Jericho’s inhabitants while continuing to maintain control over its borders. While Palestinian labor into Israel had increased by 64% from 1972 through 1990, due to the shift in the Israeli economy, cheap unskilled labor was no longer required in the amounts it had been during the pre-Oslo period.\(^{242}\) The amount of laborers entering Israel fell from a high of 116,000 in 1992 to less than 36,000 in 1996 and the numbers would continue to decrease.\(^{243}\) Despite the fact that the Israeli and Palestinian economy had reached its highest level of inter-connectedness in 1993, the signing of Oslo gave Israel the green light to begin the severing process. The PLO agreed to have their trade limited by the fact that “Israeli import policy prohibits trade with several countries, mainly those that do not have diplomatic relations with Israel,” whereby Israel tried to use the Palestinian captive economy as a lure to build bi-lateral trade agreements with neighboring Arab states.\(^{244}\) The limited success of such an endeavor cost the Palestinians severely. Since 1967 Israeli policies had significantly reduced and reconfigured Gaza’s external trade. Following Oslo this policy came to a head as Gaza’s economy evolved into an autarky, whereby Israel severed most opportunities for external trade causing Gaza’s economy to grow increasingly isolated and turn exceedingly inward.\(^{245}\)

Israel relied heavily on the Paris Protocol’s main clause of security whereby it consistently justified closure of the Gaza Strip and West Bank. Closure would bring movement of labor and goods to a complete hold- aiding in the further severing of the two areas from each other-bringing about economic devastation following the Oslo accords. Between the years 1994 and 1999 Israel imposed 443 days of closure, totaling 90 days per year.\(^{246}\) In 1996 alone closure caused losses of 39.6% of GNP in Gaza, while complete closure in March-April of that year lead to 66% unemployment in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.\(^{247}\) One study estimated the total damages incurred by closures between 1993-96 to total $2.8 billion, equaling double the amount of aid disbursed in the area over that period.\(^{248}\) Reuters reported that the cost of shipment of Coca-Cola’s sole Palestinian producer and distributor per kilometer from the Israeli port of Ashdod to the economic border crossing into Gaza was greater than any of the company’s trade routes in the world.\(^{249}\) A U.S.A. issued report stated, “there is currently no possibility of Gaza exporters to move goods according to international standards.”\(^{250}\)

The condition of labor is central within the Oslo Accords. On the one hand, many PLO officials sought to jumpstart their desires of exploitation with the aid of investments, which Oslo would make possible. On the other hand, the PA’s deemed autonomy aided Israel in obscuring its legal responsibilities towards Palestinian labor.

At Oslo the PLO had ceded to a “regional economic cooperation” with Israel dominating

\(^{241}\) Roy, 1999: 70. See chapter 4.II.A: In line with neo-liberal requirements the PA creates a hire freeze and reduces the number of employees.

\(^{242}\) Roy, 1999: 67.

\(^{243}\) Roy, 1999: 71.

\(^{244}\) DOP: 1.

\(^{245}\) Roy, 1999: 68, 72.

\(^{246}\) Farsakh, 2000: 23.

\(^{247}\) Roy, 1999: 69.

\(^{248}\) Farsakh, 2000: 23.

\(^{249}\) Entous, 2007.

\(^{250}\) Cited in Roy, 1999: 72.
the “new Middle East.” The new opportunities available for a Palestinian business elite caused the society to “vacillate between the values and ethics of the ‘new opportunism’ on the one hand, and ‘traditional conservatism’ on the other.” The “false consciousness” of a “one-dimensional Palestinian is to aim at creating artificial needs represented in consumerism” and “is intended to guarantee the subordination and conformity of the Palestinians, especially those with revolutionary ideas.” Husam Khader, a Fateh leader from the young guard said, “Oslo culture destroyed our future” by creating an “economic party” within Fateh, “if they go back to the struggle, their benefits will be destroyed.”

The PLO’s nationalist path of “liberation,” reached a new apex in February of 2006. The Fateh leadership responded to their democratic election loss by maintaining their domination of security apparatuses, authority over which should have been transferred to their opponent Hamas. Repeating their neglect of centripetal- local collective political will and any semblance of the democratic process, the PLO imposed their hegemonic control, which lead to the accentuation of political, social and geographic divisions. Following their elite- and party-driven transformation of the landscape of the Gaza Strip, the Fateh elite continued to set their compass according to a foreign- centrifugal- directive imposing their vastly de-legitimized political will on the masses. With Fateh’s stance of resistance long forgotten, the proscribed notions of nation-statism entailed a searing division between the party’s elite and all who opposed their relentless mimetic mode. The desire to appease “inter-national” standards of legitimate nation-statism meant the neglect of the will of the very people they said to represent. Meanwhile, the political and economic desires of the movement’s elite largely coincided with those of its occupying power as well as their international backers the Middle East Quartet- the USA, the UN, Europe and Russia. The PLO- once revolutionary, resistant, anti-imperialist, anti-colonial- had made a complete about-face tempted by one sole phantasm of the modernization story: a state.

III: THE GAZA “TAKEOVER”

“It's a fight between the national project and this small kingdom they want to establish in Gaza, the kingdom of Gaza, between those who are using assassination and killing to achieve their goals, and those who are using the rules of law.”

- Abu Mazen

“We stopped saying we are Palestinians, we now ask what is your loyalty (iltima)… is it for Fateh or Hamas?… since the death of Abu Ammar.”

- Nasir

The morning of Monday June 18, 2007, a Hamas van pulls up to president Mahmoud Abbas’ house to make a total of eleven Hamas security men stationed there. A prayer rug lies on the ground nearby, a Hamas flag inconspicuously lies on top of an awning, the guards greet each other with traditional kisses usually exchanged between close friends. 30 minutes later the building is deserted. An unimaginable sight in my two years here. The presidential compound was not lit up for the first time in my memories over the past two years. The Palestinian flag that used to fly over it has been taken down. The military training

251 Massad, 2006: 100.
253 Eid, 2008: 133.
256 Nasir, interview by author, 2 June 2007. Gaza City.
base nearby is deserted, the tents have disappeared, no vehicles are in sight. As I leave my building things are being moved out, likely from a Fateh big wig that fled to West Bank and now is moving his stuff there.257

In the months leading up to the Palestinian parliamentary elections in January 2006 the USA’s pressure mounted on Israel not to hinder proceedings; after all this was planned to be a great success in the USA’s drive to bring “democracy” to the Middle East.258 The USA publicly announced its financial backing of Fateh, making official their support of Fateh as their party of choice.259 The Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research- funded by a coalition of Western governments- conducted three crucial polls that affected perceptions in Washington in the months of June, September and December 2005. They all showed Fateh leading Hamas by a comfortable margin.260 Hamas’ victory in the elections revealed that the “international community’s”261 true colors in the conflict was not “democracy” but a push for their version of the order of things. Consequently, all aid was cut to the PA. In agreement with Israel and almost every other government Fateh denied the practical implications of the election outcome by never fully releasing its control over security forces, which ought to have been ceded to the Hamas run Ministry of Interior. The mounting financial burden on Fateh made it impossible for them to function.262 With its loss of the parliamentary elections Fateh lost most international funding support despite its stance in opposition to the election results and its recognition internationally as Israel’s elect “negotiation partner.”

During this period the EU set up the “Temporary International Mechanism” whereby donations by-passed the now Hamas operated PA Ministry of Finance and were funneled through “the president’s office” which proceeded to distribute partial and sporadic paychecks to PA employees in both Gaza and the West Bank.263 Following Hamas’ victory, Israel rejected entry of all day-laborers working in Israel- prior to the second Intifada their numbers had reached over 200,000- further throwing Gaza into economic stagnation. In the eyes of the Palestinian street Abbas’ ability to provide any alternative to Hamas’ proposed stance of resistance became less viable than ever, significantly decreasing his support. Simultaneously, Hamas’ popularity waned among some sections of Palestinian society as economic pressure mounted. These events caused the division initiated by the establishment of the Oslo pseudo-state to be brought to a head.264

In February of 2007 a covert plan to provide Fateh an economic boost was leaked in the el-majid newspaper in Jordan- its headquarters were consequently shut down.265 The document proposed economic backing of Fateh in preparation of hoped-for early elections. It read, “Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas should propose, in consultation with the World Bank and the European Union, a plan that defines specific sectors and projects that are in need of financing, and that will show useful and tangible results on the ground in the space of six to

257 Author’s field notes, 18 June 2009.
259 Abo Toameh, January 22, 2006. This act has been asserted by some to have been a strategy of undermining Fateh, building on the common knowledge of the USA’s unpopularity on the Palestinian street. “The US government, however, is keeping a comparatively low profile in the $2 million initiative headed by the Agency for International Development. No official government logos appear during projects and events.”
261 The international community is imagined as being composed of the aggregate of particular nations, but is also posited at the same time as the source of “universal” values on which international institutions draw to justify their characterization of these particular values as universal. Thus there is a circular relation of ation and international community in which each reinforces the Other’s claim to universality” (Pahuja, 2005: 465).
262 Since Oslo PA salaries are almost entirely funded by donor governments.
263 Not unlike cases described by Duffield in Africa the EU used such measures to create a perceived “structural stability” thus changing the perceived political balance of power (Duffield. 2001: 103). See Duffield regarding donors influencing political structures via aid (2001: 87, 92).
264 “The existence of a Palestinian government created a divide. Abu Ammar created a mushawih/phony version of a nation. What was tragic is that many hoped for the return of the Israeli occupation.” Iyad Al-Saaraj, Interview by author, Gaza City, January 24, 2008.
nine months, centering on the alleviation of poverty and unemployment. And since some projects will take more than nine months, there should be a guarantee of adequate results within the nine months. This is so as to guarantee the usefulness of these projects before the elections.” Soon thereafter the US congress passed a $42 million aid package to boost Fateh’s security apparatus in the Gaza Strip. Much of the international community reacted disdainfully towards efforts of negotiations between Hamas and Fateh and the formation of a unity government. The US pushed its backed strongman, Muhammed Dahlan- referred to endearingly as Abu Fadi by his supporters- to undermine an agreement struck in Mecca early 2007. In a leaked report UN rapporteur Alvaro de Soto said, “The US clearly pushed for a confrontation between Fateh and Hamas, so much so that, a week before Mecca the US envoy declared twice in an envoys’ meeting in Washington how much “I like this violence,” referring to the near civil war that was erupting in Gaza in which civilians were being regularly killed and injured, because “it means that other Palestinians are resisting Hamas.” Egypt provided Fateh’s security forces permits to cross the Rafah border to travel abroad for military training, while Hamas seized multiple arms shipments intended for Fateh forces. The man within Fateh on the receiving end of US support was Muhammed Dahlan- personified by some as the Palestinian Pinochet- who collaborated with the CIA to undermine Hamas’ rule in the Gaza Strip. In the months leading up to Hamas taking military control of Gaza, Abu Fadi’s men, provided with American weapons, sought to undermine Hamas’ rule in Gaza by kidnapping and torturing Hamas members thereby destabilizing neighborhoods. This outside military support did not stop some Fateh officials from selling the weapons on the black market for personal gain.

On Monday June 12th I drove back into the Gaza Strip like I had so many times before but this time it was different, something was in the air. Eid informed me that Hamas had set up major roadblocks all across the strip and were searching for Fateh activists. Throughout the 20 minute drive Eid looked around nervously, taking shortcuts wherever he knew how to stay off of the main streets while desperately trying to remove a sticker of Yasir Arafat on his dashboard. His son Hussein had put it there recently, after Eid had purged the car and his house from any remnants of his deep-seated Fateh allegiance. Even the car we drove in had been provided by the Fateh leadership. Intermittently between explaining the most recent events and keeping a close eye out for any manned roadblocks Eid’s right hand would return to the dashboard to pick away just enough little pieces of sticker so that “alrayis’s” image would not be identifiable to a gun-clad Hamas member at a roadblock. Hamas had already shot many drivers and passengers in the knees due to their allegiance to Fateh.

On the 11th of June 2007 Hamas forces killed Baha’ Abu Jarad, a close accomplice of Muhammed Dahlan’s in the Northern Gaza Strip. From there Hamas’ military wing the el-Qassam brigades took over police stations and headquarters of the Preventative Security Forces (PSF) headed by Rasheed Abu-Shbak, a Dahlan supporter. Over the course of the next three days Hamas’ military apparatus took control of police, secret police and PSF military installations across Northern Gaza and in Rafah and Khan Younis in the South. On Hamas-run radio stations one neighborhood after another was reported “liberated” from the corrupt PA forces.

My neighbor Ayman, a Hamas supporter, was kidnapped by Sameeh- a Fateh militant- one week before the latter was executed. Ayman was beaten and taken to the beach to be shot. His

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266 Missing Links. 29 June 2007.
268 Ibrahim, Interview by author, November 29, 2008. Cairo.
269 De Soto, Alvaro. 2007.
oldest brother, himself a Fateh activist, saved his life by calling the perpetrators and pleading for his younger brother’s life, many others were not as fortunate.

Although the final Fateh stronghold was still standing by the evening Hamas fighters were already making the rounds in the streets, three and four jeeps at a time, loaded with armed men wearing all black, their faces covered with masks, holding their guns in the air, a few, rather uncomfortably, waving to the people. On el-Aqsa, the only remaining radio station being aired from Gaza belonging to Hamas, these areas are being called “freed” from the traitors.

A former Fateh spokesman, now speaking on behalf of Hamas, was heard on the air denouncing his former leaders, calling them spies of the USA and traitors.

A further shock came around 8pm when Abu Mazen announced Gaza a renegade entity and declared his presidency over the West Bank. Gazans reacted with a mixture of disgust and betrayal.

On June 14th Hamas took control of the National Security compound el-Saraya and the central PSF headquarters in Gaza City. Fateh leadership had been strangely absent from Gaza as the fighting began that week, and as soldiers watched their officers abandoning their posts during the course of the Hamas onslaught they barely fought back. On June 14th an Egyptian ship appeared near the presidential compound in Gaza City taking aboard fleeing Fateh leaders. By early Friday morning all Fateh resistance had been broken. Other than for all PA forces to stand their ground and to try and avoid a bloodbath, no orders whatsoever had come from Fateh central command in Ramallah.

As we are talking Eid gets a phone call that his neighbor’s house is burning. “We stopped being one people, there is a people of Fattah and a people of Hamas,” (battal shaeb wahid, shaeb Fateh wa shaeb hamsa). Hamas has begun going door to door searching for weapons, at times kidnapping Fateh activists, while talks between the two parties in Egypt have fallen apart again. Over the phone Eid’s daughter informs him that Hamas has burned Sameeh el-Madhoun’s home down in which Eid replies, “no problem Sameeh has burned down a house here too” referencing a building near my home that Eid and I had watched burn earlier that day.273

Fateh labeled the events a “coup,” the press quickly labeled the Gaza Strip “Hamastan” echoing Israeli government statements.274 The Middle East Quartet also intervened pressing president Abbas not to yield to Hamas and to hang onto power in the West Bank, promising to support him if he did so.275 Mahmoud Abbas immediately fired Prime Minister Ismael Haniyeh, disbanging the government cabinet and setting up an emergency government in the West Bank town of Ramallah. Hamas for its part explained its forceful position as being a mere reaction to a planned Fateh military coup lead by Muhammed Dahlan and his loyal supporters within Fateh. In a lecture four days after Hamas took power in Gaza former US president Jimmy Carter echoed Hamas’ remarks stating the role of the USA, EU and Israel in subverting the outcome of Hamas’ election victory and militarily helping Abbas remain in power as “criminal.”276 Subsequently, Hamas obtained hundreds of secret documents from Fateh’s secret police headquarters in Northern Gaza revealing Fateh’s complicity in receiving foreign military training and aid confirming previous suspicions.

Days after the power redistribution in an interview with Reuters, Dahlan contended that Hamas had fallen into a “trap,” adding to the suspicion that Hamas’ military actions had been hoped for.277 The reports from Fateh soldiers in Gaza legitimated the theory. “There was total frustration and disappointment,” said an Abbas security officer who was one of the last to

273 Author’s field notes, 12 June 2007.
275 Ibid. Abbas’ hands remained tied until the “emergency government” formed. Israel and the Quartet retained the authority to determine when Fateh would be considered “real power” vs. “shadow power” (Bayart et al, 1997: 23).
desert the presidential compound in Gaza City.\textsuperscript{278} Hamas military commander Abu Obeida stated, “I expected it to take one month. That is what we planned for and trained for. But then at the beginning, all the Fateh commanders escaped their compounds in ambulances and left for Egypt. They left their men to die.”\textsuperscript{279} Referring to Israel’s complicity in the incident, former Islamic Jihad leader Sayed Baraka said, “on the day of the coup one single apache could have stopped the events. Israel allowed Hamas to take control of PA police stations without firing on them as they did to the PA in the past.”\textsuperscript{280} In an interview with Aljazeera, Hani al-Hassan, a member of Fateh’s Central Command identified Dahlan as the "main culprit" behind the Gaza crisis. Accusing Dahlan of influencing Abbas’ to “foil any reconciliation bid between Fateh and Hamas after the Islamic movement came to power in January 2006.”\textsuperscript{281} The following day Abbas fired Al-Hassan from his post as presidential advisor.\textsuperscript{282}

Over his TV in the living room Eid used to have a postcard of Sameeh hanging, right next to his deceased grandmother whom he can no longer visit in the cemetery since it is too close to the border area where Israel will shoot at anyone approaching. After Eid returned home following these terrible days in the North of Gaza he informed me he burned every paper and ID he had of Fateh. Only the Kalashnikov remains hidden. His eldest son Hussein hangs photocopied poster of “martyred” Sameeh Al-Madhoun on the wall, not much earlier his teacher had torn a necklace, baring a picture of Sameeh, from around his neck.

