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Contents

From the Editor

Featured Essays

In Conversation with Prof. Prasenjit Duara

Interview by *Lee Kiat Jin*

From the Editor

The twelfth issue of the ISA E-Bulletin carries diverse contributions from social scientists placed globally. The essays segment features three fascinating articles on the subject of `resistance`: the first is, `To Laugh is to Resist? Palestinian Women Negotiating Meaning and Practice of Resistance` by *Sophie Richter-Devroe,* the second is entitled `Bedouin Resistance to the Imperial State: Memories from the *Naqab* during the British Mandate 1917-1948` by *Mansour Nsasra* and the third piece is `Masculinities and the Occupation of the West Bank` by *Phil Leech.* All three pieces engage challenging questions about conflict, gender and resistance in the Middle East and constitute a special focus for this issue. A fourth contribution is a historical piece about a very different subject, the construction of religion in the Philippines by Nicola Mapelli from the University of Roma and is entitled 'The Western Construction of a Religion: The Philippine Case (1521-1614).'

The 'In Conversation' segment features Professor Prasenjit Duara, a historian, who is presently the Director of Research, Humanities and Social Sciences at the National University of Singapore and Professor Emeritus of History and East Asian Languages and Civilizations at Chicago University. His research interests include nationalism, imperialism, transnationalism, and modern China. He is interviewed by Dr. Lee Kiat Jin, who is currently a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore. Kiat Jin's research interests encompass the sociology of education, social stratification and mobility, social and political thought, and comparative-historical sociology.

I am grateful to fellow sociologists who have supported the ISA E-Bulletin as contributors and readers. I look forward to many more suggestions, feedback and of course, contributions.

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To Laugh is to Resist?
Palestinian Women Negotiating Meaning and Practice of Resistance

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Sophie Richter-Devroe is a Ph.D. student at the Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Exeter University, with a broad research interest in women's activism in the Arab world and Iran. Her dissertation research focuses on gender and conflict transformation in the Palestinian Occupied Territories, looking at women's participation in dialogue-based conflict resolution programmes as well as in various forms of formal and informal resistance activism. She is an advanced student of the Arabic and Persian languages and has published translations and reviews of Arabic literary works as well as scholarly articles on Palestinian and Iranian women's activism.

All throughout the Israeli attacks on Gaza I tried in vain to get news from Marwan, a friend in Gaza City who had helped me two months earlier to arrange interviews for my PhD project.[1] There was never a reply by phone or email. Then suddenly on 18 February, the first day of a very fragile ceasefire, I found three emails from him in my Inbox: the first was a joke about an IT expert naming his twin babies "Copy" and "Paste". The second was a short video ridiculing women's driving (and parking) techniques. And, the third was the following joke: An Israeli arrives at London's

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[1] The empirical data for this paper was collected during 9 months field work for my PhD project on Palestinian women's political activism in 2007 and 2008. I conducted ca. 70 semi-structured interviews, several focus groups and many more informal conversations with Palestinian women (and also few men) from the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza Strip. Names of all informants are anonymised. I am grateful to my doctoral supervisors Prof. Gerd Nonneman and Dr. Ruba Salih for their critical comments and continuous support. Of course, only I am responsible for possible shortcoming. The findings presented here are part of my ongoing PhD research and thus work in progress. I would be grateful to receive further feedback (sr268@exeter.ac.uk).

Heathrow airport. As he fills out the entry form, the immigration officer asks him: "Occupation?" The Israeli promptly replies: "No, no, just visiting!"

I was very happy to hear from Marwan, but at the same time his outpour of humour and jokes, coming from Gaza which had been under constant bombardment and attack for more than three weeks, left me somewhat confused. The "genocidal Israeli attack on Gaza" (Pappé, 2009), killed 1,416 people and left 5,303 wounded (PCHR, 2009) and a whole population emotionally and psychologically distressed (see Thabet et. al., 2009; Grimaud, 2009). The attacks completely destroyed civilian infrastructure services and brought Gaza "to the brink of humanitarian catastrophe" (Shlaim, 2009:1).

In response to my further inquiries about the situation – but also about his jokes – Marwan answered me in a later email:

> …about Gaza and the Israeli aggression, believe me it was the worst days in my life, very difficult, ugly and horrible especially on the kids. 8 windows were broken in my flat. My wife and the kids were in the room and the glass broke on them, but thank God nothing happened to them. Plus the sound of the explosions with the sound of the F16 made my kids, and even us, suffer until this moment. My kids now are scared of everything, even if the door [just] shuts strongly from the wind. […] About [the question of] how we can still make jokes about Israelis and the occupation? - Because we have to, we have to live and yes, you can call it " *umūd*". (Emphasis and diacritics added)

umūd, which translates as steadfastness, can be described as a form of infrapolitics, or everyday (nonviolent) resistance (Scott, 1997).[2] It is, as Marwan shows, the steadfast and stubborn insistence on carrying on with life and even seizing every opportunity to enjoy it, despite all odds. In contrast to the public, heroic and overt nonviolent resistance, which in Palestine is mostly associated with stone-throwing youth, *umūd* is a more covert, often individual and non-organised form of everyday resistance. The term is used to refer to a wide variety of acts ranging from more materially-based survival strategies (such as continuing to tend occupied agricultural land or engaging in small-scale income-generating projects to provide livelihoods) through cultural resistance (by maintaining traditions, folkloric songs or dresses and other customs), to social and ideational resistance (of, for example, maintaining hope and keeping the social fabric intact). As a strategy concerned particularly with family and community life *umūd* has been associated particularly with women's daily struggles (see e.g. Johnson, 2007:602-3; Peteet, 1991:153; Richter-Devroe, 2008:47-51).

Lama, a mother of five who was born and raised in Askeri refugee camp in Nablus and now is a secretarial worker in one of Ramallah's NGOs, explained her *umūd* in the following way to me:

> When we were students in school […] me and my best female friends we used to talk a lot about our vision for the future for our children. How much you need to keep yourself together, so that you will stay strong, despite all the sadness around you. How much you need to remain steadfast.

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[2] For a comprehensive study of *umūd* as a Palestinian commemorative narrative, see Khalili (2007:99–112).

Just as for Marwan, for Lama *umūd* takes place not only on the material level through practical survival strategies, but also on the ideational level: through keeping up hope, joy and a vision for the future. It is this form of *umūd* that Palestinian women from various age groups, socio-economic, geographical and religious backgrounds continuously stressed to me: their everyday struggles to maintain a normal and – to the extent possible – enjoyable life for themselves, their children and families, *despite* destruction, frustration and death around them. Women organise wedding and other celebrations for their sons and daughters, despite economic hardship,[3] they take their families to visit relatives and friends in other parts of the West Bank and they gather women through mainly informal networks to go on trips and picnics in the countryside, despite restrictions of mobility through checkpoints and closure.[4]

The fact that Palestinians now overwhelmingly identify their pursuit of a normal joyful life as a form of everyday resistance and *umūd*, is crucial. Why at this moment in time do Palestinians (and, it seems, particularly women) put emphasis on keeping up hope, normalcy and a joyful life? How have their understandings and practices of resistance changed over time? What can Palestinian women's changing understandings and practices of *umūd* tell us about developments in the nature of the Israeli occupation and shifts in the matrix of different internal and external power structures?

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[3] See Roy (2004) for an account of how Israeli siege, closure and territorial fragmentation policies have led to the dependency and de-development of the Palestinian economy.

[4] In February 2009, OCHA (2009) identified 626 obstacles to movement within the West Bank (such as checkpoints, roadblocks, earth mounds or trenches), indicating an increase of 250 obstacles (66.5%) over their baseline figure (376) of August 2005. For updated figures on mobility restrictions and closure in the West Bank and Gaza Strip see www.ochaopt.org.

While Palestinian women devise and practise a wide variety of everyday coping strategies, this paper will focus on women's particular practice of going on trips, i.e. crossing physical (but also ideational) boundaries, to enjoy life. What insights can women's pursuit of everyday pleasure through travelling offer on the functioning of systems of power in the Palestinian case in particular, and for the theorisation of resistance and power more broadly?

Following a brief introductory overview of theories of resistance and power, I present the cases of three Palestinian women who frame their pursuit of everyday pleasure through travelling as an act of resistance. Drawing on evidence provided in other scholarly accounts of Palestinians' everyday struggles and as obtained during my field studies more broadly, my discussion of these three detailed cases highlights that women's claiming their right to an ordinary joyful life certainly is a political act. Yet, one should not jump hastily to the conclusion and romanticise it as necessarily being fully transformative in intent or outcome. While their acts might be a tactic to temporarily circumvent Israeli control over physical space, they might, at the same time, constitute a strategy to resist – to various degrees and in different forms – not only Israeli control over their ideational spaces, but also internal material and normative forms of patriarchal control.

Everyday Resistance: Theoretical Considerations

The study of everyday life and everyday resistance has received much academic attention. Here I aim to give an overview and critical discussion only of those points most

directly relevant to an analysis of Palestinian women's everyday acts of travelling as a way of claiming their right to enjoyment of life.

From the 1970s onwards the notion of everyday life increasingly became a focus in scholarly attempts to identify both the location and quality of transformative agency (see e.g. Bourdieu, 1977; de Certeau, 1984). The local and everyday in these writings was recognised as an important site that not only bears traces of power and policies but also reacts to, challenges, and gets by and around these power imprints in various and often unrecognised ways. Studying these social and political struggles at the local level was and is a way to deconstruct universalist conceptualisation of resistance and change. It can serve to discover alternative - but nevertheless political - modes of struggling against complex interactions between different power structures at the local level. Scott (1997:323) puts it in the following way:

> So long as we confine our conception of *the political* to activity that is openly declared we are driven to conclude that subordinate groups essentially lack a political life, or that what political life they do have is restricted to those exceptional moments of popular explosion. To do so is to miss the immense political terrain that lies between quiescence and revolt, and that, for better or worse, is the political environment of subject classes.

In the Palestinian case, studying women's everyday struggles challenges a unitary conceptualisation of resistance as consisting of either armed resistance or collective (nonviolent) protest only. It compels us to recognise that women's everyday struggles are political acts.

Studies of the everyday struggle thus highlight that resistance is not independent of systems of power, but rather takes place within them and is conditioned by them. Systems of power do not determine the form resistance takes, but they set the possibilities for distinct types of resistance to emerge. Realising this inter-dependence between resistance and power (or agency and structure) should lead us to "use resistance as a diagnostic of power" (Abu-Lughod, 1990:42). Doing so, a study of Palestinian women's changing understandings and practices of everyday resistance can shed light upon the ways in which the nature of the Israeli occupation and its interrelation with other power structures (class, patriarchy, Islamist, nationalist, etc.) that restrict (and enable) women's agency has changed over time.

By turning the questions on its head and asking not primarily about women's acts of everyday resistance themselves, but rather about what their distinct understandings, framings and practices of resistance reveal about shifts in the matrix of power relations that women are negotiating with and through, we can also avoid falling into the trap of romanticising women's everyday resistance as definite signs of freedom and trajectories for change (Abu Lughod, 1990:42). Rather than devaluating women's everyday resistance as irrelevant and a-political or heroifying it as an unquestionably emancipatory act, more nuanced ways of dealing with the question of everyday resistance and its transformative potentials are needed. For an analysis of women's practices of crossing physical and ideational restrictions to enjoy life, two more recent comments following Scott's original conceptualisation of everyday resistance are particularly important: the

notion of "quiet encroachment" (Bayat, 1997) and of "accommodating protest" (MacLeod, 1992).

Bayat (1997) has found Scott's everyday resistance paradigm to be inapplicable for studying the "street politics" and "quiet encroachment" of the urban poor in Iran. He finds that their struggles cannot be described as defensive, hidden and marginally affecting systems of power only, but that they are offensive acts and often able to initiate changes in the lives of their actors. "Scott's implicit subscription to rational choice theory", according to Bayat (1997:6), "would overlook the complexity of motives behind this type of struggle, where moral elements are mixed with rational calculations." Bayat draws attention to the meaning and intent that actors might (or might not) attach to their acts. Are everyday acts that *unintentionally* affect social or political change also a form of resistance?[5] As he explains, "the 'quiet encroachment of the ordinary' – a silent, patient, protracted, and pervasive advancement of ordinary people on the propertied and powerful in order to survive hardships and better their lives" (Bayat, 1997:7) often starts without much political meaning attached to it, but rather is justified on moral grounds. As will be shown below, Bayat's unpacking of the relationship between action and the meanings and intentions which actors attach to it (or claim to attach to it) is crucially important also when studying Palestinian women's acts of travelling to enjoy life. How do women justify this claim to their right to have fun? Against which oppressive structures do they (claim to) target their acts and onto which systems of power might they (intentionally or unintentionally) be "quietly encroaching"?

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[5] For a more detailed study on this point see Bayat (2000) where he criticises resistance scholar for not taking into consideration meaning and intent and thus labelling nearly any act a form of resistance.

MacLeod (1992) in a study on the new veiling in Cairo provides further insights into the everyday resistance tactics of women in particular. She argues that the controversial voluntary veiling adopted by educated and working Egyptian women is an ambiguous form of their agency with which women both aim to alter and maintain, challenge and accept the status quo. She thus draws attention to women's multiple and often hybrid subjectivities, resulting in their ambiguous agency of "accommodating protest":

> For women, there is no clear-cut other to confront directly. Facing a layered and overlapping round of oppressors, women do not have the relative luxury of knowing their enemy. Relations with men, class relations, and the more distant realm of global inequalities all affect lower-middle-class women in Cairo, yet none is exclusively responsible for women's subordination. Women see a web of cross-cutting power relations, and an ambiguous symbolic solution like the veil that speaks on different political levels suits the nature of these overlapping power constraints (MacLeod, 1992:553).

Her main point - that one act of resistance can have different meanings, intentions and effects on different power structures - is crucial also for understanding Palestinian women's everyday resistance tactics. It is a forceful reminder not to conceptualise agency only within the dichotomies of resistance and conformance, but rather to trace how most of the time one act is both conforming and subverting.

A study of Palestinian women's struggles to travel to enjoy life should thus not be caught up in dichotomous questions of whether these acts are either resisting or

reinforcing the status quo. Rather it should be concerned with tracing women's hybrid subjectivities: Which of the oppressive structures (patriarchal, class, nationalist, Islamist, occupation, etc.) that shape (and are shaped by) their subjectivities do women's (often ambiguous) forms of agency, overtly or covertly, support, and which might they challenge? Which might both be challenged and supported at the same time?

Four major points have so far been established in this theoretical discussion on resistance and power:

1. Women's everyday struggles, although mostly quiet and largely unrecognised, are political acts.

2. They should, however, not be hastily romanticised as necessarily being fully transformative in intent or outcome, but rather be used as a diagnostic of power.

3. They might be justified on various moral or political grounds and they might be "quietly encroaching" onto different forms of control.

4. They might be both challenging and supporting different forms of domination.

With this framework in mind, I now present a number of specific cases of Palestinian women's everyday resistance acts of travelling to pursue normalcy and pleasure in life. I will do so by providing a short background for each of the women, followed by their specific practice, understanding and framing of this act as a form of resistance.

Palestinian Women Crossing Boundaries: The Cases

Najla

Najla is originally from a small village near Bethlehem, but like many other university graduates has moved to Ramallah to find a job there. She is not too happy with her job as a trainer for women's groups, but is grateful for having a source of income at all. She finds life in Ramallah rather boring and misses her family a lot. Every Thursday at around 4pm after work she embarks on the unpredictable journey with a shared taxi from Ramallah to her home village near Bethlehem. Since Palestinians with a West Bank ID like her cannot travel the direct way from Ramallah to Bethlehem through Jerusalem (which would take around an hour) she has to travel on the often make-shift roads that wind through the craggy valley called *Wadi Nar*, "The Valley of Fire". If there are no delays, the trip can be done in 1.5 hours, but mostly, because of traffic jams caused by closed or only partially open checkpoints, it takes much longer. Normally Najla is exhausted when she arrives at her family house on Thursday evening, and also when she arrives back home in her flat in Ramallah on Saturday nights.

When not travelling back home to her family, she uses the weekends to visit friends from university in different places of the West Bank. There is hardly a weekend where she stays in Ramallah, because, as she explained to me, "I need to see my friends and enjoy life. I refuse to be locked up here in Ramallah and just spend my life working. I go, even if there are checkpoints and it takes long. I need to have a change of scenery (*taghyīr al-jaww*) from time to time." Her expression *taghyīr al-jaww* ('a change of scenery', *lit.* 'a change of air/climate') is very common – it captures well the feeling of

being stuck in one place, always breathing the same air, with nothing new or exciting happening. Her story also shows that even a leisure trip within the West Bank, clearly is a struggle of regaining control over land and living space.

Amal

Amal is a mother of four - two boys and two girls - in her 40s. Originally from a village not far from Ramallah, she used to live with her husband in Ar-Ram, one of East Jerusalem's neighbourhoods that were sealed off from the city when the wall was constructed. In order not to loose their Jerusalem IDs, to continue her work in one of Jerusalem's hospitals and for her kids' to be able to complete their education in Jerusalem, she and her family were forced to leave their family home and move to a rented flat in Beit Hanina, an area of East Jerusalem on the other 'Jerusalem' side of the wall. Amal used to be an active member of the Communist party and, as she told me, used to work in different women's committees participating in demonstrations and cooperative work during the First Intifada. Her husband still is active in politics and a member of a leftist political initiative. Amal also was approached by her husband's political party and has worked with them for a short while, but then, she told me, "I stopped. There is absolutely no point these days. Now I prefer to work as an individual, as Amal. I can, for example, go and treat sick people or help in any other way as an individual – but not in a collective, not in a political party."

Amal likes to enjoy life. The first time I met her she welcomed me with a beaming smile into her flat, dragged me into the kitchen, served me a huge plate of

maqlūba and poured me, without further asking, a glass of Arak. With her female friends, many of whom used to be active in the communist party as well, she organises regular meetings and trips to different parts of the West Bank, a great deal of which is spend with eating, telling stories of the past and laughing about husbands (who are not allowed to join). "When I really want to relax, however," Amal told me one day, "then I take my book and go to the settlement nearby." I was surprised to hear that - of all places - she chooses a settlement to enjoy life. Although Amal was not referring to the highly secured Israeli settlements in the West Bank (which are impossible for Palestinians to access), but to those inside Jerusalem, I still could not imagine how and why, as a Palestinian, it could be relaxing there and I wondered if it would not even be dangerous. She explained to me that she would wear sunglasses and a shirt with short sleeves, so that no one can recognise her as Palestinian. "They think I am a Jewish woman. I can sit there and read my book and no one bothers me. They have nice gardens and parks there. Where can I go here [in East Jerusalem]? We have nothing here, and even if I would find a bench somewhere people would look strangely at me."

Although Amal's financial situation, in comparison to that of other Palestinians, is relatively secure, her life is not void of problems and suffering. To the contrary: her father was killed by an Israeli soldier when she was still young, she is working hard (and fighting with the Israeli authorities) to be able to afford the overpriced rent and Jerusalem municipality tax (*Arnona*)[6] for her flat in Beit Hanina to keep her, her children's and her

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[6] The *Arnona* tax (*Arnona* is a Hebrew term) is disproportionally high in annexed East Jerusalem where little services are offered to the Palestinian residents. See Vitullo (1996) or the website of the Jerusalem Center for Social and Economic Rights at www.jcser.org for further information.

husband's Jerusalem ID. Nevertheless, Amal has decided to make the best of what there is, even if this means finding sneaky ways to gain access to spaces formally out of her reach and control.

Karima

Karima is a forceful and restless woman in her 60s. I met her the first time in her weekly women's meeting in Bethlehem, the aim of which, as she explained to me is "to share our problems. We as mothers have a lot of problems, so everyone can share. It is good for women to go outside, because there are no jobs. We are housewives." Karima's story of *umūd* centres on her house near Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem. The wall cuts through her backyard, but, as she stresses over and over again, she will remain *āmida* (steadfast). "All the shops around my home, all the area which used to be so vibrant and full of life is dead now. Nobody can work here. So my home here is my *umūd*. We will stay in our home. They put the wall and they took the land without asking."

Karima, however, is also a self-declared ambassador of Palestine: "I see myself as the ambassador of peace and justice. I need to meet Israelis face-to-face to tell them about our suffering here and what they do to us, so that they cannot escape their responsibility and guilt," she told me after a joint Palestinian-Israeli women's meeting in Haifa. As the meeting's Palestinian coordinator, she had got together ca. 20 Palestinian women, mainly friends from Bethlehem, and managed to secure travel permits for them to go to Haifa for this workshop. When I joined the meeting on its last day, there was clear tension between the Palestinian women and the Israeli programme instructor. Most Palestinian women I

spoke to complained that the topic of the workshop, communication skills and self-empowerment, is irrelevant to their situation, that they felt patronised by the treatment of the Israeli instructor who, according to them, did not allow any discussion about everyday life under occupation. The Israeli instructor, however, criticised the Palestinian women for not taking the course seriously and for "just coming here to have fun."

She was right. The Palestinian women did indeed come to Haifa to have fun. Hala, a young university graduate, told me in her very im-(and ex-)pressive English:

> I came to this meeting because I wanted to see Haifa and I wanted to take a break from my life in Bethlehem. Yes, you can write this in your research. I only came here to have fun. I have no problem saying that. But then – what sort of fun is that? It is not fun for me to come here and listen to her [the Israeli instructor's] bullshit. It is much better for me if I speak to my Palestinian friends who understand the situation and who understand my feelings. There is no point to tell her anything about my life or about me.

When I met Karima a couple of weeks later in Bethlehem she immediately wanted to explain to me what had happened in Haifa. Staying true to her mission of confronting Israelis with reality, she replied back to the (non-present, of course) Israeli instructor:

> Yes, we came here to enjoy! It is our right as Palestinians to also come here to Haifa to have fun. You stole our land [Karima's family is originally from Haifa], our water, our rights and our freedom. So the least we can do is to come here to our land, go to the beach and have fun. There is nothing wrong with that. Or do you really think I want to come here so that you can teach me how to communicate?

Karima thus added yet another layer to how women understand and frame their travel practices to enjoy life. She states that it is her *right* as Palestinian to use and enjoy those spaces now inside Israel.

The previous stories provide different illustrations of how Palestinian women's struggles to enjoy life through trips and gaining space take place. Najla's, Amal's and Karima's attempts to carry on with everyday life, by using and enjoying to the extent possible their fragmented and occupied living space provide important insights into their practical and discursive negotiating with changing systems of domination. It is here that Abu Lughod's (1990) call – to use resistance as a diagnostic of power – can guide the way to discovering shifts in the inter-workings of power and resistance in Palestine.

From "Suspension" to "Affirmation of Life"?

A thread that runs through all three women's stories is their struggle to find ways to enjoy life by changing and gaining space: *taghyīr al-jaww* ('a change of scenery', *lit.* 'a change of air/climate'). They clearly state that it is their right to have fun and relax in life. They thus strive to keep up or reproduce a sense of normalcy and hope, despite the destruction, death and frustration they are caught in. Such an attempt to lead and provide for one's family an ordinary joyful life – and more importantly the framing of this struggle as an act of *ṣumūd* – is decidedly different to practices and understandings of resistance during the First Intifada.

