Border Collapse and Boundary Maintenance: Militarisation and the Micro-geographies of Violence in Israel-Palestine

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Drawing upon subaltern geopolitics and feminist geography, this article explores how militarisation shapes micro-geographies of violence and occupation in Israel-Palestine. While accounts of spectacular and large-scale political violence dominate popular imaginaries and academic analyses in/of the region, a shift to the micro-scale foregrounds the relationship between power, politics and space at the level of everyday life. In the context of Israel-Palestine, micro-geographies have revealed dynamic strategies for 'getting by' or 'dealing with' the occupation, as practiced by Palestinian populations in the face of spatialised violence. However, this article considers how Jewish Israelis actively shape the spatial micro-politics of power within and along the borders of the Israeli state. Based on 12 months of ethnographic research in Tel Aviv and West Jerusalem during 2010-2011, an analysis of everyday narratives illustrates how relations of violence, occupation and domination rely upon gendered dynamics of border collapse and boundary maintenance. Here, the borders between homefront and battlefield breakdown at the same time as communal boundaries are reproduced, generating conditions of 'total militarism' wherein military interests and agendas are both actively and passively diffused. Through gendering the militarised micro-geographies of violence among Jewish Israelis, this article reveals how individuals construct, navigate and regulate the everyday spaces of occupation, detailing more precisely how macro political power endures.

Keywords: micro-geography; militarisation; Israel-Palestine; feminist geography; subaltern geopolitics; violence

Engaging with the body of critical scholarship that highlights the centrality of micro-politics to power, this article considers how militarisation and gender relations shape the micro-geographies of violence in Israel-Palestine. Following the imperatives of feminist geography and subaltern geopolitics, the analysis presented here de-centres the state and re-gauges scale, foregrounding the relationship between power, politics and space at the

level of everyday life. In doing so, gendered dynamics of border collapse and boundary maintenance emerge as key conditions sustaining occupation and macro-political power in Israel-Palestine.

Since 1967, the Israeli state has occupied significant amounts of territory that lie beyond its internationally recognised borders, including the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem. As made evident within existing literature, Israel's continuing occupation is not limited to the exercise of military force, but entails the long-term development of social and political infrastructure, systems of economic and judicial regulation, and practices of territorial sequestration and annexation (see Yiftachel 2006; Weizman 2007; Gordon 2008; Lentin 2008; Ophir, Giovni and Hanfi 2009; Shlaim 2010). With the control of land has come the management of Palestinian populations, creating categories of non-citizens who are effectively subject to the Israeli state. As detailed by numerous scholars of Israel-Palestine, the state's approach to managing its Palestinian subjects has shifted over time, from early settler colonial practices aimed at the exploitation of natural resources (Shafir 1989; Gordon 2008) to the increasingly biopolitical regulation of life and death (Ghanim 2008; Lentin 2008). For Palestinians living in now-occupied territories, this long-term management has yielded experiences of deepening social, political, economic and spatial isolation, as physical and juridical barriers enforce a 'principle of separation' (Gordon 2008, 197-222) designed to ensure Israeli control. Imposing restrictions on movement that impact labour, education and even family patterns, Israel's policies of socio-spatial 'management' have created Bantustans in the West Bank, an open-air prison of the Gaza Strip, and a volatile 'seam zone' that distinguishes affluent (Jewish) West Jerusalem from the relative poverty of (Palestinian) East.

However, while the construction of borders and boundaries shapes the geography and lived experiences of Israel's occupation, its logics cannot be regarded as strictly divisive. Rather, the practice of occupation relies upon a degree of unpredictability in order to secure its efficacy and longevity. As Ronen Shamir (2009, 588) argues,

> 'The Occupation' in fact conceals more than it reveals. It seems to speak of a delimited space, a temporal and spatial exception, something 'out there,' whereas the occupation is in fact an all-encompassing sociopolitical configuration: a deliberate dissection of space along multi-layered lines of partition and a normative reality of strategically shifting borderlands.

As such, Israel's political, economic, social and spatial control of Palestinian territory and populations entails variability as much as order, entanglement as much as separation.

