The Politics of Power around Qalandiya Checkpoint

Deconstructing the Prism of Im/mobility, Space, and Time for Palestinian Commuters

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Abstract

This essay examines Palestinian im/mobility in the colonial context of the checkpoint. The essay offers a theoretical approach for studying the prism of im/mobility, space, and time at Qalandiya checkpoint through a Foucauldian/de Certeau framework of power. Based on Foucauldian analysis of disciplinary power, the essay examines im/mobility by examining the ways the Israeli checkpoint subjugates Palestinian bodies to produce "docile bodies" only to cause them "wasted time" waiting by Qalandiya checkpoint. The author approaches Palestinian commuters as the active subjects of power who act and are acted upon at the same time. Building on de Certeau's theory of the everyday and focusing on the tactical power of the "weak," the author explores Palestinian agency with the production of Palestinian "resistant bodies" at the checkpoint and the evolution of "survival time" during their mobility practices. The essay is enriched with the accounts of three Palestinian commuters to complement its theoretical insight. The author concludes with the need to build on this theoretical framework with a broad ethnographic study to develop a better understanding of mobility practices for Palestinian commuters at Qalandiya checkpoint.

Keywords

Movement; checkpoint; Qalandiya; East Jerusalem; disciplinary power; tactical power; docile bodies; resistant bodies; wasted time; survival time.

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On 16 January 2019, I spent five hours in my car driving the short distance between Ramallah and Jerusalem. This was the same period of time it would have taken me to fly to London and gain an additional study day, rather than regret my decision to spend a week-long vacation with my family in Jerusalem during the total traffic freeze between Kafr 'Aqab and Qalandiya checkpoint. During those five hours, I listened to that most acclaimed of Arab singers, Um Kulthum, known for her hour-long performances of a single song. It was raining hard and I struggled to keep the car windshield clear of fog. I played mind games betting that if the traffic moved a few meters and I reached to a certain store, then I would have no trouble for the rest of the distance. I thought there must be a temporary obstruction between point x and y along the road to Qalandiya, but every fifteen minutes the traffic moved only a few inches at best. The congested road spawned a third lane of traffic chaotically formed from the usual two lanes. I became lost in my thoughts, musing if I had been in London, I would have reached my home a long time ago. The journey to the checkpoint felt like a battlefield. At a small opening along the road's cement dividing blocks, some shared transport vehicles squeezed through to try their luck driving on the opposite side of the road, against traffic, to reach the front of the queue. Drivers were constantly honking and snaking their cars around to bypass others to save a few moments.

The seemingly endless queue ended five hours later when finally, I reached the checkpoint and presented my blue Jerusalemite ID card to the Israeli soldiers. One soldier looked inside the car to verify my ID as someone allowed to enter Jerusalem. The bar barrier was then lifted and I passed the checkpoint, a process that alone can delay the security check by up to ten minutes for each car, based apparently on the drivers' looks.

Since I had commuted daily to work in Jerusalem for six years from 2012 to 2018, I knew that five hours from Kafr 'Aqab to Qalandiya checkpoint was unusual. Rain or a car accident might slow the passage and cause additional chaos, but usually one or two hours was needed to cross the distance of three kilometers. This ordeal is a daily norm for many Palestinian commuters who must negotiate the queue of vehicles or pedestrians waiting to cross the checkpoint.

Israeli Checkpoints

Following the Oslo peace process in 1993, Israel established checkpoints to control the movement of Palestinians to and from the ever-changing boundaries of the state of Israel. Israeli checkpoints regulate, prohibit, and control Palestinian mobility – constituting a total regime of movement.[1] Established under the pretext of maintaining Israel's security,[2] checkpoints have been justified as a temporary prevention and response for any "terrorist threat" by Palestinians to the state of Israel,[3] and thus, "terrorist threats and checkpoints are understood as having a cause and effect relationship."[4] Indeed, Israeli authorities have claimed that "checkpoints are needed because of today's security situation, because of the explosive device that was

discovered yesterday, because of last week's attack etc."[5] However, despite the claim that they were created for a "temporary" period, checkpoints have changed in form but have never ceased operating since the 1990s until today.