In the First Intifada Palestinian resistance was mainly collective in the form of strikes, mass demonstration, committee work, and so on. However, what ran in parallel to

the overt public nonviolent resistance acts against Israeli occupation was a more covert everyday resistance, what Jean-Klein (2001) has described as "suspension of life." In a process that Jean-Klein terms "self-nationalisation" people called upon themselves to live an ascetic life and suspend everyday activities and joyful events. Wedding, religious, birthday or other celebrations needed to be stopped in order to affirm the abnormality of occupation. Living normally was seen as a form of normalising the abnormal situation of the occupation. The suspension of everyday life, ordinary activities, joyful events and entertainment was considered a necessary sacrifice to the cause. Time for normality and pleasure was to come only once independence had been gained. As one of Jean-Klein's informants clearly put it: "When we have our state, then we will have one big wedding procession!" (quoted in Jean-Klein, 2001:96).

Now, several years into the Second Intifada and with the prospects for peace- and state-building shattered, Palestinians have turned back to striving for everyday pleasure and normality (see Junka, 2006; Kelly, 2008). A redefinition of what constitutes resistance has taken place and certainly, by now, enjoying life and finding hope, despite the hopeless situation, is considered by many Palestinians a part of resistance and *umūd*.[7] This is not to claim that an act like, for example, Amal's of sneaking into a Jerusalem settlement to relax, will change the status quo of the Israeli occupation. Rather, the crucial questions to ask are: Why, at this moment of time, do Palestinian women return to striving for a normal joyful life and why do they understand and frame this act

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[7] See for example the volume "Challenging the Wall: Toward a Pedagogy of Hope" edited by van Teefelen (2007) in which most contributions and interviewees relate the concept of *umūd* to Palestinians' acts of searching for hope, joy and a normal life.

as   *umūd*? How has the matrix of power relations changed since the First Intifada so that women now stress travel and everyday joy as a form of resistance?

Resisting (the Effects of) Israeli Settler-Colonial Policies

A theme that clearly dominates women's struggles is that of space and land. Palestinian women continuously face restrictions of mobility in their daily life. Several scholars have described Israeli policies of spatial control as one of "enclavisation" (Falah, 2005), "bantustanization" (Farsakh, 2005), "creeping apartheid" (Yiftachel, 2005), or "matrix of control" (Halper, 2000). What Hanafi has termed "spacio-cide," i.e. the systematic dispossession, occupation and destruction of Palestinian living space, is made possible "by exercising the state of exception and deploying bio-politics to categorize Palestinians into different groups, with the aim of rendering them powerless" (Hanafi, 2009:106).[8]

The spatial dismemberment of the Palestinian community has severe damaging impact on Palestinian economy (Roy, 2004), society (Johnson, 2006) as well as political organisation and action (Taraki, 2008). Israeli "spacio-cidal" policies thus have secured not only complete domination over the land, but also over the smallest details and fine grains of Palestinian everyday life. Against this background, what spaces are left for Palestinian resistance? Mbembé has argued that since Israeli "late-modern colonial occupation" reduces Palestinians to "living dead" the space left for Palestinian agency is

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[8] The Israeli practices of spatial control have drawn increased academic attention after the outbreak of the Second Intifada and the construction of the wall. They are, however, not a recent phenomenon, but rather are rooted in and informed by the Zionist myth of 'a land without people for a people without land' (see Hanafi, 2009:119) and thus part of Israel's long-term policies of unilateral separation and Palestinian territorial dismemberment (Falah, 2005:1341).

their mere control over their own death; the possibilities of resistance become reduced to the act of martyrdom (Mbembé, 2003). Hanafi (2009:119), however, maintains: "Violence is not the only form of resistance. To counter the Israeli "spacio-cidal" project, Palestinians transgress the regime of exception by constructing their habitat without permit, even at the risk of demolition."

The struggles of Amal, Najla and Karima (and many more women I interviewed), confirm Hanafi's assertion that Israeli practices of physical and spatial domination and subjectification are met by acts of resistance other than violence and martyrdom. They show that resistance does not necessarily have to be violent, nor does it necessarily have to be public and collective. None of these women's individual acts are clearly confrontational, rather theirs is a struggle to indirectly and quietly re-appropriate and redefine their occupied, fragmented and dispossessed spaces. Each woman has their own way to deal with the spatial dismemberment and destruction of their living space.

Najla's defiance "not to be locked up in Ramallah" and instead enjoy everyday life by embarking on unpredictable trips through the West Bank, despite checkpoints and closures, is an example of what by now, according to Hammami (2004:26), has become one of the most common forms of Palestinian resistance against the occupation: "getting there."[9] Defying Israeli restrictions on mobility and "getting there" by whatever means is now understood and practiced as a form of *umūd*. This new meaning of *umūd* is decidedly different from its original nationalist understanding. While in the 1970s *umūd*, institutionalised through financial support from Arab states, denoted a refusal to

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[9] For an account which finds that Palestinian resistance is not only a way of "getting there," but also "getting around" and, more importantly, "getting by" the occupation see Allen (2007).

leave the land (and as such has been criticised as a form of passive non-resistance [Tamari, 1991:61]), it now stands for something more proactive. "Its new meaning, found in the common refrain, '*al-hayat lazim tistamirr*' ('life must go on') is about resisting immobility, refusing to let the army's lockdown of one's community preclude one from reaching school or work" (Hammami, 2004:27). Najla's insistence to not only stay on her land, but also to travel this land and use it proactively, to breathe the different airs of this land, is an example of this emergent and changing understanding of *umūd*.

To re-appropriate space for their own gains, Amal and Karima go even a step further in their defiance of Israeli spatial control. For them, the air they want to breathe is not confined to "what is left" after the Oslo "peace" process. Their tactic to reach and use those spaces now formally out of their reach and control, however, must – in order to succeed – take a more covert and cunning form than Najla's straightforward insistence to "get there." Both adopt a tactic of disguise: Amal quite literally by dressing up in a short-sleeved shirt and sun-glasses (so as not to be recognised as Palestinian), and Karima by formally enrolling herself and friends in the occupier's project (to obtain the travel permit). To understand their, but also Najla's acts better, de Certeau's (1984, xix) notion of tactics of everyday life is helpful:

> The place of a tactic belongs to the other. A tactic insinuates itself into the other's place, fragmentarily, without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance. It has at its disposal no base where it can capitalize on its advantages, prepare its expansion, and secure independence with respect to circumstances. […] it is always on the watch for opportunities that must be seized "on the wing." Whatever it wins, it does not keep. It must constantly

manipulate events in order to turn them into "opportunities." The weak must continually turn to their own ends forces alien to them.

Going to an Israeli settlement to relax, or to Haifa to the beach, or across the West Bank to visit friends and family clearly is not an act with which women can, or believe they can, permanently change Israeli occupation. It is, as de Certeau makes clear, a tactic to temporarily subvert the established power configurations. Gains are temporary, small and personal victories only: Amal might be able to enter the space where she can relax this time, but the next day she must negotiate access all over again. Amal, Karima, and Najla have no strategy with which to maintain their gains. Their tactics to enjoy life are not premised on effecting long-term political change. They cannot be. There is no way they realistically can revert Israeli policies of spatial control and fully take control of the physical space. As the disproportionally weaker actor they can only trick the much more powerful Israeli authorities, gain access to "their" space and subvert the power relations from within by making use of it for their own good. Yet it is in tricking the occupier that they find joy and that their dignity is maintained: "In these combatants' stratagems, there is a certain art of placing one's blows, a pleasure in getting around the rules of a constraining space. We see the tactical and joyful dexterity of the mastery of a technique" (de Certeau, 1984:18).

The cunning act of subversion, however temporary and individual, brings joy. Women's transgression of physical and ideational boundaries does not claim to intent to change the material reality of the occupation and women are aware that their victories

over Israeli control are only temporary. Yet, this temporary gain over the Israeli "spacio-cidal" policies does subvert, at least, some of the *effects* that these policies intended to have on Palestinian bodies. Junka (2006:422) concludes in her study on the politics of Gaza Beach:

> If what is at stake in Palestine today is the very possibility of life itself and the ability of Palestinians to exercise control over their colonised bodies and spaces of everyday life, then the affirmation not only of death but also of life and pleasure becomes a meaningful aspect of the Palestinian struggle.

Her conclusion also holds true for Palestinian women relaxing and enjoying life in a Jerusalem settlement, on Haifa beach or with friends and family in the West Bank. Palestinians' "affirmation of life" during the Second Intifada (Junka, 2006) thus stands in stark contrast to their "suspension of life" during the First Intifada (Jean-Klein, 2001). Enjoying life is a tactic to subvert the effects that Israeli "spacio-cidal" policies indented to have on Palestinian bodies and agency: to render them powerless (Hanafi, 2009).

"Spacio-cidal" policies and brutal arbitrary force with which Israeli forces have increasingly aimed to reduce Palestinians to "living dead" have thus been countered not only by Palestinians taking control over death through martyrdom, as Mbembé (2003) writes, but also by many other, much more covert tactics, one of which is to keep up hope, laughter and joy, despite violence, death and loss. In his earlier book "On the Postcolony" Mbembé (2001) argues that humour and ridicule have no potential to bring about change: "Those who laugh, whether in the public arena or in the private domain,

are not necessarily bringing about the collapse of power or even resisting it" (Mbembé, 2001:110). In his view humour cannot be considered a form of resistance since it does not radically alter the oppressor's material base. However, in general accordance with other more recent literature,[10] the findings of my field studies including the three detailed cases of Amal, Karima and Najla presented here, show that Palestinian women's pursuit of everyday pleasure and normalcy does not aim to and cannot change material realities. Since controlling the occupied, fragmented and dispossessed *physical* space is impossible, Palestinian women stress the need to maintain their own alternative *ideational* spaces, by insisting on their right to an ordinary life including its pleasures, joy and laughter.

Resisting Patriarchal Control

Women's struggles to enjoy life do not take place within and against restrictions imposed by the Israeli occupation only. They are also shaped by (and shaping) internal Palestinian power structures that dominate women's lives materially and normatively. Besides subverting physical and ideational forms of Israeli control, women going on leisure trips thus also transgress both normative expectations and physical boundaries placed upon them by patriarchal power structures in secular-nationalist or religious-political groups as well as at the community and family level.

The call for "suspension of life" during the First Intifada was not only self-initiated by ordinary people. It was also enforced by family, community, political party

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[10] For such more recent studies that deal with Palestinian's everyday resistance see, for example, Hammami (2004), Junka (2006), Allen (2007), Johnson (2007) or Kelly (2008),

and national leaders. It might well be that a bride whose wedding was called off did not choose to do so on her own, but rather that she was *expected* to sacrifice her celebration and suspend enjoyment for the bigger cause. Communal, nationalist and Islamist leadership thus played an important role in policing and enforcing the policy of suspension (Junka, 2006:423). Leaders were eager to ensure that their own definition of resistance remains hegemonic. Controlling what counts as resistance and when or why people are allowed to have fun (or not) is thus also a way to consolidate political and social power. Resistance was and still is the explanatory paradigm for Palestinian political, social and ideological movement mobilisation. Every act – so as not to be de-legitimised by opponents – has to be (accepted as) one of "proper" resistance to the occupation.

Resistance still remains the meta-frame today. However, Israeli settler-colonial policies have not only brought about spatial dismemberment but also political fragmentation. The Palestinian political landscape is now increasingly characterised by factionalism and lack of national unity and leadership. One specific way of defining and practicing resistance, although primarily targeted against Israeli occupation, thus also involves a challenge against internal political opponents and their chosen form of resistance (which then is branded as "nonresistance"). The Second Intifada was not just launched in resistance to the Israeli occupation but the form it took of public, action-oriented and predominantly armed resistance was also a way to oppose and render the final blow to the negotiation paradigm symbolised in the failure of the Oslo "peace" process.

Since, however, not only the negotiation paradigm, but also armed, and collective nonviolent resistance have failed to bring results, there is no longer one single hegemonic resistance paradigm. Definitions and practices of resistance are not only differing along political party, generational and socio-economic lines, and by the spatial categories of town-camp-village, but are also geographically defined. Spatial dismemberment has resulted in the fragmentation of political action and has given rise to new forms of more local manifestations of activism and resistance (Taraki, 2008). Such increased spatial and political fragmentation, in addition to the brutal reprisal that Israeli forces take against any collective form of resistance, has reduced not only collective acts, but also collective understandings of resistance. Palestinian political culture thus seems to be increasingly characterised by a plurality of narratives and forms of resistance.

One common trend within (and perhaps result of) this diversification, however, has been that Palestinians, and particularly women, now express their adherence to the resistance paradigm increasingly on the individual (rather than collective) and ideational (rather than action-oriented, practical) level. Amal sees "absolutely no point" in participating in collective political initiatives, Karima insists on her "right as Palestinian to come to Haifa to have fun," and Lama, quoted at the outset of this paper, stresses that as a mother she has to resist Israeli occupation, by "keeping herself together," "staying steadfast" and providing a vision for the future for her children. The great majority of my interviewees emphasised that as mothers they feel responsible for providing a normal joyful life, hope and a future outlook for their children and family.

Kelly has argued that in the Palestinian context where everyday life is dominated by political violence and omnipresent Israeli control, a distinction between the ordinary and extraordinary has little analytical purchase. In a situation where "[t]he unexpected is […] never entirely a surprise and the expected is always partly surprising" (Kelly, 2008:353), Palestinians can never predict the outcome of their acts, nor the form that Israeli arbitrary and brutal reprisal to their acts might take. Since their daily life is riddled with uncertainties, they now are predominantly "focusing on the affirmation of life in the immanent present rather than in a future that for many Palestinians appears indefinitely delayed" (Junka, 2006:426). Women's everyday struggles thus are mainly individual and short-term; they focus on the "here and now," on seizing every opportunity to maintain (a sense of) ordinary and joyful life.

Internal fragmentation of Palestinian political struggle certainly has changed the matrix of power relations that enable and constrain women's agency and it might be argued that lack of unity has opened up new spaces for women to define and practise more individual forms of resistance. The mere fact of power struggles over the meaning of Palestinian resistance at the national level, however, does in no way indicate that women are now free to pick any sort of fun, frame it as resistance and face no opposition. Their spaces for agency are still limited by the different and often contradictory resistance discourses (as well as other power structures) which vary according to class, age, geographical location, etc. While Najla's travelling within the West Bank is broadly accepted as a form of *umūd* of "getting there," Amal's and Karima's acts of using Israeli space for their own ends by subverting power relations from within without,

however, directly or overtly challenging them, might not be. Particularly acts like Karima's, i.e. the participation in joint Palestinian-Israeli projects which do not clearly oppose the occupation but rather are built on and reinforce the status quo of power relations between occupier and occupied, might provoke hostile reactions and accusations of normalisation, i.e. of accepting as normal the abnormal situation of the occupation.[11] While their shift from "suspension" to "affirmation of life" reflects Palestinian women's understandings and practices of resistance more broadly, the precise forms that Amal's and Karima's acts of striving for a joyful ordinary life take, thus are probably not very common within Palestinian society. They are clearly a way of testing boundaries.

Yet, what Amal's, Karima's and Najla's acts of crossing physical and ideational boundaries to enjoy life (whether more exceptional or more common in their specific forms) - and especially their framing of these acts as a form of resistance - indicate is that women have succeeded in seizing the confusion and struggle over resistance at the national level to "quietly encroach" on other forms of domination. By claiming that it is their right to have fun they clearly frame their acts as political resistance against Israeli occupation and thus stay true to the meta-frame of resistance. Yet, in fact their acts are a challenge to patriarchal forms of control in family, community, secular-nationalist as well as religious-political structures that curtail their individual freedom and mobility.

Bayat (2007) has argued that "anti-fun-damentalism" stems less from the Islamists' fear that the more spontaneous and individual nature of what he terms "the

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[11] For a more comprehensive discussion of joint Palestinian-Israeli people-to-people projects and the charge of normalisation against them see Andoni (2003), Nasser-Najjab (2004), Richter-Devroe (forthcoming) or Sharoni (1995:131-152).

politics of fun" could disrupt moral norms, but rather that it might undermine their own regime of power and authoritative voice on social conduct. The denial of fun, pleasure and entertainment thus is nothing specific to Islam or political-religious groups, but rather is an attempt, undertaken in one way or another by most political groups, to consolidate power. Illustrating his argument with the example from a secular setting where militants from the al-Aqsa Martyr Brigade disrupted a music concert in Nablus claiming that joy and entertainment would disrupt public commitment to the cause and to (the Brigade's understanding and practice of) resistance, Bayat (2000:456) concludes that the "militias' apprehension of 'happiness' follows the same logic of power – fear from a rival frame of mind that could ultimately undercut their authority." The authoritative understanding of resistance in Nablus (which has the reputation of being one of the last strongholds of Palestinian armed resistance) thus takes inspiration from the First Intifada resistance paradigm of "suspension of life". On the other end of the spectrum, the predominant understanding and practice of resistance among the urban middle classes in, for example, Ramallah (but also Bethlehem and Jerusalem), is that of pursuing a normal life including pleasure and entertainment (see Taraki, 2008).

Besides challenging patriarchal attitudes in secular and religious political groups, women's insistence on their right to joy and entertainment also constitutes a resistance to patriarchal restrictions and social control at family and community level. Women's leisure trips are often organised with a group of female friends and thus are a way of keeping intact and strengthening women's informal networks and sources of power. The suspension of activities such as evening strolls, family visit, or women's coffee circles

during the First Intifada restricted particularly women's mobility and social life. The return to a resistance paradigm that calls for the "affirmation of life" thus has been seized by women as an opportunity to challenge patriarchal restrictions, increase their mobility and revive informal networks, a crucial source of their social and political power. While most Palestinians have shifted their understanding and practice of resistance from "suspension" to "affirmation of life" the precise forms that women's practices of "affirmation of life" can take and that are accepted by their local communities vary widely. Consequently the extent to which Palestinian women succeed in regaining power by framing their crossing of patriarchal physical and normative boundaries as an act of resistance against Israeli "spacio-cidal" policies still crucially depends on their specific context.[12]

This analysis of Palestinian women's pursuit of normalcy and pleasure through travelling and their framing of this act as a form of everyday resistance has highlighted the growing hybridisation of women's subjectivities. Women are negotiating with and through a multitude of intersecting and quickly changing power relations. The specificity of Palestinian women's struggles, however, is that although they - like their Egyptian sisters - face a "layered and overlapping round of oppressors" (MacLeod, 1992:553), they *do* have the "luxury" of knowing their enemy. To gain social approval for their acts of travelling to enjoy life, they thus frame them as resistance to that clear-cut other, Israel,

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[12] Israeli policies of territorial dismemberment have by no means brought about a general relaxation of patriarchal control. They have merely created new conditions in the Palestinian resistance culture which set the possibilities for women's bargaining with patriarchal power structures. Israeli occupation and spatial control has had widely varying effects on Palestinian social and gender relations; see Johnson (2006) for a detailed analysis.

rather than to other layers of control. By demanding their right to have fun they claim to be resisting the Israeli occupation and thus accommodate their acts within the newly emerging interpretations of *umūd* as "affirmation of life." Yet, with such ambiguous agency they are also "quietly encroaching" on and challenging patriarchal restrictions and social control exercised at family, community and national level.

Conclusion

This paper has traced Palestinian women's understandings, practices and framings of everyday resistance. Palestinian women's everyday resistance acts consist of both materially-based survival strategies and various coping strategies at the ideational level. Focussing on the latter, this study has taken the example of women's particular practice of travelling to enjoy everyday life to shed light upon the complex and mutually constitutive inter-relationship between women's agency and the various power structures that women are negotiating with and through. It has drawn attention to the fact that Palestinian women, although framing such practices as acts of resistance against Israeli occupation, are also seizing an opportunity to covertly challenge and trespass internal patriarchal restrictions.

Insights on why such an "opportunity" for women to engage in ambiguous, challenging but accommodating, subverting yet reinforcing forms of agency haven arisen now, can be gained from studying their resistance acts as a diagnostic of shifting power relations. The fact that women's acts of *umūd* centre on the two notions of space and

"affirmation of life," points to shifting (inter-related) external and internal power constellations.

Since Israeli "spacio-cidal" policies of occupation, dispossession and fragmentation of Palestinian living spaces not only target physical space, but also the fine grain and mere possibility of an ordinary joyful life, Palestinian women's defiance of mobility restriction to pursue - to the extent possible - everyday pleasure and a normal life, becomes a meaningful act of resistance. It is clear that with their acts of crossing Israeli-imposed physical borders women do not hope to, cannot and will not change the material reality of the occupation. They are everyday tactics with which women can only temporarily and individually subvert power relations. On an ideational level, however, acts of trespassing physical borders to enjoy life are a way to resist the effects of Israeli "spacio-cidal" policies by creating and maintaining own alternative cultural spaces.

On an intra-Palestinian level, women have seized the moment of confusion over what constitutes "proper" resistance and the opportunity of the emergence of multiple understandings and practices of resistance to formulate and live - albeit in different ways and degrees - their own more individual forms of resistance. With their acts of crossing Israeli-imposed physical restrictions, they also trespass physical and normative boundaries set internally by patriarchal power structures. By insisting that it is their right to lead a normal joyful life, women frame their acts of trespassing as political resistance against Israeli occupation and thus stay true to the overall meta-frame. Yet, the apparently unintended "side-effect" of their defying Israeli "spacio-cidal" policies is their

"quiet encroachment" on, challenge and resistance to different internal social and political forms of male domination.

While women's acts of travelling to enjoy everyday life might be a tactic that can achieve only temporary small-scale victories over the Israeli occupation of their physical space, it clearly is a more long-term strategy to resist Israeli control over their ideational spaces. Furthermore, such ambiguous acts are also part of women's practical and discursive bargaining strategies to challenge and transform material and ideational patriarchal power structures within their own society. When scholarly inquiring into whether or not, or to what extent their acts have potential to bring about social or political change, one should, however, not lose sight of the bigger picture: that these women's acts take place in a context of pervasive and omnipresent Israeli control, where a struggle to maintain an ordinary joyful life often is the most feasible, urgent and meaningful thing for people to do.

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Bedouin Resistance to the Imperial State:
Memories from the *Naqab*[13] during the British Mandate 1917-1948

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A Bedouin who is dissatisfied with the actions of the government towards him will rarely offer

resistance, but will normally simply escape out of reach… being nomadic he can take his family

and all his worldly possessions with him. He will often escape across the boundary into a

neighbouring state, thereby indefinitely postponing the settlement of the case to which he was part

(Glubb Pasha: GB 165 -0118)[14].

Abstract

It is usually argued in the academic literature that the Bedouin in the Naqab under the British Mandate in Palestine were passive and silent, not posing any threat, having any agency or providing resistance to the imposed powerful and oppressive regime. For this historical era (1917-1948) covering the existence of the British Mandate in southern

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[13] The Bedouin employ the term "*Naqab*" in Arabic to refer to the southern part of Palestine. Naqab means the "route in the mountain," the region of the southern part of Palestine (Dabagh, 1965:116). The related term "*Negeb*" is an old Hebrew appellation meaning "the south" (CO 537/2311). Israel new state uses the term "*Negev*" for this area which constitutes 60 percent of its land today. The *Naqab* derives from an ancient Semitic word *"Negeb,"* which means the "dry land" referring to the entire Beersheba district in southern Palestine. The *Naqab* region extends from Beersheba to Aqaba, covering 12,577 km, which comprises half of Palestine before the catastrophe or "*Nakba*" of 1948 and the creating of the state of Israel (Dabagh, 1965:122). In this paper I have chosen to use the term "*Naqab*" as a historic term used by indigenous community for centuries, especially pre the establishment of the state of Israel in May 1948.
[14] Glubb Pasha papers: The Middle East Centre Archive – St Antony's College-Oxford, England.

