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The spatial manifestation of threat: Israelis and Palestinians seek a 'good' border

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ABSTRACT. Boundary studies in political geography have largely focused on the presentation of empirical case studies. There has been little development of a theory focusing on the multi-faceted nature of both spatial and group boundaries, and the interlinkages between them. An analysis of the boundary concept within the context of the Israeli-Arab conflict points to the importance of understanding both internal and external perceptions of threat. This is reflected in the dual political discourse of physical security and space purification, the former being used as a means of securing territorial boundaries, the latter in an attempt to obtain boundaries between competing national groups. Idealistic solutions to the Israeli-Arab conflict would result from an emphasis on human rights as an alternative to the traditional spatial discourse.

Introduction: putting meaning into boundaries

> Instead of understanding boundaries as mere empirical manifestations of state power, they are located in the socio-spatial consciousness of a society . . . Boundaries are historically constructed and the meanings attached to them are perpetually changing along with the developments taking place in international social relations as well as in the internal relations within a state. (Paasi, 1994: 103)

Boundary studies have focused on comparative, and largely empirical, analyses of specific boundary case studies (Prescott, 1987; Grundy-Warr, 1990, 1994; Rumley and Minghi, 1991; Abu-Taleb 1993a, 1993b; Girot, 1994; Schofield, 1994; Schofield and Schofield, 1994). The classic boundary typologies, relating to the categorization of delimitation and demarcation (Boggs, 1940; Fischer, 1949; Jones, 1943, 1959; Kristof, 1959; Minghi, 1963), remain the focus of some political geography textbooks (Muir, 1982;

Glassner, 1992). Boundaries have largely been studied as an empirical manifestation of state power, rather than as part of an evolving theory concerned with the nature of boundaries (Paasi, 1994), similar to that which has accompanied the study of the state (Driver, 1991; Taylor, 1992a). Giddens's (1987: 51) definition of borders as constituting 'nothing other than lines drawn to demarcate states' sovereignty' restates the focus of boundary studies as belonging to the realm of inter-state territorial demarcation (Finer, 1974; Kratochwil, 1987). The study of boundaries as part of societal processes has yet to emerge as a new, dynamic focus for understanding why humankind continues to draw lines as a means of territorial separation. According to a popular Arabic dictionary, *Lisan al Arab*:

> Boundary is a means of separation between two objects, in order that one does not mix with the other, or does not transgress on the other. (Ibn Mandhur, n.d.: 799)

We are socialized into believing that states can only function as 'good neighbours' if they possess 'good fences'. Boundary studies need to be placed within the context of how groups perceive their space and give meaning to territory, both at national and micro levels of spatial analysis.

In addition to horizontal territorial structures, boundary concepts also relate to social, ethnic, gender and class vertical structures. The nature of the changing relationship between vertical and horizontal types of boundary is unclear, as the latter tends to be no more than the spatial encapsulation of the former at any given point in time. But while the horizontal boundaries remain relatively static, the dynamics of social change result in increasing dissonance between the two types of separation. This is adequately summarized by Barth (1969):

> If we define the boundaries that define the group, not the cultural stuff it encloses, then we must give our attention to social boundaries, though they have territorial counterparts . . . ethnic groups are not merely or necessarily based on the occupation of exclusive territories, and the different ways in which they are maintained . . . by continual expression and validation, need to be analyzed. (Barth, 1969: 15)

As a result of the ongoing peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians and several Arab countries, the prospect of achieving final stable boundaries now appears closer than ever. Part of this process involves the emergence of a Palestinian political entity, necessitating the delimitation and demarcation of new boundaries of separation between the two peoples and their respective territories. Such a process assumes a traditional form of state structure, encompassing sovereign territories bounded by clearly demarcated borders. While this notion appears to continue to hold sway at the end of the 20th century, we nevertheless raise questions concerning the need for other forms of territorial arrangement, encompassing not only boundaries between pieces of sovereign real estate, but also between ideologies, cultures and competing histories.

In order to achieve this, it is important to examine the type of boundaries that both Israelis and Palestinians have envisioned for their respective cultural entities. We attempt to focus on deeper layers of both Israeli and Palestinian society, within which context the search for a 'good' boundary, as perceived by both sides to the conflict, may be better illuminated. It is not our intention to draw an optimal boundary for either side, as others have already attempted (Cohen, 1986). A pragmatic solution to the conflict is based on mutual compromise, although this itself is not symmetric. For Israel, compromise means a

withdrawal from occupied territories and the acceptance of the right of Palestinian self-determination. For the Palestinians, compromise consists of recognition of the existence of the State of Israel and accepting a state area of less than the whole of Palestine. However, there may be non-spatial boundaries that serve a solution better than do clearly demarcated lines of territorial separation. In this context, it is necessary to explore the multiple meaning of the term 'boundary' at the micrological level of everyday life. Relevant to such a discussion is the way in which Israelis (Jews) and Palestinians (Moslems, Christians and Druze) surround themselves with various types of boundaries.

