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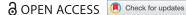Cultural Geography, Wageningen University and Research, Wageningen, The Netherlands

ABSTRACT

When Israel occupied the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in 1967, restrictions on Palestinian movement were gradually put in place. Today an intricate 'architecture of occupation' has been established – made up of numerous material barriers, the continuous expansion of illegal Israeli settlements on the West Bank, and the establishment of an elaborate checkpoint system. For most inhabitants of the West Bank, passing through an Israeli checkpoint is a daily ritual they cannot avoid. In this article, I analyse two car checkpoints in the Bethlehem area: The Tunnels and Al Walaja, and the experiences of the Palestinian and Jewish Israeli commuters subjected to them. I argue that these checkpoints are spaces where two different, but inherently connected, mobility regimes meet: providing Jewish settlers swift and seamless passage, while controlling and hindering Palestinian commuters. I indicate how the existence of these two mobility regimes is only possible due to the low-tech design of the checkpoints, as well as the implementation of numerous biopolitical categories by the checkpoints managers. The implementation of these biopolitical categories was experienced by my interviewees as highly arbitrary as it allows the Israeli soldiers to act 'biopolitically on the spot', reinstating over and over again the asymmetrical relationship between the occupier and occupied. Moreover, I analyse how Palestinian commuters employ their 'checkpoint knowledge' in response to this arbitrariness to try to positively influence their passages: incorporating the rules and regulations as much as possible or trying to manipulate and twist the checkpoints' practices and biopolitical categories.

Introduction

I am on a go-along interview with Hajar, a 22-year-old Palestinian student with an Israeli passport. This morning we are driving from her home in Beit Jala to the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and, on our way, we will pass The Tunnels checkpoint. We get in line to pass the checkpoint and Hajar smiles at me nervously. While Hajar and I should have no trouble passing the checkpoint, and she had told me during a previous interview she was almost never stopped, she is worried now. We were passed by very slowly and extensively watched by a couple of Israeli border police when exiting her street and she said she felt that

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today nothing would go as usual. Although I know we are allowed to pass the checkpoint, she is making me nervous now, too. As she explained, it all comes down to the mood of the soldiers. While Jewish settlers seem to always fly through the checkpoint, if the soldiers feel like making the lives of Palestinians difficult, they can and they will.

Field notes excerpt of the author, 16 June 2016.

Since Israel occupied the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in 1967, the restricted movement of Palestinians has increasingly been juxtaposed to the unrestricted movements of 620,000 Jewish settlers (B'Tselem 2019). During the first decades of the Israeli occupation, control on Palestinians' movements was still easily circumvented. However, an intricate 'architecture of occupation' has developed in the West Bank after over 50 years of occupation (Weizman 2007). These years saw a growing number of Jewish settlements and their related bypass roads, the implementation of an elaborate checkpoint system and the construction of 'the Wall', the separation barrier the Israeli government is building since 2002 in the West Bank. In this process, the presence of Palestinians living in the West Bank has become separated and hidden from the daily lives of Jewish settlers. While the Green Line has become increasingly difficult to identify, the ideal of Jewish settlers to live in 'Greater Israel' seems more real now than ever (Allegra, Handel, and Maggor 2017). One of the materialities that disrupt this are the numerous checkpoints Jewish settlers have to pass through on a daily basis. While the majority of the checkpoints aimed at the passage of Jewish settlers do not allow the passage of West Bank Palestinians, they are used by Palestinians living in Jerusalem and Israel.[1] These Palestinians, who carry Jerusalem or Israeli identity (ID) cards, have the same legal level of freedom of mobility as Jewish Israelis do and share the same spaces. However, as will become clear in this paper, they do not experience this as such: while the mobility of Jewish Israelis is enhanced as much as possible by the Israeli state and its 'settlement project' – aimed at the continued erasure of the Green Line – the mobility of Palestinians with Jerusalem and Israeli ID cards is controlled and frequently hindered.

Numerous academics have analysed the checkpoints in the West Bank (see, amongst others, Braverman 2011, 2012; Griffiths and Repo 2018; Hammami 2004, 2010, 2015, 2019; Kotef and Amir 2015; Mansbach 2009, 2012, 2015; Rijke and Minca 2018, 2019; Tawil-Souri 2009, 2010, 2011). In these analyses, the workings of the checkpoints are discussed, the Palestinian experience of passing through them analysed, and the influence of the presence of Israeli observers is considered. These analyses provide important insights into the checkpoint regimes. However, these studies are focused on pedestrian checkpoints predominately used by Palestinians with a West Bank ID card. Few authors have analysed the car checkpoints that both Jewish Israelis and Palestinians with Jerusalem and Israeli ID cards use (Bishara 2015; Parizot 2009). The work of anthropologists Cédric Parizot (2009) and Amahl Bishara (2015), with which

I engage more thoroughly in the upcoming pages, illustrates the interplay between the slow and laboured checkpoint passages of Palestinians and the fast and smooth passages of Jewish settlers, as well as the diverse ways in which commuters engage with the shared car checkpoints.

In this article, I add to this body of work by analysing two car checkpoints, The Tunnels and Al Walaja checkpoints,[2] in the Bethlehem area as spatial political technologies. These two checkpoints, which have not yet been the focus of a study and are used both by Palestinians with Jerusalem and Israeli ID cards and by Jewish settlers, are examples of places where two opposing regimes of mobility are brought together: one focused on the speedy and smooth movement of Jewish settlers, the other on the limitation and control of Palestinian movement. I argue that this has been translated into the design and functioning of these two 'low-tech' car checkpoints, in which Israeli soldiers make the decision about who is stopped and questioned and who can pass through unhindered. In this article I indicate how this decision, which is based on the implementation of several biopolitical categorisations, was experienced by my Palestinian interviewees as being made in a highly unpredictable and arbitrary way. This arbitrariness, which I elaborate on later, is inherent to the checkpoint regime, and the occupation in general, and reproduces, over and over again, the asymmetrical relationship between the occupier and occupied. Moreover, as I show with several examples, Palestinians engage with the checkpoints' soldiers and regime in specific ways, employing their 'checkpoint knowledge' to try to positively influence their checkpoint passages: some tried to behave in ways that they expected the soldiers want them to behave, others played with the biopolitical categories employed in the checkpoints in order to pass unhindered. As such, in this paper I indicate how a biopolitical framework inspired by the work of Foucault allows for an investigation of the important role played by the spatial design of checkpoints, their (lack of) machines and the specific set of relationships that are produced by the constant interplay between the commuters, checkpoints managers and the low-tech design of the checkpoints. Furthermore, by analysing the checkpoint experiences of Palestinians with Jerusalem and Israeli ID cards, as well as the experiences of Jewish settlers, I show the different levels of freedom of movement experienced, the workings of the biopolitical categories implemented and the difference-that-bodies-make when screened by the checkpoint technologies.

