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Item Type	Article
Authors	Ryan, Caitlin
Citation	Critical Studies on Security;1 (3), pp. 295-310
Publisher	Taylor & Francis - Routledge
Download date	2026-06-13 08:28:00
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Link to Item	<a href="https://hdl.handle.net/10344/4655">https://hdl.handle.net/10344/4655</a>

# **The Subjected Non-Subject: Security, Subjectification and Resistance in the Occupied Palestinian Territories**

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*(Received 7 May 2013; final version received 10 July 2013)*

## **Abstract:**

The aim of this paper is to examine how Palestinian women living under Israeli occupation experience and resist subjectification through security practices. Such an examination is inspired by Foucault, who claims that power functions upon corporeal bodies to create subjects. Interesting to the case of Palestinian women in the Occupied Palestinian Territories is the way in which they are *de facto* subjects in that their bodies are subject to Israeli power, without being subjects of Israel. This paper is based on recent field research in the West Bank. It thus relies upon narratives from individual Palestinian women of how they experience being subject to Israeli power and how, in turn, they enact resistance to that power.

**Keywords:** Palestine, resistance, subjectification, Israeli occupation, security

## **Subjectification and Resistance**

Throughout his corpus, Foucault maintained that it was ‘the subject’ that was the theme of his enquiries (Foucault 1994a). Specifically, he was concerned with uncovering how practices and exercises of power produced subjects through processes of subjectification, and in turn,

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how subjects might resist or revolt against subjectification. Within Foucault's model of power, the practices and possibilities of resistance and revolt are as important to defining power-relations as subjectification, (Foucault 1994b). In this paper I utilise Palestinian women's daily-lived experiences of the Israeli occupation to demonstrate how the occupation exercises power through processes of security that contribute to the subjectification of Palestinian women through corporeal regulation and control. This corporeal subjectification is accompanied by Palestinian women enacting resistance to their subjectification, and these resistances are also often embedded within daily-lived experience.

The value of such an analysis is in its challenge to relegations of women's lived experience to the outside of examinations of security, and its potency comes from the focus on the corporeal body as a site where security practices focus to control, regulate and discipline subjects. There is certainly a wide variety of literature within critical studies on security examining how subjects can be made insecure as result of processes of securitisation, much of it coming from a feminist perspective, such as in Hansen's work on the dilemmas of 'speaking security' and 'security as silence' (Hansen 2000), or MacKenzie (2009), who examines how female combatants' needs are desecuritized after conflict. From other perspectives, Balzacq (2005) makes an argument for looking beyond discourse and accounting for power imbalances in the examination of securitisation. In a 2010 contribution to the International Studies Association Compendium that draws from the work of the c.a.s.e. collective manifesto (2006), Balzacq *et al* (2010) argue that 'Security is, the result of a process of (in)securitization' (p2). There is a need to add to these existing analyses by examining how subjects made (in)secure by processes of security engage in resistance, as the Balzacq *et al* article advocates (*ibid*, p.13). Herein is how this paper makes a contribution to the critical studies on security literature. By highlighting women's daily lived experiences of (in)security that result from subjectification and their enactments of resistance to these

processes, I demonstrate that it is narratives of women's daily experiences of occupation and resistance that have the greatest potential to de-stabilise existing state-centric assumptions of who is being made secure and who is being made insecure during the present form of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories. Furthermore, the focus on the corporeal body as the site where the exercise of power is directed contributes to critical studies on security by adding to the literature which argues examining how bodies are controlled in analyses of the Israeli control of the OPT (Parsons and Salter, 2008).

In order to carry out this analysis it is first essential to define 'the subject' and 'corporeal' within the context of Palestinian women and their experiences of occupation and resistance. Secondly, the field research methodology used to collect narratives from women in the West Bank will be briefly detailed. Thirdly, narratives of Palestinian women will be utilised to demonstrate how the occupation of the Palestinian territories functions to create the (in)secure and subjugated Palestinian subject through processes of securitisation that corporeally control, regulate and discipline. It will be shown that, a multi-faceted occupation entails a multi-faceted resistance. Thus, Palestinian women's narratives will be presented to demonstrate how women enact resistances to this subjectification. Finally, I will present an analysis of what Palestinian women's experiences of subjectification and resistance can tell us more broadly about the embodied nature of security practices and how those practices are resisted in the Occupied Territories.

### **The (Corporeal) Subject**

'Subject' is a term far too often taken as a pre-given in International Relations without adequate interrogation. In the context of Palestinian women living in the Occupied Territories, the complexity of legal jurisdictions of control and the ways that these

jurisdictions are interpreted or interrupted in a very *ad hoc* way means that we cannot take the category of 'subject' for granted in an investigation of Palestinian women's subjectification and resistance. Taking the subject as a 'pre-given' in political analysis and failing to interrogate how one is formed as a subject is a failure to understand that the process of subjectification is inherently political (Butler 1995 p48).