From micro to macro analysis: some methodological comments

Local activity spaces have a stronger impact than national spaces on the daily lives of most citizens. As such, not only are they affected by the filtering down of national conflict, but they in turn are also influential in determining the parameters within which national conflict is played out. Segregated residential patterns, mutual geographies of fear and a desire to control processes of resource allocation influence national decision-making as it relates to wider issues of conflict resolution. Moreover, the key processes of political socialization take place at the micro level, within the neighbourhood, the family, the school and the church. These geographical settings produce their own interactions and identities (Giddens, 1983). Agnew (1987, 1989) notes that the appeal of nationalism can only be satisfactorily understood by reference to the social contexts and milieux within which people carry out their everyday lives, while Taylor (1992a) stresses the reciprocal relationships that take place between global and micro contexts, especially between states, peoples, classes and households. He further notes that:

> The most visible relationship is between states and peoples as defined through the ideal of the homogeneous nation ... equally important are the links between households both as the purveyors of culture to produce peoples and as the creators of labour to produce classes. (Taylor, 1992b: 15–16)

The study of boundaries is one area within which the traditional distinction between national and local, macro and micro has been maintained. The comparison between social boundaries at the micro level and political boundaries at a macrological level might appear asymmetric at first glance. This is partly due to the differentiation between boundaries separating sovereign territories with other type of functional and administrative boundaries within the state, which do not possess aspects of sovereignty (Finer, 1974; Jenkins, 1989). Boundaries at the local level can exercise a strong influence on our daily lives even when they are not demarcated or delimited. These 'invisible' lines of separation occur where schools and residential neighbourhoods are segregated, family and religious values oppose intermarriage with other groups, and different ethnic groups occupy different positions and status within the workplace. The respective activity spaces of different ethnic groups is 'purified' (Sibley, 1988; Hoggett, 1992) and, as such, reflect spontaneous separation and 'ghettoization' without the need for formal boundaries.

Reorganising political space: changing boundary conceptions of Israelis and Palestinians

For both Israelis and Palestinians, perceptions of national territory and boundaries have changed according to the political time contexts within which they operate. The most significant of these changes concerns their respective transformations from a diaspora non-

state situation to one in which statehood has been (or will be) achieved. A diaspora situation allows for a more flexible perception of the territorial dimensions of the 'state-to-be'. It does not require the precise delimitation of fixed boundaries. As such, the diaspora territory is a maximalist one. For pre-state Zionists, such boundaries could theoretically extend up the biblical boundaries of a Greater Israel (*Eretz Yisrael*) from the Euphrates to the Nile, although there was always a clear core and periphery to this territory, centering on the area of Palestine and the city of Jerusalem. Biger (1981: 156) notes that pre-state Jewish concepts of territory were vague and that there was 'no single common territorial perception of Palestine'. Following the establishment of the state, the metaphysical 'Land of Israel' territory had to be transformed into a concrete reality, resulting in a problem of collective identity falling between 'primordial or civil' definitions (Kimmerling, 1983, 1985).

For Palestinians, the diaspora perception of territory consists of the whole of Palestine, including all the area within which Palestinian villages were to be found prior to the establishment of the State of Israel and the exodus of Palestinian refugees (W. Khalidi, 1992). The Palestinian National Charter of July 1968 defines this territory as constituting 'Palestine, with the boundaries it had during the British Mandate, as an indivisible territorial unit'. Palestinian folklore, speech, maps and textbooks stress the Arabic territorial identity of Palestine (*Filistin Arabiya*). Within Palestinian consciousness, Palestine is captured as a clearly defined territory, resulting from the recognition of the boundaries of the neighbouring states of Lebanon, Syria and Transjordan, all of which were established prior to 1948. The only area left under contention was that of Mandatory Palestine. As such, diaspora territories are the most conflictual because they desire exclusive rights to the same territory.

The transformation to statehood brings with it a more realistic and pragmatic approach as to what parts of the desired territory are really feasible. Faced with the option of taking control of part of the territory on which to exercise rights of self-determination, or alternatively to forego immediate statehood in the hope that at a future date the whole of the territory will be attained, a national group is unlikely to opt for the latter. Such was the case with the Jewish leadership and the 1947 partition resolution. Galnoor (1991) describes this as a victory of an instrumentalist pragmatic approach over an alternative approach that emphasizes expressive and ideological arguments. According to this, territory was simply a means for accomplishing other goals. The pragmatic approach would also appear to be the case with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the current peace process, in which the agreement to establish interim autonomy on a small territory as a first stage in the eventual founding of an independent state in the West Bank and Gaza represents a withdrawal from a territorial stance that is based on controlling the whole of Palestine.

From a territorial perspective, the roles of Israelis and Palestinians have been reversed since 1947. In the former period, the Jewish leadership were prepared to take whatever territory they were granted, so long as they could have an independent state, while the Palestinians were in a position to give territory had they agreed to the partition resolution. Today, it is the Israelis who are in the position of voluntarily ceding territory, while the Palestinians have now moved to a stance in which they are prepared to accept a much smaller territory, so long as they can obtain independence and statehood immediately, or as Edward Said (1992: 124—125) noted: 'Palestinian self determination has come to rest by and large on the need for an independent state on a liberated part of the original territory of Palestine'.

But while the existence of a sovereign state requires the more precise delimitation of boundaries, it does not mean that the aspirations for a larger territory, in line with

diaspora or pre-state thinking, automatically disappear. Territorial claims based on history remain entrenched within national consciousness and socialization (Burghardt, 1973; Murphy, 1990).

