

# Arrested in Place:

Palestinian Children and Families Experiences with  
Visible and Invisible Borders

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Centre for Research on Children and Families (CRCF) Research Seminar

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# Background

- Palestinians make up half the world's refugees population; children are 50%
- rights, protection and well-being viewed through lens of occupation, annexation, and ongoing forced displacement
- war is not the only trauma

# Research Question:

What are the socio-spatial implications of occupation and violence on young children and their families?

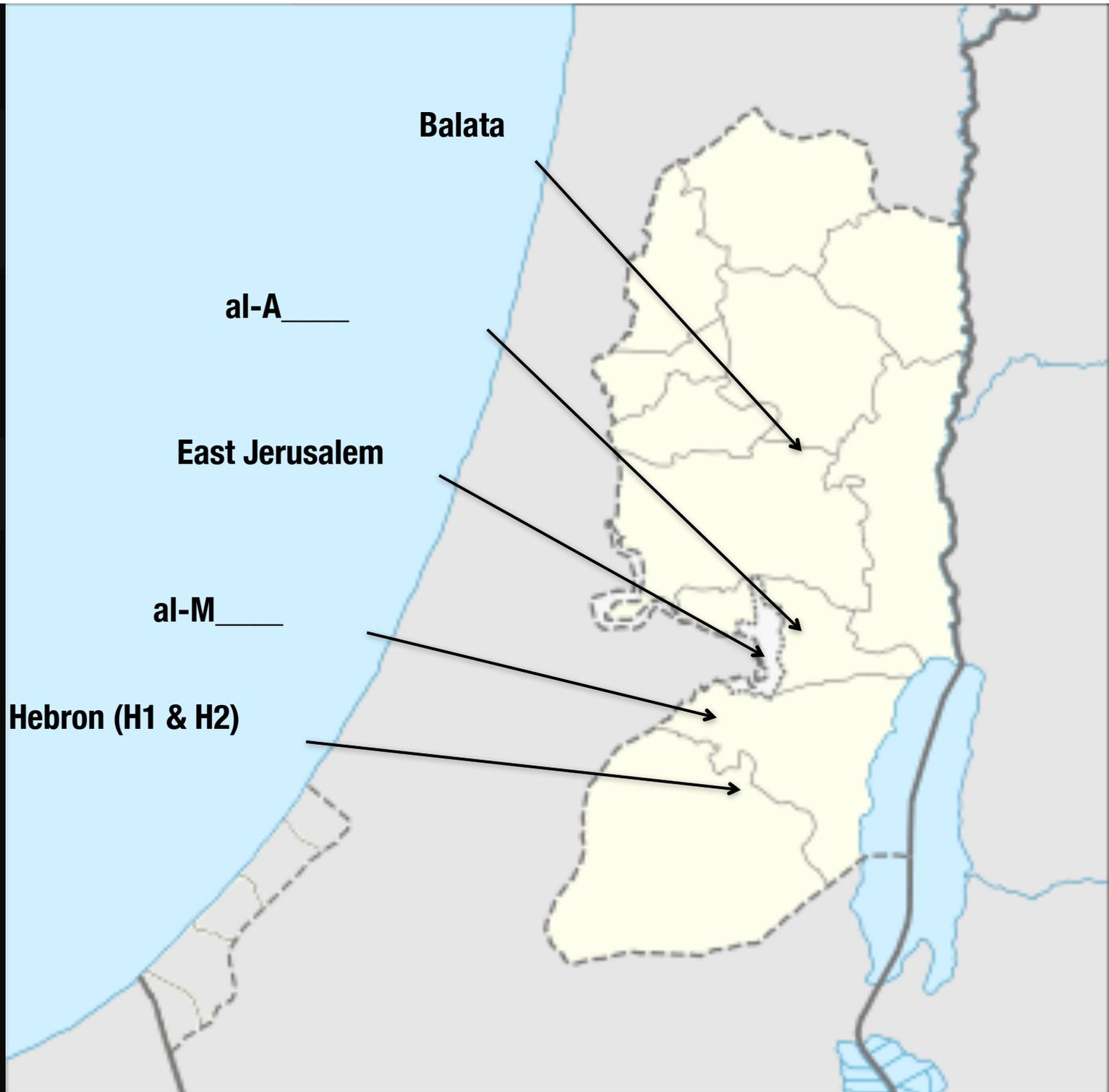
- What is the concept and meaning of “place” for children and families?
- How do families and communities mediate children’s placemaking processes?
- What methodologies can be used effectively with young children and their families?

# Research Plan

- Phase I: Pilot study in Montreal  
(Winter 2010)
- Phase II: Field visit to oPt  
(Spring 2010)
- Phase III: Primary data collection in oPt  
(Winter-Spring 2012)

# Site Selection

Area	Site	Setting Type	Security Control	Civilian Control	Area (km2)	Population (Palestinian)
A	Balata	Refugee Camp	Palestinian	Palestinian	1	30,000
B	al-M____	Village	Israeli	Palestinian	2	1,000
C	al-A____	Bedouin Encampment	Israeli	Israeli	5	100
H1	Hebron - H1	City	Palestinian	Palestinian	18	140,000
H2	Hebron - H2	City	Israeli	Israeli	4.5	30,000
C	East Jerusalem	City	Israeli	Israeli	70	260,800



**Balata**

**al-A\_\_\_\_**

**East Jerusalem**

**al-M\_\_\_\_**

**Hebron (H1 & H2)**

# Sampling

- purposive sampling from multiple sites
- 3 families from each site (A, B, C, H1, H2, E1) with:
  - young child 8-and-under
  - older child over 8
  - primary caregiver

# Methods of Data Collection

- participant observation

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- participant observation
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- GPS-tracked neighborhood walk
- key informant interviews (n=10)

# Sample Demographics

	Index Family		Non-Index Family		Total
Adults (18+)	Male (Dad)	9	Male	8	17
	Female (Mom)	16	Female	17	33
	25		25		50
Children (<18)	Male	45	Male	10	55
	Female	33	Female	11	44
	78		21		99
Total	103		46		149

# Sample Characteristics

	Completed <i>Tarjehe</i> ?		Employed (outside home)?		Index School-Age Children Attending School?
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	
Yes	4	7	9	3	60
No	14	12	9	16	8
<b>Total (n)</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19*</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19*</b>	<b>68</b>

\* Some families had multiple wives; one family's mother was deceased.