Shortly after dinner is served Eid receives a call and we changed the channel from Rotana Cinema (a very popular music channel in many non-religious homes in Gaza) to el-Hurra (an Arabic news channel USA funded by the USA) to catch an interview with Abu Fadi. Daher says just one word when Jamal switches to it, “khalas,” to which Eid explodes, “who else are we going to listen to, are we going to listen to you?” Everyone is quiet and glued to the screen, especially Eid.\textsuperscript{283}

For its part Israel- ever seeking to maximize its legitimacy- considered the inter-fighting reason not to negotiate with the Palestinians;\textsuperscript{284} only after the West Bank emergency government was formed Israel reversed its stance. Israel furthermore increased its siege on Gaza to banning of all exports and reducing even further the types of imports to what Israel deemed as “essential” items.\textsuperscript{285} In the West Bank Mahmoud Abbas appointed Salam Fayyad as the new Prime Minister of the PA- Fayyad’s party, the Third Way, had received 3% of the

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\textsuperscript{278} Nissenbaum, 20 June 2007.
\textsuperscript{279} The Observer, 24 June 2007.
\textsuperscript{280}Sayed Baraka, Interview by author, Khan Younis, 12 July 2008.
\textsuperscript{281} Abo Toameh, June 28, 2007.
\textsuperscript{282} The incident parallels Teresa Caldeira’s description of the absurd argumentation defending police in case of prison massacre (2000, 178). There is little space for the state to err. The fear of self-critique is moved by a “language of legitimization”/ “doxic submission” to occupiers imagining of legitimacy (Bourdieu, 1998: 38).
\textsuperscript{283} Author’s field notes, 12 June 2007.
\textsuperscript{284} Caldeira, 2000: 178; 199. Divide and conquer in Saudi by race, in Sao Paulo by class, in Gaza by political affiliation: Governmentality. Jonathan Hill argues that in the “failed state” literature such a “condition” is considered an internal/ domestic problem by identifying such a “failed state” with a sick body that needs curing. Such analysis furthermore points to the benevolent restorative stance of the “international community;” the entire process is a red herring distracting from the systemic role of external players in bringing about internal fragmentation (2005: 149). Israel’s role in the formation of a militant Hamas as alternative to the more active and dominant nationalist discourse of Fateh in the 80s is well documented (see Hroub, 2002; Milton-Edwards, 1992; el-Zaeem, Sharhabeel, Interview with author, January 21, 2008). The role of the Israel, the USA, Egypt and Jordan in backing Fateh as the sudden Palestinian dove and elect partner for negotiations- in opposition to Hamas. Rajan addresses the episode of “scandal”/ the abnormal referring to the intention of keeping the attention off the day to day hostilities thus distracting from the role of the state- in this case, Israeli- of perpetuating the occurrence of civil war (Gramsci in Rajan, 2003: 232 n.33).
\textsuperscript{285} BBC, 25 May 2009.
vote in parliamentary elections in 2006. The new Prime Minister was also a former senior member of the World Bank and an established member of the inter-national aid regime.

On the 18th of June the New York Times reported, “The United States on Monday ended an economic and political embargo of the Palestinian Authority in a bid to bolster President Mahmoud Abbas and the new Fateh-led emergency government he has established in the West Bank as a counterweight to Hamas-controlled Gaza.” The fact that according to Palestinian legislation the emergency cabinet’s legality expired after 30 days since it did not receive PLC legitimation did not concern political actors, least of all the democracy pushing USA and its affiliated institutions. Consequently, not only was withheld aid immediately reinstated, but also a percentage of past PA wages were incrementally and partially repaid. Even in Gaza this back pay was applied and the payroll re-installed under the condition that PA employees not work in the now Hamas controlled ministries and public enterprises—whether as school teachers, nurses, police officers or higher officials. Furthermore, all PA employees suspected of affiliation with Hamas had their pay cut. Towards determining true affiliation Fateh designated employment agents that reported on Fateh members who switched allegiances who had their pay immediately halted. This situation, still ongoing, has created deep divisions within Palestinian society including within families with divided political affinities. In his June 2007 speech Carter went on to accuse American-European-Israeli consensus for reinstating direct aid to the West Bank emergency government, while denying the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip this privilege as an "effort to divide Palestinians into two peoples."

Israel furthermore returned illegally withheld PA tax monies while development projects were implemented to boost the West Bank economy. el-Quds el-Arabi reported citing Palestinian NGO members, that USAID had requested large-scale project proposals for financing accelerated projects within hours after the appointment of Dr Salam Fayyad to form an emergency government. These projects had to be capable of “showing quick results in the life of people in the West Bank and that they involve large numbers of Palestinian workers.” The projects furthermore were meant to make apparent that large-scale American funding for improvements in the life of the people of the West Bank had been made available. These sources verified that not one dollar was to reach the Gaza Strip; aid directly played into the hands of political divisions. The New York Times went on to report on June 18th, “[o]fficially, Bush administration officials insisted they would not write off Gaza, and Ms. Rice said the United States would give $40 million to the United Nations to finance relief projects there. ‘We will not leave one and a half million Palestinians at the mercy of terrorist organizations’” Ms. Rice said. The head of the American Task Force on Palestine

286 “Abbas on several occasions suggested that he had no choice but to retain Fayyad as prime minister since dismissing him wouldn't bode well with Western powers that pay the salaries of tens of thousands of PA civil servants and security personnel and generally keep the PA financially afloat” (Amayreh, 21-27 May 2009.).

287 Duffield points to the use of aid for the sake of “structural stability” and “to help change the balance of power and authority and between groups and to restructure societies in such a way so as to prevent future conflict (Duffield, 2001: 103). In this case the conflict that is to be prevented is between Israelis and Palestinians, not within Palestinian society.


289 Brown, 2007b: 3.

290 Kafarna, Ayman. Interview with author. Beit Hanoun, January 9, 2008. This process of differentiation between Fateh and Hamas members subverts conceptions of citizenship by disregarding the rights of some (Caldeira, 2000: 2).


292 Missing Links. 29 June 2007.

293 Missing Links. 29 June 2007.

294 New York Times, June 18, 2007. In the liberal peace paradigm the poor are identified as legitimate agents of resisting against the system of inequality. Here Rice refers to the divisive rule of Hamas (the “terrorists”) whom the benevolent USA will not abandon. The USA’s administration creates legitimate agents out of the poor rebelling against the injustice of Hamas in their search for ”stability,” completely ignoring the systemic violence it itself carries out (Duffield, 2001: 127). See n.184: Hill 2005: 149.
Ziad Asali, referring to the re-instated aid said, “[t]his is as serious as it gets… [i]t is time to lift the siege off the Palestinian people. This is the time to open up the political and economic horizons, and wage a campaign for the hearts and minds of the Palestinian people.” On its website the organization describes itself as a “non-partisan organization based in Washington, DC,” that is “dedicated to advocating that it is in the American national interest to promote an end to the conflict in the Middle East through a negotiated agreement that provides for two states - Israel and Palestine - living side by side in peace and security.”\(^\text{295}\) One of the Task Force’s founders is Ghaiath Al-Omari, who according to the website is “a former foreign policy advisor to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.”\(^\text{296}\)

Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zahri, for his part accused the international community of hypocrisy saying, “this confirms the falseness of the international community’s support for democracy.”\(^\text{297}\) The USA-EU-Israel nexus are utilizing the administration of aid as an opportunity to reform “collective identity and social organization” towards their version of social stability.\(^\text{298}\) The stability they refer to includes an economic dimension. Journalist Arthur Nelson identifies the strings attached to the aid economy as the duo of market liberalization and a “crushing of the Intifada’s resistance dynamics.”\(^\text{299}\) Nelson further points to the PA’s Negotiations Support Unit, the main body engaging in “negotiations” between Fatah’s PA and Israel receives funding from the Adam Smith Institute.\(^\text{300}\) The implementer of such policies is the new emergency cabinet made up of so-called “technocrats” who are hailed as neutral bodies, beyond the deep political divide ailing the Palestinian community. Joseph Massad traces the term “technocrat” back to Chilean reforms under Pinochet designed by “Chicago school” technocratic economists. This model is now being presented to Palestinians as a neutral way out of their political impasse.\(^\text{301}\) Following the events of June of 2007, Palestinians ended up with two governments, neither of which recognized the other. The technocrat cabinet in the West Bank went on to close NGOs not registered in Ramallah, which one ministry director justified as required action in order to “build a state.”\(^\text{302}\) Hamas-affiliated NGOs in the West Bank thus effectively became illegal.\(^\text{303}\) Mirroring these policy trends and economic underpinnings is none other than right-wing Likud party’s prime minister, Benjamin Netenyahu. In a recent speech addressing his recommended political strategy he brushed aside dealing with Palestinian demands for a state, Jerusalem and the return of refugees on behalf of focusing on an economic plan for Gaza and the West Bank in order to deter Palestinians from terrorism.\(^\text{304}\)

At 8:30pm on June 14th reports begin circulating that Sameeh el-Madhoun tried to escape from the building he was seeking refuge in. Reports said that he had taken a car from a driver on the road and headed South, supposedly to the border with Egypt. Meeting a checkpoint along the way el-Madhoun and his guards killed a Hamas member after which they were hunted down. Reports say that he was taken to Nussairat camp and shot by the mother of his final Hamas victim. Abu Karim who lives just a few houses from the slain Hamas man’s house said later that the woman who had shot Sameeh was “irhabeya (a terrorist), if he killed someone he should be tried.”\(^\text{305}\) El-Madhoun, nicknamed “el-Maleoun” (the cursed one) by many Hamas supporters became a symbol following his death, becoming the image and the name connected with the Dahlan-lead coup plotters.

\(^{295}\) The American Taskforce on Palestine, 2008.  
\(^{296}\) The American Taskforce on Palestine, 2008.  
\(^{298}\) Duffield, 2001: 123.  
\(^{299}\) Nelson, 26 February 2008.  
\(^{300}\) Nelson, 26 February 2008.  
\(^{301}\) Massad, 2007.  
\(^{302}\) Conflicts Forum. 8 October 2007.  
\(^{303}\) Massad, 2007.  
\(^{304}\) Jerusalem Post, November 19, 2008.  
This image, developed by Hamas (recalling the American deck of cards of their most wanted Iraqis), paints a vivid picture of the deep seeded divisions in Palestinian society. The image of the deck is created after el-Madhoun’s death and thus the Ace-bearing his portrait is crossed out. Two weeks later I am shocked to see a five story building size poster of Sameeh covering the central square in in Ramallah. el-Madhoun had become a national figure of resistance to Hamas and of divisions between Palestinians. For months weddings in the Gaza Strip would end in bloodshed if a song was heard celebrating the late Fateh fighter. The song put to a fast pace wedding dance tune includes the words, “Yasir, your waves are roaring, your blood is priceless; an earthquake is backing you, he is called him Sameeh el-Madhoun.” One night, my host’s nephew asks me if I will name my first child Sameeh. el-Madhoun became a symbol for many Fateh members who had their pride broken by the successful routing of Fateh. Yet, the Fateh fighter is also representative of another trend, the “blurring of civil and international war.” Another title given to Dahlan and his supporters is jamaet Dayton- Dayton’s possee- referring to the American Lt. Gen. Keith Dayton who heads a US-sponsored ”security coordination” program for the Ramallah-based PA. “The Dayton agenda aims to transform Palestinian Security Forces into an "enabler" of the two-state solution and provide the PA leader with the capacity to contain any resistance to any "strategic" political decisions he makes.” The US-backed “Action Plan for the Palestinian Presidency” includes the requirement of Fateh reforms that entail the get Dahlan- whom former US president Bush called “our guy”- and his supporters into higher positions of influence. Dahlan and the “takeover” of Gaza in June 2007 are a crystallization of a trend that began with the slow transition of Fateh in the late 60s and with Oslo as a central marker. The PLO has transformed itself from a regional symbol of resistance to leading the opposition against its greatest internal political contestant. The PLO and particularly Fateh altered their raison d’être from a militant struggle against colonial powers to complete alignment with economic strategies of colonial interests.

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307 Herzallah, Mohamed. 2 July 2009.
Chapter 3: 
HAMAS: PALESTINIANIZING ISLAM: Counter-Ordering of Time and Space

“Nations… lose their origins in the myths of time
and only fully realize their horizons in the mind’s eye.”
- Homi Bhaba, The Location of Culture

“Since the Hamas election win, Palestinian has no meaning."
- Abu Shady, Gaza City, June 2, 2007

“Rahat biladna,” (our country has gone) Yusra said to me upon driving through the streets of Gaza City and seeing the military headquarters “al-Saraya,” a prison and various intersections free of PA forces. It was on June 17th 2007 days after Hamas had taken control of the Gaza Strip by force after Fateh security heads had not handed over power to the new Hamas cabinet.

The battle for the Gaza Strip as a “countr[y] of words” is accentuated and complicated by the increasing popularity of Hamas as a nationalist alternative. The Islamic Resistance movement (Hamas) grew out of the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood whose popularity was based largely on its charity and educational agenda. Meanwhile, the Islamic movement increasingly transfigured into a political force deriving much of its legitimacy from regional socio-political changes and Hamas’ inauguration during the Intifada in 1987. Regional influences include the Islamic revolution in Iran, the decline of Nasir’s influence on Arab nationalism following the 1967 war, and the waning influence of left-leaning centers of power beyond Palestine. As its popularity and influence grow Hamas reveal increasing tendencies of nationalism thus adding another layer of narrative discursivity to the “Gaza Strip” as a fabricated spatial entity. By framing the liberation of Palestine as a priority en route to the liberation of the entire Islamic umma, Hamas reveals its ideology as merely a different species of the genus of nationalism shared with the likes of its rival Fateh. Hamas’ narrative provides a “mythico-history” that reconstitutes a “moral order of the world,” by presenting itself as a project in opposition to the occupying force in an attempt to gather an oppressed people under the unifying banner of nationalism- though with a religious coloring- in opposition to the nationalism of the PLO.

It is important to revisit Hamas’ image as terrorist and violent. I will claim that through closer assessment it becomes clear that the movement has a certain political trajectory denying the claim that the movement’s raison d’être is violent or purely religious- religion being portrayed as the source of its terrorism. Rather, Hamas engage in a war of position, which much like Fateh and the Israeli administration, utilize violence- as well as social welfare, education etc.- at varying levels in order to pursue political objectives. If Walter Benjamin is correct in his assessment that “history is made up of images,” then it is precisely the image of Hamas- its operatives with gun and covered face much like Fateh before it- that taints it as illegitimately violent and thus terrorist with the ostensible tie to its religious nature. I want to claim that political pragmatism, more than alignment with shifting regional political, was the determining factor for the Islamist movement’s political decision-making process. The ensuing contest between Palestinian players is accentuated by the vacuum of the existence of a Palestinian state and takes place at various levels including social welfare, education, politics and military activity. Terminologies of secular/religious, terrorist/non-terrorist, legitimate/illegitimate and democratic/non-democratic are key tropes utilized to mark the war of position both by the contenders and its external interest parties before an internal and an external legitimizing audience.

308 Bowman, 1994: 3
By breaking with the movement’s religious heritage the Islamic Resistance Movement enters the same trend of thought that had transformed the PLO into an anachronistic shell of the resistance movement it once was by engaging in a “mimetic mode” of its occupier. Much like the PLO before it and third world liberation movements elsewhere- Hamas aides the trend of a universalization of discursive nationalism in part “by their collaborative venture and violence.” The battle for legitimacy between Hamas and its main political rival Fateh, reaches unprecedented levels precisely because the bedrock of sought after nation-state legitimacy- including within its rubric the vital element of territorial sovereignty- is never achieved. This dynamic perpetually accentuates competition over control of “spatial representations,” and internal political domination. This battle for legitimacy in a milieu of statelessness stands as the biggest achievement of Israeli policies’ biggest success, namely: divide and conquer.

In this chapter I will once again be addressing matters of time and space, this time Hamas’ role in reshaping the landscape of the Gaza Strip. I will examine the resistance movement’s emergence from a focus on charity and educational programs to military resistance and eventually to a political establishment- though not recognized by most global political players. I want to claim that the movement changes its approach to governance, rather than merely amending its political trajectory. Much like it did for Fateh before it, I will posit that Hamas aligns its methods of governance with the status quo, the familiar imaginary for how a group is meant to govern. In my assessment of Hamas’ nationalization process I will draw on Khaled Hroub, Milton-Edwards, Lybarger and Baumgarten. In depicting Hamas’ struggle for legitimacy vis-à-vis the PLO I will engage Antonio Gramsci’s formulation of counter-hegemony. I will use Mark Duffield, Fanon and Arendt in assessing the role of violence in the portrayal of Hamas and the ongoing contested process of its legitimation and de-legitimization centrifugally and centripetally. This latter distinction builds on Trouillot’s examination of the processes political actors engage in searching for legitimacy among a local constituency versus external political forces. Throughout my analysis I will draw upon participant-observation during the time I lived in the Gaza Strip as well as interviews with Hamas members and their critics. Finally, I will highlight Hamas’ transformation of the spatial landscape of Palestine in relation to force (police, prison, security, courts) and economy (tunnel trade, borders, economic controls).

3.1. COUNTER-HEGEMONY: Building Hamas

“Israel gave Hamas a cup of tea, now they want it back.”
- Abu Shady, Gaza City, June 2, 2007

Unlike many of its rival factions Hamas can claim to be an indigenous party that was founded inside Palestine. Formed in January of 1988, the movement’s roots go back to the early 1930s when Muslim Brotherhood founder Hassan el-Banna sent his brother Abdel-Rahman to Palestine to spread the movement’s teachings. A debate exists between those that believe Hamas played a more central role in causing rise to the Intifada (Khaled Hroub, 2002: 36f.; Abu Amr, 1993: 10f.; Beverly Milton-Edwards, 1996). While Abu Amr, Hass and other locally based authors claim, Hroub and Milton-Edwards place a larger emphasis on he central role of Islamists in the Intifada. While they argue that the Intifada brought about the creation of Hamas, the new movement actually jumpstarted the Intifada. Milton-Edwards emphasized the significance of Jihad el-Islami.

313 Trouillot, 2003: 22. These twin concepts express the division between a desire to join a global regime of neo-liberal markets which leads to a centrifugal economic dependency on external bodies due to its existence on the periphery of the capitalist world. A centripetal dynamic conveys a stance that is “inherently inward-looking to exercise primary control and derive their momentum from dynamics of coercion and consent within that space.”
314 A debate exists between those that believe Hamas played a more central role in causing rise to the Intifada (Khaled Hroub, 2002: 36f.; Abu Amr, 1993: 10f.; Beverly Milton-Edwards, 1996). While Abu Amr, Hass and other locally based authors claim, Hroub and Milton-Edwards place a larger emphasis on he central role of Islamists in the Intifada. While they argue that the Intifada brought about the creation of Hamas, the new movement actually jumpstarted the Intifada. Milton-Edwards emphasized the significance of Jihad el-Islami.
occupying Israeli forces. While developing the more traditional stance of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in the West Bank with an emphasis on teaching and preaching, in Gaza the Brotherhood participated and lead many of the clashes with the Israeli army. Two groups, the Youth of Vengeance and the Battalions of Justice, were principle actors in this effort. Soon thereafter the Muslim Brotherhood, who had initially cooperated with the Egyptian revolution leaders, experienced increasing tension in their relationship with president Gamal Abdel-Nasir and after 1952 were forced to go underground. This dynamic was paralleled in the newly formed Gaza Strip, which had come under Egypt’s tutelage after 1948, causing significant cutbacks to the movement’s military activity. The militant movements that had formed under the Muslim Brotherhood’s leadership were disbanded, while many of their members would soon join the nationalist Fateh, whose leaders had gained inspiration from the Brotherhood’s early militant groups. Only in the late eighties did the Palestinian Brotherhood emerge again to play a central role in opposing occupation. Despite its Brotherhood roots, Fateh evolved with a strategy to have “no visible Islamic coloration” in order to adapt to the dominant political milieu of the time. Nasir’s regime tolerated no religious political action. For Brotherhood members disgruntled with their leadership’s inactivity, Fateh provided a viable exit from the impasse the Egyptian leader imposed.