At the time of the UN partition resolution in 1947, the Palestinian population totalled 1.3 million. The subsequent Israeli–Arab War resulted in the uprooting of 750 000 Palestinians, leaving behind only 150 000 Arab residents within the territory that became the State of Israel. Some fled or were expelled to areas that did not fall to the Israeli army, which subsequently became known as the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Others sought refuge in the neighbouring countries of Egypt, Transjordan, Lebanon and Syria. By the time the armistice agreements were signed in 1949, some 77 percent of Mandatory Palestine had become the new State of Israel. The 1949 armistice lines of the Rhodes Agreement following the first Israeli–Arab War (Caplan, 1992) have been significantly altered and no longer represent the current reality. The region has experienced five additional wars since then, and the borders have been changed no less than eight times, leaving Israel in control of a much larger territorial expanse than that gained in 1948. The boundary between Israel and the West Bank changed even prior to 1967. Additional demilitarized areas along the border were annexed to Israel, while some existing Arab villages along border areas and the 'green line' were depopulated by Israel's military authorities and their residents resettled elsewhere in the country or expelled to Syria and Egypt (Jones, 1975; Jiryis, 1976; Bowen and Drake, 1992; Morris, 1993; Falah, 1995).

For the Jews, the establishment of sovereignty constituted the realization of Jewish national aspirations, while for the Palestinians it represented the replacement of an indigenous population by a non-indigenous settler colonial regime (Brand, 1988: 1). This internal contradiction between achieving immediate statehood within clearly defined boundaries and the continued desire for more expansive territorial control is best summed up in the following statement:

> There was a proposal to determine borders, and there was opposition to this proposal. We decided to *evade* (and I choose this word intentionally) the matter for a simple reason. If the UN fulfils all its resolutions and undertakings and maintains the peace and prevents bombardments and uses its powers to execute its own resolutions, then we on our part (and I express the opinion of the people) will honour all the resolutions in their entirety. So far the UN has not done so . . . Therefore, we are not bound by anything, and we left this matter open for developments. (David Ben-Gurion, 1948, quoted in Davis and Lehn, 1978: 4)

National interest, perceptions of threat and security claims

For both Israelis and Palestinians, the territorial demarcation of the state has to ensure security for both the individual and the collective. It is often difficult to distinguish between real and perceived threats. As Mroz (1980) notes, it is the nature of perceived threats that enables us to understand the security considerations put forward by any state. The dual concepts of national interest and security threat may be magnified as part of the socialization process. A similar argument has been directed at US policy concerning the Soviet threat during the Cold War era (Frei, 1986; Dalby, 1990). Dalby (1990) has described these tactics as consisting of 'security as spatial exclusion', while Paasi (1990) demonstrates how different contexts of security and threat can be managed through the socialization system in response to changing geopolitical realities. Central to this form of

socialization is the emphasis and focus on the 'others' as the prime source of the security threat. Eva (1994) argues that the concept of frontier/boundary involves a mental dimension closely linked to a feeling of security in the individual. The willingness of people to cooperate with each other only comes after they have developed an awareness of their external borders which, in turn, are based on perceptions of dangers built on fear or opposition of others (Eva, 1994: 379). To escape the psychological burden of living under threat, a society may stereotype the 'other' as constituting a collective threat. Thus, for Israelis, the Palestinians (and by extension the whole Arab world) are perceived as constituting an existential threat to the State of Israel, while to the Palestinians, Israel (and by extension, Zionism as an ideology) is perceived as aspiring to a complete transfer of Palestinian residents out of Israel/Palestine. Each is labelled as the 'cause' for the all-pervasive sense of vulnerability that haunts respective national consciousness and each refuses to recognize the symmetry in the perceived collective threat.

Israeli security discourse

Israel's security demands are essentially rooted in the definition of 'threat' as it is viewed in Israeli society and the way such a sense of threat is coped with psychologically and psychospatially. Generally, one could describe Israel as locked in a situation of either war or no-peace. This situation is basically rooted in the fact that the 1948 Israeli–Arab War, which accompanied the creation of the State of Israel, did not fulfil its original function of settling the fundamental dispute (Liddell-Hart, 1967: 42). In his analysis of Israeli foreign policy-making, Brecher (1972) stresses the role of national perceptions based on an image of a rigid and hostile world, within which the Arab nations only understand force. Studies of the perceptions of threat among Israeli Jews (Bar Tal, 1991; Peretz, 1991) are indicative of these attitudes. Since boundaries are shared by one or more states, the demands of one for a defensive boundary will often be at the expense of the other. It is unlikely that any sovereign state in the world will voluntarily give up part of its territory because its neighbour feels threatened. Yet other arrangements are often sought if necessary. The actual demarcation of boundaries has taken place with respect to Israel's security considerations. In each case of boundary, Israel has extended its 'buffer' territory beyond its sovereign space into the territory of its neighbours. The self-declared 'security zone' in Southern Lebanon (Beydoun, 1992; Norton and Schwedler, 1993), the multinational force deployed in the Sinai Peninsula, and the current demands for a demilitarized Golan Heights as part of a peace agreement (Cohen, 1992) are indicative of the primacy of these security considerations.

Withey and Katz (1965: 76) suggest three ways by which the 'national' interest can be disseminated by the political leadership. First, the national leader speaks to a whole population and not to one segment, thus obtaining support from the opposition parties as part of a national, rather than sectoral, issue. Secondly, the message is more powerful if the issue at hand is psychologically close to the lives of the people. Thirdly, the appeal to national interest concerns its substantive message in terms of the type of interest involved. The extent to which these three conditions apply in the Israeli case provides the social context in which security matters are nested in people's everyday reality.