Israeli checkpoints are not uniform – they differ in form and function. They range from simple flying checkpoints – for example, a moving tank of soldiers that stops to check identification cards of Palestinians, or a one-meter-square cement block to stop or divert vehicular traffic – to a twelve-meter-high control tower from which soldiers communicate or, more recently, the remote control metal turnstiles that literally squeeze Palestinians as they pass through.[6] Qalandiya checkpoint has evolved through all of these stages; it is currently equipped with extensive, well-solidified architectural and administrative infrastructure. By 2019, Qalandiya became the main checkpoint separating the northern West Bank from Jerusalem, processing the 26,000 Palestinians travelling daily by foot, car, or bus.[7] The checkpoint is mainly used by East Jerusalem residents with Jerusalem identification cards or West Bank citizens who hold special entry permits; both are subject to daily inspection at the checkpoint crossing.[8]

The change in the structural design of the checkpoint is not only material; there is also constant change in the rules and regulations of passage that appear random, arbitrary, and uncertain. This includes regulations concerning the age and necessary documentation of who may pass the checkpoint.[9] A changing political situation can also impact the experience of passage for Palestinian commuters.[10] For example, a Palestinian attack inside Israel or a rise in political tensions can be met with more movement obstacles and lead to closure of some roads.[11] Such arbitrariness in the process of passage at the checkpoint highlights the unpredictability of Palestinian life under Israeli military rule.[12]

Qalandiya Checkpoint in Context: The Implications of the Ever-changing Boundaries of Jerusalem

Contextualizing the checkpoint of Qalandiya in relation to the spaces around it is imperative for an in-depth and critical understanding of how the checkpoint exercises its power to hinder Palestinian mobility. Following the redefinition and expansion of municipal boundaries of Jerusalem in 1967, most of the adjacent area of Kafr 'Aqab surrounding the borderline of Jerusalem was appropriated. By 2006, with the construction of the separation wall, Kafr 'Aqab found itself left outside the wall and completely sealed off from Jerusalem.[13] Kafr 'Aqab remained legally under the control of Jerusalem municipality, but in practice the area was neglected with little attention to any municipal services.[14] Although it was only four kilometers from Ramallah, which was under Palestinian Authority governance, Kafr 'Aqab was also left outside the responsibility of the PA to address its municipal needs. Kafr 'Aqab, cast out from both the city of Jerusalem and Ramallah, is best described by what Helga Tawil called "the exopolis."[15]

Ever since Israel occupied East Jerusalem in 1967, Israeli authorities have been

implementing a systematic policy of expulsion against Palestinian Jerusalemites. Since its inception in 1995, a "center of life" policy was introduced by the Israeli ministry of interior requiring Palestinians living in East Jerusalem to prove that Jerusalem is their center of life in order to maintain their residency rights.[16] Since the application of the policy, Israel has revoked the residency of more than 10,000 Palestinian Jerusalemites who failed the Israeli measures of "center of life."[17] This includes Palestinian Jerusalemites who travelled abroad or who sought affordable housing in the suburbs.[18] Many Palestinian families who lived in the suburbs moved back to the city to guarantee their residency rights. However, with more than 70 percent of Palestinians in East Jerusalem living under the Israeli-established poverty line, this meant that not all families could afford the high cost of housing to maintain their residency rights. Housing availability was also limited by Israeli authorities complicating the permit process, severely restricting, or simply denying building permits to Arabs in Jerusalem.[19] Palestinians were left with building and renovating their homes without permits, a practical solution that was even more visible in the Kafr 'Aqab neighborhood.[20] Despite legally being part of Jerusalem, housing in Kafr 'Aqab was more affordable due to its location outside the wall around Jerusalem. Eventually, thousands of Palestinian Jerusalemites found themselves forced to migrate to the city's outer limits.[21]

With poor urban planning, no building permits, limited land, and neglect by Jerusalem municipality, apartment buildings in Kafr 'Aqab expanded upward.[22] Buildings were eventually filling all available space on both sides of the main road between Ramallah and Jerusalem that intersected with Qalandiya checkpoint. The chaotic building up of Kafr 'Aqab into an overpopulated space added another obstacle to mobility for travelers to Qalandiya checkpoint. Understanding the impact of the checkpoint on im/mobility therefore transcends the inspection point itself between the Israeli soldier and the Palestinian commuter. It stretches to the waiting spaces prior to arrival to the checkpoint: the long queues of Palestinian pedestrians and the long lines of Palestinian vehicles negotiating their way toward the inspection point.