This article highlights some of the seemingly contradictory spatial logics through which Israel's occupation is produced and maintained, focusing on gendered processes of militarisation among Jewish Israelis. The first section explores existing academic research that details everyday life and micro-scale violence in Israel-Palestine, constructing a 'micro-geography of occupation' (Smith 2011a). The article then considers methodology, advancing a micro-geographical approach to the study of power, politics and space as developed within feminist geography and subaltern geopolitics. The third and fourth sections explore gendered dynamics of border collapse and boundary maintenance, which take place within Jewish Israeli society as militarisation sews conflict into the space(s) of everyday life. Occurring simultaneously, these socio-spatial dynamics generate conditions of 'total militarism' wherein military power is both actively and passively diffused.

Geographies of violence

As scholars of Israel-Palestine have revealed, spatial politics sustain relations of power across economic, social and political scales with significant geopolitical effect. Attending to the relationship between geography and society, scholars such as Juval Portugali (1993), Oren Yiftachel (2006) and Eyal Weizman (2007) reveal how spatial division effectively obscures and facilitates the expansionist logics of occupation. Yet while technologies of control may be evident or obvious in their manifestation as political, social, juridical and material boundaries, the resulting geographies additionally secure domination through more subtle means. Here, scholarship on the micro-politics of violence in Israel-Palestine foregrounds less visible means of control and management by exploring how individuals and communities understand, experience and navigate the occupation in everyday life.

In the West Bank, Julie Peteet's (1994) ground-breaking ethnographic work reveals how experiences of beating were transformed into a rite of passage among Palestinian men during the first *Intifada*, detailing the shifting meaning of somatic violence. A micro-geography emerges wherein sites of violent encounter moved from relative concealment within spaces of detention to become public spectacles witnessed by local, regional and international audiences (Peteet 1994, 36). Laleh Khalili (2007) turns to Lebanon, considering how micro-geographies of violence transcend the borders of Israel-Palestine to shape the lives of displaced Palestinian refugees. Within the space of the camp, Khalili (2007, 83) depicts how practices of commemoration foster national sentiment in conditions of enforced proximity, as marked by the display of images and slogans, the naming of streets and neighbourhoods, and the conduct of community ceremonies. Exploring how individuals navigate sites of violence, Lori Allen (2008), Sophie Richter-Devroe (2011) and Ron Harker (2011) reveal diverse strategies for

'getting by' Israel's occupation in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem, from the avoidance of checkpoints and roadblocks to cartographies of martyrdom (Allen 2008), women's 'joyful' practices of travelling (Richter-Devroe 2011), and the geographies of intimacy provided by families (Harker 2011).

Collectively, this literature reveals how micro-geographies of occupation (Smith 2011a) emerge through a dialectical relationship between force, control and violence, on the one hand, and contestation, negotiation and steadfastness, on the other. Yet following feminist geographers who emphasise that knowledge is always already situated, these analyses necessarily reflect 'a partial view from somewhere' (Hyndman 2004, 309). By narrating the centre from its margins (Sharp 2009, 2011; Harker 2011), the accounts above indeed make visible the subtle technologies specific to Israel's occupation, as well as how those subject to power act and react within the resulting space. However, as a category of political actors Jewish Israelis remain largely hidden, with the exception of soldiers, politicians and settlers whose decisions and actions directly impact Palestinian territories and communities. To an extent, this absence is addressed within the ethnographic accounts of Avram Bornstein (2002), Natalie Konopinski (2009), Juliana Ochs (2011) and Max Blumenthal (2013), who consider how ordinary Jewish Israelis take part in shaping extra-territorial violence through their understandings and experiences of conflict. Through this work we gain critical knowledge of how socio-spatial relations within Israeli society sustain occupation, through both dramatic and banal means. This article further narrows focus to explore how Jewish Israelis actively construct, navigate and regulate the micro-geographies of violence in keeping with gendered processes of militarisation, revealing a complex relationship between space and society that implicates resistance in the maintenance of power.