Leaders are successful in uniting the people around security matters more than any other issue—essentially because the appeal to national security is related directly to the issue of protection against a dangerous enemy and involves the physical survival of one's family, friends and nation. The national threat is translated into reality at the micrological level. During parliamentary elections, retired army generals are often asked to give an

assessment of Israel's exposure to threat in the case of a withdrawal from the Occupied Territories. Despite the diversity of their opinions, their positions go a long way to reinforcing public perceptions as to whether such a withdrawal does or does not constitute a security risk to the state. The election campaign in Israel involves a significant element of debate over security matters and thus people generally vote with a sense of confidence (trust) that their party will not sacrifice state security.

On the degree of an individual's involvement in the national structure, Withey and Katz (1965: 70) state that 'people may not so much be tied into the national structure through taking on its ideology as they are when they take on the ideology because their way of life ties them into the nation'. Young adults are obliged to serve in the Israeli army for two—three years. Most men later serve in the reserve up to the age of 50 for a minimum of one month annually. The military establishment is probably the only institution in Israel that is connected in one way or another with most Israeli Jewish citizens. For males, this can involved over three decades of their life span—more than any other official institution. The Jewish male citizenry lives a bifurcated life, as private individuals and with a regular obligation (reserve army) for the fulfilment of national security duties. They are socialized into a concrete bond to the 'fragile, vulnerable' boundary mediated by their experience as soldiers, a bond that is constantly reproduced and reinforced.

The role of Israel's Peace Movement is interesting from this perspective. While there is a strong Peace Movement in Israel, this does not extend to an anti-nuclear movement calling for dismantling of nuclear bombs and other weapons. To focus on the state's nuclear weaponry might be interpreted as a bid to weaken Israel's military capability more generally. Peace activists also tend to downplay direct criticism of the Israeli army or soldiers' behaviour against the Palestinian population in the Occupied Territories or elsewhere, directing their protest to the politicians instead.

Soffer and Minghi (1986) discuss the impact of security considerations on the formation of Israel's human landscapes, resulting from the 'necessity to defend a state (territory)'. Israeli settlement policy in border regions has also traditionally been linked with security and defence considerations (Kimmerling, 1983; Newman, 1989; Kellerman, 1993). Other civilian settlements, both within Israel and the Occupied Territories, are surrounded by security fences aimed at protecting the inhabitants from real and perceived external threats. Not only do such residential spatial arrangements demonstrate a profound psychological preoccupation with security at the micrological level of everyday life, they also raise question marks concerning the extent to which the 'controller' really 'controls'.

The content of messages spread among individuals and that which passes from leaders to masses is a key factor in the cultivation of threat. Such discourse ultimately has a dual purpose: to unite the people around an issue closest to their physical survival while at the same time effectively labelling the enemy as the physical source of the threat. Looking at the content of Israeli discourse relating to the wider Israeli-Arab conflict, pre-state Jewish history has been systematically utilized and incorporated in such messages with special attention given to the Holocaust (Hirst, 1977; Friedman, 1993: A1; Roy, 1993).

In addition to the historical arguments, geography too plays an important role in cultivating a sense of threat, particularly in legitimating the concept of spatial vulnerability. The smallness of Israel's territory compared with the large space that Arab countries enjoy (Allon, 1976: 38), the distance of border areas to major Jewish population concentrations and the possibility that the country could be cut into two (Cohen, 1986), and topographical disadvantages, specifically along the 'green line' (Allon, 1976; Cohen,

1986; Newman, 1994) and Israel's pre-1967 border with Syria (Haupert, 1969; Salisbury, 1972; Harris, 1978; Brawer, 1988), are all used as a means of demonstrating this spatial vulnerability.

In terms of security, each successive change in the political map from 1947 through until 1967 has brought about more secure and more easily defensible boundaries. The worst boundaries for Israel would have been those of the UN Partition resolution, while the most easily defensible are those of post-1967. The withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula as part of the Camp David Peace Accords between Israel and Egypt was accompanied by a compensatory security shield in the form of a multinational peace force. Yet this has not served to reduce the perceived level of the feeling of collective threat within the country.

Palestinian security discourse

While commentators single out Israel's need for security as compared with the Palestinians' rights to self-rule, the Palestinian need for security has been taken for granted or appeared to be self-evident. Indeed, if Palestinians have to conceptualize threat according to Israeli criteria, then they would have to live in a perpetual nightmare of fear. However, this does not imply that the Palestinians' needs for security are less than those of Israel. We suggest two reasons why notions of Palestinian security needs have not emerged as a central focus for debate. First, the Palestinian political discourse has concentrated on the struggle for statehood and on activities aimed at ensuring that the Palestinians themselves will determine their ultimate fate. Secondly, while Palestinians have focused on security issues as they affect the individual and the family, Israel has emphasized issues of state and national security. In terms of international perceptions of what constitutes a security debate, it is the national, rather than the individual, level which takes prominence. For Israelis, security is determined by the continued existence of the state, while for Palestinians it is the establishment of a state which provides the essential security umbrella. For the Palestinians, as with the Israelis, victimization plays a major element in their perceptions of security. This stems from their situation as refugees and their treatment both by Israel within the Occupied Territories and by many of the countries within which they found refuge (Abu-Lughod, 1988; Brand, 1988; Said, 1992). Seeing themselves as constituting the 'victims of the victims' and being denied the same right to self-determination that was afforded Israel only serves to make the national struggle more bitter. Palestinians view their struggle for statehood as the only way to put an end to the plight, which can best be described today as that of a people in exile, both within Palestine and the Diaspora (Abu-Lughod, 1988; Said, 1992). While many of the Palestinians who became refugees in 1948 are no longer alive, the younger generations have only known a situation of exile and/or occupation and continue to live under threat (Sayigh, 1993), if only by virtue of their being controlled by other sovereign powers.