Im/mobility, Space, and Time around the Checkpoint

With the increasing scholarly attention to the "mobility turn,"[23] much academic reflection and discussion has been made about mobility in the Western world.[24] In a fast-paced and technologically-advanced globalized world, examination of mobility becomes even more essential due to the increase in movement and flow of people, goods, and ideas, and the profound ways in which these mobilities have impacted how global citizens experience space and time. Nevertheless, little scholarly reflection has been focused on mobility or its lack in a non-Western and colonial context where it is most deprived.[25]

As Auoragh sees it, "Mobility is naturally adjoined with immobility" since mobility reflects unequal power relations.[26] In her article on Qalandiya, Helga Tawil-Souri

reiterates this inevitable association, stressing that mobility cannot be addressed in separation from immobility. The relative immobilities that control and limit Palestinian movement around the checkpoint cannot be understood apart from mobilities created for Israeli settlers to move – illegally – onto Palestinian land.[27] With the unevenness of Palestinian im/mobility at the checkpoint, there follows an unevenness of Palestinian experience of time and space, reflecting the power of Israeli authorities in colonizing and controlling Palestinian movement.

Before placing space and time in a colonial context and particularly in the context of the checkpoint for understanding Palestinian im/mobility, it is important to look first at the global transformation of how the world is experiencing space and time. In his reflections on recent transformations in globalization, David Harvey introduces the idea that the world is experiencing a time-space compression as a result of how capitalism annihilates space through time.[28] Building on Marx's rationalization that "capital must tear down every spatial barrier to exchange and conquer the whole earth for market," the annihilation of space requires that the time spent moving between one place to another should be reduced.[29] With the annihilation of space, time-space compression means "the world is experienced socially and materially as a smaller place."[30]

Paradoxically, this rationalization works ironically for Palestinian commuters traversing the checkpoint. In a reversed equation, Palestinians experience "prolonged" time in a narrow stretch of space. Contextualizing this for the passing of Qalandiya checkpoint shows that the time needed to travel between. Kafr 'Aqab and the checkpoint did not decline. Rather, it increased due to the waiting Palestinian commuters need to do as a result of Israeli control of their movement. In line with Fabian speculations on differences in sharing the same time between the West and the non-West,[31] it can be argued that Palestinian subjects at Qalandiya checkpoint do not share the same time with the Western developed world. Instead, the wheel of time is rather jeopardized for them as they are always behind the actual globalized time. Unlike the speeded-up time of a globalized and capitalist world, time is slowed down for Palestinians.

Foucault's Conception of Power

The jeopardized experience of time-space for Palestinian commuters is a result of the unequal power relations that control Palestinian movement. To understand this tight grip over Palestinian mobility, an in-depth analysis is needed of how the politics of power unfold at Qalandiya checkpoint. The way power is exercised on the movement of Palestinian commuters across the checkpoint can best be understood through Foucault's conception of power. For Foucault, power exists[32] only when it is put into action and must be understood dynamically as existing in ongoing processes. Foucault highlights that the exercise of power entails a set of actions on possible actions that "it makes easier or more difficult, it constrains or forbids absolutely but it is always a way of acting upon one or more acting subjects by virtue of their acting or being

capable of action."[33] In other words, a relationship of power can only be articulated if the other is recognized and maintained as a subject who acts. In his article "The Subject and Power," Foucault elaborated that there are two meanings of the word "subject": "Subject to someone else by control and dependence; and subject tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to."[34] Eventually, in a relation of power, Foucault posits that power is practiced over subjects, and he suggests that subjects are also capable of action.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault offered a better understanding of the way power works by introducing disciplinary power, a form of power that renders the subject in question submissive. Through disciplinary power, Foucault offered a detailed analysis of the exercise of the power of punishment through the instrument of the individual's body. To use Foucault's words, the body is an object and target of disciplinary power where "systems of punishment are to be situated in a certain 'political economy' of the body."[35] Through offering a historical development of punishment in the eighteenth century French penal system, Foucault exhibited the various torture methods with which "the truth of the crime is published in the very body of the man to be executed."[36] Yet, the development of the punishment-body relation became less directly centered on the body and punishment gradually shifted towards the pain and suffering of the criminal's soul. In fact, Foucault exhibits how the French penal system witnessed a transformation from one thousand long methods of death including burning, beating, and starving into one single death, a momentary death done through cutting off the head.[37]