# Data Analysis

- grounded theory approach  
(Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994)
- QDA software: Dedoose

Mapping Children's Place in the oPt

Users: 1

Resources: 24

Descriptors: 13

Excerpts: 1598

Tags: 213

Tag Apps: 3392

- Codes**
- education
  - methodology
  - occupation
  - place
    - (no) sense of community
    - (threatened with) leaving/moving/fleeing from/...
    - being lost without place
    - difference between places
    - dream places
    - fighting for/defending place
    - hamula as place
    - having no place to go
    - history of place
    - home/village/community as a prison
    - improving/rebuilding/protecting place
    - marking place
    - meaning/importance of place
    - nostalgia
    - place access
    - place attachment
    - place familiarity
    - place identity
    - safe/good/favorite place
    - there is nothing here
    - unsafe/bad/negative places
    - protecting children
    - raising children
    - resilience/coping/resistance

Media: 24

Title	Added	User	# Ex	Length
3-MSF Interview Transcript_12April2012.doc	12/27/2012	baa15	1	14962
Balata2 Interview Transcript_27March2012.doc	11/13/2012	baa15	64	64806
Balata3 Interview Transcript_27March2012.doc	11/13/2012	baa15	63	61458
2012_OPT Research Journal.docx	11/22/2012	baa15	0	467924
EJ1 Interview Transcript_24April2012.doc	11/26/2012	baa15	184	169433
EJ2 Interview Transcript_25April2012.doc	12/26/2012	baa15	101	102059
EJ3 Interview Transcript_25April2012.doc	12/26/2012	baa15	95	93350
HebronH2-1 Interview Transcript_31March2012.doc	12/27/2012	baa15	76	108379
HebronH2-2 Interview Transcript_31March2012.doc	12/27/2012	baa15	93	96462
HebronH2-3 Interview Transcript_31March2012.doc	12/27/2012	baa15	78	111222
1-EAPPI Interview Transcript_9April2012.doc	12/27/2012	baa15	40	47442
2-AAJCS Interview Transcript_11April2012.doc	12/27/2012	baa15	40	30942
Balata1 Interview Transcript_26March2012.doc	11/13/2012	baa15	65	60564
4-PRC Interview Transcript_14April2012.doc	12/27/2012	baa15	0	40301
5-YMCA Interview Transcript_16April2012.doc	12/27/2012	baa15	0	46698
HebronH1-1 Interview Transcript_30March2012.doc	12/29/2012	baa15	57	72950
HebronH1-2 Interview Transcript_30March2012.doc	12/29/2012	baa15	109	91148
HebronH1-3 Interview Transcript_30March2012.doc	12/29/2012	baa15	88	116106
Villana1 Interview Transcript_14April2012.doc	11/07/2012	baa15	80	68636

Excerpts: 1598

Resource: **Bedouin3 Interview Transcript\_17April2012.doc** Added 03/10/2013 Username: baa15 # Codes: 0

NH: Give her the chocolate.  
BA: I don't want to give it to her now, because they [children] will go crazy.  
NH: You don't give it to her...

Resource: **Bedouin3 Interview Transcript\_17April2012.doc** Added 03/10/2013 Username: baa15 # Codes: 0

BA: (to NH) Cousin5M drew this, and I wanted to know what he drew. (referring to Drawing19).  
NH: He ran away.  
BA: He ran away?

Resource: **Bedouin3 Interview Transcript\_17April2012.doc** Added 03/10/2013 Username: baa15 # Codes: 0

OK, do you have any other questions for me. Maybe I ask Mom first, and then the children.  
NH: You give the chocolate?  
BA: Yes, but it is for the mom though. But I want to ask if they have any questions for me, or if mom has any questions for me...

Resource: **Bedouin3 Interview Transcript\_17April2012.doc** Added 03/10/2013 Username: baa15 # Codes: 0

Cousin5M: (shows BA another drawing)  
BA: Wow, Cousin5M.  
Child9M: (steals the drawing away from Cousin5M)...

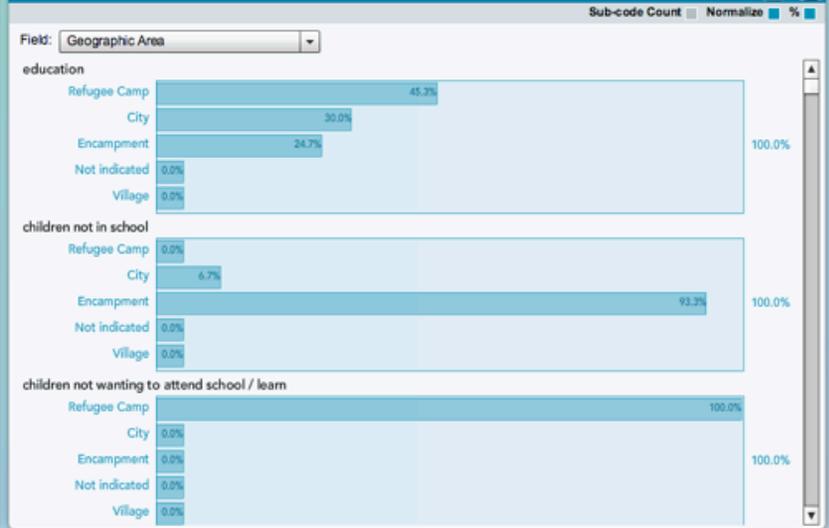
Resource: **Bedouin3 Interview Transcript\_17April2012.doc** Added 03/10/2013 Username: baa15 # Codes: 0

BA: (to NH) OK, is there anything else.  
NH: (to BA) I missed it.  
BA: It's OK. I thought she said something else.