After the 1993 Oslo accords when the West Bank and East Jerusalem were divided to give different jurisdictional authorities to different areas, Palestinians living in some areas were subject to different laws and jurisdictions than Palestinians living in others. Area 'A' is made up of areas under Palestinian civil and military control. Area 'B' is under Palestinian civil control, but Israeli military control and Area 'C' is under full Israeli control.<sup>1</sup> East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip are subject to different laws entirely, and any Israeli living in any part of the West Bank or East Jerusalem is subject only to a different Israeli civil law. Even amidst the complexity of this jurisdictional division, in times of 'emergency' or whenever the Israeli military deems necessary, all Palestinians become subject to Israeli military power (Makdisi 2008). The sheer numbers of legal statuses applicable to Palestinians are only one aspect of differing subjectifications experienced by Palestinian women.

For Foucault, 'There is no sovereign, founding subject, a universal form of subject to be found everywhere. The subject is constituted through practices of subjection, or, in a more autonomous way, through practices of liberation' (Foucault, 1988p50). If the subject does not exist prior to exercises of power or resistance, then this provides an important rationale for examining how subjects are formed. Subjects are not inactive because power is not applied to them; instead, subjects are that through which power is transmitted or exercised. The subject's relation to herself always encompasses the 'communication' between codifying power and that 'which resists codes and power' (Deleuze, 1999 p85). In other words, the subject, formed through exercises of power that subjugate, has a very particular relationship

to the resistance she enacts against that subjectification. This is because the subject, in and of itself, does not exist prior to the exercise of power that forms her. This is not to say that the individual does not exist, but rather that we become subjects through exercises of power. In turn, we can resist this subjectification.

Our subject status is not fixed, it is always in flux. The exercises of power that form us as subjects shift, merge, and re-locate, and as they do, the possibilities for resistance morph as well. Our relationships to our subject statuses and to opportunities for resistance are folded against one other in that we do not inhabit merely one subject status, nor is there merely one opportunity for resistance (ibid p86). In the context of Palestinian women, such a conception of the subject as ‘folded’ is evident in the social constructs of gender and the culture of resistance to occupation prevalent in Palestinian society. Similarly, the occupation continually forms the Palestinian as subjectified, and these subjectivities and resistances are ‘folded’ against one another – in contact, yet separate. It is important to remember here that despite exercises of power being aimed at subjectification, there always exists the potential for resistance (Foucault, 1994b).

For Butler, the subject is gendered as well as gendering, illustrating the heritage of Foucault’s subject, who is constituted by power and simultaneously immersed in the exercise of power. For Butler as much as Foucault, this by no means implies that the boundaries of ‘the subject’ are fixed. Instead, the bounds of acceptability of gender (in the case of Butler) are re-negotiated and shifting (Butler, 1999 p.40). Subsequently, because the subject is not determined by subjectification, but instead formed through the repetition of performance of subjectification, there exists the possibility of changing the repetition of performance as a means of changing or resisting ones subjectivity (ibid p198). This reflects the ideas of Foucault and Deleuze that resistance to subjectivity exists wherever there is subjectivity.

Drawing upon the above engagements with ‘the subject’ allows for the formation of a working definition of ‘the subject’ that can be utilised in an analysis of Palestinian women’s experiences the corporeal subjectification of the occupation and their resistance to it. Before proceeding with the definition it is of utmost importance to re-iterate that this in no way signals the existence of a universal ‘Palestinian woman’. For example, Bedouin women in the West Bank occupy different subject positions than women with Jerusalem ID cards living in East Jerusalem. Furthermore, individual women in Bedouin communities or East Jerusalem or living in refugee camps are differently subjectified amongst one another. There is no one ‘Palestinian Woman’. I propose a definition of ‘subject’ that allows for a degree of malleability and is not fixed to certain experiences of occupation, but instead allows for a complex array of subjectifications and resistances to emerge.

For the purpose of this paper, and drawing from Deleuze and Butler, I propose that ‘the subject’ is: *she who becomes subjectified through practices which occur upon and through her body*. The domination of the Palestinian woman would not be possible without producing her as a subject. The on-going process of subjectification both produces her as subject as well as enabling her to perform that subject position. The process also provides opportunities to resist and destabilise subjectification. The subject reinstates or subverts her subjectification through conduct and counter-conduct, and this conduct and counter-conduct can occur at precisely the same moment. Thus, Palestinian women are not entrenched in the binary opposition of being either an ‘obedient’ subject or a ‘disobedient’ resister.

In relation to corporeality, subjectification relies on the physical body of the subject as a point to direct the exercise of power. It is the corporeal body through which power can be exercised to form the subject. Resistance can in turn take place through the corporeal body by challenging the subjectification of the body. Diana Coole argues that in politics the body is

‘paradoxically, the its most visible and its most invisible component’(Coole 2007, p.413).

Our corporeal bodies are easily seen, but are generally invisible to analysis.