A note on methodology

As Israel's two main population centres, Tel Aviv and West Jerusalem provide points of contrast within the state's internationally recognised 1949 Armistice Agreements borders,[1] while sharing the relative political, economic, social and historical privilege associated with large urban cities. Chosen for their differing proximities to occupied Palestinian territories and histories of political violence, these cities provide compelling snapshots of how Jewish Israelis navigate the micro-geographies of violence in everyday life – not as *subject to* occupation, but rather as *productive of*.

From October 2010 through September 2011, I conducted twelve months of fieldwork with Jewish Israeli women and men in both sites, collecting data through in-depth interviews and participant observation. Importantly, the use of these methods aligns with the methodological approach emphasised by feminist geographers, who practice ethnography in a way that focuses attention on the everyday without losing sight of regional or globalising forces (Sharp 2004, 96). This critical ethnographic approach produces analyses that work across scales, highlighting the significance of family, home and domestic to the geopolitical (Enloe 1989; Sharp 2004; Fluri 2010; Pain, Panelli, Kindon and Little 2010; Koopman 2011). Here gender emerges as central to the multi-scalar relationships that underpin macro-political power, shaping space in intersection with other axes of difference (Staeheli and Kofman 2004, 13). Sharing this commitment to cross-scale analysis are scholars of subaltern geopolitics, who join feminist geographers in arguing for the de-centring and re-scaling of the geopolitical (Ó Tuathail 1996; Dowler and Sharp 2001; Hyndman 2004; Staeheli, Kofman and Peake 2004). Informed by postcolonial theories, subaltern geopolitics undertakes a project of

narration and representation from the margins (Sharp 2009, 2011; Harker 2011), intervening in approaches that foreground the state and political policy. Together, feminist and subaltern approaches advocate grounded research, which re-focuses academic inquiry on the micro-geographical level and entails a commitment to transformation.

With these shared interests, my fieldwork concentrated on a particular segment of the Jewish Israeli polity: those who subscribe to a 'liberal' or 'leftist position' as defined by their opposition to Israel's occupation of Palestinian Territories. This left-to-right political spectrum is specific to Jewish Israeli society and Israel-Palestine, where political categories are defined largely in relation to matters of conflict and national security. In practice, data were collected among primarily secular Ashkenazi, middle-class, heterosexual Jewish Israeli women and men living in Tel Aviv and West Jerusalem, totalling 58 interviews and over 300 days of participant observation.

While the period of research produced rich data through which to analyse the socio-spatial dimensions of conflict, this article engages with a relatively small number of participant responses. Rather than providing an account of sociological trends that reflect primarily upon the macro levels of scale and politics, in this article I undertake a close reading of four select narratives. This is not to argue that working at the everyday scale entails analysing only a small number of interviews, just as working with a significant number of narratives does not translate to working on the macro scale. Rather, the accounts related here reflect the prevailing trends made visible by the majority of Jewish Israelis interviewed in Tel Aviv and West Jerusalem during fieldwork. These narratives have been included at length and analysed in depth as speakers provided often deeply personal accounts of violence, conflict and occupation, which mirror the politics of the day through emotion and experience. This sustained

engagement with a select number of interviews conducted over the course of long-term fieldwork again aligns with the imperatives of ethnographic research, which foregrounds both the significance of human contact and the necessity of time (Skeggs 2001, 427) – as feminist ethnographers have convincingly demonstrated, these practices are particularly significant to research conducted in sites of conflict. Thus guided by feminist and subaltern approaches, the analysis presented here relates grounded theory, which illuminates the complexities and contradictions of Jewish Israeli everyday life through sustained participant engagement.

Border collapse: homefront and battlefield

As this article details, gendered processes of militarisation are central to how Jewish Israelis construct, navigate and regulate the micro-geographies of violence and occupation in everyday life. Scholars of militarism and conflict (Enloe 1989, 2000; Kimmerling 2001; Lutz 2002; Bernazzoli and Flint 2009; Higate and Henry 2011; Dowler 2012) have convincingly demonstrated how militarisation is actively produced and maintained through the blurring of boundaries, including military/civilian, public/private and political/intimate. Following feminist scholarship, gender is key to the ability of military aims and interests to permeate domestic and civilian realms, while at the same time contributing to the appearance of these domains as separate and in need of protection (see Enloe 1989; Cockburn 1998, 2007; Sjoberg and Via 2010). Within the Israeli context these gendered processes of bordering and spatialisation take place within conditions of 'total militarism' (Kimmerling 2001, 214), wherein preparation for war 'becomes part of social routine and is no longer considered a matter of public debate or political struggle.'