To do this, I first position the checkpoints in the larger architecture of the Israeli occupation, in which I address their role as arbitrary openings in a larger system of enclosures aimed at the Palestinian inhabitants of the West Bank and Israel. Then I discuss the biopolitical analytical framework that is used in this article and briefly introduce Foucault's arguments concerning the importance of surveillance and circulation. Here, I elaborate on Foucault's term 'political technologies'. After a concise description of the methods used to collect the data presented, I discuss the car checkpoint experiences of the

Palestinians and Jewish settlers interviewed. In these sections, I describe the way in which the checkpoints function and how the interviewees engaged with them. Finally, I offer some concluding remarks in which I indicate how analysing checkpoints as spatial political technologies entails paying attention to how they produce, via the agency of their human and non-human components, specific geographies resulting in smooth passage for Jewish settlers and in the limitation and control of the movement of Palestinians. Furthermore, I argue that these checkpoints are reproduced and challenged by diverse and creative forms of engagement on the part of Palestinians subjected to the checkpoints' spatial regimes.

Checkpoints and the Settlement Project

Checkpoints play an important role in the architecture of occupation (Weizman 2007). There are 98 checkpoints inside the West Bank and on its 'border' with Israel.[3] These range from large, meticulously designed 'terminal checkpoints' filled with numerous machines, such as turnstiles, cameras, X-ray machines, metal detectors, fingerprint- and iris-scanning devices (Rijke and Minca 2018, 2019); to two fences with a cabin in the middle; to the 'tollbooth'-like car checkpoints analysed here.

Checkpoints are a technology that, together with the Wall and numerous other material barriers, help create Jewish-Israeli-only spaces. These spaces, which are inhabited by the more than 600,000 Jewish settlers living in the West Bank (Allegra, Handel, and Maggor 2017), have been separated from the neighbouring Palestinian spaces through the use of material barriers and the creation of bypass roads. The settlements cover almost 10 per cent of the West Bank and control another 30 per cent, bringing the total percentage of land under direct control of the regional councils of the settlements to 40 per cent of the West Bank (B'Tselem 2019). Most of these settlements are relatively small. Almost 50 per cent of the settlements are inhabited by less than 500 people, almost 40 per cent have between 500 and 5000 inhabitants, and only 12 per cent of the settlements have over 5000 inhabitants (Peacenow 2019).

Due to their small size, the inhabitants have to leave their settlement to go to work or school, do their shopping and visit their families and friends. Therefore, the Jewish settlers required direct connections to other settlements and to Israel (Allegra, Handel, and Maggor 2017). Over the years, hundreds of kilometres of bypass roads have been constructed to achieve this (Handel 2014). While only a minority of the roads is explicitly illegal for West Bank Palestinians to use, the way these are constructed and securitized is intended to limit their use. These roads, for instance, do not always have ramps leading to the Palestinian towns located next to them and, when they do, these ramps are often heavily securitized and their usage regulated by checkpoints.

In this way, a parallel road system has been created, in which Jewish settlers can move smoothly and quickly in a continuously connected space and Palestinians are slowed down, marginalized to slow backroads, and forced to take long detours and to pass through numerous checkpoints. This parallel road system is translated into two mobility regimes: one aimed at the smooth movement of Jewish settlers, the other at frustrating and controlling the movement of Palestinians. The major effects of the Israeli road structure in the West Bank on Palestinian life and the possibility of a future Palestinian state have been analysed in detail by authors such as Julie Peteet (2017), Eyal Weizman (2007), Ariel Handel (2009, 2011, 2014, 2016) and Hagar Kotef (2015). As argued by Marco Allegra, Ariel Handel and Erez Maggor, the bypass roads are an important mechanism in the 'normalization of the Jewish presence in the West Bank (…) i.e., the ongoing incorporation of the settlements into Israel's social, economic and administrative fabric underlying the development of Israel's settlement policy' (2017, 1). By connecting the settlements not only to each other, but also to Israel through the creation of a continuous thoroughfare, the bypass roads work towards erasing the Green Line. The settlements are no longer placed 'outside Israeli society', but are deeply entrenched in Israeli economic and political life. The bypass roads in many places look like any other highway in Israel, with multiple lanes, petrol stations, signs and lighting, hiding their position 'behind' the Green Line (Salamanca 2015). Furthermore, the bypass roads do not only erase the Green Line (see, amongst others, the work of Allegra, Handel, and Maggor 2017; Maidhof 2013; 2016 on the erasure of the Green Line in the narratives of Jewish settlers), they also hide the presence of Palestinians. This erasure, a strategy used in numerous settler colonial contexts as detailed by Lorenzo Veracini (2010), further entrenches the legitimacy of the existence of a Jewish state that includes the West Bank: 'Greater Israel'. As such, the two mobility regimes may ostensibly seem oppositional, but are actually two sides of the same coin; aimed at the continuing erasure of the Green Line and the establishment of 'Greater Israel'.

