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Entrapped transnationalism: West Bank and Israeli Palestinians between closeness and distance

Silvia Pasquetti

Studies of transnationalism typically frame it in opposition to the entrapping effects of borders. Yet, for many people, transnationalism is negotiated in contexts marked by forced separation and differential mobility. Drawing on long-term fieldwork among West Bank and Israeli Palestinians, this article explores transnational ties and orientations in relation, not in opposition, to the entrapping effects of borders. Specifically, I examine the two-way traffic in emotions and perceptions that marks family, social and symbolic relationships between West Bank and Israeli Palestinians. I show how entrapping and transnational processes combine to generate a tense interplay between closeness and distance, solidarity and estrangement. The paper calls attention to complex transnational formations among people prone to entrapment such as detained and deported migrants, refugees and minorities divided by rigid borders and it suggests that a focus on emotions and perceptions is critical if we are to understand such formations.

Keywords: transnationalism; entrapment; regimes of differential mobility; emotions and perceptions; Palestinians; Israel and the West Bank.

Introduction

Studies of transnationalism typically frame it in opposition to the entrapping effects of borders. ‘Narrow’ approaches to transnationalism consider the regular movement of people and goods across borders as one of its main features and privilege the experiences and viewpoints of mobile elites and migrants (Ong 1999; Portes, Guarnizo, and Landolt 1999; Portes 2003). ‘Broader’ approaches to transnationalism conceptualize transnational formations as inclusive of people that are not involved in regular cross-border movement (Itzigsohn et al. 1999; Levitt and Schiller 2004; Levitt and Jaworsky 2007, 132-3) but they do not address the question of how border entrapment interacts with transnational processes. Yet, for many people, whether migrants or not, transnationalism is negotiated in contexts marked by forced separation and differential mobility.

The lack of analytic attention to the experiences and viewpoints of people that are prone to border entrapment—among others, detained and deported migrants, refugees, and minorities divided by rigid borders—is problematic for two related reasons. First, it leads to the unwarranted assumption according to which those experiencing entrapment are excluded from transnational processes and are fully defined in their subjectivities and practices by the spatial-legal constraints imposed on them. Second, it prevents the study of transnational formations in stronger connection with issues of power (Glick Schiller 2005; Faist 2013), especially regimes of differential mobility and entrapment (Cunningham and Heyman 2004; Shamir 2005; Turner 2007; Salazar and Smart 2011; Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013).

Drawing on long-term fieldwork among West Bank and Israeli Palestinians,¹ two segments of an ethnonational population divided, displaced, and immobilized by borders, this article explores transnational ties and orientations in relation, not in opposition, to the entrapping effects of borders. Specifically, I examine the two-way traffic in emotions and perceptions that marks family, social, and symbolic relationships between West Bank and Israeli Palestinians. I show how entrapping and transnational processes combine to generate a tense interplay between closeness and distance, solidarity and estrangement. By exploring the cumulative effects of transnational and entrapping processes on cross-border ties between West Bank and Israeli Palestinians, this article aims to contribute to our understanding of how regimes of differential mobility affect transnational formations.

The focus on affective and perceptual experiences of simultaneously entrapped, yet transnational, Palestinians that I develop in this article resonates with the recent attention within the field of transnationalism to emotionality and subjectivity (Levitt and Waters 2002; Carling 2008; Skrbis 2008; Gowricharn 2009; Boccagni 2012). While emotions and perceptions are not

usually a central focus in studies of transnationalism, this recent ‘affective turn’ helps distinguish and explore the interplay between ‘the physical space’ that people ‘inhabit’, ‘the social and cultural spaces they interact with’, and ‘the emotional and affective spaces they strive to negotiate’ (Boccagni 2012, 127). In turn, this analytic distinction helps scholars study the experiences, sensibilities, and challenges of people like Israeli and West Bank Palestinians whose lives are shaped by both transnationalism and entrapment.

Rabinowitz’s (2001) conceptualization of Israeli Palestinians as ‘a trapped minority’ mobilizes transnationalism as a theoretical lens. However, its focus on Israeli Palestinians’ experience of symbolic-marginality within the ethnonational collectivity and its exclusion of the viewpoints of other Palestinians outside Israel ultimately give analytical primacy to the disconnecting effects of the Israeli border regime. In this view, Israeli Palestinians experience a predicament of ‘double marginality’: the marginality that they experience in their relationships with Palestinians outside Israel due to their legal status as Israeli citizens reinforces the marginality that they experience in relation to the Israeli state due to their ethnonational membership. While this ‘trapped minority’ approach properly captures the predicament of entrapment that Israeli Palestinians experience in their relationships with the Israeli state, it does not capture as effectively the multilayered and at times contradictory interplay of caring, connecting, and distancing that marks the symbolic and, when allowed, social relationships between Israeli and West Bank Palestinians. Put differently, it does not examine the ongoing work done by Palestinians in Israel and the West Bank to reconnect across border restrictions and to negotiate border-related differences.

