| **Article** | **Multilayered surveillance in Israel/Palestine:** Dialectics of inclusive exclusion |

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Abstract

The paper examines the surveillance apparatuses in Israel/Palestine as mechanisms aiming to secure support for the Israeli regime, and to preserve its domination over the entire territory in dispute. We analyze three layers of surveillance: "exclusionary surveillance" towards Palestinians; "normalizing surveillance" towards Jewish-Israeli citizens; and finally, "globalizing surveillance" using Zionist constituencies as agents for building a "domain of defense" for Israel in their own countries. Taking into consideration these power and surveillance dispositives, we draw insights on the global authoritarian turn and suggest a post-Foucauldian transnational approach to the study of the relations between surveillance, socialization, and subjectification processes.

Introduction

Surveillance has direct connections to issues of inclusion and exclusion of populations. David Lyon (2007: 14) describes surveillance as "focused, systematic and routine attention to personal details for purposes of influence, management, protection or direction," while Elia Zureik (2011: 10) states that "surveillance in the everyday life is involved in the constitution of subjectivities." This discourse, common in Surveillance Studies, is influenced by Foucault's analysis (1979, 2007) according to which gaze, categorization, and paperwork are directed at fixing and adapting docile bodies, as part of an inclusive system of care. Other scholars (e.g. Giddens 1985; Torpey 1998) pointed at the ways in which the state uses surveillance to "embrace" its citizens. It is through deep penetration into habits and behaviors that the state "knows" its subjects. In the classic description of modern state surveillance, therefore, there is a correlation between the perimeters of the state's surveillance apparatuses, the state's territory, and its overall population.

Israel's sovereign power is organized to serve its hegemonic projects of Zionism and control of the Palestinian population. However, its surveillance extends to in-group populations that are not in the territory of the state (in Zionist parlance, its "diaspora"), and the "envelop" of surveillance is used to exclude out-group populations within this territory. The project of control thus hinges not only on the subjectification of the population that the state wants to include under its governmental power, but on securing the loyalty of population domains outside its borders. Second, Israel excludes undesired populations, which are still under its governmental control. While undesired populations (on the basis of ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and more) are often discriminated in many states, the case in Israel/Palestine is harsher—surely when compared to Western/OECD countries—as will be shown in the following pages. The Israeli regime is a complex case study, combining liberal-democratic elements, authoritarian features, and military occupation

in the West Bank and Gaza strip. Israel can be thus seen as a laboratory for population management and surveillance, that may be helpful for understanding "the authoritarian turn" in the Global West and beyond. It is a model for a regime in which rights and limited pluralism essentially derive from emotional loyalty. Because it is sensitive to thoughts and deeds of individuals that may turn into a threat to the basis of its legitimacy, the state obsessively engages in the "influence, management, or direction" towards the authoritarian rationale of loyalty (Lyon 2007).

This paper explores three types of surveillance used for maintaining the Israeli regime: (1) "normalizing surveillance," performed on Israeli-Jews, the only legitimate subjects of the regime, whose loyalty is secured on the basis of ethnic separation, emotional loyalty and existential fears; (2) "exclusionary surveillance," enacted on different levels, mainly on the Palestinian inhabitants of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, but also on the Palestinian citizens of Israel; (3) "globalizing surveillance," under which Jews and former-Israelis serve as surveillance agents responsible for building a "domain of defense" for Israel in their own countries. Through activating its population domain outside its borders, Israel maintains a consistent gaze on and polices all shades of criticisms of the current regime. The purpose of multilayered surveillance is hence not only subjectification and control domestically but staving off the deterioration of the regime into pariah status internationally, seeking for it more favorable acceptance, and even "legitimacy surplus."

Normalizing surveillance

Zionism retains the status of state religion in Israel and is the principle signifier of the Jewish society. The maintenance of a discourse of Zionism as an alive-and-kicking movement is a way for the regime to hold this "constructive ambiguity" (Benvenisti 1988: 49), while attributing symbolic capital to a shared mission of perpetually constructing and maintaining a national Jewish home as if this mission was not completed in 1948. Israel Harel, a right-wing publicist, once likened Zionism to the movement of cyclers: once you stop pedaling, you fall (Harel 2005). It is a movement-in-a-permanent-movement, in which "only by acquiring more power can it guarantee the status quo" (Arendt 1979: 142), and for which the biggest threat is a halt. This never-ending movement is led today by a coalescence of settler and neoliberal elites driving forward a project of normalizing colonization and control. This dynamic is brought into sharp focus in studies that show how Judaizing the land has become a lucrative real-estate business on both sides of the green-line; from "individual farms" in the Negev desert for which Bedouin lands are taken without compensation to settlers' "boutique farms" of organic products that land in chef restaurants in Tel Aviv, and well-planned urban settlements built in the heart of the West Bank. The normalization of colonization has come to inform every fabric of daily life in Israel (Algazi 2006; Handel, Rand and Allegra 2015; Allegra, Handel and Maggor 2017).