However, these bypass roads are not the same as other highways in Israel, which is evidenced by the presence of numerous soldiers, the large concrete blocks that are positioned at bus stops, the (still persistent) sight of Palestinian towns and Palestinian cars, and the checkpoints. While the majority of these checkpoints are aimed at controlling and possibly hindering the movement of West Bank Palestinians, some are also positioned on routes taken by Jewish settlers and Palestinians with Jerusalem and Israeli ID cards. The Tunnels and Al Walaja checkpoints are examples of such checkpoints. As stated earlier, only a relatively small group of academics has analysed the workings of this type of checkpoint and the experiences of the commuters subjected to them. Here, I wish to discuss the work of Amahl Bishara (2015) and Cédric Parizot (2009).

In her article entitled 'Driving while Palestinian', Amahl Bishara (2015) ana-lysed how Israeli Palestinians smuggled West Bank Palestinians through car checkpoints into Israel. In her work she did not specifically focus on checkpoints, but described several experiences she had while driving around in the West Bank and into Israel. One of these experiences detailed passing a checkpoint. Here, she explained that one of her interviewees, a Palestinian woman with an Israeli ID card, had smuggled West Bank Palestinians without the proper permit through car checkpoints. For this act of defiance, she used her knowledge about who is more likely to be stopped and checked while passing through these car check-points. Examples of this knowledge are, for instance, which road to use when approaching the checkpoint and where to position whom in the car: the younger, least modestly dressed woman in the front while avoiding positioning young men in such a visible place. This knowledge, gained, as she stated, 'by the skin of one's teeth, uncomfortably and in fear' (Bishara 2015, 43), made it possible for her interviewee to circumvent the Israeli regime of enclosure.

Cédric Parizot (2009) focused on one specific checkpoint in his analysis, namely the Meitar/Wadi Al-Khalil checkpoint, which is located in the south of the West Bank. In his analysis, he compared the experiences of Jewish settlers, Bedouins of the Negev/Nagab and West Bank Palestinians who use the check-point. These three groups all pass through the checkpoint and, as such, share the same space. This is most explicit, as Parizot explained, with the Jewish settlers and Bedouins, who both drive through the checkpoint using the same car lanes. However, Parizot argued that they are subjected to different regimes of control and mobility. The Jewish settlers experienced their time spent passing through the checkpoint as 'temporal pollution' (2009, 15) – as undesired time – a means to achieve an end without any intrinsic value. Their checkpoint passage was simply part of a steady and predictable journey. While the Bedouins legally should have the same freedom of movement as the Jewish Israelis, this group, who Parizot stated are treated in an equally precarious way as Palestinians with a Jerusalem ID, experienced their passages in a very different way. They were subjected to uncomfortable, humiliating and at times violent interactions with Israeli forces. For West Bank Palestinians, the least mobile of the three groups, the checkpoint passages were central to their lives. Although they considered the passages a waste of time, they did represent very significant moments in their daily lives. Whether or not one would be able to pass was never certain and this meant the same was true for their ability to reach their work, school or family.

In this article, I add to these works by analysing the checkpoint experi-ences of Palestinians with Jerusalem and Israeli ID cards and Jewish settlers with a biopolitical framework inspired by the work of Foucault. I engage with the work of Bishara (2015) and Parizot (2009) throughout my analysis, indicating the differences between the experiences of the Jewish settlers and the Palestinians with Jerusalem and Israeli ID cards who I have interviewed, and the ways these latter used their 'checkpoint knowledge' to 'improve' their

checkpoint passages. Furthermore, I add to these works by indicating the important role played by the spatial designs of the checkpoints, in which ways the checkpoint regimes are the outcome of the constant interplay between the commuters, checkpoint managers and low-tech design, as well as the important difference-that-bodies-make when screened by the checkpoint technologies.

Surveillance in the Architecture of Occupation

Besides helping to create Jewish-Israeli spaces, the checkpoints are also a means of surveillance. They have not been constructed to completely stop Palestinian movement (as Amir 2013; Hammami 2015; Handel 2009; 2011, 2014; Kotef 2015 have also argued). Instead, they represent key spatial political technologies that monitor, discipline and/or selectively limit the mobility of Palestinians. As Polly Pallister-Wilkins (2016) argued, the working of the barriers in the West Bank as a security apparatus is dependent upon the existence of checkpoints. One should always keep in mind when studying barriers/walls that 'they include openings, checkpoints and gates that allow for the movement of people and goods' (Pallister-Wilkins 2016, 154). As also stated by Parsons and Salter (2008), the Israeli barriers are not in place to stop movement; they are there to control porosity, and in the process represent an important biopolitical technology in the occupation (2008, 703). These openings, Pallister-Wilkins argued elsewhere, 'enable Israel to comprehensively regulate Palestinian circulation, discipline and govern the occupied population using topographical, spatial and material forms of control working in conjunction with the forces of circulation' (2015, 451). Following these authors, I examine how the checkpoints function as biopolitical security technologies that the Israeli state uses to control porosity and the flow of population.

Analysing checkpoints as political technologies – a term I take from the work of Michel Foucault (1977) – entails analysing the checkpoints as made up of specific practices and techniques aimed at organizing the bodies subjected to them (Behrent 2013; Elden 2013; Katz, Martin, and Minca 2018; Minca 2015; Rijke and Minca 2018, 2019; Simon 2013). It entails focusing on methods of calculation, the controlling of mobility and the role played by 'eruptive' and 'withheld' violence (Azoulay and Ophir 2009) in their workings. It also sheds light on power as productive and creative, 'as a relationship that moulds, adapts, triggers, and stimulates individual behaviour, particularly by shaping bodily conduct' (Behrent 2013, 60). This does not mean that the mechanisms analysed do not have violent effects but rather that, when analysing these mechanisms, one should focus on what they *produce* – such as, for instance, the knowledge of Palestinian commuters on how to pass through the checkpoints with the least amount of friction. It

also brings into frame the interplay of human and non-human interactions. As stated by Foucault, the exercise of power is not 'a naked fact' (1982, 345), but it is influenced by and influences the space in which the relationship takes place. Analysing these relationships entails acknowledging that they are influenced by and always put into operation systems of differentiation – differences in privilege, economic status, linguistics, and so forth – and the material means that are used as enforcement – the threat of weapons, but also systems of surveillance, archives, rules and more (Foucault 1982, 344). Here, I include a spatial element by framing the checkpoints as *spatial political technologies* (Katz, Martin, and Minca 2018; Minca 2015; Rijke and Minca 2018, 2019), and by analysing how these produce selective, arbitrary and mutable geographies of mobility.