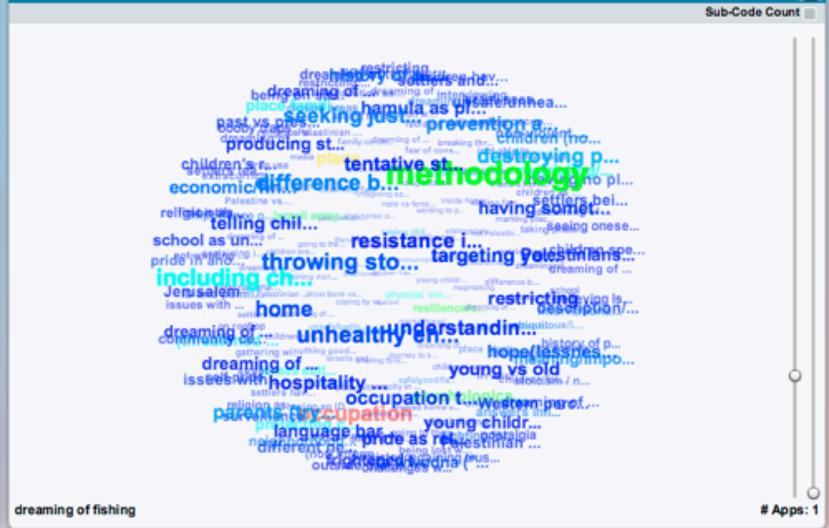
Resource: **Bedouin3 Interview Transcript\_17April2012.doc** Added 03/10/2013 Username: baa15 # Codes: 0

BA: I just wanted to ask, something I didn't ask, about raising Child4F.  
Child9M: (yelling and mimicking BA) Child4F! Child4F!

Codes By Descriptor



Code Cloud



# Major Research Themes

- the concept and meaning of place  
(e.g., home, schools, playspaces, neighborhoods, borders, nation-state)
- child protection mechanisms  
(e.g., indigenous and formal)
- psychosocial impact of political violence through the life cycle  
(e.g., young children, older children, adults)

# Borders

- Visible

- Invisible



# “Matrix of Control”

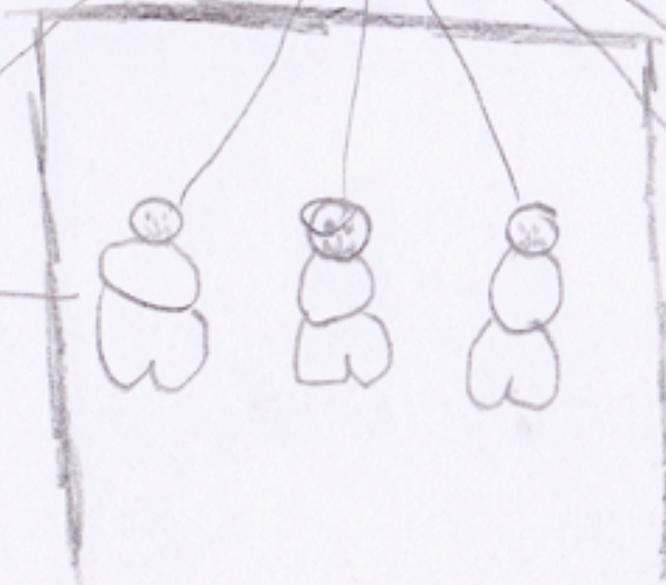
(Halper, 2000)

- creates artificial borders, limits movement within/ across borders, and suppresses human development
- disallows movement and freedom
- contributes to the “hollowing” of Palestinian land  
(Weizman, 2007)
- creates new “facts on the ground” marking Israel’s presence and re-signifying the landscape



# Everyday Negotiations with Visible Borders

people

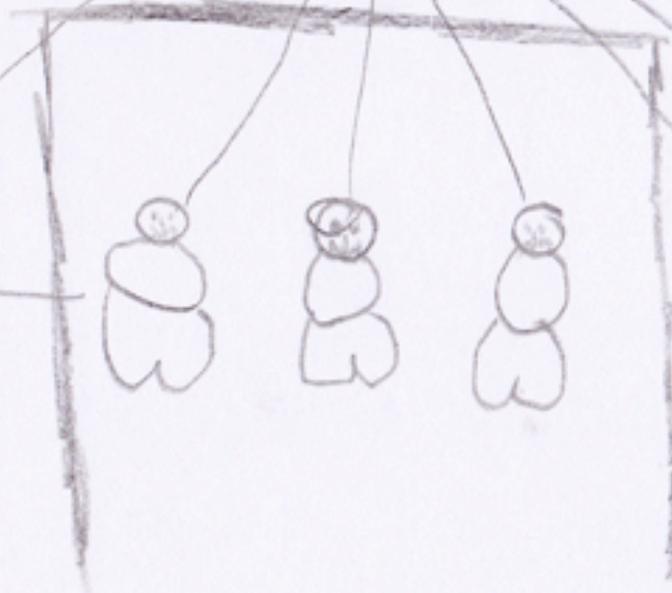


They



Mourad: This is me, OK? *(pointing to right-hand figure in drawing)* I wake up in the morning. I put on my clothes. My father drives me to the checkpoint, because of the traffic.... Like, [the checkpoint] is far away, like, 15 minutes. I get to the checkpoint. I am the last one *(laughing)*. There are some people after me *(laughing)*. OK, this is the entrance to the gate. And, they [Israeli soldiers] all have their guns and arms. You know, the gate in the checkpoint that moves like a circle? ... So, it's like, a big man is there, by the ones who move with him. So, you can imagine three or four men coming inside the gate. Then they close it for ten minutes. Then they open it again. And, you know, children like me have their school bags, and they are big. And sometimes it is stuck in this gate.... Sometimes, the bags are damaged from this. And after ten minutes, they open it for like, 30 seconds. You have to, like, move so quickly to enter, old men and old women and children. So, you can imagine how it is hard for them too. And usually people in the morning are stressed there *(EJI)*.