By contrast, focusing on transnational orientations among both Israeli and West Bank Palestinians—especially poor Palestinians in the Israeli city of Lod and poor West Bank villagers

and refugees, including those who have moved to Lod as a result of marriage—this article shows that feelings of marginality and exclusion, expressions of solidarity, as well as claims to symbolic worth and practices of symbolic distancing cannot easily be mapped onto a distinct segment of Palestinians. These practices are situational and contested in relation to the types of cross-border relationships, the people, and the places they involve. Beyond the difficulties Israeli Palestinians face in signaling their ‘ethnic authenticity’ due to their legal status—what Rabinowitz and others emphasize as their symbolic-moral marginality within the ethnonational collectivity—I find that the transnationalism of entrapped West Bank and Israeli Palestinians is characterized by a tense two way-traffic in feelings of closeness and expressions of distance.

Conceptualizing and contextualizing the transnationalism of entrapped Palestinians

The Palestinian-Israeli context is a compelling context for studying transnationalism in relation rather than in opposition to predicaments of entrapment and immobility. Since the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948, Palestinians have been repeatedly divided, displaced, and immobilized by borders.² In 1948, about 80 percent of the Palestinians who lived in what became Israel became refugees (about 750,000 people) while the remaining 20 percent (about 150,000) managed to remain inside Israel and obtain Israeli citizenship even if they had most of their land confiscated and were put under military rule for twenty years (Leibler and Breslau 2005). From 1948 to 1967, West Bank Palestinians, including refugees who relocated in the West Bank, were under Jordanian rule.³ In this period, both Israeli and Jordanian rulers used a wide range of coercive means against Palestinians who tried to cross the border in either direction, including family members who attempted to reunite across the new border that had split them (Korn 2003). For twenty years following Israel’s 1967 military occupation of the West Bank, families and

friends were allowed to reconnect across the Green Line and West Bank Palestinians were allowed to work inside Israel. Since the early 1990s, however, parallel to the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, an authority of semi-rule operating in parts of the West Bank, the Israeli state has increasingly once again repressed movement across the Green Line and ties between West Bank and Israeli Palestinians. Restrictions first targeted employment practices by introducing a strict permit system on West Bank Palestinians looking for work inside Israel (Farsakh 2005) and then targeted marriage practices by effectively barring West Bank Palestinian spouses of Israeli citizens from obtaining residency status inside Israel (Masri 2013).⁴

At the same time, despite their different legal-political predicaments and the criminalization and suppression of their cross-border movement and contact, West Bank and Israeli Palestinians continue to be connected by a transnational sense of history and belonging. The importance of cross-border ties for Palestinians in Israel can be gleaned, for example, from the edited volume on Palestinians inside Israel entitled *Displaced at Home* (Kanaaneh and Nusair 2010). In their introduction to the volume, Kanaaneh and Nusair (2010, 5-6) argue that the physical separation between Palestinians in Israel and those in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip ‘has not necessarily produced increased emotional separation’, pointing for example to the reactions that January 2009 Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip produced among Palestinians in Israel; these reactions ranged from the somatization of the attacks through symptoms of physical illness to the participation in mass demonstrations of protest. In a chapter of the same volume, Ghanim (2010) shows how these practices geared towards the re-establishment of ties under conditions of physical separation were not new. She draws on her family’s cross-border stories—stories originating from the experience of living in a border village on the Israeli side—to highlight how Palestinians who remained in the newly formed Israeli state in 1948 attempted to re-connect with

their kin and friends on the other side of the Green Line—which was controlled by the Jordanians until 1967—by ‘infiltrating, sneaking, smuggling, using specific signs and marks to pass messages to the other side, loud calling, or quiet whispering’ (Ghanim 2010, 10). Those Palestinians who became refugees in 1948 pursued similar practices, crossing the border into Israel to visit relatives, harvest fields, and attempt to go back to their villages and cities despite the risks of being arrested or killed (Korn 2003).