Any disruption to this doctrinal flow that implies, in however minor way, that the project is not accepted by practically everyone, is a liability for normalization that is met with intimidation, harassment, and legal persecution. This is the kernel of Israeli government anti-democratic legislation in the past few years. Beyond state-led initiatives, there are private propaganda arms who specialize in blacklists and shaming, making critical discourse and knowledge a personal liability. The label "anti-Zionists," frequently depicted as "traitors," is applied by non-governmental propaganda agencies like *Im Tirtzu* almost indiscriminately. Crusades against "de-legitimization" often attack anonymous rank and file lefties, not excluding the mainstream Zionist left. The media uncovers periodically "the Israeli faces" of the BDS, the global Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement has become the strategic locus of state operations abroad, and any hint of support for it domestically is severely sanctioned.[1]

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[1] "Meet the Israelis and Jews behind the boycott and the BDS," http://www.maariv.co.il/news/politics/Article-480425, in Hebrew, published June 13, 2015. BDS was propelled by the 2005 call of Palestinian civil society to boycott, sanction and divest from Israel and developed since to a global movement.

Israeli sociologist Yael Berda (2015) argued that the purpose of such surveillance practices is to turn citizens into "objective enemies," emptying out the body politic from any expression of non-consensual politics. In a classic inversion the aggressors are critics of all sorts—academics, social justice activists, NGOs, human rights defenders—and their victim is Israeli society. This analysis corresponds with our contention that surveillance is "normalizing," namely, singling out deviance to establish the norm. In the "normalizing" type, deviates are too few, and there is no need to win them over so the impetus is to wipe them out. Yet, the regime must continuously generate them and exaggerate their power and threat in order for purges to even make sense and for the norm to be established. This logic of inclusive exclusion is present in Israel and may be useful for understanding the Western authoritarian turn: the attempts of a ruling oligarchy of pro-settlers and neoliberal elites to conceal its own thin social bases of legitimacy by turning against a phantom ghost "enemy," in the name of defending the interests of "the masses."

Exclusionary surveillance

In contrast to the apparatuses that are intended to include, embrace, and normalize a desired population, exclusionary surveillance uses power-knowledge technologies as means of exclusion. Exclusionary surveillance does not include corrective-normalizing features, and it contains no "right behavior." Rather the opposite, those apparatuses are intended to make their subjects fail so as to prove their inability to be included (Kotef and Amir 2015; Handel 2009, 2011). In Israel/Palestine, exclusionary surveillance is applied mainly towards the Palestinian population, in a variety of modes and intensities derived from their civil status and geographical location.

Since Israel's withdrawal from Gaza Strip in 2005, Israel has abandoned any purpose of annexation or inclusion of the population in the region. Yet, UAVs are flying constantly over the Strip, filming and recording all kinds of communications. Israel still controls the population registry and authorizes the limited freedom of movement of the few that are permitted to cross the borders (mainly for medical treatment). It is a management from the outside, similar to the prisons described in Zygmunt Bauman's account of the post-corrective penal system, in which the improving and correcting dimensions of the disciplinary prison are totally absent, and exclusion is all that is left: "what the inmates of the Pelican Bay prison *do* inside their solitary cells *does not matter*. What *does matter* is that *they stay there*" (Bauman 1998: 113; italics in original).

In the West Bank, the inhabitants are slightly more "included" than in the Gaza Strip. Over 60,000 Palestinians are working in Israel and in the Jewish settlements, carrying an updated magnetic card with personal data and security and employment history, while hundreds of thousands of Palestinian citizens are crossing several Israeli checkpoints within the West Bank on a daily basis. But the level of control that is actually taking place under direct surveillance in most of the inner checkpoints is low: nothing is written down, and no data are catalogued or transmitted. Passage regulations are unclear and in constant flux, making it nearly impossible for the controlled population to behave "correctly." The Israeli bureaucracy, represented by the District Coordination Offices (DCO), tends to work as hard as it can in order *not* to give permits and documents, as stated in one report: "the bureaucratic failure is so transparent that it seems clear that the purpose is not to give the service… many times the DCO's location is a trap in itself: to reach it the Palestinian needs a special permit, which he can get only in that DCO" (Machsom Watch 2004).