This choice of words is deliberate, because while the checkpoints are porous openings in the larger architecture of occupation, they do not always function in a predictable and stable way. More precisely, the commute for Palestinians is never entirely predictable. Whether a passage will be smooth or long; whether the Israeli soldier managing the checkpoint will be polite, rude, or violent; whether or not a permit will provide passage; or whether or not the checkpoint will be closed all together – one can never be sure. As it has been argued by Azoulay and Ophir (2009), due to the constant arbitrary workings of the checkpoint regime, the only two things Palestinians can learn in their interactions with Israeli forces inside these points of friction is 'the absolute submission of the Palestinian to the agents of the Israeli ruling power and the need to relearn again and again what is expected in order to either please or avoid them' (2009, 115). The Palestinian moving bodies are disciplined, produced, to know they can never predict how their commute will go and that they will have to incorporate any unexpected changes in their daily routine. This arbitrary functioning of the checkpoints is not an unintended by-product of the Israeli occupation. Instead, their arbitrary management appears to be one of the main functions of the checkpoints. As stated by Yael Berda (2018), the occupation regime should not be seen as a regime of rights but rather as a 'regime of privileges'. She explained that the Palestinian subject is dependent upon the goodwill of the ruler. Compared to a regime in which a subject can call upon certain rights, privileges can be withdrawn in an administrative decision, without prior notice or explanation (Berda 2018, 40).

This regime of privileges is based upon the use by the Israeli occupation regime of numerous categorizations to differentiate between Palestinians – such as ID card, gender, religion, hometown, occupation, marital status (Peteet 2017). Within the checkpoints, the permit system is the most important tool of categorization. The first differentiation is made between commuters who need a permit to pass a checkpoint, those who do not need a permit and those who are unable to get one. Individuals who do not need a permit are Palestinians with a foreign passport, an Israeli passport or Jerusalem ID card, foreign nationals

and Jewish Israelis, including Jewish settlers. Palestinians with a West Bank ID card need a permit and a magnetic card, on which their (biometric) data is registered.[4] The Palestinians who need a permit are further categorized according to the type of permit with which they are travelling. The last category is a group of Palestinians who are unable to get a permit or a magnetic card due to the fact that they have been blacklisted by Israeli authorities. According to Berda (2018), 200,000 residents of the West Bank have been included in this list. Blacklisting may occur for numerous reasons and often without any explanation or warning.

Despite these obstacles, Palestinians keep on moving, and thousands pass through checkpoints every day and employ diverse strategies to try to improve their passages. Analysing their experiences compared to those of the Jewish settlers is the main focus of this article.

Checkpoint Methods

This analysis is based on research developed during a seven-month period of fieldwork spent in the Bethlehem area in 2016, 2017 and 2019. As part of a larger research project focused on the workings of checkpoints in this area (Rijke and Minca 2018, 2019), I aimed to explore the dynamics of The Tunnels and Al Walaja car checkpoints. To do this, I conducted 34 interviews. I have interviewed eight Palestinians either with a Jerusalem or Israeli ID card and eleven Jewish settlers, nearly all of them twice. The interviewees, 13 women and six men, whose age ranged from 21 to 65 years old, regularly passed through the two car checkpoints analysed. The Palestinians I interviewed lived either in Bethlehem or in the surrounding villages. All the Jewish settlers lived in the Har Gilo settlement, located south of Jerusalem and east of Bethlehem. Both the Palestinians and Jewish settlers I interviewed travelled regularly to Jerusalem on their way to work or school. Besides these interviews and to further observe the workings of these checkpoints, I regularly crossed these checkpoints independently during my stays in the West Bank.

The data I discuss here were collected using methods that have been largely inspired by Ivinson and Renold (2013), Renold and Ivinson (2014) and Rose, Degen, and Basdas (2010). The combination of go-along interviews – where I joined my respondents on their way to work or school – and in-depth interviews, which usually took place in the home of the interviewee, and observations allowed me to analyse the way these car checkpoints work and the impact they have. The go-along interviews specifically allowed me to observe and experience the daily engagements of my interviewees, both Palestinians and Jewish settlers, with the checkpoint regime. During these go-along interviews I was able to further discuss the checkpoint experiences that my interviewees had already brought up during the in-depth home interviews, and observe their passages directly. As such,

I experienced the differences that the two inherently connected mobility regimes created while travelling through the checkpoints with my interviewees. For instance, while the Jewish settlers never stopped talking to me when we were driving through the checkpoint, at most absently waving at the soldiers; my Palestinian interviewees often fell silent when we were passing through.

Furthermore, by assessing my own positionality as a white woman with a European passport, the different experiences of different bodies became all the more clearer. I was never stopped at these checkpoints, something undoubtedly influenced by my white skin and blond hair. My interviewees often commented on this when we were discussing who was more likely to be stopped in these car checkpoints. John,[5] a 27-year-old Palestinian, for example, remarked: 'you would be good in the car when passing the checkpoint!' (interview, 22 May 2017), while 46-year-old settler Ariel commented that 'we would not be stopped with you in the car' (interview, 9 July 2016).

The Tunnels and Al Walaja Checkpoints: where Two Mobility Regimes Meet

The Tunnels and Al Walaja checkpoints are both located west of Bethlehem and are considered 'border checkpoints' by the Israeli army (B'Tselem 2018). Al Walaja checkpoint is indeed on the Green Line and positioned close to the Palestinian town it has been named after, Al Walaja. The Tunnels checkpoint is located several kilometres west of the Green Line, inside the West Bank. It has four lanes with four soldier booths leading in the direction of Jerusalem, two lanes leading in the direction of Bethlehem/Hebron, as well as watch towers and a separate area where cars can be directed to for further inspection (see Figure 1). Al Walaja checkpoint is considerably smaller; it has one lane in both directions and a small area to the side where cars can be further inspected.