Of these two processes—entrapment and transnationalism—the literature on Palestinians mainly focuses on the former. For example, the many works citing Rabinowitz’s transnational approach address the question of the entrapment of Israeli Palestinians within the Israeli state without investigating their transnational engagements (for an exception, see Menahem 2010). In general, those few works that have studied Palestinians in both the West Bank and Israel have been based on surveys and focused on the formal political arena (Schölch 1983; Rouhana 1990; Al-Haj 2005). While recent studies have applied a transnational approach to different segments of Palestinians living outside Israel (Aouragh 2011), a transnational research agenda involving Israeli Palestinians is still missing. Thus, while ‘methodological nationalism’ can be transferred from an approach ‘entrapped’ within state borders to a ‘groupist’ one that overemphasizes ethnic groups as unit of analysis (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2003, 598), in the case of the relationships between Israeli and West Bank Palestinians, there is a significant tension between scholarship that rarely crosses borders and an empirical terrain that is characterized by historical and ongoing cross-border orientations.

Understanding the transnationalism of entrapped Israeli and West Bank Palestinians in its various layers and tensions requires going beyond the tendency to emphasize only one dimension of the relationship between entrapment and transnationalism, for example the rise of a ‘global

regime of mobility’ (Shamir 2005) or, by contrast, the transgression and hybridity of borderlands (Anzaldúa 1987). It requires recognizing and exploring the complex relationship between transnational formations and degrees of immobility, including blocked mobility and forced immobility (Smart 2003; Golash-Boza 2014). The next section begins this exploration, focusing on how West Bank and Israeli Palestinians negotiate their family lives, social relations, and symbolic ties within the regime of differential mobility that is imposed on them.

West Bank and Israeli Palestinians between closeness and distance

The restrictive measures on cross-border contact and movement adopted by the Israeli state do not linearly suppress the transnational experiences and feelings of West Bank and Israeli Palestinians; rather, they transform these experiences and feelings, supplementing them with contrasting orientations toward distance and distinction. The disruptions produced by border entrapment are particularly evident when differences in legal status, mobility rights, and dynamics of entrapment exist within the family and among friends (Boehm 2012). Entrapped forms of transnationalism are also ‘haunted’ by histories of physical displacement and absence (Navaro-Yashin 2012). For analytic purposes, I will explore the dilemmas and sensibilities produced by the Israeli regime of differential mobility: first, among family members and friends; and second, at the level of relationships ‘at a distance’ under conditions of imposed physical separation. My findings show how both West Bank and Israeli Palestinians articulate, in their orientations and practices, a tense combination of closeness and distance, solidarity and estrangement. Yet, due to their distinct legal-political relationships with the Israeli state—especially their distinct legal statuses and attached mobility rights—they claim closeness and signal distance in distinct ways.

Between closeness and distance: family lives and friendships

Thousands of ‘mixed’ Palestinian families are caught between new Israeli restrictions on legal residency rights for West Bank spouses of Israeli citizens and protracted war-like conditions of military repression in the West Bank.⁵ During my fieldwork moving between the West Bank and the Israeli city of Lod in 2007-2008, I met dozens of these families. An analysis of the viewpoints of the West Bank and Israeli Palestinian members of these families reveals how these two segments of Palestinians display distinct profiles of entrapped transnationalism.

The West Bank Palestinians that I met in Lod responded to their distinct legal-political condition as ‘illegalized’⁶ subjects even when married to Israeli citizens, by simultaneously claiming their shared group membership with Israeli Palestinians and routinely distancing from them in moral-cultural terms. This interplay between connecting and distancing practices also extended to their sense of place, as they both claimed historical connections to places inside Israel and emphasized differences between the West Bank and Israel.

On the one hand, they vigorously countered the state practices and discourses criminalizing their presence inside the state, by referring to their kin and ethnonational ties with Israeli Palestinians and to their sense of belonging inside Israel. For example, Basima⁷, a West Bank villager in her late twenties, who had not been able to renew her temporary permit despite her marriage with Sami, an Israeli Palestinian man, articulated her sense of belonging to and in the city through an emphasis on her transnational family project:

They [Israeli authorities] consider me the same as the workers from Thailand, as a foreign worker,⁸ and not as a citizen. I got married here [in Lod], I live here, and my son is also here, he goes to school here.

Basima supported the legitimacy of her presence inside Israel, which, in her eyes, could not possibly be compared to the predicament of foreign workers, by noting her shared group membership with Sami and other Palestinians inside Israel:

These people [Israeli Palestinians] are originally Palestinians, but they were lucky because their grandfather and grandmother didn't leave their houses while other people left [in 1948] ... I am the same as these people [Israeli Palestinians]. We are the same people and it is normal that we want to make families and live together.