Inclusive of both professional and civilian dimensions, total militarism bridges military, political and social institutions and permeates Israeli state and society at all levels. As Baruch Kimmerling (2001, 215) writes,

> [Total militarism] is amply underscored by the overt and latent social significance that is attributed to military service, and by the way in which the society orients itself toward constant preparation for war, a kind of 'militarism of the mind.' In this case, the socio-political boundaries of the collectivity are determined and maintained by participation in military service and manipulation of the collectivity to sacrifice in order to support the spheres classified as belonging to national security.

Taken together, Kimmerling's (2001) claims underline how 'total militarism' takes shape through both unfinished processes of militarisation and the embrace of militarism as an ideology. In the former state, military interests and agendas are continually diffused and absorbed through often imperceptible channels, subtly normalising and naturalising readiness for violence as a condition for everyday life (Dowler 2012). In the latter, a society actively invests in and reproduces militarism as a central belief and practice, building collectivity around the project of securitisation (Cowen and Gilbert 2008).[2] With both processes at play, the Israeli military enters deeply into identity formations, social relations and collective aspirations, blurring the boundary with the civilian realm in order to facilitate the production of violence (Geyer 1989 in Levy and Sasson-Levy 2008, 353; Jacoby 2005, 42-43).

Importantly, patterns of gender underwrite the reach and reproduction of militarism among Jewish Israelis, along with its capacity to collapse borders between seemingly separate domains. Within Jewish Israeli society institutions of military, education and family remain deeply entangled (see Sharoni 1995; Lentin 2000; Abdo

and Lentin 2002; Jacoby 2005; Abdo 2011; Peled-Elhanan 2012), bound together

through intersecting gender regimes, or 'the state of play in gender relations in a given

institution' (Connell 1987, 120). Ana, a university lecturer in her mid-30s living in Tel

Aviv, highlighted the role of education as she reflected on the relationship between

military and society:

> Related to the occupation is the big role of the army – it's in everyone's lives. In
> order for an 18 year-old to go to the army he must be brainwashed from the day he
> is born. And part is the gendered military discourse. I remember in high school the
> girls with the soldier boyfriends were 'so cool.' The discourse is very gendered.
> Now women can be fighting [combat] soldiers and the position is very high status
> because it's a *male* position (interview in Tel Aviv, 6 February 2011).

Ana's narrative is not unique in naming 'brainwashing' as the reason for participation in

mandatory service, nor is she alone in noting links between the formal education system

and processes of militarisation. Fulfilment of military service is required of all Jewish

Israeli men and women upon completion of high school, for periods of three and two

years respectively (Shafir and Peled 2002, 143).[3] Many interview participants cited

indoctrination as compelling them to take part in national duty, just as they referenced

experiences of schooling wherein lessons and excursions prepared students for service.

Through Ana's narrative, the physical space of high school becomes part of the micro-

geography of violence constructed within Jewish Israeli society, constituting a physical

site in which today's pupils are transformed into tomorrow's combat soldiers, boys and

girls alike. Interestingly, Ana remembers the education system less for its nationalistic

lessons and fieldtrips than for popularity contests won by those girls with (older)

soldier-boyfriends, revealing a novel type of militarised hierarchy present within many

Israeli schools.

This brief account demonstrates how gendered discourses and practices bind education with the aims and interests of the Israeli military, shaping space, social relations and embodied experience. Here the divisions ostensibly separating 'homefront' from 'battlefield' and intimate from political collapse, as education straddles the boundary between public and private realms (Unterhalter 1999). In the context of Israel-Palestine, critical feminist scholarship details how 'homefront' becomes coded as feminine and 'battlefield' as masculine, with the former site requiring protection by those bodies mobilised militarily within the latter (Sharoni [1994] 2005; Herzog [1998] 2005; Jacoby 2005). Yet as borders collapse through militarisation, the home also becomes a site of battle. Central to the (re)production of culture, ideology and nation, the homefront produces young men and women who will fulfil mandatory conscription, and instils in them the 'latent significance of military service' (Kimmerling 2001, 215).