The checkpoints can be considered to be 'low-tech'. Besides cameras there are no visible machines present – there is not even a traffic arm to stop the cars from driving up to the checkpoints. The only mechanisms used to slow down cars is the bumps on the road, the soldiers and the guns they are armed with. Often, especially during rush hour, there are several vehicles waiting to drive through the checkpoints. When arriving at the front of the queue on the way to Jerusalem and Israel, a vehicle is confronted with one or two armed soldiers. There are no soldiers in the direction of Bethlehem and Hebron.

Only commuters with Israeli or Jerusalem ID cards are allowed to use both these checkpoints.[6] Since they are 'car checkpoints', they can only be passed while inside a vehicle. This vehicle has to have a yellow – Israeli – number plate. Vehicles with green-white – Palestinian – number plates are not allowed to pass through these checkpoints.[7] The Israeli and Jerusalem ID cards mean these commuters can travel to Israel and Jerusalem without having to acquire permits. Hence, unlike checkpoints used by West Bank Palestinians, The Tunnels and Al

Figure 1. The tunnels checkpoint (source: photo by the author, May 2017).

Walaja checkpoints do not revolve around checking the permits of the people travelling through them. This does not mean that these checkpoints do not control and discipline the passages of (some of) its users. More specifically, these checkpoints bring together two different, but inherently connected, mobility regimes: providing Jewish settlers swift passage, while simultaneously stopping and controlling Palestinians with Israeli and Jerusalem ID cards – who can be stopped by the soldiers for a short chat, an ID check or a search of their car, but who can also be denied passage or even be detained.

To ensure the fast passage of the settlers, not every car is stopped inside these checkpoints. As explained by 47-year-old Fadwa, a Palestinian woman who holds an Israeli ID card, 'it is impossible to check everyone at The Tunnels because Jewish people also use it and they [the soldiers] do not want to delay them' (interview, 12 June 2016). This means that there is always the possibility of not being stopped and checked. Although Palestinians carrying Israeli or Jerusalem ID cards should legally enjoy the same level of freedom of movement as Jewish Israelis, which includes the Jewish settlers, their checkpoint passages are often associated with tense and humiliating contacts with Israeli forces, something Cédric Parizot also found in his analysis of the checkpoint passages of Jewish settlers and Bedouins (2009). Most of my Palestinian interviewees were stopped and checked regularly at these checkpoints. As explained by 27-year-old clergyman John:

> When you see the long line of cars at the checkpoint, you realize you are going to be late for work. You see the soldiers checking a lot of the cars and you start brainstorming: Do I have something in my car? Tools? Any food? Did I think of my ID? That is something you always have to worry about. (Interview, 22 May 2017)

The Jewish settlers I interviewed did not experience their checkpoint passages in the same way. As 64-year-old Jewish settler David notes, 'I am never stopped. The only time I have to stop is because they stop a car in front of

me' (interview, 4 June 2017). Another example is Hannah, a 44-year-old Jewish settler, 'I usually just wave at them, tell them "Good morning" or "Good day" and continue on' (interview, 5 July 2016). This was also the experience of 25-year-old Esther, 'I just say "Hi" to the soldiers, and go through' (interview, 22 June 2016). Here, it becomes clear how the checkpoint passages of Jewish settlers seemed to represent a formality, an annoyance perhaps if they caused delay due to heavy traffic. A checkpoint experience in which one would be subjected to engaging more extensively with the checkpoint regime would clash with the 'settlement project' and its accompanying erasure of the Green Line.

While at first sight it could be expected that Palestinians with Israeli and Jerusalem ID cards are stopped and checked to ensure that they do possess the right papers, Salah, a 47-year-old Palestinian with an Israeli ID card, mentioned a possible other reason behind the random stops. Salah, who was born in Jerusalem with a Jerusalem ID, had gained the Israeli ID card through his employment with the Israeli police during the 1990s. He travelled from his home in Beit Jala to Jerusalem five days a week, usually passing The Tunnels checkpoint on his way. Salah stated he was stopped often: 'I am stopped many, many times. You can say one out every of three or four times' (interview, 12 May 2017). He explained what he thought was behind the random stops:

> Often the soldiers know me, they see me pass through the checkpoint every day. But they still want to stop me. It's a matter of psychology. They want to give you the feeling that everybody can expect to be stopped, they don't want you to feel free. (Interview, 12 May 2017).

Here, one can see how the checkpoints work towards disciplining Palestinian commuters to believe that they can never predict how their commute will go by subjecting them to specific techniques aimed at controlling their mobility.

However, all cars that can pass through these checkpoints are Israeli. This means that the soldiers must differentiate one Israeli car from another, and they have to do this quickly, to ensure that the Jewish Israeli drivers are not slowed down too much. As stated before, these checkpoints are low-tech. Hence, there are no machines present to aid the soldiers in making the decision about who to stop and who to let pass without delay. While this may seem unexpected, especially when compared to other Israeli checkpoints where there are many machines present (Griffiths and Repo 2018; Hammami 2019; Rijke and Minca 2018, 2019), this is actually necessary to guarantee the Jewish settlers' smooth passage. Subjecting Palestinian commuters to any interaction with scanning devices would also mean subjecting Jewish Israelis to these same interactions and, hence, delaying them. One way in which the decision is simplified for the soldiers is through the use of stickers on the windshields of the cars of Jewish settlers. These stickers, which settlers can voluntarily decide to put on their car, indicate which settlement they live

in, and, hence, that they are Jewish Israelis. However, not all of the settlers I interviewed had this sticker on their windshield and some of them with this sticker were occasionally stopped.

Who to Stop?

