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Assembling state and citizenship in Jerusalem

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OUTSOURCED SECURITY AND THE POLITICS OF UNCERTAINTY

I was standing on a dusty hill on Jerusalem's outskirts. The Israeli separation wall ahead of me obscured the otherwise open view to the Judean desert and the Dead Sea. Birds flew over, sewage canals passed below. To my left and right were two Israeli checkpoints, controlling the movement of people and goods between the West Bank and East Jerusalem, both territories under Israeli occupation.

These two checkpoints could hardly be more different from one another. The first checkpoint, al-Zayim, is situated on the main highway leading to the Dead Sea and connects Jerusalem to the large Jewish-Israeli settlement of Ma'ale Adumim. The travellers passing through the checkpoint are primarily Israeli motorists, who rush through with little or no disruption to their journey. The other checkpoint, Ras Abu Sabitan, is situated a few hundred meters away, at the far end of a cul-de-sac. This is a large pedestrian-only terminal consisting of high fences, turnstiles, a military watchtower and biometric scanners. Most of the travellers here are Palestinians from Jerusalem's suburbs who have acquired temporary permits to cross into the city. It can take them several hours to make the crossing during rush hour – if they are allowed to pass at all.

In this chapter I examine how the Israeli authorities assembling of a modular security toolbox at Jerusalem's checkpoints was designed to engender a differential allocation of (un)certainty to different residents of the city, and what the consequences of this process are. I seek to overcome the dominant but limited perspectives on the relations between governance and uncertainty by proposing that uncertainty is not only a problem that security agents seek to resolve as part of their attempts to instill law and order, but can be instead employed as a mode of governance. I do so through a focus on the intersection of two key governance domains – security and mobility. Using the case study of Israeli checkpoints in Jerusalem's environs, I propose that state security actors can strategically employ and adjust (un)

certainty. By enlisting additional actors, practices, technologies and materialities, state actors produce different forms of uncertainty, specifically in terms of irregular operation, managerial obfuscation, un-accountability, and contradictory or often-altered directives and regulatory frameworks. Under the banner of security provision, the possibility, reliability and predictability of residents' entrance and exit from the city serves to shape different patterns of (im)mobility, economic dependency and social and political fragmentation. I suggest that governance actors can deliberately utilize uncertainty as a material, organizational and affective security module, enlisted to circumvent political and legal constraints in order to unequally distribute rights, resources and privileges between those seen as deserving of additional security and those deemed to be security threats. In this chapter I explore why and how they do so.

If security is approached as the imposition of national and social order (Zender 2000), then the operation of the checkpoints around Jerusalem (re)produces disorder, unpredictability and illegible governance for the Palestinian population. In this chapter, I contend that the plurality and interoperability of public and private actors manning the checkpoints, the near-arbitrary allocation and revocation of permits, the frequent changes to the crossing regime, the unpredictability of the crossing duration and the lack of accountability and transparency in the checkpoints' operation represent a deliberate security strategy on the part of the Israeli authorities. This strategy stifles Palestinian dissent and fragments Palestinian social and political lives, while hampering Palestinian economic growth.

Checkpoints suggest uncertainty and unpredictability for some, and certainty for others. Jewish-Israeli settlers and citizens are guaranteed the freedom of movement – both of people and of goods – in and out of Jerusalem. Their movement is streamlined, with both the physical infrastructure and the crossing experience itself simulating the contiguity of Jewish-Is-

raeli space and conveying a preferential citizenship and residency status. Palestinians (Jerusalemites and West Bank residents alike) are subjected not only to a limiting mobility regime imposed by the Israeli military authorities, but also face the suspension of what can be considered ‘the normal’ – the reliability, predictability and regularity of movement – in favour of the modularity and mobility of security mechanisms.

I follow this argument through an exploration of three different dimensions of uncertainty at the checkpoints around Jerusalem. The first dimension is that of the opaque and interchangeable roles of public and private security actors at the checkpoints, which contribute to the obfuscation of authority and the unaccountability of the checkpoints operators. The second is the uncertainty and unreliability of military permits issued to Palestinian West Bank residents to enter Jerusalem, based on legally indeterminate and unclear criteria, and subject to unpredictable rejection or revocation. Third, I analyze the spatial-temporal dimension of the checkpoints, in which the physical movement of the border leads to further uncertainty and danger while pre-emptively discouraging the movement of Palestinian civilians. Drawing on my own participant observation at these sites, interviews with both Jewish-Israelis and Palestinians who cross at the checkpoints, and data from secondary sources, I seek to illustrate why and how (un)certainty is produced, maintained and employed as a mode of governance, as a security module deliberately developed and applied differentially at significant mobility nodes on the borders of a contested urban space.

In the following section I review recent debates on the governance of risk and uncertainty, which I relate to questions on mobility and security provision at the checkpoints in Jerusalem’s environs. Next, I develop my argument on the deliberate differential (re)production of uncertainty through four sections, drawing primarily on ethnographic fieldwork conducted at Jerusalem’s checkpoints. First, I attend the Israeli public and private se-

curity actors' opaque regulations and management of security operations at the checkpoints, where the unclear governance structure and security practices contribute to the uncertainty faced by Palestinians as they pass through Israeli military checkpoints. Second, I explore the illegibility and unreliability of the Israeli military travel permits afforded to the few West Bank Palestinians allowed to enter Jerusalem. Third, I contrast the uncertainty of Palestinians' impeded mobility through checkpoints with the seamless mobility of Jewish-Israeli settlers, by how Jewish-Israeli settlers travel in and out of Jerusalem. Fourth, I examine how uncertainty is also produced by the shifting of the border, whose significance is transformed on different occasions and to different target audiences. I then conclude by highlighting how uncertainty as a mode of governance contributes to differential patterns of mobility, economic development and social fragmentation.

GOVERNANCE THROUGH UNCERTAINTY IN A CITY OF BARRIERS

Uncertainty and risk are common 'talking points' evoked in conversations about different aspects of life in an increasingly precarious era. These discussions – common in scholarship on conflict, security policy (Bratich 2006), and cities (Simone 2010) – tend to revolve around the different strategies that governance actors and urban residents use to minimize uncertainty and risk. Such analyses follow Beck's (2009) influential argument that governance has increasingly become the management of risk, with political arenas reconfigured to prioritize the minimization and mitigation of risk on different scales. O'Malley (2012), for instance, shows how governmentality over the incalculable is pursued through estimations. It is

through forecasting and model-building that governments cope with uncertainty. Risk and uncertainty are thus both anticipated and negotiated. Governing over uncertainty, O'Malley goes on to suggest, is inherent to what market-oriented governments do – they aim to endure the uncertainty of the market economy and preserve their capacities when encountering the unknown.

Few scholars, however, have approached uncertainty as a potential opportunity rather than a threat; fewer, if any, have attended to uncertainty as a mode of governance deliberately pursued in the administration of a civilian population. This chapter seeks to address this gap, to extend our understanding of (un)certainly as differentially reproduced, applied and managed – as another component in the governance toolbox of state (and non-state) actors. In this chapter I focus on the intersection of two key governance domains, mobility and security, to demonstrate how uncertainty can be employed to pursue (controversial) political aims.

The mobility of people and goods is increasingly understood to constitute a prominent domain of everyday life. Mobility is often approached as a defining concern of governance across different eras and contexts (Cresswell 2006): for governance, taxation or security, the paradigmatic material infrastructure of our era is dependent upon free-flowing mobility. Yet mobility is also simultaneously linked to uncertainty and risk – to the adventures associated with the road leading to the 'unknown' (Dalakoglou and Harvey 2012). To facilitate the mobility of people and goods, governments devote resources and attentions to the development of infrastructure, rules, regulations, and measures to protect these, in their attempts to govern both domestic and international circulations.