Then like education, the family constitutes a site of regulation and subjectification (Ong 1999) while at the same time providing a material, social and affective realm in which individuals might 'deal with' the occupation (Harker 2011, 309). As Ron Harker (2011, 312) notes in relation to Palestinian communities, 'The phrase 'dealing with' conceptualises practices that must encounter the Occupation, but are not explicitly carried out as forms of resistance to this incredibly extensive set of power relations.' As Jewish Israelis navigate the geographies of violence that sew conflict into the intimate spaces of everyday life, so too they 'deal with' the power relations of occupation, if with arguably more ambiguous effect. Aviva, a 61 year-old Jerusalemite with two children above conscription age, related how home necessitates particularly sensitive modes of navigation:

My daughter challenged my limits, she said 'Maybe I will be a combatant.' I said, 'No way. No way.' We had great discussions about the army in our family. First with our son – my partner didn't go to the army and he didn't want our son to go, but he let everyone make his own decision. He said that I didn't allow our son to go to the army. It's *true*, he's right, but I think that we *shouldn't* allow our son to go to the army! Here is the discussion. With our daughter we were more permissive because she's a girl, but she was more rebellious also. It was clear that I didn't want her to go. But I supported her, I took food, I went to the ceremonies. Here is where you have… the army gets into your house. The main way the occupation gets into your house is through the army.

Now it's less, but I was very busy with one issue when my daughter was 18 years old and her boy friends came to the house. We'd have dinner together, chat, the usual thing. These boys are in the army. And you don't ask questions, you try not to. I knew that if I asked questions I would be in a situation where I have to decide if I let them into the house. On the other side, they are responsible, but they are 18 years old… 18 years old. They are kids. You close your eyes to the occupation (interview in Jerusalem, 14 June 2011).

Through the entanglement of military with family, the space of home becomes a site in which individuals – mothers, fathers and children alike – encounter and 'deal with' the occupation, revealing an intimate geography of violence. As both men and women are required to fulfil military service, violence and conflict are sewn into the everyday lives of almost every Jewish Israeli family, often borne upon the bodies of children-soldiers seated around the dinner table. Yet here the enlistment of sons and daughters garners differing reactions, revealing how gender structures the collapse between homefront and battlefield, if in unexpected ways. While parents might be more permissive with daughters who are required to volunteer for combat positions rather than facing open conscription like sons, these children actively dispel the notion of the family's sanctity from violence. Unlike her son, Aviva's daughter ushers the military into the domain of family, allowing the occupation into the house. At the same time, Aviva actively brings

'home' to the 'battlefield' in the form of nourishment and attendance at ceremonies, again bridging the gap between family and military, however reluctantly.

While Aviva's account is significant in underlining how gender serves to structure border collapse, it must also be read as a commentary on the effects produced by 'dealing with' the occupation in the intimate space of home. Encountering violence and conflict in the guise of her daughter's boy friends seated at the kitchen table, Aviva must decide whether to 'close her eyes' to the occupation or to 'ask questions' that align with her politics and risk upsetting familial accord. By choosing not to see the occupation Aviva opts to preserve a sense of normalcy and harmony, effectively bargaining with the wider political reality in a way that preserves the seeming sanctity of family. Thus Aviva's actions highlight an ambivalent position assumed by many leftist Jewish Israelis as they encounter – but do not explicitly resist (Harker 2011) – the occupation in the micro-geography of everyday life.

Boundary maintenance: us and them, here and there

Following Doris Wastl-Walter and Lynn A. Staeheli (2004, 146), these accounts illustrate why '[…] we need to conceptualise territories as overlapping and boundaries as porous rather than as rigidly defined and completely exclusive.' As militarisation allows violence to penetrate the intimate spaces of everyday life and shapes micro-geographies that bind society to military, we see more clearly how permeability might constitute a strategy for control (Wastl-Walter and Staeheli 2004, 149). Yet the passages above also hint at the ways in which militarisation promotes separation, as expressed most clearly in the desire to preserve normalcy, harmony and sanctity.