Notwithstanding this, there are various degrees of threat to which Palestinians are subject and which reflect the socio-political conditions within the space that they occupy. In all localities—be it within Israel, under military occupation or within neighbouring Arab states—Palestinians have had to adjust to the imposition of control. Palestinians have engaged in armed conflict with Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, while relations with other Arab countries have had their ups and downs (Said, 1992: xi). The impact of these events on local Palestinian communities has often been devastating. Within Lebanon, Palestinians have been living in extremely difficult conditions since the outbreak of civil strife in the mid-1970s, resulting in the loss of over 20 000 of their compatriots (R. Khalidi,

1992: 36). The type of threat momentarily experienced by the Israeli population in the wake of the Iraqi missiles falling on Tel Aviv during the 1990 Gulf War has been experienced by Palestinians in Lebanese refugee camps for many years. Thus, at the micro level, security for Palestinians means being able to settle in a safe place and to survive as human beings.

The lack of a secure situation is rooted in the degrading material circumstances of a refugee population (Said, 1992: 126). The fact that Palestinians are culturally part of the Arab world has never been a strong ideological reason to be absorbed or welcomed in the Arab world (Brand, 1988: 10—11). For their part, Palestinians have not generally sought to be assimilated within their host countries. During the immediate post-war (1948 and 1967) years, their immediate preoccupation was with survival. Those living outside Israel and the Occupied Territories seek self-determination outside the countries within which they reside. As with all diaspora nationalisms, Palestinians seek rights as a means rather than as an end (Brand, 1988: 11). The quest for an independent Palestinian state is essentially linked to individual and community security needs and as the only way by which to guarantee their protection and basic human rights (Sayigh, 1993).

Security arguments for the Palestinians emanate from three different sources: mistrust, intention and geography. Concerning mistrust, the Arab world perceives Israel as a country that systematically disregards international law and does not pursue true peace. Mistrust is also directed towards the wider international community for its 'double standards' in treating Middle East conflicts. There is a widely held belief that the international community only uses armed intervention to make Arab countries comply with international law and UN resolutions, but not Israel (Imsalam, 1993: 31). Palestinians also mistrust the other Arab countries in that they do not believe that the latter would be prepared to engage in full-scale warfare should a future Palestinian state be attacked by Israel. This belief was strengthened in the wake of Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982.

In the domain of intention, Sayigh (1993: 5—6) suggests three ways in which the territorial integrity of a Palestinian state could be threatened. First, a threat may emanate from Israeli settler and other extreme groups who might undertake militant activities in order to undermine and destabilize a Palestinian state. A second source of threat could emanate from retired army generals and government functionaries, while a third possible source of threat is the Israeli government itself, both as a result of over-reaction to political and military developments within the Palestinian state or as a result of a change in government within Israel itself. From a geographic perspective, Palestinians also have a right to demand a defensible border. Political geographers have often pointed to the disparity of military power between neighbouring countries as a source of conflict, such as Iraq and Kuwait, Syria and Lebanon, Turkey and Cyprus. This may be exacerbated when the weaker of the states occupies a buffer territory between larger military powers. This situation describes the position of a small Palestinian state squeezed between Israel to the east, and Jordan, Iraq and Syria to the west. The Palestinian state may find itself at best as a land passage, and at the worst a battlefield, for armies crossing from one side to the other. While threats to a Palestinian state may exist from Arab countries, the real perception of threat will be from Israel. A West Bank state will closely resemble an enclave, surrounded on three sides by Israeli territory. Palestinians will demand security guarantees, such as demilitarization or the presence of international forces along its border with Israel, similar in nature to the security demands made by Israel.

A further geo-security problem concerns the territorial discontinuity of a state consisting of two separate units, requiring a territorial corridor through Israel. This makes

the situation of a Palestinian state even more vulnerable in times of regional crisis. Renewed conflict could result in Israel cutting the link between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, while the ability of Israel to implement a sea blockade of the Gaza Strip is also perceived as a major security threat. The Palestinian borders with Jordan and Egypt are therefore of major geopolitical importance in that they provide the West Bank and the Gaza Strip respectively with alternative strategic outlets. For this reason, Palestinians will strongly oppose the notion of Israeli military presence along either of these two borders. Finally, the southern section of the West Bank is linked to Jerusalem and to the northern section by a single road. In times of conflict, this artery could easily be cut, resulting in the isolation of major Palestinian population centres and also preventing contact between the northern section of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Each of the respective security arguments for Israelis and Palestinians are rejected by the 'other'. As with the case of the USA and the former Soviet Union documented by Frei (1986), there has been evaluative symmetry in that the two sides have applied different standards when evaluating their own actions and those of the adversary, as well as repudiating the use of similar argumentation, discourse and standards by the other side (Frei, 1986: 270). Palestinians reject the notion that Israel has anything to fear from a separate state, while Israelis view Palestinian fears of a future Israeli invasion as unfounded. Each sees the others' use of the security argument as being used in order to justify the demands for defensible boundaries and demilitarization. From the case of the military and defensive boundary, we now turn to a different type of boundary, one which is ethno-demographic in nature and which is based on ideological considerations of vertical and horizontal purity.