Unlike the transformation of punishment in the French penal system, Palestinians endure a combined torture of both the body and soul as they suffer physical bodily checks as well as wait in long queues of pedestrians and vehicles. Even worse, Palestinian bodies remain the central target of punishment as they are still checked, inspected, and humiliated. While Foucault argues that by the nineteenth century the great spectacle of physical punishment disappeared and the theatrical representation of pain was excluded,[38] it can be deduced that the theatrical representation of pain is still visible at Qalandiya checkpoint as it is encapsulated and intensified in the narrow, chaotic, and numerous queues of Palestinian vehicles and pedestrians.

The Politics of Disciplinary Power and the Making of Palestinian Docile Bodies

Throughout Foucault's account of disciplinary power in the penal system and later on in its application in the state's institutions including hospitals, schools, factories, and charities, Foucault posits that the aim of disciplinary power is to produce submissive and obedient subjects to the system that is in power. Foucault explains that disciplinary power operates through a corrective approach which entails repetitive habit and exercise. This happens through taming and training the body and behavior of the

condemned in question through forms of constraints and coercion including timetables, compulsory movements, regular, and repeated activities.[39]

In her article on "checkpoint knowledge," Alexandra Rijke demonstrated how disciplinary power was exercised on Palestinian commuters as they internalized the knowledge of the best behavior and bodily appearance that would let them appear the most obedient and the "least suspect" of any potential threat while crossing Israeli checkpoints.[40] She indicated how some sought to appear less Palestinian and more foreign so that they could pass the checkpoint more easily.

Figure 1. Traffic jam in front of Qalandiya checkpoint, 05:50 AM. Residents of neighborhoods left on the other side of the barrier on their way to work in Jerusalem. Photo by Amer Aruri and B'Tselem, online at www.btselem.org/photoblog/201404_qalandiya_checkpoint (accessed 10 November 2021).

Eventually, Palestinian commuters were transformed into what Rijke described as an "obedient and non-threatening Palestinian other."

In her article entitled "The Dangers of Driving under Israel Apartheid,"[41] Izzy Mustafa further highlights this knowledge by recounting her experience of how she disciplines her body movements in order to be safely able to pass the checkpoint. She shares her father's advice on driving at the checkpoint:

> Don't rev your engine. Keep your hands on the steering wheel. Don't make sudden eye contact with the soldiers in front of you. Turn down your music. Have your ID ready to be checked. Have your foot on the brake pedal. Make sure when the soldier waves you forward that you don't hit the gas pedal by accident.

Izzy explains that this is part of the checklist she runs through in her mind every time she crosses an Israeli military checkpoint in Palestine, where any driving mistake or accident can be suspect as a threat to Israel's security.

Disciplinary power operates in the context of Israeli military checkpoints as an arbitrary system of orders and regulations governing Palestinian movement. One of the disciplinary examples of this arbitrary control is through the invention of the "imaginary line." In discussing Israeli military checkpoints, Hagar Kotef and Merav Amir explain, "The imaginary line is a line drawn (metaphorically, abstractly, 'in thin air') by a soldier or soldiers at the checkpoint. It is a line that delimits the permitted movement of Palestinians within the space of the checkpoint, yet a line that exists only in the minds of the soldiers standing in front of them."[42] Since it is an unmarked

line, the orders and rules on the exact place where Palestinian commuters should stand is blurry. Even after checkpoints became well-constructed and turnstiles built to make sure every Palestinian can pass singly and even after lines were marked, the imaginary line still existed in different areas of the checkpoint, either before passing the turnstile or after.[43] The installation of the turnstiles slowed progress of the queues at times, resulting in tension, chaos, and more pressing and pushing forward in the lines.

Eventually, the imaginary line makes an abrupt and arbitrary re-appearance when the security check takes a long time causing for more pushing forward in the queues by the turnstiles. This manifests through the notorious order *irja' la wara'* (Go back!) screamed by soldiers behind their booth at the commuters. With this order, Palestinians in the queue are reminded to mind their individuality, keep their place in the line, and control the movement of their bodies. Changing the routine is one way to fully control the bodies and time of the Palestinian commuters. According to an account from Checkpoint Watch Activists (CPW),[44] the change in routine was an evident pattern that emerged at the checkpoint:

> Those (Palestinian commuters) waiting in line were shifted around some fifteen times from line to line for 45 minutes, and one time [the soldiers] changed the routine even more when they closed line 3 and yelled over a loudspeaker to go to line 2 and immediately after they reached there, they were sent back to line 3.