people

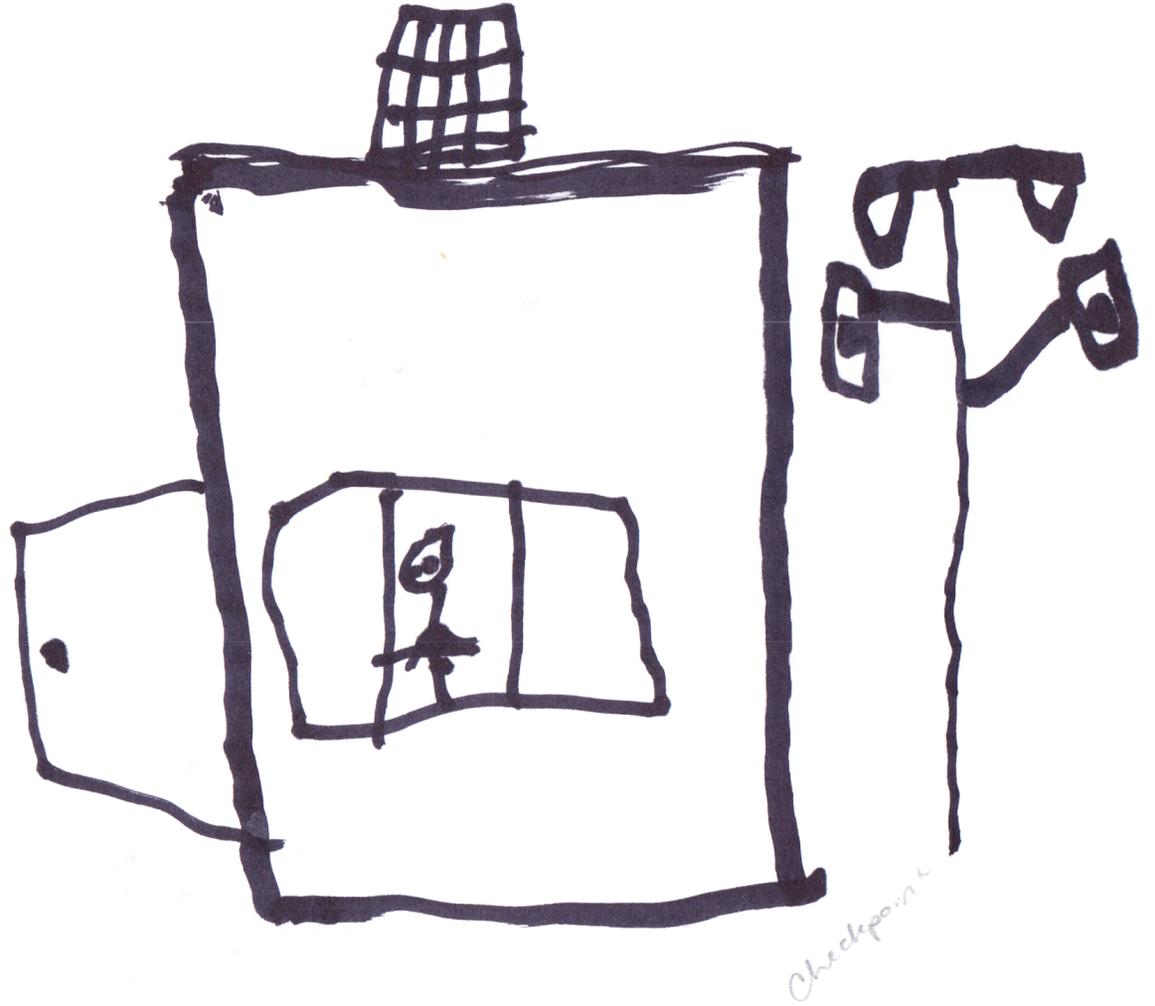
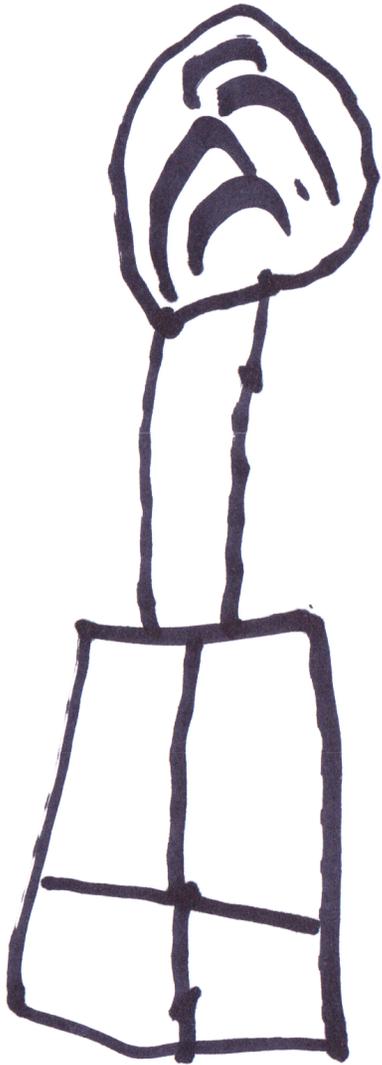


They



ta'wwudna

“we have gotten used to it”



Mehdi: This is the checkpoint, and a tree near the checkpoint.

Q: And what happens when you go through the checkpoint?