Along similar lines, Rasha, another West Bank villager in her early thirties living in the city with an expired permit, related her 'mixed' marriage to a broader history of kin ties across the 'border' between Israel and the West Bank, expressing her sense of familiarity with both the West Bank and Israel, thus symbolically erasing the border in-between:

I was 15 years old when I first came here [Lod]. I came for my sister's wedding. I thought Il-Led [Lod in Arabic] was beautiful. I was hoping to come and live here ... I have relatives there [in the West Bank], my brothers' families and my sisters' families. But also here [in Lod]⁹, I don't feel there is a big difference between the two places ... It [Living in Lod] doesn't feel foreign ... I also have uncle who came here 40 years ago and got married. I like to go there [the West Bank], but I don't like to stay for a long time. I like to come here [Lod] ... My son doesn't like to stay in the West Bank for a long time because he is used to living here. But wherever you go it's one country, it's Palestine. All the places in Palestine are beautiful.

On the other hand, despite these routinely voiced claims to group identification with their Israeli Palestinian counterparts and to historical ties with places inside Israel, the West Bank Palestinians I met in Lod remained oriented toward the West Bank, often voicing concern for the suffering of fellow Palestinians under military rule and identifying the West Bank as the moral-symbolic core of the ethnonational collectivity. This attachment of moral meanings to the West

Bank operated as an axis of difference in their relationships with Israeli Palestinians—for whom, as I will discuss below, the West Bank held less positive meanings.

This is the case of Nisreen, a Palestinian woman in her late thirties who was born in a West Bank refugee camp. When I visited Nisreen in her new apartment in Lod, she voiced her resentment toward Nura, an Israeli Palestinian woman who had lived in her refugee camp for about a decade as a result of marriage with a camp dweller. When I met Nisreen and Nura, they were once again neighbors, this time in Lod after leaving the West Bank with their husbands during the Second *Intifada* (Uprising, 2000-2004). When I asked Nisreen about her neighborly relationships with Nura, she complained about Nura's lack of emotional attachment to the camp community. Specifically, Nisreen felt offended by Nura's unwillingness to share memories and express nostalgia about everyday camp practices such as eating falafel at one of the camp 'restaurants':

She lived there for 11 years. She lived like them, ate and breathed like them, too. She participated in their happiness and their sorrow. But she always says that we are lucky that we could move to Lod. But what really bothers me is that she says that she never ate at the camp falafel restaurant, which has been there for twenty years. When I try to tell her that I miss the falafel from there, she just says that the food at the Kanion [the mall, in Hebrew] is very delicious and that she doesn't remember Khaled, the owner of the falafel place inside the camp.

In Nisreen's eyes, Nura's preference for the food at the Lod mall over the falafel from the refugee camp was no matter of individual taste. On the contrary, this choice was imbued with a deeper suggestion of national group membership. Indeed, while like other West Bankers living in Lod, Nisreen herself often emphasized that she had been lucky to be able to move to Lod, she always combined this stance with an equally emphatic comment about the suffering of West Bank Palestinians. Thus, Nura's dismissal of the camp falafel restaurant, a major site of

sociability inside the camp, was interpreted by Nisreen as a sign of lack of interest in, and respect for, a community of co-nationals suffering under military rule (see below for Nura's viewpoint).

More broadly, despite the ongoing military occupation, West Bank Palestinians living in Lod often described the West Bank as a place where it was possible 'to breathe fresher air' and conduct a 'healthier' life than inside Israel. For example, Fuad, a West Bank Palestinian in his mid-thirties married to an Israeli Palestinian woman, told me:

If there were peace, life would be very beautiful in the West Bank. The air there is pure and beautiful. You can't smell pure air here [Israel] unless you go to the sea, to Jaffa beach. The West Bank's air is similar to the sea air here.

Like their West Bank counterparts, Israeli Palestinians living in Lod often mixed feelings and practices of closeness with expressions of estrangement. On the one hand, they expressed solidarity toward co-nationals who have been rendered stateless and deprived of mobility. This was the case for Sami, the husband of Basima, the above-mentioned West Bank villager living in Lod with an expired permit. When I asked him what he thought about their family visits to the West Bank, Sami told me that he supported his wife's efforts to visit her family and that he attempted to negotiate, on her behalf, the checkpoints between Israel and the West Bank as well as those within the West Bank. He described how he usually engaged the soldiers at the checkpoints telling them that Basima was his sister rather than his wife. He added that he would often tell them that Basima was 'very religious' thus trying to prevent them from speaking with her directly.¹⁰ He also emphasized how, through his conversation with Basima and her West Bank relatives, he had developed familiarity about which checkpoints around Basima's West Bank village were 'easier' to cross and when to cross them. Further, Sami explained how he extended his solidarity to Ibrahim, Basima's younger brother when Ibrahim crossed the border 'illegally' to work inside Israel. While Ibrahim did not leave his workplace—usually a

construction site—for weeks at a time to avoid contacts with Israeli authorities, he visited his sister and her husband once in a while for a hot shower, a warm meal, or company. More broadly, Sami shared with me his feeling of being overwhelmed by the deprivation experienced by fellow West Bank Palestinians living in Lod:

There are many of them without ID cards here [in Lod]. It is dangerous for them. I am also afraid but I try to help them ... they are poor, they don't have jobs ... with Basima, most of our conversations are about ID cards, I want her to live here ... I bought private health insurance for her ... I am afraid for our future because she is from the West Bank and she has no rights...

At times, Israeli Palestinians living in Lod supplemented their pronouncements and practices of solidarity toward those West Bank Palestinians they witnessed struggling to find a job or to obtain a permit within Israel with general expressions of admiration for the political mobilization of their counterparts in the West Bank. As a young Lod Palestinian told me with a tone of respect: 'There [in the West Bank], there is action'.

On the other hand, Israeli Palestinians routinely expressed a sense of estrangement toward the West Bank, which they articulated by temporally placing the West Bank in a premodern past or by 'seeing' it through the eyes of the Israeli state, as a dangerous zone to avoid. For example, Nura, the above-mentioned Israeli Palestinian woman who lived in a West Bank refugee camp before moving to Lod, told me that she felt a heightened sense of relief for an everyday life without military checkpoints. She had convinced her husband, a West Bank Palestinian who had been able to obtain a relatively long permit, to reduce the number of their visits to the camp and, instead, to save money for an annual week-long vacation inside Israel. She expressed satisfaction about giving her children the opportunity to learn how to swim and, more broadly, to grow up without the presence of the Israeli army. In her future-oriented attitude, Nura did not express any

desire to speak about the camp where she used to live. As I discussed above, Nura's approach to the West bank differed from that of Nisreen—Nura's neighbor in Lod—who grew up in the camp where Nura had spent eleven years and who, unlike Nura, intensively cultivated her family and social ties with people and places in the West Bank. Nura shared with me her disagreement with Nisreen:

I have respect for the camp, my husband is from the camp, but my life, our life is not in the camp: the future is here, not in the West Bank ... If I say that the Kanion [the mall in Lod] is modern and beautiful, Nisreen doesn't like it, but it is true, I like the Kanion much more than the camp.

While Nura carefully attempted to thread her social and symbolic relationship with her husband's and Nisreen's place of origin, among Israeli Palestinians in Lod, the words 'West Bank' and 'West Banker' were often used in a derogatory way to signal a condition of 'backwardness'. Indeed, the same youth who, as I mentioned above, praised the political mobilization of West Bank Palestinians, also used the word 'West Banker' derogatorily. Exposure to this negative meaning was particularly shocking for the West Bank Palestinians who had moved to Lod. In the words of a West Bank villager in her mid-twenties:

Here [in Lod] people [Israeli Palestinians] consider the West Bank a bad thing. For example, when kids are fighting they curse one another by using the expression: 'Hey you, West Banker'.

These findings illustrate the tense interplay between closeness and distance, solidarity and estrangement that West Bank and Israeli Palestinians experience in their mutual relationships when, as in the case of 'mixed' families in Lod, they are allowed to meet and live together. They show that West Bank Palestinians challenge their imposed immobility by claiming shared group membership and life projects with Israeli Palestinians while Israeli Palestinians express and

practice solidarity with their less-mobile co-nationals. At the same time, West Bank Palestinians attribute particularly positive, moral and social meanings to the West Bank—and thus, to themselves—while Israeli Palestinians mix their expressions and practices of solidarity toward West Bank Palestinians with feelings of estrangement from the social and political conditions of life in the West Bank.