These rhythms and routines reminiscent of Tom and Jerry chase-and-miss games carry in their arbitrary nature of change a tight control over the movement of Palestinian bodies as they navigate between the lines guessing which one is the open one and which one is closed.

Similar to the changing routine for pedestrians waiting to pass the checkpoint, Palestinian vehicles are also subjected to a certain discipline and mode of order and control. This includes what Foucault called the dual system of "gratification-punishment" that operates as part of training and correcting the subjected individual.[45] Following this system, individuals are given rewards and penalty points according to their behavior and performance. In a similar manner, as the regime of the checkpoint was established under the claim of a cause-effect rationalization wherein its "establishment was in response to terrorist threats by Palestinians," this means that the more "obediently" Palestinians behaved and assuming the political situation was calm, the fewer obstacles they would face passing the checkpoint. For example, the gates situated near the checkpoint and leading to Dahiyat al-Barid, which can be opened to relieve traffic pressure from Jerusalem, are opened or closed according to a system of reward and punishment. If Israel announces a security alert or an alleged attack, for example, Palestinians are collectively punished and the gate closes causing a traffic bottleneck. In an interview with Iman Sharabati,[46] a Palestinian commuter living in Kafr 'Aqab, Iman elaborates:

> The way this gate works is really provoking. It does in practice help me

> pass and reach my home faster when it is open, yet the mechanism by
> which it opens or closes is conditional on the political situation. Say for
> example there is an attack or there are orders to relax or tighten movement
> restrictions then the gate being open/closed operates accordingly. It feels
> like we are being tamed.

Such mechanisms and methods of how disciplinary power operates on the subject are essential to understand how the subject is made docile. Yet, the essence of disciplinary power is situated in a cause-effect relation of docility-utility where bodies are made docile in order to be useful.[47] Eventually, the process of subjectivizing the bodies and making them docile is intended to reform the condemned criminal through forced labor, make pupils at school better students, and workers at factories more productive. Yet, situating docility-utility in the colonial space of the checkpoint does not operate in the twofold way Foucault theorized.

Palestinian Docile Bodies and the Development of "Wasted Time"

Palestinian bodies around the checkpoint are made docile to be punished and not to be useful bodies. They are humiliated, subjected, regulated, trained, and made obedient in order to serve the colonial plan that turns them to occupied subjects. Their docility does not serve their utility; put simply, their docility is of no use for them. They are not improved or better subjects and the ways in which they have been taught to be disciplined only results in their time being wasted.

It is particularly essential to shed light on one of the important aspects of the docility-utility dynamic and that is time. According to Foucault, "time is the operator of punishment."[48] Foucault posits that punishment must be temporal so that it can be effective and the condemned criminal is reformed. Eventually, duration becomes essential to the act of punishment where long hours of punishment have more effect on the criminal than a passing moment of pain. Yet, Foucault highlights that once punishment did the fixing, it should be diminished because the purpose of punishment is achieved and that is reform.[49] However, punishment at the checkpoint is continuous, which Palestinian commuters must experience daily.

Figure 2. Waiting for the security check at the checkpoint. Photo by Amer Aruri and B'Tselem, online at www.btselem.org/photoblog/201404_qalandiya_ checkpoint (accessed 10 November 2021).

In Foucault's concept on docility-utility, time is not only central in the making of docile and reformed bodies of condemned criminals but it is also essential to the making of docile bodies for individuals of the state's institutions including the army, school, factory, etc. Time is the core of what makes bodies docile and hence soldiers, workers, and pupils had to capitalize on every moment of time to shape their bodies in the best way they can to turn them into useful ones. "Establishing rhythms, imposing particular occupations, regulating cycles of repetition"[50] for individuals was essential so that they can make use of time and be better soldiers, more productive workers, and improved pupils. Those in authority make sure that the time of the docile bodies is utilized to be useful time as they begin "to count in quarter hours, in minutes, in seconds."[51] Wasted time is forbidden; individuals are expected to avoid any useless time.