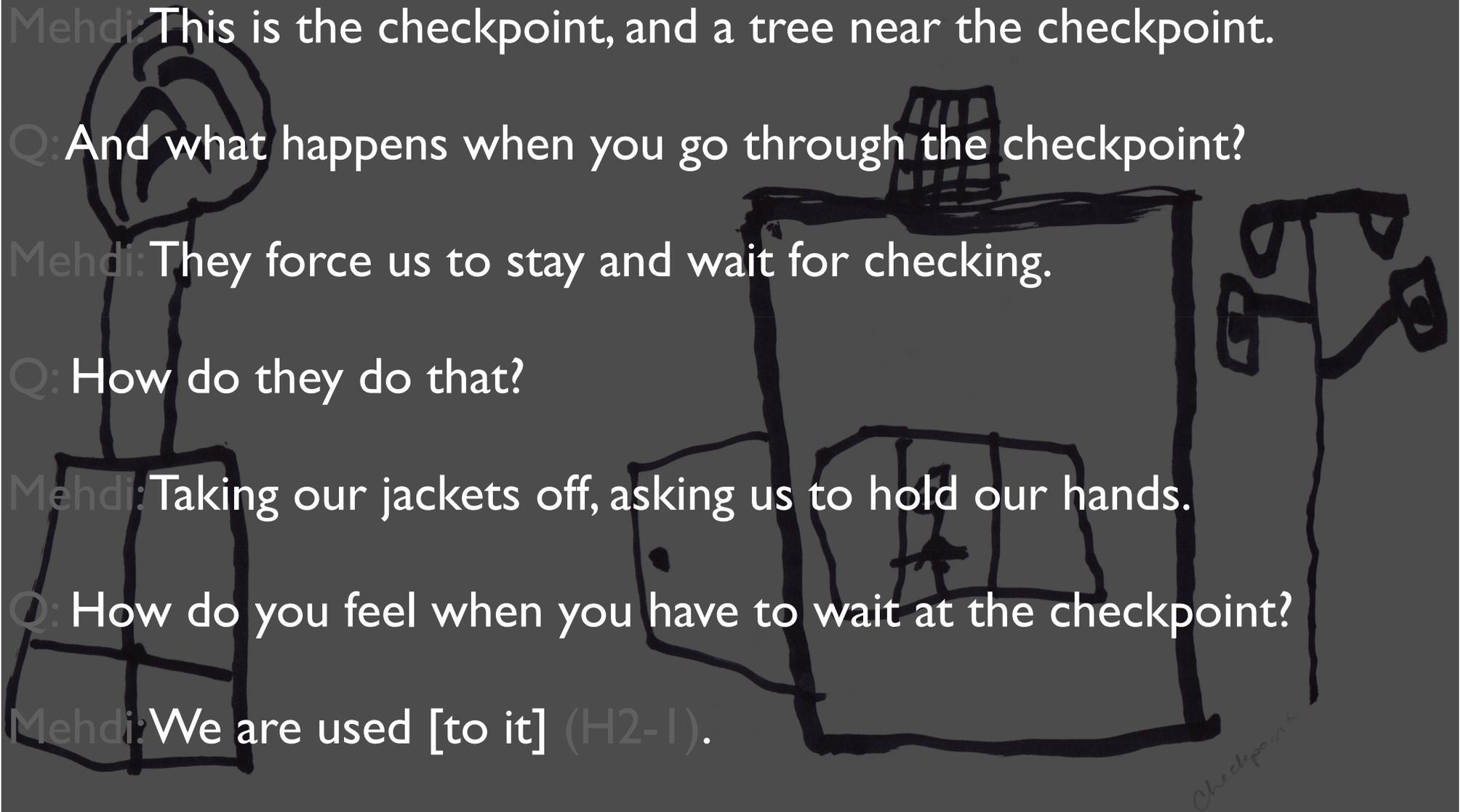
Mehdi: They force us to stay and wait for checking.

Q: How do they do that?

Mehdi: Taking our jackets off, asking us to hold our hands.

Q: How do you feel when you have to wait at the checkpoint?

Mehdi: We are used [to it] (H2-1).





ta'wwudna

“we are used to it”

Adam: So, of course, going through the checkpoint every day, twice a day, seeing all these soldiers every day is a part of their daily life, having their schoolbags checked, and um, this must have a psychological effect (KII).

Adam: I have heard stories of kids wetting their beds until ages when they are not supposed to wet their beds anymore, because of all of this stuff happening. It's hard to imagine (KII).

# Psychosocial Impact

(Arafat & Boothby, 2003; Baker & Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 1999; Espié et al., 2009; Khamis, 2000; Lieberman et al., 2005; Qouta & Odeh, 2004; Thabet et al., 2006)

- nightmares
- bedwetting
- increased aggressiveness and hyperactivity
- decreased attention span and concentration capacity





Abu-Mehdi: No one could ever feel the difference, except the one who is living inside this place. You enter through the checkpoint, and you feel the suffering that the inhabitants of this area are suffering through daily. Because they are entering the electronic gates on each visit or going out. Even to the market, he is checked. Security is checking, showing them everything. You are holding the ID, opening your arms and raising your hands on the walls. During the overall inspection, they are attacking you with bad vulgar words or with their hands, kicking you, beating. In all means, they are trying to insult you, making you feel that you are not human, making you feel that they are not dealing with humans, but that they are dealing with animals (H2-1).

Umm-Mourad: It's, like, how we take our chicken to kill at the market, to get them for eating.

Sanaa: You know, in the garden, they put something for the cow to walk in it. They put the same thing in the checkpoint. You feel that you are like a cow (EJI).

Abu-Rachid: [I am] in my own country, ...  
(*sarcastically*) and I am a terrorist. I am enemy  
number one.

Amanda: (*sarcastically*) [You are a] scary  
monster.

Abu-Rachid: (*laughing*) So be it (EJ2).



# Encounters with Invisible Borders

# Dream Places

- to buy land and build a home
- to have a house with a garden
- to live in a safe place
- to go fishing
- to go back home
- to go outside
- to visit a place on the other side of the wall
- to travel to a foreign country
- to go to a restaurant
- to go to school
- to see the ocean
- to have someplace to play
- to go swimming
- to have a future

Maha: Palestine is occupied, so there are checkpoints and the wall... It's like a dream (Balata I).

Wafa: I hope to go to al-Ibrihimi mosque.

Dad: She wishes to go to al-Ibrihimi from this side, from this street.

Q: Can you draw a map of how you would get there?

Dad: She doesn't know, because she has never passed through (H2-1).



Mabrouk: I am dreaming about going outside, traveling. We are living here, but we don't know what is going on outside. So it's my dream (Balata2).