While the debates on both uncertainty and mobility do not exclusively pertain to the urban, yet it is in the city where movement, its facilitation

and disruption become acute, inscribing new divergent and emergent social structures (Lee 2015). While the checkpoints in Jerusalem's environs are not all situated in urban settings, their role in regulating who can enter the city, when and where, makes the checkpoints an urban phenomena with crucial consequences for the city's political, economic and social life. Zeiderman et al. (2015) suggest that uncertainty is not only central to contemporary governance, but to the urban experience more broadly. Examining the governance and negotiation of urban uncertainty, they emphasize that uncertainty is tackled in both the technocratic domains of municipal administration, security provision and urban planning as well as in the daily practices of marginalized residents. Policies are proposed and implemented based on statistical models and economic consultations, while urban dwellers struggle to cope with uncertainty that hinders or paralyzes their long term planning. Zeiderman et al. suggest, briefly, that uncertainty can also be desired by a selected few, whom it benefits materially as they are able to profit from instilling order within spatially or temporally delimited boundaries.

Modern states are inclined to collect, sort and process data on their geography and population, to schematically map spaces and people through 'schemes of legibility and standardization' (Scott 1998: 343) aimed at territorializing and (re)configuring spaces towards a certain vision. While the state 'sees' its citizens, the citizens can return the favour with a gaze of their own. How do citizens understand the state, its countless institutions, agents, regulations and contradictions? In analyzing how the Indian poor see the state and its different manifestations in their everyday lives, Corbridge et al. (2005) highlight the importance of attending to how modes of governance are 'seized upon, understood, reworked and possibly contested' (Corbridge et al. 2005: 7) by low-income and marginalized populations.

Deliberate attempts to adopt risk management and adapt to uncertainty are thus not limited to policymakers. As Bratich (2006) also notes, the new

‘normal’, both for people living their every-day life and for policymakers, is continuous uncertainty – a state of managed insecurity in which citizens are delegated with confronting the uncertainty of mundane life through relations and affiliations with others. These are matters that not only require managerial decisions, but also trickle down to the domain of daily practices, to how people make their day-to-day decisions. People perceive, and attempt to cope with, uncertainty differently from one another. As Boholm (2003: 175) suggests, uncertainty should be understood in a cultural context, where ‘social relationships, power relations and hierarchies, cultural beliefs, trust in institutions and science, knowledge, experience, discourses, practices and collective memories all shape notions about risk or safety’. Indeed, people negotiate the unknown differently, speculating on different possible futures – a predicament that is more urgent for poorer individuals and communities.

Differentiating ‘the state’ to attend to the more individuated agency of state officials, O’Malley’s (2010) study of these officials’ responses to an environment increasingly populated by risk and risk-management demonstrates how their subjectivities are re-constituted towards resilience, fortitude and a nuanced understanding of risk and uncertainty. Security agents, in particular, can be taught to address risk both in terms of danger and as a potential opportunity. They increasingly view the stability offered by ‘normalcy’ as implying complacency and stagnation, from which both individuals and society as a whole stand to lose. I thus suggest that security should be understood and critiqued not only in terms of enabling or impeding order and mobility, but further in terms of the unequal disbursement of clarity and reliability for some and uncertainty for others.

In this chapter, I illustrate the intersection between mobility, security and uncertainty from the vantage point of Jerusalem’s boundaries, where checkpoints persist as a feature of both security governance and daily lives, exemplified in the lived experience of waiting without certainty in long meandering lines through barren corridors in the early hours of the morning.

Hundreds of checkpoints and roadblocks are situated throughout the West Bank. These are often located deep within the territory, separating Jewish-Israeli settlers' towns and infrastructure from their Palestinian neighbours, while also dividing Palestinian communities one from another, effectively carving up the Palestinian West Bank into a series of enclaves (Amir 2013). While the deployment of checkpoints began as a temporary military measure, it is now considered a main feature of the Israeli occupation (Azoulai and Ophir 2007). Most of the 19 entry points to Jerusalem are controlled by a checkpoint, each regulating access into the city (but usually not in the opposite direction) for Jewish-Israeli citizens, eligible East Jerusalem residents and Palestinians with a valid permit issued by the Israeli military (Havkin 2014). The checkpoints, complemented by the separation wall, tightly control all pathways that connect the West Bank with Jerusalem, separating the metropolitan region from its suburbs, peripheral villages, townships and refugee camps. The checkpoints are not intended merely to record the movement of people and goods, but rather to limit it to specific populations and possessions. All checkpoints operate a differential policy of permissions and constraints towards Jewish-Israelis, Palestinian Jerusalemites, West Bank Palestinians and foreigners.

The differential treatment of Jewish-Israelis and Palestinians at checkpoints can be fruitfully explored in terms of territorial governance (Weizman 2007), as resulting in differential mobility practices, as a debateable security instrument (Freilich 2015) or as a part of a larger colonial toolbox of segregation and oppression (Tawil-Souri 2011b). I build on and extend this emergent literature on checkpoints and (im)mobility by approaching the Israeli checkpoints around Jerusalem through the analytical lenses of (un)certainly and irregularity – to understand the security provision at checkpoints in terms of its consistency, legibility and production of 'normality'.

The following section elucidates some of the experiences of Palestinian residents at a checkpoint around Jerusalem, focusing on the material and visual

elements of the checkpoint structure, followed by a discussion on the uncertainty produced by the opaque and interchangeable roles of public and private security actors at the Israeli checkpoints.

PLURAL SECURITY ACTORS: OBFUSCATION AND CONFUSION

The road leading to the Judean desert from the eastern outskirts of Jerusalem is ‘as old as civilization itself’ – it has served traders, armies, diplomats and nomads for thousands of years. Today’s travellers must cross the Israeli separation wall on their path. Palestinian residents of Jerusalem and its suburbs, Jewish-Israeli settlers and tourists cross back and forth at designated checkpoints between Occupied East Jerusalem and the Occupied West Bank. In this section I delve into the different security actors present (and absent) at these checkpoints, and Palestinians’ perception of these different agents. I argue that the plethora of different and interchangeable security actors at the checkpoint contributes to the confusion and obfuscation of the roles, authority, and responsibilities of the security agents on site. I observe how this process engenders uncertainty, which functions as a mode of governance within the confines of the checkpoints.

On a windy summer day in June 2015, I walked down the road towards the Ras Abu Sabitan checkpoint, situated directly to the east of Jerusalem’s Old City. Descending from the neighbourhood of At-Tur, the magnitude of the separation wall in its current route became visually apparent – an 8-meter-long cement wall hid both the desert horizon and the nearby suburbs of al-Eizaryia and Abu-Dis. These towns, situated in the West Bank outside of Jerusalem’s municipal boundaries, used to be populated mostly

with Palestinian Jerusalemites, many of whom left after the construction of the wall, which separated them from their work and families. After walking past an industrial district of empty garages and burning garbage containers, I finally reached the checkpoint: a large covered terminal at the end of a cul-de-sac, encompassing a maze of gates and turnstiles. The sight of a gleaming asphalted road was misleading: the terminal serves pedestrians only, and the road is intended exclusively for operational use by the military, police and private security personnel.

The roundabout that marked the entrance and exit of the checkpoint featured a lone olive tree, accompanied by a large sign (in Hebrew) proclaiming the official name of the checkpoint, 'The Olives Crossing'. The small entrance was bustling with activity: pupils hurrying to school, day labourers commuting to work and taxi drivers vying for business. Among them stood Rafat, a tall man in his late forties, whom I recognized as one of the taxi drivers who spend hours sipping coffee by the entrance of the Old City's Damascus Gate. He was calling out 'Taxi! Galaxy!' to passers-by, referring to his shiny white Ford Galaxy car. As I approached, he started smiling, welcoming the odd sight of a Jewish-Israeli researcher with exclamations of his surprise at my visit. He was then quick to launch into a tirade about the checkpoint, saying that in the previous week the crossing duration had varied greatly, with some passengers forced to wait up to two hours, while others made it through in only ten minutes. It all depends on the time of day, or the passenger's papers, or the current policies of the Israeli security personnel, he speculated. Noticing the lack of interested customers – many passengers preferred the cheaper, rickety mini-buses – Rafat used the chance to vent his anger over the perceived unfair policies of the Israeli authorities:

I'm from the Old City, but I live also in al-Eizaryia, where I built my own big secluded house, just the opposite thing from the noisy Old City, right? But everything changed after they built the wall and the checkpoint. Before, I was able to walk back and forth, drive back and forth.

Gesturing with his hand in the direction of the manned watchtower behind the wall, he continued:

Now I have to leave my car inside Jerusalem and go by foot to cross here. Every time they have some new surprise here for me – sometimes the new soldiers are trying to be more strict, sometimes they're playing on their phones instead of doing their job and letting us in.