Palestine, the Mandate government worked hard to control the Bedouin. The Bedouin dominated the desert by employing various policies and tactics directed towards the Mandate. However, the Bedouin, as indigenous people who had inhabited the Naqab for centuries, responded with a variety of techniques of struggle and forms of resistance, both violent and non–violent, towards the hegemonic power of the British Mandate in order to survive and to remain on their land. I will argue that, as a result of this resistance to the imperial state, Bedouin seems to have exercised a significant independence in the Naqab desert, despite the strong attempts of control and influence by the Mandatory government.

This paper examines British-Bedouin relations through the lens of collective memory and oral history interviews. It compares the memories of Bedouin resistance from two perspectives through oral history interviews: The first interview was conducted with an indigenous Bedouin employed by the British Mandatory authorities, while the second interview was with the former British Assistant District Commissioner of Beersheba district (1942-1944).

Introduction

Over the last two years, I have conducted numerous interviews with Jewish Israelis, British and Palestinian Bedouin[15] from the *Naqab* as part of my PhD research. I have mainly interviewed people both about their memories of British Mandate period, and also about the Israeli military government 1948-1966.

The overall aim of the project is to record the oral testimonies of living under the British Mandate and the Israeli military government. The history of the Bedouin

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[15] The Bedouin are Arabs of the desert who live in a nomadic or semi nomadic life. The term *Bedouin* derives from the word *"badia"* which means *"desert"*. In the case of the *Naqab*: Bedouin lived both a nomadic and a semi nomadic life until 1948. Israel made efforts to force the remaining Bedouin to live in planned villages "Forced Sedentarization". Today half of the Bedouin in the *Naqab* live in villages which were planned by the state of Israel in the 1970s, and the other half still live in their land and resist *"Sumud-steadfastness"* to move to the state planned villages; as a result they live in *"Unrecognized Villages"*. This term refers to Bedouin villages in the *Naqab* which Israel did not recognize as legal according. Around 90,000 Bedouin live in unrecognised villages in the *Naqab* desert. The villages are deprived of basic services like housing, water, electricity, education and health care.

community in the *Naqab* has not been well documented, and few indigenous[16] researchers have studied their community and its history. I am a member of the post-1948 survival community from the second generation, and I feel the strong need to document and study my community during this particular historical era.

My role as an *"indigenous-insider"* researcher offers numerous advantages. I can conduct interviews in three languages: Arabic Hebrew or English. I am familiar with the tribal dynamics and culture in the *Naqab*. I have good contacts with some tribes and access to others. In the process of interviewing Bedouin, I have had the opportunity to meet some who served the British Mandate. I have also had the opportunity to interview some of the few remaining British officials who worked with the Bedouin in the 1940s in the *Naqab*. Indeed, interviewing both a Bedouin and a British Assistant District Commissioner who worked together is a rare chance to draw a comparison from two perspectives. Such an opportunity should help us to better understand the relationship between the British and the Bedouin during the period by using two perspectives and memories from the 1940s.

The main purpose of this paper is to contrast the memory of two interviewees (one British, one Bedouin) of the British Mandate in southern Palestine and to relate it to the broader archival data available. These two life history interviews demonstrate that the Bedouin resisted the British Mandate in certain ways by using their methods as Bedouin,

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[16] Martinez Cobo (1986) defined indigenous communities as: peoples and nations which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems" (Cobo, 1986: 378-380). According to Cobo's definition, the *Naqab* Bedouin are categorised as indigenous peoples.

and also collaborated at times. Some British laws and control mechanisms did not suit the Bedouin way of life and ignored them. In other cases, the British were asked to shift or mitigate their policies towards the Bedouin. My findings reveal that the Bedouin reacted to the shifting nature of British policy in various ways and with a range of special tactics of resistance. If they were not happy with the British policies and tones, they sent their warning messages to the British officials using formal letters sometimes.

This review of British-Bedouin relations suggests that, despite the harsh policies of control imposed by the British to govern the Bedouin, the British regime was unable to establish significant authority over the Bedouin, and had a little influence on their lives. If the Bedouin were not satisfied with the British policies, they resisted with a package of techniques. The most common tactics of resistance to the imperial colonial state included challenging the order and security; attacking colonial power's soldiers, challenging the legality and laws imposed by the regime, participating in revolts, sending formal warning and complaints, and agreeing but then not doing what was requested. Bedouin in the *Naqab* succeeded as the result of some tactics of resistance to practice their traditional life within their space by challenging state control. The state had little control influenced over the Bedouin, although these leading the Mandate remained small, and realized the limits of their attempts.

The Naqab *and the Bedouin: A Historical Overview*

Historically, Bedouin have inhabited the *Naqab* for centuries as pastoral nomads (for more see Abu Saad, 2004; 2006). Prior to the creation of Israel, Bedouin were estimated

to number 65,000-100,000, divided into 95 tribes (Marx, 1974; Abu Rabia, 1994). Due to the catastrophe *"Nakba"*, and the creation of the state of Israel, only 11,000 remained within the borders of the new Israeli state. The community known as the *Naqab* Bedouin today are the survivors from this 11,000 and their descendants. Those *Naqab* Bedouin outside Israel's borders are classed as Palestinian refugees, and live primarily in Gaza, Hebron, Sinai and Jordan (Abu Setta, 1995).

Before the existence of the state of Israel, the Bedouin dominated the *Naqab* in nine main tribal confederations: Tiyāhā, Zullam, Tarābīn, `Azāzme, 'Hanajreh, Jbarat, Sa'idiyeen, A'heiwat, and Jahalin (Al Aref, 1999; Marx, 1974).
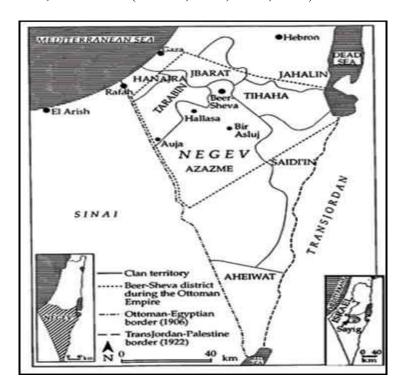

Figure 1: Map of *Naqab* Bedouin in the early 20th century (Meir, 1997).

The Bedouin have been governed by a series of different regimes in recent history, including the Ottomans, the British Mandate and the Israeli state. The Ottomans era in Palestine (1516-1917) is the longest in Bedouin history, however, it is remembered by the *Naqab* Bedouin as a very tough experience of oppression. The Bedouin who inhabited the *Naqab* were antagonistic towards the Ottoman Empire, mainly because of their policies of intervention into the Bedouin life. Yet, the tribes showed hostility, antagonism and resistance to the Ottoman efforts to control them, sometimes it escalated to rebellions against Ottoman rule in southern Palestine. The Bedouin also remember that the Ottoman regime in southern Palestine ultimately had little significance on their life, because they felt free. As a result, tribes exercised their independence in the desert and fought each other freely. Until the late 19th century, the *Naqab* was actually under control of the Bedouin tribes, and despite numerous attempts, the Ottoman did not impose their direct rule over the area.

Ottoman strategies of control did not work for semi nomadic indigenous Bedouin. The Bedouin tribes ignored the existence of the Ottomans in the desert and carried on living their way of life without any threat.

The period from 1900 until 1917 marks a new era in Ottoman attempts to integrate and control the *Naqab* Bedouin. In the early 20th century, the Ottoman policies regarding the Bedouin shifted from oppression to facilitating the Bedouin's entry into governance positions, a new approach to control the Bedouin and maintain security and

order in the desert. In 1900, the policy of the Ottoman regarding the Bedouin entered a new phase through the creation of a new administrative centre (Beersheba[17]).

The Ottomans, for example, facilitated the Bedouin role in local governance by employing them in official positions. The most important government position held by a Bedouin was the mayor of Beersheba. The appointment *sheikh Ali Al Atawna* (a Bedouin indigenous tribal chief -*sheikh*-) to a mayor of the city marked a shift in policy of the Ottomans towards Bedouin. Ottoman control over southern Palestine was terminated in 1917, by their defeat at the Battle of Beersheba.

The next period of occupation of the *Naqab* was during the British Mandate (1917-1948). The British attacked the Ottoman in the southern district in early 1916, and took a significant advantage by conquering Rafah in January 1917. However, they became bogged down at the gates of Gaza. With the appointment of General Edmond Allenby as the commander of the British forces, they began their offensive in October

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[17] Beersheba is the name as used by British documents, and in Arabic it is known as (*Bi'r Al Sabi*'بئر السبع). In Hebrew it is *Beer Sheva*, (In *Beer sheva* the Hebrew history starts) and located in the Western of the Dead Sea. In Turkish it is *Birüssebi*. In 1900, the Ottomans took the decision to separate the tribes from the administrative centre in Gaza and to build a new district "*Qada*" of Beersheba, the larger and more permanent base in southern Palestine (Al Aref, 1999:244). Before the Ottomans, Beersheba played a central role during the Islamic Empire and their base of some *Umayyad* rulers.

For almost 400 years, the *Naqab* had been ruled either from Gaza or Jerusalem. Immediately after its establishment, Beersheba becomes the central city and the military base of the Ottoman in southern Palestine, particularly during the First World War. The recreation of the city by the Ottomans ended by being built on *Azazma* land -One of the biggest Bedouin confederations-, after the Ottomans purchased 480 acres from the *Azazma* chief -*Sheikh Hassan Al Maltaa*. It appears that one reason for the Ottoman decision was the persuasive arguments of *Sheikh Al Maltaa*, since he had worked to convince the Ottomans to impose order across the region and to stop the inter tribal wars (Abu Rabia, 2001:8-10) Thus, the creation of Beersheba can be seen partly as a result of collaboration between the *Azazma* Bedouin and the Ottoman administration in order to halt the tribal wars and impose order in the desert. The Ottoman built an administrative centre in Beersheba "*Al- Saraya*" including other buildings: mosque, Bedouin school, post office, police station, tribal court, Bedouin market, train station, among others. The city was occupied by the British in 1917, and by the Israelis in 1948, and today still play the central Israeli city in the south, and the Bedouin still see it as a primary city in their every day life.

1917 to conquer Beersheba, the Ottoman military base in southern Palestine. A massive war operation escalated between the British army and the Ottoman who tried hard to defend Beersheba, without significant success. The Ottoman army withdrew from their defensive bases, and the British occupied Beersheba on 31st of October 1917, where many Ottoman soldiers were killed (Al Aref, 1999:254-262).

British control of Palestine lasted for over 30 years, ending in May 1948. Once the British captured Beersheba, the British actively sought a different relationship from that of the Ottoman period. In 1938, during the Arab revolt, Beersheba was controlled briefly by Palestinian rebels after defeating the British. They actively facilitated a role for Bedouin sheikhs in the *Naqab* and in Beersheba. The British were very careful not to intervene significantly in Bedouin life.

The current position of the *Naqab* begins in October 1948 when the new Israeli army occupied Beersheba. Following the withdrawal of the British from the *Naqab* in May 1948, there were a few months of Palestinian independence with Egyptian soldiers defending the city. Shortly after, the Egyptians withdrew and the city was occupied by the Israeli army in October 1948 during "*Operation Yoav*". Almost all the Bedouin were exiled and left from both the *Naqab* and their capital city of Beersheba. Most of the Bedouin became refugees in neighbouring Arab countries, with the remainder numbering approximately 11,000 (Falah, 1989). The tribes became refugees and, split by new borders, some found themselves in the Sinai, the Hebron Hills, Egypt, Gaza and Jordan.

The remainder of the 18 tribes left within the new Israeli borders were concentrated into a *Closed Zone*[18], *"Siyaj"* for more than 18 years. They were subject to a military government which restricted their freedom of movement and eradicated their semi-nomadic life (Abu Saad, 2006; Meir, 1997). Since 1948, the Bedouin have been administratively segregated from the rest of the Arab population in Israel (Marx, 1974). After the military government terminated in 1966, the majority of the Bedouin faced sedentarisation policies which aimed to control both the land and 'modernise' the population by moving them into new planned townships (Yiftachel, 2003; McKay &Abu Hussein, 2003). Today, the Bedouin are estimated at 160,000, comprising 25 percent of the Northern *Naqab* population, and constituting approximately 12 percent of the total Palestinian Arab minority in Israel (Human Right Watch, 2008).

Oral History from the Naqab 1940s: Asquith and Suliman

In recent years there has been an explosion in scholarship in the field of memory and oral history, mainly of war memories. For the purpose of this paper, two interviews held in 2008 will be discussed. The first interview was conducted in English with Julian Asquith

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[18] Closed Zone "the term in Arabic is *Siyaj*": an area constituted 1,500 sq km between Arad, Dimona, Shoval and Beersheba in the *Naqab*. The remainder Bedouin in Israel post 1948 were concentrated in this geographical region in the *Naqab*, in order to control and prevent access to their original land. A military government system that was imposed on the Arab population in Israel was based on the British Defence Emergency Regulations (Jiryis, 1976; Korn, 2000; Robinson, 2005). During the military government period, numerous strategies of control were developed to dominate the Arab population: for example, restricting movement between villages and the return of refugees by registration, creating closed areas and curfews, political control, dissociating the Arabs from the Jewish people, and land control (Korn, 2000:162).

in the south west of England. This interview records the memories of a British official, Julian Asquith, who was known by the Bedouin as "Lord Oxford". The second interview was conducted in Arabic in the *Naqab*/Israel with "Suliman-Zullam tribe" from the Bedouin tribe west of the Dead Sea. This interview reveals the memories of Bedouin serving in the Palestine Police during the British Mandate in southern Palestine.

For both interviews, I used a semi-structured interview for gleaning information. I allowed my interviewees to narrate their life story as they preferred, focusing on their memory of the British Mandate in the *Naqab*. I did have similar sets of questions, which largely facilitated my interviewees to address my interest.

For both interviews, the questions focused primarily on various events of the British Mandate 1917-1948. The core themes included history of the Bedouin city of Beersheba and its tribes, the Bedouin tribal police role (Palestine Police- Bedouin *Hajjaneh*[19]) in the service of the British, the role of the Bedouin in the Arab revolt of 1936-1939, Bedouin land ownership registration and land taxes, Bedouin tribunal courts, tribal affairs, security concerns and education of Bedouin, cross boundaries relations with Jordan and Sinai, clashes between state and tribal laws, and other contradictions between the British Mandate and the indigenous Arab Bedouin.

Biography of Suliman[20]: A Bedouin Police

Suliman was born in 1927 in a Bedouin village east of Beersheba, where he grew up and where he still lives. He studied firstly in the *Kuttab*[21], and then he continued his studies at

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[19] *Hajjaneh*: According to Abu Rabia (2001) Police riding camels were known as *Hajjaneh*- sing- *Hajjan*.
[20] Personal communication with the author on August 2008, Beersheba/ Naqab-Israel.

boarding school in Beersheba. The Beersheba school was built initially by the Ottoman Empire in the southern district of Palestine after 1900, and primarily served *sheikhs'* sons. This elementary school attracted tribal *sheikhs'* sons. Some of his teachers were from the West Bank or Egypt, and some from the *Naqab*. He studied Arabic, Maths and the *Quran*. For the purpose of studying, Suliman stayed five days a week in Beersheba, returning to his tribe at the weekends. In 1946, after he finished year six in the Beersheba boarding school of Beersheba, he moved on to study a special course in Bethlehem in order to join the Palestine Police.

Suliman and other Bedouin boys took an intensive course to work as wireless operators in the service of the Mandate. The course lasted six months, and passing the exams allowed Suliman to continue to the second stage of this course. Afterwards, he was sent to Jerusalem to continue his study of wireless for another nine months (This course was in English). After he finished the course with the other Bedouin boys, they were sent back to the *Naqab* to be employed by the British as wireless operators and border police in multiple police centres distributed in the *Naqab*. Suliman himself was employed in *Om Rashras* which, now *Eilat* military point, until the 1948 war. Many other Bedouin were employed as wireless operators and served the British in multiple missions in the desert.

Biography of the 2nd Earl of Oxford & Asquith "Lord Oxford[22]"

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[21] *Kuttab*: Traditional Bedouin way of studying during the Ottoman and the British period. Bedouin narrated it is an ancient form of studying with a teacher "*sheikh*", started on caves and later on schools. In the *Kuttab*, Bedouin boys mainly studied *Quran*, Maths and Arabic.
[22] Personal communication with the author on November 2008, south west of England.

Julian Edward George KCMG (1964), 2nd Earl of Oxford & Asquith. Only son of Raymond Asquith, killed in action on the Somme 1916 and of Katharine née Horner, died 1976. Lord Oxford was born on 22nd April 1916, and succeeded to the title from his grandfather, HH Asquith, (British Prime Minister 1908-1916, 1st Earl of Oxford & Asquith). He was employed as Lieutenant, Royal Engineers in 1941 in Greece, Egypt, and in Lebanon on the personal staff of General Spears.

In April 1942 he joined the British Mandatory Government in Palestine. He studied Arabic in *Safad*[23] with his close friend, Elias Abu Hammad, and was then transferred to Gaza as an Assistant District Commissioner. During 1942-1948, he was employed as Assistant District Commissioner in Palestine.

During his stay in Gaza district (Which included Beersheba), he learnt a lot from *Aref Al Aref*[24] and made good friends with him, and got to know the culture of the Bedouin and their language. In 1943 he was based in Beersheba as Assistant District Commissioner. Lord Oxford made great efforts to build networks with Bedouin in the area, and got to know Bedouin norms and culture. The creation of good relationships with Bedouin sheikhs facilitated Lord Oxford's position in the *Naqab*. He also took significant steps to assist the Bedouin and facilitate services such as opening schools (He started three schools for Bedouin boys in Beersheba), facilitation of higher education, opening health services, and enhancing Bedouin agricultural methods. In addition, he built

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[23] *Safad* (in Arabic) *Tsfat* (in Hebrew) is a city in the Upper Galilee in Israel. It was one of the oldest Palestinian central cities.

[24] *Aref Al Aref:* a Palestinian scholar, who was born in Jerusalem in 1891, studied in Istanbul and joined the Ottoman army in the First World War. He was employed as a British official: the governor of Beersheba district (1929-1939), and later on the governor of Gaza.

personal networks with Bedouin *sheikhs* from Beersheba and Gaza. For example, some of the *sheikhs* he remembered were *sheik Suliman Abu Rabia of the Zullam*, *sheikhs Freih Abu Medien from Nsiraat*, *sheikh Taj Al Dein Sha'at* from Gaza, and *sheikh Hassan Al Atawna, they* played a critical role in Beersheba. Some of them were employed as the city mayors such as *Taj Al Dein Sha'at*. For Oxford, building contacts with *sheikhs* facilitated his job among the tribes.

He remained in Beersheba until 1944 when he was posted to the Headquarters of the Palestine Government in Jerusalem. In 1945 he became Private Secretary to the British High Commissioner, Sir Harold Macmillan. After the bombing of the King David Hotel (July 1946), he was once more posted as an Assistant District Commissioner to *Safad* again, in the Galilee district. In 1947, he returned to the Main Secretariat of the Palestine Government in Jerusalem. He moved to Haifa in 1948 and departed Palestine from there in May 1948.

Bedouin Serving British in Multiple Security Missions

Out of the interviews, four key approaches of relationship existed between the Bedouin and the British Mandate in southern Palestine. The interviews stressed four main issues, which I also found in Archives. On some issues, the interviewees confirmed the archives, and in others they challenged them. By using archives and interviews, I am able to identify four key aspects of resistance against the imperial state. The first form of resistance addressed by the interviews and the archives is through facilitating the Bedouin service to the British in the Palestine Police.

As mentioned above, in order to avoid early clashes with the indigenous Bedouin, the British encouraged the Bedouin to play an important role in administering the city, avoiding imposing state laws on the Bedouin. One significant policy identified by the British to govern the Bedouin was to rely on the tribal chiefs "*sheikhs*" and to establish a mobile police force "the Palestine Gendarmerie" from the Bedouin. The British did not oppose Bedouin customs, but allowed them to deal with their internal affairs according to their own customs as Al Aref claims (Al Aref, 1999:263).

The British also improved the city's infrastructure by building a hospital, a mosque, schools and other public buildings. The economy of the city grew, and the Bedouin started to elect their representatives to positions in the municipality. Bedouin *sheikhs* from both Beersheba and Gaza played the role of Beersheba mayors.

Both interviewees stressed that these early policies to govern the indigenous Bedouin led to a status quo of cooperation and temporary stability in the *Naqab*. Suliman (the first interviewee) suggested, in particular, that British officials in Beersheba found it difficult to operate in the desert without the assistance of the existing Bedouin tribes, mainly for security and order issues. For Suliman, the most striking form of collaboration between the Bedouin and British could be found in the Palestine Gendarmerie Police on Bedouin "*Hajjaneh*". The main mission of the *Hajjaneh* was to carry out special assignments in the desert and to patrol the borders. The *Hajjaneh* Bedouin soldiers were employed in various ways – to police remote sites, identify criminal activities, reduce smuggling arms activities and guide in the desert, and act as trackers and to serve as wireless operators.

(Lord Oxford Album-UK (Novemeber 2008)

Figure 2: a group of Bedouin Palestine Police *"Hajjaneh"* in the 1940s (Source- Lord Oxford: November 2008)

According to Suliman, to support this policy, during the 1930s and 1940s, the British established numerous police stations across the *Naqab* desert. Bedouin wireless police served in multiple units to connect and link these units. The main military groups were distributed all over the *Naqab*: *Asluj, Auja Al Hafir, Kurnub, Ras Zuweira, Wadi Ghamr, Umm Rashrash, Al Imara, Jammama, Quseima, Khalassa, Ayn Hasb, Ayn Ghadhyan, and Tall Al Malah.*

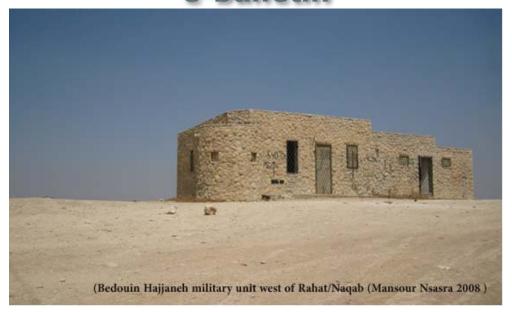(Bedouin Hajjaneh military unit west of Rahat/Naqab (Mansour Nsasra 2008))

Figure 3: One of the remaining Palestine Police points "*Hajjaneh*" Eastern the Bedouin town of Rahat "Wadi Al Zballah" in the *Naqab*. (Photo by the Author: summer 2008).

Suliman himself narrated his story of serving as a wireless operator in *Om Rashrash*-now *Eilat*. He told his personal story of being an employee of the British Mandate. Suliman mentioned that the Bedouin mobile police on *"Hajjaneh"* served also as trackers, and were sent by the British officials to carry out important security missions. Suliman went to say:

The role of Bedouin trackers was critical to identifying criminal cases across borders: in some cases we followed tracks in the desert, to identify smugglers for example. The British used the Bedouin trackers in various places in Palestine, not only in the *Naqab*. In one case I remember, a famous Bedouin tracker was taken to Hebron by the British to identify a crime case. The Hebron area was very difficult and dry, it was impossible to follow tracks of people who went through. A British officer who served in Hebron said only a Bedouin tracker from Beersheba would be able to help us in this mission. Then a Bedouin tracker was sent from the Zullam tribe to find the criminal

tracks. The Bedouin tracker worked for six hours and succeeded in identifying the house of the person who committed the crime from Hebron. This case proved that the British missions in the desert would be impossible without the assistance of the indigenous Bedouin.