The Palestinians and Jewish settlers I interviewed explained that they suspected that the soldiers at the checkpoints used several categories to decide who to stop. One of the most important categories implemented is whether or not the person trying to pass through the checkpoint is identified as Palestinian/Arab or Jewish Israeli.[8]

Jewish versus Arab

The first response my interviewees provided when asked what influenced the chances of someone being stopped was whether or not someone looked 'Jewish' or 'Arab'. As 43-year-old settler Ruth explained, 'You can recognize them. This is how the soldiers make a difference at the checkpoint. With women, you can see if they wear a headscarf. And … I don't know … I think you can recognize most of them' (interview, 16 July 2016). When asked if it had to do with a darker skin tone, Ruth responded, 'I don't know … not all of them are darker. But there is something … You can see if someone is Israeli or not. You can be wrong, but usually you can tell' (interview, 16 July 2016). Samira, a 54-year-old Palestinian woman with a Jerusalem ID card, said she was rarely stopped. When asked about this, she explained:

> What I noticed is that if you look very Arab, if you are a veiled woman, or if you are a man with really Arabic features, you will be stopped. Every time I look in the car of the people getting stopped, it is definitely that they are stopped because they look Arab. I think that if they don't stop you, you don't look suspicious enough, or they don't think you're Arab. That's my interpretation. I am always mistaken by Arabs and Jews as not being Arab. I don't know why, maybe it is the short grey hair. (Interview, 22 May 2017).

My interviewees indicated that factors other than 'looks' were also used to differentiate between 'Jewish' and 'Arab' commuters. One of these was the car someone drives: certain car brands were seen as more likely to be driven by someone 'Jewish' or by someone 'Arab'. This was explained by 46-year-old settler Ariel. Ariel, who was occasionally stopped at the checkpoints, said that this was because of the type of car he drove. He owned a plant nursery in a town close to Jerusalem and often needed to transport plants and other gardening materials. Due to this, he owned a large truck: 'Sometimes I need to take plants with me, so because of that I have a big car. Occasionally they stop me and take me out of the line because they want to see what is inside the car' (interview, 9 July 2016). Lya,

a-62-year-old Jewish settler, also brought this up when I asked her how she thought the soldiers decided which cars to stop and which ones to let pass: 'When someone drives a Subaru, they would be a Palestinian. The Subarus and Peugeots – they are good for builders. They are sturdy cars. Everybody in the building business would have them' (interview, 17 June 2017). This was confirmed by 54-year-old Palestinian Samira. She was almost never stopped at the checkpoint and while, as already stated, she felt her short grey hair helped, she also suspected the brand of car she owned helped: she owned a Volvo. According to Samira, this was a brand of car that was almost never owned by Palestinians. While most brands may have had a more neutral reputation, she mentioned that the Mercedes that her colleague owned was not really Palestinian or Jewish, certain brands were more obvious: 'Truck? Palestinian. Peugeot? Palestinian. Volvo? Jewish' (interview, 13 June 2017). And while she had not purchased the car because of this ('No, I just like it' [ibid.]), she did feel the difference it made.

Gender

Another categorization that my interviewees identified as being employed by the checkpoint regime was gender. As has been described in detail by Rema Hammami, the Israeli occupation regime treats Palestinian men and women differently: 'the Palestinian male body is the archetype of the terrorist-other of the Israeli military and the larger Zionist national imaginary, this masculine corporeality is almost always already the paradigmatic threat' (2019, 91). Opposed to this threatening male body is the female body: 'female corporealities and performativity have a greater chance of success in passing through the scan [at the checkpoints]' (ibid., 92). Inside large terminal checkpoints, such as Checkpoint 300, the checkpoint managers provide, or deny, women the 'privilege' of using a 'humanitarian lane' (Rijke and Minca 2018). With regards to the car checkpoints, gender is employed by the checkpoint managers to decide who is suspect and should be checked. This was exemplified by Abeer, a 27-year-old Palestinian with a Jerusalem ID who lives with her husband and two young daughters in Bir Ouna. Bir Ouna is located west of Bethlehem and on the West Bank side of the Wall. Half of the town is administratively designated as Jerusalem. Due to this, Abeer and her family, with their Jerusalem IDs, can live here. Abeer often passes through The Tunnels on her way to Jerusalem for work or to visit her family. She explained that although she was regularly stopped anyway, it was best to travel with her daughters and without her husband. If her husband was with her in the car, chances of being stopped were bigger. Travelling alone with her daughters often meant she passed through The Tunnels without getting stopped. John, a 27-year-old Palestinian, brought up the same subject:

> Usually if they see a lady driving, then it's easier. If they see a guy driving, then they definitely stop you at the checkpoint. It depends on the mood of the soldiers, it's not a law … my experience is that if my wife or my mom is driving, it is easier. If we are just with guys in the car, it is a definite stop. (Interview, 22 May 2017).

Here we can see how certain categories, such as 'Jewish' versus 'Arab/Palestinian' and gender, have been incorporated to produce selective rationalities of mobility. While the checkpoints are at most barriers that can cause unwanted delay for the Jewish settlers, they represented places for Palestinian commuters where a set of asymmetrical relations between the occupier and occupied are performed. Although these Palestinian commuters have the same legal rights as the Jewish settlers to freely enter Jerusalem and Israel, the passages of my Palestinian interviewees always came with the lingering possibility of having to engage in tense interactions with checkpoint managers, being stopped, being searched and even being denied access altogether. However, the Palestinian commuters I interviewed did not passively accept this. More specifically, they selectively used these same biopolitical categories while passing through the checkpoints. As put by Samira, 'There are many things that we have learned. There is so much that we know that they don't know we know … after a while, you get the hang of it' (interview, 22 May 2017).

Checkpoint Knowledge

Many of my Palestinian interviewees used their 'checkpoint knowledge' to try to positively influence their chances of passing through the checkpoints without being stopped. This usually meant behaving/driving in a way they described as being the least suspect, or 'the least Palestinian'. An example is, again, 27-year-old clergyman John, who said when I asked him if he thought certain strategies could increase the chances of one passing through the checkpoint unstopped:

> Phone … the passenger should play with his phone, pretend to have a phone call. Close the windows. Closed windows help more. It means … I don't know what it means … so, close your windows, the passenger should play with the phone and try not to have eye contact with the soldiers. The chauffeur says hi. Don't stop or make them feel that you are worried. Don't slow down too much. Just keep on driving. (Interview, 22 May 2017).