In the context of Israel-Palestine, the maintenance of spatial and social boundaries takes place as human and territorial geography are read for familiarity or otherness. Following the work of feminist geographers, territory must be understood as

'[…] personal and relational, starting from the body, through which we experience, perform and interpret territoriality' (Wastl-Walter and Staeheli 2004, 150). Creating categories of 'us' and 'them' and realms of 'here' and 'there,' militarisation produces systematic ways of ordering and perceiving spaces and bodies, underwritten by the aim of ensuring readiness for violence. Importantly, gender emerges as central to processes of spatial and corporeal mapping in Israel-Palestine, which construct a reality in which '[a]n average Jewish Israeli can live an entire life without personally knowing, let alone befriending, a single Palestinian citizen of the same country' (Mendel 2009, 29).

As Juval Portugali (1993, 156) details, in order to make sense of the environments in which ordinary life unfolds, individuals create 'cognitive maps' which facilitate passage through space and interaction within communities. Inscribing the social and spatial, in Tel Aviv and West Jerusalem these maps take shape through gendered, racialised and sexualised valuations of safety. Sitting at a popular café in Jerusalem's Machane Yehuda market, 25 year-old Meirav recounted her experience of the city's spatial 'zones' or internal boundaries, describing how geographic seams impact lived experience and social interaction:

> Personally, there are three neighbourhoods that I feel safe on a good day to walk in. For the average Palestinian man there are five. . . .
>
> You feel the neighbourhood boundaries when you crash into them – I can't walk on the East side alone. People know who is Palestinian or Jewish, it's more than history. Palestinian guys stare at your eyes directly and Mizrahi Israelis won't. I feel more threatened by the Palestinian guys. Someone from the university, an activist, came to the AI [Alternative Information Centre][4] café in the East of the city. This guy suggested that two girls walk to the café in the East! I didn't go. He probably thinks I'm racist, but he doesn't realize. I used to live in French Hill for

three years – I've been called 'Jewish whore' enough. I was stalked, the group made my life hell. But I can't tell because what would people say? Even the police…. The police won't help French Hill students and also on the lines between. They won't help on the borderline. So the liberal leftist male activist won't believe me, the police I can't tell – I was forced into silence because it's not okay to say what Arabs do to me (interview in Jerusalem, 3 May 2011).[5]

For Meirav, encountering Palestinians in the space of annexed East Jerusalem activates memories of gendered and sexualised subjectivity, which now inform her understanding of the cityscape. Having lived on the geographical 'borderline' in the French Hill [Giv'at Shapira] neighbourhood – technically built over the Green Line in occupied territory – Meirav's subjection to sexual harassment understandably shapes her appraisal of personal safety. Significantly, Meirav's feeling of insecurity is distinctly racialised, as she relates feeling 'more threatened by the Palestinian guys' as an Ashkenazi Jewish Israeli woman. Here, the sense of 'perpetual threat' that characterises conditions of total militarism (Kimmerling 2001, 216) creates divisions along broad lines of 'Jewish Israeli' and 'Palestinian,' which correspond to the discourses of ethno-national conflict. However, Meirav's felt insecurity emerges as the product of *multiple* social relations, as she expresses feeling abandoned by the Jewish Israeli leftists with whom she shares common politics and the Israeli police who are charged with her physical protection. Together, these patterns intersect within the shared space of the city to compound Meirav's sense of vulnerability, revealing how militarisation produces gendered, racialised and sexualised modes of (in)security.

Yet those men deemed potentially 'threatening' by Meirav also experience divided urban micro-geographies as gendered, racialised and sexualised, if differently so. For many Palestinian men who traverse the same Jerusalem streets, the spatialised

entanglement of gender, race and fear also yields experiences of vulnerability, rather than a sense of power (Smith 2011b). However, Jerusalem offers a surprising degree of security for Yoni, a 28 year-old Mizrahi gay activist, despite the frequency with which he is mistakenly identified as Palestinian:

> My Ashkenazi friends have been harassed or beaten, but I'm a big, Sephardic man. When I go down the street I feel very safe. These Ashkenazi friends are white, a bit scrawny… it goes through the whole macho, manly thing…. I have an advantage that way – if you're a dark man and big, you feel safe in the city.