In this paper I will bring the corporeal bodies of Palestinian women into the centre of the analysis of how subjectification and resistance are experienced and enacted. Core elements of the occupation such as the separation barrier, checkpoints, or curfews function through the regulation and control of corporeal bodies. Likewise, enactments of resistance such as demonstrations or suicide bombings/martyrdom operations<sup>2</sup> can be seen as re-asserting control over one’s own corporeal body in resistance to occupation.

There are also explicit concomitants of the corporeal body in relation to politics. The corporeal body is a site upon which politics can act (Butler 2004b; Coole, 2007). Politics can make one’s corporeal body more secure or less secure, more nourished or more malnourished. The corporeal body is what situates subjects in relation to one another and in relation to power. The exteriority of the corporeal body is what enables the formation of the subject. One cannot speak of the corporeal body’s capacity for agency without simultaneously acknowledging that one’s corporeal body is precisely what makes one vulnerable to violence, power and subjectification.

Palestinian women living in the Occupied Territories experience multiple threats to their corporeal bodies. Many of these threats occur outside the home, as women travel through Israeli military checkpoints, attend demonstrations or walk their children to school. Some of the threats occur in the home, especially in regards to house demolitions or night-time raids. More indirect threats come from economic circumstances incurred as a result of decades of occupation or imprisonment of family members. One way to centralise the corporeal can come from an examination of the common vulnerability of our corporeal bodies. This is certainly not to say that every body is equally vulnerable, but rather, our corporeal bodies are all at risk of harm (Butler 2004). The corporeal body can thus be

examined in material terms based on its actual, physical vulnerability, the one aspect common to all corporeal bodies. This is important when exploring the subjectification of Palestinian women, as the Israeli occupation heightens the corporeal vulnerability of Palestinians and leaves women at risk of bodily harm or death as well as losing a loved one because of Israeli state or settler violence. The theme of martyrdom<sup>3</sup> is obvious in every corner of the Occupied Territories, reminding Palestinians not only of their loved ones who have been killed, but also of their mutually shared corporeal vulnerability as Palestinians.

To summarise, corporeality in the context of this paper is critical because it allows for a more thorough analysis of how Palestinian women come to be subjected and how they enact resistance to that subjectification primarily through their corporeal bodies. It is their corporeal bodies which make them vulnerable, which relate them to others around them, which determine how they are treated and how they are expected to act. Their corporeal bodies are the means through which they are subjectified, exposed to operations of power and simultaneously the means by which they are able to resist the security practices of occupation.

### **Centralising Women's Lived Experiences:**

The narratives of Palestinian women utilised in this paper were collected as part of field research for my PhD. The decision to use a narrative approach to examine experiences of subjectification and resistance was drawn from the argument made by Stern (2006). She argues that centralising narratives of women's lives and experiences of security and insecurity challenge dominant Security Studies discourses by engaging with the 'contextual and specific meanings of (in)security in sites other than those privileged by the grammar of state sovereignty' (Stern 2006 pp177-178). Stern argues that narratives are texts that can be

read as security discourse that are embedded in representations of the narrator as subjects (ibid p183). In other words, while the subject exists prior to giving the narrative, the subject is re-formed through the narrative process because their subject position is an integral part of the narrative. My decision to utilise a narrative approach to Palestinian women's experiences of subjectification and resistance was rooted in this idea that narratives were discourses that held key understandings of how women saw their own subject formation and resistance rooted in daily-lived experience.

I conducted narrative interviews with 18 women over a period of six weeks in the West Bank of the Occupied Territories. The women I interviewed all had a variety of 'identities'. Each individual woman can be described in numerous ways, depending upon which 'categorisations' are used to examine them. I interviewed a mix of Muslims and Christians, aged from 25-77, various occupations and living in a variety of settings. All of these identities were intermingled, and each of my participants was extremely unique in their circumstances. The only real commonality between them was that they all self-identified as being 'Palestinian'. This demonstrates the importance of examining individual elements of the occupation, as women with different identities and coming from different areas have differing experiences of the occupation and subsequently different ideas about resistance to it.

### **'As Long as there is Occupation there will be no Security for Either of Us'**

The diversity of the elements of the Israeli occupation and the ways individual women experience corporeal subjectification as a result of them is extensive. As such, it is not possible to explore every conceivable experience of corporeal subjectification in the space of this paper. It is also important to note that the procedures, tactics and appearances of the Israeli occupation have been in constant flux since 1967. The occupation is not homogenous

in any way; it is applied differently to different Palestinians and different sections of territory on different days. Overall, since 2001, I argue that the occupation has been bolstered by the language on the global ‘War on Terror’ – as evidenced by Sharon’s 2001 comment that ‘Arafat is our bin Laden’ (Whitaker, 2001). This section will therefore focus on an in-depth analysis of two elements of the Israeli occupation that result in corporeal subjectification through the control, regulation and discipline of Palestinian women. The choice of elements is based upon the frequency with which these elements were discussed by the women I interviewed when I asked them to give narratives of their daily-lived experiences of occupation. The two elements to be discussed are settlement expansion and freedom of movement. These elements are intertwined and are also more multi-faceted than I can legitimately cover in such a short space. Therefore, the focus will be on how these elements are reflected in the narratives I collected and how they can inform the argument that the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories can be examined through the lens of corporeal subjectification.