Yet, the time of Palestinian commuters around the checkpoint is wasted time as they wait long hours to pass the checkpoint. Eventually, Palestinian bodies are disciplined to become docile and obedient bodies but are only left with useless and wasted time. In 2017, I attended a play called "Other Places" in Jerusalem where one of the actors, Raeda Ghazaleh, recounts her actual experience of daily commute between Jerusalem, Bayt Jala, and Ramallah for work.[52] She explains a detailed mathematical calculation of her wasted time at Qalandiya and Bayt Jala checkpoints as she exits and re-enters her city of Jerusalem:

> I live in Jerusalem and my children go to school in Jerusalem as well. My parents live between Bayt Jala and Jerusalem. I work in al-Hara theatre in Bayt Jala and I teach in Ramallah as well. Every day I drive my kids to school and then go to work to al-Hara theater in Bayt Jala. I then leave Bayt Jala to pick the kids from Jerusalem and I drop them at my parent's house in Bayt Jala. Then, I leave for my second job in Ramallah. I go back to Bayt Jala to pick up the kids and return home to Jerusalem.
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> In order to live my day in a normal manner … it would take me 20 minutes from Jerusalem to Bayt Jala, 20 minutes from Bayt Jala to Jerusalem, 20 minutes to bring my kids back home from Jerusalem to Bayt Jala, 40 minutes to go to Ramallah, another 40 minutes to go to Bayt Jala to pick them up, 20 minutes to return back home in Jerusalem. This process would take me 160 minutes of travel – almost 2 hours and a half.
>
> But now (because of the checkpoint) this commute route takes me 420 minutes – 7 hours daily. The difference between my commute duration in the normal ideal situation and the current status quo is four and a half hours – I waste four and a half hours of my time every day. This is equal to 22.5 lost hours a week, 90 hours a month, 990 hours a school year and 4,950 hours in 5 years. This means I have lost 206 days of my life in the last five years just stuck at the checkpoint!

De Certeau's Politics of Tactical Power

Within these everyday experiences of being immobile waiting to pass the checkpoint, Qalandiya checkpoint can still be a space of flows and non-flows. Helga Tawil-Souri suggests that Palestinians still experience some mobility, and flow of time and space in the tiny chances when the checkpoint slowly allows their daily movement.[53] It is in these opportunities of movement that Palestinians have the chance to challenge the imposed immobility and find ways to fight it. Given the limited possibility of movement and control over space and time, resistance may be seen in the simple act of passing the checkpoint. To put it in Tawil-Souri's words, "checkpoints redefine what resistance is; in this context, for example, simply getting through can be deemed resistance."[54]

Hence, in juxtaposition to Foucault's theory of disciplinary power in spaces around the checkpoint, Michele de Certeau challenges it with his conception of power. In his book *The Practice of Everyday Life*, de Certeau introduces the power of tactics as a way of resisting systems of domination, and inquires about ways of operating that could manipulate the mechanisms of discipline. In his words:

> If it is true that the grid of "discipline" is everywhere becoming clearer and more extensive, it is all the more urgent to discover how an entire society resists being reduced to it, what popular procedures (also "miniscule" and quotidian) manipulate the mechanisms of discipline and conform to them only in order to evade them, and finally what ways of operating form the counterpart on the consumers (or dominee) side, of the mute processes that organize the establishment of socioeconomic order.[55]

In response to his own inquisition, de Certeau suggests to examine the power of tactics as a force that challenges the mechanisms of disciplinary power. Through the power of tactics, de Certeau develops a theoretical framework for analyzing how the "weak" make use of the "strong."[56] According to de Certeau's logic, a tactic is an action attributed to the weak, where the individual would take advantage of opportunities despite the constraints and limitations imposed by dominating systems of the strong. De Certeau suggests that several everyday activities like cooking, reading, moving about, dwelling, shopping are tactical in character.[57] Giving the example of reading, de Certeau elaborates that despite the overwhelming culture of consumption presented through TV, magazines, newspapers, or the internet, how the consumers use the images and texts they see, what they make of what they watch, how they absorb them, what they skip and what they select, are all ways of reading that are out of the hands of those who produced them and that are only tied to the hands of the users. De Certeau suggested that within these tiny chances lies the agency of users and eventually their potential of resisting the material they are expected to consume.