> KN: But what about when they check your ID?

> Yoni: I feel safe then because I know it will be okay. The inspection operates through the idea that the person blowing up is an Arab – and he looks like me. I understand the holistic experience of going through it all the time. When they realize I'm a Jew it's alright, but for Palestinians there's more…

Safety in Jerusalem appears forgone conclusion for Yoni, despite experiences that reinforce how his appearance positions him as 'other' to Meirav's white female body. Paradoxically, Yoni's sense of security actually rests in his embodiment of 'otherness,' as physical size and racialised perceptions of violence insulate him from the homophobic attacks experienced by slighter, whiter friends. Though lacking certain types of social capital – whiteness and heterosexuality – Yoni's physique and demeanour reflect the values associated with military-masculine hegemony among Jewish Israelis (Lentin 2000), understood as 'the macho manly thing.' Later in our exchange Yoni described how he actively performs hegemonic masculinity:

> You have to have a strong spine. . . . It's this macho thing that comes through the military and society. You can't be polite. If you don't know how to argue here…
> When I was in the US I'd see people raise their hand and wait to react – it was still very emotional, but they wouldn't cut in. Here that's just weird! It's very violent,

but this is how you establish your presence. You have to say, 'Fuck you! I'm going to *show* you' (interview in Jerusalem, 3 July 2011).

For Yoni, the learned and performed values of militarised masculinity guarantee safe passage within the politically charged spaces of Jerusalem, despite the (mis-)reading of his body. Here, militarisation clearly shapes space in gendered, racialised and sexualised terms, while at the same time experiences and interpretations of territory reinforce the hegemonic construction of (militarised) masculinity. As Doreen Massey (1994, 179) argues, 'From the symbolic meaning of spaces/places and the clearly gendered messages which they transmit… spaces and places are not only themselves gendered but, in their being so, they reflect and affect the ways in which gender is constructed and understood.'

Thus the narratives of Meirav and Yoni differently illustrate how categories of 'us' and 'them' emerge through assessments of safety and danger, as gendered bodies are read for their belonging in space (Yuval-Davis 1997, 47-48; Ahmed 2000, 7-9, 21-37). However, the spatialisation of violence produces not only social distinction, but also the territorial division between 'here' and 'there.' Meirav's narrative underlines the existence of a geographic 'borderline' between Israel and Palestine, upon and beyond which (Jewish) inhabitants cannot count on police and community protection. These experiences of liminality and vulnerability are carried into later life, informing her reading of bodies and constructing neighbourhood boundaries that one 'crashes into' as eyes meet. For Meirav, the safety and belonging of (Jewish Israeli) 'here' is experienced as viscerally separate from the danger and otherness of (Palestinian) 'there.' However, Yoni experiences safety and danger differently within the shared space of Jerusalem, as belonging and otherness are read together on his male Mizrahi body. While racialised experiences of inspection delay access to spaces maintained as separate, the process of

identification eventually confirms that Yoni is 'one of us.' Once passed, Yoni moves safely through the securitised space of 'here' in his embodiment of militarised hegemonic masculinity, a privilege not shared by friends whose bodies fail to convey this mode of belonging.

Common to both Meirav and Yoni's narratives, then, are the ways in which militarisation serves not only to collapse borders, but to maintain particular socio-spatial boundaries in keeping with the relations of power that underwrite occupation. As divisions between 'us' and 'them,' 'here' and 'there' emerge at the levels of city streets and neighbourhoods, micro-geographies of violence cleave public space in ways that sustain macro-political conflict. Significantly, like Aviva's earlier account these narratives attest to the ambivalent position taken up by many leftist Jewish Israelis when confronted with the occupation in the spaces of everyday life – choosing to avoid or tolerate, their actions remain suspended between resistance and sanction.