#### *Settlement Expansion:*

In the village of Nabi Saleh, the settlement of Halamish is visible from the front of ‘Wafaa’s’ house. She described to me how the settlement expansion and the annexation of land owned by people in the village has impacted her life:

In some villages settlers invade the village, burning cars and throwing stones in houses, the break windows. Now everybody is terrified of the settlers. When we go to sleep at night we expect the wars of the settlers against us, that maybe they will invade the village. We are more afraid of the settlers than the army. (‘Wafaa’ – Elderly Matriarch, Interview 15, Nabi Saleh, 2012).

Later in the interview, 'Wafaa' explained to me that until recently the family grew much of their own food. Their land was within walking distance and they even grew enough oregano to sell. She spoke of how since recent expansion of Halamish, the only farming the family did was on Facebook (ibid).<sup>4</sup>

Another woman from the same family, aged 77, came into the house mid-way through the interview. She expressed how she had seen things change dramatically in the village since the occupation and the establishment of Halamish. She said:

'The high court stands with the settlers. Every year we have a new case, but the decision always goes with Israel. The settlers are taking more and more land every year. Maybe in 15 years' time there will be no Palestinians. Finally we will discover that our sons are not our sons, that they are settlers' ('Faiza' woman with great historical knowledge, Interview 15, Nabi Saleh, 2012).

In the village of Al Walaja, another woman explained how the settlements of Har Gilo and Gilo had grown over the years, slowly annexing more and more of Al Walaja's land. The village has lost over 80% of its territory due the 1948 war, settlement expansion and the building of the separation barrier. The size of the village prior to 1948 was just under 18,000 dunams.<sup>5</sup> Today, Al Walaja is just over 2,000 dunams and finds itself surrounded by two settlement blocs and the separation barrier. 'Samaah' explained how she saw the aim of continued settlement expansion:

Israel, the only democracy in the Middle East cannot afford to displace people in crowds like they did in 1948, they have to do it more sophisticated. This is the idea of the settlements and the wall. And, on top of that, it stops any political solution of a Palestinian state nearby them in the near future. ('Samaah', Activist, Interview 18, Al Walaja, 2012).

The testimonies from these three women demonstrate different conceptualisations of how settlement expansion has impacted their lives and how they interpret policies of settlement expansion. For 'Wafaa' settlement expansion prevented her from working and farming her family's land, leading to a dependence on buying food outside the village as well as a change in economic conditions and daily activities. The proximity of the settlement also brought the fear of violence. Both 'Faiza' and 'Samaah' discussed the demographic impacts of settlement expansions. The way 'Faiza' framed the increase in settlers – that one day women in Nabi Saleh would wake to realise their sons were settlers – is particularly indicative of how settlement expansion is framed at pushing Palestinians out of the territories, and it illustrates how some Palestinian women see the demographic struggle taking place through women's corporeal bodies. 'Samaah' expressed a similar sentiment. Thus, from these testimonies we can see how some Palestinian women living in close proximity of settlements see settlement expansion as a threat to their way of life and their continued presence on the land.

Settlement expansion has been a frequent topic for debate in the United Nations in recent years (UNHRC, 2013) and it continues unabated despite widespread international condemnation based on the acknowledgement that it is adversely affecting the possibility of a future viable Palestinian state. Along with Zionist language that posits 'Judea and Samaria' as a part of the whole of greater Israel, Israeli security discourse argues that settlements are a vital element of Israel's security apparatus. Weizman documents how multiple decisions handed down from the Israeli High Court of Justice in response to claims made by Palestinians that their land was taken for settlement expansion reflect the judge's decisions that settlements contribute to Israel's security (Weizman, 2007 pp95-106). Furthermore, in his last speech to the Knesset before he was assassinated in 1995, Rabin argued that settlements in the West Bank, and in particular the Jordan Valley, would be necessary for Israel's security (Gold, 2012). What has not been analysed in detail is the outcome settlement

expansion has on the subjectification of Palestinians through corporeal discipline, control and regulation vis-à-vis settlers.

The critical method of control exercised through settlement expansion comes from the differentiation of Palestinian and Israeli bodies. Through a mixture of Zionist and security discourses, Israelis are framed as the legitimate inhabitants of the hills of Judea and Samaria and the settlements are framed as necessary for Israeli security (Weiner and Morrison 2007, p.38). Discourse alone is not sufficient for corporeal subjectification of Palestinians, so architectural forms such as walls, fences, earth mounds, watchtowers, checkpoints, Israeli only roads and tunnels are utilised by IDF soldiers and settlers to ensure that Palestinians are regulated and disciplined in the ever-shrinking 'Palestinian areas' (UNHRC 2013 p10). This system is further supported by distinctions made between Palestinians and Israelis in law. Wherein Israeli settlers in the Occupied Territories are subject to Israeli civil law, Palestinians in the same territory are subject to Israeli military law (ibid). The results in Palestinians who are seen to pose a threat to the security of Israeli settlers being quickly identified and disciplined through arrest or detention by the IDF. Meanwhile, Israeli settlers who threaten the security of Palestinians are widely ignored. The broader outcome is that Israeli settlers and the expansion of their settlements are the focus of practices of securitisation through discursive practices that cast Palestinians as (in)secure subjects.