The second interviewee, Lord Oxford made the case that the Bedouin Gendarmerie was in charge of order and security, and tasked with maintaining British law among the Bedouin. The main objectives were patrolling, preventing smuggling and arms shipments, illegal offensives, and reporting any disruption in public order by the Bedouin. Lord Oxford said:

> My main mission was to maintain security and order, trying to put an end to tribal wars over land, honour and blood feuds. I worked very closely with the Bedouin Palestine Police; one of them was my personal guard. Without the Bedouin being employed as mobile police forces and for security issues, it would be impossible to govern the Bedouin and maintain order. The British Mandate laws did not work sometimes for the Bedouin, so we preferred to use the Bedouin for security missions in order to keep them happy. Bedouin saw that to be employed by the British gave them high status among the tribes. This policy encouraged more Bedouin *sheikhs* to send their boys to join the mobile police forces.

This tactic helped to secure the British power in the *Naqab* desert, and was effective, since only the Bedouin were familiar with the desert, its valleys and routes. This was the indigenous Bedouin's advantage which the imperial power lacked. Lord Oxford also mentioned that Bedouin were very smart in hiding some cases from the government (hidden resistance). The Bedouin used to solve some problems, especially in very sensitive areas, such as crime without the knowledge of the government.

> In one case which happened in the desert, I remember that even the Bedouin police sometimes allowed some Bedouin to carry on smuggling or to facilitate the road to them or even to hide a crime which happened. Normally the Bedouin who served in such an area were from the same tribe. As a result, the government law was not always protected, even though they were employed by the government. They did not always uphold the law. They used to benefit from their inter-tribal relations without our knowledge.

It is important to remember that the British policy of building wireless points was not unique to the *Naqab*. The British worked everywhere with nomadic peoples, for example in Iraq during the 1920s, wireless points were spread as part of their control of nomadic people[25]. This Mandate policy was not unique to Palestine; it travelled with the British throughout the Middle East. It certainly makes some sense that, a foreign coloniser who failed to rely on the indigenous community and encourage them to be part of the system would be easily defeated and resisted, since the tribes had the dominant power in the desert and not the Mandate.

My approach is different from Lord Oxford and Suliman. In order to survive in the desert, the British employed the policy of building wireless bases everywhere they worked with nomadic people in the Middle East. The government was weak in the desert. A foreign coloniser would fail to govern semi nomadic tribes without relying on them as the indigenous community and encouraging them to be part of the system. I assume that if the British Mandate operated in the desert without the tribes, they would have been

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[25] - For more on Bedouin government relations in the desert see Glubb Pasha (War in the Desert).

easily defeated and resisted. The tribes were the dominant power in the desert and again not the Mandate authorities.

The Bedouin were aware of their rights and independence, and reacted severely to any attempt to control them. "They do not hesitate to demand recognition of their rights, or resist any effort to filch right of them" (Al Aref, 1974:35).

Bedouin Tribal Courts: A Strategy of the British to Dominate the Bedouin

The second key approach addressed by the interviewees and the archives is the clashes between the British Mandatory legal system and the indigenous legal structure of the Bedouin. There was a big gap between the laws of tribes and the laws of states, and the interviewees held this view.

As mentioned, the British encouraged the Bedouin to play an important role in administering the city of Beersheba. They established a juridical centre or "tribal court" to deal with Bedouin feuds and affairs, in order to avoid clashes between the state and the indigenous community. The British tried to avoid enforcing their laws over the Bedouin, maintained the existing structure, and even empowered it. Bedouin tribal laws were allowed to operate, and in fact, the British made efforts to enhance the Bedouin tribunal system.

The British Mandate recognised the Bedouin inter territorial tribunals as "tribal courts" in a similar way to how the Ottomans had handled them and, it appears that

Mandatory officials were eager to become familiar with Bedouin customs. Lord Oxford remembered such a process and argues:

> We, the British, did not solve the Bedouin's daily problems. However, we worked side by side with them and with the legal court which we established, taking into consideration tribal customs. I applied eight tribal Bedouin *sheikhs* and judges to operate in the tribal court. I got to know the sheikhs very well, and in many cases I used to follow their recommendations. Some *sheikhs* were very educated, they studied in Istanbul. The Bedouin, in particular cases, accepted the British system of law in order to avoid clashes. Sometimes, it was extremely difficult to judge cases by the British legal system, and the Bedouin did not accept this. Bedouin asked us to take their laws in advance in order to accept the final decisions. Various cases happened between tribes that were not reported to the state. The Bedouin kept many secrets of tribal affairs which they did not want to bring to the British to deal with. In some particular crime issues, Bedouin dealt with it and being solved without reporting to the government.

A related policy adopted by the British Mandate in working with Bedouin tribes in southern Palestine was to join tribal judges from Sinai and Jordan together into cases where they were needed to solve critical problems. Both Lord Oxford and Suliman mentioned the importance of the tribes of Palestine maintaining their relationships with Jordan and the Sinai tribes. In the 1940s, Bedouin judges from Jordan, Sinai and Palestine, for example met in tribal conferences to deal with special cases related to Bedouin tribes. They also consulted the tribal court of Beersheba to deal with disputes that the British failed to deal with. The Mandate government did not like this idea, but were forced to encourage it in order to avoid clashes with the Bedouin existence structure

of cross boundary relations. British policy was to keep the Bedouin happy and not to clash with them, primarily to maintain stability in the region and across the borders. Also, it was appropriate for the Bedouin to settle their internal problems with limited intervention from external powers.

Archival documents support my interview data from the interviews with Lord Oxford and Suliman. The important aspects that interested the British were to understand the Bedouin tribunal system and to avoid any clashes with it. The Bedouin constantly stressed this point and sought to warn off the British from any intervention into their traditions, customs, and tribal court system. Over and over again, the Bedouin requested the British Mandate to avoid any interference in their lives and to leave them free to practice their culture and way of life.

In response, according to certain British reports, the Mandate government expressed willingness to understand how the Bedouin tribunal system worked, in order to avoid clashes between themselves and the Bedouin. One Bedouin reported to the Mandate by warning them:

> Bedouin traditions and customs should be safe-guarded and enhanced and tribal courts should be reformed. A tribal judge who does the work of a magistrate, is only paid LP 20-per annum and this salary should be raised (PRO CO 733/344/4).

The memorandum written by an educated Bedouin *sheikh*[26] in 1937 included other requests from the Mandate to address the Bedouin tribes concerns as follows: providing

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[26] The formal memorandum presenting or laying out Bedouin needs and requests from the Mandatory government was written by *Sheikh Izat Al Atawna* on behalf of the Beersheba Bedouin to the Palestine Royal Commission in 12-02-1937. Much of the memorandum lays out key concerns of the Bedouin that

improved educational facilities, reducing land taxation, providing more agricultural loans, increasing road construction, improving water resources and medical treatment, allowing free trade, and making sure that Bedouin traditions and customs are safe guarded and enhanced (PRO CO 733/344/4).

This also led the British to make a counter-intuitive proposal that there should be collaboration across the regions' borders among the Bedouin, mainly networking the tribes of the Sinai, Trans-Jordan and Palestine, together to create a single tribunal system. These inter-territorial tribunals would be recognised by the British in order to maintain peace, order and good government for the tribes:

> under Article 17 of the Palestine Order in Council, 1922, as amended by the order in council of 1923, ordinance may be made for the "peace order, and good government of Palestine", and there would not appear to be any objection in principle to an ordinance providing for the enforcement in Palestine of the judgement or orders of these inter-territorial tribunals (whether given in Palestine, Trans-Jordan or Sinai) in so far as they affect tribes in Palestine or their property there" (PRO CO 733/205/12).[27]

Such a policy represents a common approach found across the territories administered by British imperialism – to base their rule on existing leaders, customs and laws – on a wide range of issues, only excluding land, taxation, or economic issues. British rule generally

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must not be ignored by the Mandatory authorities. This memorandum founded in Public Record Office at Kew, UK.

[27] According to this British report, the Mandate government was willing to understand how the Bedouin tribunal system worked in order to avoid any clashes between them and the Bedouin as found in the Public Record Office at Kew.

sought to allow these local courts and leaders to operate, but then to encapsulate them within a new broader framework, thus subtly transforming them into something else.

Disputes over Land Ownership and Paying Taxes

The third key type of relationship between the Bedouin and the British which emerged from the interviews is the land and tax system. This key element highlights clashes between British and Bedouin law. Indigenous communities proved their land ownership by their existence on the land, rather than through title and deed (For example, the Native American, and Australian Aboriginal). This topic was very controversial among both interviewees. The topic of land and taxes was very central and controversial throughout Palestine during the Mandate era. It was also one of the most sensitive issues when dealing with the Bedouin tribes. For the Bedouin, honour and land are the most sensitive and crucial topics in dealing with any foreign government. This was true with the British and later with the Israelis. Both my interviewees agreed that the Bedouin did not like to negotiate about land ownership and even resisted the registration of their land according to state codes (For example, the Ottoman land codes of 1856-1858).

Lord Oxford narrated that the British were very careful in dealing with Bedouin land. He said that the British Mandate in the *Naqab* recognised that land was always a sensitive topic when dealing with the Bedouin. "We recognised their land ownership without asking them to register it or to pay high taxes. Bedouin land was the property of the tribe as a unit and not for individuals. All the tribes knew their land naturally without

registering it with the government as the Ottoman codes of land asked". Lord Oxford then went on to argue:

> We did not oppose Bedouin land ownership, as well as not forcing them to register it. They were happy the way they recognised their land, so we thought not to impose on them something they did not like and resist. For example, the city of Beersheba land belonged to a very well known Bedouin tribe (*Azazma*). As a result we did not confront the Bedouin about the way they perceived their properties. Because the Bedouin were not very rich, we preferred not to ask them to pay high taxes for economic reasons, but in fact some did pay tax. The economic situation of the Bedouin did not encourage the British to impose harsh policies of taxes, assisting the Bedouin to survive. Only the Ottomans enacted land codes, we the British did not have any registration system of land in Beersheba. We did not want to force the Bedouin to do something that they resisted and did not like.

Lord Oxford thus argues that land was the key economic resource for the Bedouin tribes. Despite a shortage of rain in the Beersheba region, the Bedouin managed to build dams to gain benefits from the winter rains. The Bedouin knew dry farming and crops, and cultivated large tracts of land in the desert. Through British assistance, the Bedouin enhanced their agricultural tactics and benefited more from farming, particularly in years of low rainfall, Oxford said.

Historically the Bedouin resisted and avoided registering their land, in particular under their regime of the Ottoman and the British. It seems that the Bedouin also adopted some tactics to resist Israeli law concerning their land rights. They believed in their own

power rather than in the laws of states. Al Aref mentioned the Bedouin use of arms in order to approve their land ownership: "here are our titles" (Al Aref, 1974:180).

Even though, some Bedouin were illiterate. They do, however, as Al Aref describes them as a people possess "high innate intelligence". They knew their land and did not register it as *Tabo*[28]. Al Aref records that when asked why they resisted registering their land, they replied by raising their swords, thus saying that through their own strength they could and would protect their traditional land rights rather than through the legal authority of the Ottomans (Al Aref 1999:273).

Suliman agrees that the Bedouin knew their land without registering it with the official British system: "We lived in our land for generations; this is the best proof of Bedouin land ownership". Suliman clarifies the idea by arguing that:

> The Bedouin tribes fought against each others for years in order to maintain their land and to prove ownership. Bedouin title of proving their land was by sword and not papers. The British officials understood the system very well, and avoided opposing our land ownership.

My archival research reveals that Bedouin *sheikhs* did address British officials regarding their land. A key aspect of "land ownership" for the *Naqab* Bedouin, which came up over and over again in their representations and memoranda to the Mandatory authorities, was opposition to land sales to the Zionists, and Jewish immigration into the *Naqab*.

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[28] *Tabo*: The Ottoman system of land code registration 1858.

For the Bedouin, the land tax issue was central. The Bedouin consistently asked the British to reduce their land taxes. A constant refrain in Bedouin representation was that "land and animal taxation should be mitigated". It was a good tactic for resisting the British policy regarding land. Interestingly, this was complemented by another. British reports suggest that the Bedouin in fact rarely paid taxes and avoided repaying loans: "the Bedu "Bedouin" of Beersheba seldom pay taxes owing to their poverty; taxes are annually remitted; and loans issued to them in kind or cash are rarely recovered" (PRO CO 733/344/4).

At various times the British did try to address these concerns over land ownership and taxation. For example, Winston Churchill and the first British High Commissioner for Palestine, Herbert Samuel, when they met with Bedouin sheikhs in 1921, recognized Bedouin land ownership according to their custom and tribal laws (Abu Setta, 2008). The Bedouin also resisted selling Jews land. One mandatory document suggests that a Bedouin sheikh from the *Naqab* wrote: "Land sales to Jews should be prohibited, Jewish immigration should be stopped and a Legislative Council, in which Bedouins should be proportionately represented, should be established" (PRO CO 733/344/4).[29]

Agency and Resistance: The role of the Bedouin in the Arab Revolt 1936-1939

The final key aspect addressed by the interviewees is a very political one. It seems that the Bedouin participated in the political crises in Palestine during the 1930s. It was

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[29] - This report was also sent by *sheikh Izat Al Atawana* asking the British to stop Jewish immigration and land purchased in the *Naqab* (The full report is available in the Public Record Office – Kew Gardens).

exciting to see the conflicting understanding of the political situation my interviewees presented.

The primary British policy towards the Bedouin after the occupation of Beersheba in 1917 was to absorb them into the new regime and to facilitate their service to their community. Despite significant instances of collaboration, as mentioned above, the Bedouin also demonstrated numerous signs of organised resistance towards the British. Of particular importance were three types of actions such as continued contacts with their relatives across borders, participating in Palestinian political conferences, and joining the Revolt of 1936-1939.

Bedouin *sheikhs* represented the Bedouin community in Palestine-wide dialogue and discussions with the British about the future of Palestine. These discussions often arose following the outbreak of violence and frustration by the Palestinian community over Zionist immigration or toward British policy allowing Jewish immigration. Bedouin participation demonstrates an active engagement with the political crises of the time and their attempts to influence its trajectory. This includes their clear message during uprisings against the British during the Mandate in Palestine.

Other Bedouin oral history stresses that in March 1935, Bedouin *sheikhs* joined a Palestinian conference in Jerusalem to form the Palestinian Arab Party. The representatives from Beersheba tribes included *Sheikh Ibrahim Al Sane, Hossien Abu Setta* and others. Bedouin I interviewed mentioned various meetings between *Hajj Amin Al Hosseini* (The Grand *Mufti* in Palestine) and tribal *sheikhs* of the *Naqab* during the 1930s. The series of visits by *Hajj Amin Al Hosseni* to the *Naqab sheikhs* came after the

Jewish settlers succeeded in buying large tracts of land from Bedouin tribes. Bedouin sheikhs also met *Hajj Amin Al Hosseni* in the *Naqab* before the revolt of 1936 broke out (*Al Sane tribe*), and were asked to swear to ban selling land to Jews. Bedouin oral histories narrated that Bedouin sheikhs were sworn in front of *Hajj Amin Al Hosseni* and tribal *sheikhs* banned any tribe which sold land to settlers[30].

Importantly, the Naqab Bedouin showed their communal resistance during the Arab Revolt of 1936-1939 through various forms of participation in violence. Lord Oxford argued that the Bedouin were not interested in politics, yet he also acknowledges that they knew exactly when to intervene in politics. He said:

> The Bedouin of the *Naqab* were not really interested in politics. However, they had a great sympathy to Palestinian leaders, in particular *Hajj Amin Al Husseni*. Some of them joined Glubb Pasha's Army of the Arab Legion and also showed agency during the Arab revolt of 1936-1939. The Bedouin did not fight against the British during the Second World War.

In contrast, Suliman frequent mention of Bedouin activities in the political arena. Suliman was very familiar with the political situation himself; he was very educated, speaks fluent English, and was trained as a wireless operator. His position as a British official allowed him to intervene a lot in politics. Bedouin participated in the Palestinian conferences, the most important meeting of Bedouin *sheikhs* was held in the *Naqab* in the 1930s, when *Hajj Amin Al Hussein* arrived in the *Naqab*. The major concern of the *Mufti*

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[30] Personal communication between the author and *Al Sane A* on September 2008, Lakiya/ *Naqab*-Israel.

was to convince the Bedouin tribes to stop selling land to Jewish settlers. Suliman summarised the Bedouin role in the Arab revolts by saying:

The Bedouin rebels made real problems for the British Mandate in Beersheba. Some Bedouin joined Palestinian rebels in the 1936-1939 Arab revolt, attacking the British bases in Beersheba. *Eid Al Sane*, one of the most famous and well remembered of Bedouin rebel leaders in the *Naqab* was one dominant figure (He was previously employed by the British as part of the *Hajjaneh*). A group of Bedouin fighters gathered around him during the Arab Revolt, and their main military activities included attacking British troops, exploding British military bases, and recruiting Bedouin fighters for other actions. The British army in the *Naqab* worked very hard trying to capture *Al Sane*. It took them a long time to reach him, while he was hidden in the *Naqab* desert, Bedouin rebels were far from the British army's hand. They were hidden in the mountains, attacking the British at night time and joining rebels from Hebron and Gaza.

Other Bedouin oral histories reveal that some Bedouin formed militant groups and joined the rebels, (Under the command of Abed Al Halim Al Jelanni) attacking the British commands in Beersheba. In September 1938, the capital city of the *Naqab*, Beersheba fell into angry rebel hands, with the police station being taken from the British (Dabagh, 1966:360). I came across Bedouin who recall that some Bedouin joined other Arab rebel factions to attack the British in Beersheba. The most familiar Bedouin rebel leader to appear in my interviews was *Eid Al Sane* from the *Trabin* confederation. There were also others from the *Alamaat* confederation. The Bedouin success in temporarily capturing

Beersheba during the revolt threatened the British status, raising the alarm for possible joint cooperation with the Trans-Jordan Bedouin in the revolt[31].

The Bedouin participated in a number of conferences and meetings among the top Palestinian leadership. They also held numerous meetings among themselves to organise the whole Bedouin community as part of their resistance. One of the most important meetings for demonstrating organised antagonism to the British was held in the tent of *Sheikh Hamd Al Sane* from the *Trabin* during the 1936 revolt. Representatives from a wide range of tribes and sub groupings participated in the meeting in order to reach a decision regarding the Bedouin role in the Revolt. *Eid Al Sane,* organised military activities, which included attacking British troops, blowing up British military bases, and recruiting Bedouin fighters for other actions[32].

Concluding Remarks: Bedouin Resistance against the British Mandate

British forces withdrew from Beersheba on 14 May, 1948 in a ceremony attended by Bedouin *sheikhs* and government officials. The flag of independent Palestine was raised over the *Saraya* "government building*"* of the city by the mayor of Beersheba, *Shafiq Mustafa.* Arab rule over the city lasted only a few months (Dabagh, 1966:360-361). The Egyptian army arrived in the city in May and participated in the war with the Jewish army in the defenders battle of Beersheba. They were defeated and the Bedouin capital

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[31] Personal communication between the author and *Abu Srehan, O* on October 2008, Tel Sheba/ *Naqab-*Israel.
[32] Personal communication between the author and *Abu Srehan*, *O* on October 2008, Tel Sheba/ *Naqab-*Israel.

was occupied on October 21 1948. Immediately, the catastrophe *"Nakba"* happened in Palestine with the exodus of most Bedouin tribes to neighbouring Arab countries.

In reviewing the Bedouin-British relationship as illuminated by these interviews and archives together, it seems that the Bedouin adopted both violent and non-violent actions towards the British Mandate in order to maintain their independence. Some archival material, in fact, supports the view that Bedouin used a considerable range of non-violent tactics to resist. For example, the Bedouin attempted to change policies and opinions of the British Mandate for their sake and own benefit. In particular, the Bedouin behaved as an organised force to face down Mandatory policies by adopting a continual stream of non- violent actions in an attempt to improve their status and power *visa vis* the state. The Bedouin maintained their status by challenging the British Mandate legal system, and sought to preserve their tribal system.

Multiple tactics of resistance could be identified when we look at the case of Bedouin- British relations through both interviews and archives. A key set of tactics were indirect or hidden, adopted by Bedouin towards the British Mandate.

First, the Bedouin challenged the international borders by moving freely across them. No matter what the British tried to do, the Bedouin resisted by disregarding the borders established by the state. They intensified or renewed old activities of smuggling and trade with their relatives across the borders. They established or created commercial activities and social relations with other tribal members across these borders. I classify Bedouin commercial activities and challenging international borders as hidden and non violent resistance.

A second form of resistance was to actively attack the agents, both military and civilian, who represented the regime. Under the British Mandate, the Bedouin attacked patrol units, targeted government centres, and used violence to express their displeasure. In particular, the Bedouin participation in the Arab Revolt was a clear indication of this form of resistance to the imperial state. This was a very clear message to the British Mandate: Bedouin adopted violent resistance when they felt at risk. The participation of Bedouin in the Arab revolt is one of the dominant forms of resistance used by the Bedouin. This was both hidden and direct resistance.

Third, they avoided paying taxes. The Bedouin resisted state laws requiring them to pay taxes. They refused to register their land under the laws, proved their land ownership by their continued existence on their land "*Sumud*- steadfast". Also during the British Mandate period, Bedouin send letters asking for mitigating land taxes. These are symbolic resistance forms. Bedouin disobeyed the British Mandate legacy. Declaring that British laws were not suitable for indigenous Bedouin was a very active symbolic resistance, avoiding cooperation and non recognition of British law system gained success for the Bedouin.

Fourth, the Bedouin continued to conduct as much of their internal affairs as possible under traditional formula, whether it was carrying on inter-tribal wars, by using their own mechanisms of conflict resolution, or by using their tribal courts as they saw fit. They did not recognise the legitimacy of either regime or modify their social processes very much.

Fifth, the interviews clearly show that the Bedouin used every avenue of complaint and protest to express their unhappiness and dissatisfaction. Through letters to the authorities in London, delegations to the British governors, or expressions of *sheikh* concern in letters, the Bedouin leaders used the avenues available to them to complain, explain and decry what was happening to them. They were not passive, but active agents for change. They directly resisted non- violently by sending formal letters to make the British aware to their anger and dissatisfaction.

Sixth, under the British, Bedouin continued their lifestyles, using their own laws, and tribal system. Bedouin made the British aware that they rejected any intervention in their life, and successfully blocked part of the state system.

British rule in the *Naqab*, on the other hand, initially sought to understand the Bedouin, and absorbed them into police units, imposing order in the desert, strengthening the *sheikhs'* role, and enhancing the tribal courts to settle Bedouin internal conflict, and avoid tribal wars between the tribes. Throughout the 1920s-1940s, the British Mandate pursued similar tribal control policies.

Ultimately, there was considerable resistance to the British regime. The British Mandate did not "win" these confrontations, but rather only got the Bedouin to bend slightly and for a limited time. The Bedouin community emerges from this study stronger than we had thought, more sure of itself and full of various techniques to react to new regimes as they sweep over their home in the *Naqab*.