While Fateh took center stage in the PLO and in the Palestinian political scene in the mid 60s, the Brotherhood would eventually emerge again, at first quietly in the “mosque building” phase starting with the momentum gained by Nasir’s defeat in 1967 until 1975- between 1967 and 1987 Gaza’s mosques increased from 200 to 600. During this time the movement embodied principles inspired by its mother organization in Egypt, preaching and teaching as well as concentrating on charitable work especially among Gaza’s expansive refugee population. In the following stage from 1975 through the late eighties, the Brotherhood emphasized the building of social institutions consistent with their desire to change society from the bottom-up. In 1973 the group formed the Mujamaa el-Islami as a charitable organization, which simultaneously provided the facade of its mounting political aspirations whereby it contested the PLO’s hegemony.

Starting in 1978 the Mujamaa’s political maneuverings explicitly pitted the Islamists against the PLO. The Gaza Strip’s first university represented one site of contestation between the two factions. In the early 80s PLO head Yaser Arafat demanded the resignation of the university’s president, Sheikh Awwad- backed by the Islamists- and the university’s board to be placed under control of civil society leaders in Gaza. The day the announcement was to be made el-Mujamaa el-Islami organized a rally in Gaza City in support of Awwad. The resignation was deterred and the rally, in clear sight- or oversight according to some eyewitnesses- of Israeli security torched the Palestinian Red Crescent society, one of the civil society organizations that Arafat had intended to join the board of the university. While the Israeli administration did not directly cede control of the university to the Mujamae, they did “make sure there was always competition present between the PLO and the Islamists, this was their goal,” explained Dr Ghazi Eouda, a founding member and former professor of the Islamic University. In a further incident at the university Dr Eouda recalls seeing Abu Sabry Shalom, a well known Israeli officer passing out sticks to Fateh and Islamist students gathering for a fight in order to perpetuate the conflict. In February 1981 the Mujamae and Israeli administration’s plans once overlapped. Following a request from the Islamist leadership the Israeli administration called on seven of the thirteen university council

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318 In a July 1957 memorandum from Khalil Al-Wazir (cited in Hroub, 2002: 24).
319 Abu Amr, 1993: 8.
320 Abu Amr, 1993: 30.
322 Eouda, Dr Ghazi, interview with author, 17 July 2007.
members— all of them non-Islamists— to resign. With complaints falling on deaf ears, the Mujamae had once again successfully spread their web of counter-hegemony.\footnote{Milton-Edwards, 1996: 110.} Education in general was a field of power that the Mujamae invested in heavily.\footnote{Bourdieu, 1985: 736.} By the Oslo period 65% of secondary education had been standardized under the Islamists’ guidance, with the seal of approval by the PA’s Ministry of Education revealing the group’s successful infiltration of PA ranks.\footnote{Roy, 2003: 16. Islamic banking became a further space of contestation where this religious movement found potential to expand its counter-hegemony by creating an alternative religion sanctioned network of institutions.}

Dr Iyad el-Sarraj, a mental health physician and a political independent leader in Gaza was told by his uncle Najjar that the Israeli military ruler of Gaza had told him in early 1987, “we support the Islamists because the PLO is becoming a pain for us.” Upon being warned of the danger in such a strategy the military ruler reportedly boasted, “we can handle them.”\footnote{el-Sarraj, Dr Iyad, interview with author, 24 January 2008. Gaza City.} The Israeli administration aimed at strengthening a conservative Islamist alternative to the PLO’s popular program for national liberation in a classic colonial “divide-and-rule strategy.”\footnote{Milton-Edwards, 1996: 104.} Israel’s shared contempt with the Islamic block for the PLO lead to its exploitation of the existent political divisions in the form of the provision of permits to the Islamic group, which PLO factions were denied funding of mosques thus supporting the movement’s counter-hegemony to the existent secular, leftist and nationalist block.\footnote{Milton-Edwards, 1996: 126; 151.} The funds,” an Israeli military governor in Gaza explained, “are used for both mosques and religious schools, with the purpose of strengthening a force that runs counter to the pro-PLO leftist.”\footnote{Milton-Edwards, 1996: 128.} The Israeli administration understood the vitality of the container of nation-state acting as a factor of legitimation in the global regime of governance. Israeli political leaders shrewdly utilized this reality by acting as the gatekeeper to the recognition of the legitimacy of Palestinian political movements internationally. The very lure of international recognition, often lead Palestinian factions to change their internal policies- with a trend towards tropes of the nation-state.

The Mujamae el-Islami considered the PLO, rather than Zionism, as the primary enemy to be targeted as they considered these factions to have committed the unpardonable sin of causing the failure of liberation due to their encouragement of the younger generation to abandon Islam on behalf of mere secular national aspirations. Emulating the nation-statist logic of the Israeli administration and Fateh before them, Hamas would begin to consolidate its internal legitimization by utilizing the PLO to fill the necessary container of an internal “enemy.”\footnote{Khalidi, 1991: 1370.} Thus, Fateh filled the role of Hamas’ savage slot. The primary target of the Islamists was thus the weakening of a secular nationalist discourse, some going so far as to consider the nation-state an “abomination.”\footnote{Zahhar and Hijazi, 1995: 84.} For many Islamists across the region, the nation-state was a secular container that opposed an Islamic rubric of umma. As Hamas leader Mahmoud el-Zahhar puts it, “a pebble in a pool leaves a series of concentric circles. I live in Rimal quarter. This quarter is in Gaza. Gaza is in Palestine. Palestine is in the Arab world. The Arab world is in the Islamic world. The error arises when you try to substitute a little circle for a bigger one, for instance, making the small circle of narrow nationalism a substitute for the large circle of the great community of believers.”\footnote{Cobban, 1990: 214.} One widely distributed Brotherhood publication in the West Bank and Gaza advocated efforts to “expose the traitors, agents and proponents of nationalism and... bring about Palestinian awareness of the true nature of its battle with Zionism.”\footnote{See sections 1.2. and 2.1.2.} Following the burning of the Red Crescent Society the
Mujamae smashed liquor stores and two cinemas in Gaza City in their effort of reforming society to build a true culture of Islamic resistance.

Initially, the Mujamae el-Islami did not print its own tracts or religious texts and used only Egyptian materials. As all printed materials had to pass the Israeli sensor this word-of-mouth approach enabled the Mujamae members to carry out their agenda of counter-hegemony whether it was approved by the Israeli authorities or not. This method of oral dissemination revealed the difference of their non-nationalist aspirations vis-à-vis the nationalist discourse of the Israelis and the PLO. Yet, all this would change after the eruption of the Intifada in 1987 and reshaped not only the Gaza Strip’s landscape, but also the role of the Muslim Brotherhood there.

3.1.1. UMMA TO NATION-STATE: Intifada And The Nationalism Counter-Myth

“The victory of Hamas… demonstrates not the collapse of the system of prosthetic sovereignty but, paradoxically, its culmination.”
- Eyal Weizman, Hollow Land

"Parties are only the nomenklatur of classes."
- Antonio Gramsci, The Prison Notebooks

The Intifada began spontaneously born out of the extent of the Israeli occupation’s suppression of Palestinians, manifesting itself as an explosion of resistance towards Israeli policies. One of the contenders in the war of positions for leadership was the familiar Mujamae el-Islami under the new guise of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas. At the start of the Intifada in 1987, the Mujamae, headed by sheikh Ahmed Yasin came under increasing pressure from the movement’s younger generation who were ready to join active resistance. The older generation leaders were more hesitant to enter the stage of jihad before they deemed society prepared to do so. The senior leaders, buckling under the pressure, established the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) in the first month of the uprising as a wing of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood with a mission of participating in the Intifada. It would not take long before the Hamas eclipsed its founding body. In their charter the Hamas leadership, all doubling as representatives of the Mujamae el-Islami, declared all peace initiatives “a waste of time,” and considered jihad a duty “when our enemies usurp some Islamic lands.” Hamas’ long-term plan was the liberation of Palestine, “to raise the banner of Allah over every inch of Palestine.” In the immediate, Hamas was able to delay such goals by the division of their vision into historic and interim solutions, with respective long- and short-term aspirations. In later stages this division between the practical solution and an eschatological vision would come to be embodied in the dialectic of the movement’s rhetoric and its praxis. As Hamas gained new political responsibilities while holding on to the same totalizing aspirations of liberation- the vague “liberation of Palestine”- it emulated its political rival by utilizing the same indefinite rhetoric in order to maintain its revolutionary and militant ring while quietly toning down their oppositional actions. Though much of the

335 Lesch, 1985: 57.
337 Benedict Anderson explicates the centrality of the printing press in disseminating the ideas of nationalism (Anderson, 2003).
338 Gramsci, 1971: 11; al-Ghazali, 1988: 177. Glimmers of a similar trend can be identified in Egypt. On April 18th 2008 Al-Masry Al-Youm reported that 700 Brotherhood youths had determined to join the May 4th strikes, despite the leadership’s opposition to their calls. A few days later Brotherhood spiritual guide Mahdi Akif declared the Brotherhood’s official endorsement of the 4 May events.
PLO establishment had already made the considerable shift from resistance to taking on the legal rhetoric of nation-building and a neo-liberal economic stance while invalidating violence against the occupation, some significant though hidden discord still remains. Shuhada el-Aqsa, the militant wing of Fatah, which formed during the second Intifada, revealed the anachronistic resistance desire of an otherwise well established political movement. On an ideological plane, the establishment of an “Islamic” Palestinian state formed a stepping-stone for the emergence of the Islamic umma. Yet, in this interpretive step, Hamas split with both its spiritual forefathers of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt as well as historic Islamic precedent. The same urgency that overshadowed Sayyid Qutb’s later writings in prison, calling for the overthrowing of the corrupt regime that had put him there, occupied the writings of Hamas who had been born in a condition of occupation. Hamas’ social teaching was almost verbatim a repetition of Qutb’s. Much of the distinction that caused el-Jihad el-Islami to break from Hamas was blunted at the juncture of Hamas’ entry into the realm of military resistance.

Hamas’ formation at a critical moment in Palestinians’ social conscience enabled it to capture the public’s imagination and surpass the popularity of its rival Islamic faction- el-Jihad el-Islami. As the PLO began to move from resistance to negotiation, and as the prioritization of the Palestinian cause diminished in the Arab world, Hamas began to shift into a central space of leading the resistance. Yet, Hamas carried their new stance carefully, as Sheikh Yasin’s words would identify in an interview on April 30th 1989. Regarding the announcement of independence, Yasin stated, “I approve of the establishment of a state, but I refuse to relinquish the remaining territory of my homeland, Palestine.” In their charter Hamas spoke very highly of their rival faction, considering the PLO “a father, a brother, a relative, a friend,” and a “falcon,” whose missing wings Hamas believed itself to embody. The falcon metaphor is likely to have been inspired by Qutb’s reference to the secular state without Islam as a one-winged bird because it lacked the necessary component of Islamic governance that Hamas was offering. This conflicted relationship would ebb and flow over the coming decades and came to personify a growing divide in Palestinian society. Hamas departed from their spiritual forefathers, Sayyed Qutb and Mawlana Mawdudi through their vociferous attachment to a local territory. Qutb and Mawdudi had argued clearly against the final protection or expansion of any specific dar el-islam, national territory. The Hamas charter states, “[w]hile other nationalisms consist of material, human and territorial considerations, the nationality of Hamas also carries, in addition to all those, the all important divine factors which lend to it its spirit and life; so much so that it connects with the origin of the spirit and the source of life and raises in the skies of the Homeland the Banner of the Lord, thus inexorably connecting earth with Heaven.”

Hereby Hamas shows its desire to “subsume Palestinian nationalism within one or another form of Islamic identity.” These Islamic values Hamas asserts will first transform the soul of the Muslim, then her society and state. While most of Hamas’ charter is based significantly

342 See further chapter 2.1.
344 See further section 2.2.
345 Nuesse, 1998: 56.
346 Nuesse, 1998: 56; 87.
350 “Those who claim that jihad intends to defend Muslim territory, overlook the programme of Islam and consider it less important than territory” (Qutb, 1989: 84 cited Nuesse, 1998: 48).
on the Muslim Brotherhood, their straying from this path shows their propensity for the use of *ijtihad* in accordance with the urgent reality of their political and social context.\(^{353}\) Hamas goes on to paint a vision of a liberated Palestine as a necessary step towards liberating the *umma*. The movement continues to hold these two realities in constant tension.\(^{354}\) The dilemma Hamas faced was whether it would give precedence to “Islamizing Palestine” or “Palestinianizing Islam.”\(^{355}\) The first, entailed the potential for remaining outside of the limiting boundaries of nation-statism, while the latter placed the messianic ideology within the rubric of nation-state.

By entering into the race of direct opposition with its occupying power Hamas had to address its perceived link with Israel to better its image in a centripetal war of position in an attempt to undermine the popularity of the PLO. Only a nationalist agenda would enable the Islamic party to gather the necessary following to become a serious contender in the contest for a claim to legitimate Palestinian representation.\(^{356}\) By building their nationalist agenda around Islam they used a language the masses could understand, at the strategic moment when other forms of nationalism were in decline.\(^{357}\) The ongoing exceptional situation of Palestinians continuously calls for extreme measures of response. Following the death of Nasir and the decreasing influence of leftist movements- due to their perceived “failure”- an Islamic coloring to resistance increasingly crystallized itself as the most viable “language” for popular mobilization in search of an exit from the impasse of occupation. In the early months of the *Intifada*, Hamas would back the UNLU leadership’s call for strikes and protests. Yet, at times the Islamists started penning their own communiqués- though with smaller turnouts than the UNLU- revealing the considerable popular base the movement had formed over the years. In the summer of 1989 in defiance of the UNLU’s non-violent strategy, Hamas killed two Israeli soldiers, thus setting itself apart from the other nationalist leadership as well as successfully cutting all previous ties with Israel.\(^{358}\) Only after this first attack against Israeli targets, were relations between Israel and Hamas completely severed. Hamas’ successful use of force revealed the ability of violence in “constitut[ing] a political party.”\(^{359}\) In May 1989 the Israeli authorities again arrested Ahmed Yasin and for the first time declared Hamas a “terrorist organization.”\(^{360}\) Following this incident, the internal nationalist contest escalated, evolving into a centripetal/centrifugal tit for tat war of position whereby legitimacy was sought wherever it could be found, locally, regionally and beyond.\(^{361}\) While one side could garner the larger support on the Palestinian street in the West Bank and Gaza and among the Arab public elsewhere, the other increasingly received the blessing of suit-clad political decision-makers the world over. Yet, moments like Hamas’ takeover of 2007 divided the playing field among a public that primarily assessed the movements by their use of violence. While some onlookers assessed the movement’s stance towards colonialism, others judged the perceived fairness of militant action. The clash revealed itself further in that both Hamas and PLO factions vied over the very similar constituency, primarily camp refugees and the lower middle class.\(^{362}\)

A number of regional shifts following the start of the *Intifada* played into the change of position of the *Mujamae el-Islami*. The vacuum of opposition brought about by the end of the cold war as well as the declining influence of politically left-oriented movements in the Arab world following Nasir’s defeat in the late 70s created the possibility for an Islamist agenda as

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353 L. Carl Brown argues that in history Islam actually has tended more towards division of religion and state only recently has the call emerged to return to the early years of Islam where these overlapped (Brown, 2000).
354 See section I.
356 Abu Amr 1993: 18
359 Fanon, 1991: 73.
360 Cobban, 1990: 216.
an alternative nationalist program. The Islamists had rejected joining the PLO in the past and thus were seen as a cohesive entity separate of the coalition of PLO. Meanwhile, the PLO’s unbridled support of Saddam Hussein in his war on Kuwait brought about a decisive shift in financial flows whereby a vast amount of Saudi funding was re-directed from the PLO to Hamas. The Islamic movement was furthermore able to build on the success of the Iranian revolution to ultimately emerge as the sole alternative to the existent nationalist movement. In the early eighties the Brotherhood had experienced a second migration from among its ranks, this time by the more radical members who would no longer toe the Brotherhood’s line of gradually preparing society for jihad. El-Jihad el-Islami formed with just this call, prioritizing jihad against the occupation over reforming society. Thus, in contrast to Fateh and Hamas, el-Jihad have at least been able to resist acceding to nationalism as “an integral part of the Westernization story.” El-Jihad el-Islami key leaders opposed the emerging nationalist nature of the Mujamae claiming, “it is futile for the Islamists to dream of complete independence or a comprehensive civilizational revival, while the nature of colonial operation remain fully entrenched, fully fortified and fully equipped in Palestine.” Yet, while they did not accede to this narration, the group did place their resistance within the rubric of another totalizing narrative, claiming their battle was not just for the “Palestinian people alone,” but a “battle for Islam, a battle for the future of the entire umma.” This meant the group merely replaced one messianic ideology for another. The intense Israeli crackdown on el-Jihad especially during the start of the Intifada revealed that the occupying regime was caught off guard thus placing the blame for the uprising on the more established Islamist movement. Due to its non-conformist approach to resistance el-Jihad members regularly remained the Israeli military’s primary targets and “legitimate” assassination targets. Furthermore, due to its non- or anti-nationalist stance the movement never grew to significantly compete with other populist parties.

On February 25th 1994 an Israeli settler entered the Ibrahimi mosque in Hebron murdering 32 Palestinian worshippers. On the 6th of April, 41 days after the attack, Hamas responded with its first military offensive on Israeli civilians through two bombings on Israeli buses in Northern Israel. Israeli authorities reacted by exiling hundreds of Hamas and Jihad Islami leaders to majd el-zehur, an Israeli-occupied no-man’s-land in Southern Lebanon. The combined popularity of Hamas following the military attacks and the vacuum left behind with most Jihad leadership successfully exiled- many senior Hamas operatives evaded exile- gave Hamas the further chance to capitalize on its claim for Palestinian leadership. The ensuing process of defining the nation-state existed in a vacuum of statehood, which challenged the conception of what precisely the state should be and whether it should be. What would the determining factors of cohesiveness be? Would they be defined by national, religious, class or economic categories? Which begged the question if such a vision could avoid situating itself within a pre-determined narration. These features raised the stakes for national control and increased the political rivalry in the Palestinian political field. An accentuated rivalry, and its commentator’s propensity to simplify it for the public eye, lead to the blurring of differences between the two competing parties.