Situating this logic in the context of the spaces before the checkpoint, ways of commuting would be ways of "moving" through the crowded, slow, and almost immobile lines of vehicles and pedestrians before the checkpoint. They are the continuous battle of "movement" attempts to inch a few steps forward through the

crowded lines. Helga Tawil-Souri puts it this way: "In reshaping these spaces and being active subjects within them – even within limitations and under constant surveillance – Palestinians have turned the Israeli-created landscape of checkpoints into a battlefield where everyday life continues to exist, albeit redefined by the occupation."[58]

Palestinian Resistant Bodies and the Evolution of "Survival Time"

Palestinian pedestrians and vehicles queuing before the checkpoint find themselves stuck in a space of massive immobility imposed on them as individuals using these spaces. Looking through the power of tactics, Palestinian commuters should challenge the disciplinary power of the checkpoint and hone their resistant bodies to develop tactical ways of movement to cross the checkpoint more quickly and easily. That is, Palestinians ought to cut through space to save a few

Figure 3. At the entrance to the checkpoint. Photo by Amer Aruri and B'Tselem, online at www.btselem.org/ photoblog/201404_qalandiya_checkpoint (accessed 10 November 2021).

seconds from here, a minute from there, and maybe cumulatively they will make it through to their workplaces on time – what I call the evolution of "survival time."

Since it does not have a physical place, a tactic depends on time. It is always on the watch for moments of opportunities that must be seized "on the wing." It must constantly manipulate events in order to turn them into opportunities of mobility.[59] De Certeau emphasized the inevitable interrelation between tactic and time and the detachment of tactic from place. He first highlighted the inevitable relationship between place and strategy where strategy has a place as its "proper" base from which it establishes its relation with others such as adversaries or targets. He then posited that a tactic has no place as its establishing base and therefore belongs to others. De Certeau establishes that "the 'proper' is a victory of space over time."[60] In the context of Qalandiya checkpoint, this victory is visible through the complete Israeli control of the checkpoint space which eventually paralyzes Palestinian time. Indeed, the wasted time Palestinians experience while queuing to reach Qalandiya checkpoint is a manifestation of the colonial control of Palestinian space and eventually the triumph over Palestinian time.

In that "spatio-temporal container" where space is limited and time is slow, Palestinian subjects ought to manipulate any space gaps they find in the long queues to gain more time. Through the performativity of mobile practices including the art of pulling tricks and managing movement with limited space available, Palestinian

bodies resist their imposed docility as they try to dig through any possible opportunity in the given space to survive time and get through the rest of the day "normally." Over time, commuters seek to find new ways of moving around and establishing informal systems of mobility.[61] Indeed, Hammami argues that the drivers and commuters by the checkpoint personify the "ethic of getting through anything, by anything, and to anywhere."[62] Hence, Palestinian commuters seek to take control over the waiting spaces preceding their turn to be checked at the checkpoint; what Sewell called "spatial agency" which he described as "the ways that spatial constraints are turned to advantage in political and social struggle and the ways that such struggles can restructure the meanings, uses, and strategic valence of space."[63]

One of the tactics that Palestinian commuters use to combat the long line of pedestrians by the checkpoint turnstiles is to stand by the nearest Palestinian vehicle near to the point of inspection and appeal to the passing cars to let them ride across the point of inspection. They are then dropped off after the point of crossing to continue their commute on public transport buses to Jerusalem. This way they can save much time. Hanan Yassin, a teacher living in Kafr 'Aqab who crosses the checkpoint daily with her car, says:

> I cross the checkpoint with my car while my sister uses the pedestrian lane. By catching a ride with the closest passing cars to the point of inspection, she can save a big chunk of time. I noticed that sometimes there is one-hour difference between her crossing the checkpoint and me. While I am still stuck in the queues, she would have already passed.

Another tactic that Palestinian commuters use to combat the waiting spaces of the long vehicular and pedestrian queues is to avoid Qalandiya altogether and use alternative routes, such as the road leading to Hizma checkpoint. In her research on how time serves as the infrastructure of control to the mobility of Palestinians in Jerusalem, Hanna Bauman recounts how some Palestinian commuters resorted to shared Ford transit vans departing from near Qalandiya checkpoint but driving through Hizma checkpoint instead to enter the city of Jerusalem.[64] Raeda Ghazaleh, the commuter between Jerusalem, Bayt Jala, and Ramallah,[65] explains:

> When I am returning back from Ramallah to Jerusalem, if I see a lot of congestion at Qalandiya checkpoint, I use alternative routes like Hizma checkpoint. It does help sometimes but, if you think of it, [the time it takes] using the long bypass road to reach Hizma checkpoint is almost the same … as waiting at Qalandiya checkpoint. However, by using the alternative route, you do not feel passive. At least, you feel you are doing something during that time.