This lack of care and interest on the part of the Israeli military policemen who control the Palestinians' movements at checkpoints might be understood as reflecting individual soldiers' passive boredom, associated with soldiering under the Israeli occupation (Grassiani 2013). We might also read it as a more sinister military policy involving a deliberate 'effective inefficiency designed to slow down the movement of the population', as Berda (2012: 56) proposes. The behaviour of Israeli security agents, placing additional hurdles in front of Palestinian residents as they cross the checkpoint, often encourages the latter reading. They often ask Palestinian Jerusalemite children, for example, to provide the municipal tax papers of their parents, or require permit-holding medical patients to explain the need for their appointment, and present corresponding medical records. The seeming illogic of such arbitrary hurdles often provokes anger from Palestinians, but it can also be approached as deliberative actions aimed at re-constituting Palestinians as 'lesser' subjects who must endure bureau-

cratic torture (Lavie 2014), humiliations and regular disruptions to their daily lives. The Israeli security agents' boredom and lack of care further compound the impact that the uncertainty of crossing has on the lives of Palestinians. This became clearer as I neared the enclosed checkpoint.

I headed into the checkpoint, the Israeli flag waving above me. Passengers crossing from Jerusalem to the West Bank are not checked routinely, yet passing through still involves entering a series of iron turnstiles, empty security booths and a long corridor within the large, covered structure. This maze on the way out of Jerusalem serves two distinct yet related purposes. First, it exacerbates the spatial segregation between Jerusalem and its Palestinian environs, compounding the impression of the separation wall with a passage process that mimics the experience of crossing a 'hard' border (Dumper 2014). Second, it maintains the capacity of the Israeli authorities to immediately block the movement of Palestinians into the West Bank, if only through the implied possibility that they can close off the gate at any given time.

The checkpoint is situated at the edge of al-Eizaryia, a sprawling urban complex, which has deteriorated visibly following the construction of the wall. On the West Bank side, the entrance to the checkpoint is within a fold on the route of the separation wall. Overlooking the yard in front of the entrance is a manned watchtower, visible from afar, with burn marks hinting at past confrontations with local protestors. Having reached this side, I saw men and women passing the tower quickly on their way to the checkpoint, in many cases after saying goodbye to family members or friends who had driven them there with Palestinian-licensed cars, which are not allowed into Jerusalem. I now reentered the checkpoint from the West Bank, joining the ranks of passengers heading into the checkpoint on their way to Jerusalem. By the time I reached the queue, most of the day labourers had already made their way through – those waiting in line were

mostly heading into Jerusalem for business or medical examinations at one of East Jerusalem's hospitals. Crossing into the city requires passing seven consecutive metal turnstiles, in a series of winding corridors and waiting lines enclosed by weathered grey fences and watched over by black-clad private security guards. The largest turnstile controls the entrance to the control booths, where documents are inspected and commuters' luggage and body are scanned using an x-ray machine.

Military policewomen controlled the turnstile remotely from their isolated control booths, allowing in one or two persons at a time. After five minutes in a slowly progressing queue, movement in the first line ground to a halt. No-one knew whether the line was closed or only temporarily paused. Was it worth staying and waiting? Was it better to go to the back of the other line? With no information provided, most passengers decided to stay in line. I gave up after ten minutes and moved to the parallel line, only to see the first line open again soon thereafter; I had no chance to catch my place again in the scramble that ensued. Children jostled for a place at the front, while sighs of distress could be heard from men patiently waiting in the other lines. Since it was only metal bars separating the waiting crowd from the inspection area, those still waiting in line were able to watch and listen to the exchanges between the military policewomen in their bulletproof chambers and the Palestinians wishing to cross. Some passengers were well-versed in the process, preparing their belongings for inspection while handing over their documents. Others were evidently novices, stumbling inside only to wait for confusing instructions delivered in a mix of Hebrew and Arabic by the impatient military policewomen.

The difficulties faced by Palestinian residents at Israeli checkpoints fuel anger and despair, emotions which in those morning hours undoubtedly saturated the air of the waiting room at Ras Abu Sabitan checkpoint. The oppressive dimension of the crossing experience can be elusive, hard to

pinpoint or analyze. In attempting to do so, I adopt the analytical lens of an affective atmosphere, 'a quality of environmental immersion that registers in and through sensing bodies while also remaining diffuse, in the air, ethereal' (McCormack 2008: 413). We can attempt to describe the affective atmosphere through a 'specific focus on material, people and practices' (Adey et al. 2013: 9). I suggest that the prevailing atmosphere at the checkpoints is that of uncertainty and anticipation. The composition of this atmosphere includes the contrasting meteorological effects of the open-air compound and the air-conditioned workstations of the soldiers, the semi-prison architecture evident in the materialities of barbed wire and watchtowers, and the waiting bodies standing within the ether of diffused violence. Indeed, as Adey et al. (2013) note, the affective atmosphere can be unevenly distributed, producing differentiated atmospheres that may be more or less hospitable for some. The laughs of the soldiers watching videos on their smartphones can co-exist in one and the same space with the nerve-racking delay of a Palestinian patient on her way to al-Makassed hospital.

My turn finally arrived after 20 minutes. The light above the turnstile turned green and I was allowed to pass, feed my bag to the x-ray machine and hand over my documents to the military policewoman behind the reinforced glass. The entire process seems detached from the outside world. Despite the clamour outside, inside the checkpoint each individual is assessed separately and subjected on their own to the deliberations of the young soldiers, to the watchful eye of the private security guards and the operational considerations of the border policemen. The military policewoman asked me to repeat my name. The sight of a Jewish-Israeli citizen seemed to alarm her. After a short deliberation I was allowed to put my bag in the x-ray machine and to continue on my way, passing an electric turnstile and a long corridor before reaching yet another turnstile that marked the final exit from the checkpoint. Rafat was still there, waving me

over to his awaiting taxi, inquiring whether the ‘fuckin’ soldiers’ had kept me waiting too long.

How should we understand, or read, the presence of different security actors operating at Jerusalem’s checkpoints? In this case, Rafat’s denouncement of the checkpoints’ security personnel is noteworthy. By approaching all security agents at the checkpoint as ‘soldiers’, he presents a perspective that does not distinguish – or at least attend to the nuances – between different security actors. Like many other Palestinians, Rafat uses one name to refer to all the different policemen, private security guards, military policewomen and border policemen that jointly operate the checkpoints. Indeed, many Palestinians perceive the capacities, authority and responsibilities of the different actors as indistinguishable, all falling within general terms such as ‘the army’ or ‘the occupation’. This confusion is not the result of a mere error on Rafat’s part: rather, this is an outcome of a deliberate obfuscation of the roles, authority and responsibility of the many different security agents at the checkpoints – engendering uncertainty as a mode of governance towards Palestinians at the checkpoint.

The role of determining who may enter Jerusalem is within the discretion of the military police, a corps of the Israeli military normally in charge of staff discipline and prison services. These are low-prestige roles that are often looked down upon by other soldiers. The checkpoints unit within the corps was established in 2004, at a time when the separation wall was under construction; the corps’ Erez battalion was deployed to the Jerusalem sector soon thereafter (see also Dumper 2013; Havkin 2014). Yet while inspection of Palestinians’ documents and belongings remains a military capacity, the specific circumstances of Jerusalem’s annexation and legal incorporation brought the official overall responsibility for operating the checkpoints around the city under the jurisdiction of the (civilian) Israeli police. Their role includes detaining Palestinians under arrest warrants,

suspects in criminal or security offences, and stopping illegal individual entry or group smuggling of West Bank Palestinians into Israel.

A small number of civilian policemen are stationed at each of the checkpoints; most of the policemen present are in fact part of the Israel Border Police, a gendarmerie branch of military recruits to whom police authorities have been delegated. Additionally, while the construction, maintenance and physical security of the checkpoints are overseen by the Israeli police, these tasks are outsourced to external contractors. The police administrators provide the funds and issue the public tenders for the cleaning crews, the construction teams and the PSCs that service the checkpoints.