3.1.2. CONTESTING (IL-)LEGITIMACY AND THE TROPE OF VIOLENCE

“All politics is a struggle for power; the ultimate kind of power is violence”

- C. Wright Mills

“We used terrorism to establish our state.

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Why should we expect the Palestinians to be any different?”
– Leah Rabin

The first Intifada started to fade under the increasing Israeli clampdown on Palestinian resistance as well as the PLO’s overtures to negotiations. The failure of the Madrid negotiations raised hopes among Hamas’ constituency that their time of legitimate representation had finally come. Yet, Israel and the PLO were secretly outmaneuvering the rising popularity of the movement through negotiations at Oslo. Joseph Massad points out the Israeli strategic recognition of the PLO as the “sole representative of the Palestinians” at the precise moment that the body ceased being so. This Israeli admission of the PLO’s seeming legitimacy not only undermined the pseudo-state building process the movement was about to initiate, but also created an obstacle for their competitors. Hamas who, having assumed a vast increase in local legitimacy would have to first prove their local popularity while backing it with external recognition. Hamas’ exclusion from talks despite its popular support furthermore signified Israel, the PLO and the international community’s denial of Hamas grip on local legitimacy. The PLO’s fast track to international legitimacy raised a number of questions regarding the validity of such achieved centrifugal legitimacy within the nation-state regime versus a localized claim to legitimacy. Violence plays a large role in this trend. When international players deem Hamas an unlawful player- citing its “illegitimate” use of force- despite their local sanction, it reveals the hypocritical utility of democracy as a legitimating trope.

3.1.2.1. VIOLENCE/TERROR
“Palestine has been put on the map with the beginning of the Palestinian resistance. It will disappear from the map the moment we stop our resistance.”
- Khalid Mishal, Hamas Political Bureau Chief

Political theorist Carl Schmitt’s conceptualization of the state of exception draws on philosopher and theologian Søren Kierkegaard’s formulation of the suspension of the ethical. Schmitt considers all law to be “situational law.” State sovereignty must therefore be “properly juridically defined not as the monopoly to sanction or to rule but as the monopoly to decide, where the word “monopoly” is used in a general sense that is still to be developed.” Kierkegaard describes ethical standardization as suspended during an incident of “divine intervention” as that faced by Abraham’s intention of sacrificing his son. The comparison depicts the political sovereign as the one who both creates an order as well as maintains the power to suspend it at will. It is such logic of exception that is entailed in Israel’s emergence as a global political player. The Palestinians are on the recipient end of this tabula of ethical suspension and in full approval of an on-looking international community, which applies its own “divine” exceptions when deemed fit. In replying to such internationally sanctioned positions, Hamas would eventually lean towards a stance of negotiation in the hope of fulfilling the desire of national sovereignty. Hannah Arendt writes, “[p]ower needs no justification, being inherent in the very existence of political communities, what it does need is legitimacy.” And it was precisely this legitimacy that Israel sought and continues to seek to deny Hamas. Meanwhile, with the increased centrality of religion within the Palestinian discourse boundaries became increasingly blurred, as Hamas took on more nationalist tendencies, while the PLO secularized religion in its addresses. On one occasion when the PLO’s authority was challenged Abu Ammar would insist that the PLO’s status of

373 Arendt, 2003: 241
legitimacy came from “the blood of its martyrs.” Questioning this reality he claimed in flowery Islamic Arabic, would equate an “act of blasphemy that contravened ‘[Islamic] law, belief, religion, Homeland and Arabism and invited fitna (Islamic dissent).”

Frantz Fanon writes, “decolonization is always a violent phenomenon,” pointing to the fact that violence is first inserted into the economy of debate through the intrusion of the colonizer, rather than the portrayed violence as a reaction to the colonizer. This differentiated cycle of violence identifies the colonizer as “the bringer of violence into the house and mind of the native.” Mahmoud el-Zahhar has pointed out Israel’s religiously inspired use of violence as predating the Islamic nature of a current thread of Palestinian nationalism, while the continuous aim of retaining the Jewish nature of Israel is the underlying justification for Israeli state sanctioned violence. In this sense the two movements- Zionism and the Islamic ideology of Hamas are seeking to replace the present “disorder” with their respective deemed “divinely” inspired order. Both orders are hegemonic, as well as colonial. Much like the colonial is still present in the post-colonial state, Hamas was increasingly asserting a colonial logic thus, in a sense, colonizing its own people, transforming the landscape yet again according to a messianic ideology.

In the hegemonic conception of liberal peace, violence is only sanctioned to a player within a hegemonic club of nation-states, of which Israel is one and Palestine is not. Following the vacuum of power left by the end of the cold war, liberation struggles are no longer deemed legitimate, and liberal peace with its promise to end “war” abolishes the idea of a violent “just cause” outside of an explicitly defined framework. By attempting to enter the “formal networks” of liberal governance the PLO sought to engage the political game in search of internationally deemed legitimacy. Doing so prohibited them from challenging the order itself subsequently being required to make the existent order “work better.” By directing violence away from their colonizer and onto their own in an attempt to “maintain security” the use of force was legitimized according to global standards of international law. The leaders of the Israeli occupation meanwhile have narrated their existence as a liberation struggle become legitimate by entering the club of nation-states in 1948. Israeli political leaders are loath to be identified as a colonizer because for some this would justify the violence carried out against their now sovereign territory in the form of a liberation struggle. Israeli strategy entails its hegemony over the conflict’s discourse whereby Israel has been depicted as a legitimate body vis-à-vis the terror of its opposition- whether the PLO or Hamas or others. Meanwhile, the Israeli discourse- in concert with liberal government- successfully delegitimizes indigenous leadership by illegitimating the colonized’s use of force. This illegitimate use of force’s demarcation as “terrorist” carries a negative definition whereby the terrorist’s other becomes the non-terrorist. Such linguistic games beg the question, can the deemed “non-terrorist” cause no terror? Joseph Massad posits, “[t]error then is a discourse about a colonial identity that needs to differentiate itself but always fails.”

At the Security Council in December 1987, a resolution against terrorism was passed. The only two objecting votes of Israel and the USA were in opposition to a paragraph that legitimated “the rights of people struggling against racist and colonialist regimes or foreign military occupation to continue with their resistance.” The two states sought to confirm the exclusivity of the legitimate use of force to remain in the hands of a particular club of nation-

375 Fanon, 1991: 35.
376 Fanon, 1991: 38.
379 See further Mbembe in chapter 2.1.
381 Duffield, 2001: 130.
384 Chomsky, 2003: 221
states vis-à-vis any resistance towards them. In the Palestinian-Israeli context the use of force remains a vital dimension of local and external legitimacy seeking of parties on all sides. By participating in elections in 2003 and then 2005, Hamas has begun the process of seeking this "formal" recognition in constant contestation with its local legitimacy. Accordingly, an ideological shift results in downplaying the movement’s stance on liberation while retaining its rhetoric of militant liberation.

The el-Aqsa Intifada escalated competition over the use of force to an unprecedented level. As settlement construction escalated drastically during the post-Oslo period and without any further achievements that had been hoped for from the PA, Hamas’ popularity had rebound after the short-lived increase in the popularity of the PLO in the post-Oslo period. The Oslo process proved itself to be a setback, crystallizing the necessity for a violent Palestinian reaction to the unhindered repressive trends of the occupation. Following the establishment of the PA, Hamas had maneuvered very carefully going out of its way to avoid a clash with the PA and reducing its use of violence when this was in line with popular opinion. With the aspirations placed on the peace process violence had initially been frowned upon. Following a negotiated cease-fire in 1995 Hamas spokesman Mahmoud el-Zahhar would explain a stance that was very reminiscent of the PLO’s before it. Hamas, he said, always calculates "the benefit and cost of continued armed operations. If we can fulfill our goals without violence, we will do so. Violence is a means, not a goal."385 In an internal document dated 6 April 1994 the Islamist leadership declared, “[o]ur political and informational discourse must focus on that Israel is our foremost and our only enemy, that the central purpose of our people is to resist the Zionist occupation.”386 Through such political pragmatism the movement continued its upsurge in nationalistic coloring anticipating its aim of a Palestinian- Islamic- nation-state.

3.1.2.2. INTIFADA EL-AQSA AND THE EL-QAEDA TROPE

The el-Aqsa Intifada began as a protest movement within the ranks of Fateh. Disillusioned with the outcome of the Oslo process and the capitulation of higher up leadership the tanzimat within Fateh- a younger cadre of leaders that hadn’t left with the PLO in the 70s- lead the first four violent months of the Intifada.387 In this vein of violent resistance the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade formed, a force made up of Fateh members often acting independently of the PA and senior Fateh leadership.388 The National and Islamic Higher Committee for the Follow-Up of the Intifada (NIHC) came into being with Hamas and Fateh cooperation. Hamas’ willingness to coordinate with their “secular” foe when their political nationalist aims overlapped revealed the group’s true political nature. In those years the PA lost the monopoly over the use of force vis-à-vis its constituency as its legitimacy began to be increasingly questioned by the Palestinian street.389 The contestation over violence entailed a public that once again increasingly supported violence and opposed cracking down on either Hamas or the Fateh young guard involved in violent resistance.390 To retain his seat of power and deemed legitimacy Arafat was forced to tolerate the young guard’s alliance with the Islamists and their use of force in confronting the Israeli army, bringing about an ongoing negotiation process within the party.391 Starting in March 2001 as Israel started targeting PA security headquarters, Arafat undermined the PA’s external legitimacy by sanctioning the participation of members of his Presidential Guard and intelligence services in attacks on Israeli soldiers and settlers in an effort to strengthen his local standing. With the rise of the el-

387 Usher, 2005.
391 Shikaki, 2002: 95.
Aqsa Intifada, Hamas’ “resistance project”- in contrast to the PLO’s negotiations policies- gained ground as a “national agenda.” In a 2007 Washington Post op-ed Hamas advisor Ahmed Yousef affirmed this evolving reformulation of Hamas, “The struggle has always been against the Israeli agenda of ethnic cleansing and conquest. Hamas is a movement of Palestinian liberation and nationalism… Yet it remains that Hamas has a world in common with Fatah and other parties, and they all share the same goals -- the end of occupation; the release of political prisoners; the right of return for all Palestinians; and freedom to be a nation equal among nations, secure in its own borders and at peace.”

Following the 11th of September attacks in New York and Washington the discourse regarding Hamas took a critical shift. These events are an example of Walter Benjamin’s depiction of history made up of images, shaping the perception of movements such as Hamas no matter what role they did or did not play and despite the position they would take to such an “event.” Following this attack the pressure on Hamas, and consequently all Palestinians, increased sharply as Sharon successfully equated the Palestinian resistance with international terrorism and likening Hamas to el-Qaeda. Further, the Israeli Prime Minister was able to alter the narrative in his favor by explicitly calling on the PA to "dismantle terrorist organizations." Hamas’ response to the attacks settled their position a as a national liberation movement once and for all, by citing political differences with el-Qaeda rather than pointing to religious differences. Thus after condemning the attacks Hamas emphasized that its battle was solely against the Israeli occupation declaring that, it did not target non-Israeli individuals or interests and never operated outside Mandatory Palestine. Such clear statements have made little difference either in the popular perception of Hamas in the “West,” or among external policy makers. All American peace initiatives would thus highlight the aim of “ending terrorism” which had become a much easier agenda in light of the liberal peace era to follow the September 11th attacks. The resolve to end all Palestinian “violence”- no matter Israel’s use of it- as a precondition to any “peace” mirrored the exceptional Israeli legitimization of the use of torture in 1987- later to be emulated by the USA. American president George Bush would say, “the most important condition for peace is to dismantle organizations whose vision is to destroy peace.” For Palestinians “peace” here was to mean a complete acceptance of the logic of nation-statism and conclusive submission to the domination of Israel- economically, socially and politically.

Between mid 2001-2004 the Israeli military carried out 320 assassinations of Hamas members, including the killing of 15 people in the assassination of Salah Shehada with sixteen F16 bombs. No legal repercussions followed the assassinations. Meanwhile, Hamas’ use of violence- deemed illegitimate by external actors- was used to undermine the PA’s authority when the Road Map called for “sustained, targeted, and effective operations aimed at confronting all those engaged in terror and dismantlement of terrorist capabilities and infrastructure.” A cyclical situation ensued, Hamas was successfully undermining the PA’s local legitimacy by continuing to use violence approved of locally. Meanwhile, external players considered the end of such acts a requirement for a “political process” to proceed. The USA leadership further linked the implementation of the Road Map to the appointment of a Prime Minister with the “authority” to end all violence. Revealing the ability of external forces to manipulate Arafat, the PA president appointed Mahmoud Abbas- a self-identified

393 Yousef, June 20, 2007.
396 Hajjar, 2004; Agamben, 1998.
399 Road Map, 30 April 2003.
espouser of “non-violent” resistance as Prime Minster. Following Hamas’ takeover of the Gaza Strip in June 2007, Bush called Abbas “the president of all the Palestinians” and “a reasonable voice among the extremists.” A few weeks later in a further effort to utilize the taboo nature of violence and terror, Abbas would again hark on a link between Hamas and al-Qaeda claiming that, "thanks to the support of Hamas, el-Qaeda is entering Gaza.”

Meanwhile, Hamas continued on its path towards sought-after centrifugal legitimacy of nation-statism by participating in democratic elections. Any two-state solution implied a de facto recognition not only of Israel albeit in the guise of an Islamist long-term armistice or truce but also the legitimization of the Oslo process, which legally undermined any stance of liberation. Following Oslo Mahmoud el-Zahhar had explained Hamas’ position saying, “we only support... popular elections to the popular institutions such as the municipalities and professional associations because they are not part of the Oslo autonomy and don’t give legitimacy to the occupation.” Yet, by 2003 Hamas’ municipality election run paved the way for their victory in the 2005 parliamentary elections. The movement had already early on justified that democratic elections compared to the Islamic interpretation of shura (consultation) Hamas’ declaration of election participation in the mid-90s had revealed a split within the movement due to such a stance’s shift towards a desire for territorial sovereignty. Hamas succeeded in utilizing religion as justification for actions, while the rhetoric of tahdia and hudna rather than referencing liberal peace deflected any tendencies to identify their latest actions with similar trends of the PLO. As the Islamic Resistance Movement’s actions and statement had religious underpinnings it reduced the need for purely ideological justification. By 2005 Hamas’ election run aroused little tension. Following the election victory the Islamic group began a whole new process of negotiating the use of legitimate violence both within the borders of the Gaza Strip and outside them.

3.1.2.1. THE GAZA STRIP: Hamas’ Re-Ordering of Space

A. Transforming Everyday Sites

“The climax of terror is reached when the police state begins to devour its own children, when yesterday’s executioner becomes today’s victim.”

- Hannah Arendt, On Violence

“Now it is much worse, because you cannot defend yourself properly [against Hamas], you cannot know who would do something to you… it could be your neighbor, your brother or your relative. Such attacks are much harder to prevent.
I hardly ever spend the night at home.”

- Hassan, member of PA security force, Beach Camp, Gaza

During legislative elections in 2006 Hamas- running under the title of Change and Reformation- recreated the Palestinian flag by expanding the green third of the flag to take up most of the flag’s space while adding the party’s slogan within it. Other parties were soon to follow suit using their respective party colors to alter the national flag. When the Hamas forces had reached the heart of Gaza City in June of 2007 they replaced the Palestinian flag adorning the Palestinian Legislative Council building with their party flag. This was only the beginning of a reformation of the Gaza Strip’s politico-spatial landscape.

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400 Hroub, 2004: 29.
402 Alsharq Al-Awsat. 10 July 2007.
403 Baumgarten, 2005: 42.
In December of 2007 Anwar watched from his office window as a group of students raised the Fateh flag on a building of the el-Aqsa University campus in Gaza City. The university is funded and run by Fateh supporters. An unknown observer called the Hamas Executive Security Force (el-tanzifeya) to report on the action, which, like the Palestinian flag under the Israeli administration, was illegal. The tanzifeya forces beat the students breaking one student’s limb, while causing the other severe head injuries. Next, the Executive Security Forces blocked the university entrance for 30 minutes before clearing the way for the ambulance carrying the injured- reminding onlookers of commonly utilized Israeli methods.\(^{409}\)

During the end of 2007 the presence of a Fateh flag on the roof a house identified its inhabitants’ allegiance to the West Bank emergency cabinet. Reports were widespread that Fateh informants reported on Gaza residents who removed their flags as signifying their switched allegiance to Gaza’s new government. If these were employees of the former PA apparatus they had their incomes cut. The matter was not confined to flags. When the Ramallah based PA commanded doctors on their payroll to leave their hospitals by 11am, many rejected because they simply could not abandon their patients due to internal politics. All PA employees faced a similar challenge as the Ramallah PA started cutting many of their incomes, leaving them with the option of finding other means of income or switching allegiance to Hamas and abiding by their rules in order to be on a Hamas payroll.\(^{410}\) The Gaza government had its own informants, unemployed young men-“drones” (zanana) in local parlance- as well as “children of the mosque”- who informed on non-Hamas activities.\(^{411}\)

Subsequent to Hamas forces “liberating” neighborhoods or national landmarks during the takeover they were renamed according to the party’s political imagination. Thus they altered the name of the roundabout facing PA president Mahmoud Abbas’ residence from the “Abu Mazen roundabout” (dawwar Abu Mazen) to dawwar el-Ameen Muhammed. On a Palestinian chat forum one user remarked on the change of naming saying, “let us then change all of the secular state with Islamic titles and names of the prophet.”\(^{412}\) The Tel el-Hawwa neighborhood, where Hamas forces won one of the most strategic victories over Fateh’s Preventative Forces, was renamed Tel el-Islam, the “hill of Islam,” while the Islamists changed the name of el-Quds (Jerusalem) Hospital located there to Tel el-Islam Hospital. Gaza’s authorities then started taking control of all Fateh institutions, from schools, to relief agencies, universities, mosques and hospitals. One such hospital was the Fata hospital, previously owned and operated by Muhammed Dahlan’s wife.

On the 17th of June 2007 I met with Fata Hospital administrator Abu Karim in the recently re-named neighborhood of Tel el-Islam in Gaza City. The building was empty; he told me people were afraid of coming to work fearing they would lose their salaries according to Fateh orders from Ramallah. I was surprised the building had been left fully intact considering Hamas’ deep opposition to Muhammed Dahlan. The building was new and looked organized. The few staff members that were there- despite the hospital not functioning-came daily fearing it would be looted. In the corner of the room lay a prayer rug, along one of the walls a cabinet containing between 30 and 40 large binders. Throughout our conversation Abu Karim received calls from sources unknown to me informing him of the members of the emergency government being formed in Ramallah. The hospital administrator rejoiced over the information, especially as five of the newly appointed members were from Gaza. Abu Karim considered this new cabinet legitimate and to be representing him. A few weeks later Hamas security forces stormed the hospital and barred all employees from returning to the premises of the hospital.\(^{413}\)

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\(^{409}\) Anwar, interview with author, 1 January 2008. Gaza City.