In looking only at the interviews, I found a range of alternative perspectives on Bedouin resistance and collaboration with the British Mandate. Resisting registering their

land, resisting paying taxes and justifying it for economic reasons, participating in violence, taking role in Palestinian conferences, writing letters of complaint, using their power status as indigenous community by joining the Palestine Police, challenging borders, smuggling to survive and imposing their administrative role in capital city of Beersheba, among others.

The contrast between Lord Oxford and Suliman in representation is quite interesting from my point of view as an "indigenous[33] - insider". It seems to me that Lord Oxford made efforts to understand the Bedouin in order to avoid clashing with them; by contrast Suliman emphasises independence and power by highlighting the political edge of the Bedouin. Suliman is empowering the Bedouin by depicting them as not the more passive actors and as independent and powerful. In contrast, I see Oxford's depiction of British-Bedouin relations in a very different way. He was a British official who wanted to maintain security and order, and might not understand precisely Bedouin politics. My reading of both Suliman and Lord Oxford narratives is very much related through the prism of each of them. Suilman got the right sense of Bedouin politics, as he is familiar with his community circles, while Lord Oxford, as a British official, saw his position in a different way. Also Suliman's position as an "indigenous Bedouin" depicted things

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[33] I want to make a note that my role as an "indigenous-insider" researcher is critical in looking at things differently. Being an indigenous researcher who gathered various interviews with members of his community allows more open space of access to resources. I am a complete member of this society, who speaks the same language, and practices the same culture. This was both powerful in some cases, and restrictive in other cases. I saw this during my interviewing Suliman and Lord Oxford. Suliman's ideas as an 'indigenous Bedouin' have a different approach from that of Lord Oxford who was an "outsider" and served as a British official. Both interviewees produced their own and different story of understanding the overview of the case in the *Naqab*.

differently from the perspective of a "British official" concerned with fulfilling his role in the best way.

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FO -Foreign Office Papers

WO -War Office Papers

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Glubb Pasha Papers

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Masculinities and the Occupation of the West Bank

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Introduction

This paper represents the initial findings from the first phase of my doctoral research. It is a work in progress. It argues that during the first intifada young men were seen as the "metonym"[34] of Palestinian resistance to the Israeli occupation, and thus they were the main targets of Israeli action. However, more recently, particularly since the peak of the al-Asqa intifada and Israel's re-invasion of the West Bank (also known as "operation Defence Shield"), for many young men they way they perceive their role in society has changed. According to certain discourses, the normative requirements of "being a man" have shifted from the role of fighter against Israel to provider and protector for their family and resistance has been re-conceptualised to focus primarily on steadfastness, or *sumud*, against the occupation.

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[34] Peteet, J. (1994) "Male Gender and Rituals of Resistance in the Palestinian 'Intifada': A Cultural Politics of Violence", *American Ethnologist*, pp. 31-49.

This paper presents the argument in the following way. First, it defines what masculinities are and how they "intersect" with other power relationships in the occupied West Bank. Second, that as such, research into men's behaviour acts as a *way in,* or a starting place, that allows for an analysis of the range of factors that affect the lives of Palestinian men and how these can both inform and confine agency. Third, that as well as asking why some Palestinian men certainly pursue a militarized resistance to Israel, an equally important question to ask is w*hy more Palestinian men are not militarized?*[35] Finally, it considers an important caveat and concludes that the behaviour of Palestinian men reflects the ongoing circumstances in Palestine as a whole. By researching men's behaviour and the discourses of masculinities a new perspective is opened up and it is possible to view the power dynamics of occupied Palestinian society in a way that is revealing, under examined, and, because of men's traditional role at the heart of the resistance, potentially very significant for the architects of any renewed peace process.

What are Masculinities?

Sa'ar and Yahia-Younis (2008)[36] position their analysis of Palestinian's with Israeli citizenship masculinities in relation to the work of RW Connell.[37] Their exegesis of Connell's thesis not only distils its most important aspects, but also brings them into the

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[35] *C.f.:* Kelly, T. (2008) "The Attractions of Accountancy: Living an Ordinary Life during the Second Palestinian Intifada", *Ethnography,* Vol. 9, No. 3, pp. 351.

[36] Sa'ar, A. and T. Yahia-Younis (2008) "Masculinity in Crisis: The Case of Palestinians in Israel", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 3, pp. 305-323.

[37] RW Connell is one of leading scholars on Masculinities. The book: Connell, R.W. (1995) *Masculinities*, Berkeley: University of California Press is perhaps Connell's best known work. Some more of Connell's conclusions are discussed below.

context of a study of the Middle East. From Connell, they have inferred the following five major points. First, that there is no such thing as "masculinity" rather, different models or discourses co-exist, are changeable, and can inform each other. It is therefore, more appropriate to consider the existence of "masculinities", in the plural sense, than "masculinity" a singular. Second, masculinities are hierarchical and "compete for hegemony".[38] Further, particularly (but not exclusively) in the Israeli-Palestinian context they "share a formidable interest in maintaining patriarchal and heterosexist principles".[39] Third, masculinities can be internally divided. This is based on competing concerns or desires of the individuals or communities. Fourth, masculinities are "sustained and enacted" by "individuals ... groups, institutions, and cultural forms such as mass media".[40] Fifth, that masculinities tend towards a "strong exclusionary nature" and there is "no necessary or automatic link between masculinities and men".[41] In short, masculinities are socially constructed discourses that cannot be said to exist independently of each other. Further, they are not the essentialist expressions of qualities associated with biological men.

Masculinities and Normative Values

Another way of conceptualising the nature of masculinities is found by asking not *what are they?* But rather, *where are they?* This means that if masculinities are neither defined

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[38] Sa'ar, A. and Yahia-Younis, T. (2008) "Masculinity in Crisis: The Case of Palestinians in Israel", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies,* Vol. 35, No. 3, p. 306.
[39] Ibid., p.307.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.

as the abstracted representations of male behaviour nor as the empirical record of the behaviour of men – yet simultaneously, it remains true that they are "configurations of practice"[42] – then masculinities must be understood to occupy a space between the individual (micro-level) and that of entirely non-personalised factors (macro-level). Masculinities can be said to exist at the "meso-level". This means that they exist as one of several inter-subjective frameworks through which both individuals interpret the meanings of events and experiences. Therefore they can also be seen as ideational structures which indirectly and directly inform the nature of individual's agency.[43]

As we have seen, multiple masculinities can exist simultaneously and they compete for hegemony. What this means is that there can be competition between different inter-subjective frameworks, and thus different contested ways of interpreting the world. Further, these interpretations inform normative valuations. For example, how an individual interprets the meaning of events informs the valuation of what is the "right" way to respond.

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[42] Ibid., p. 44.

[43] Ostensibly, individuals may be in receipt of the same, or very similar, information about particular events as each other, yet the way in which the meaning of such events is understood will vary as it is informed by discourses at the meso-level. These discourses are themselves likely to be in a constant state of flux and self-renewal as information is interpreted and re-interpreted during interaction with others. What is generally accepted as that which distinguishes the gender power-relationship from other identity factors is the extent to which they are embedded. However, it is important not to allow generalisations at this point either. As discussed below Kandiyoti and Joseph argue for particular understandings of what gender means in the Middle East. C.f. Kandiyoti, D. (1991) "Islam and Patriarchy: A Comparative Perspective", *Women in Middle Eastern History: Shifting Boundaries in Sex and Gender,* pp. 23–42; Joseph, S. (1997) "The Public/Private-The Imagined Boundary in the Imagined Nation/State/Community: The Lebanese case", *Feminist Review*, Vol. 57, No. 1, pp. 73-92; Joseph, S. (2005) "Gender and Citizenship in Middle Eastern States", *Women and Islam: Critical Concepts in Sociology*, Vol. 4, p. 10.

Thus, working back, masculinities are framed by common normative standards and also help to produce and/or reinforce them.[44] According to a number of scholars focused on the Palestinian case study (or similar case studies) there are various examples of normative thresholds that have become institutionalised.[45] These include the endurance of/participation in particular "rites of passage", and as such there is often a normatively accepted way an individual ought to behave in these circumstances.

"Intersectionality" and Masculinities as a "Way In"

According to Yuval-Davis (2006, 2007)[46] "intersectionality" described how different identities "intermesh".[47] She argues that analysis of oppression should not essentialise a particular form of identity. She refers to the example that "there is no meaning to the notion of 'black', for instance, which is not gendered and classed, no meaning for the notion of 'woman' which is not ethnocized and classed, etc."[48] It is, of course, difficult [if not impossible] in practical terms to establish an exhaustive list of the full ways in which any individual is identified/oppressed. Therefore, the key conclusion that we can

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[44] Connoll's own discussion argues against the idea of normative masculinities as they are seen to lead inevitably to a paradox. This is that the social norms they extol are very rarely met "What its normative about a norm that hardly anyone meets?": Connell, R.W. *Op. Cit.,* p. 70.

[45] C.f.: Peteet, J. (1994) *Op. Cit.;* Massad, J. (1995) "Conceiving the Masculine: Gender and Palestinian Nationalism", *The Middle East Journal,* Vol. 49, No. 3, pp. 467-483; Nashif, E. (2008) *Palestinian Political Prisoners: Identity and Community*, Boston: Routledge.

[46] Yuval-Davis, N. (2006) "Intersectionality and Feminist Politics", *European Journal of Women's Studies,* Vol. 13, No. 3, p. 193; Yuval-Davis, N. (2007) "Intersectionality, Citizenship and Contemporary Politics of Belonging", *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy,* Vol. 10, No. 4, pp. 561-74.

[47] Yuval-Davis, N. "Intersectionality and Feminist Politics", *Op. Cit.,* p. 195.

[48] Yuval-Davis, N. "Intersectionality, Citizenship and Contemporary Politics of Belonging", *Op. Cit.,* p. 565.

draw out from Yuval-Davis is that we should consider that any/all identities that we seek to

explore are subject to a range of intersecting oppression. Further, as part of this, we must acknowledge that an individual's agency is capable of reinforcing structures of oppression, defying them or both at the same time.

Therefore reading "intersectionality" in the context of this project's goals would not be best served by merely drawing up a typology of identities associated with men and noting how other forces "intermesh" with them. Rather, I take as a point of departure the fact that there are a range of identities "intermeshing" on multiple levels. Further, I accept that I will never have access to a comprehensive account of the myriad identities and how they interact. Instead this study focuses a particular range of identities, and notes how they inform the behaviour of individuals.

In other words, as concerning my study of men in Palestine, intersectionality provides a *way in* to conceptualise men's behaviour that are informed by and inform intersecting power structures. By tracking how men's behaviour is affected and, in turn, how it affects the agency of others, through causal analysis this will eventually allow me to interpret how particular changing elements of the structure are effective in informing and/or constraining the agency of Palestinian men. Further, I will be able to make informed estimates as to the impact (or lack of impact) of possible changes in other power relations have on young Palestinian men. Therefore, masculinities grants this study a *way in,* or a starting place, for understanding the complex "intersectionality" of different identities and power relationships in occupied Palestine in a way that is linked to

the dynamic nature of the occupation and the actions of third parties. Practically, this research is manifested in the observing and interpreting the behaviour of men and their

interaction with, subjectification by, and oppression of, other individuals and/or power structures. Thus, in other words, this study of masculinities is a lens through which I can see the different relationships of social discourses and agency.

Masculinities and the Family

This section discusses the significance of the family unit in relation to masculinities. Diane Baxter (2009)[49] draws on Denise Kandiyoti's (1991) "patriarchal bargain".[50] She argues that that a great deal of gender-sensitive literature has focused solely on how women's behaviour has shaped to "accommodate and acquiesce"[51] to the regulation of the patriarchal bargain. However, the family is a powerful idea for men too. Suad Joseph (2000), argues that it the basic unit of society in the Middle East[52] and as such, it is also a regulator of men's behaviour. Baxter follows Abu Lughod's (1985)[53] argument that the key intersection where kinship meets masculinities is represented in an "honour code". Baxter defines "honour ideology" as "primarily about relationships among various selves. Indeed, notions of selfhood and subjectivity undergird the ideologies of honour... in its

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[49] Baxter, D. (2007) "Honor Thy Sister: Selfhood, Gender, and Agency in Palestinian Culture", *Anthropological Quarterly,* Vol. 80, No. 3, p. 737.

[50] *C.f.* Kandiyoti, D. (1991) "Islam and Patriarchy: A Comparative Perspective", *Women in Middle Eastern History: Shifting Boundaries in Sex and Gender,* pp. 23–42.

[51] Baxter, D. *Op. Cit.,* p. 740.

[52] Joseph, S. (2000) "Gendering Citizenship in the Middle East", *Gender and Citizenship in the Middle East,* pp. 3-30.

[53] Abu-Lughod, L. (1985) "A Community of Secrets: The Separate World of Bedouin Women", *Signs*, pp. 637-57.

standard portrayal, honour signifies male selves controlling the bodies, movement in space, and sexuality of female selves".[54] Further, Baxter argues that "according to the

'honour code,' it is men who are centrally impacted; men experience personal pride/satisfaction/respect and are validated based on the behaviour of women".[55]

Building on Joseph's conclusions,[56] Baxter moves to a broader analysis of honour in the West Bank, arguing that both honour, and its binary opposite, "shame" are bestowed at a familial level. She also cites Hold (2004)[57] and Haj (1992)[58] in support of her point that the occupation has changed the particular dynamics at the intersections of identities. Holt's point is that there is a "crisis of masculinity" born out of the humiliation forced upon them by Israel. Haj, however, paints a more complex picture of the intersectionality. She argues that her female interviewees described their position as "triply oppressed",[59] that is by Israel, by men, and by themselves.

Holt's "crisis of masculinity" is perhaps better refined as a crises of a certain discourse of masculinity that sees the family as its basic framework. Indeed, it is a crisis born out of the occupation's targeting of the Palestinian economy. The result is that it makes it very difficult for men to earn money to support their families. When this is seen in combination with gendered occupation policies that include brutal beatings of Palestinian men, the policies of mass detention, and in particular cases house demolition,

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[54] Ibid., p. 743.
[55] Ibid., p. 744.
[56] Joseph, S., *Op. Cit.*
[57] Holt, M. (2004) "Palestinian Women, Violence, and the Peace Process", in H. Afshar and D. Eade (eds.) *Development, Women, and War: Feminist Perspectives*, OXFAM, pp. 109-32.
[58] Haj, S. (1992) "Palestinian Women and Patriarchal Relations", *Signs,* pp. 761-78.
[59] Haj, S., *Op. Cit.,* quoted in Baxter, D., *Op. Cit.,* p. 750.

it would not be unreasonable to conclude that men are likely to perceive themselves as at the frontline of the occupation's assault on the whole Palestinian family, and by extension the foundation of Palestinian society.

There are four important conclusions from the discussion up to now. First, the unit of the family is extremely significant for cultural, but political, social even economic analysis of the occupied West Bank. Second, that the code of honour and shame is an important way in which the family unit has and operates with normative power. Third, those occupation policies that target young men have a ripple-in-water effect – directly and indirectly impacting on the stability of the family and on the basic structure of society. Fourth, many men are in this context both oppressed and by by reinforcing the dominant discourses of masculinity, are capable of being oppressors also. This is not only applicable to the oppression of women but importantly this can be extended to show that men are themselves capable of oppressing other men by stressing the normative requirements infused in certain masculinities.

Masculinities of Resistance

This section demonstrates how the intersectionality between discourses of resistance, masculinity and the family operate and have lead to a certain discourse of resistance that has been re-conceptualised as a defence of familial honour at a national level. Second, that this re-conceptualisation has occurred within a context where the status has itself transformed, specifically through the normalisation of violence since the peak of the second intifada.

Before the second intifada, Joseph Massad (1995) argued that "resisting occupation ... can be used to state masculine acts as it performs nationalist ones".[60] For Massad, a cyclical relationship was evident from his discursive analysis of the Palestinian nationalist movement. Where, according to the dominant language of the national movement, the Palestinian resistor is conceived of as male and resistance is interpreted as a masculine activity. Massad goes further, to argue that a new masculine identity has been established on the basis of active resistance and that resistance is (broadly) conceived of in masculine terminology. "[M]asculine-centric discursive axioms"[61] were absorbed into the descriptions and definitions of Palestinian nationalism, particularly represented in official documents and communiqués of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) and in the speech from Yasser Arafat to the United Nation General Assembly.[62] Massad contends that through resistance, "a new figuration of masculine bodies is mapped out on the terrain of the national struggle, one that becomes the model for Palestinian nationalist agency itself".[63]

However, more recently, Amal Amireh (2003) explains that resisting Israel is given normative value within context of a re-imagined concept of the nation, which

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[60] Massad, J. (1995) "Conceiving the Masculine: Gender and Palestinian Nationalism", *The Middle East Journal,* Vol. 49, No. 3, p. 480.
[61] Ibid., p. 476.
[62] Arafat (1974) "Al-Harb," p. 16. Quoted in Massad, J. (1995), *Op. Cit.,* p. 478.
[63] Massad, J. (1995), *Op. Cit.,* p. 480.

aligns to a masculine role in the family. The applicable narrative she outlines, describes

Zionism as an act of sexual aggression against the feminized Palestinian nation.[64]

According to this, it is incumbent upon Palestinian men to defend their nation as they

would their family. "The Palestinian is a male lover, a groom, and a defender".[65] Further,

Amireh argues that metaphore is not merely a rhetorical device, it has animpact on the

everyday lives of Palestinians. As an example she summarises Lilah Abu-Lughod's

(1986) argument that finds that "control" as an "important element in Arab

masculinity".[66] Amireh explains that according to particular discourses sexual restrained

behaviour is conceptualised as part of a defence against possible Israeli attacks. She

argues that fear of betrayal by others, and of others by oneself (made the worse by the

general fear and suspicion of Palestinian collaborators), accounts for an acute mistrust of

giving up one's control in any circumstances, even to one's own sexual desire. Thus

according to this discourse of masculinity, part of being a man is the requirement to

subjugate one's sexual desires beneath one's responsibilities to the rest of society.

This example is extremely revealing as it exposes the cyclical interactions of

events and discourses on all three levels. This is as follows. At the macro-level Israeli

policy used traps based on exploitation of sexual desire, and also used sexual harassment

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[64] This is not unusual as a Middle Eastern nationalist narrative *per se*. As argued by Suad Joseph, in various cases this is evident, particularly as a post-colonial mythology inspiring loyalty to the state. Leliah Abu-Lugod also identifies is significance in western cultures in relation to their understanding of the middle east. This was particularly palpable as justifications for the war's in Iraq (2003) and Afghanistan (2001). *Cf*. Joseph, S. (2000), *Op. Cit.*; Abu-Lughod, L. (2003) 'Saving Muslim Women or Standing With Them? On Images, Ethics, and War in Our Times", *Insaniyaat*.

[65] Amireh, A. (2003) "Between Complicity and Subversion: Body Politics in Palestinian National Narrative", *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Vol. 102, No. 4, p. 750.

[66] Ibid., p. 759; also *C.f.*: Abu-Lughod, L. (1986) *Veiled Sentiments: Honor and Poetryin a Bedouin Society*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

and rape as punishments to emasculate detainees. As this was interpreted inter-subjectively at the meso-level the product was a shift in emphasis of the normative discourse toward valuing sexual restraint. At the micro-level behaviour changed towards

that which focused on "a militarisation of the intifada and a redomestication of women".[67] This process is made cyclical, rather than top down, because the manifest outcome of this micro-level behaviour alters the discursive environment within which future meso-level interpretations occur, which in turn, inform the broad based, non-personalised, policy decisions (*inter alia*) at the macro-level.

Another interpretation, which I introduced at the beginning of this paper, is exposed by Julie Peetet's (1994) argument that young Palestinian men use a "trick" of interpreting violence against them as a rite of passage.[68] While Israeli forces represent the embodiment of domination over Palestinians in day-to-day experiences, many Palestinians reject the position of inferiority this relationship imposes onto them. As, except in rare instances, Palestinians were unable to directly challenge, and overcome, the Israeli advantage in force and were subjected to beatings as part of the "apparatus of domination".[69] Peteet argues that, discursively, Palestinians masculinities adapted to interpret the meaning of these beatings differently. Instead of physically imposing the status of colonial subject on Palestinians, the meaning has been "appropriated by the subject in a dialectical and agential manner".[70] Endurance, and bearing scars of Israeli

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[67] Abu-Lughod, L. (1986) *Op. Cit.,* Quoted in Amireh, A. (2003) *Op. Cit.,* p. 760.
[68] Peteet, J. (1994), *Op. Cit.* p. 36.
[69] Ibid., p. 36.
[70] Ibid., p. 37.

aggression, stands a "commentary on suffering"[71] and also a "commentary on sacrifice".[72] Furthermore, such is the reversal that on occasions where the IDF used

disproportionate brutality; it is the Israeli aggressor who was emasculated and seen as individuals without honour.[73]

In recent years the occupation forces have continued to use mass detention to primarily target young Palestinian men.[74] As Peteet suggests happened with beatings, detention is reinterpreted at the meso-level. "The prisoner experience is a cornerstone of the Palestinian national narrative. Palestinians have written thousand of songs, poems and stories about it"[75]. Esmail Nasif (2008)[76] argues that in relation to detention, endurance of brutality and torture without giving up information is the basic standard of what is required by, in this context, a hegemonic discourse of masculinity. Failure to do this would be considered a betrayal of Palestinian society and would also bring about the shaming of the individual's family. Importantly both before and since the second intifada some aspects of the Palestinian experience, and there relationship to manhood remain the same. Detention and beatings are both gateway experiences where behaving in a certain way defines the individual as "a man". In broader society that contribute towards

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[71] Ibid., p. 38.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid.
[74] By far, the majority of prisoners in Israeli jails are male, and extremely loose legal standards mean that detentions of Palestinians can be timed to cause the most disruption in their lives: for example during important phases of school or university education. For more details and myriad examples, *C.f.:* Nashif, E. (2008) *Op. Cit.*: Birzeit University's Right to Education Campaign website (available online at http://right2edu.birzeit.edu/news/catindex31, accessed 19 January 2009).
[75] Cook, C., Hanieh, A., *et al.* (2004) *Stolen Youth: The Politics of Israel's Detention of Palestinian Children*, Pluto Press, in association with DCI, Defence for Children International, Palestine Section
[76] Esmail Nasif (2008), *Op. Cit.*

recognition of an individual's right to a position of authority and respect on a social and political level.

The fact that the vast majority of victims of the IDF's aggression are male, and that the occupation's policies are recognised as explicitly gendered, suggests that the

occupation forces still see young Palestinian men as the "metonym"[77] of resistance. However, it is important to note that while the normative value ascribed to endurance of detention and beatings my not have changed much since the first intifada, outside those instances, the ideational structures of society have. In particular, during the Israeli re-invasion of the West Bank, the lives of Palestinians were subjected to such an extent of prolonged violence that violence itself became what was perceived as the status quo. [78] Further, Lori Allen (2008)[79] argues that because death became a regular occurrence Palestinian's would no longer be shaken out of their normal patterns of existence by it. She explains that "space and life [were] filled with the destiny of remembered dead".