Private security guards are deployed to the checkpoints around Jerusalem in order to provide physical security to the checkpoint and its personnel. Since 2006, the Israeli government has begun a long-term process of privatizing security operations at major checkpoints, delegating responsibilities to new private security contractors, replacing prior military structures with a new hybrid structure encompassing these private security contractors, the Israeli police, border police and intelligence services. The Jerusalem area checkpoints are still in a transitional position: partial privatization has allowed private security guards to physically secure the checkpoints, but not to control population movement directly through inspection of IDs and tax papers, a function still under the responsibility of the Israeli border police corps (Havkin 2014).

Braverman (2011) argues that the main intention of this privatization process is to create a conceived professionalization of the checkpoints, where spacious computerized terminals replace manned towers, sandbags and automatic rifles – a process intended to re-territorialize, bureaucratize, and de-humanize a main feature of Israel's occupation, turning tem-

porary military instalments into permanent normative structures. Others have addressed the underlying neoliberal logic behind the governmental decision to outsource the checkpoints, noting in particular the wish to improve efficiency, reduce expenses and formulate a novel, less obtrusive legal framework as the selling points of the privatization process (Havkin 2014; Maoz 2010). The outsourcing of the checkpoints' operation to PSCs exacerbates the blurry lines between public and private actors, and between sovereign legitimate violence and aberrant violence, and does so in a manner that is perceived differently by Jewish-Israeli and Palestinian publics. As in Chapter 4 in my discussion of the settler compounds, in my analysis of the checkpoints I extend this literature by emphasizing the blurriness between public and private actors – not only as a by-product of neoliberal governance, but rather as a deliberate obfuscation of roles and authority, sought by state actors as a mode of governance, in which private actors are enlisted to produce managerial and operational unaccountability.

Private security guards are at the frontline of checkpoints in the Jerusalem area. They are stationed outside the gates or within the waiting areas, holding automatic rifles while scanning the space for any sign of suspicion. The Israeli policy of hiring private security contractors to protect police and military installations is not unique; in Iraq, for example, private military contractors (PMCs) were deployed to protect American military bases and state installations (Avant 2006). For the Palestinian residents who cross the checkpoint, the legal status, delegated authority and accountability of private security guards remains unclear. While some Palestinians perceive private security guards as 'soldiers', others, referencing their threatening garb and stoic capacity to stand for long hours, identify them as immigrants from the former Soviet Union. In an interview, a Palestinian community activist from an East Jerusalem neighbourhood situated near a major checkpoint described private security guards as 'Russian guys with a gun'; despite passing the checkpoint almost daily, he was not sure what



Figure 3: An Israeli policeman (left) and private security guard (right) directing traffic near Qalandyia check-point, Jerusalem, April 2015. Photo by Author.



their job actually was. ‘They usually just stand there’, he told me, ‘but sometimes they can take on the roles of a policeman, directing traffic and inspecting IDs upon entering the checkpoint. [...] they don’t really know how to check [an ID], but they like to feel important’. He recounted how he tries to avoid them as much as possible while crossing the checkpoint, since the private guards could present a danger, as he considered them ‘trigger-happy’.

Of the manifold actors operating at the checkpoint, not one takes full responsibility over either the policies or the decision-making that takes place within its confines. If a Palestinian resident believes she has been wronged, arbitrarily denied entry or suffered maltreatment and humiliation, there is little in the way of possible redress, either at the checkpoint or through litigation. In other words, none of the multiple security actors can be held fully accountable for what takes place at the checkpoint. This view was reflected in the testimony of a representative of the Association for Civil Rights in Israel during a hearing at the Israeli Knesset (Knesset Committee for Public Relations 2014), in which she argued that:

The main problem at these checkpoints [...] is the feeling that no one is in charge. There are many bodies involved, each one responsible towards its small niche, whether its construction, staffing or security guards, and every time we turn to one they send us to the other, from which we’re sent to address another, and this feeling trickles downwards.

The uncertainty of the different actors’ roles, responsibilities and authority serves state actors in evading legal, international and humanitarian appeals concerning the limitations imposed at the checkpoint. The deployment of private security guards, in particular, marks the state’s abdication of re-

sponsibility towards the checkpoints' passengers. It shifts the responsibility of the security agents away from that of a public office responsible for its citizens (or residents, or military subjects) and into the limited obligations of a private company under its commercial contract and (limited) state regulation.

When a corruption case was brought against a private security guard at a checkpoint north of Jerusalem, for partaking in the illegal smuggling of West Bank Palestinian eggs into Israel, the defendant argued that his role as an employee of a private corporation means that he is not considered a public servant, and thus cannot be accused of bribery.¹⁴ The Jerusalem district court in fact reduced his sentence (in comparison with those of his border police co-conspirators), considering him to be a private employee. Unlike public security officials, private guards are outside the jurisdiction of the Police Internal Investigation Unit. Even in cases of grave incidents such as suspected manslaughter, the threshold for a criminal indictment is high, contributing to the near-impunity of private security guards working in a public capacity.

The plethora of different public and private actors governing, operating and supervising the checkpoints is read by different audiences either as a single security apparatus, defined by the ubiquity and scope of military authority, or as a multicity of separate components, each with its own limited roles, capacities and authority. State actors deliberately aim to diffuse the operations of the checkpoints into modules that are heterogeneous and discernible from the inside, while appearing monolithic and illegible from the exterior. For an outsider, the machinery of comparable actors appears as a single, nearly-omnipotent body called 'the army' or 'the occupation';

14 See Jerusalem District Court (2015).

every actor seems intractably attached to the other, every security guard, policeman or soldier seems to draw his authority and capacity from the entire security array. However, on the 'inside', at the organizational level, the grey zone of legal and regulatory authority allows for flexibility and creativity in determining the roles, regulations and limitations of each actor.

MILITARY PERMITS

The Israeli military maintains a regime of separation between the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem, allowing only a select group of West Bank Palestinians, who have been issued with a special military permit, the right to access Jerusalem. One of them is Mansour, a 33-year-old merchant living in Ramallah, who needs to travel often to Jerusalem as part of his work importing, selling and servicing electrical appliances. He speaks softly, in a measured tone designed to make friends, not accusations. In an interview, Mansour made distinct efforts to avoid politically-charged issues: he did not complain about the Israeli occupation, nor comment on its chokehold on the movement of Palestinians and their goods between the West Bank and Jerusalem. Instead, he voiced his grievances in strong terms against the 'disorder and inefficiency' of the application process to acquire Israeli military permits to enter Israel. 'I had enough of this nightmare', he told me.

They [the Israeli authorities] cap the number of permits for Palestinian traders, and they don't exceed the quota [...] but the quota changes every time, and every half a year or so you wait to see if you will be lucky enough to get in the list, and for how long the permit will be valid, and if there will be additional restrictions

[...] and all of this means something only in case they won't just revoke the permits altogether at one point.

This section explores how the rules governing the allocation and issuance of Israeli entry permits, coupled with the practices of permits' rejection and revocation, (re)produce a mobility regime that instils uncertainty amongst Palestinians through its illegibility, unreliability and potential for political extortion. Whether in checkpoints, at the Israeli military coordination offices, or at the initial stage of preparing an application, Palestinian West Bank residents face uncertainty and illegible governance in every part of their quest to gain legal access to Jerusalem.

Every checkpoint has a target audience, which is determined by the Israeli military. Ras Abu Sabitan is intended for Palestinian Jerusalemites and Palestinian West Bank permit-holders from the nearby suburbs. The first possess Israeli-issued blue IDs of 'permanent residents' (a status discussed in more detail in Chapter 6), while the latter hold IDs issued by the Palestinian authority in collaboration with the Israeli military (Tawil-Souri 2011a). West Bank residents require permits to enter East Jerusalem. There is a large variety of permits – labourers' permits, traders' permits, medical permits, study permits and many others.

Applying for a temporary permit is a tenuous process which requires several visits to the Israeli military District Coordination Offices (DCOs), where the Israeli intelligence services get to decide who will be issued a permit. Permits can be denied for any reason: to those whose relatives were previously arrested by the Israeli military, or whose houses were demolished, or who refuse to collaborate with the Israeli security services – or for no reason at all. The Israeli military occasionally announces partial or complete closures of the West Bank, during which all permits are void; this is usually the case during major Jewish holidays.