East Jerusalem presents a specific case of exclusionary surveillance. Since its illegal annexation in 1967, "most Palestinian Jerusalemites are 'permanent residents' under Israeli law, permitted to exercise a limited set of rights: they may live and work in Israel, travel to and from the West Bank, collect some social benefits and vote in municipal elections" (Jefferis 2012: 95). However, as 'permanent residents' they may lose their residency status if they are not able to prove that Jerusalem is their "life center." When the Israeli population registry surveys East Jerusalem's Palestinian inhabitants that "move their life center" to another location for a certain time—be it for study or work, or families that bought houses just a few hundred meters beyond

Jerusalem's municipal borders—it aims to deprive them of their residential rights and to keep some imagined demographic *status quo* of a unified and Jewish Jerusalem. Israeli policy is characterized by rights deprivation or removal, and misuse of statistical data against those surveyed. Ironically, this exclusionary surveillance in fact pushes more and more Palestinians towards active inclusion, especially in East Jerusalem where Palestinians insist on living in the city, study in Israeli universities and even apply for full citizenship.

In recent years, Israel has developed mechanisms of exclusion directed against its Palestinian citizen minority, with regulations that authorizes Jewish villages to reject Palestinian inhabitants, laws that enable dismissal of parliament members who do not accept Israel's identification as a Jewish state, and plans to redraw the borders as to move entire populations from the state of Israel to the Palestinian Authority.

Israel's actions echo some of Arendt's ideas on the refugees and the birth of the nation-state. Arendt notes that the establishment of the new European states had revealed a new structure, in which they preferred losing parts of their population in order to constitute themselves as pure nation-states. Arendt points to it as the moment in which "the transformation of the state from an instrument of the law into an instrument of the nation had been completed. The nation had conquered the state" (Arendt 1979: 275). In contemporary Israel, it is the loyalty to the Zionist project that conquered the state, rather than legal definitions of citizenship, or even blood-national relations. The exclusionary surveillance apparatuses are thus used to recreate the *demos* by the active exclusion of parts of the state's residents and citizens. Those populations are not deported, but the rug is pulled from under their feet, leaving them within the controlled territory, yet excluded and with less and less rights. At the same time, as the next section shows, Israel actively includes other populations, beyond its national borders.

Globalizing surveillance

For its global operations, the state of Israel established rival propaganda bureaucracies in addition to the Foreign Ministry, in the Office of Strategic Affairs, and the Office of Diaspora Affairs. Both offices share a similar goal to combat "de-legitimization" through covert and overt operations. They meddle in "diaspora politics" in the United States and in Western Europe and in campus politics in the Western world through direct and indirect support and funding of a host of non-governmental organizations officially tasked with "blackening" civilian targets identified through "deep" surveillance, essentially espionage on foreign countries' citizens.[2] Their declared war is against the Palestinian global resistance in the form of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement (BDS). "Delegitimizers" are blacklisted and are subject to bans, open threats, Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation (SLAPP) lawsuits, online harassments, attacks on sources of livelihood, censorship and campus expulsions, particularly in the US, as documented by the US organization Palestine Legal.[3] However, the ultimate strategic concern is much broader pertaining to Israel's deterioration into an international pariah status. A curious typology of "harsh, soft critics and bystanders" appears in a leaked report of a joint task force established by the Reut Group (2017) and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). The report addresses, without naming, the real problem festering at the heart of Zionist society. The de-legitimization problem is a cover to the problem of demoralization. Instructively, it sets out to achieve ambitious goals such as "re-uniting the Jewish world around Israel," and changing the "unfavorable zeitgeist" against it. For this purpose, the state needs vetting agents to spy after pro-Palestinian organizations, detect "biases" of reporters, and lobby to block "anti-Israeli" initiatives. But most importantly, it needs to overcome the controversy over Israel within its extended population domain.

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[2] "Blackening," or Hashchara in Hebrew, is a specific job description. There is a unit head of the "blackening arena" (Zirat Hashchara) at the Ministry of Strategic Affairs and his rank is at the level of head of deparment in the Israeli General Security Services (Shabak) as reported in Haaretz: http://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/.premium-1.2978698.

[3] For more information on legal cases see: www.palestinelegal.org.