Sumud and the Ordinary

I have argued elsewhere,[80] that nonviolence which is interpreted as resistance through a discourse of *sumud* (steadfastness), operates as a default position for young Palestinians who wish to avoid the high risk inherent in "heroic" violent resistance, and the apparent disenfranchised of appealing for external help. However, in the light of further research,

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[77] Peteet, J., *Op. Cit.*
[78] Allen, L. (2008) "Getting by the Occupation: How Violence Became Normal During the Second Palestinian Intifada", *Cultural Anthropology,* Vol. 23, No. 3, pp. 453-87.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Leech, Philip (2009) *Youth and the Palestinian Resistance: The Role of Young Palestinians in Resisting the Military Occupation of the West Bank*, Berlin: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller.

in particular Tobias Kelly's paper (2008)[81], I acknowledge that the situation is more complex than this. Kelly also starts from the position that during the Israeli re-invasion of the West Bank, violence became a normalised part of life. However, Kelly's interest is in

asking why, when some young men are motivated by these events to join paramilitary organisations and resist the occupation violently, are others more concerned with pursuing a career that would seem *prima facie* to have nothing to do with resisting the occupation, for instance: accountancy.

He argues that this pursuit of an "ordinary" life is an example of how in terms of everyday life in the West Bank other discourses (in this case resistance) have been re-conceptualised in order to fit in with the powerful discourse of kinship. Defining the "ordinary" Kelly explains that it "hangs, uneasily between a description and an evaluation, and it is this movement between the 'is' and the 'ought' that gives this category such purchase".[82] This means that the "ordinary" is not just a category which describes the nature of life in occupied Palestine as it is; it is also a sense of what might be. It is "shot through with a residual hope that it still may be possible, and a fear that it might not".[83] Kelly's argument describes how the particular discourse of masculinity though which one of his informants defined himself, was "steeped in the more practical responsibilities of kinship, and the sacrifices of paternity and brotherhood".[84]

Kelly's argument is critical for my own discussion because he posits the idea of a discourse of masculinity that combines two normative values. The first is the requirement

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[81] Kelly, T., *Op. Cit.*
[82] Ibid., p. 353.
[83] Ibid., p. 354.
[84] Ibid., p. 361.

of defending the family and providing for it, which co-exists with the second, the requirement to resist the occupation of Palestinian lands. This means that, the constructed identity manifested in this discourse of masculinity has changed. Through the prism of

this masculinity men see their everyday role more to be providers than fighters. As a result, they also see the occupation differently: while it remains a colonial project that seeks to remove Palestinians from the West Bank the primary threat, which is experienced every day, is to the welfare of family. Arguably, this particular form of masculinity is represents the desperate position in which many Palestinian men find themselves. Most young Palestinians have lived the majority of their lives in the political and social half-light of post-Oslo Palestine. They have never experienced a Palestine that was not occupied (and for many, neither have their parents). And for many, the brutality of Israel's re-invasion (operation "Defence Shield") of the West Bank in operation would have been a powerful and formative experience, reinforced by the knowledge of more recent Israeli actions in Lebanon and in Gaza. For now, at least, the occupation is seen by many as insumountable, and thus resistance itself has changed. Instead of attacking Israel, according to this discourse, a man's role should focuses on steadfastness and everyday provision for the family.

For Kelly *sumud* is a term that describes a particular type of resistance, that is particularly relevant to this context. For his informant, accountancy was a means to establish himself as independent man who could also be financially supportive of his family. It's clear to Kelly that this process is in itself is a goal that is defined, and is generally accepted, as a legitimate form of resistance. This is resistance because the

informant interprets the occupation with a particular policy goal: to make his life, and the life of his family, unfeasible in the West Bank. By pursuing a stable carrier the informant was not abandoning the struggle and becoming passive towards the occupation, rather, he

interpreted the situation at a macro-level in a way that centralised his concern for his family and adjusted both his form of agency in resistance, and his meso-level interpretation of the discourse of masculinity, accordingly.

However, Kelly makes two other important refinements to his argument. First, is exposed by the fact that Kelly also engaged with another informant who continued to pursue a more militant form of resistance. This informant had been associated with the Palestinian security services for a long time, aand for thim the best form of resistance was not *sumud*, but through force of arms. By virtue of assuming greater risk this informant was prepared to sacrifice his everyday responsibilities to his family to a greater degree than the informant who chose to pursue accountancy. This does not necessarily imply that this informant (or others like him) does not conceptualise his actions in relation to the family. And the difference should not be necessarily interpreted to mean that this informant has been in the position to freely choose a more violent path. At the level of legitimising discourses, it is possible that Palestinians who actively fight against Israel see themselves as acting in the long term best interests of their families. By trying to destroy the occupation, regardless of the fact that he is more likely to lose his life/be incarcerated which would cause immediate – or as he would see it according to this logic "short term" – problems for his family. Second, Kelly stresses that neither the ordinary nor the violent paths are necessarily represent permanent choices. Kelly explains that

individuals who pursue an "ordinary" life are not necessarily confined to it in all circumstances and might change their goals in relation to alterations in the frame work at the macro, meso or micro-level.

Conclusions and Caveats

This paper has argued that masculinities are socially imposed, complex and highly political phenomena. Masculinities also intersect with other dynamics of power. They are themselves usually somewhat fluid, inter-dependent and in competition with each other. They are subject to changes in their environment and internal constitution, and yet they also act as important meso-level interpreters of events and the agency of others.

Twenty years since the start of the first intifada, during my own field research in 2007, it was clear that young Palestinian men were still the main targets of Israel's oppression. However, due to its sustained nature and occasional escalation to the heights of brutality, the occupation has changed the conditions of everyday life for Palestinians. Under these harsh conditions the underlying basis for Palestinian society, the family unity, has become exposed and is seen to be vulnerable. Because of this, the ideas about what it is to be a man have been forced to adapt. To abstract from the previous discussion this could be summarised in the following way: normative valuations are usually interpreted within a framework which is strongly focused on the protection and support of the family unit above other interests. Therefore resistance or any other discourse is largely forced to be re-imagined as to become one that does not contradict the primacy of the defence of the family.

However, one caveat against this point is that while this paper has argued that the perceived vulnerability of the family unit has caused the other normative valuations to change, it does not specify in what way. Therefore the potential range of re-interpretations of what is meant by "resistance" is much wider than it might initially

appear to be. Normative valuations that are applied within the crude framework beneath the powerful ideal of the family unit potentially allow for concerns of familial welfare in the short to medium term to override longer term political goals.

In spite of this caveat, understanding masculinities in occupied Palestine as infused with normative values is a useful point of departure for further research. They offer a *way in* to examine other important structures and power relationships through their impact on young men. They also allow, to some extent, the categorisation of ways in which young men are likely to interpret certain events. Most importantly, understanding masculinities helps inform our assessments as to the likely outcomes of particular events and changes in the broader political and social dynamics.

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The Western Construction of a Religion:
The Philippine Case (1521-1614)

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Abstract

In the 16th Century the Philippines entered in the Spanish empire's colonial sphere. The cultural differences of native groups that had stayed out of the European worldview were quickly attenuated through a process of assimilation, which led the Spaniards to read the cultural realities of the Philippines through their own European religious traditional categories. In this way, we observe the translation of native superhuman entities into familiar concepts understandable to Spanish Christians in the 16th Century. For example: Abba was interpreted as God the Father, Bathala as the Supreme Being and the anitos as demonic representatives of the forces of evil[85].

The Sources

Almost all the sources related to the contact between Europeans and native Filipinos are

in Spanish, even if the Portuguese who occupied Malacca in 1511 gave us news of some

native merchants from Luzon. Furthermore we know that in around 1530 Portuguese

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[85] This article develops on a conference which I held in the Department of History of Religions at the University of Rome "La Sapienza" on November 14, 2006 (see also Mapelli, 2006:207-231). The English translation of Pigafetta's text by R. A. Skelton (Pigafetta, 1994) has been modified when necessary to fit the context.

navigators carried out some brief excursions in Mindanao, although there is scarce documentation.

The Spanish documents begin with those relative to Magellan's expedition: the *Relazione del Primo Viaggio Attorno al Mondo* (1524). The first circumnavigation of the world (1519-1522) is narrated by Antonio Pigafetta, born in the Italian city of Vicenza. In the text, compiled in Italian, we find the first reports regarding the inhabitants of the Philippine islands and their beliefs. The subsequent reports about the Philippine archipelago were in part ordered to be written by the Spanish crown, which wanted more specific information about the new territory. The first was written by Miguel de Loarca, *Relacion de las Yslas Filipinas* (1582). The work, while giving a general panorama of the archipelago, concentrated in particular on the central and southern part of the Philippines. Some years later, a Franciscan, Juan de Plasencia, wrote about the Tagalog religion practiced in the northern part of the Philippines: the *Relacion del culto que los Tagalog tenìan* (1589) would be followed by the *Relacion de las Islas Philipinas* (1592).

However, the most important source is the *Boxer Codex* (1590). The manuscript, whose content was ignored, was part of the Englishman Lord Ilchster's collection; during the Nazi bombardment of London in 1947, his house was hit, bringing the *Codex* to light. Charles R. Boxer acquired it when it was put on auction in 1947 and from that time on it has been known as the *Boxer Codex*. Its value is also due to the fact that it is the only document with illustrations of native Filipinos from the 16th Century. Another important work is by Juan de Oliver, *Declaracion de la doctrina Christiana en idioma Tagalog* (1590). Additional sources relative to the first century of the Spanish presence in the

Philippines include a work by Father Pedro Chirino, *Relacion de las Islas Filipinas* (1604) – a history of the first Jesuit missions in the Philippines – and one by Antonio de Morga, *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* (1609). Morga was a colonial official, and therefore had easy access to government documents; his reports are considered to be the most objective of all. We conclude this review with the *Vocabulario de lengua Tagala* (1613) by Pedro de San Buenventura and the *Explicacion de los siete sacramentos de la Santa Iglesia* (1614), by Father Francisco Blancas de San Josè[86].

Pigafetta

The first documentation of the contact between Spanish and native Filipinos is the *Relazione del primo viaggio attorno al mondo* (*A Narrative Account of the First Circumnavigation*) by Antonio Pigafetta. This text shows how, already in those first days of contact, the attempt to "familiarize" an unknown world was carried out by interpreting its categories and inserting those of the Christian faith into them.

Little is known about Pigafetta's life before the trip with Magellan (in which he was the *criado*, or trusted right hand man), during the trip as well as after his return to Spain. Antonio was probably born after 1492 into a family of ancient nobility from Vicenza. Pigafetta informs us that in 1519 he was in Spain following the Apostolic Nuncio by the imperial court – the reverend Monsignor Francesco Chieregati, apostolic

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[86] In order to know the Southern regions of the Philippines, an important text is the *Historia de las Islas de Mindanao, Iolo y sus adyacentes* (1667) by the Jesuit Francisco Combés, while the most important ethnographic work on the Philippines written before the twentieth century is considered to be the work by the missionary Francisco Ignacio Alcina *Historia de las islas e indios de Bisayas* (1668). For all this information, see Scott, 1994: 282-287 and Jocano, 1975.

protonotary and ambassador of Pope Leo X[87] – who gave him the permission to embark with Magellan's fleet. After 1525 nothing more is known of Pigafetta. The uncertainties regarding Pigafetta's life are also reflected in the text of the *Relazione*: the original is unknown, we are missing the diary that Pigafetta claimed to have written daily, and that which is left of the original compiling is only the ms. L 103 sup. (now in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana of Milan, Italy), which was translated into two French versions. From that time until 1975, 57 editions of the trip appeared. The most recent critical edition of the Italian text – and our main reference – is from 1999.

Pigafetta confesses that he wasn't a clean slate when he faced the new ocean: "having learned, both *by reading divers books and from reports by various clerks and learned men who discussed the great and terrible things of the Ocean Sea* with the said protonotary, I determined (with the blessing of the Emperor and the above-mentioned lord) to experience and to go and see some of the said things, thereby to satisfy the wishes of the said lords as well as mine, that it might be recounted that I made the voyage and saw the things hereafter written with my own eyes, and that I might earn fame and posterity"[88].

Other than scarce news, the Ocean Sea ["Mare Occeanno"], as Pigafetta calls it, is still unknown. The reports in the *divers books* refer to the American continent, about which much was written from 1492 on. First of all were Columbus' writings as well as

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[87] See Pigafetta, 1994:37.
[88] Pigafetta, 1994:37. *Italics mine.* (The original Italian: "avendo io avuto gran notisia *per molti libri letti e per diverse personne che praticavano con sua signoria de le grande e stupende cose del Mare Occeanno*, deliberai con bonna gratia de la magestà cezaria e del prefacto signor mio far experientia di me e andare a vedere quelle cose che potessero dare alguna satisfatione a me medesmo e potessero parturirmi qualche nome apresso la posterità". Pigafetta, 1999:159). The emperor is Charles V.

those by Pietro Martire d'Anghiera, the author of *Decades de orbe novo,* which was already translated into Italian and printed in Venice in 1504 (under the title *Libretto de tutta la navigatione del re di Spagna de le isole et terreni nuovamente ritrovati*); then the work relative to the Vespucci's undertaking: *Paesi nuovamente retrovati et Novo Mondo da Alberico Vesputio Florentino intitulato* (1507). These works were definitely part of Pigafetta's readings as a youth[89], and they contributed to elaborating his vision of the Ocean Sea, giving him some interpretive categories to familiarize that, which was still unknown. Some examples: the trip towards the Americas described in the *Relazione* presents some themes that are dear to Pietro Martire – such as the strange atmospheric phenomena from the island of Hierro, the voracious *tiburoni* sharks, and the description of the Tera del Verzìn, Brazil. It also described common themes relative to the natives such as their longevity, their nudity, and the wealth of their lands. Pigafetta wrote: "The said land of Verzin abounds in all good things, and it is larger than France, Spain, and Italy together. […]. Its people are not Christians, and worship nothing, but live according to the custom of nature, more like beasts than otherwise. And some of these people live a hundred years, or six score or seven score years, or more, and they go naked, both men and women"[90]. The conclusion is clear: "certainly these people would be easily converted to the Christian faith"[91].

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[89] See Pigafetta, 1999:66.

[90] Pigafetta, 1994:43. (The original Italian: "Questa Tera del Verzìn è abondantissima e più grande che Spagna, Fransa e Italia tute insieme… Li populi de questa tera non sonno cristiani e non adorano cosa alguna; vivono secondo lo uzo de la natura e viveno centovinticinque anni e cento e quaranta. Vano nudi cossì omini como femine". Pigafetta, 1999:170).

[91] Pigafetta, 1994:45. (The original Italian: "questi populi facilmente se converterebenno a la fede de Iesù Cristo". Pigafetta, 1999:174).

The Philippines, Magellan, and Christianity

Magellan was the first European to cross the Pacific from east to west: his ships embarked on November 28, 1520 through the passage that was then named the Straight of Magellan in his honour. After a rough trip of hardships and suffering, the Spaniards reached the Marianne islands on March 6th of the following year. These islands were then called *de los Ladrones* ("Islands of Thieves") because of thefts committed by the native Chamorros. Ten days later they reached the archipelago that, in honour of the Spaniard Phillip II, would be named the Philippines.

Antonio Pigafetta dedicated few and sober lines to his arrival in the Philippines, just as few and sober lines were dedicated to the natives' amiable welcome. Instead, Pigafetta immediately lavished into a long and meticulous description of the coconut palm[92] and the first traces of gold[93], almost as though he wanted to underline the economic gains of Magellan's mission and the potential wealth that the trip had revealed for the Spanish throne. Faith would soon be added to this material wealth, thanks to the potential conversion of the natives to Christianity.

The fleet thereafter explored other islands in the archipelago, and during the mission a slave named Enrique proved himself to be extremely useful: "a slave of his [i.e. Magellan] from Zamatra [i.e. Sumatra Island], formerly called Traprobana, spoke to those men at a distance"[94]. Enrique immediately demonstrated that he understood the

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[92] See Pigafetta, 1994:63-64.
[93] See Pigafetta,1994:64, 69, 72, 80, 95.
[94] Pigafetta, 1994:67 (The original Italian: "uno schiavo del capitano generale, che era de Zamatra, già chiamata Traprobana". Pigafetta, 1999:212). According to T. Valentino Sitoy Jr. (see Sitoy, 1985:282-283) the language used by Enrique was a pidgin called 'market-Malay': *pasar melayu*, the language used

language spoken in the Philippines, speaking with the natives' king "who understood him well"[95]. We shall keep the figure of Enrique in mind because his "translations" of some of the native Filipinos' words and expressions would birth some of the misunderstandings regarding the true nature of their religious system. Pigafetta informs us that when oral communication with the king proved difficult, he integrated by "signing to him"[96]. In this way, the basis for celebrating the first Catholic mass in the Philippines was established. It took place on the last Sunday in March of 1521, Easter Sunday. However, one last sign of communication was missing: when the Spanish ships neared the coast where the mass was being celebrated, "our ships fired six shots as a sign of peace"[97]. The translator's words, the Spaniards' gestures, and the roaring of their weapons were the three modes of communication that the following dialogue was based on.

The Spaniards reached the consecrated sight for the mass and the celebration began. Pigafetta informs us that the natives participated in the celebration before they even knew what Christianity was. In fact, "two kings went to kiss the cross as we did", and "at the raising of our Lord's body they knelt as we did and worshiped our Lord with

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throughout Southeast Asia in the first quarter of the XVI century. This pidgin wasn't understood everywhere in the Philippines: in Cebu, Enrique couldn't communicate directly with the island's king, and had to use one of the king's slaves who knew Malay (see Pigafetta, 1999:213). We will see that these linguistic difficulties would have consequences that weren't indifferent to understanding the religious world of the natives.

[95] Pigafetta, 1994:67. (The original Italian: "il qualle subito inteseno". Pigafetta, 1999:212).

[96] Pigafetta, 1994:68. (The original version: "parlando con segni". Pigafetta, 1999:215).

[97] Pigafettta, 1969:70. (The original Italian: "foreno scaricati sei pezi de bombarde in segno de pace". Pigafetta, 1999:218)

clasped hands"[98]. The Spaniards' first two modes of communication must have seemed incomprehensible to the natives. The ceremony was held in Latin – not in the semi-comprehensible language of the translator – and the ritual significance of the gestures in the mass couldn't have been understood because there hadn't been any form of catechism. However, Pigafetta informs us that the natives understood the third mode of communication utilized: "the ships fired all their artillery at the raising of our Lord's body [the signal being given from the shore with muskets]"[99]. The scene is vivid: the priest raised the consecrated holy host, from the bank the soldiers shot their muskets, and at this sign the ships' cannons were fired and the natives fell to their knees. That wasn't it. At the end of the mass "the captain ordered his men to skirmish"[100] at which they mimed a duel, and immediately afterwards "he had a cross brought, with the nails and the crown"; Pigafetta informs us that at this the natives immediately "did reverence"[101]. That is: *immediately* after a mimed *duel* – but regardless a manifestation of weapons and force – the natives revered the cross. At the end Magellan told the natives to put the cross on the highest mountain and adore it because "if they did this, neither thunder, nor lightning, nor tempest could harm them"[102]. The natives' answer to Magellan isn't surprising:

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[98] Pigafetta, 1994:70. (The original Italian: "li re andorono a bassiare la croce come nui". "quando se levava lo corpo de nostro Signor stavano in genochioni e adoravanlo con le mane gionte". Pigafetta, 1999:218)

[99] Pigafetta, 1994:70. (The original Italian: "le nave tirarono tuta la artigliaria in uno tempo quando se levò lo corpo de Cristo, dandoge lo segno de la tera con li schiopeti". Pigafetta, 1999:218).

[100] Pigafetta, 1994:70. (The original Italian: "lo capitano generale fece fare uno ballo con le spade". Pigafetta 1999:218).

[101] Pigafetta, 1994:70. (The original Italian: "fece portare una croce con li chiodi e la coronna"; "subito fecero reverentia". Pigafetta, 1999:218).

[102] Pigafetta, 1994:70. (The original Italian: "se questo facevano, né troni né fulmini ni tempesta li nocerebbe in cosa alguna". Pigafetta, 1999:218).

"those kings thanked the captain and said that they would be willing to do this"[103]. It's only after all this that Magellan and the Spaniards showed that they were interested in the religious world of the natives.

God and *Abba*

The first questioning is revealing. Magellan "had them asked whether they were Moors or heathens, and [in the original Italian: *or*] in what they believed"[104]. The first concern was to check whether the natives had already been converted to Islam, the oppressive presence that the Spanish had been liberated from only a few years prior in their own land. Magellan, who had already lived on Portuguese territory in the Orient where he had found his translator Enrique (from 1505 to 1512, pushing towards the Spice Islands), was in fact aware that Islam was already in diffuse in those areas; and therefore it wasn't impossible for the Muslim expansion to have reached the Philippines as well. Instead, he excludes from the start the possibility that they could already have encountered Christianity. It is probable that rather than making a direct observation here, we see Pigafetta's desire to build up Magellan's prestige by showing that he hadn't only found material wealth (remember previous mentions of the coconut palm and the first traces of gold), but also spiritual wealth – virgin souls to convert to the Christian faith. He wasn't new to operations of this sort. As previously stated, when Magellan's fleet reached Brazil Pigafetta wrote that "certainly these people would be easily converted to the Christian

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[103] Pigafetta, 1994:70. (The original Italian: "lo ringratiorno molto e dissero che farebenno ogni cosa volentieri". Pigafetta, 1999:219).
[104] Pigafetta, 1994:70. *Italics mine.* (The original Italian: "li fece dire se eranno mori o gentili *o* in che credevano". Pigafetta, 1999:219).

faith"[105]. Regardless, the captain left the possibility of the unknown out in the open: "*or in what they believed*", Pigafetta wrote, referring to the alternatives that Magellan had already put forth as an answer to his question. Magellan was aware that an unknown people could have an unknown religion. He was therefore aware that, considering how remote the islands were, neither Islam nor another known religion could have reached them with their missionary efforts. Instead, the natives' response is extraordinarily and *suspiciously* familiar. "[T]hey replied", says Pigafetta,

> that they worshiped no other thing but they clasped their hands, looking up to heaven, and called upon their god *Aba* [in the original Italian: *Abba*]. Hearing this, the captain was very glad[106].

Andrea Canova, curator of the critical edition of the *Relazione* by Pigafetta, comments on these few lines and brings back the thesis expressed in *El mundo indigena conocido por Magallanes en las Islas de San Lazaro* (1975) by T. Sanz. According this, the term *Abba* used by Jesus in the Gospels (Mark 14:36) was known to the Muslim merchants that had commerce in the insular Southeast Asian islands, and therefore could have transmitted it to the native Filipinos. Another thesis put forward by Canova is that of G. Soravia, who in his *Pigafetta lessicografo dei nuovi e vecchi mondi* (1994) sustains instead the idea that *Abba* was nothing other than a bad translation of *abà*, an exclamation of surprise used by certain groups of native Filipinos[107].

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[105] Pigafetta, 1994:45. (The original Italian: "questi populi facilmente se converterebenno a la fede de Iesù Cristo". Pigafetta, 1999:174).

[106] Pigafetta, 1994:70. *Italics in the text.* (The original Italian: "risposero"; "che non adoravano altro si non alsavano le mani giunte e la faza al ciello e che chiamavano lo suo dio *Abba*, per la qual cosa lo capitanio ebe grande alegressa". Pigafetta, 1999:219).

[107] See Pigafetta, 1999:219, n. 414.