For over a decade, these permits have been issued in the form of magnetic biometric cards, which contain the bearer's personal details, photo and fingerprints; these are used to identify Palestinian residents at the crossing. It is not unusual for Palestinians to be alerted of their permit's revocation by the Israeli security services only when they arrive at the checkpoint and the computer halts their crossing. There are endless stories told by Palestinians of crossings gone wrong – of missed appointments at the hospital, of foreign visas denied as the applicant could not reach the diplomatic consulates located in East Jerusalem, of workers who were replaced after too many 'no-shows' resulting from delays or a policy change at the checkpoints. As Berda (2017) notes, the many ordeals Palestinians undergo in order to retain their right to access the Israeli labour market are a testament to the severity of the Israeli 'effective inefficiency' (Berda 2017: 107), in which Palestinians' personal, family and economic relations are subjected to the whims of both Israeli policy-makers and the individual security agents at the checkpoints. The uncertainty of the crossing, its length and the possibility of detention or humiliation serves not only to limit those who attempt to cross, but furthermore discourages other Palestinians from travelling and applying for permits altogether.

The permits regime is yet another element in the matrix of control over the lives of Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian territories, who despite a façade of Palestinian state-building remain subjects of the Israeli military administration. While nominally a Palestinian government under the Palestinian Authority is mandated with governing civilian affairs for the majority of West Bank Palestinian residents, much of the relevant decision-making takes place elsewhere. The Israeli Coordinator of the Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT), a unit under the Ministry of Defence, together with the Israeli military Civil Administration, are delegated with implementing Israeli civilian policy in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Laws, regulations and policies are adopted and amended

without the consent, and often without the knowledge, of the Palestinian population. Rules governing the mobility of Palestinians in the West Bank are often shrouded in mist, inaccessible or incredibly vague. COGAT maintains a cheery English website with tweets announcing deliveries of Israeli goods to the besieged Gaza strip, yet the regulations, procedures and protocols determining the daily lives of millions of Palestinians – the core of its work – are not published or updated.¹⁵ Information on who is eligible for a permit, who is excluded from crossing checkpoints and who can apply for import/export licenses remains elusive and inconclusive. Palestinians are thus subjects of illegible governance, where the laws and rules are fully known only to the enforcers, and subjected to arbitrary enforcement and unannounced alterations.

Das (2004) argues for a conceptualization of the state as a form of regulation that oscillates between legibility and illegibility, between a rational-bureaucratic mode and a ‘magical’ form of being that renders citizens susceptible and vulnerable. State actors can thus choose, adjust and adapt their degree of (il)legibility to different audiences, limiting their exposure and scope of citizens’ potential for negotiation. At Jerusalem’s checkpoints, the state’s effort at a deliberate ‘unreadability of [...] rules and regulations’ (Das 2004: 234) is reflected in the opaque and oft-altered policies governing the eligibility to and validity of military permits.

Through the permits regime, the Israeli military authorities place the Palestinian population in a condition of continuous legal indeterminacy, in a grey zone of uncertainty. Palestinian civilians are kept as vulnerable, exploitable dependents, whose mobility is used as a political bargaining chip. This grey zone of governance enables an opaque application of political

15 See also Roth (2016) on the unavailability and inaccessibility of the military regulation governing the lives of Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza strip.

pressure. Permits are granted as a ‘carrot’, issued to a select few in order to effectuate a dependency on the Israeli authorities and prevent radicalization. Permits can also be revoked at whim – impeding Palestinians’ mobility and enhancing the uncertainty of their economic, family and social lives. The illegible governance of the permits regime, coupled with the arbitrariness of rejection or revocation, enables the Israeli authorities to gain leverage over the Palestinian residents, using their dependency to stifle dissent and recruit collaborators. Rather than aiming to reduce uncertainty, the Israeli administration advances the proliferation of uncertainty, transforming it from an impediment for proper governance into an integral module within the military toolbox used by the Israeli authorities.

HOW SETTLERS TRAVEL

A discussion about the uncertainty which governs Palestinian mobility cannot be complete without a discussion on the parallel certain, unimpeded mobility of Israeli citizens (notably, Jewish-Israeli settlers) between Jerusalem and the surrounding exclusively Jewish-Israeli West Bank settlements. This section focuses on the seamless crossing experience of Jewish-Israeli travelers at al-Zayim, a checkpoint aimed at facilitating movement between the settlements and Jerusalem. Its contrast with the experience of Palestinian passengers at Ras Abu Sabitan sheds light on how uncertainty can be managed and applied differently towards different residents.

Walking down the hill from Ras Abu Sabitan, a second checkpoint comes to view. Built over Highway 1, the main road connecting Tel Aviv with Jerusalem, the Ma’ale Adumim bloc settlements, Jericho and the

Dead Sea, this large checkpoint resembling a road-toll terminal halts the westwards traffic. The al-Zayim checkpoint serves drivers holding Israeli IDs, who enter and exit Jerusalem through its eastern boundary. It is situated in a narrow unbuilt section of the separation wall route, a gap left in order to allow for a future annexation of the nearby settlements

Figure 4: Aerial photo of Ras Abu Sabitan (bottom) and al-Zayim (top-right) checkpoints. Source: Jerusalem GIS (2016).



(Till et al. 2013). The dual-lane highway provides commuters with quick entry into Jerusalem through the Mount Scopus tunnel or via Highway 1, which engulfs and delimits the nearby East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Issawiya (see Figure 4). Similar checkpoints dot the rest of the West Bank, servicing mostly Jewish-Israeli settlers headed into Israel for work or leisure.

The low hills around the checkpoint were blooming, and the Bedouins' sheep were grazing, as I walked down the hill towards the checkpoint on a spring day in April 2015. The crossing from Jerusalem to the West Bank is entirely unhindered; without the need to slow down, drivers race through without even acknowledging the large security structure on their left side. The effortless crossing intimates the contiguity of space, reflecting the minor differentiation most Jewish-Israeli citizens perceive between the Israeli-dominated parts of East Jerusalem and of the Occupied West Bank. The continuous, smooth asphalt, the emerging view of the Judean desert and the absence of any controls or barriers hide the fact that travelling this road means moving from a territory under Israeli civilian rule to an area under the authority of the Israeli military. The material and visual elements of this crossing replicate a continuous extension of the sovereign state – from Tel Aviv into the West Bank and on to the Dead Sea. Only a very attentive traveller would notice the subtle signs demarcating the hard boundaries of Jerusalem to Israelis and foreign visitors.

When travelling in the opposite direction, from the West Bank to Jerusalem, the signs marking the crossing are more discernible. A large yellow sign has been placed before the checkpoint, delineating not the territory but rather the scope of the checkpoint's target audience. 'This crossing is intended for the exclusive movement of Israelis', it reads in Hebrew, Arabic and English. It continues sternly:

It is forbidden to cross, or transport, any person who is not an Israeli through this crossing. *Israeli* – Any person who is a resident of Israel, or that resides in the area¹⁶ and is an Israeli citizen, or that is entitled to migrate to Israel under the Law of Return 1950 [*Aliya*], as well as anyone who is not a resident of the area and holds a valid entry permit to Israel.

In brief, Israeli citizens and legal residents (including Palestinian Jerusalemites and tourists) are allowed to cross, while crossings by Palestinian residents of the West Bank or the Gaza strip – even permit holders – is a criminal offence under Israeli law.

I passed to the left of the sign, walked to the side of the checkpoint and sat down for a while. Al-Zayim checkpoint was built as a vehicular crossing: its structure, with the separated wide lanes and the air-conditioned work-stations, closely resembles a pay-toll stop on the highway. Cars headed into Jerusalem were divided among three lanes, one of which is intended for trucks and public transport vehicles. Jewish-Israeli drivers know the ritual of passing through the checkpoint almost instinctively: they slow down, open the window half-way and exchange greetings with the military policeman who stands by the side of the lane. The policemen usually says ‘Shalom, how are you?’ while the driver often replies with ‘good morning’, ‘good evening’ or ‘*Shabbat Shalom*’ and continues driving nonchalantly. If the toll barrier is down, the drivers might have to wait in line a bit. Jewish-Israeli drivers who cross the checkpoint project assertiveness – a visible military-green sign asks them to stop and prepare their IDs, yet they seldom do so. Instead, the brief oral exchange described above (occasionally enlivened with ‘what’s up guys?’ or ‘enjoy your weekend!’) replaces the checking of documents or possessions.