Abu-Mehdi: Our children are used to living like anyone who is in prison. You see our house is covered with these bars? *(his 7-year-old niece pulls the curtain back and shows the windows)* Because the Israelis attack us and harass us. Schools are the same, surrounded by barbed iron *(pointing to the houses of settlers across the street)* (H2-1).

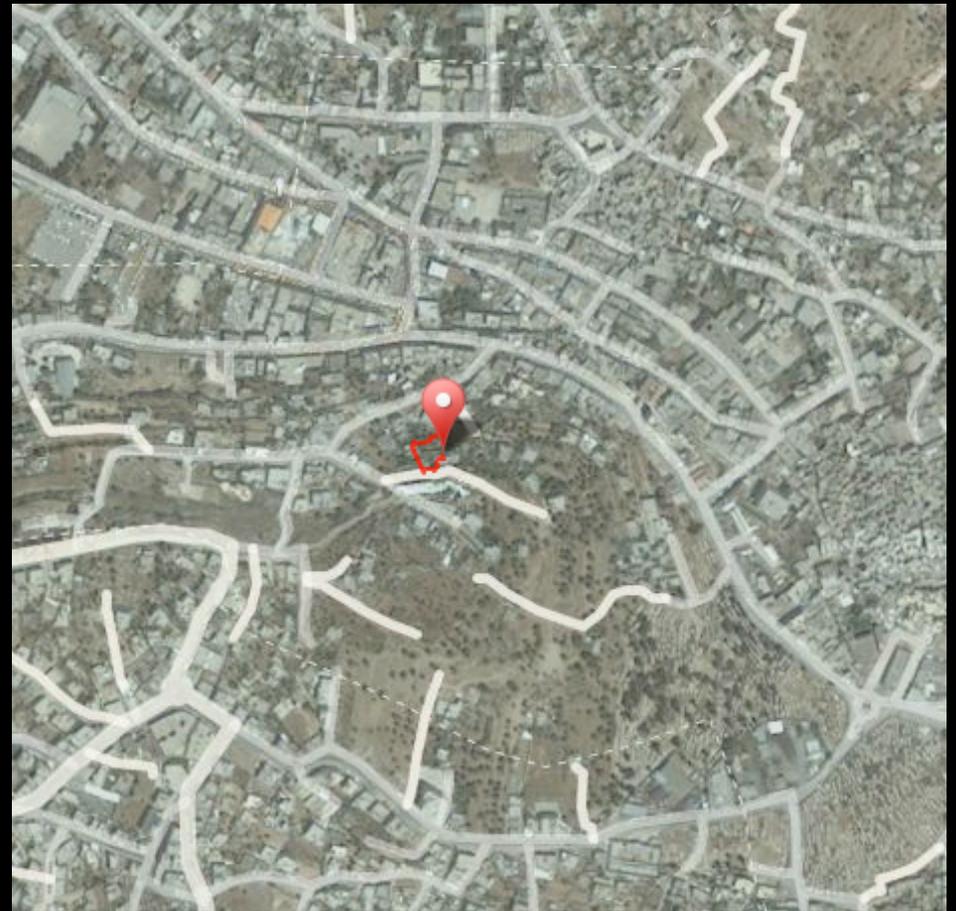


H1-1

Scale: 150m

Distance: 2.48km

Time: 46:23



H2-3

Scale: 150m

Distance: 0.09km

Time: 03:14

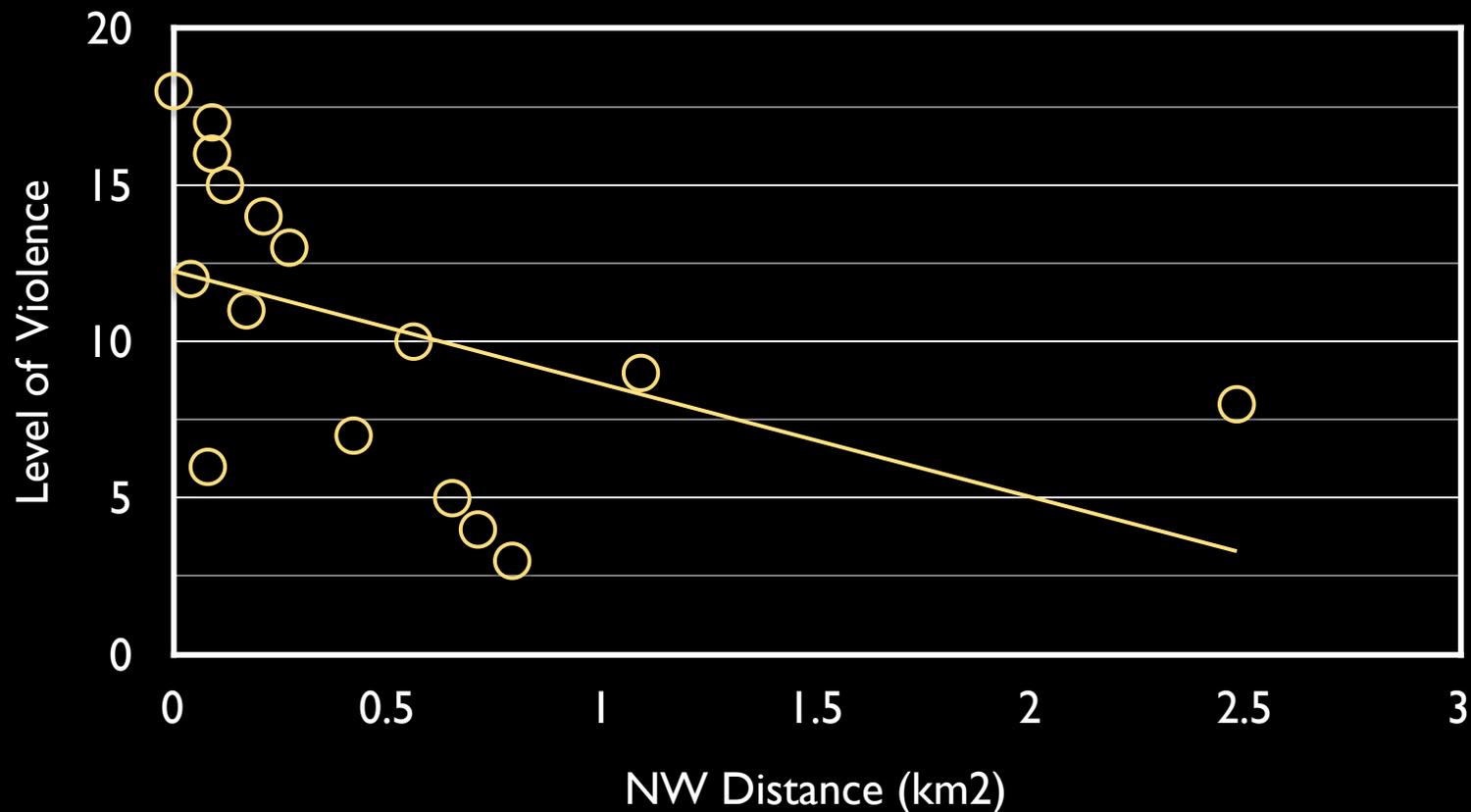
# Determining Level of Violence

- Media: violence reported in media
- Family: fear of violence expressed by family
- Interviewer: witnessing of violence