Emigration of Jewish citizens from Israel was for years despised as a selfish and unpatriotic individual choice. To deal with this demoralizing reality, Zionists underwrite the old scorn, in what we might term "Neozionism." As former General Gal Hirsch told an audience of Israeli expats, "the state can afford Israelis leaving, but cannot afford Israelis leaving and turning their backs on the state."[4] The concern, in other words, is with the loyalty of ex-Israelis. The Israeli diaspora turned into a strategic asset and a "domain of defense" (*merhav hagana*) for the state.[5] As a result of the privatization of *hasbara* operations [*hasbara* means propaganda in Hebrew, the official term used by state agencies] no longer the purview of professional diplomatic cadres, the global arena has become a hodgepodge of "net soldiers," private initiatives, some by ex-Israelis, many are one-person shop operations, often creating problems of chaos and duplication. Neozionism is characterized by propaganda wars led by privatized and decentralized initiatives, which the Israeli government tries to coordinate, direct and support. It is a tool of double surveillance: one that is applied within, making sure that everyone is aligned with and remains emotionally loyal; the second is the surveillance applied by those agents towards foreign governments, media, campuses, local politicians, for instance in the case of the passing of a legislation in the state of Navada that outlaws contracting BDS-supporting agents and companies, which was advocated by IAC Israeli-American Coalition for Action, specifically established to fight BDS.[6] It therefore serves as a means to embrace but also constantly vet "supporters" from "enemies." The new entry ban is a case in point. The law, passed in March 2017 by the Israeli parliament, bans the entry of whoever Israeli authorities deem a supporter of boycott, including of settlements and products in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. It fails to distinguish "hard" or "soft" critics or "bystanders," which led liberal Jews and ex-Israelis to wonder whether they are included in it as well. Mobilizing compatriotic populations outside of state borders and using them for propaganda wars is of course not an invention of Israel, and is a tool used by the Russian and Turkish regimes as well.

Conclusion

Surveillance is a means to an end. In our case, the end is maintaining loyalty to Zionism and the current regime in Israel/Palestine, where half of the population is subjected to strict surveillance arrays, yet is still excluded and has less and less right to have rights. Israel cannot afford becoming a full democracy, as it will have to let go its privileges and the differential control systems. The importance of discussing the case of Israel's population management's technologies and rationales nevertheless exceeds its specificities. Although its multilayering surveillance apparatuses are quite unique, the dismantling of relations between surveillance, population and territory is a broader phenomenon of our time. Other regimes in the West concerned with their own bases of legitimacy may soon warm up to the Israeli model as they did in other closely related areas such as global security and surveillance technology (Gordon 2011; Feldman 2013).

We must emphasize, however, that the multilayered surveillance keeps failing and its outcomes are often defeating its own purposes with unprecedented results. The normalizing surveillance is creating resistance, but its main failure is the growing visibility for the abnormality of the regime and its authoritarian logic. As the normalizing efforts are more and more apparent the situation looks less and less "normal." The exclusionary surveillance pushes more and more Palestinians towards active inclusion, especially in East Jerusalem. Finally, the globalizing surveillance is plagued by doubts about outcomes despite the 20-fold investment. The Neozionist fantasy about the state's "domain of defense" bringing about a "legitimacy surplus" goes hand in hand with the vast insecurity about it evident in vetting and exclusions.

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[4] Field notes from Global Israeli Leadership conference, February 24-26, 2015, IDC Herzliya, Israel.

[5] The articulation of this mission was an attempt to make legible what is sociologically very much in doubt—the allegiance of self-styled communities, particularly in Europe and in the US, that increasingly organize independently from the state and from the Jewish establishment.

[6] As reported in the Israeli newspaper Israel Hayom: http://www.israelhayom.co.il/article/481263 in Hebrew.

At the same time, isn't it the case that surveillance *always* fails? The raison d'être of surveillance is that one never sees / surveys / normalizes everything—which is why surveillance seeks to expand, proliferate, and broaden its range. Surveillance itself has an imperialist logic of permanent expansion, of permanent movement. In the case of Israel while we must leave open the possibility that inclusive exclusion is ultimately self-defeating because the tensions it generates threaten the stability of the entire system, we may also say that the failure is exactly what keeps the system moving and further expanding. In the global context, while in the short run Israel's "legitimacy" may be bolstered by the authoritarian turn, success ultimately depends on its regime normalizing. While there is no sign that Israel is becoming less controversial, in the past this hardly had any bearings on the dynamic of importing and adapting its technologies of control and surveillance by countries in the Global West. There seems to be no reason to suspect that its status as a model or laboratory in key areas will change in the near future.

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