John employed all these strategies, and while he could not explain to me what some of these strategies implied, during the many years of travelling through these car checkpoints he had learned that they somehow worked. Hajar, a 22-year-old Palestinian with an Israeli ID card, was more specific about the reasons for her strategies. When I asked her if she was ever stopped at The Tunnels checkpoint, the checkpoint she regularly passed through on her way to the university in Jerusalem, she responded that she was almost never stopped. I asked her why this was the case, and she stated:

> I know how to be around them [Israeli soldiers], how to deal with them. They never think I am an Arab. The most important thing is to be confident, to smile and say hi. You should never wait for them to tell you what to do, do not hesitate. Slow down, but not too much, you have to keep on driving. (Interview, 12 June 2016).

These types of strategies were also employed by 54-year-old Nisreen. Nisreen holds a West Bank ID and is thus technically barred from using The Tunnels and Al Walaja checkpoint. She also holds a US passport, but, without the obligatory entry card, she is not allowed to use this passport to pass a checkpoint. However, this does not mean that she does not try, and, at times, succeeds. She explained that sometimes, when the pedestrian Checkpoint 300 in Bethlehem was particularly busy, she would travel through The Tunnels checkpoint with a Palestinian friend of hers who carries a Jerusalem ID card. While her friend could travel through The Tunnels, Nisreen is barred from using this checkpoint with her West Bank ID. The trick was to be mistaken for a foreigner. Nisreen explained the tactics she used:

> Wearing a hat! If you are wearing a hat, 99 per cent of the time they think you are a foreigner. So, I just wear a hat when I go through The Tunnels with my friend, and they don't stop us. With a hat and an English magazine in my lap, in their mind I am a foreigner. This way, they won't check for the entry card, showing them the [US] passport is enough. (Interview, 23 June 2016).

When I asked her why she did not do this every day, she explained that she had been sent back a few times. The repercussions of getting caught were large. Her friend could get fined for transporting her through the checkpoint, Nisreen could lose the permit she had through her employer in Jerusalem, and it was difficult for her to get back from The Tunnels checkpoint to Checkpoint 300 in Bethlehem:

> Getting out of the car [belonging to her friend at The Tunnels checkpoint], you have to walk until you can catch a ride with the bus that drives back to Bethlehem. Then [catch] a taxi from the bus stop in town back to the checkpoint here [Checkpoint 300]. (Interview, 23 June 2016).

These are examples of the strategies used by Palestinians that imply enacting certain biopolitical categories in such a way that they could possibly be mistaken for being Jewish Israeli, or a foreigner, and not 'Palestinian/Arab'. Amahl Bishara (2015) indicated the same, when she described several strategies her interviewees used to smuggle West Bank Palestinian through car checkpoints. One of these implied embodying certain stereotypes her interviewees suspected the Israeli soldiers would have of how a Palestinian woman would behave and dress:

> Upending age hierarchies, the youngest of the group claimed the most visible driver's side passenger seat. She was ready to dress the least modestly and, thus, to look the "least Palestinian," according to what the group expected Israeli soldiers' stereotypes to be. (Bishara 2015, 42).

Not all interviewees tried to be identified as someone who was not 'Palestinian'/'Arab'. Salah, for instance, used a different strategy. As was

described earlier, 47-year-old Salah was stopped very often on his way through The Tunnels. When I asked him if he employed certain strategies to improve his chances of not being stopped, he responded:

> You shouldn't be clever inside the checkpoints. If the soldier gives you a very small sign with his hand that you have to stop, you have to stop immediately. Otherwise you're in trouble. So, you have to obey, whatever they say. They can keep you aside for whatever they want. They can start checking your car, very slowly, checking your ID, calling the main post to check about you. This will all take a long time. If you are in a hurry, if you want to go to work, it's like you are ruining your own day. In the end, it depends on the soldier. So, the best way is to obey them. (Interview, 12 May 2017)

While the different strategies implemented by John, Hajar, Nisreen and Salah may seem contradictory, these quotes actually illustrate the diverse ways in which Palestinians engage with these checkpoints' biopolitical categories and related spatial regimes. Where some commuters – like John, Hajar and Nisreen – choose to use creative ways to try to negate the effects of the arbitrariness at play inside these checkpoints by enacting certain biopolitical categories, others – like Salah – argued the best way to engage with the checkpoints was to follow the soldiers' instructions as precisely as possible. In this process, all tried to positively influence their chances of getting through unchallenged.

The people I interviewed experienced this decision-making process of the soldiers regarding who was to be stopped and who was not as highly unpredictable and arbitrary. As they explained, they often felt it was determined by the mood of the soldiers, or the 'goodwill of the ruler' (Berda 2018). As exemplified by 47-year-old Salah: 'It depends on the soldier. If he is in a bad mood or in a good mood, you never know how they will work. Sometimes they know you because they see you every day, but they still want to stop you. Sometimes they only ask for your ID, sometimes they want you to open your trunk to check your car' (interview, 12 May 2017).

John, the 27-year-old clergyman, said the same thing: 'It depends on the soldiers' mood. If they decide that this car is good, they let it pass. If they think no, then you get stopped. Why? We do not know' (interview, 22 May 2017). This was also stated by 54-year-old Samira when I asked her if her journey from Bethlehem to Jerusalem had become predictable. Samira, who had told me that she was almost never stopped, said that her journey would never really be predictable:

> Maybe they will stop you, maybe not. There is nothing official about this. Sometimes you find that things go easier, and then it will get harder. They can stop you and send you back. We take it one day at the time. (Interview, 22 May 2017).