Between closeness and distance: physical separation and symbolic presence

Entrapped forms of transnationalism take shape under prevailing conditions of physical separation. Social contact across layers of differential mobility is precariously established and easily disrupted. As a West Bank Palestinian spouse of an Israeli Palestinian woman told me: ‘I am afraid that in the future people from here [Israeli Palestinians] will no longer marry people [Palestinians] from the West Bank because of the identity-card problem’. Beyond the disruptions and uncertainties produced by (changing) distributions of legal-spatial rights and restrictions, entrapped forms of transnationalism that have emerged, like in the case of the Palestinians, as a result of broader histories of mass displacement, are fraught by the symbolic presence of those who are physically absent. Navaro-Yashin’s (2012, 20) argument about ‘the eeriness discharged by a territorial space and material objects left behind by a displaced community’ is relevant for the study of symbolic relationships between West Bank Palestinians, especially refugees, and Israeli Palestinians. Navaro-Yashin (2012, 17) studies how forced displacement has ‘the effect of a haunting, an enduring force or afterlife despite physical absence’ on out-groups living in the houses and on the lands of the displaced community—in her case, Turkish Cypriots living in Northern Cyprus after the displacement of Greek Cypriots. Her insights into forced displacement’s ‘effect (and affect) of haunting’ can be fruitfully extended to the intra-group relationships among members of a displaced collectivity when, like in the case of Palestinians,

displacement has not affected them equally, producing a symbolic-legal distinction between displaced and non-displaced members.

Take, for example, the mutual orientations of Israeli Palestinians living in Lod and Palestinian refugees, originally from the city and 36 villages around it, now living in Jalazon, a West Bank refugee camp where I conducted fieldwork.¹¹ During my transition from the camp to the city in February 2008, I documented how, similar to the social interactions among family members and friends that I discussed above, the profiles of emotions displayed ‘at a distance’ by these two segments of Palestinians revealed a mixture of closeness and estrangement.

These mixed emotions are evident in my field notes from the weeks prior to my move. Many West Bank camp dwellers followed, and some helped me, in my efforts to develop relationships with Palestinian living in Lod. They phoned their relatives and friends in the city. While these phone calls revealed a lively network of ties across the border, Palestinian refugees routinely warned me that ‘*Ladadweh*’ (‘people originally from Lydda’) did not live in the city but in refugee camps. Some of them also used the term ‘*ghuraba*’ (‘strangers’) to indicate Palestinians living in Lod today (see also note 11). Further, during the last month in the camp before I moved to Lod, refugees changed their attitude toward my research, expressing fear that my transition to Lod would cause problems for the camp inhabitants. In the words of Khawla, the wife of a camp dweller who had greatly helped me in my adaptation to camp life:

People here told you a lot about politics, you know a lot, will you bring this information to Lod? There are checkpoints...will you bring your computer with you?

Despite the presence of a military base nearby and my crossing of checkpoints inside the West Bank, in the eight months I spent in the camp, nobody from the camp ever asked me where I stored my files and how I secured my information. By contrast, as my transition to Lod became

closer, refugees increasingly expressed a negative view of Lod's Arab districts, as both drug-stricken places of criminality and places where the Israeli security agencies had relocated a significant number of alleged 'collaborators' (informers) from the West Bank (Abdel al-Jawad and Beer 1994). In the words of another Palestinian woman in her late forties living in the camp:

How will you know whom you can trust there [in Lod]? There [in Lod] there are people [Palestinians] you cannot trust...

At the same time, some '*Ladadweh*' living in the camp remembered how in the 1970s and 1980s when, like many West Bank Palestinians, they crossed the Green Line on a daily basis to search for work inside Israel, they preferred looking for construction jobs in Lod, their place of origin, rather than in other Israeli cities. More importantly, as I discussed above, marriage practices have continued to establish a link between West Bank Palestinians, including camp dwellers, and Israeli Palestinians living in Lod. This is the case of the '*Ladadweh*' in West Bank camps, who have tried to find marriage partners for their daughters and sons in Lod despite their full awareness and acceptance of the city's predominantly negative image as an environment marked by crime and drug-dealing, and the presence of relocated 'collaborators' from the West Bank. In this sense, although West Bank refugees express feelings of estrangement from the Palestinians currently living in Lod, they do not consider them truly 'strangers' and are oriented toward symbolic reconnection with them.

On their part, Israeli Palestinians living in Lod responded to the phone calls that they received from camp dwellers on my behalf by voicing their concern that helping me might cause them problems with the Israeli police. After each phone call, refugee families would explain to me that their relatives and friends 'were afraid' of and 'didn't want to have problems' with the

Israeli authorities. While eventually the refugees' phone calls put me in contact with some key informants in Lod, they also revealed how, for many Israeli Palestinians, symbolic association with the West Bank is fraught with anxiety due to its negative connotation as a place of violence and terrorism within the Israeli official and public arenas.