\(^{410}\) See chapter IV.II.A for the possible economic incentives behind such discharges.

\(^{411}\) ICG, 2008b: 7.

\(^{412}\) Palestine’s Dialogue Forum. 29 February 2008.

For Abu Karim, the unprecedented nature of the utilized violence of Palestinians against Palestinians during the “takeover” was what deemed Hamas illegitimate. Furthermore, his perception of the democratically elected leadership was tainted by their unwarranted use of force. For Abu Karim, like many other Fateh supporters, legitimate violence was retained in the “established” forces of the PA that had never been handed over to the new Hamas cabinet.

The administration of mosques also changed hands after the Hamas takeover in June of 2007. Fateh administered mosques all over Gaza and at least one el-Jihad el-Islami mosque fell under the jurisdiction of Hamas.

Yusef is 18 and a member of the PFLP. In the past he had attended three different mosques to pray but eventually stopped frequenting all of them. Each time following an invitation to attend a private meeting with a sheikh, Yusef never returned. He did not want to undergo brainwashing (taebi’a) he said and rather wants to choose for himself what to believe. He says he would leave Gaza at the first opportunity he has. Yusef’s brother Yunis is 16 and a Hamas member. He says he would never leave Gaza because it is “ard el-ribat” [meaning the land to which one is tied where those that stay tied (rabit) are said to have many rewards in heaven]414. At the mosque they teach him about “jihad and the life of the prophet.” Yusef likes to spend time on the computer. When his neighbor- who is listening in on the conversation- jokes that he is chatting with girls in Morocco, he does not deny it. Yunis says he does not stay online much, he only checks the news he says. He wants to grow up and carry an RPG.415

Following Hamas’ taking control of the Gaza Strip the dress code changed not so much due to newly instituted laws but by societal moral default. The member of a large clan in Gaza City remarked, “I stopped praying because I was afraid people would think I was Hamas.”416 Under social pressure almost all women veil in public, while men are no longer permitted to visit Gaza’s beaches topless, women must enter the water fully veiled. Meanwhile the new government set an 11pm curfew, stating that after midnight anyone violating the curfew may be shot for suspicion of spying on the resistance.417 In 2008 the Gaza government introduced a law that all married couples appearing together in public had to be able to provide their marriage certificate on demand. On numerous occasions murdered women were found by the roadside. Many such occurrences entailed little follow-up as the killing of women was almost exclusively due to morally indecent behavior and the new authorities tolerated such forms of punishment. Shortly after Hamas’ successful ceasing of power in Gaza the movement’s forces gunned down a recently engaged couple at a Gaza beach for what was deemed indecent ethical behavior. Hamas leader Mahmoud el-Zahhar acknowledged the mistake and explained that the government had made a payment (deyya) to the family in recognition of its misdeed. Following the expulsion of what Hamas deemed “corrupt” Fateh members, el-Zahhar insisted that all remaining Fateh members ought to also face punishment.418

3.2.2. PRISONS, POLICE SECURITY: Panopticon of Control

“We’ve lived the worst period.
Now we are living the best period since the end of Gaza’s occupation.”
- Mahmoud el-Zahhar

Temporary policemen took to the streets today wearing brand new Hamas police vests; traffic in the streets has never been so organized and disciplined. Finally, the Gaza Strip has just
one government and just one police force governing it. A sense of order and security for most residents are the upsides that come along with many’s sense of a very uncertain future. 419

Hamas’ speedy ability to take control of traffic became a reference for Gaza’s residents that the new authority was capable of something as basic as traffic delegation. Within a matter of hours the new authorities had released a network of volunteers onto the streets who took their jobs very seriously despite their lack of training, which was soon to follow. The PA’s shortcomings in managing even such tasks in the past added to the revelation of how the PA’s weaknesses had translated into prevalent lawlessness. 420 Yet, this initial show of force would be only a foretaste of the societal regulation that was to come under Gaza’s new government.

Figure 8: A Hamas banner, Gaza City, June 2007. Source: Philip Rizk

During the takeover, Hamas forces had revealed an unprecedented level of fighting skills that caught PA security forces off guard. Though the PA’s forces far outnumbered Hamas’ men, the latter took control of the entire Gaza Strip within the course of days. The first targets were police stations starting North and South of Gaza City followed by security forces headquarters, which were fought over and contained in violent and swift maneuvers.

Following the decisive victory over the Preventative Security headquarters on the 13th of June in Gaza City the remaining PA prisoners were paraded onto the streets in their underwear with their shirts pulled over their faces in an exhibition of force. Khaled, one of those made to participate in the spectacle was tortured in the basement of a mosque for four days before being released. 421 Days after the victory Hamas paraded the PA’s police car fleet manned by new Hamas appointed policemen through the streets of Gaza City again manifesting the changed hands of authority. The new government further replaced roughly 50,000 security forces with their own force a quarter the size divided into three main branches to manage Gaza’s internal security. The Civil Police controlled the strip’s streets, the Internal Security Forces, modeled on the former Preventative Security Force tended to intelligence while the National Security Forces, which Hamas called its “army” manned the Gaza Strip’s borders. 422

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419 Author’s field notes, June 2007.
420 James Scott refers to the centrality of the role of traffic in asserting control over a people (Scott, 1998: 73-76).
422 ICG, 2008a: 14.
Figure 9: Hamas parades police fleet past president Mahmoud Abbas’ abandoned residence. Gaza City, June 2007. Source: Philip Rizk

Mebmbe described sovereignty as the right to condemn to death. The competition over this right, results in a victor’s attainment thereof and a loser who becomes peripheral. Hamas forces quickly started to consolidate their power beyond traffic regulations, striving for coordination between resistance fighters, intervening when other groups carried out training without permits, closing training grounds and rounding up Fateh’ sanctioned weapons.

The divisive nature of the gun that had been revealed in the el-Aqsa Intifada reached its culmination in the summer of 2007. Unlike the stone, which had been an internally neutral method of resistance, the weapons used in the second Intifada were owned and sanctioned by a multiplicity of political factions. The bearer of such a weapon deemed its owner legitimate by fighting on their behalf and in their name. Hamas had reversed the tables, thus the suppression experienced under a Fateh-dominated PA, they now carried out on Fateh. Hamas thereby de-legitimized not only their weapons, but their authority and their very presence in the Gaza Strip.

Meanwhile, Hamas has thrived under such conditions, which at times has meant the counter-intuitive use of force to thwart efforts to plant explosives or launch Qassam rockets against Israeli targets. Mahmoud el-Zahhar justified the change of position days after the takeover on the 20th of June stating, “nobody will be a protector of the Israeli border... we are protecting our people... if they stop their aggression against the Palestinian people, the Palestinian people will not attack anybody.” On another occasion the former Foreign Minister explained that, “his group was open to a cease-fire with Israel if the army halts its activities there and in the West Bank,” adding that Hamas was capable of halting all rocket attacks out of Gaza. On various occasions Hamas’ security forces arrested members of Fateh’s el-Quds Martyr’s Brigades, the Alweyya el-Nasir faction and Jihad el-Islami’s military wing for launching or trying to launch rockets into Israel during a cease-fire. Perpetrators were accused of being spies aiming to undermine the strategy of the Islamic nation. As Fateh operatives were the Gaza’s authorities main target, Jihad el-Islami members on occasion allowed el-Aqsa Brigades fighters to launch attacks under their banner.

425 ICG, 2008a: 8.
426 Al-Deeb, 21 June 2007.
while sheltering their weapons. A retired PA security official, commenting on Hamas’ change of policy stated, “Hamas won the elections with a whole series of slogans—‘negotiations are haram [forbidden by religion]’; ‘resistance is a sacred right’; ‘Palestinian blood is a red line’—and then betrayed them.” A Jihad Islami leader responded to the crackdowns saying, “let Hamas stop us…they will be seen as taking steps against resistance and lose support in the Arab world.”

Hamas furthermore moved quickly to consolidate its control over clans who could pose a threat to its authority. Within a matter of days Hamas ascertained the release of British journalist Alan Johnston who had been kidnapped by the Dughmush clan in Gaza City. An explosion on the 25th of July 2008 that killed five members of Hamas’ military wing was a stark reminder that the new authority had failed to establish a monopoly on the use of weapons in the Gaza Strip. On the second of August, after failed negotiations brokered by Islamic Jihad, the Executive Security Forces moved in on the shuja’eyya neighborhood to end resistance stemming from the Hillis clan based there. In an earlier clash between the executive forces and the clan, many traditional supporters of the shuja’eyya family sided with Hamas. In August no other families came to the clan’s aid. Clashes between Hamas and Gaza’s clans have revealed the extent of identification with Hamas. “Hamas rose in popularity because it replaced the family, it created a new identity,” said Dr el-Sarraj, “if I am Hamas,” he went on, “this becomes a barrier between me and those around me…someone who is not Hamas is considered an infidel (kafir) or traitor (khayin).” Similar to the nationalism of Fateh, Hamas supporters identified with their party in a familial patriarchal mode that gives the individual meaning.

While crime and lawlessness in general reduced significantly after the government attained power, its monitoring of violence revealed itself to be selective. While reported crimes, social disturbances, drug trafficking and deemed moral indecent behavior were investigated and punished severely, incidents of “morally” motivated crimes, especially against leftist or PLO institutions often went by unpunished. One drug dealer in Deir el-Balah explained he had been arrested multiple times and tortured with the aim of confessing on video to have been involved with a Dahlan funded drug ring. Though the perpetrators were religious groups and likely not affiliated with Hamas, it seemed the new authority did not want to risk its religious legitimacy by punishing certain religiously justified behavior. On February 14th 2008 a bomb exploded in the Christian-run YMCA in Gaza City, a local organization in Beit Lahyia in the Northern Gaza Strip was bombed reportedly because it hosted co-ed traditional dance lessons and across the Gaza Strip internet cafes were blown up after being accused of providing access to immorality. On the 7th of October 2007 the body of Rami Ayyad was found in the early morning hours after he had been kidnapped days prior. Hamas officials attended Ayyad’s funeral, condemned the murder of the Christian bookstore director and said full investigations would be carried out. No arrests were ever made.

Despite accusations of capitulation and the rise of salafi groups that condemn the political nature of Gaza’s new authorities, Hamas has been able to sustain a very strong support base, especially in its strongholds in the refugee camps and urban centers. Hamas’ continued claim

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429 ICG, 2008b: 7n.74.
430 ICG, 2008a: 9.
432 ICG, 2008b: 2.
434 See Abu Shady quote in section I and Abu Karim in section 2.1.
to religious inspiration for its actions has so far succeeded in ascertaining its continued widespread popularity.

3.2.3. COURTS, LAW:

"Law is the repressive aspect of the civilizing activity of state."

- Antonio Gramsci, Prison Notebooks

After attaining power in June of 2007 Hamas responded by bypassing the existing PA courts, issuing summary justice, sanctioned by clerics.\footnote{437 ICG, 2008a: 12.} Gaza City lawyer \textit{Sharhabeel el-Zaeem} responded to changes, “I don’t recognize this government, nor any of their acts,” explaining that they have created a parallel legal system, which was creating confusion among Palestinian lawyers.\footnote{438 el-Zaeem, Sharhabeel, interview with author, 21. January 2008. Gaza City.} Some cases appeared before Hamas courts, while other didn’t. “Society is split with law being split,” he went on, “the neck of the law has been twisted and the division is deepening.”\footnote{439 el-Zaeem, Sharhabeel, interview with author, 21. January 2008. Gaza City.}

In order to gain access to Ramallah’s PA funds- which they deemed to have rights to- the Gaza government courts charged bail of NIS1500 (approximately $400) for detainees held on suspicion of any anti-Hamas activities.\footnote{440 ICG, 2008a: 16.}

Following the takeover all of Gaza’s 57 judges resigned, with the exception of one who is married to a Hamas leader.\footnote{441 ICG, 2008b: 10.} A wide spectrum of lawyers claimed that the new courts were discriminating on a political basis explaining, “if you are Hamas, you win; if you are Fateh, you lose.”\footnote{442 ICG, 2008b: 10n.16.}

On the 24th of August the teacher’s union called a strike of its 9,000 government teachers reacting to the new government’s re-location of teachers to different schools according to political affiliation. The government responded by closing the union. The Gaza authorities “temporarily” hired 4,200 new teachers and administrators hired on five-months contracts.\footnote{443 ICG, 2008b: 9.} Hamas accused the union of coordinating a majority of its actions with the Ramallah PA and carried out investigations into whether teacher’s striking was based on financial or political-thus punishable- intentions.\footnote{444 ICG, 2008b: 7.} Gaza’s current administration communicated to the public that political opposition is not an option.\footnote{445 ICG, 2008b: 11.} Hamas has sporadically banned West Bank newspapers from entering the Gaza Strip, especially any papers affiliated with Fateh.\footnote{ICG, 2008a: 16.} The civil affairs ministry is one of the only former PA institutions that has not been taken over by Hamas.\footnote{ICG, 2008a: 16.} This exception points to the new authority’s pragmatism as the ministry is responsible for any coordination with Israel which Hamas wants to maintain though not under its own jurisdiction. Accordingly, a small outpost remains on the Palestinian side of the main pedestrian border crossing with Israel also under control of the Ramallah PA.

Without their presence Israel wouldn’t allow any international journalists, NGO employees or the few Palestinian businessmen and patients with permits in and out of Gaza.

3.2.4. ECONOMY: Siege and its Uses

Hamas was able to deepen a lot of its power structure by capitalizing on the selective pattern of the Israeli-Egyptian imposed siege. Meanwhile Israel deepened its trend of collective punishment in its attempt to destroy the possibility of the formation of a unified national consciousness- a people- while pruning the seeds of hatred planted in them. This would
continue to legitimize the existent status quo of Israel as occupier and Hamas, as resistant and ideologically benefiting, as occupied. Though Hamas maintained a political rhetoric of raising attention to the political dimensions of siege, the government likewise co-opted the humanitarian rhetoric of Israel and international NGOs in order to try to garner international sympathy. Following Hamas’ takeover a lot of hopes were placed on the June 19th ceasefire to generate economic revival. Though Hamas clamped down on offenders, their centripetal legitimacy was too much at stake to make protecting the borders their primary objective. Though Hamas’ own attacks from the Strip decreased, their punishing other’s attacks was more an exhibition for Israel and other international players than it was effective to stop attacks on the ground. The new government was caught in a catch 22 where they had to reveal to the world their political will to impose cease-fire agreements with Israel, while convincing their local constituency of their preliminary commitment to resistance until liberation. The dilemma of juggling various planes of legitimacy- internal and external- caused the movement, like Fateh before it, to carefully balance its rhetoric with its actions. This political balancing act revealed Hamas’ willingness to change its core ideology of resistance when in authority in spite of the impracticality of risking their local legitimacy. Continued siege has enabled the new government to garner both internal support from its traditional supporters as they remain steadfast- unlike their predecessors in recent years- against the political demands of Israel.

Furthermore, the Gaza government utilized the limited nature of entering goods for the profit of its own constituency. Thus, while specific former PA security forces had acted as gatekeepers to profit from their control over Gaza’s economic border crossings with Israel, the few goods that now entered the Strip were prioritized for Hamas’ constituency. While many businesses profited from the shortage of stocks by raising prices of existent stocks, Hamas affiliated businesses had better chances of obtaining the small trickle of goods entering through the border crossings with Israel. As it had been during the era of the Fateh controlled PA, economic elites had the most to benefit from siege and tight border crossing regulations. The tunnels between the Gaza Strip and Northern Sinai provided a new source for the government to collect taxes, causing smuggled goods prices to skyrocket. The authorities also controlled most of the passageways thus prioritizing their imported content to their own constituency before they reached the rest of the population.

Article 42 of the 1907 Hague Regulations espouses that a territory is occupied when a foreign entity exerts “effective control” over it in military and administrative matters. The actual presence of the occupier inside the territory is a moot point. Israel retains control of air space and sea access and all- but the Southern- land borders. Israel also has the right to prevent the reopening of the airport and the building of a seaport in Gaza. On the 19th of June 2007, only days after the transition of authority in the Gaza Strip the Israeli Knesset passed a resolution that deemed the Gaza Strip a “hostile entity.” In opposition to international law standards the Israeli administration sought to reduce its legal responsibility for the occupied territory to a “humanitarian” one. A statement read following the cabinet decision concluded that, “[t]he limitations will be implemented in accordance with formal legal position papers and the humanitarian situation in the field,” revealed the two decisive tropes around which Israel functioned: assumed judicial authority and humanitarianism. Despite the UN secretary general’s conclusion that, “[s]uch a step would be contrary to Israel’s obligations toward the civilian population under international humanitarian and human rights law,” Israel remained undeterred. In January 2008, Israel’s Supreme Court upheld the Israeli government’s decision to deem Gaza a “hostile entity” considering the

447 See chapter 2.2.1.
449 Revised Disengagement Plan of 6 June 2004, §3.1; §6.
452 Erlanger and Cooper. 20 September 2007.
action a form of “economic warfare” and an appropriate means of retaliation for rocket attacks on Israel.\textsuperscript{453} Subsequently, the Israeli administration reduced all flows into Gaza to what it deemed “essential” items- in order to avoid a humanitarian crisis- which included wheat, flour, sugar, frozen meats, Israeli dairy products, rice, vegetables, fruits, cooking oil, medicines, straw and some hygienic products.\textsuperscript{454} Banned goods include natural gas, gas, wood, cement, clothes, shoes, soft drinks, cigarettes, computers, cars and spare parts. Precisely these items are high on the list of imports via the tunnels from Egypt, which Hamas has largely been able to monopolize control over. Nahed, a tunnel owner explained, "I import everything- from men's and women's clothing, to Vespa and car parts, chocolate and medicine, but most of all shoes."\textsuperscript{455}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of working establishments</th>
<th>June 2005 (pre-disengagement)</th>
<th>Week 1, July 2007 (current Crisis)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3,900</td>
<td>780</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Number of working employees     | 35,000                        | 4,200                             |
|                                 |                               |                                   |
| Export (truckloads)             | 748                           | 0                                 |

\textbf{Figure 10: Gaza Economic Statistics, Paltrade}\textsuperscript{456}

Meanwhile, due to Israel’s intensified stance of closure towards the Gaza Strip and Hamas’ simultaneous inability and lack of will to normalize trade relations, border closures with Israel reached unprecedented levels. Most significantly, Israel did not open its borders to export from Gaza one single day the rest of the year after the 12\textsuperscript{th} of June 2007. 95% of Gaza’s industry was dependent on imported raw materials and a further 80% of factories depended on imported machinery and maintenance parts.\textsuperscript{457} In one month at least 3,190 establishments were closed and an estimated 65,800 employees were laid off.\textsuperscript{458} By August 2008, 98% of Gaza’s factories lay dormant.\textsuperscript{459} 5,000 farmers whose income was based on exports faced 100% losses in sales of produce like strawberries, flowers and cherry tomatoes.\textsuperscript{460} Added to that, Israel barred vital imports like fertilizers, pesticides, sterilization gas, seeds, seedlings and packaging materials.\textsuperscript{461}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AllMontar/Karni</th>
<th>Before June 12th 2007</th>
<th>After June 12th 2007</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Available Operating Days (Day)</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Operating Days (Percentage)</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Closure Days (Percentage)</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>72.5%</td>
<td>55.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Imports (Truckloads)</td>
<td>53,141</td>
<td>2,944</td>
<td>56,085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Exports (Truckloads)</td>
<td>5,746</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5,746</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textbf{Figure 11: Imports and Exports to the Gaza Strip in 2007, Paltrade}\textsuperscript{462}

Hamas and Israeli policies overlapped on certain dimensions of the economic siege. Hamas’ attempt at barring Israeli fruit from entering the Gaza Strip with a plan to boycott Israeli

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\textsuperscript{453} Passia, 2008: 6.
\textsuperscript{454} Paltrade, 2009: 14.
\textsuperscript{455} Rizk, 9 September 2008.
\textsuperscript{456} Paltrade, 12 July 2007: 3.
\textsuperscript{457} Paltrade, 12 July 2007: 3.
\textsuperscript{458} Paltrade, 12 July 2007: 3.
\textsuperscript{459} Paltrade, 12 July 2007: 12.
\textsuperscript{460} ICG, 2008b: 12.
\textsuperscript{461} Paltrade, 12 July 2007: 6.
\textsuperscript{462} Paltrade, 12 July 2007: 6.
goods was short lived as Hamas businesses were affected causing its owners to quickly have the policy overturned.\textsuperscript{463} Furthermore, certain Israeli fruit was grown specifically for sale in Gaza and was not sale-worthy elsewhere thus the Israeli authorities ascertained its entry to the “hostile entity” no matter what the level of siege.\textsuperscript{464} In this way both parties managed to benefit politically and economically from the Gaza Strip’s condition as a captive market, though Israel was the one scoring much bigger points.