The purification of space

The way in which space is purified in order to meet a people's desire for retention of a specific ethnic character is also a key factor for understanding reactions to external threat. The external threat is translated into an internal threat posed by members of any (minority) ethnic or national group that identifies with the external force. Thus, the national (macro) conflict is transformed to the local (micro) realm of spatial activity inasmuch as it relates to survival strategies. The social environment and type of experiences with other communities over time create conditions for sharpening ethnic and national identity. Eventually, this will precipitate boundaries, 'purified' spaces and further segregation. The use of the term 'purification' relates to processes of territorial exclusivity and homogeneity as they emerge from the micro to macro levels of spatial activity.

Eva (1994: 379) notes that the notion of internal homogeneity as defined within the nation-state construct is intentioned to guarantee the safety of the citizens of that state by considering them to be 'equal, undiscriminated and similar'. Sibley's (1988: 409) notion that the 'purification of social space . . . involves the rejection of differences and the securing of boundaries to maintain homogeneity' is instructive. Barth notes that:

> . . . boundaries persist despite a flow of personnel across them . . . categorical ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of mobility, contact and information, but do entail social processes of exclusion and incorporation whereby discrete categories are maintained despite changing participation and membership in the course of individual life histories. (Barth, 1969: 10)

The practices of spatial organization and boundary formation are underpinned by how the society defines itself ideologically. We suggest here that the debate concerning

boundaries within the Israel/Palestine context has much deeper psychological and perceptual roots than simply the pragmatic drawing of lines separating two sovereign entities. Jews and Arabs perceive themselves as distinctly separate cultural entities. They operate within a dual functional space, in which meaningful interaction is kept to the minimum, both through policies of voluntary self-segregation as well as exclusion of the other group from its own mono-ethnic activity space.

The current internal debate in Israeli society is thus not 'whether or not to be(come) a binational society', but 'what should be the boundaries as the consequent character of this binational society' (Portugali, 1993: 180). The fear of diluting the Jewish character of the state as a result of demographic changes is probably the most important single factor determining future territorial policy. It is interesting that much of the emphasis on the danger of forfeiting the 'Jewish character' of the state has been associated with issues related to infringing upon and compromising Israel's democratic character and its territorial integrity. Little has been said about the essential validity (or advantages) of maintaining Jewish character, which is taken for granted as a desideratum. The consensus regarding the definition of Israel as a 'Jewish state' is so deeply entrenched in the mentality that any challenge to such hegemony is often interpreted as the destruction of Israel. For an Israeli Jew, this constitutes the basic *raison d'etre* of the state's existence. For Palestinians, this constitutes the denial of self-determination. A useful tack for understanding the genesis of fear as emanating from a radical dilution of the state's Jewish character is to address the inner psychological world of the individual. Here Hoggett's (1992) notions regarding 'place of experience' are a possible angle for a more psychoanalytically weighted perspective on individual fear. Utilizing Hoggett's concept of 'social medium', we can argue that losing the Jewish character of the state bears a close resemblance to a case where individuals face a situation of imminent catastrophe. This also explains why Israel has always rejected the notion of a secular binational state, as originally proposed by the PLO in the late 1960s.

Intra-state purification: the Israeli context

In looking at the social, economic and political domains in Israel, one can find numerous examples in which spatial (e.g. occupation-linked and residential) reality has been structured along ethnic lines. At the micro level, this is implemented by a variety of gatekeeping policies. This is apparent in immigration policy, housing and employment, within all of which Jewish—Arab segregation and separation are major components.

Israel is self-defined as a 'Jewish State' to which Jews from all over the world can immigrate at any time and become instant citizens. The processes of Jewish emigration into Israel were bolstered by specific legislation (i.e. the Law of Return) aimed at creating a Jewish majority as well as the establishment of *ad hoc* official (or semi-official) agencies to bring Jews to Israel. Davis and Lehn (1978) have analysed the Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel. They note that the document applied specifically to the establishment of a Jewish state. According to Davis and Lehn (1978: 5), proposed amendments, which would equally have stressed sovereignty and independence and not just the Jewish character of the state, were not accepted. Equal rights for all citizens were categorically stated in the Declaration of Independence, but this can be interpreted as being relevant only inasmuch as the rights of ethnic minorities (in this case Arabs citizens) do not interfere with the rights of the Jewish majority, for whom the state was established. In their study of Israeli public opinion on peace and the territories, Shamir and Shamir

(1993: 85—87) note that the concept of a Jewish majority was one of the two most important values in understanding how these opinions are formed. This conception of the Jewish state formed the blueprint for classifying space at the macro level of the state and at lower meso (settlement and neighbourhood) and micro levels.

The debate concerning the maintenance of a Jewish demographic majority within the state became more complex as a result of the large Arab minority (16 percent) which is perceived by some as posing a serious 'internal threat' (Yiftachel, 1992). From a micro-regional perspective, parts of the Galilee region contain a significant Arab majority (over 75 percent). The occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with their large Palestinian populations, has only served to highlight the demographic issue, especially as it relates to the demarcation of territory (Friedlander and Goldscheider, 1974; Romann, 1989; Newman, 1991). There is no optimum balance between demography and territory at the macro scale. Friedlander and Goldscheider (1974) have discussed the demographic implications of four territorial alternatives, ranging from a 'minimalist' solution of pre-1967 Israel plus East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, to a 'maximalist' solution encompassing Israel and all of the Occupied Territories. The larger the territory, the greater the degree of binationality. The smaller the respective territories, the greater the degree of ethnic purity at meso and micro spatial levels.