16 ‘The Area’ is Israeli legalese for the Occupied West Bank and the Gaza strip. An ‘Israeli resident of the area’ is the Israeli legal term for Jewish-Israeli settlers who reside in West Bank settlements established in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention (see also Azoulai and Ophir 2007).

Once the military policemen establish that the Hebrew accent of the driver is that of a Jewish-Israeli, they briefly glance inside and with the slightest nod indicate that the driver may proceed.

Next to every lane, behind the military police personnel, a private security guard stands inside a short cement cubicle, resting his M16 to face incoming traffic. As I sat by the checkpoint, I observed these security guards. Wearing bulletproof vests and sunglasses, they toyed around with their rifles, directed them at incoming cars or at the roadside; occasionally they sneaked a peek at their smartphones. They were not very talkative, but did like to joke about how the policemen are inexperienced, and how they find the military policewomen attractive. I asked one of them whether there had been any trouble at the checkpoint, to which he replied that all had been quiet in the last months. Others added that they were not around last year, when a Palestinian driver was shot and killed by security guards up the road, after he was caught smuggling permit-less Palestinian labourers. One of the security guards, a young man with a heavy Russian accent, was busy texting on his mobile phone. Then, suddenly, the military policemen loudly asked a driver for his ID, and then those of the passengers.

The driver was a Palestinian Jerusalemite, a holder of an Israeli permanent residency card. Palestinian Jerusalemites are legally allowed to cross using all checkpoints, but are often subjected to stringent inspections of their IDs, vehicle and luggage. The young private security guard looked up from his phone and aimed his rifle at the driver – a standard practice. If the security guard were to judge the driver to be a threat (for instance if he was speeding towards the checkpoint), he could fire his weapon. The soldier asked the driver where he was from ('Beit Hanina') and where he had been ('al-Eizaryia'), then proceeded to check the ID of one of the passengers through his walkie-talkie, reading the numbers slowly. After a minute he allowed the car to proceed. More cars with Jewish-Israeli drivers followed, crossing at a consistently swift pace.

The different crossing experiences of Jewish-Israeli and Palestinians can be understood as reflecting differential policing, in which different strategies and performances are employed by different security actors in order to manifest power and legitimize authority (Grassiani and Volinz 2016). The same security actors, technologies and materialities address different residents differently, presenting a two-tiered system which follows the multifacetedness embedded in a modular security provision, as detailed in Chapter 3. At Jerusalem's checkpoints, the differential mobility regime which ensues is constituted as much by the unequal allocation of (un)certainly as by formal and legal rights. The ease with which Israeli citizens cross the checkpoints in and out of the West Bank allows Jewish-Israeli settlers to imagine their life in a settlement as intractably linked to the urban metropolitan – as normal suburban life 'only 20 minutes from Jerusalem'. This was reflected in an interview with Dov, a Jewish-Israeli settler in his fifties who resides in the small settlement of Kedar, south of Ma'ale Adumim. Besides praising the community life and fulfilment which he enjoys while living in a settlement, he emphasized just how near to Jerusalem he lives. He referred to al-Zayim checkpoint, which he passes with his car daily on the commute to Jerusalem, as 'our checkpoint'. 'At our checkpoint', he told me, 'there are rarely any problems. Sometimes a bit of traffic, but if you know the best time of day to go, you're fine [...] and if a lane gets stuck because someone suspicious is trying to cross, I just move to the next lane, wave my hand at the soldiers and continue on my way'.

Israeli citizens' right to unhindered mobility in and around the Occupied Palestinian territories hinges on the reliability, ease and certainty of crossing between different areas seamlessly, securely and at whim. Similarly, the limitations imposed on Palestinians' mobility cannot be understood properly without attention to the irregularity, uncertainty, fear and lack of redress, which define Israeli security operations, regulations and practices at the checkpoints. Uncertainty is applied differently by security actors at different checkpoints and towards different audiences, contributing to the implementation of an unequal mobility regime in and around Jerusalem.

SHIFTING BORDERS IN SPATIOTEMPORALITY

Following from the sharply contrasting experiences of crossing that Jewish-Israeli citizens and Palestinians have, the boundaries between the occupied West Bank and (occupied) East Jerusalem are perceived differently, too. Ong (2004) suggests that we extend our approach to sovereignty – and to the border – towards a more flexible understanding of authority and governance, one in which a single sovereign can employ strategies of zoning, of differentially applying law, order and political authority in divergent delimited territories. The Israeli authorities have zoned the West Bank differently from East Jerusalem: the former was annexed and placed under civil law, the latter is subjected to military law. Within the West Bank, Israel has declared territorial islands of competing authority: the settlements are placed partially under Israeli civil law, while most Palestinian areas are under the authority of the military commander. Meanwhile, some of the responsibility towards Palestinian urban enclaves has been delegated to the Palestinian Authority. I suggest that the (re)production of the uncertainty of spatial and temporal boundaries plays a pivotal role in border-making practices; by employing uncertainty, Israeli security actors are able to enhance their authority towards, and the dependency of, the Palestinian civilian population. This section discusses the spatial and temporal shifts of the border and its significance.

I suggest that the differential regime of uncertainty at Jerusalem's checkpoints is not only produced through differentiation in mobility policies, but also through the mobility of the location of borders (visible and invisible), and through temporal shifts in their differential significance. In other words, the borders themselves move in both time and space. In the absence of an agreed border, the border itself is shifted and redrawn based on one's

ethnicity, age and gender, while also contingent on current events and the deployment of security actors.

The shifting of border is an act of violence by the sovereign; in other words, bordering is an articulation of the sovereign's monopoly over violence (Parker and Adler-Nissen 2012). While the formidable sight of the separation wall represents an act of bordering, so do other, more subtle articulations of violence: changes to border regulations, the availability of permits, and the re-drawing of no-go zones that target perceived security threats. The movement of borders is also expressed in their differential significance, with boundaries differentially applied to different citizens and residents through practices, performances, regulations and visualities of security.

If modern sovereignty is both flexible and modular, it can encompass spaces located outside national borders, while within its national borders deliberate 'zoning' (Ong 2004) may reconfigure political and economic relations. The movement of the East Jerusalem-West Bank border serves to enable or impede the movement of Jewish-Israelis and Palestinians respectively, and to adjust the level of interaction between different residents of the city. My interpretation is that the checkpoints serve not only to enforce the occupation, but are further aimed at denoting a border – not between two countries, but rather between two different zones of law enforcement under the sovereignty of the same state.

The border itself thus acquires different gradations; its significance is determined more by one's documents and ethnoreligious background – in this case, Jewish Israeli, Palestinian Jerusalemite or Palestinian West Bank resident – than by a normative, geographically delineated binary boundary between two territories.

Jerusalem's checkpoints, constituted of uncertainties, illegibility and lack of accountability in their operation, legal structure and daily practices, can become part of a daily routine for Palestinians residing, working or studying in the city. The long waits in the car or in the queue at the open-air structures of iron bars and turnstiles, the unpleasant or hostile encounters with the military police, the fear of losing one's permit, of suffering humiliation or personal injury are all elements of Israeli rule that Palestinians have generally learned to cope with. Conversely, permit-less Palestinians have largely internalised the Israeli limitations and do not attempt to cross without a military permit. But what happens if, for a limited time, the entire mobility regime is turned upside down, replacing previous structures, regulations and practices with an entirely different operation, bringing forth a surge of solidarity and anticipation among the Palestinian public?

In this section, I seek to address these questions by detailing a Ramadan Friday in Qalandyia checkpoint, which is the main crossing from the northern West Bank (including Ramallah) to Jerusalem and vice-versa. This was my fifth visit to the Qalandyia checkpoint during my fieldwork – it was the third Friday of the month of Ramadan and the level of tension in the city had increased dramatically over the past week. On that day I accompanied members of Machsom Watch, an organization that regularly monitors the situation at the checkpoints around Jerusalem, advising Palestinian passengers and trying to intervene on their behalf when possible. During Ramadan hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from the West Bank travel to Jerusalem on Fridays to pray at Al-Aqsa mosque, Islam's third most holy site. Their pilgrimage also holds political significance, as it represents the strong connection between Palestinians and their self-declared capital, Jerusalem. While the Israeli authorities generally forbid West Bank Palestinian residents from entering Jerusalem without special permits, during Ramadan Fridays entrance is subjected to other, usually more lenient, restrictions.