### *Freedom of Movement*

In multiple interviews women expressed how their freedom of movement is restricted as a result of the occupation, and how they find that restriction to be difficult to manage and accept. Restriction of freedom of movement as applied to Palestinians, like settlement expansion, relies on the construction of differentiated Israeli and Palestinian subjects.

Restricting freedom of movement for Palestinians is a means of corporeal subjectification because it regulates which geographic spaces Palestinians can enter, as well as how and when they can do so, thereby exercising comprehensive control, regulation and discipline over Palestinian bodies. These restrictions on freedom of movement are discursively framed as necessary for the security of Israelis, and like settlement expansion, they result in the creation of (in)secure Palestinian subjects as a result (Abufarha, 2009; Smith 2011; Weizman 2007). Palestinian women's narratives can shed light upon how restrictions on freedom of movement pervasively impact their daily-lives.

Since the start of the construction of the Separation Barrier and the accompanying checkpoint system, Palestinian access into Israel has been severely limited. Palestinians who have not been granted a special work permit to enter Israel have to apply for special permission to visit if they need to see a doctor, want to visit relatives, want to worship in Jerusalem or have any other need to travel to Israel. Often permissions are granted by lottery system for religious celebrations, so some Palestinians have not been able to visit Jerusalem for Ramadan, Easter or Christmas for many years. Many of the women I interviewed told me how much they wanted to travel to Jerusalem to worship:

'We feel that Jerusalem is in our hearts, because you know, many churches, many places are there. We like to go and visit and pray there, especially in the Holy Sepulchre and the Gethsemane church, I like this church very much, where Jesus Christ had his last prayer on the rock. So they (Israelis) have the right to go there whenever they like, and we don't have this freedom. We have permission twice a year, and sometimes we don't have it, it is random' ('Jana' Retired Teacher Interview 2, Beit Sahour, 2011).

'There should be peace, and we should have the right to go to Jerusalem every day to pray, as the Israelis can go every day to pray at the Wailing Wall. We are

deprived of this right. They go everywhere, but we can't go' ('Alla' Mother of martyr Interview 10, Rural Bethlehem, 2011).

For Palestinians who have had relatives killed as a result of the occupation, it is often the policy not to grant permission for the family to visit Israel. This is the case not only for the families of Palestinian militants, but for anyone who has had a family member killed. Salaam, the son of 'Fatima' was killed when a settler fired a bullet through the window of the family's kitchen during the First Intifada. The family still cannot get permission to travel to Israel:

'Because Salaam was killed, we cannot get permission to go to Jerusalem. Even now, we still can't get permission. No one in the family can get permission, not my daughters or my husband or me, not to go for Christmas or Easter' ('Fatima' Mother of martyr Interview 3, Beit Sahour, 2011).

These three narratives demonstrate how women are unable to worship as they would like to. This restriction contributes to their subject formation Palestinian subjects whose corporeal movement has to be regulated, controlled and disciplined. This restriction on their freedom of movement functions through their corporeal bodies and the identification of these corporeal bodies as 'Palestinian' bodies that can be legitimately regulated.

Getting permission to travel to Jerusalem is only one aspect of restrictions on freedom of movement. The separation barrier was not built along the 1949 Armistice (Green) Line. As a result, Palestinian communities located between the Green Line and the barrier are isolated from rest of the West Bank. According to B'Tselem, this land makes up 11.9% of the West Bank, including areas west of the barrier, and areas east of the barrier that have been partially or completely surrounded by the barrier. The total population affected is 275,320 (B'Tselem 2011).

The category of 'communities west of the barrier', also known as the 'Seam Zone', is home to 27,520 Palestinians (ibid). The status of women in these communities warrants

special attention because of the harsh measures of subjectification they experience in the simple act of leaving their homes. In the language of the Israeli state, these zones are ‘Closed Military Zones’, thus access is restricted. Furthermore, people living in these seam zones have been designated by the IDF as ‘temporary residents’ (Wiezman, 2007 p178). These discourses have critical implications for access to and exit from these areas.

Living in a community which has been encircled by or cut off by the separation barrier will result in unique forms of corporeal subjectification. Life in the seam zone is first and foremost, a life of embodied separation and isolation. The illusion of imprisonment that comes from the presence of the separation barrier collectively imposes restrictions on freedom of movement on everyone living in the seam zone, leading women living there to describe how they feel ‘caged in’ (WCLAC 2010a). A 2010 Women’s Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling report relies on testimonies of women living in the Seam Zone to establish the difficulties of daily life. One woman explained that her house was surrounded by fences, a settlement and a section of wall. She told WCLAC that:

‘It felt like a punishment for refusing to leave, to cut us off completely from the village so we couldn’t even see our neighbours or the village anymore and force us to leave’ (ibid p27).