On November 15\textsuperscript{th} 2008 the Independent cited a leaked ICRC report that stated, “[c]hronic malnutrition is on a steadily rising trend and micronutrient deficiencies are of great concern.”\textsuperscript{465} One year later in October 28\textsuperscript{th} 2009 the Israeli human rights group Gisha released a press statement demanding answers from the Israeli army that they never got, “What are the criteria for defining goods as ‘humanitarian’? Is there a list of goods that are permitted or prohibited for import into Gaza?” The group furthermore inquired about a certain “Red Lines” document “which ostensibly sets the nutritional ‘minimum’ required for the subsistence of the residents of the Gaza Strip and contains tables specifying the number of grams and calories from each food group that a Gaza resident should be allowed to consume, based on age and sex.”\textsuperscript{466} Gisha furthermore accused Israeli decision makers of “limit[ing] human beings to a “minimum” level of nutritional subsistence, a true state of exception. Hamas for its part would not budge on its political demands thus deeming legitimate Israel’s position in the eyes of the hegemonic “international community.” Yet Gaza’s authorities managed to capitalize on their harsh stance of opposition by manipulating the conditions created by the siege to their own benefit. When the Israeli authorities limited the import of American dollars into the enclave, Gaza’s government’s access to smuggled dollars from Egypt allowed them to benefit from higher exchange rates due to dollar shortages in Gaza’s official money market.\textsuperscript{467} Up until the wall breach with Egypt and prior to a mass increase in functioning tunnels with Egypt, Hamas also collected extraordinary amounts of taxes on cigarettes smuggled from Egypt. As price- and quality- differences between Egyptian and Israeli cigarettes were so high Gaza’s residents were still able to afford Israeli priced Egyptian quality cigarettes without holding too large of a grudge against Gaza’s authorities. Nathan Brown notes that Hamas “lays claim simultaneously to both Islamic ideological credentials and valid constitutional ones, but it finances itself by taxing smuggling and vice.”\textsuperscript{468} Gaza’s authorities furthermore established customs offices en route to the Kerem Shalom and Sofa crossings in order to levy taxes on imported goods.

After Gaza’s new government consolidated its power in June of 2007 tunnel construction increased drastically along the border with Egypt. By January 2008 local sources estimated 500-600 tunnels supplying an estimated 35 percent of Gaza’s goods.\textsuperscript{470} Among the diggers who are earning higher wages than they can in any other manual labor jobs in Gaza are university students, former office employees and farmers who can no longer profit off their now fallow land. Bar a small percentage of tunnels that lie too close to the Israeli border East of Rafah all tunnels are managed by the interior ministry’s Tunnel Administration, which in some cases has records of legal contracts that refer to “underground commercial venues” between property owners and tunnel diggers.\textsuperscript{471} Gaza’s authorities distribute lists of permitted items, regulate prices and collect taxes on imported items- fuel is taxed in kind.\textsuperscript{472} The

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{463} Krieger and Lazaroff, 10 July 2007.
\bibitem{464} Leshem and Bar-Eli, 18 June 2007.
\bibitem{465} Macintyre, 15 November 2008.
\bibitem{466} Gisha, 2009b.
\bibitem{467} ICG, 2008a: 17n.189.
\bibitem{468} Brown, 2008b: 2.
\bibitem{469} ICG, 2008a: 17.
\bibitem{470} Rizk, 9 September 2008; ICG, 2008b: 14.
\bibitem{471} ICG, 2008b: 14.
\bibitem{472} ICG, 2008b: 14.
\end{thebibliography}
government films tunnel activity and posts overseers, who work eight-hour shifts and charge transgressors penalties.473

The new potential for generating income has created a class of nouveaux riches, especially among Hamas operatives. When a cease-fire in August of 2008 was frozen after a homemade rocket was launched into Israel by unknown assailants, some Gazans accused the new tunnel owners. One trader in Gaza City considered it “conceivable” that a tunnel owner may have suffered from dropping prices and funded a rocket attack in order to close the crossings. After all, for Gaza’s new primarily Hamas-affiliated bourgeoisie, “if the borders open, all his work will come to an end.”474

Gaza’s authorities have also found other means of financing their coffers while under siege. While the PLO-run PA had once been heavily criticized for pressuring utility bill payment defaulters, the roles were now reversed. Once Hamas took control of municipalities a drive for payments included the creation of “defaulter courts.”475 The old PA had turned a blind eye to PLO affiliated defaulters’ bills, but with the tables turned, the coinciding criticism was now aimed at the new money-collectors. A further source of government funding was vehicle registration and licensing often overlooked by the previous authorities due to poor economic conditions of many vehicle owners. In order to attract registrations, the government reduced fees and provided owners of cars stolen from Israel to pay for official standard green plates, thus legalizing their vehicles and revealing the thin line between legality and illegality.476

Today the Hamas government remains politically isolated in the Gaza Strip. The enclave as well as the movement are under siege economically and politically as a vast majority of “international players” reject engagement with them. Hamas for their part, are unwilling to comply with the requirements made of it: recognizing Israel's right to exist, the ceasing of all "violence," and recognizing all past PA agreements with Israel. The same would never be asked of Israel's leaders and if it where, they would also never comply. The double political standards reveal some of the political game beneath the surface. Yet, since coming to power Hamas has significantly transformed the landscape within the Gaza Strip, enforcing its social and political imaginary on a public that today is still very divided about who it considers to represent them. As Dr Sarraj said, “Arabs don’t have strong adherence (intima’) to the state. Not in Jordan or Egypt either. The state is a foreign (ajnabeya) concept. Arabs don’t get the sense that they are a partner (shareek) in it.” And yet, as elsewhere, the transformation that has occurred within Hamas has implied similar trends as its predecessor. While complying to foreign imaginaries of governance, local concerns and local representation becomes secondary.

474 Rizk, 9 September 2008.
475 ICG, 2008a: 17.
476 ICG, 2008a: 17.
Chapter 4: 
BEYOND THE NATION-STATE: SIGNPOSTS ALONG THE WAY

“The era of stateness [Staatlichkeit] is nearing its end, the State as the model of political unity, the State as the holder of the most extraordinary of all monopolies, that is to say, of the monopoly of political decision-making is being dethroned.”
- Carl Schmitt, Der Begriiff

“Power springs up whenever people get together and act in concert, but it derives its legitimacy from the initial getting together.”
- Hannah Arendt, On Violence

Amongst the plethora of mutilated landscapes I want to seek a moment of difference. Despite all the scars of nation-state history, such a narrative has remained “common sense” to most who participate in it. I will not so much make an attempt to replace such “familiar” perceptions with what could be claimed as a worthier common sense. Rather, I will highlight some signposts that reveal moments of un-staatlichkeit- where statelessness reaches its limits and questions the intrinsic nature of the “familiar.” One such moment- demarcated by an “act in concert”- is the first Intifada. Up until this stage I have used the Gaza Strip as my spatial category of analysis in part to highlight the constructed nature of nation-statist geographic categorizations. Here I will broaden my unit of analysis from the boundaries of the “Gaza Strip,” as the Intifada reformulated the landscape of all of historic Palestine in its wake. I will assess the legal potential for resistance opened up by the popular nature of the uprising. Then, I will address matters of deterrioralization whereby spatial demarcations become peripheral within globalizing trends of economic hegemony. At that juncture my analysis will move beyond even the strict spatial entity of “Palestine.” The economic battlefront of neo-liberalism- governed by trans-national organs- is everywhere and isn’t tied to specific boundaries. In this trend of global governance the trope of development plays an expansive role for the deterrioralizing tendency of neo-liberal hegemony. Finally, I will identify one further site of resistance: counter-cartography, as utilizing the methods of nation-state hegemony with the aim of undoing it.

4.1. INTIFADA: Grammar of A Multitude

“But above all, since World War II, the Palestinian voice was muffled because it always had to pass through that manmade black hole of the Holocaust, and so it was almost never heard: till 1987.”
- Anton Shammas, Autocartography

“The occupation officers have hit a stone, been struck
By the steadfast hardness
Of a people willing
To die on their feet
Rather than live on their knees”
- Peter Boulata, Intifada

The Intifada erupted onto the horizon of a seemingly composed Zionist occupation. Unlike the cartographic demarcation that resulted from the Oslo process at its apex, the uprising occupied a space of resistance that shook up the map of nation-states in its ebb. Presenting itself as another moment that deeply reformulated the landscape of Palestine, the Intifada placed Palestine on a map, but a different sort of map. At a time of widespread sanction of the economics of Thatcherism and Reaganomics, the Palestinian uprising stood for opposition to

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477 See Foucault on the juxtaposition of the “familiar” versus “unfamiliar” in chapter 2.1.
the spread of hegemony of centralization, while saying no to the unchallenged rule of an economic bourgeoisie. While Thatcher and Reagan sought to take revolutions, resistance and strikes off the world map, the Palestinian Intifada placed resistance dead in the center by carving out “a particular space of resistance.” The adherents of neo-liberalism desired for individuation and the isolation of the single from a collective. Far from revealing trends of a global new order, such phenomena function in the wake of the very same nation-state logic. During the Intifada the “public good and the collective will predominated.” The uprising arose spontaneously without a centralized political decision-making process, which caught all sides by surprise. The uprising was the culmination of Faisal al-Husseini’s assessment, that “[b]efore 1982, people here would sit and wait for liberation from outside. After 1982, they started to ask what they could do to bring it about.”

In an independence day speech Israeli president Chaim Herzog framed the Intifada as violent “rioting” that would bring about the same results as the 1930s revolt. Similarly, in the revolt of black slaves against a foreign occupation on the turn of the 18th century, the occupiers could only describe the insurrection in terms of a “riot.” In both Haiti in the 18th century and Palestine in the 20th, the colonizer was not able to recognize the possibility for revolt, to consider the potency of such a political moment of transformation. In both sites resistance to the familiar, thinkable tropes of colonization are deemed as a savage notion where all actions are reduced to haphazard “rioting.” The function of naming furthermore carries what Bourdieu entails a “quasi-magical power… to make-exist by virtue of naming.” The colonizer’s monopoly on naming frames resistance as a savage act of “rioting” in the “official” annals of history- the handmaiden of the nation-state. In Palestine the occupier’s inability to recognize resistance in such an unfamiliar guise lead to their assassinating Abu Jihad, accusing the Fateh co-founder of being the mastermind behind the “revolt.” For the Palestinian multitude behind the Intifada the occupation’s suppression-political, social and economic- was to blame. The centrality of this oppression as a cause was highlighted in an Israeli authored communiqué, which was distributed as counterfeit instructions claiming to originate from the Palestinian grassroots leadership. The message aimed at confusing Palestinian steadfastness by claiming that Palestinians should put an end to their resistance to Israeli oppression.

The success of the Intifada was due partly to the widespread frustration with traditional and centralized leadership. As well as that the occupiers knew best how to contain centralized resistance, revealed in their assassination of Abu Jihad and their initial targeting of Jihad Islami activists. The failure of the PLO to deal with the real needs of Palestinians everywhere lead to the Uprising’s dispersed nature. Collective actions against the occupying force subsequently sidestepped the usual hierarchies of command, both traditional and national as an expression of “disgust.” The Jordan-Palestine Fund attempted to overturn this dispersion of leadership with the inflow of funds for “steadfastness” (sumoud) to clan leaders and traditional elites. Yet, as funds from the outside either dried up or were blocked by the

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478 For Foucault “space is a metaphor for a site or container of power which usually constrains but sometimes liberates processes of Becoming” (Harvey, 1989: 213). The Intifada is one such place. De Certeau gives the multitude a central role in the formation of space, “[t]he intertwined paths give their shape to spaces. They weave places together” (Harvey, 1989: 213).


480 Abu Amr 1093: 10; Hass, 1996; Cobban, 1990: 211.

481 Cobban, 1990: 229.


483 Trouillot, 1995: 73.

484 Bourdieu, 1985: 730.


487 Lockman and Beinim, 1996: 386.


occupation, these new dynamics forced activists to become innovative, laying the ground for the dispersed nature of the Intifada.\footnote{Lustick, 1993: 575 citing Hilterman, 1991.} Such an expression of resistance placed “Palestinians” on the map in the form of “popular sovereignties” by weaving an opposing “fabric of hegemony” to counter that of the occupying forces.\footnote{Farsoum and Landis, 1990: 16ff; 29.} The Intifada leaders eventually posed a threat to the PLO especially upon their members’ return from Tunis and the region. Over the coming years many of these activists were co-opted into the PA’s governance structure. Other Intifada activists subsumed their grassroots efforts into inter-statals structure of non-governmental structures, whereby external donors would be able to tame the dispersed spirit of the uprising through the conditionality of funding and standards of inter-national development.\footnote{See further Hanafi and Tabar, 2003.}

On December 8\textsuperscript{th} 1987 an Israeli army truck drove into a group of Palestinian workers at the Erez border crossing, killing four of them. The funerals attended by over 10,000 brought rise to a pent up sensation among Palestinians living under an unrelenting occupation. The resulting Intifada caught all parties involved by surprise. Israeli authorities reacted with an even more intense version of repression that had been the stimulus of the uprising. A month earlier, in October 1987 Jihad el-Islami had held a strike in response to the deaths of four of its operatives and an announcement calling for the arrest and deportation of Jihad leader Aouda.\footnote{Milton-Edwards, 1996: 122f.} Due to the recent oppositional activity of the Islamic movement, the Israeli military authorities immediately cracked down on the movement’s leadership all across the Gaza Strip. Though this had a debilitating effect on el-Jihad, it did not slow the Intifada and therefore revealed to all involved that they were not the sole driving force behind the uprising.\footnote{See Lockman and Beinin, 1996: 327.}

Abu Ammar, traveling in the Gulf at the time quickly sprang into action in order to coordinate with the new diverse leaders on the ground. Following the first communiqué that was signed solely by the UNLU leadership based in the occupied territories, subsequent instructional dispatches added the PLO’s signature to the UNLU’s name as the source of the directive.\footnote{el-Sarraj, Dr Iyad, interview with author, 24. January 2008.} Future communiqués claimed to speak on behalf of both the UNLU- “voice of the people”- and the “voice of the PLO.”

Dr Iyad el-Sarraj, an independent Gazan physician explained, “the absence (ghiyyab) of a Palestinian nation-state in the first Intifada crystallized (balwarat) a national identity more than any other stage before or after… the collective (jamaheeree) nature of the Intifada was hijacked when the orders started coming from the outside [leadership], from Tunis.” Later communiqués revealed arising divergences between the “inside” and the “outside.” When Arafat appeared before the UN General Assembly with an olive branch and a gun, the UNLU authors portrayed themselves baring the olive branch and “the sacred stone.” Later disillusionment with the PLO regarding their stance on the use of violence and concessions lead to claims that the PLO lay between “collaboration (with Israel) and concessions to the public.” Especially after May 1989, the PLO leaders in Tunis were much more eager than the locally based activists to engage in the plans set forth by the Israeli administration.\footnote{Dajani, 1990: 35.}

These dynamics bring to mind Chakrabarty’s claims of “third world” national resistance movements as a central tenet disseminating Western imaginings of governance.\footnote{Cobban, 1990: 233.} The Intifada became collectively generated “common sense” opposing that of the PLO in exile. This opposition to any centralized authority relayed itself further in villagers non-centralized,
grassroots resistance to Israeli settlements, Israeli urbanization and the institutionalization of land appropriation.  

The very makeup of the UNLU, despite its identification as the “striking arm of the PLO,” and acting as a guiding voice to the popular uprising, 501 represented a non-centralized leadership. One example of its diffuse nature was the fact that anonymous authors from various factions penned the communiqués- including at times non-PLO members of el-Jihad el-Islami. The authors were in constant flux due to arrests, deportation or injury and used the communiqués as a form of appeal (nida’) rather than command or pronouncement. 502 Furthermore, there were often multiple committees coinciding writing different communiqués with different instructions. As the authors remained anonymous, “[l]eaders were never identified,” and “personalities were submerged in the group.” 503 The loci of power being diffuse rather than centralized meant that the grassroots committees- at the apex of the uprising an estimated 45 thousand- did not vie for authority or legitimacy for social power, rather formulated extra-statal structures that simply resisted. 504 Israel responded by bolstering traditional sites of power and by building centralized but weak leadership in an attempt to blunt the edge of resistance by continuously opposing the will of the populace. 505 Mirroring their approach to labeling resistance as “rioting” here the occupation logic attempts to fit the unfamiliar along lines of the familiar forms of organization and hierarchy. Under the lure of being adopted into the global familiar order it is the PLO leadership that contains the Intifada’s vibrant effectiveness at throwing off the occupation. Meanwhile, on multifarious levels the Intifada was breaking the norms of hierarchy, governance, representation, class, generation and gender rifts. The search for centrifugal- external- acknowledgement is simply left out of the equation. 