Ramadan Fridays also mark a drastic change in the transport infrastructure of East Jerusalem, which shifts towards the goal of shuttling hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Muslim pilgrims, who arrive at the Old City for the Friday prayers in and out of Haram-al-Sharif/Temple Mount and the al-Aqsa mosque. The Israeli authorities had cleared the roads to make space for the large fleet of buses transporting the Palestinian West Bank pilgrims coming from and going to the West Bank. The streets around Qalandyia checkpoint were all closed, with police barriers in every corner: the Israeli military had closed the checkpoint for the vehicular traffic and only pedestrians are allowed to try their luck at passing through.

I walked slowly towards the checkpoint. It was a scorching hot July day, making it a particular difficult journey for the fasting Muslim pilgrims. Hundreds of buses were parked in a makeshift parking lot by the checkpoint; the Israeli military had transformed the take-off strip of the nearby disused Qalandyia airport into a transport terminal for buses.

'Blue' policemen were channeling the pilgrims through barriers on the 'Israeli' side to the buses. I spoke to an international observer from UN-OCHA, who explained the changes in the Israeli military's Ramadan permit policy to me. Unlike the previous Friday, when Palestinian West Bank male residents over 40 years old and all women had been allowed to enter without a special permit, today only men over 50 years old and women over 30 years old could enter. The limitations were particularly strict for children, with only accompanied minors below 12 years of age allowed through. She warned me of the 'chaos' on the West Bank side of the checkpoint, as these stringent limitations by the Israeli military took many Palestinians by surprise.

I then walked to the middle of the closed vehicular crossing, a place I knew well from previous visits. Usually the crossing is divided according

to means of transport and ID type: vehicles (Jerusalem and Israeli IDs only) on one side and pedestrians (all other Palestinians) on the other side. Today, as part of the major Ramadan Friday operation, the checkpoint was divided by gender – women attempted to cross at the former bus crossing, while men crossed (or were rejected) at a designated temporary area to the east of the checkpoint, and were led to exit through the gates of the permanent pedestrian crossing.

One of the men exiting the checkpoint, a stocky young guy who spoke fluent Hebrew, stopped by to talk to me. He told me that last week, the Friday prayers had been much more relaxed, and by the end of the day everybody had been allowed to enter Jerusalem: ‘At one point the army said *khalas* [enough], they had too much of these games, they opened the gates and everybody rushed through in just minutes, really’. His story echoes those of Israeli soldiers, who stated to the press that in response to overwhelming Palestinian arrivals to the checkpoint, they sometimes decide to relent and allow everyone to pass. ‘Sometimes even 1200-1400 Palestinians will cross at once [without inspection], even though our crossing capacity is much lower’ (Zeitoun 2015), one soldier stated. Should these stories give hope to Palestinian passengers, particularly to those too young or too old to satisfy the Israeli criteria?

I continued walking out of the checkpoint’s main structure and completed my crossing to the ‘Palestinian’, West Bank side of the checkpoint.

Qalandyia, as I had come to know it before, was gone. Ramadan Fridays are an entirely different operation. The women’s line, adjacent to the separation wall and the watch tower charred by Molotov cocktails, continued all the way into the road and the entrance of the camp, effectively blocking all traffic on the main bypass road between Ramallah and Bethlehem. Instead of the usual turnstiles and x-ray machines, the crossing involved a

series of hurried checks conducted by military police and Magavniks (border-police guards). While the usual crossing is entirely automated, with little to no contact between the passing Palestinians and the Israeli security agents, on this occasion there was a lot of physical friction. People pushed and shoved each other, shouted, cursed and pleaded for help – a very different scene from the usual sterile, individualized and routinized crossing, where soldiers and policemen often serve only as conduits of information to and from the digital database.

The Israeli soldiers had established an outer perimeter on the road, creating a small wall from cement slabs, behind which infantry and snipers were stationed, aiming at the gathering crowd. The women's line led to the first check post, operated by female border guards (Magavniks), who subjected the passengers' IDs to an initial check, verifying the birthdates of the women passing through. Girls above 12 and below 30 (except for blue Israeli ID holders) were sent away. The female border guards called 'Wahida Wahida' over the speakers, prompting the Palestinian women in Arabic to 'go one by one', but leading instead to more pushing and shoving from the line. The second check post, immediately after the first one, was a cursory inspection of luggage, though not a single one of the women dared to bring anything larger than a purse with her.

The next barrier of concrete slabs was a makeshift 'turnstile', a narrow passageway between the slabs. A private security guard stood on top of the turnstile, looking around nervously and aiming his gun towards the outer perimeter. As usual, his job was to physically protect the soldiers and policemen, while refraining from communicating with the pedestrians. This of course did not prevent the pedestrians from venting their anger at the security guard ('Why is the line not moving?') or pleading to be allowed to cross ('I have a blue ID, I go to work in the school, why don't you let me go through?').

The convoluted permit system that determines which West Bank Palestinian may enter Jerusalem was turned upside-down during Ramadan Fridays. All the usual permits – for merchants, day labourers, doctors and others, were not valid. In addition, the ‘black list’ of Palestinians banned from entering Jerusalem and Israel was not enforced, since names were not checked on the computer. The border controls were entirely focused on the gender, age and type of ID of each passenger. Many people complained about this lack of logic: ‘How can I be considered ‘safe’ the entire week, but on my way to pilgrimage on Friday I’m not allowed through only because of my age?’

Another tangible problem was the separation of families during the crossing procedures: men are sent to the men’s crossing on the other side of the terminal, while children are supposed to pass with the women. Some Palestinians became concerned: what would happen if a 13-year-old child were refused entry? Would

Figure 5: Israeli border-policemen and a military policewoman watch over the passage of Palestinian women into Jerusalem, Qalandyia Checkpoint, July 2015. Photo by Author.



the whole family stay behind? They had come from throughout the West Bank, some of them from as far north as the villages around Jenin or Nablus. One mother, accompanied by four children, faced a dilemma when her 20 year-old daughter was refused entry. It might be unsafe, and inappropriate, to let her daughter stay in the checkpoint area, or in Ramallah, where she had no relatives to look after her. A private taxi for the return journey was too expensive. The family deliberated and blocked the crossing for long minutes – only to decide to return backwards and forego their chance at visiting Jerusalem.

For the luckier pilgrims who progressed, another concrete barrier was situated 20 meters down the line, staffed by border policemen and military policewomen (see Figure 5). This was the ‘actual’ crossing, as the military policewomen held the ultimate authority to determine who could cross – and indeed many women and children were rejected at this stage.



To the right of the last check post, the Israeli soldiers had hastily built a small passage out of cement slabs and cardboard – a passageway for the returnees, for those women and children who were rejected at any point of the crossing procedure and sent back. The sheer number of people trying to cross meant that anyone could try their luck at crossing even if they did not ‘fit the criteria’ that the Israeli military had formulated. If they crossed the first barrier successfully, they were sometimes happy thinking they could pass the second one, too. If they were rejected, they could queue up and try their luck again. I saw one woman who tried to pass for the third time in a row with her three children, one of them above the age of 12. This time she got to the second barrier, before the policewomen again noticed her kid was ‘too old’ to pass. The border policewoman shouted at her in Hebrew: ‘What are you doing here again? I told you three times already to go home!’, yet the female pilgrim unapologetically pushed forward her two smaller children and tried to move forward, until another policeman came by and blocked her way, leading her back to the rejected lane once again.

After having observed this scene at the women’s crossing, I walked to the men’s crossing, a makeshift compound surrounded by barbed wire and a metal fence, in which Palestinian pilgrims walked a route that ended in the main pedestrian crossing building.

By now it was after 10 o’clock and people were getting visibly nervous – they might not reach Jerusalem for prayer at all that day, and their entire journey would be in vain. I stood by the side of the makeshift entrance, made of concrete slabs. On our left and straight ahead the separation wall loomed above. By the side of the wall I could see ‘sentry posts’, where combat-gear Magavniks stood ready for action. One of them resembled a Rambo figure, with ammo chains on his chest, and an M16 by his side.