The idea of being imprisoned resonates throughout most of the testimonies in the report, as does the notion of punishment, and fits into Foucault’s description of how the architectural form of the prison causes them to self-regulate their behaviour. Foucault refers to the Panopticon – a prison design that allows for a total surveillance of the prisoners by the guards, but prevents the prisoners from knowing if—or when--they are being watched (Foucault, 1977). While there are multiple exercises of power in the Seam Zone, the omnipresence of surveillance can cause those living there to self-regulate their behaviour so as to avoid going

outside. Women living in seam zones avoid the difficult process of leaving their houses as much as possible, furthering their feelings of imprisonment and punishment.

Smith (2011) argues that the wall is more like a Panopticon than the prisons operated by Israeli Prison Services. In order to expand upon the picture of occupation as painted by the critical geopolitical work by Smith and others, it is important to examine how Palestinians emerge as subjects as a result of elements of the occupation such as watchtowers and checkpoints. The subjectification imposed upon women in the seam zone relies upon the physical presence of the separation barrier/wall in order to impose restrictions on corporeal perceptions of freedom of movement and space. The outcome of watchtowers and checkpoints is not merely the corporeal control of the Palestinian population, but the imposition of a specific subject status that cannot move freely.

Weizman (2007) argues that the construction of various types of barriers, such as the separation wall, earth mounds and agricultural gates create ‘territorial islands.’ He writes: ‘More than a fortification system, they become bureaucratic-logistical devices for the creation and maintenance of a demographic separation’ (ibid p178). I argue that this demographic separation has the further effect of corporeal subjectification wherein Palestinian women become the (in)secure subjects as the result of the architectural practices of the barrier that are framed as necessary for Israeli security.

### **‘I Resist the Occupation because it has Stolen Many Things from me’**

In interviews, the Palestinian women with whom I spoke all put forth their ideas about the role of women in resisting the occupation. While their views on women and resistance varied, the common understanding underlying them was that it was to be expected that women would find ways to resist the occupation. Many of the women explicitly stated that the roles of

women in resistance would vary from woman to woman, and that there was no one specific form that resistance should take. Several women spoke about the importance of using only unarmed resistance, while others included militant resistance as an intrinsic part of the mosaic of women's resistance to occupation.

These narratives illustrate how Palestinian women's resistance was framed as necessary or to be expected:

'Yani, I think that each and every Palestinian is involved in politics. As we take milk from our mother's breast the milk is mixed with politics. I think that any occupied country; her women would have some involvement in politics. Now we're only in one stage, the stage of conflict will pass on' ('Dema', former prisoner, interview 17 Tulk Arm 2012).

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

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

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

From these narratives we can see how these women expect Palestinian women to be involved in resistance because of the impacts of the occupation. In particular, the first example illustrates how resistance to occupation is something that comes naturally with being Palestinian. It is also an interesting example because of the representation of the maternal body of Palestinian women as being so imbued with resistance that 'breast milk is mixed with politics'. This view of the maternal body as not only life-giving but also as politicising is a poignant example of how resistance is connected to the corporeal body and the occupation. It also places resistance within the context of daily life, and, as a life-giving element of being Palestinian.

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

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

This account came from a woman who was very active in her community. As a representative of a popular resistance movement she is involved in 'obvious' resistance, but yet she is still very aware and supportive of the way Palestinian women resist the occupation in their daily lives. This is important because she is not privileging 'obvious' high profile forms of

resistance over daily enactments of resistance which is more inclusive the broader spectrum of Palestinian women's resistance to the occupation.

Examining women's narratives on the topic of women's involvement in resistance is important because it allows for a better understanding of how resistance to occupation is embedded in daily lived experience. This challenges dominant understandings from a state-centric perspective that frame resistance as a primarily a militant activity. These narratives also demonstrate how this conceptualisation of resistance is aimed at the subjectification that results from occupation.

'Sumud' is a word one hears frequently when speaking with Palestinian women about how they conceptualise resistance to Israeli occupation. In Arabic, sumud means 'steadfastness' and can also refer to 'perseverance' or 'determination'. Sumud is described as a way of living that insists upon the rights of the Palestinian people to stay on their land—or return to their land if they were forced from it—to maintain Palestinian culture and to nurture Palestinian society (van Teefelen 2011, p.5).

In narrative interviews, women discussed their views of what sumud meant to them:

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

'Sumud, or resilience, to me, means defying, and power. It gives me energy to continue. I am not afraid of the Israelis. And I am not afraid of death. My family was forced to leave their village in 1948, near Jerusalem. We took refuge in Beit Sahour, and that's where I was born, but I feel we were deprived of our land.