# Violence and Place Access

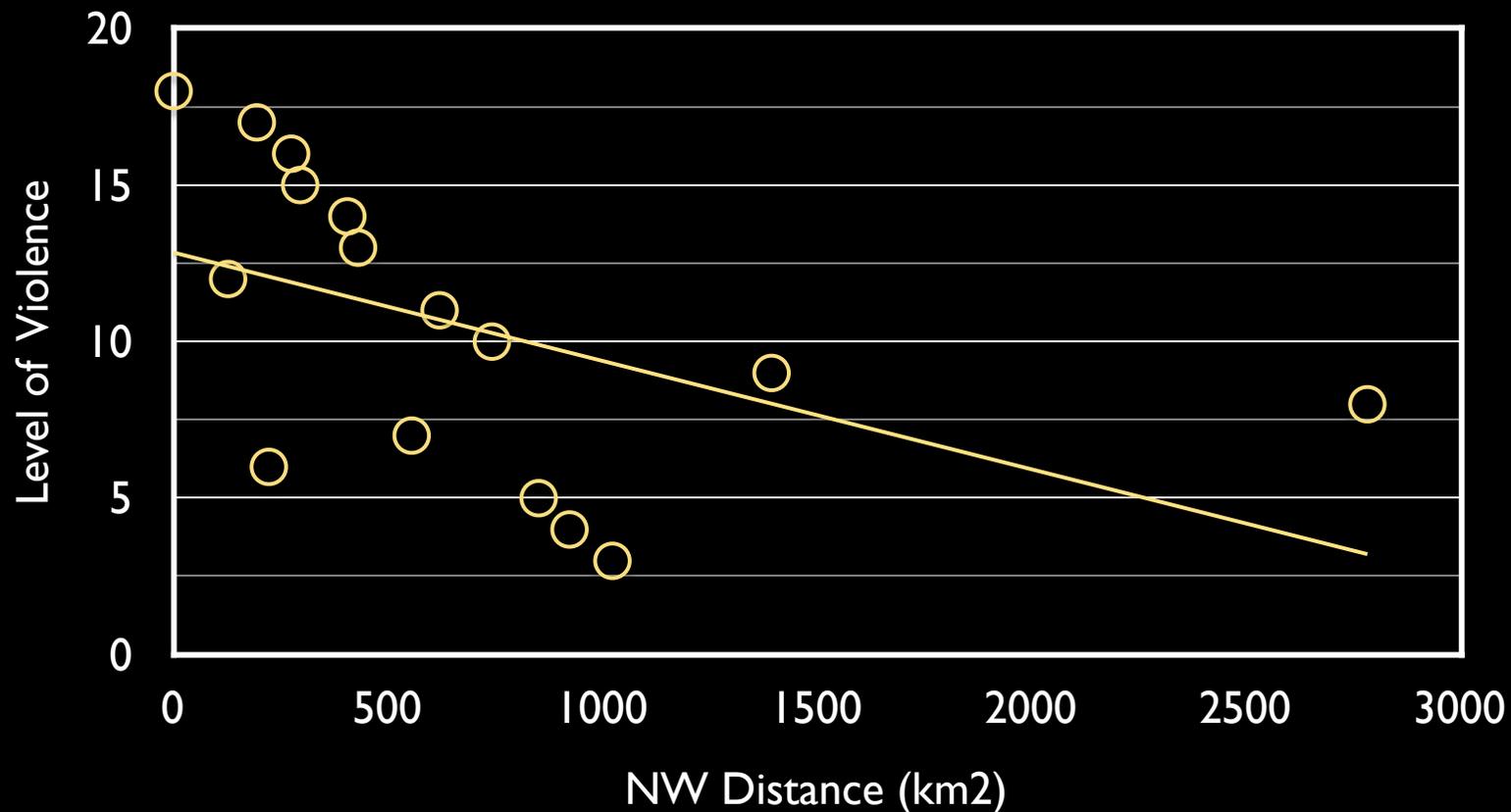
Location	Violence Rank	NW Distance	NW Time (seconds)
Balata 1	9	1.09	23:14 (1394)
Balata 2	5	0.65	14:11 (851)
Balata 3	10	0.56	12:22 (742)
H1-1	8	2.48	46:23 (2783)
H1-2	7	0.42	09:15 (555)
H1-3	13	0.27	07:10 (430)
H2-1	18	0.00	00:00 (0)
H2-2	16	0.09	04:34 (274)
H2-3	17	0.09	03:14 (194)
Bedouin 1	6	0.08	03:42 (222)
Bedouin 2	14	0.21	06:45 (405)
Bedouin 3	11	0.17	10:20 (620)
Village 1	3	0.79	17:03 (1023)
Village 2	2	0.04	02:02 (122)
Village 3	1	0.12	04:07 (247)
EJ1	4	0.71	15:23 (923)
EJ2	15	0.12	04:55 (295)
EJ3	12	0.04	02:07 (127)

# Level of Violence & NW Distance (n=16)\*



\*Two NWs excluded due to sandstorms.