Why or when you would be stopped was difficult to say, according to Samira. Due to this unpredictability, she felt like she had no control over the commute from her home to the university in Bethlehem:

> It should take me about seven minutes to reach the university from my home. But there is something more to this seven-minute drive … Driving through the checkpoint, I feel that I'm doing something much more complicated than a simple seven-minute drive. You never have a sense of control over those seven minutes. If I am going anywhere else and it is seven minutes away, I have a better sense of the distance. When driving through the checkpoint, it feels like there is a break … There are two pieces of time: the time before and the time after. And you cannot connect these two. (Interview, 22 May 2017)

Here, it becomes clear that even though Palestinian commuters can employ several tactics to try to improve their chances of getting through the checkpoints unhindered, the checkpoint passage never becomes fully predictable. As such, the experience of driving, which is usually centred around flow, becomes 'cut up' into before the checkpoint and after. Amahl Bishara found the same in her research: 'Palestinians' systematized knowledge of closure has to take into account the lack of systematicity of military rule and the possibility of arbitrary brutality' (2015, 42). As such, these checkpoints produce selective, arbitrary and mutable geographies of mobility.

Concluding Remarks

In this paper, I have argued that The Tunnels and Al Walaja checkpoints in the Bethlehem area function as spatial political technologies. While on the one hand they help to create Jewish-Israeli spaces by excluding Palestinians with a West Bank ID from using them, on the other, they monitor, discipline and selectively limit the mobility of Palestinians with Jerusalem and Israeli ID cards. While Palestinians with Jerusalem and Israeli ID cards have the same legal right as Jewish Israelis to enter Jerusalem and Israel, their checkpoint experiences are often determined by uncertainty and possible tense interactions with Israeli soldiers. As such, these checkpoints are examples of places within the West Bank where two different, but inherently connected, mobility regimes meet: one aimed at ensuring the fast and smooth movement of Jewish settlers, the other aimed at controlling and possibly hindering the movement of Palestinians.

The existence of these two regimes influences the design and spatial regime of these checkpoints. More specifically, to ensure that these regimes can exist simultaneously, the checkpoints have been designed as low-tech, with almost no technological support present. As a result, Jewish settlers are not slowed down by having to engage with (biometric) machines, but this also means that there are no machines available to control and possibly delay the movement of the Palestinian commuters using these checkpoints. The decision of who is stopped and who can pass unhindered is thus made solely by the soldiers.

The Jewish settlers interviewed indicated that they were almost never stopped and checked, while many of the Palestinian interviewees were stopped regularly and all experienced these checkpoints as potential obstacles

on their way to work, school or family. Various biopolitical categories were employed by the soldiers at these checkpoints when making the decision of who to stop and who to let pass unhindered. In this paper, I discussed two categories, namely ethnic distinction: 'Jewish' versus 'Arab' and gender, which were identified as being employed by the Israeli soldiers managing the checkpoints to determine who could be a potential threat – the Palestinian (male) Other – and hence needed to be stopped.

Palestinian commuters used various tactics based on their 'checkpoint knowledge' to try to make their passages as smooth as possible. Part of the interviewees explained that they employed and performed the same biopolitical categories that they expected the soldiers to use to sort cars and those inside them in order to enhance their chances of getting through unhindered. This entailed behaving in such a way that they could either be helpfully miscategorised as 'Jewish' or as a foreigner. Other interviewees explained that they tried to behave as they expected the soldiers wanted them to as much as possible: as the obedient and non-threatening 'Palestinian Other'.

However, although this 'checkpoint knowledge' may enhance the chances of Palestinian commuters to pass through the checkpoints unhindered, they remain depended upon the goodwill of the ruler: the mood of the soldier. While some may be stopped regularly and others almost never, for Palestinian commuters the passage through the checkpoints is never entirely predictable: they are never fully in control of their commute. The arbitrariness at play in the decision of who to stop and who not – which for my interviewees included stopping commuters who pass through these checkpoints every day – shows how the checkpoints are a tool for Israeli soldiers to reinforce the asymmetrical relations between the occupier and the occupied. As such, these checkpoints produce, via their spatial regimes, design and managers, specific geographies based on the limitation and control of the movement of Palestinians, while simultaneously working towards the continuing erasure of the Green Line and the future establishment of 'Greater Israel'.

Notes

1. With 'Israel' I mean the State of Israel within the '1967-borders', also at times referred to as 'Israel proper' (for a critical engagement with this term, see the work of Oren Yiftachel 1998).
2. Al Walaja checkpoint is sometimes called Malha checkpoint (B'Tselem 2018). However, my interviewees referred to it as Al Walaja checkpoint, so I will also refer to the checkpoint here with that name.
3. The term 'border' should be interpreted loosely here – there is no agreed upon 'border' between Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The Green Line, also called the 1949 Armistice border, is internationally the most recognized border. However, Israel does not recognize this line. Furthermore, due to the presence of numerous checkpoints, the building of the Wall and the presence of 600,000 Jewish settlers 'inside' the Green Line, in practice it is difficult to identify the Green Line or any other 'border' (B'Tselem 2019).

4. I do not include Palestinians with a Gazan ID card, the least mobile inhabitants of Israel/Palestine, in this analysis because I focus on The Tunnels and Al Walaja checkpoints, which are located in the West Bank.
5. All names used are fictitious, since the interviewees asked to remain anonymous.
6. There is a small group of Palestinians with West Bank ID cards who can pass through The Tunnels checkpoint in a bus. This is due to the type of permit they hold – such as work permits for employees of international organisations or special hospital permits. Because this is a relatively small group and none of my interviewees were able to pass through the checkpoint in this way, I do not include the experiences of this group in my analysis.
7. It is not allowed to drive a Palestinian car and Palestinians with a West Bank ID card are not allowed to drive inside Jerusalem or Israel. Because of this, Palestinians with a West Bank ID have to pass through pedestrian checkpoints and find alternative transport.
8. For a more comprehensive analysis of the role played by racism in the Israeli society and the occupation of the Palestinian Territories, please see, amongst others, the work of Oren Yiftachel (2006), Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian (2004) and Julie Peteet (2016).

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