Local space is purified, as settlements become increasingly mono-ethnic, while within so-called 'mixed communities', different neighbourhoods take on mono-ethnic characteristics. Within Israel, the planning mechanisms and the housing market both work to enforce this process of spatial exclusion and purity. Most towns and villages are either Arab or Jewish. The 'mixed' towns within Israel have clearly segregated Arab neighbourhoods (Falah, 1992, 1993). An important condition for state mortgage eligibility or residence status within rural villages is dependent on the applicants having fulfilled their obligatory army service. Arab residents of Israel are exempt from military service and, as such, are by definition not entitled to the same mortgage benefits as their fellow citizens. This is a refined form of managerial control of the housing market. Similarly, within rural communities founded by the Settlement Department of the Jewish Agency, only Jewish residents are entitled to housing. Since the Jewish Agency is not formally a state institution, it is entitled to discriminate in its gatekeeping policies. This is an example of institutionalization of the purification of settlement.

Initiative for purification of settlement also comes from the people themselves. Smooha (1992) has documented several cases in which the rent and sale of houses to Arab citizens have been prevented. Private landlords and neighbourhood committees can function to enhance ethnic or religious homogeneity by barring certain persons from renting or buying into the neighbourhood. In one extreme case, a grassroots movement of Jewish residents in Upper Nazareth was formed in an attempt to pressure other Jewish residents not to sell their apartments to Arabs (Smooha, 1992: 246).

The purification of residential space is different depending on the scale and the political perspective. Thus, Jewish settlers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip argue that any attempt to remove their settlements is tantamount to purification. They do not accept the purification argument with respect to Arab citizens in Israel. The existence of a 16 percent minority population is, to them, evidence of the existence of an ethnic minority amongst a majority, and on the basis of this they search for symmetry. This argument has its flaws. In the first place, the settlers do not reside within the sovereign territory of the State of Israel, unlike the case of Israel's minorities. Moreover, it is highly unlikely that the Jewish settlers would accept a form of symmetry by which they would reside in Palestinian sovereign space.

The employment market is also characterized by segregative tendencies. Job advertisements in Israeli daily newspapers, Jewish factories and job offers routinely stipulate the requirement that only applicants who have served in the Israeli army can be considered. As in the case of public sector mortgages, Israeli Arab citizens who are not requested to do such service are effectively excluded. It is often contended that the military stipulation is due to the security needs of some of the workplaces. Carmi and Rosenfeld (1992) have noted that the absence of Arab employees from nearly all government ministries, such as transportation, economic affairs and housing, has been rationalized on 'security' grounds, despite the fact that these ministries deal with basic developmental issues that are of equal relevance to the whole population.

Palestinian perspectives on purification

The discussion on Israeli purification focused on the state as the agent for socio-spatial engineering. It is therefore not possible to compare Palestinian perspectives on purification using the same parameters. A survey of the constitutions of most Arab countries 'reveals an explicit insistence on the identification of the state as Islamic and/or Arab' (Korany, 1987: 9). Within the context of a Palestinian state, one may argue that the nature of purification will be a function of the way in which the Palestinian state is self-defined as an exclusively Arab state. Within the Arab League, Palestine already has the status of a fully fledged state, defined *de facto* as an Arab state, with embassies and representatives in many Arab capital cities.

Contextually, concepts of purification have to deal with various issues, ranging from the macro to the micro levels of analysis. Within the Middle East and North Africa there was a long tradition of Jewish communities, but the areas within which they were to be found nevertheless retained their identity as constituting 'Arab' spaces. Despite the fact that immediately prior to 1948 approximately a third of Palestine's population was Jewish, the country continued to be perceived as an Arab entity. The changed demographic situation that resulted from the mass exodus of Palestinian refugees and the arrival of Jewish immigrants did not change the Arab image of Palestine as an Arab country.

Imsalam (1993) has discussed three scenarios for arriving at a solution to the Palestinian problem. Each of these has ramifications for the issues of statehood and space purification. The first option perceives the conflict as an existential issue in that the very existence of Israel by definition negates the existence of a Palestinian entity, and vice versa. According to this view, there can be no conflict resolution other than the victory of one side and the submission of the other. This exemplifies purification in its purest form. From a Palestinian perspective, this is impractical at present as it necessitates the military defeat of Israel. In some respects, this option is similar to the earlier proposals of the PLO aimed at 'the reconstitution of Palestine as a democratic non-sectarian republic for Palestinian Arabs and Israeli Jews, in which all communities share a common homeland with equal rights and obligations' (Center for Policy Analysis on Palestine, 1992: i). While this solution would also result in the elimination of Jewish sovereignty and state *raison d'etre*, it constitutes an anti-purification thesis in that it requires the two peoples to share space. Under a democratic regime, the Palestinians are most likely to assume power as a result of their demographic majority, following the return of refugees.

A second option is the partition of Palestine into two states on the basis of existing UN Resolutions (242 and 338). Israeli identity has to be territorially defined and limited within these boundaries. As such, conflict resolution focuses on traditional positional dispute between two politico-territorial entities. This solution is the most acceptable to

the international community. But from the Palestinian perspective it does not provide an answer to the problem of the existence of 60 percent of the Palestinian population who reside outside Palestine, many of whom wish to return to their former homes. But this solution does provide for the purification of 23 percent of Palestine as an exclusively Palestinian entity. In terms of a political solution, this would necessitate the evacuation of all Jewish settlements from the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and Gaza.