# Level of Violence & NW Time (n=16)\*



\*Two NWs excluded due to sandstorms.

# Hypothesis:

Children's place access beyond the home is inversely proportionate to the level of violence in a child's community.

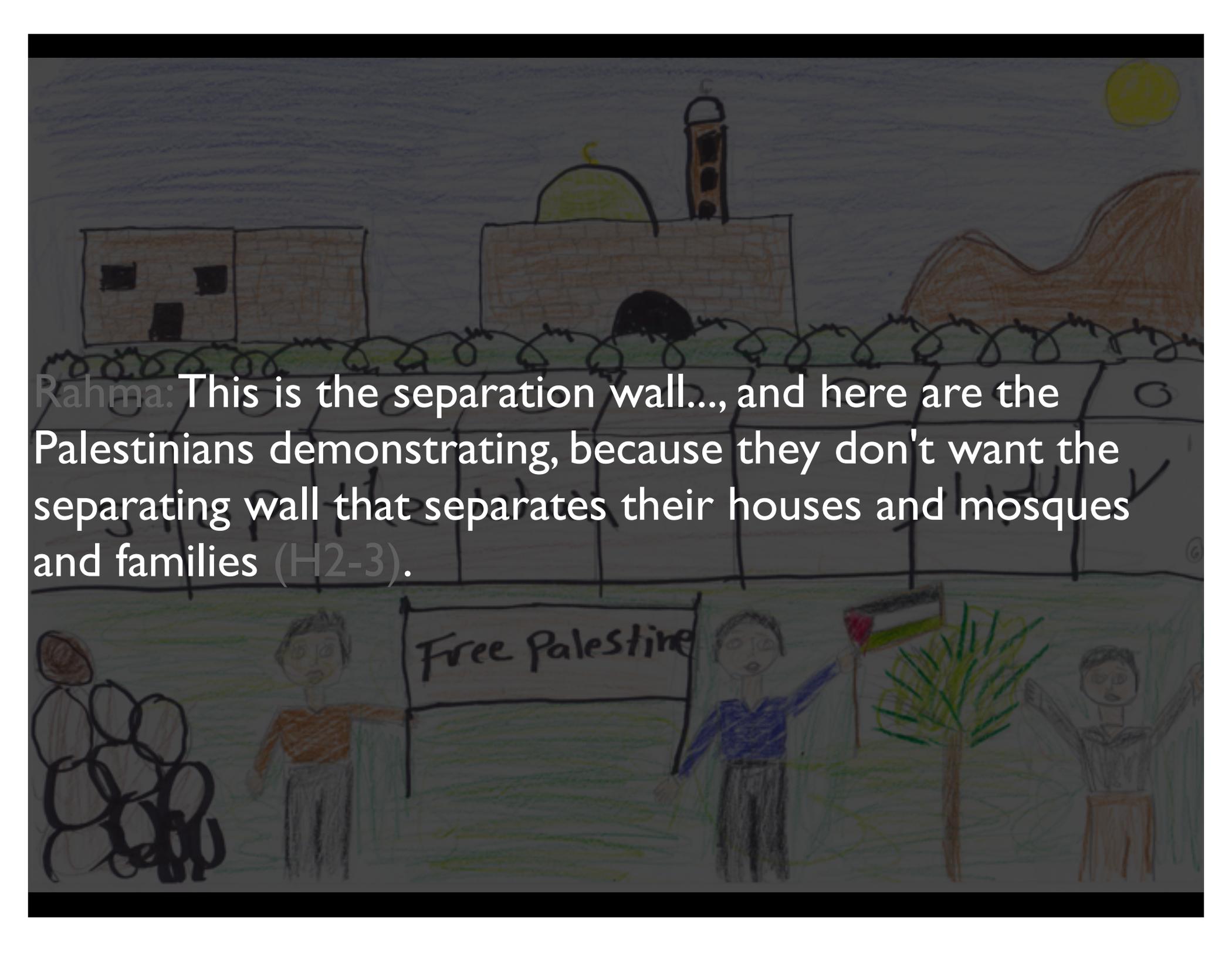
Abu-Rachid: ...it's hard for me to get him a passport, a Jordanian passport. He should have before two months ago, gone to Kuwait.... I couldn't send him, because he doesn't have a passport. I don't have one. It's very hard to leave. It costs a lot of money to do it. Even me, I might have to go, but I cannot go out of Israel. I am not allowed to go out of Israel (EJ2).



# Resilience & Resistance in the Face of Borders







Rahma: This is the separation wall..., and here are the Palestinians demonstrating, because they don't want the separating wall that separates their houses and mosques and families (H2-3).



sumud

“daily resistance”

Amanda: They are *sumud* anyways...by staying (EJ2).

# Summary

- occupation has a restrictive impact on children and families' everyday geographies
- war does not inevitably destroy all it touches (Boyden & de Berry, 2004); children and families are able to cope and resist

# Practice & Policy Implications

- the only solution is political
- listening to children and families to develop locally meaningful understandings of:
  - risks to children from occupation and appropriation of land and resources
  - view of situation as chronic, long-term human rights and protection crisis
  - the need for security of children's movement and place access
  - children and families' stated needs for protection and well-being
- consideration of destruction of home and restricted freedom of movement as a grave violation against children (UN Resolution 1539)

# Strengths & Challenges

- community entry
- family size
- engaging children's voices (age, gender)
- confidentiality
- trust
- culture
- working with local translators/transcribers
- grounded theory approach
- interpreting visual data
- triangulation of data
- unforeseen events

# THANK YOU!

All Participating Families and Organizations

Centre for Research on Children and Families

Social Science and Humanities Research Council

McGill University School of Social Work