Once I settled in the city, I noticed how the physical absence of Palestinian refugees had 'the effect of a haunting' on Israeli Palestinians living there. When I asked them questions or they initiated conversations about Palestinian refugees who had been displaced from the city in 1948, they noted the refugees' physical absence in a matter-of-fact manner, often shrugging their shoulders and using the expression '*raahu*' ('they are gone'). At the same time, Palestinian refugees were symbolically present in the interpretive frameworks that Israeli Palestinians inadvertently or consciously used in their everyday lives. For example, once I joined a Palestinian family living in Lod for a picnic in a nearby park. After parking the two cars we drove in, we walked toward the park carrying various items from foldable chairs to blankets and bags of food. As we were walking, a girl in her teens spontaneously commented 'we are like refugees' and her father half-laughingly and half-nervously replied 'well, we are ready, at least we have water and money with us'. Israeli Palestinians in Lod also purposely used the terms 'refugees' to refer to the local authorities' policy to demolish Arab houses built without licenses,¹² thus evoking the historical events that in 1948 transformed the majority of Palestinians into refugees.

The interplay between distancing orientations, which are produced by border entrapment and connecting orientations, which are driven by a sense of shared group history and destiny also emerged when Israeli Palestinians reacted to material objects belonging to or left behind by Palestinian refugees. Take a calendar picturing a building that remained intact from a destroyed

Arab village during the 1948 war, which used to be a school and is now an administrative office at the entrance of a new Israeli town. When some Palestinian residents of Lod saw the calendar, which I had brought with me from the West Bank camp where I lived before moving to Lod, they suggested that we visited ‘the school’. So, one day in June 2008, Rami and Hassan, two middle-aged Palestinian men from Lod—both of whom are essentially illiterate and have criminal records for dealing drugs—drove me first to visit an abandoned cemetery of another destroyed Arab village and, then, to ‘the school’ pictured in the calendar. At the cemetery, which was located in barred and thorny hills, Rami and Hassan were relaxed and enjoyed competing with me over which of us could read names and dates the fastest. However, at our second stop, they were highly tense and, while they wanted me to take a photo of ‘the school’, they were afraid of stopping the car. Driving slowly in front of ‘the school’, they explained to me that there was no plausible explanation that they could give to the Israeli authorities about their presence there. If stopped, they would prefer admitting to plan a theft rather than mentioning the destroyed village because they feared that mentioning the meaning and history of the place would frame their presence there in political-security terms. Once back in their district, Rami and Hassan told the story of our ‘adventure’ to some residents who had ties to the destroyed village pictured in the calendar, encouraging them to share the picture that we had taken of ‘the school’ with their relatives from the village. Rami and Hassan’s orientation toward ‘the school’ as both a medium to reconnect with a broader group history and a potential source of troubles in their relationships with Israeli authorities exemplifies the tension between closeness and estrangement traversing Israeli Palestinians’ entrapped transnationalism.

Similar to the findings on the discordant perceptions and emotions produced by the combination of transnational and entrapping processes within the ‘mixed’ families of Israeli and

West Bank Palestinians I met in Lod, my findings here discussed on symbolic relationships between Israeli Palestinians living in Lod and their counterparts living in West Bank refugee camps, illustrate how feelings of closeness and feelings of estrangement co-exist and build further tension within entrapped forms of transnationalism.

Conclusion

In the first decade of the twenty-first century, a significant and growing number of people negotiate transnational contact, movement, and orientations across layers of differential mobility, including blocked and forced immobility (Salazar and Smart 2011; Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013; Golash-Boza 2014). Detained and deported migrants, refugees, minorities divided by rigid borders, and inhabitants of walled territories are all people that negotiate transnational ties and orientations within contexts marked by unevenly distributed, precariously obtained, and easily lost access to mobility. In these cases, transnationalism is inherently intertwined with experiences of border entrapment, including imposed physical immobility and symbolic-legal-political repression of transnational contacts.

The findings reported here show that, in the case of divided and entrapped segments of poor Palestinians in West Bank camps and villages and in the Israeli city of Lod, feelings of closeness and expressions and practices of solidarity combine with feelings of estrangement and distancing practices. This interplay between closeness and estrangement informs both face-to-face communication within transnational families and circles of friends and cross-border symbolic relationships under conditions of physical separation. My findings also show that West Bank and Israeli Palestinians express closeness and signal estrangement in distinct ways. West Bank Palestinians respond to their predicament of physical immobility under military occupation by claiming shared group membership with their more mobile co-nationals inside Israel while at the

same time routinely assigning moral-cultural distinction to the West Bank, mainly as a form of recognition of the suffering of Palestinians living there. By contrast, Israeli Palestinians respond to their distinct status as minority citizens within a state that stigmatizes their contact with co-nationals outside the state, by combining expressions of solidarity with West Bank Palestinians with a propensity to also distance themselves out of fear of the Israeli authorities or out of an interpretive framework that temporally places the West Bank in a premodern past.