Many of the men waiting in line were probably too young to cross, and were repeatedly sent away. The usual physical barriers between the soldiers and the Palestinian passengers were gone – there were no computer terminals to hide behind, no reinforced glass, just the scathing sun and the flimsy temporary police barriers. The Palestinian men tried constantly to break through the barriers, to outsmart the soldiers or argue with them. The shouts and curses aimed at the soldiers could be heard all around: ‘Go home to your mommy’, ‘You have no honour’, ‘you skunks!’ the men in the congested mess of a line were shouting in Hebrew. But once the passengers came through the first barrier, their tone changed and they often attempted some negotiation: ‘I’m older than it says here’, ‘I pass here every day, I work in construction in Ramat Shlomo [an Israeli settlement in East Jerusalem], where are you from?’, or ‘Look at this man, he’s very old, can’t you let him go first?’ Sometimes the border policemen did not want to argue too much and would let a person go, only for him to be rejected at the next check post.

I started talking with Salah, one of the men trying to pass. He wore a black NBA hat, a t-shirt of an Israeli construction contractor and dusty jeans. He was 42 years old – ‘too young’ to pass today, according to the Israeli border policemen. By the time I arrived, he had been rejected six times already. He was irritated, showing me his valid daily permit to enter Jerusalem for his work; yet this biometric identification card was useless on Ramadan Fridays. He lamented: ‘Everybody in West Jerusalem knows me, I’ve been working in gardening in all the buildings in the city for 20 years. Even when I don’t get a permit I sneak in [...] the customers can rely on me’. He seemed angry. What bothered him most, it seemed, was that despite his close relation to Jerusalem and his Israeli employers, he was denied his religious ritual because of an arbitrary decision. He made sure to tell me just how arbitrary it was: ‘Last week I was here and I was also denied, I don’t know why. But then at one point an order came and

they opened the gates and everybody went through. There were no problems. So why this week not?' He made a point of telling me that 'There are many ways to pass the wall, below and above. This time I tried to take the straight way, but next week you will see me in Al-Aqsa, but not through the checkpoint'. Salah was referring to the images circulated on social media of young Palestinians scaling the separation wall with ladders and ropes on their way to Jerusalem's Old City.

Sitting atop one of the cement blocks, Salah started joking, saying 'In a minute's time they will arrest me for sitting on the cement here', and indeed half a minute later a border policeman shouted at him to move back, warning him that he would be arrested otherwise. We exchanged half a sad smile.

I present this discussion of Qalandyia's mobility and security regime on a Ramadan Friday as a case through which to understand how uncertainty multiplies, replacing the anticipation of a religious and national event with a confounding experience of multiple unknowns regarding the border's changing location and significance. The events should have been a simple affair: the sovereign, the Israeli military, allows its subjects to attend to their religious duties at their site of worship. Yet the regulations and practices employed by the plurality of security actors at the checkpoint posed a series of differentiated hurdles rather than facilitating a seasonal festivity. The border shifted from its 'regular' position towards indeterminate and divergent spatial and temporal positions based upon gender, age and type of identification document.

The special mobility regime during the Ramadan Fridays also served to cast doubt on the usability and trustworthiness of Palestinians' documents. Possession of a valid military permit, which grants permission to enter Je-

Jerusalem, could have deceived the bearer into thinking he would be allowed to cross as on any other day. By temporally voiding all entry permits, the Israeli military questioned its own policy, barring Palestinians who had been previously vetted, favouring instead limitations based on age and gender. The shred of hope left for those who had been denied entry, the previous experience of the gates opening and allowing the free entry of worshippers, contributed to the affective atmosphere of uncertainty engulfing the checkpoint, similar to the atmosphere at the Ras Abu Sabitan checkpoint. Those who had been barred remained in place, trying to enter again and again, on occasion being allowed through, only to be rejected later.

The imposing sight of the separation wall might produce a veneer of a stable, durable and impenetrable border. Yet borders, just like the sovereignty which they mark, are both flexible and modular, shifting in location and meaning through different gazes and times of observation. Jerusalem's borders are constantly (re)produced; while carefully managed (and securitized) mobility infrastructures mark both visible and invisible borders, quotidian practices of movement by residents continuously challenge and alter those same borders (Baumann 2015). The borders of the city can be both 'hard' and 'soft' (Dumper 2014), demarcating a gradual transformation of the performance of sovereignty – but not of the sovereign. In changing the terms and locations of the different 'zones' under one zone of sovereign rule (Ong 2004), the Israeli authorities sought to differentially shift borders, their significance, elasticity and penetrability in time and space, thereby inducing uncertainty among the Palestinian public. Israeli security actors were able to impede Palestinian mobility further, while maintaining a carefully crafted image of enabling access to Jerusalem's holy sites. The spatial and temporal aspects of the border between the zones can shift, subjecting residents to uncertainty regarding who can access which area, when and through where.

CONCLUSION

The assemblage of contradictory directives, segregated processing, foiled anticipation, soured affective atmosphere and ill-assorted deployment of security actors contributes to the unequal allocation of (un)certainty in and around Jerusalem's checkpoints. Palestinians at the entry points of Jerusalem are governed through uncertainty, which is deliberately employed and moderated by Israeli security actors. Security agents on the ground have a wide leeway in determining the feasibility, duration and burden of crossing for Palestinian passengers; the security practices, materialities and technologies plugged in to the system of checkpoints only increase the already existing uncertainty produced by Israel's opaque permit system and the plurality of heterogeneous security actors on site. The arbitrariness of the checkpoints, which Handel (2011: 268) likens to a 'bingo' practice, is not intended merely to determine who has a right to enter the city. Rather, it is used to discourage Palestinians from attempting to travel altogether. Not knowing whether, how, where and when one can travel has potentially dire implications for the social, economic and political lives of Palestinians.

Zeiderman et al. (2015) posit that uncertainty is governed and tackled in multiple dimensions of the urban experience. This chapter has argued that uncertainty can be employed as a mode of governance, deliberately sought and differentially administered. This proposition does not imply that such a mode of governance involves a stable set of measures, regulations and practices. To the contrary, the production of uncertainty requires a continuous effort of enlisting and adjusting different security actors, instruments and policies – or modules – in order to curtail the scope of planning and forecasting that Palestinians are allowed in their daily lives. The Israeli production of uncertainty is pursued through a security toolbox populated by material, managerial, technological and affective modules, enlisted and instructed at alternating times with differential instructions towards different residents. Together, these modules are used to produce uncertainty through irregular

operation, managerial obfuscation, denial of accountability and contradictory or oft-altered directives and regulatory frameworks. Such a mode of governance adversely affects Palestinian social and political lives while placing limits on the Palestinian economy, as it subjects the movement of people and goods to the numerous unforeseen disruptions on their route.

The question remains as to how different people respond to the spectre of governance through uncertainty. Simone (2010: 101) argues that urban residents and collectives rely on 'politics of anticipation' – a 'temporality of intersections' in which uncertainty is mitigated through 'a game of transactions that propel different kinds of residents into varied forms of contact with each other [...] that result in different kinds of benefits and constraints'. The case of Palestinians' constrained mobility through Israeli checkpoints presents a case of manifold responses, none of which is devoid of complications and pitfalls. While extended mobility can be pursued through NGOs and diplomatic advocacy, litigation and civil society organizing, it is rather the personal acts of daily resistance – illicit movement, practices of negotiation and evasion – that comprise the popular politics (Chatterjee 2004) pervasive among Palestinian labourers, students and pilgrims. Those politics aim to overcome uncertainty and maintain normalcy under the most unusual situations.

The deliberate (re)production of uncertainty by Israeli security actors should not be approached as detached from the violence and desperation that largely define the relations between Palestinians and Israeli security agents; one fuels the other in a continuous circle, for which there is currently no possibility of change on the horizon. In a relevant observation, articulated in a different context, the UN Human Rights Council attended to the dangers of this continuous governance through uncertainty, decrying the political authority that employs a 'pervasive control system [...] used in absolute arbitrariness to keep the population in a state of permanent anxiety' (UN-OHCHR 2015). Uncertainty, it is recognized by both proponents and critics, takes its toll.