A further mode of non-centralization was the role of women in the Intifada who over time broke the male-centric nature of patriarchy. The Arab Women’s Committee (AWS), established in 1929, came to be considered the “women’s wing of the national movement” during the uprising. 506 The expansion of the role of women in the Intifada to care not only for their nuclear family but for their "national family" lead to the overthrowing of gender norms and helped break traditional familial and clan allegiances on behalf of a collective identification with a broader multitude. 507 Paulo Virno states that in the multitude we “confront a concept without a history, without a lexicon,” and thus the resistance of the Intifada remained unnamed and undeterred until the dispersal was detained by the lure of Palestinian representation. 508

This drastic shift was aided by the arrest of men and the UNLU’s endorsement of a non-conventional role of the woman throughout the uprising. 509 Women acted as a central force in

500 Dajani, 1990: 32. Following the division of occupied Palestinian territories under Oslo, areas B and C remained completely outside of the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority. Consequently, inhabitants there looked to anyone- Palestinian, Israeli or international activists to help them in their struggle to remain steadfast on their land. 


505 Dajani, 1990: 40. The Israeli administration emulated the British occupation’s habit of establishing or supporting a weak and centralized leadership with the village leagues in the 1930s by backing the Islamic block as an alternative to the PLO, then supporting the traditional leaders in the first Intifada, and finally the PA against the growing influence of Hamas after Oslo. The British and Zionist imaginary cannot be differentiated from each other for their underlying logic of nation-statism and colonial hegemony follow and build on the same script. 


508 Virno, 2004: 32. 

509 Usher, 1992: 38 cited in Swedenburg, 2003: 187. The Intifada’s multitude spirit was affected by Hamas when the movement began seeking legitimacy by competing for leadership of the Intifada by reintroducing patriarchical gender norms capitalizing on the frivolity of the Intifada period. Here the body of the woman acts as a tabula on
the Intifada’s drive for Palestinian economic self-dependency by running domestic food production and farming while men were away. Women continued in a leadership capacity despite the occupation authorities’ unprecedented punishments of women in response to their newfound authority. The popular (shaabee) resistance of the Intifada entailed spontaneous actions carried out by students, prisoners, women, shopkeepers and refugees without prior coordination. The everyday forms of resistance included strikes by laborers, merchants and lawyers, commercial shutdowns, economic boycotts, demonstrative funerals, the hoisting of banned Palestinian flags, the resignation of tax collectors and various forms of political non-cooperation. Alternative means of communication were utilized when phone lines were cut including the messages of the communiqués and the use of the clandestine el-Quds radio station. When the UNLU called for daylight savings time to be changed in mid April two weeks earlier than Israel, the occupation’s very hegemony over time was undermined by the Palestinian masses. Israeli soldiers were ordered to respond without mercy by punishing Palestinians functioning by the resistance’s timeframe by breaking their watches and wrists. Meanwhile, the inhabitants of the predominantly Christian village of Beit Sahour decided they would not accept “taxation without representation” and refused to pay taxes. When the Israeli authorities recognized the extent of the threat to their authority, they reacted harshly by confiscating furniture, industrial machinery, animals, cars and IDs, ultimately imposing an additional “Intifada tax” without which merchants would not be able to engage in any trade.

In these ways resistance succeeded at overcoming the decisive factor of class differences. For the first many months of the uprising the Palestinian multitude were sporadically united in the face of a common occupier. In the absence of a national signifier who narrated a uniform narrative, a dispersed authorship arose. Hereby every action across usual dividing lines manifested a collective spirit of resistance. The consolidated nature of uprising would later begin to unravel at a class level as vendors and shop owners are the first to oppose the ongoing efforts of the UNLU. Yet, prior to this point the Intifada revealed a capacity to counter what Poulantzas identified as the capitalist state’s ability to represent “itself as the representative of the ‘general interest’ of competing and divergent economic interests which conceal their class character from the agents.” In the Intifada the multitude regained their authority to determine their own “general interest” and rejected the hegemonic claims of the capitalist state over them. Herin the very exchange of representation for sovereignty is upturned allowing the reliance on the many, rather then a single patriarchal-coercive power.

which contesting national movements inscribed their brand of nationalism by imposing their respective moral standards upon it. See also Swedenburg, 2003: 186.

Swedenburg, 2003: 187. When all measures of military suppression failed, the Israeli administration utilized liberal tactics by imposing a civilian administration that entailed the appeasement of economic improvements to oppose widespread resistance, which would find its apex in Oslo (Dajani: 1990: 41). This form of resistance, which prioritized soil over territory, was broken by Oslo’s devotion to the opposite. “While soil is a matter of spatialized and originary discourse of belonging, territory is concerned with integrity, surveyability, policing, and subsistence” (See Appadurai, 1996: 46).

Swedenburg, 2003: 188.

Vitullo, 1989: 52.

Dajani, 1990: 30f.

Vitullo, 1989: 49f.


Poulantzas, 1968: 130-133.

See chapter I.II. Hobbes conception of a “people,” tied to the ideologically correlated conception of territory immensely perpetuated the idea of nation-state.

The varied and widespread forms of the uprising began undoing the Israeli state-apparatus by ending Israeli hegemony over schools, the collection of taxes, commercial traffic, collaborators and even challenging the occupier’s domination over time. The predominantly nonviolent nature of the civilian resistance formulated a political legal exception that undermined the liberal logic of the nation-state’s claim to a monopoly on legitimate violence. For though nonviolent means acted as “a means of wielding power, a technique that is designed to fight a violent opponent willing and well equipped to wield military force,” the uprising’s nonviolent nature also posed a legal offensive on the occupation’s claim to legitimacy.

The state of Israel’s determinative method provides it the upper hand in any contest vis-à-vis the Palestinians as a group, over claims of a “just” cause for the control of territory or legitimate governance. This hierarchy is made possible by the legal fiction of the prior’s legitimacy as a nation-state recognized within the global regime of nation-states and the exclusion of the latter. This privileged position buttressed by a global hegemonic club of allies always sided with “peace”- provides the decision makers of the state of Israel with an exceptional “right” to measure their actions on a disparate scale. In the post-cold war era “peace” has become equivalent with the expansion of capitalist domination. “Peace” becomes a prerequisite for the presence of global economic regimes like the IMF and World Bank to transform landscapes. The use of violence doubles as a sanctioned tool of defense and offense, while any act of retaliation is deemed illegitimate, unsanctioned and worthy of punishment. In this distorted equilibrium violence from the lesser party acts as the pretext for the disparate relationship; it becomes the trope for the ensuing state of exception.

With “peace” as the legitimating trope the occupier’s state bears the paradoxical legal sanction to determine what is lawful and unlawful. The Intifada’s predominantly non-violent nature disrupted these crooked scales, not because Palestinian violence was unsanctioned but by divulging the inequitable logic reinforcing the equation. As Iqbal Ahmad explained, a “liberation movement seeks to expose the basic contradictions of the adversarial society.” The Intifada achieved this most powerfully by exposing the inequitable sanction on use of force.

With the matter of violence out of the equation the occupation’s legitimacy was suspended by an external public’s growing recognition of the justness of the collective uprising’s cause. The simultaneous universalization of international law and the complete coming into being of a “real community of states,” occurred only after decolonization had taken place. Or expressed differently, “decolonization repeated imperialism, but with a new legal and moral appearance,” which acted as a “legitimising force of colonialism.” These legal fictions provided sovereign states with legitimate reasons for “the right of conquest,” by dividing the world into “civilised and the uncivilised, permitting civilised states to occupy the uncivilised.”

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524 Agamben, 2005.
525 See further chapter 3.1.2.1. on “liberal peace” and the use of language of “legality.” For further reading see Agamben, 1998: 16ff.
526 See eg. Chomsky, 2003: 221. An important distinction needs to be made here between the use of non-violence resistance as a form of struggle and the politically motivated renouncing of violence as the PA did in Oslo.
528 Mohammed Bedjaoui, president of the International Court of Justice wrote, “[t]his classic international law thus consisted of a set of rules with a geographical bias (it was a European law), a religious-ethical inspiration (it was a Christian law), an economic motivation (it was a mercantilist law) and political aims (it was an imperialist law)” (cited in Otto, 1996: 339).
4.1.1. RESISTING LEGAL HEGEMONIES

“Law plays a constitutive role, alongside the social sciences, in defining the colonial subject and, given the connection between knowledge and power, in legitimating dominant distributions of power.”
- Dianne Otto, “Subalternity and International Law”

At this juncture a short excursus into the utility of the terminology of “legitimacy” and the regime of international law that reinforces it is necessary. There are two definitions of the term “legitimate,” which are often intentionally blurred. A more strict sense of the “legitimate” according to international law is being “in compliance with the law.” Only those agents that international law deems permissible to decide to resort to the use of force are deemed “legitimate authorities.” In a broader definition of the word “legitimate” implies “moral” or “just” irrespective of legality. In the case of the state of Israel’s use of force, the imperial regime has doubled the state’s deemed moral sanction with a legal sanction. Though in the case of Israel “[n]o one questions the use of violence in self-defense,” in light of the violence that had been perpetrated against Jews in Europe, the Israeli use of vengeance against an unarmed resistance broke even the wings of this faltering “justice.” Hannah Arendt goes on, “[l]egitimacy, when challenged, bases itself on an appeal to the past, while justification is related to an end that lies in the future.” The Intifada brought to light the fact that the appeal to the past did not justify the ends lying in the future if the means would wage such an extent of violence to life- human, animal and earth. The Intifada- outside of the framework of nationalism or nation-statism- tipped the scales of the unjust nature of the globally applied regime of political legitimacy. Gene Sharp describes the power of a nonviolent resistance to be “designed for use against opponents who cannot be defeated by violence.” In the Palestinian case Israel cannot be defeated by force not only because of the current unequal military strength of the two contesters but primarily because of the legal regime sanctioning the one’s actions and condemning the other to illegitimacy.

Legal scholar John Strawson describes the 1648 Peace of Westphalia- the essential claim to legitimacy of states like Israel’s existence- as granting legal monopoly to the European powers rather than simply establishing the doctrine of state sovereignty as such. Sunhya Pahuja and Ruth Buchanan describe the effects: “[t]he terms of international “comity” then “society” and now “community,” “effect a closure around nation [and] confirm… its universal reach… leav[ing] no space that is not national space.” The widespread recognition of the just nature of the Palestinian uprising began to deconstruct the hegemonic nature of the global- colonial- legal regime.

Another linguistic tool utilized by the nation-state regime is the parlance of “just war.” The principle of Just War is based on the legal record stemming from the Theological sanction of Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas. The three main strands of their argument that determined a war to be just included, the sanction of a “prince,” a “just cause,” and a “right intent.” In contemporary legal jurisprudence the second is emphasized, the third is downplayed while the compliance with the first is implied in the stance itself. In the case of the Intifada this logical hierarchy is upturned as the prince- contemporarily identified with the nation-state- is sounded out, and found to lack the legal credentials vis-à-vis an uprising of

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531 The previous sentences are based on Wilson, 1990: 13.
536 Pahuja, 2005: 462; See ref chapter 2n.157.
537 Wilson, 1990: 14.
539 “The idea that only a sovereign state may legitimately wage war seems a foregone conclusion in the twentieth century. Indeed this requirement is often included in the definition of war... By the close of the nineteenth century,
a suppressed multitude. These are located in a site “outside the law” only because the law itself is sanctioned by the very regime of political structures- the idea of nation-states- that the multitude oppose. The power of the Intifada lies in the challenge posed to Israel’s legally sanctioned paradox of sovereignty. Hereby the law can be enforced and at the same moment be aufgehoben, thus Israel as sovereign simultaneously lies outside and inside the juridical order: “law is outside itself.” The Intifada entails the potential seed of aufhebung of the legal scale itself. The popular nature of the Intifada with its widespread, dispersed nature created centripetal- local- legitimacy, while gathering global centrifugal support, thereby undermining the usual order of things.

The strategy Israel chose to oppose this popular onslaught after violence alone was insufficient was what colonial powers had done elsewhere: self-determination. The significant difference is that Zionism is a settler-colonialism and thus offered only a semblance thereof. Israeli policy makers had no intention in replacing the typical trend of decolonization with the informal colonization of neocolonialism. The Israelis did emulate the legal dimensions of decolonization by beginning the process of assumed self-determination with the usual aim of breaking the sting of resistance with the temptation of “granting formal legal status to new subjects by rendering them commensurable with its forms.” Yet, Israel had no interest in conceding land and ruling from a distance, the typical form of European “decolonization.” Just as the European colonial powers had needed “a legal system that would both regulate relations between themselves and legitimate conquest and its consequences,” Israel now sought justification within the global legal regime to authorize its continuous occupation. The occupation successfully demolished its greatest opposition by providing the lure of recognizing the PLO with “the requirements of statehood [that] repeat the founding violence of colonialism by inscribing it in a new legal narrative that relegitimates its imperialist outcomes.”

The doctrine of self-determination represented a “new legal right that frees peoples from colonial rule, yet also sanctifies the effect of colonialism on those societies.” Ultimately, nationalism, secularism and self-determination provided the legal framework that allowed for “the modernizing or civilizing ideologies par excellence.”

In the 70s and 80s a coalition of nation-states formed with the aim of opposing the logic of imperialism. Once decolonized nation-states had outnumbered the developed states within the UN structure, the latter developed methods in order to retain economic hegemony. At a meeting in Algiers in 1973 the non-aligned movement and the Group of 77- nations that called for a more equitable economic world order- realized their attainment of national independence had not established a “fundamental reordering of the colonialist order.” In 1975 the USA denied the UN General Assembly a central role in economic decision making, maintaining such powers instead in the institutions that had resulted from the 1944 Bretton-Woods gathering: the IMF, World Bank and later the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT). A leader of the initial G77 movement Leophold Sedar Senghor claimed the unthinkable by upturning hegemonic “common sense” and deeming the philosophy of Europe- and thus its hegemonic political logic- as, “static, objective, dichotomic; it is, in fact, dualistic, in that it makes an absolute distinction between body and soul, matter and spirit. It is founded on separation and opposition: on analysis and conflict. The African, on the other hand, conceives the

sovereignty and the exclusive right to wage war were characteristics of State so strongly established that to suggest otherwise would have seemed preposterous” (Wilson, 1990: 14f.).

Agamben, 1998: 15. Aufheben in German means both to ‘abolish’ and to ‘sublate.’ See further chapter 3.1.2.1.

Pahuja, 2005: 464. See also Fanon, 1963: 79.


For further details see Ferguson, 1987: 375ff.
world, beyond the diversity of its forms, as a fundamentally mobile, yet unique, reality that seeks synthesis.”

And yet, in the final analysis the G77 failed due to its uncritical embracing of a European framework. The movement’s inability to disrupt the discourse of a “right to self-determination” and political “independence” revealed its fallacy in thought and its acquiescence to a common legal and politico-moral fiction. Here, the legal becomes more than simply a technology but articulates a certain social imaginary embedded in a realm of the moral. The root of “postcolonial misery” is not “the inability to think new forms of the modern community [or identity] but in our surrendering to old forms of the modern state.”

II. SIGNPOSTS ALONG THE WAY

“Palestinian identity, we don’t know what it means. Abu Ammar used to be a symbol. We are like someone in the water who is drowning and have nothing to hold onto… no one knows what is going on. We are living dangerous days.”

- Abu Shady, Gaza City, June 2, 2007

“[T]he national state was never as closed and as unavoidable a container-economically, politically, or culturally-as politicians and academics have claimed since the 19th century.”

- Michel-Rolph Trouillot, The Anthropology of the State in the Age of Globalization

The crisis of the state in the Palestinian case can be primarily summed up as a failure of centripetal-local representation. I will delineate three strands of this crisis of representation before moving on to their outcome: deterritorialization. The achievement of potential global recognition that started with Palestinian-Israeli negotiations in the start of the 90s came at the cost of Palestinians obstructing Palestinian popular resistance against the occupation. While patterns of Palestinian resistance made the occupied unrulable, the new political elite of the PLO took advantage of such conditions and acceded to ruling in the place of the ruler-the par excellence colonial condition. Acting under the occupier’s jurisprudence this occupied elite legitimated its occupier. The Intifada’s legitimacy, gained by the initial act of “getting together” was lost in the elite’s kidnapping of “popular sovereignties.”

The second stage, again in order with a foreign imaginary, was the restriction of resistance to national resistance within the paradigm of European legal consent. Hereby also, the Palestinian leadership chose external recognition over internal representation. The third moment of centrifugality is simultaneously the outcome of the first two. The economic integration entailed in the Oslo process means Palestinians accede to existing in the economic periphery with Israel at the core. The neo-liberal narrative adopted by Palestinian leadership in Ramallah seeks the individuation of the Palestinian populous. This economic moment calls for “integration” in a fictitious economic “community” that suddenly overcomes racial, religious, national boundaries revealing political power as the inherent nature of the “economy.” These acts of acquiescence entailed special economic benefits for a Palestinian political elite. It is that final reward that Palestinian political battles are now fought over: with external recognition comes access to certain financial benefits, resistance is forgotten en route. The desire for liberation through resistance is replaced by visions of a “corporate peace” via negotiations.

Accompanying the realization of the legal fictions of political structures is the deterritorialization process brought about by global economic trends. As Akhil Gupta and

549 Chatterjee, 1993: 11.
551 See also section 4.1.
James Ferguson argues, the experience of space has been “deterritorialized” thereby there is an urgency to problematize the so far taken-for-granted linkage between ethnos, territory, and state. By de-sacralizing the land as national-religious space we can de-sacralize the idea of the nation-state. De-linking the tie of identity to territory challenges the potency of private property and aims at sounding out the myth of the nation-state’s legal fixity and the utility of territory in destroying the mutual exchange of human and land, which like Benvenisti said would turn the “landscape into a desert of concrete and asphalt.” Writing “Earth-wise” detaches “personal identity, cultural affiliation, people’s sense of belonging, heritage, solidarity” from bounded place will allow rise for the potentiality of the multitude to act independent of a territory-bound myth.