Within the framework of a two-state solution, the issue of Arab citizens of Israel remains problematic from the purification perspective. How many, if any, of these citizens would be prepared to relocate to a new Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza in a process of 'self-ethnic cleansing'? There are three good reasons why this is unlikely to take place. In the first place, any voluntary decision by Arabs/Palestinians to leave this territory would, in effect, represent the final giving up of any claims for Palestinian presence within all of Palestine. Secondly, despite their politically inferior status, Arab citizens of Israel are nevertheless sufficiently integrated into the economic, social and bureaucratic systems of the state for them to feel more comfortable with these systems than with the unknown of a new state undergoing its formative stages of development. It is also possible that given a lasting peace, and the subsequent removal of the perception of existential threat within Israel, Arab citizens of the country may become even more integrated at the political and administrative levels of state activity. Finally, even assuming a desire on the part of some to relocate, their immediate need is far less pressing than that of the Palestinian refugees. As such, Israel will remain a country which possesses a significant Arab minority amongst its residents.

An entirely different perspective for conflict resolution is implicit within a third option. This entails the establishment of a single state covering the whole of Palestine, but within which neither of the two national groups will attempt to gain political supremacy. This is based on the concept of equal human rights for all the inhabitants of that territory. This does not require the elimination of Israeli sovereignty or associated names, but rather the restructuring of the core content of the state. Palestinians and Jews will both have an automatic and inherent 'right of return'. There would be no limitations on the rights to residence in any particular area —Palestinian refugees could return to areas within pre-1967 Israel, while Jewish settlers could remain within the West Bank. Within the state, there would be equal access to resources and employment opportunities, based on ability rather than ethnic identity. According to Imsalam (1993), this is the most equitable solution as it ensures the basic human rights of all residents and removes the physical threat that either group perceives from the 'other'. In terms of purification, there is likely to be much voluntary segregation at the micro level of settlements and neighbourhoods, while the engineered purification of space at the level of the state will cease to occur.

While the idealistic content of the third proposal is more acceptable from a humanistic perspective, the present political realities would suggest that both sides feel more comfortable with a two-state solution. This requires territorial separation and the redrawing of internal boundaries within Israel/Palestine. In each case, it is in the interests of the Palestinians not to pursue a blatant purification thesis at this stage as such a policy would be counter-productive. The presence of Jewish residents in Israel cannot be used as a reason to prevent the return of Palestinian refugees. We would argue that this is again indicative of the difference between state and non-state strategies. An existing state is empowered to implement policies of socio-spatial engineering in favour of the dominant national group, while groups aspiring to

statehood are unlikely to emphasize such policies during the formative stages of the process.

Concluding remarks

In this paper, an attempt has been made to introduce the respective Israeli and Palestinian boundary discourse, focusing on the quest for secure and safe spaces. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has reached a stage in which re-partition of the region would appear to be the most realistic option facing the two sides. The implementation of a solution based on partition raises pressing questions concerning the nature of both the territorial and group boundaries. We have suggested that an initial question concerns 'why draw a line?' Such an approach looks at the way by which boundaries separate groups rather than territories, focusing on processes of self-sorting, purification of space and group cultural self-definition, rather than the exclusivity of historical and ideological claims. This requires an analysis of the aspatial realms within which the basic human rights of all peoples and individuals are recognised, through the interiorization of the principle of equality (Eva, 1994).

Contextually, the two major boundary constructs discussed in this paper— security and space purification—have become enfolded within each other as spatial manifestations of threat posed by the 'other'. Further elaboration is necessary concerning the perceptions of internal and external sources of threat and the way in which they are linked with, and feed on, each other. Instead of addressing fears as part of the inner world of the psyche, essentially emanating from an inner desire for homogeneity, the Israeli discourse has shifted to an analysis of the external world. We would argue that there is a basic misconception concerning the perceived linkage between the physical and demographic threats. Both internal and external threats are used to raise basic existential issues facing Israel as a state, and the Jewish people as its basic social construct. A threat to the demographic nature of the state is interpreted as also constituting a threat to the physical security of the Jewish population. This does not have to be the case. As such, the quest for continued hegemony relates also to Arab (Palestinian) citizens of Israel who are continuously asked to prove their 'loyalty' to the state, despite the fact that there is no interiorization of equality, nor can there be within a nation-state.

Palestinians too have claims for securing a 'safe haven' within Palestine. At this point in time, their claims are even more pressing as a result of their stateless condition, coupled with the fact that they are living under external control. Lines for a Palestinian state have to be drawn within Palestine, enabling the establishment of a core area in which Palestinian self-determination may materialize. The purification of space is not a necessary prerequisite of this process but is likely to accompany the dynamics of state formation. But in the short term, it is important to attain a viable home, in which Palestinians are empowered as sovereign equals and within which refugees who so desire can return.

The creation of a Palestinian state, together with regional security arrangements between Israel, Syria and Jordan, will result in a transformation of concepts of 'security' and 'threat' as they relate to the current protagonists. The removal of the physical threat will enable a change in focus to the security of the individual and his/her economic, family and basic human rights. As such, the focus will shift away from the macro level of state analysis to that of the micro—the family and the individual. The whole concept of boundaries, as they relate to the Israel–Palestine context, will change, strengthening Giddens's (1987: 51) definition of borders as constituting no more than arbitrary lines.

Such an approach expands the horizon of boundary studies by inserting meaning into a multi-boundary functional framework and by emphasizing the relationship between micro and macro scales of analysis.

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