These findings point to the importance of developing a transnational research agenda on West Bank and Israeli Palestinians, as well as other segments of Palestinians, for example those living in East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. While, in this article, I have focused on the forms that entrapped transnationalism takes among marginalized Palestinian villagers and refugees in the West Bank and urban minorities in Lod, studying multiple viewpoints and experiences along axes such as generation and class is a necessary step for a better understanding of the cumulative effects of entrapment and transnationalism. For example, an analysis of transnational ties between educated Palestinians on both sides of the border, especially young graduates, social movement activists, and artists, might reveal that these segments of Palestinians are more openly engaged in initiatives, especially cultural and political activities, aimed at challenging entrapment (see Maira 2013, on the emergence of a Palestinian hip-hop transnational movement), than the poor Palestinians I met. Another interesting line of research would explore whether and to what extent online activities—a seemingly privileged way to communicate for physically divided people—change the relative balance between entrapment and transnationalism in the symbolic relationships between West Bank and Israeli Palestinians (Bishara 2011). A third area of transnational research worthy of exploration is the role that

economic transactions, for example Israeli Palestinians' consumption patterns in the West Bank, play in shaping the social relationships between Israeli and West Bank Palestinians (Sa'ar 2004).

Beyond the Israeli-Palestinian context, the findings discussed in this article suggest that understanding transnational formations that emerge across layers of differential mobility requires going beyond the one-dimensional focus on either the rise of an entrapping 'global regime of mobility' (Shamir 2005) or the expansion of transnational borderlands (Anzaldúa 1987), and requires studying, instead, the cumulative effects of entrapment and transnationalism. They also suggest that an approach attentive to issues of emotionality and perceptions is a particularly fruitful one for grasping how border entrapment combines with—rather than erases—transnational histories and orientations and for exploring the discordant sensibilities and practices produced by such a combination. This approach is especially important for identifying and studying the continued salience of transnational ties in cases where border entrapment is a particularly visible and productive force and cross-border contact and movement are irregularly enacted and routinely repressed.

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Notes

¹ I lived and conducted research in Jerusalem (1998-2000), the West Bank (spring 2002, summers 2003, 2004, 2005, and eight months in 2007-2008), the Gaza Strip (summer 2002), and the Israeli city of Lod (six months in 2007-2008). In the period from 1998 to 2008 I also repeatedly traveled across the Green line, the 'border' between Israel and the West Bank and visited several other Arab localities on both sides of the Green Line.

² While this article focuses on the relationships between West Bank and Israeli Palestinians, the 'entrapped transnationalism' approach here developed is also relevant for other segments of Palestinians, for example those living in the Gaza Strip.

³ A parallel process of separation affected Gaza Palestinians, whose number more than doubled due to the mass influx of Palestinian refugees in 1948, who were under Egyptian rule from 1948 to 1967.

⁴ In 2012 the Israeli High Court upheld the prohibition on permanent residency for West Bank and Gaza spouses of Israeli citizens. In addition to splitting or relocating their families, these spouses are left with the option of applying for temporary permits which neither grant them access to health services nor allow them to work.

⁵ The number of families affected is not clear. The Israeli Minister of Interior has reported that in the 1990s it processed 22,414 family unification applications and approved 16,007 without specifying the number of residence permits that it actually issued (Conte 2005, 34).

⁶ I follow here Heyman (2013, 304) who suggests conceptualizing 'legalization and illegalization as processes (in particular as social-political projects), rather than as states of being'.

⁷ All names are pseudonyms.

⁸ In the early 1990s, the Israeli state replaced West Bank and Gaza Palestinian workers with foreign workers.

⁹ Rasha has a sister and a brother who, like her, have moved to Lod as a result of marriage.

¹⁰ By claiming that Basima is his sister, Sami's goal is to signal to the soldiers Basima's status as Israeli citizen; while by playing the 'religious card' he hopes that the soldiers will be satisfied with his mediation.

¹¹ The history of Lod is marked by the displacement of its Palestinian residents in 1948. Until 1948, Lod was an Arab town called Lydda. After the mass expulsion in 1948, only 1,050 Palestinians were left. The recomposition of the Palestinian population in the city has taken place since the 1970s due to internal migration. In 2008, about 16,800 Palestinians lived in Lod (25 per cent of the town's total population).

¹² Urban planning in Lod follows an 'ethnocratic' logic, discriminating against the Palestinian residents of the city (Yacobi 2009).

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