In one of his final interviews Edward Said opposed the abandonment of the nation-state, as he consider this to be fulfilling the suggestions of neo-liberalism. This premise mistakenly assumes the nation-state to be ordered along a different logic to neo-liberalism. Said did not take into consideration that the adoption of the nation-state would likewise place the Palestinian cause within the grasp of neo-liberalism. The logic of occupation, national independence in the framework of the Oslo process and a two-state solution of the Road Map are all premised on an economic vision for the region with Israel at its core. Hereby Israeli, Palestinian and regional capitalist groups are set to profit from Palestine’s incorporation into a regional political economy with promises of a “corporate peace;” the vision that excludes all but a Palestinian elite.

4.2.1. THE NON-SENSE OF COMMON SENSE DEVELOPMENT

“[P]olitical economy announces the unknowability for the sovereign of the totality of economies processes and, as a consequence, the impossibility of an economic sovereignty.”

- Michel Foucault, *The Foucault Effect*

On 17 December 2007, at a one-day conference in Paris, over 90 representatives from various countries and donor organizations pledged over US$7.7 billion to the Ramallah PA. The conference was to garner financial support for a new PA economic strategy called the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan for 2008-2010 (PRDP). The plan, based on proposals written by the World Bank and other international financial institutions, has since 2007 acted as the guiding framework for West Bank economic policy. The explicitly neo-liberal subplot of the PRDP calls on the PA to carry out fiscal reforms aiming at an “enabling environment for the private sector” as the “engine of sustainable economic growth.” The plan entails three main neo-liberal dimensions starting with calling on the PA to cut 21% of jobs-40,000 people- in the public sector workforce by 2010, and a freeze on PA salary increases over the next three years. Thirdly, the PA was pressured to ascertain citizens would be required to present a “certificate of payment” for receipt of municipal or government

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553 Rabinowitz, 2000: 761.
554 Benvenisti, 2000: 8. See also chapter 1.1.
558 The following three paragraphs rely heavily on the analysis of Hanieh, 2008a; Hanieh, 2008b.
559 Following Hamas taking control of the Gaza Strip, the Ramallah-based PA begins mass lay-offs citing factional disloyalty (see further chapter 2). The coinciding timing of the West Bank PA’s lay-offs in Gaza with the disclosure of a new economic program is an unlikely coincidence. Did Salam Fayyad’s cabinet use factional disloyalty as a rationale for implementing neo-liberal reforms? If this is the case, it implies that the Ramallah PA accented factional strife and acceded to international demands for non-democratic policies on behalf of economic benefits? Hamas’ conditions for new elections in January 2010 included the re-instatement of all Hamas members fired from the PA payroll due to political affiliation after the Hamas “takeover.” In an interview PLC chair and Hamas leader Dr. Mahmoud Ramahi claimed Fateh had agreed to comply until a meeting with American Middle East envoy George Mitchell disswayed the Fateh leadership (Frykberg, Mel. 1 February 2010). Such incidents again seem to verify the overlap in external political and economic interests.
services. This meant the end of subsidies of electricity and water for the poorest of the poor. All international assistance—including the $7.7 billion promised at the Paris Conference—would be contingent on the PRDP’s implementation. To ensure compliance, the Washington D.C.-based PRDP Trust Fund, managed by the World Bank, would receive all international aid on behalf of the PA.

The PRDP development model will also change economic trends like the utility of cheap Palestinian labor in industrial parks, located at the edges between the West Bank and Israel. Twenty percent of jobs in the West Bank are planned to be tied in some way to these industrial zones, in which Palestinian and Israeli labor laws, wage levels and environmental policies will not apply. As the Israeli military will monitor all access to the industrial parks, the ability to work becomes dependent upon complying with Israeli military orders. All these plans are tied to plans for a “New Middle East” with an aim in the words of former USA president George Bush, “to bring the Middle East into an expanding circle of opportunity, to provide hope for the people who live in that region.”

In this economic vision the term “hope” implies a submission to neo-liberal policies that include privatization, free trade agreements, cutting-back of public sectors, opening the market to foreign investment and the removal of state subsidies.

The linkage of economic and political normalization between Arab states and Israel with neo-liberal policies, however, most articulately came to the surface during the 1990s with the Oslo Accords. A principal example of Arab state’s normalization with Israel as precondition for economic exchange with the USA is the establishment of the Qualified Industrial Zones (QIZ) in Jordan and Egypt. An outcome of economic agreements between the USA, Israel, Jordan, and Egypt, these zones entailed the provision that in the case of certain proportions of Israeli inputs, the goods produced in the industrial zones would gain duty-free status to the USA. Like the Palestinian industrial parks no labor laws apply in these zones while workers are prevented from joining unions. The effects of these zones are the commensuration of Israeli and Arab elites, while integrating their markets under American economic hegemony at the cost of the exploitation of laborers.

Bush’s promise to break “[o]ld patterns of conflict in the Middle East” was tied to a condition that, “all concerned will let go of the bitterness, hatred, and violence, and get on with the serious work of economic development.” Here the terminology of “development” reflects the modernization theory of Westernization, while highlighting the rhetoric of peace with its monopoly on legitimizing violence. Arturo Escobar explains,

“development was not a process which involved only the material conditions of living, the upgrading of living standards and the modernization of the productive apparatus. More than that, development was, inevitably and perhaps more significantly, a mechanism through which a whole rationality was to be learned…this attempt involves higher levels of colonization.”

Mirroring the trends of the idea of nation-state, the idea of global economic integration according to neo-liberal dictates lures the economic elite with economic opportunity at the cost of the working class. The created division mirrored the divide-and-conquer nature of the nation-state. At this point in the analysis the spatial category of the Gaza Strip is subsumed in a de-territorialized global condition. Such imperial trends make no distinction according to

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560 See also Hass, 2008.
562 “As Oslo unfolded, the US and other world powers sponsored a series of four consecutive summits, known as the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Economic Summits, first held in Morocco in 1994. The Jordanian government was not shy about promoting MENA’s goal of normalization, with its Foreign Ministry openly noting that the summits are ‘intended to create economic interdependencies between Arab states and Israel, promote personal contacts between the two sides and foster trade, investment and development’” (Hanieh, 2008b).
categories of state- or statelessness for that matter. Much like the imperial trap of “decolonization” through the universalization of a hegemonic legal regime such economic “reforms” perforate the landscape of the region along class lines. Robert Zoellick uttered words with the potential of placing a seeming magical spell on the region’s economic elite, “we are charting a new constellation: shining lights of trade and investment that offer a clear course for countries in the region wishing to embark on a journey of economic openness and reform.” Zoellick, 2003. See further for a discussion on violence: chapter 3.1.2.1. The US Trade representative promised to “assist” nations “ready to embrace economic liberty and the rule of law” to bring their economies into the “modern era.”

Escobar questions the underlying logic, “[i]t is a puzzling paradox, however, that at the moment when Western constructs (philosophy, science, culture) break down or negate themselves (post-modernism, theoretical nihilism, holism, positivism, and empiricism self-destructing as standard epistemologies), the old Enlightenment rationality is exported to the Third World under the banner of ‘development’… As if the Third World were perpetually condemned to mirror the West as it was, not as it is.” Escobar, 2003: 171.

Rejecting these condemnations is a manifestation of resistance.

4.2.2. SITE OF RESISTANCE: Doing Cartography “Other-wise”
"Throughout the history of cartography ideological ‘Holy Lands’ are frequently centered on maps. Such centricity, a kind of ‘subliminal geometry,’” adds geopolitical force and meaning to representation. It is also arguable that such world maps have in turn helped to codify, to legitimate, and to promote the world views which are prevalent in different periods and places.”

- J. B. Harley, “Deconstructing the Map”

"History breaks up into images."

-Walter Benjamin

Counter-cartography provides a site of resistance, where the imagination is open to post-national and counter-national cartographies. The Intifada is one such moment of a “post-national geography,” where “social activity” is re-imagining spaces. After all it is the Intifada, not Oslo or the PA or “international” recognition that put the “Palestinians” on the map: a map of resistance, a map of existence. Here the imagination must remain open for “mapping, even realms that are yet to come.”

In A. B. Yehoshuah’s short story “Facing the Forest” a deaf and mute forest preserve watchman- not the expected agent of breaking silence- sets the forest he is meant to guard on fire. The flames reveal the remains of a razed village beneath the remaining tree stumps. The mute Arab’s story tells “history” precisely because it brings the past into the present. J. B. Harley points out that not only is there power “exerted on cartography” but there is power “internal to cartography, for [c]artographers manufacture power: they create a spatial panopticon.” And if “catalogu[ing] the world is to appropriate it,” to codify it, control it then there is potential to undo these processes of power through counter-cartography, like the mute man exposing the centers of silencings- not so much through word, but through act. Here to deconstruct is “to reinscribe and resituate meanings, events and objects within broader movements and structures; it is, so to speak, to reverse the imposing tapestry in order

568 Bowman, 1999: 120.
569 Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 5.
570 Harley, 1989: 12f.
to expose in all its unglamorously dishevelled tangle the threads constituting the well-heeled image it presents to the world.”

“L’archipel de Palestine orientale” is a map described by its creator Julien Bousac as “an illustration of the West Bank’s ongoing fragmentation based on the (originally temporary) A/B/C zoning which came out of the Oslo process.” The “islands” divided from each other by the Israeli controlled “sea” reveal the violence and absurdity inherent in the Zionist state-building project. Thus while most “cartographers are talking about their maps and not landscapes,” such efforts at counter-cartography are an attempt to speak about landscapes, not about maps, to display the “‘aporias,’ blindspots or moments of self-contradiction” lying within state-sponsored cartography projects.

In the project “This is Rafah” architect Pablo De Soto maps the border town of Rafah otherwise. De Soto illustrates the town’s transition from united village to divided city due to the Egyptian-Israeli Camp David “peace” accord. By illustrating the socio-spatial effects of the Israeli army’s razing of an entire neighborhood in 2003’s “operation rainbow” the architect gives voice to a geographical memory that maps typically succeed at silencing. Hereby De Soto’s efforts parallel the aims of ethnographers of memory in dismantling “the mythic Israeli narrative.” The authors of a further site, “Decolonizing Architecture” recognize the events of the past in the present while deflecting the temptation of the formulation of a counter-narrative. The project’s creators use the term “decolonization” in order to,

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573 L’Archipel de Palestine Orientale.
“maintain a distance from the current political terms of a “solution” to the Palestinian conflict and its respective borders. The one-, two-, and now three-state solutions seem equally entrapped in a “top-down” perspective, each with its own self-referential logic. For the authors decolonization takes on an entire new meaning outside of the logic of its legal trappings. Here, decolonization implies the dismantling of the existing dominant structure-financial, military, and legal- conceived for the benefit of a single national-ethnic group.”

The author’s version of from-the-ground-up decolonization entails “large-scale destabilizations in the world of knowledge,” as well as the exposing of silencings entailed in state-sponsored projects and a “collapse” and “deflation of all our big stories.”

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577 “Decolonizing Architecture.”
578 Rose, 2008: 166.
jeopardizing of an order-utopia-savage triad is the realization of the limits of knowledge with the potential to bring about the collapsing of the Western enterprise of ordering.\textsuperscript{579} Thus, engaging in writing historiography other-wise introduces our vulnerability- we too are complicit in the use of the tools of liberalism- and the real possibility of deflating the space we also inhabit; destabilizing order deflates the deemed legitimacy of power of the projects reliant on just such a trope of order.\textsuperscript{580} This very process of decolonization is itself a model of deterritorialization as one of its key authors, a Jewish Israeli oversteps the “common sense” proscribed boundaries, constructing solidarity across lines demarcated by enmity.\textsuperscript{581}

4.2.3. (OPEN) END/ NARRATION WITHOUT STATE

“In a small portion of the school’s garden we were allowed to plant flowers and shrubs. We were also encouraged to gather samples of wildflowers from all over the country. With the help of friends, I collected a hundred specimens. I arranged them in a booklet, identifying them and the areas they were from. But what names to use: Syria? Lebanon? Palestine? The boundaries for the Middle East seemed to be changing constantly...

Even nature was victim to artificial frontiers.”

- Wadad Maqdisi Cortas, \textit{The World I Loved}

“…and continuing long afterwards to disturb and threaten with collapse our age-old distinction between the Same and the Other.”

- Michel Foucault, \textit{Order of Things}\textsuperscript{582}

“Post-modernism” is often erroneously diagnosed as an era, an ideology that historically superseded modernism. Yet, if such a post-modern tendency is identified with a multifarious reaction to the modern moment- as many of its proponents claim- then such a trend breaks with the ontological claims of progress with the allegation of bettering and replacing what came before. Likewise, I am here not suggesting replacement or an improved version of the state project. If “[h]istory depends on inherited plots, received cultural myths,” then I am calling on the discipline and its internal logic to be questioned, for the “‘laws’ of historical narration” to be interrogated and its hostile outcomes to be presented as such rather than wonted norms of “common sense.”\textsuperscript{583}

Questioning the intrinsic logic of economy and history means disrupting hegemony.\textsuperscript{584} This process entails opposing the perpetuation of meta-narratives by not yearning to replace failing national political programs with more of the same under the justification of being more just, more equal or more popular. We must “push at the boundaries of modernity,” seeking to “understand what modernity means, and develop strategies to deal with it, not to take a countermodern position.”\textsuperscript{585} Rather, there is an urgency to explore “the transformative possibilities at the limits of western philosophy.”\textsuperscript{586} We must work within the boundaries of the modern, the multitude must act rather than constructing a utopia for a (utopian) people. Here the aim is shared with what the subaltern studies program sought, “the impossible task of excavating a presence that European thought has rendered impossible... by attempting to

\textsuperscript{579} Trouillot, 2003: 28.
\textsuperscript{580} Trouillot, 2003: 20.
\textsuperscript{581} Rabinowitz, 2000: 768.
\textsuperscript{582} See further chapter 2.1.
\textsuperscript{583} Hayden White in Yaeger, 1996: 4.
\textsuperscript{584} “Nation states have the capacity to enforce their truth games, and universities, their critical distance notwithstanding, are part of the battery of institutions compliant in this process. “economics” and “history” are the knowledge forms that correspond to the two major institutions that the rise (and later universalization) of the bourgeois order has given to the world- the capitalist mode of production and the nation state. A Critical historian has no choice but to negotiate this knowledge” (Chakrabarty, 1993: 19).
\textsuperscript{585} Otto, 1996: 356.
\textsuperscript{586} Otto, 1996: 356.
give voice to a social absence, which is difference itself.”

For here is where all efforts for a global ethic and for a global (human) “rights” code decay despite their potentially irreproachable intentions. Their individuizing tendency - much like the universalization of the regime of international law through decolonization - perpetuate the Westernization project by manipulating the relationship of same and other. Here liberalism falls short by not admitting to the need for an other, while community “denies difference by positing fusion rather than separation as the social ideal.”

Deborah Rose seeks to undermine the very binary of “us” and “them” that the Westernization project is based on. Counter to both individuizing and collectivizing projects, we are in need of the prophetic voice with the potentiality of awakening “the listener to the proximity of the other.” The trend of severing one from the other is a principle requirement in the project of collectivization, of creating groups, which requires the Other to appear as threat on behalf of the formulation of meaning of a discursive group. A challenge poses itself to think beyond binaries, to sound out the state’s invention of its own meanings whereby it governs the logic that underlies all other meanings within society. We must aim at disrupting the hegemony of the institutionalization of that “world of meanings” in an attempt at suspending the assumptions of “common sense.”

By un-ratifying the fetish of “common rituals” of the commandement we may unravel the suspension of the possibility for resistance. By questioning the conception of common sense and of the differentiation of same and other we do not so much replace “it” with an “actual” or “true” common sense, but rather aim to undermine the conception of what is common while opening up the analysis for difference.

The application of such a subsuming of “other in sameness,” is made possible in the disruption of hegemony. Here “modernization” and “colonization” must be identified as “weed” rather than remedy. In the act of disruption rather than turning to the past for solutions we must consider diversity over the monocultures of modernity/hegemony/neoliberalism/nation-statism. James Scott highlights the resilience of diversity, pointing out that “polyculture is a more stable, more easily sustainable form of agriculture than monocropping.” The early days of the G77 represented a moment of such polyculture by championing solidarity and attempting to oppose the centralization of the economic decision-making process since Bretton Woods.

A further possibility for thinking a polyculture of resistance appears in Guittari and Deleuze’s description of the “rhizome” over and against the linear Western “arborescent” model. In “A Thousand Plateaus” they describe the rhizome as bringing,

“into play very different regimes of signs, and even nonsign states... It is composed not of units but of dimensions, or rather directions in motion. It has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle (milieu) from which it grows and which it overspills. The rhizome is an antigenealogy... the rhizome pertains to a map that must be produced, constructed, a map that is always detachable, connectable, reversible, modificable, and has multiple entryways and exits and its own lines of flight. It is tracings that must be put on the map, not the opposite. In contrast to centered (even polycentric) systems with hierarchical modes of communication and preestablished paths, the rhizome is an acentered, nonhierarchical, nonsignifying system without a General and without an organizing memory or central automaton, defined solely by a circulation of states.”

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589 Susan Handelman cited in Rose, 2007: 165.
590 Mbembe 2001: 103f.
591 Trouillot, 2003: 28. Trouillot here echos Emanuel Levinas, “The ontological event accomplished by philosophy consists in suppressing or transmuting the alterity of all that is Other, in universalizing the immanence of the Same (la meme) or of Freedom, in effacing the boundaries, and in expelling the violence of Being (Etre)” (Levinas, 1996: 11).
Israel deemed Palestinians state-less and voice-less, without the ability to speak. According to Anton Shammas, the conflict is precisely about speech, not about the identity of the speakers.\(^{595}\) The dispute in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is about the power to determine who has a claim to speak in a struggle of epistemic ambition of declaring the frontiers of the sacred and profane- a struggle over power vis-à-vis fields of cultural and ideological production.\(^{596}\) Whitlam suggests that, “if Palestinian history is to be freed from the constraints of biblical studies, which it must have if it is to have a voice, it will need to create its own space or contest the current spaces available.”\(^{597}\) Such rhizomatic spaces were created in the first Intifada until the movement was halted by a Palestinian elite driven by a lure for recognition in the “common sense” of non-sense. Today the contest of representation has expanded beyond the Oslo elite and threatens to implode. Moments of resistance must be celebrated and perpetuated so that the cacophony of Intifada may live on and multiply. A resistance that is perpetually liminal, that creates spaces, not space, a multiplicity of voices, rather than a dominating voice of the symbol is what occupation, imperialism and neo-liberal hegemony fear most. A politico-territorial entity’s construction of walls all around it signifies that it has reached an impasse regarding solutions to sharing life with an other. One hundred years ago not one nation-state container existed on the political horizon. We must permit our imagination to think the unthinkable- not unlike like the first visionaries of national states. The impasse of a Palestinian nation-state provides the ideal opportunity for manifesting a radically different imaginary.

\(^{596}\) Bourdieu, 1985: 735.
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