Sometimes, even the ways Palestinians spend their wasted time of waiting can embody the act of survival from being muted subjects. As Maha Samman writes, it can be claimed that Palestinians create their own rhythms and patterns within the larger rhythm of the Israeli occupying power. Samman elaborates: "Such rhythms provide

Palestinians waiting in queues with a means to release tension through psychological self-pacification either by listening to music, or connecting with others through social media devices, or by being alert while driving to prevent losing one's place in the queue – each of which can be considered an accomplishment under such circumstances."[66] In my interview with Hanan, she reiterates, "Sometimes, the experience of driving towards the checkpoint is a nerve-wracking one and full of stress and anxiety. The best thing for me to do is to dissociate myself and not let it affect me. Sometimes, I use the waiting time to correct student's exams, listen to relaxing music like Fairouz, or just drink my coffee while waiting."

Online mobilities may be deemed another tactic in which Palestinians battle space to save time. In the case of Qalandiya checkpoint, the creation of social media groups and apps has acted as a navigating tool giving real time updates and information of the current traffic at Qalandiya checkpoint and hence helping Palestinian commuters reschedule and better manage their time by using other alternative routes or postponing the times of exiting their home or work.[67] Samman points out, "Receiving this information before reaching the checkpoint gives one a sense of advantage in being able to re-arrange one's schedule accordingly. Such information helps in making on-time decisions about when to approach the checkpoint, or whether it is better to stay at work and maximize the time that would otherwise be wasted by idle waiting in queues."[68] Iman reports:

> Social media groups, especially "Ahwal Tareeq Qalandiya/Hizma," the one I use, is very helpful. They also exhibit a sense of solidarity among commuters. Sometimes it gets funny when some commuters post on the group asking about the traffic when they are actually in the middle of the traffic itself. It could be that someone is in the beginning of the traffic asking about the traffic from people who are two or three cars away from the actual point of inspection. This helps the people who are in the beginning of the traffic line to make a decision if to continue their commute or turn around or use an alternative route.

To put the aforementioned tactics in perspective, it can be argued that such tactical movements of commuters are silent, tireless, and almost invisible amid the larger subjugating control of the checkpoint regime. Such observation falls in line with de Certeau's description of the user's consumption of products as almost an invisible, tireless, and quiet activity amid the larger system of capitalism which produced them.[69] Due to their quasi-invisibility, it is therefore difficult to map those tactics and draw a clear pattern out of them. Eventually, mapping tactful practices of Palestinians requires a broad ethnography that would engage deeply with Palestinian commuters in order to be able to better understand their mobility practices. Most importantly, ethnographic research on im-mobility in a non-Western and colonial context is highly needed not only because it is lacking in the field but also because it shifts the focus towards Palestinian agency and resistance, which is the foundation of Palestinian indigenous narrative.

Conclusion

The deconstruction of the ways Israel practices its colonizing power to produce Palestinian docile bodies and waste Palestinian time was necessary to showcase how Palestinians unfairly experience jeopardized time in comparison with the rest of the developed world. However, such analysis sits well in a settler-colonial framework where it is a narrative showcasing the settler's success over Palestinian resistance. As much as settler colonial academy is important to understand the structural colonization of the settler, it is also important to resist it. Hence, in her article "Writing/Righting Palestine Studies," Rana Barakat calls scholars to lend attention to positionality where indigenous resistance ought to be the main focus of the narrative and not settler triumph over the occupied subjects.[70] Accepting Barakat's call of positionality; meaning that settler colonial studies should not be the main focus but should inform and benefit indigeneity, this article does benefit from settler colonial studies in its analysis of how Israel practices disciplinary power over Palestinian bodies and waste their time. However, it places it within the larger framework of indigeneity; hence favoring Palestinian resistance as a point of main focus where disciplinary power is challenged with the power of tactics where Palestinian resistant bodies manage every possible opportunity of mobility to create their survival time.

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