Now, even if they come to destroy my home, we will stay. We will put up a tent and stay' ('Sineen', seamstress, interview 6, 2011 Dheishah refugee camp)

These representations of sumud illustrate how sumud shapes the subject formation of Palestinian women, and is an alternative to Israeli imposed subjectifications. Enacting sumud may not change the daily circumstances one experiences as a result of occupation, but it does provide Palestinians with an alternative way of interpreting their own position in society. To do so, sumud declares that going about one's daily life in spite of difficulty and hardship, and maintaining one's Palestinian identity and culture is a way to take back one's dignity.

Corporeality comes into play here in several ways, the most obvious being the continuation of a corporeal presence on the land. Sumud can also manifest in the way one carries one's body through the occupied space. Women enacting sumud take great pride in being Palestinian, and thus can convey this dignity through body language as well as through wearing clothes that transmit Palestinian culture, such as traditional Palestinian embroidery. Practicing Palestinian culture and transmitting that culture to younger generations can be seen as a performative action which insists upon the dignity of being Palestinian, thereby challenging practices of the occupation that undermine a sense of self-worth.

Another form of Palestinian resistance that women engage in—and that can be seen as performative but is altogether more violent and contentious—is suicide bombing/martyrdom operations. If one examines the discourses uttered by ten Palestinian women who became suicide bombers/martyrs, as told in their martyrdom videos, in addition to testimony from women who were prevented from carrying out their attacks, a clear relationship between corporeal oppression and corporeal resistance emerges.

Andaleeb Takafka, the fourth Palestinian suicide bomber/martyr said: 'I've chosen to say with my body what Arab leaders have failed to say...My body is a barrel of gunpowder that burns the enemy' (Hasso 2005, p.29). Hanadi Jaradat stated: 'By the power of Allah, I

have decided to become the sixth female martyrdom-seeker, who will turn her body in to shrapnel' (Gentry 2009, p.244). Reem Saleh al-Riyashi used a similar way of likening her body to a weapon when she said: 'I hope that the shredded limbs of my body would be shrapnel, tearing Zionists to pieces, knocking on heaven's door with the skulls of Zionists' (McGreal, 2004). These three women linked their own corporeal bodies to an act of resistance against the Israeli occupation. If elements of the occupation and Israeli security practice are aimed at corporeal control, regulation and discipline, then suicide bombing/martyrdom operations can be seen to represent a direct challenge to that corporeal control. Not only are the female suicide bombers/martyrs refusing to let the occupation exercise power over their corporeal bodies, they are using their corporeal bodies as the means by which they exercise resistance to the occupation.

Suicide bombings/martyrdom operations during the Second Intifada were 'successful' in that they challenged Israeli perceptions of security as they brought some of the insecurities experienced by Palestinians as a result of the occupation into the everyday civilian lives of Israelis (Long, 2006). This is not to support or defend these operations, but rather to explain the logic behind them. As Abufarha argues, 'the Palestinian sacrificers who take their lives into their own hands assert agency, control, and independence. Their performance communicates control over self-destiny in the face of political domination, curfews, imprisonment, terrorizing and constant harassment and abuse that Palestinians are subject to through their encounter with Israel' (Abufarha 2009, p.185). As a result of occupation, Palestinians experience insecurity in their daily lives, whether from army incursions, house demolitions, arrest, imprisonment, torture, extrajudicial killings, etc. These insecurities affect not only Palestinian militants, but ordinary civilians. The advent of suicide bombings/martyrdom operations dramatically changed Israeli perceptions of insecurity in public spaces in Israel. Abufarha conducted an interview with a Hamas spokesperson who

said of public spaces in Israel during the Second Intifada: ‘The Israelis are fearful for what’s coming. The bars are empty, the streets are empty, and the restaurants are empty. As they target all aspects of our life, we target their life in all of its aspects’ (ibid p207).

### **‘All the Time They Accuse Us of being Terrorists. What Kind of Terrorists Are We?’**

Palestinian women’s narratives are revealing about how the occupation and related Israeli security practices create Palestinian women as subjects through corporeal subjectification. This corporeal subjectification relies on discourses, architecture, laws and security exercises to differentiate between Israeli bodies worthy of securing and Palestinian bodies that can be made (in)secure (Abufarha, 2009; Long, 2006; Makdisi 2008; Smith, 2011). Within the territorial space of the Occupied Territories, Israeli security practices are directed at ensuring the security of settlers and the rest of the Israeli state through the construction of Palestinians as a threat. Subsequently, Israeli security practices result in the corporeal subjectification of Palestinians. In initiating security practices, the decisions about who to secure and who can be made (in)secure are based upon corporeal differentiation and practices are thus directed at the control, regulation and discipline of Palestinian’s bodies.