Both of the hypotheses, as can be seen, are fragile. It would have been much more natural for the Muslim merchants to have transmitted the term *Allà* (like a corruption of *Allah*) to the native Filipinos, rather than that of *Abbà*. The hypothesis that the letter *l* in *Allah* was pronounced as *b* in *Abba* due to pronunciation difficulties wouldn't hold either because the letter *l* is abundant in local languages. In the same way, it is quite improbable that the native Filipinos adored an exclamation of surprise or, still worse, gave their god a name that was an exclamation of surprise. So, how do we explain the term *Abba*? The hypothesis that is commonly accepted by scholars is that proposed by William H. Scott, who in some way conciliates the two hypotheses already mentioned. In his *Barangay: Sixteenth-Century Philippine Culture and Society* (1994) he sustains that it isn't particularly difficult to explain the term *Abba*. It is all fruit of a misunderstanding by Magellan's translator Enrique, a Sumatra native. In his language, *aba* "was a Malay-Arabic word for father"[108]. On hearing the native Filipinos use the term *Aba!*, "a common expression of wonder or admiration – like 'Hail!' in the Ave Maria"[109], the translator who had already been exposed to the Catholic world of the Portuguese concluded from the similarity in sound between the two terms that they meant the same thing. In this way, a Christian cultural background characterized by faith in a father god – *Abba* – tainted the interpretation of a statement. Scott sustains that the natives' answer was instead clear.

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[108] Scott, 1994:79. *Italics mine.*

[109] Scott, 1994:79. In any case, distance is kept from the comparison *Hail* (ave), in that the term isn't an expression of stupor or admiration. *Hail* (ave) is, in all effects, a salutation.

They affirmed without a doubt that "they did not worship anything"[110]. The natives' only response was to put their hands together, raise their faces to the sky and shout *Aba!,* an expression of stupor and wonder that Magellan's translator, with his knowledge of the Gospel passage where Jesus addresses God as *Abba*, misinterpreted for the name of their divinity. A little like a Christian putting his hands together, raising his face to the sky and saying *amen* and a passing native confusing that *amen* for the name of the Christian god.

The complexity of analyzing a suspect term such as *Abba*, only used once by Pigafetta and then abandoned, is evident. Although our research is limited by few sources, what we can underline is Pigafetta's description of Magellan's state of being upon hearing that the native Filipinos called their god *Abba*. He wrote that the captain was very glad. Magellan now had a familiar world in front of him. He didn't have the dangerous Muslims, or Chamorro thieves, or savages that were a blank slate. In some mysterious way, Providence had given a seed of the Word to these "savages" in the name of God as *Abba*. It wasn't important how the term had reached the Philippines nor to ask the translator to confirm whether the answer was right. The answer was right because it was what they hoped was right. That was it. Now he could start working on converting.

The Demon and the *Anito*

Magellan then turned towards Zubu (today Cebu, in the central region of the Philippine archipelago), where the celebrated scene with the three modes of communication was repeated. The ship "fired all the artillery, at which the people of those places were terribly

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[110] Scott, 1994:79.

fearful"[111], the interpreter went up to the natives and began interacting with words and gestures. In particular, seeing that the natives willingly listened to him, Magellan "began further to tell them many good things to induce them to become Christians"[112]. Here they are:

> Then the captain told them how God had made the heaven, the earth, and the sea, and all other things in the world, and that he had commanded every man to do honor [sic] and obedience to his father and mother, and that any man who did otherwise was condemned to eternal fire. And he told how we were descended from Adam and Eve, our first parents, and how we had immortal souls. Then he showed them several other things having to do with our faith[113].

Pigafetta wrote that the natives were so enthusiastic about Magellan's catechism (obviously translated by the trusted Enrique) that they supplicated him to leave one or two men "to teach them and unfold the Christian faith"[114]. The captain answered that this wasn't possible, but that there was a solution – "if they wished to be Christians, his priest would baptize them, and that another time he would bring priests and friars to teach them

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[111] Pigafetta, 1994:73. (The original Italian: "scaricò tuta l'artigliaria, per il che questi populi ebero grandissima paura". Pigafetta, 1999:223).

[112] Pigafetta, 1994:77. (The original Italian: "li cominciò a dire cose per indurli a la fede". Pigafetta, 1999:227).

[113] Pigafetta, 1994:77. (The original Italian: "Lo capitanio li disse come Idio fece lo ciello, la terra, lo mare e tucte le altre cose e come imposse se dovesseno onnorare li padri e madri e chi altramente faceva era condempnato [sic] nel fuoco eterno e como tuti descendevamo de Adam ed Eva, nostri primi parenti, e como avevamo l'anima inmortalle e moltre altre cose pertinenti a la fede". Pigafetta, 1999:227).

[114] Pigafetta, 1994:77. (The original Italian: "aciò li amaistrasse ne la fede". Pigafetta, 1999:227).

his faith"[115]. That is, Magellan proposed at first to baptize the natives so that when new vessels returned from Spain afterwards, they could bring priests and friars to instruct the natives on precepts of the faith. The phases of *adult* Christian education are noteworthy. First they were baptized and then they were explained what baptism meant! Pigafetta, perhaps knowledgeable that some readers could have been suspicious of forced conversion, underlined how Magellan had always respected the natives' desires. "The captain told them that they should not become Christians for fear of us, or in order to please us, but if they wished to become Christians, it should be with a good heart and for the love of God. For that, if they did not become Christians, we shouldn't show them displeasure. But that those who became Christians would be better regarded and treated than the others"[116]. The natives' answer seems taken for granted. Pigafetta wrote that "all cried out together with one voice that they wished to become Christians not for fear, nor to please us, but of their own free will"[117]. Becoming Christian for the natives would have not only meant being "more regarded and better treated than the others"; it also would have guaranteed that "since they were Christians, the devil would no longer appear to them except at the point and extremity of death"[118]. Being that Pigafetta hadn't mentioned the devil in previous paragraphs, the obvious question is, from where was the

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[115] Pigafetta, 1994:77. (The original Italian: "se volevano essere cristiani, lo prete nostro li baptezarebe e che un'altra fiata menaria preti e frati che li insegnarebeno la fede nostra". Pigafetta, 1999:227).

[116] Pigafetta, 1994:77. (The original Italian: "Lo capitano li disce che non ce facero cristiani per paura né per compiacerne, ma volontariamente, e a coloro che volevano vivere secondo la sua lege non li sarebe facto dispiacer alguno, ma li cristiani serianno meglio visti e caregiati che li altri". Pigafetta, 1999:227-228).

[117] Pigafetta, 1994:77. (The original Italian: "Tuti gridarono a una voce che non se facevano cristiani per paure né per compiacerne, ma per sua spontanea volontate". Pigafetta 1999:228).

[118] Pigafetta, 1994:77-78. (The original Italian: "essendo cristiani, non li aparerebe più el domonio, se non nel ponte extremo de la sua morte". Pigafetta, 1999:228).

affirmation born? Did the concept of the devil exist in the pre-Hispanic Philippine world, or did the Spaniards bring it? Pigafetta didn't give us an answer and instead described the natives' confusion when facing the apparent freedom of choice proposed by Magellan. "They said that they could not reply to so many fair words which he spoke to them, but they put themselves in his hands, and that he should treat them as his own servants"[119]. From these words we can understand the natives' confusion, a confusion that would be resolved immediately. Magellan performed his catechism on God the Father, saying that all were free to convert but that he who converted would be treated better than the rest. All this was sealed by a few firings of the cannons here and there and the natives' final choice was to put themselves in Magellan's hands.

When the day of the baptism arrived, the natives' king told Magellan that he wanted to become a Christian, but that some of his subjects didn't want to obey him. Without hesitation, the captain told the king to inform them that if he wasn't obeyed "he would have them all killed, and would give all their goods to the king"[120]. Magellan then introduced a request that he hadn't made previously. If all the natives wanted to become Christians, he told the king, "he must burn all the idols of his country, and set up a cross in their place"[121], which should be adored every day with the sign of the cross, which Magellan then showed the natives. In those idols Magellan had seen a correspondence to the "false gods" of paganism. Pigafetta continues by narrating the first baptisms in the

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[119] Pigafetta, 1994:78. (The original Italian: "deceno che non sapevano responderli per le sue belle parolle, ma se rimetevano ne le sue mani e facesse de loro come de soi fidelissimi servitori". Pigafetta, 1999:228).
[120] Pigafetta, 1994:81. (The original Italian: "li farebe amazare e daria la sua roba al re". Pigafetta, 1999:233).
[121] Pigafetta, 1994:81. (The original Italian: "li bisognava brusare tucti li sui idoli e nel luoco loro metere una croce". Pigafetta, 1999:233).

Philippines – the first was the local king followed by five hundred other natives. The names of the most important were changed (according to custom) into Christian ones. After the baptism there was a mass at the end of which, as usual, "the ships discharged all the artillery"[122]. Therefore, Pigafetta informs us, after only eight days the entire island was baptized along with some natives from nearby islands. There was only one resistance. Pigafetta wrote that the Spaniards burnt a village "which refused to obey the king or us", and that on that burnt land "we set up the cross"[123]. This enthusiasic picture began however to reveal some cracks. A few days after the mass baptism, Magellan realized that the local idols were still there and that the natives gave them offerings. Surprised, he asked why they hadn't been burnt as promised before the baptism. The natives "answered that they did this not for themselves, but for a sick man who had not spoken for four days so that the idols might give him health."[124]. Magellan didn't agree. "The captain said that they should burn the idols and believe in Jesus Christ, and that if the sick man had himself baptized, he would immediately be cured. And that if this was not true they could cut off his head"[125]. The alternative was radical and the solution predictable. They all went to the sick man's home who subsequently accepted Christianity and was baptized. When Magellan asked how he was, "he spoke at once and

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[122] Pigafetta, 1994:82. (The original Italian: "le navi scaricorono tutte le bombarde". Pigafetta, 1999:233).

[123] Pigafetta, 1994:82. (The original Italian: "per non voler obedire al re né a noi"; "ponessemo quivi la croce". Pigafetta, 1999:235). T. Valentino Sitoy Jr. claims that the king misunderstood that baptism as a ritual to sign a military alliance, so that Magellan could have helped him to fight his enemies in the nearby islands (see Sitoy, 1985:48).

[124] Pigafetta, 1994:83-84. (The original Italian: "risposero quel che facevano non lo facevano per loro, ma per uno infermo, aciò li idoli li dasse salute, lo qual non parlava ià catro giorni". Pigafetta, 1999:237).

[125] Pigafetta, 1994:84. (The original Italian: "lo capitanio gli disse che brussasero le idoli e credesseno in Cristo e, se l'infermo se baptisasse, subito garirebe e, se ciò non foce, li tagliassero lo capo". Pigafetta, 1999:237).

said that by the grace of our God he was very well"[126]. The miracle was hailed. In the following days Magellan sent the sick man nourishing food until he recovered and then, in front of all the natives, the sick man "caused an idol to be burnt, which some old women had hidden in his house"[127], and also ordered other places of worship on the riverbank to be destroyed. Pigafetta claims that the natives themselves participated in the destruction, promising to burn all their idols if the Christian God would keep them in good health from then on.

It was at this point that finally, even if in few lines, Pigafetta describes these idols to us - "these idols are of hollow wood without any back parts. Their arms are open, the feet turned up, with legs open, and they have a large face with four very large teeth like those of wild boars, and they are painted all over"[128]. Andrea Canova, trying to individuate the nature of these idols, affirms that they were probably *anitos*, whose representative images were called *likha*. They could be made of wood which was vaguely anthropomorphic and dimensioned such that food could be placed in their mouths as an offering. Instead others were smaller in size and could be inserted as amulets in necklaces – crocodile teeth and unusual forms of stones were the most commonly used objects. Who or what were the *anitos*? The term probably derives from the Javanese *antu*, which some scholars link to the Sanskrit *hantu*, or death[129]. The first Spanish dictionaries, Scott

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[126] Pigafetta, 1994:84. (The original Italian: "subito parlò e disse como, per la gracia de nostro Signor, stava assai bene". Pigafetta, 1999:237).

[127] Pigafetta, 1994:84. (The original Italian: "fece bruzare uno idolo che tenivano ascoso certe vechie in casa sua". Pigafetta, 1999:237).

[128] Pigafetta, 1994:84. (The original Italian: "sonno de legno, concavi senza li parti de drieto; hanno li brazi aperti e li piedi voltati in suso con le gambe aperte e lo volto grande con quatro denti grandissimi como porci cingiari; e sonno tucti depinti" . Pigafetta, 1999:238).

[129] See Sitoy, 1985:10. See also Francisco, 1971:147.

informs us, qualified them as *abogado* (tutor, protector) who reigned over certain sectors of the world. For example, the *anito* Lakambini was the *abogado* of the throat and was invoked when someone had problems in this part of the body, while Lakapati was the *anito* of fertility. An example of the opinion that the Spanish missionaries had of these *anitos* was the observation of Father Juan de Oliver who in his work *Declaration de los mandamientos de la Ley de Dios* (1590), assimilated the "great anito called Beelzebub"[130] to the local *anito Lakan Balingasay*. Belzelbub, the west's devil, was in this way assimilated to a local divinity and defined as "the great anito". The *anito*, this is the conclusion, were nothing other than demons.

How can we be surprised if the ritual operators were now considered to be servants of the devil? The ritual operators had various names, for example among the Tagalog they were known as *katulunan* and could be either sex, even if they were commonly female. There was even a particular category, that of the *bayugin* – males dressed up as women. There weren't temples where the rituals were celebrated, as they were usually performed in the open or under a *balete* tree. The participants couldn't come with empty hands: they had to bring offerings of food called *galal* – a term that the Spanish missionaries then used to indicate the bread and wine used during the mass[131]. The ritual operators' activities varied from fabricating amulets, conducting healing ceremonies and invoking the *anitos*. As already stated, their activity was considered demonic. Father Blancas de San Josè wrote in 1614 that these ritual operators could

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[130] Quoted in Scott, 1994:236. (The original Tagalog: "malaking anito ang pangalan si Belzebu").
[131] See Scott, 1994: 240.

disappear for two days because they were "carried off by the Devil"[132]. Pedro Chirino in his *Relacion de las Islas Filipinas* (1604) recounted that in 1590 a convert consigned "a book of certain poems which they call *gulo,* very pernicious because they included an express pact with the Devil"[133]. Not even *Bathala* was spared this destiny of being assimilated and identified with Christian religious categories.

Creation and *Bathala*

According to what Miguel Lopez de Loarca recounted in his *Relacion de las Yslas Filipinas* (1582), the native Filipinos believed that at the beginning only the sky and earth existed; one day an eagle appeared that, not having a place where it could rest, decided to create animosity between the sky and earth so that islands could emerge. A bamboo sprout grew on one of these islands and the eagle landed on the island and pecked the bamboo with its beak. The first man and woman emerged. At first the two hesitated to get married because they were brother and sister; then, after having asked the tuna, dove and earthquake for advice, they united and had many offspring. One day the husband came home angry and made the children flee.

> It is said that those who fled to the most hidden rooms are the chiefs of these islands; those who remained nearer the outside are the timaguas who hid themselves in the fireplace of the blacks; and those who fled out to the sea through the open door, are the Spaniards, and that they [i.e. the

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[132] Quoted in Scott, 1994: 240. (The original Tagalog: "ilinalayas nang Dimonio").
[133] Quoted in Scott, 1994: 240.

natives interviewed by Loarca] had no news of us [i.e. the Spaniards] until they beheld us return through the sea[134].

The myth is interesting; it reveals how the natives could integrate foreign elements such as the arrival of the Spanish into their own vision of the world. Just as Magellan saw in *Abba* the proof of a cultural-religious familiarity, also the native Filipinos adapted themselves in order to limit the cultural foreignness of the new arrivals. Only sixty years passed from the time that Magellan arrived and the telling of this myth, and it can already be seen how the natives, instead of letting themselves be absorbed into the beliefs of the Spanish, absorbed them into their belief system. It is this extraordinary capacity to assimilate foreign elements that should put us at guard when we analyze the myths and beliefs of native Filipinos, and avoid falling in the snare of maintaining that something is original which in reality isn't. The case of *Bathala* illustrates how flexible the Filipinos beliefs were before the Spaniards. Loarca as well as Pedro Chirino, author in 1604 of *Relacion de las Islas Filipinas i de lo que en elas an trabajado los padres de la Compania de Jesus,* inform us that the natives, in particular the Tagalog who lived on the Northern islands, spoke about an extremely powerful god called *Bathala*. They weren't the only ones who gave us news of him: Father Juan de Plasencia, in his *Relacion del culto que los Tagalogs tenìan* (1589), wrote that the Tagalog mainly worshipped "among many other idols one of whom they called Badhala [sic]"[135], while Father Pedro de San

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[134] Blair – Robertson, 1903-7: V, 127. The *timaguas* are a social class between the chiefs and the slaves: the *timaguas* are therefore the freemen (sometimes the term is translated in English texts as 'plebians').
[135] Quoted in Scott, 1994:234.

Buenaventura in his *Vocabulario de lengua Tagala* (1613), wrote that according to some

Bathala "was considered to be the greatest of their anitos"[136].

The term *Bathala*, just like that of *Abba*, has been the object of discussion.

According to Scott, it derives from the Sanskrit term *bhattara*, "noble sir", a term which

would have been spread out with the Indian culture in the Indonesian archipelago (where

at times the term *betara* was a common name for sultans), and from there it then passed

to Borneo and the Southern Philippines where it would become *batara*[137]. The term's

original meaning indicated prestige and authority at the political-temporal level, a

meaning that would then in some way be applied to an entity with a spiritual nature.

Antonio de Morga, in his *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* (1609) instead sustains that the

term derived from that of an omen bird, but in this contrasted with the unknown author of

the *Boxer Codex* (1590), according to whom the bird in question was the messenger of

Bathala for the natives, but wasn't absolutely confused with *Bathala* himself[138]. The

most interesting information derived from the *Boxer Codex*, however, is that according to

the natives *Bathala*'s message reached the Philippines thanks to some "readers of the

scriptures of God"[139]. If we have to give some credibility to this information, Scott

affirms, this would take us back in the first place to the world of the Hindu tradition.

Betara is Malay term meaning "saint" that was used to indicate the most important

Javanese divinities. The statement isn't without foundation. It is commonly believed that

there was – mediated by the Southeast Asian world – a certain influence of Hindu culture

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[136] Quoted in Scott, 1994:234.
[137] See Scott, 1994:234.
[138] See Scott, 1994:234.
[139] Quoted in Scott, 1994:234. (The original tagalog: "taga pagbasa nang sulatan a (?) Dios").

on the Philippine archipelago starting in the 6th Century A.D., and many scholars consider an older dating, the first century A.D.[140], to be accurate. Anyway, it is much more probable that the indication "readers of the scriptures of God" was linked to Muslim missionary activity. It is commonly thought that the first Muslim missionary, Makdum, arrived in the Philippines in 1380 and that the most famous missionary, Sharif Abubakar, arrived in 1450[141].

In other words, however you want to look at the question, the idea of a powerful god that ended up taking on characteristics of a supreme god wasn't the autonomous product of the natives, but of external influences. The product of a religion that had already developed a scriptural system and that in some way was spread out in Southwest Asia before the Spaniards arrived. Islam rather than Hinduism better fits the prerogative of having "readers of the scriptures of God", even if the term *bathala* is more easily linked to Sanskrit rather than Arabic. The scarce elements passed on by Spanish writers don't allow us to sustain any other thesis. From the *Codice Boxer* we can however obtain the description of *Bathala*. Here is how the natives referred to him after more than a half century of Catholic presence in the Philippines:

> They say that this god of theirs was in the air before there was heaven or earth or anything else, that he was *ab eterno* [sic] [from eternity] and was neither made nor created by anybody from anything, and that he alone made and created all that we have mentioned simply by his own

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[140] For the hypothesis of the I century A.D. see Jocano 1998:265, while for the hypothesis of the VI century A.D. see Benedict, 1916.

[141] Bruno, 1973:150. Some scholars propose an earlier date. Andrew Sherfan writes that "it is safe to state that Islam came to the Philippines in the 12th century; Mr. Rasul sets the date in 1180". Sherfan, 1976:12.

volition because he wanted to make something so beautiful as the heaven and earth, and that he made and created one man and one woman out of the earth, from whom all the men and their generations that are in the world have come and descended[142].

If we remember the creation myth previously told, it is clear that a god is missing, let alone a *creator* god. The sky and earth had always existed, and there was nothing "divine" besides these two realities. On the other hand, we have to point out how that myth, with its incestuous theme between brother and sister, could have been an ideal platform for the Christian doctrine of original sin and therefore of the tempting devil. This is F. Landa Jocano's thesis; this myth was "a ready matrix for the new elements like the concept of original sin and incest brought by the Catholic Spaniards"[143].

Therefore, just as the term *Abba* facilitated the introduction of the Christian idea of a father god and that of *Bathala* of a creator god, the myth of incest between the first man and woman (brother and sister) facilitated that of original sin. In this way, *creation* and the *fall*, two pillars of Christian theology, found native foundations they could graft; all that had to be done was to correct local beliefs, but the Spaniards weren't working from a clean slate. As for another cardinal pillar, *redemption*, the Spaniard's arrival was considered *providential*. They were the ones to bring the saving word of God. For this redemption to be carried out, it was necessary to eliminate whatever obstacle got in the way, and from the theology of the time attributed to the devil. The *anitos* were read in demonic terms in that they were depicted by idols and considered to be the expression of

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[142] Quoted in Scott, 1994:242.
[143] Jocano, 1975:39.

demonic deceit, and therefore to destroy. Satan couldn't help but reign on these islands that were still untouched by Christian redemption, and the *anitos*, even the greatest of them, were ideal candidates to take on this infernal role. In the theology elaborated in those years, in fact, viewing idolatry as the fruit of demonic deceit was a consolidated *topos*.

Conclusion

A Jesuit named Nicholas Cushner, author of *Spain in the Philippines* (1971), wrote that "such concepts and corresponding words for God, grace, redemption, Holy Spirit, and others were foreign to the natives and consequently not found in their language"[144]. Those concepts and words were, however, fundamental for the Christian catechism. What to do? The Spanish terms were exported and introduced to the Philippine dictionary. In the translation in visaya of the Holy Mother, for example, terms such as "*gracia, Dios, santa*" were used from the beginning, and in the Tagalog version of the *Doctrina Christiana* by Father Plasencia in 1593 we find terms such as *"Espiritu Santo, yglesia, catolica, virgen, cruz, infierno, confesar, comulgar, domingo, fiesta, sacramentos, confirmar, extrema uncion, orden sacerdo*"[145]. How can we not point out the need to introduce terms like *Dios* [God] and *infierno* [hell] in these lists? But in of all this cultural operation we rarely found traces in the texts that analyze the religion of the native Filipinos at the moment of contact with the Spaniards. One example is *The Christianization of the Philippines* (1972)*,* a book whose deceptive subtitle is *Problems*

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[144] Cushner, 1971:89.
[145] Cushner, 1971:90

and perspectives, written by a Jesuit, Miguel A. Bernard. After a brief exposition of the natives' spiritual world, Father Bernard concludes with these words which deserve to be displayed in their entirety:

> there was much in the natives' religion that predisposed the people to Christianity. Their belief in a Supreme Being could be easily converted into Christian monotheism. Their vague ideas of the after-life were clarified by the Christian doctrine of heaven, hell and purgatory. Their reverence for the spirits of the dead predisposed them to the veneration of Saints. Their belief in good and evil spirits made it easy for them to accept the Christian doctrine of angels, good and fallen. Their myths about the creation of the world and the origin of man from one pair of parents made it easy for them to accept the teaching in the Book of Genesis. Their fondness for external ritual rendered them sensitive to the symbolism of the Sacraments. And the practice of offering sacrificial victims was a convenient starting point for explaining the essential nature of the Mass[146].