Conclusion

Through narratives of everyday life in Tel Aviv and West Jerusalem, this article has explored how Jewish Israeli women and men construct, navigate and regulate the micro-geographies of violence shaped by militarisation within and along the borders of the Israeli state. Following feminist and subaltern geopolitical approaches, analysis focused on the levels of subjectivity and social relations, effectively de-centring the state – the discussion looked not to the governing elite, but to ordinary citizens whose behaviours and perceptions reflect and affect macro-level politics. The analysis of narratives has also re-gauged scale, '[…] changing the geometry of social and political power' (Hyndman 2004, 316) in ways that 'defamiliarise' the everyday and embed the actions and attitudes of individuals within the geopolitics of occupation. In doing so, the accounts of Jewish Israeli women and men trouble the seemingly easy divisions and

binary logics that sustain conflict, while at the same time illustrating how they are made real at the level of lived experience and social interaction.

In everyday life Jewish Israelis 'deal with' the occupation (Harker 2011), navigating its micro-geographies of violence that take shape within and across domestic and urban spaces. These micro-geographies emerge in part through simultaneous processes of border collapse and boundary maintenance, as militarisation generates categories of sameness and otherness, estimations of belonging and threat, and zones of safety and insecurity. Significantly, the superimposition of these processes is precisely what allows conditions of 'total militarism' (Kimmerling 2001) to take hold within Jewish Israeli society. By bridging the gap between militarisation as a seemingly undetectable process and militarism as an embraced ideology, border collapse and boundary maintenance sew military power deeply into everyday life. Permeating the borders imagined to separate homefront/battlefield, intimate/political, and private/public, militarisation ushers military interests and agendas into civilian life through institutions of education and family, binding the spaces of school and home with the territory of nation. Yet at the same time, militarisation also cements division through the maintenance of social and spatial boundaries. Here, cartographies of (potential) violence take shape through logical grids that distinguish between 'us' and 'them,' 'here' and 'there,' enabling citizen-subjects to actively read bodies, space and bodies in space according to estimations of threat and otherness. In the context of Israel's 'military-masculine hegemony' (Lentin 2000), these dynamics of border collapse and boundary maintenance importantly take root in – and give rise to – patterns of gender, through which Jewish Israeli women and men 'socio-spatially order their lives' (Portugali 1993, 57).

In an effort to deepen knowledge of how micro-politics maintain conflict, violence and occupation, this close reading of ethnographic narratives focused not on those Jewish Israelis who actively support Israel's continuing control of Palestinian territories and populations, but on individuals who express opposition. As the intimate realms of home and family intertwine with city streets and neighbourhood boundaries, the over-layering of space generates embodied experiences, performances and interpretations that implicate those who subscribe to a 'liberal' or 'leftist' position in the production and maintenance of power. Similar to Palestinians whose practices of 'getting by' or 'dealing with' the occupation reveal strategies for the normalisation or routinisation of daily violence (Allen 2008; Harker 2011), the actions of these Jewish Israelis often do not constitute forms of resistance to hegemonic power relations. Yet unlike Palestinians living in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem, Jewish Israeli leftists are not *subject to* the occupation – rather, in many ways their navigation of the socio-spatial micro-geographies of violence sustains domination. As these individuals encounter the occupation in the spaces of everyday life they participate in militarisation, not passively but actively, taking up ambivalent positions that reveal more precisely how hegemonic power endures.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1 Negotiations in 1949 resulted in agreed borders between Israel and Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria, successively (Shlaim 2000, 41-47); according to these agreements, the bounded area of the Israeli state does not include the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Golan Heights, Sinai Peninsula or entirety of Jerusalem.

3 Many thanks to an anonymous reviewer for underlining this important methodological point.

4 Many thanks to Alexandra Hyde for helping me to think through these tensions.

6 Though all citizens are legally required to undertake and complete service, in practice Palestinian citizens of Israel are precluded from doing so by virtue of their association with threat to national (Jewish) security (See Shafir and Peled 2002, 126-127).

9 The Alternative Information Centre is a Jerusalem-based joint Palestinian-Israeli activist organisation; see http://www.alternativenews.org/english/index.php/about-the-aic.

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