Palestinian women’s narrative experiences of subjectification resulting from the occupation and Israeli security practices can tell us multiple things about the relationship between security and resistance under the occupation. Firstly, the power exercised through security practices upon the corporeal bodies of Palestinians result in different corporeal subjectifications for different bodies. For Palestinian women, corporeal subjectification as a result of the occupation was different, dependent on myriad factors, such as the location of their home in relation to settlements or the separation barrier. As such, subject positions in relation to the security practices cannot be taken as given in any one situation, as different

subjects will have different subjectifications. It is for this reason that approaching corporeal subjectification from a perspective of women's narratives of lived-experience is so useful. Secondly, as long as security practices create secure and (in)secure subjects, then we should expect those made (in)secure will reject and resist this subject status. In the context of the OPT the security practices have the effect of differentiating between secure Israelis and (in)secure Palestinians. These practices like settlement expansions and restrictions on the freedom of movement and their patterns of differentiation are localised upon the corporeal body. Differentiation is legitimised by discourses that frame Israelis as threatened and thus in need of security from 'terrorist' Palestinians. These security discourses and practices will ultimately fail to make Israelis 'secure' because in the Occupied Territories, practices of 'security' result in the corporeal subjectification and (in)security of Palestinians. In such a situation, neither party can be secure because Palestinians will challenge practices that make them (in)secure through whatever means are available to them.

Palestinian women's narratives demonstrate how they understand discourses of terrorism as a part of the means of legitimising the occupation and practices of security, and they challenge the terms of these discourses:

'All the time they accuse us of being terrorists. What kind of terrorists are we?

They should look at what the Israelis do, they are the real terrorists' ('Wafaa' Interview 15, Nabi Saleh, 2012).

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

‘The world feels that our blood, Palestinian blood, is cheap. They have carried out so many killings and attacks against Palestinians. They have killed all kinds of people, pregnant women and children and men, and they have put many in jail. But when we use a martyrdom operation they say we are terrorists’ (‘Alaa’ Interview 10, Rural Bethlehem, 2011).

Here, Palestinian women recognise and address how Israeli security discourses and practices frame Palestinians as terrorists and actions taken against Palestinians as necessary for the ‘security’ of Israelis and the Israeli state.. As a result of the ‘shared’ territorial space and the stateless, non-citizen status of Palestinians, differentiations between Israeli victims and Palestinian threats are made on a basis of corporeality. Specifically, Israel has used the notion of having to ‘share’ the Occupied Territories with a ‘hostile’ Palestinian population as the justification for strictly controlling, regulating and disciplining how Palestinian bodies move through the geographical and architectural space of the territories.

While this particular territorial and citizenship arrangement is particular to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, security practices that subjugate through the corporeal control, regulation and discipline of ‘the other’ are more broadly prevalent, such as in the Caucasus, or the status of the stateless Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar or detainees in Guantanamo Bay. Through security practices in these examples, two differentiated subjects are created, those worthy of being secured, and those who are made (in)secure. The crucial element of this differential subject creation is the possibility of subjects made (in)secure engaging in resistance to these practices.

**Acknowledgements:** I would like to thank the two anonymous reviewers for their insightful and valuable comments, as well as the editorial staff of CSOS for their support. This paper was originally presented on a panel at the 2013 International Studies Association conference,

and I would like to thank the Chair, James Der Derian and the discussant, Marieke de Goede, for their helpful comments on that paper. Thanks also to Andrew Shorten and Owen Worth at the University of Limerick for their feedback on aspects of this article. Mostly, I am grateful to my research participants in the West Bank for sharing their lives, their time and their homes with me. In particular, spending two days in the village of Nabi Saleh taught me more about power, insecurity and resistance than I could have learned in a lifetime of reading.

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<sup>1</sup> For a map that illustrates how this division occurs with references to the different area designations, settlements and the separation barrier, please see the following map provided by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs:

[http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ochaopt\\_atlas\\_restricting\\_space\\_december2011.pdf](http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ochaopt_atlas_restricting_space_december2011.pdf).

For a more detailed illustration of a variety of cross-cutting issues affecting the West Bank, please see the 2012 OCHA Humanitarian Atlas. With this atlas you can look-up data for each of the villages, cities and refugee camps I visited on my field research: Bethlehem, Beit Jala, Beit Sahour, Dheishah Refugee Camp, Ramallah, TulkArm, an Nabi Saleh, and al-Walaja

[http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha\\_opt\\_humaitarian\\_atlas\\_dec\\_2012\\_web.pdf](http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_humaitarian_atlas_dec_2012_web.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> I have chosen to follow the example of Hasso, who used the same term so as to acknowledge the multiple ways of discursively referring to suicide bombers/martyrs in an attempt to discursively explain the different cultural perceptions of the women and their actions.

<sup>3</sup> In Arabic, there is a differentiation between someone who was killed as a result of the occupation – known as a shahid (martyr in English), and someone who actively sought death, such as through a martyrdom operation/suicide bombing – known as an istishhadi (roughly translates to martyrous one)(Abufarha 2009, p.10). The difference is that action is implied in the term istishhadi.

<sup>4</sup> ‘FarmVille’ is a game that can be played on Facebook where players can grow digital crops or raise digital animals.

<sup>5</sup> Ottoman system of land measurement, varies from place to place in Palestine it is 1,000 square metres

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