The disturbing thing about this excerpt isn't only the shallow way in which it refers to the belief in a Supreme Being – already in a preceding paragraph, showing the beliefs of the Filipinos before contact, Bernard had written that "there was a clear belief in one Supreme Being who was Lord of all"[147] -, and of other themes, but the fact that is continually underlined *their* disposition to conversion. Instead, more than making it easier for the natives to understand the Christian religion, the process made it easier for the Spaniards to seize the religion of the natives, and to subject it to known categories and concepts. In this way, *Abba* became a providential sign of the seeds of the Word that

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[146] Bernard, 1972:132-133.
[147] Bernard, 1972:128.

allowed them to predicate about a Father God; over the idea of *Abba*, that of *Bathala* could then be inserted and developed, which became the prototype for the Supreme creator being, while the *anitos* would supply the material to find and mould its antagonist, the devil, and the local myth of incest between the first couple (brother and sister) the starting point from which to preach about original sin.

The process was such that the attempt to discover what the "true" religion of the natives was, (as it seems from Magellan's "innocent" question, "whether they were Moors or heathens, *or* in what they believed"[148]), became instead its interpretation and almost its creation. The native Filipinos also had a God that was a Supreme Being (*Bathala*) and the Father (*Abba*), his antagonist, the devil (*anito*), and original sin (the brother-sister incest).

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[148] Pigafetta, 1994:70. (The original Italian: "li fece dire se eranno mori o gentili *o* in che credevano". Pigafetta, 1999:219).

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In Conversation with Professor Prasenjit Duara

Interview by Dr. Lee Kiat Jin

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Lee Kiat Jin (LKJ): Good afternoon, Professor Duara. Thank you for consenting to this interview. First, I would like to start off with your biographical details, namely your family background.

Prasenjit Duara (PD): I was born in Assam which is a state in north-east India that most Indians don't know much about or didn't know when I was growing up there. I grew up

my first few years there. After that, I moved basically to north India for boarding school, for high school, for college and for post-college education. Assam, while it is very substantially Indian in terms of its cultural and Sanskritic roots, it also has lots of ties with Southeast Asia culturally and economically through history.

My parents –they have both passed away - were middle class. My father was a lawyer and also worked for the government. But I have some intellectual antecedents. My grandfather was a prominent civil servant in the British administration. He was also a gentleman scholar. He wrote the early history of Assam and he also started the State Museum of Assam. So I have some affiliations with historians of that generation.

LKJ: What was the cultural milieu of the students at the boarding school and St. Stephen's College?

PD: The boarding school was very well known in India. It is called the Doon School and the cultural milieu was of students from very privileged post-colonial families in India. They were basically trained to become the elites usually of the corporate world, but also in politics and society at large. There was a very strong emphasis as in the British public school on sports and character building and things like that. But there were also a small group of people interested in intellectual issues.

St. Stephen's College was also an elite college within Delhi University which has several other colleges. This was probably, in my time at least, the most elite of the colleges. To some extent, there was continuity with the Doon School. It drew from a

wider community but still there were largely people who were trained with English as their primary medium of education and were very comfortable with English. Many of them may not have known much of their vernacular languages except to manage to talk with their servants, though that may be truer of the Doon School. St. Stephen's was also continuous with the Doon School in the sense that the goals were once again to produce the elite leaders of society, of corporate world and most significantly the Indian Administrative Service.

In my time, the educational curriculum in St. Stephen's, I would say, was not necessarily very strong nor an important part of your life as in American universities or perhaps in Singapore. Nonetheless, people were quite well rounded; since they were the elites, they had a kind of intellectual or worldly sophistication as developed as in any other society. Being English speaking certainly helped.

LKJ: Subsequently, in 1974, you graduated from Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU). What were the differences between JNU and St. Stephen's College?

PD: I think that's a very interesting issue. I think comparison should be made on a three fold basis. On the one hand you have St. Stephen's College. Then, there is Delhi University which is the larger university of which it is a part, and the third would be Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU). I think in some way each one was quite different. Delhi University was not what you would call a research university. In a way, it was a degree granting institution that qualified people, provided certification and so on. Its

catchment area was basically Delhi. St. Stephen's College was in the same university but was more cosmopolitan, with students from all over the country. So, it was a richer experience.

JNU, which was started just around 1972 - we were the first batch there - turned out to be a very different model. It was perceived as a flagship research university for India and there would a chain of those that would appear. It was in some ways more like Delhi University than St. Stephen's because the elite there was not derived from the English speaking colonial elite group as in St Stephen's, who were much like your "Baba" or English speaking Singaporeans here. Rather this was a meritocratic elite; so these were students from remote provinces and small towns who had done well and were able to get into the national centre of educational excellence. So, culturally they were much like Delhi University people where English was not their principal medium of expression. But intellectually they were much more driven and in fact I would say the political-intellectual atmosphere in JNU was very highly developed, and you had all kinds of exchanges and activity that was a natural part of the institution's existence. The curriculum was also much more stringent and a serious part of people's lives, much more so than it was in Delhi University.

LKJ: What were the occupational trajectories of the graduates from JNU as compared to those from the St. Stephen's College?

PD: Many became academics and researchers, but I would say that after a while, the humanities and social sciences in JNU also became the machinery to crank out people for the Indian Administrative Services, government services and so on. So there is more commonality now. But I would say that St. Stephen's produced many more people for the corporate world than JNU did. JNU was much more for the technocratic, bureaucratic and professional world perhaps but not necessarily so much for the high administrative and corporate world that St. Stephen's has produced for.

LKJ: What motivated you to study history?

PD: I think the choices during the post-British colonial period for people who are not automatically gifted in the sciences were limited. You could do economics, history, literature and I was interested in all three of those. But I feared and it already became clear that economics was going to require much more mathematics than I was happy doing or able to do. Everybody expected me to go for English because I was given to the imaginative side of things, but I think I deliberately did history because I wanted to keep my feet on the ground. Had something like Anthropology or Sociology or Political Science been available in a post-colonial institution like St. Stephen's College, I probably would have done one of those. But actually I am very glad that I did history because it does give you very important grounding in the empirical bases and the empirical sources.

LKJ: Subsequently you attended Chicago University for two years. What was your experience at Chicago University in opposition to JNU and St. Stephen's College?

PD: I would say that the University of Chicago was much more continuous with JNU than either St. Stephen's College or for that matter Harvard, which I subsequently attended. Different brands of left politics and groups such as the "free thinkers" at JNU were very highly developed. The atmosphere promoted a kind of unnecessary bitterness but it also promoted intellectual discussion because you have to know your position well and you have to be logical and coherent about it.

Chicago was very intellectual and quite political. Chicago was one of the few institutions in the United States developed on the model of German research university. Another was the New School for Social Research. And so it has a very strong graduate emphasis which makes it automatically a much more intellectual place than if you are basically servicing undergraduates for jobs outside the academic universe. So there was a lot of cross disciplinary forums for discussing your ideas and intellectualism becomes a part of your everyday life. It is very exciting and energizing. I actually found great continuity between JNU and Chicago in that respect.

I became interested in the study of China when I was in Delhi between my Masters at Delhi University and St. Stephen's College and my M.Phil in JNU. I became interested because that was the time of the Maoists and the Cultural Revolution. There was a lot of interest in comparing the Indian situation with the Chinese situation and when I was in JNU, I became committed to exploring the question of why it was that a

place like India could not have the kind of revolution that China had. While I did not explicitly address that question in my thesis, the question is implicitly there in several of my subsequent works. So those kinds of issues were very important for me.

One of the other questions that you had asked before was what kind of different person did I become after JNU, especially when I went back to teach in St. Stephen's College? During my college days, I was pretty much what they call a dilettante. I think what happened in JNU was that I was exposed to politics and I developed a seriousness of purpose. Intellectual enquiry was important, first in of itself and second to address the important questions of our work and our nation. That's what happened and when I went back to St. Stephen's I thought understanding China was a very significant part of that seriousness of purpose. I hoped that I was able to communicate some of that commitment to young people who were probably dilettantes like I was when I was there. One of the courses that I taught was East Asian History. Although it was a small class, many of those students, including some very well-known ones like the novelist Amitav Ghosh, have gone on to become committed professionals in various areas of life that have an intellectual aspect to it.

LKJ: What prompted you to shift from Chicago to Harvard? In addition, how would you compare the former to all the Colleges that you have attended?

PD: I moved to Harvard because my advisor Philip Kuhn took over John K Fairbank's position in modern Chinese history there. As I said, in some ways, JNU and Chicago

were more similar to each other than Chicago was to Harvard. This may sound quite weird given the completely different sort of universes that these two places occupy. But I think its so in the sense that both JNU and Chicago tended to promote a kind of intellectual enquiry driven by questions of importance to you. But a place like Harvard is much more institutionalized, very professional and specialized. So there is relatively less freedom, at least when I went. I think undergrads in Harvard have a much greater degree of freedom to choose. But at graduate level you get tracked very early at Harvard. Harvard, I have always said, suffers from an "embarrassment of riches": every institute or every department has so many resources it can just cater to all your professional needs there.

There is a story I recall from my days working in the Harvard-Yenching Library which is probably the greatest library for East Asian materials in the world, perhaps after the Library of Congress. There would be no need for me to step out of the four walls of Harvard-Yenching Institute or the Fairbank Centre where you would have all the experts on China. But then I realized that I was feeling a little frustrated because I would hear the same great minds on China, I would read the same type of books all the time and so on. I needed to interact with other intellectual universes, I wanted find out not just about developments in my profession and the reference works that I needed. Mind you, all that was very important to become an expert scholar, but I needed to get out. I once mentioned to my advisor Phillip Kuhn that when I needed to read material that was theoretical or not China related I would go to the nearby Peabody Museum, which is the Harvard Anthropology museum, and just go through their journals and consult the

encyclopedia of social sciences and so on. I found this actually quite liberating. The next thing I found was that the entire encyclopedia of social sciences had lined a shelf of the Harvard-Yenching Institute. This is what I meant by the "embarrassment of riches".

So Harvard allowed me to professionalize. You had a sufficient cohort of graduate students who also studied what you were interested in modern China. So you didn't necessarily have to interact with anybody else. It was inward but as I said there were great benefits because, of course, it made me a better Sinologist than I would have been. My training in the languages, in classical Chinese, in classical texts, consulting reference works-- which I don't do much anymore-- have been very helpful.

LKJ: So, what instigated you to write the topic of your doctoral dissertation, which would become *Culture, Power and the State: Rural North China, 1900-1942*?

PD: Well, I was very much interested in questions of rural development and revolution in China which, as I said, has motivated me to get into the study of China. But I would not have been able to find sufficient materials into which I could sink my teeth. It would have been a very difficult task. People have done it but they were looking at scattered materials or doing the communist studies in base areas and things like that.

Interestingly one of the things that happened to me when I was in Chicago was that I had gotten interested in a lot of the social sciences. So, I had become much more interested in Anthropology, in Political Science, in Sociology and so on. This was part of the interdisciplinary atmosphere of Chicago. One of the very important influences is

Charles Tilly's state-building idea. Phillip Kuhn pointed me to a set of Japanese materials of the South Manchurian Railway Company--which was as much a railway company as the East India Company was only a shipping company. South Manchurian Railway Company was the biggest research organization in the world before World War II. They had a huge research staff and one of these research teams did studies on north China villages which were basically gathered in six bound volumes of one million characters, composed of interviews with peasants from the 1930s and 40s as well as all the written materials in the villages, such as contracts and stele. At the time, I had had only one summer of Japanese and when my advisor said to take a look at those, I was aghast. He said, "Oh, you know these are simple interviews with peasants. You can figure it out".

And of course, I spent the next three years going through these materials from the beginning to the end and it was a very rewarding experience. I could ask a lot of questions that my interests in Anthropology had provoked, and looking at the whole question of, for instance, the relationship between religion and revolution and things like that which I could get at much more concretely because this was such micro level stuff and could also help me to venture into more macro level things. So that's how it ended up as *Culture, Power and the State*, which I dare say has been quite influential in China.

LKJ: Between 1983 and the completion of the final version of your manuscript, was there any significant difference between the two texts?

PD: Between 1983 and probably by the end of 1986 when I finished the book, I would say, not really. I would say that there were consolidation, reinforcement and strengthening of many of the empirical material, some sharpening of the questions, but the idea of cultural nexus of power, the idea of state-building were in the 1983 thesis; maybe not the 'cultural nexus' but I was edging toward something like that. I don't think that there was a radical conceptual transformation of the primary thesis.

LKJ: Between your first book and the dramatically different second book, *Rescuing History from the Nations*, you were at George Mason University and Stanford University. How did these two universities alter your scholarship?

PD: The most wonderful thing about George Mason was the history department there. It's basically a teaching university. It's not necessarily intellectually driven, although now it's changing. But the faculty in the History department there was excellent. They could get very good History faculty because it is close to Washington D.C, the Library Congress and so on. So I was able to gain a lot from interaction with them. I would not say that there were any dramatic conceptual transformations at that point.

At Stanford where I finished the *Culture, Power and the State* book, I participated a great deal in the intellectual life because I was there as a Mellon faculty fellow which gave me lot of non-teaching time and allowed me to attend the faculty seminars. There were two very important faculty seminars – one was the Interpretation seminar where we read a great deal of the current French literature in post-modern theory, Foucault, Derrida

and others (including Bourdieu). The other seminar that I attended was the Institution seminar and I remember the leadership of John Meyers, the sociologist, to whom I owe a great deal of my understanding of the world system of nation states. This sort of atmosphere really set me thinking and I tried to keep the knowledge coming from the institutions seminar in some kind of balance with the interpretations seminar—the humanistic with the social scientific. So that sort of thing led me to the thoughts about the relationship betweens nations and histories that emerged in my second project which I finished after I moved to Chicago as a faculty member.

LKJ: Meanwhile, you were also at the Woodrow Wilson Institute. How did the experience contribute to the makeover of your thought?

PD: Once again the Wilson Institute, I think, is probably a little more like Harvard, although there were scholars from all over the world and that was an eye opener. After I came back from Stanford, I spent a year or so at George Mason and then went to the Woodrow Wilson Institute in Washington D C. What was very useful about the Woodrow Wilson Institute was that we had at that point complete access to the Library of Congress. So I used it largely to collect material for my *Rescuing History from the Nation*. I collected a lot of material on nationalism in China and comparative studies on nationalism. Moving from the first kind of book to the second kind of book required some sort of personal paradigm change. So I had to do a lot of reading – the philosophy

of history, the theory of history and so on. The Wilson Institute gave me the time and material to do all this.

LKJ: So, *Rescuing History from the Nation* is a significant point of departure. Would you contend that *Sovereignty and Authenticity* is an expansion of the preceding?

PD: Yes, I would say that certainly there is a greater continuity between *Rescuing History* and *Sovereignty and Authenticity* than there is between either of those two and the *Culture, Power and the State*. In fact, among friends of mine in the China field in the US, I found that the people who liked the first book did not necessarily care for the second book, and the people who liked the second book often found the first book not sufficiently interesting to drive them to read it. But there was a minority who liked both and I am very pleased by that. I remember being at a talk at Columbia. Two people had invited me because each liked the other book. So there was quite an interesting exchange about which Duara do they want to speak there.

Another time, I met a graduate student (also coincidentally from Columbia) who had read all my books. I mentioned that *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern* is the book where I put in most time and work of any project in my life. I did not want to be accused by historians again of writing a non-empirical work. So there is a lot of empirical work there but also the development of many of the ideas that were in the first book. Any way this young Columbia student said, "Oh! I agree. *Rescuing History* is just the sketches for *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, isn't it?" While I

think that's not exactly true but in many ways it is also so. Yes, I would say I couldn't have written *Sovereignty and Authenticity* without having done *Rescuing History*. Actually I would say many of the ideas that I started and experimented with in *Rescuing History* were finally worked out in *Sovereignty and Authenticity*. So you get a more conclusive kind of piece, which is good for me because I can now leave those questions.

LKJ: Quite recently, you have a new book called *The Global and Regional in China's Nation-Formation*. **In what ways is this manuscript related to your earlier works?**

PD: Actually it is a selection of my works but I would say that about four or five of those essays have appeared in earlier published works. The other half are essays that have also been published but that have been written in just over last two or three years. So this volume brings the new ones together with the old essays—which have also been revised. It is also continuous with the last two books. I want to take up the project of *Rescuing History* because I want to train our eyes to look at the history of a nation not in linear terms, as something that continues for five thousand years and culminates now, but as something that is constantly reshaped by the world.

So, that's not to say that there are no internal developments. Of course, there are but these internal developments are always responding to outer forces. You can not just see them in terms of internal continuity. And it seems to me that this is intellectually a very important project because I think what I argue in the book is that we have been part

of this history of the world for at least a hundred and fifty years; most societies have been a part of it for hundred and fifty years. So much of history has been reshaped by circulating activities and global forces that we somehow edit out when we wear the lenses of national history. So we do not realize how much nations are part of global conditions and global society. Now what has happened of course is that we have to recognize the globality of our condition because most of our major problem cannot be solved on a national basis. We have to realize that we have been blinkered by the national historical lenses for at least a century and half and we have to sort of balance that and learn to look at history from outside-in rather than from inside out. So that's the goal of the new book

LKJ: You have spent most of your entire career as a historian. Yet, much of your work is sociological. Why and how should sociologists and historians learn from each other?

PD: I am not sure if I can discuss that at a meta-level, may be over time we could do it but I can give you some concrete instances in which I think I tried to work as a sociologist or social scientist and simultaneously as a historian. I do not for one minute think that the goals are contrary or so divergent. I think it is the methodological, institutional and professional culture of each of these disciplines that separates them more than the intellectual issues.

There are sociologists who do very micro, concrete level work; there are historians who do very macro level work. So, I would not say that's necessarily the

difference. Let me first talk about the sociological theory that I think has been most influential upon me and that as I said has been the ideas of what John Meyers calls the "world society" and "world culture"; earlier they used to call it the "world system of nation-states". It is really a way to try and branch out from the Wallersteinian notion of "world systems". Although nation states claim to be unique, they basically share circulating practices. But of course, we don't only see the nation from these outside circulatory practices. There are also internal developments --which historians tend to emphasize--that emerge from the locality and culture in society and from the different patterns of institutional boundaries of the state and so on.

So, we really need to develop a methodology to see historical developments emerging in the context or nexus of these circulatory forces. Sociologists have given us so much insight into it, including the idea of the profession for instance. Look at the profession, say Sociology or Medicine as a transnational form. How does it affect the national professions, how do they interact and articulate and how does the global condition the national? But at the same time, how do particular national developments transform it and send out new circulatory modes that would find them places elsewhere as well? So it seems to me that here you need them both and you need a certain *duree* of understanding as well.

Sociologists have also been very useful in providing conceptualizations or concepts to historians but very often I find that these are at the level of abstraction which may filter out a lot of details. I think many historians tend to have a knee jerk reaction that this does not fit in my area or my type and that's the end of it. For me, the more

interesting question is – why does it not fit? And if it does not fit what does it tell us about that theory and how we can conceptualize an alternative mode of linking developments in our area to broader process. So rather than a defensive negation of a theoretical abstraction that does not apply, I prefer to use it as intellectual food to be re-conceptualized. And similarly, the sociologist comes and picks up all these re-conceptualization done by the historian and examines it in his own kind of context. So, these are some of the ways in which these disciplines ought to work together much more.

LKJ: Recently, you relocated from Chicago University to the National University of Singapore. You have assumed the position of the Director of Research in Humanities and Social Sciences. What does your job entail and in what ways does it differ from your previous post at Chicago?

PD: I was mainly a historian in Chicago but I also played administrative roles. I was the chair of History department; I was also the chair of China Programme at different times. I took this job at NUS because I thought basically I thought this was a very interesting job and a kind of mid or late career change that I would enjoy. I must say that I am enjoying it. What this job entails can be seen in three ways. I have to run the competitive fellowships and grants programmes for social sciences and humanities. Second is to do my own work which of course very important. The third is the most difficult and challenging which is to coordinate social sciences and humanities at the National

University of Singapore and make them more dynamic and globally prominent. And of course I have been spending a lot of my time on the third function.

My vision of this job or one of the reasons I took this job is that I think it's a very exciting moment in history where so much of the energy and avant-garde activities are moving toward Asia. Singapore provides a great opportunity because it provides a perch to see how Asia is becoming, in fact as we speak, more integrated. There are more linkages within Asia, already there is more trade happening within Asia than outside it, just in last 10 years. And with the financial crisis I think this is even going to grow more. It seems to me that the NUS is ideally positioned to be the knowledge repertoire or knowledge producer of these linkages of inter-Asian studies.

So, that's what I am interested in and that's how I also hope to coordinate a lot of activities happening on campus, try to bring together people who work on different parts of Asia, the points of convergence, the points of intersection, the points of divergence, comparisons, connections. We also want to be the place people turn to whenever somebody wants to find out what's happening in Asia. I mean you wouldn't necessarily come here if you wanted to find out just what is happening in China. There are lots of people in China and America who would be able to tell you that. But let's see what's happening between China and India? What is the cooperation, connection, comparative understanding of Japan in south-east Asia? So, that's the exciting part of the job and this institution seems to be quite interested in those projects.

LKJ: These projects presuppose the presence of a very strong research culture. How would you propose to nurture these cultural practices?

PD: I think there is probably much more research going on here than we recognize--or the research is probably stronger than the culture. So it's really about enabling and developing connections. I think it is true that 10 years ago NUS was not necessarily known for research in humanities and social sciences and allied areas. But I think there has been a very major push to develop it as a major research centre and I think it has been working and I think you need people to coordinate these activities. I have been to schools and departments or faculties in which people are working on closely related areas, but often they don't even know of the other's existence. They work in silos. So it is really important to bring people together and coordinate and to bring them in contact with scholars abroad and link them up with networks. That's what I would like to do very much and to create a buzz or an atmosphere that you have in a place like Chicago.

LKJ: Apart from ample funding and excellent faculty members, the inculcation of a vibrant research culture necessitates a strong graduate population. How would you propose that we attract such a body, bearing in mind that our main catchment is presently Asia?

PD: I think that is very much a part of my concern, but it's not part of my work. Since I am responsible for faculty research, I think enhancing our visibility as major research

school automatically draws the top graduate students from anywhere. If we can say that we are top in six areas we get them not just from major Asian countries, you will get the best or close to the best from major Asian countries who may not then want to go to the US or something like that. Recently we had Elizabeth Perry from Harvard, who is a very old friend of mine, visit us. She is now the director of the Harvard-Yenching Institute, which has often had students and scholars from China and she has created a programme in which graduate students from NUS and other south-east Asian universities can spend up to one and half years paid for at Harvard and take courses and work out there. This is obviously a great attraction for students joining NUS because they can go and spend time at Harvard. In this kind of way we can enhance our attractiveness to the top quality graduate students. But I think its top faculty and top-research conditions and products that will enhance its visibility and then you don't have to do anything. People will just apply and you take the best.

LKJ: Professor Duara, thank you very much for the interview.

PD: Ok, thank you.