

JHU Richard Macksey Symposium

JHU Macksey Symposium Commons

2020 JHU Richard Macksey National Undergraduate Humanities Research Symposium

Apr 30th, 12:00 AM

Israel's Modulation of Checkpoints: Systematic Manipulation of the Oslo Accords

Anna Rhodes

Knox College, aerhodes@knox.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://www.mackseysymposium.org/virtual2020>



Part of the [History Commons](#), [Other Languages, Societies, and Cultures Commons](#), and the [Political Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Rhodes, Anna, "Israel's Modulation of Checkpoints: Systematic Manipulation of the Oslo Accords" (2020). *2020 JHU Richard Macksey National Undergraduate Humanities Research Symposium*. 110. <https://www.mackseysymposium.org/virtual2020/all/presentations/110>

This Presentation is brought to you for free and open access by JHU Macksey Symposium Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in 2020 JHU Richard Macksey National Undergraduate Humanities Research Symposium by an authorized administrator of JHU Macksey Symposium Commons.

Israel's Modulation of Checkpoints: Systematic Manipulation of Oslo I & II

In 1990, Gilles Deleuze introduced the concept of “modulation” as the driving concept behind the reformation of many institutions in the modern age. He argued that we can best understand modulation as the means by which those in power maintain power over others. This is done through the endless morphing of expectations so that those without power are in a constant state of trying to keep up with changing expectations -- to modulate themselves and their behaviors to fit the arbitrary and changing rules of those in charge of modern institutions, such as schools, the military, and corporations.¹ Modulation allows these institutions to exert continuous control. While Deleuze's critique is broad-based, it serves as an instructive tool to think about the difficulties faced in Israel-Palestine.

In 1993, the Oslo Accords were signed between the governments of Israel and Palestine. The purpose of this agreement was to outline a framework for peace in the region. The issues that have resulted in the most disagreement and unilateral action on the part of Israel are the issues of security and freedom of movement, the kind of literal “gatekeeping” imagined by Deleuze. Palestinians see Israeli run check-points as direct violations of their rights to mobility in what should be a Palestinian state. Israelis see these as a necessary means to keep Israel secure and safe. Although conflict in the Israel-Palestine region is long-standing, my research shows how the signing of the Oslo Accords has led to more conflict rather than peace. Furthermore, it has led to exactly the kind of modulated control warned against by Deleuze.

¹ Weinberger, Peter Ezra. *Co-opting the PLO*.

Israel modulates its policies concerning checkpoints and crossing between Palestinian- to Israeli-controlled territory based on its understanding of the Oslo Accords. Just as Deleuze predicted, the modulations are a constantly changing set of rules which are not communicated by those with power (the Israeli military police) to those without (Palestinians on the ground at checkpoints). Most commonly, stress arises at a checkpoint as a result of a language barrier, confusion as to what the correct protocol is for each side, or a dispute in political opinion pertaining to this multi-generational conflict. It is ultimately impossible to create sovereignty between two groups occupying the same area if there is not a mutual understanding of what social and legal boundaries must be followed.

The right to safe passage is explicitly created in the Oslo Accords.² Yet, ambiguous details led to poor enforcement of the agreement. Different understandings of documents make them ripe for liberties to be taken. By 1995, the Interim Agreement was signed based on the increasing issue of security disputes under Oslo. The key difference between these two agreements falls under the rubric of safe-passage disputes. The Interim Agreement sought to design a structure for effective mobility while simultaneously maintaining Israeli security and increasing safe Palestinian passage. An example of this attempt to facilitate mobility and safety is stated in the 1995 agreement as it clarified that, going forward, Israel had the right to ‘modify’ the safe-passage regime for security reasons including the right to interrupt a safe passageway temporarily, as long as *one* checkpoint remained open.³ Tensions rose during the al-Aqsa Intifada in 2000. During this time, closures of checkpoint terminals and roadblocks appeared more often and without warning, in order to directly restrict Palestinian movement. The Israeli military did

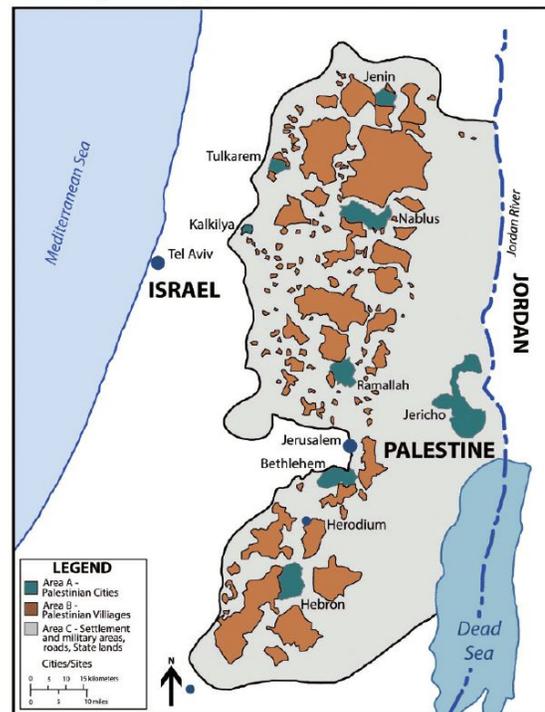
² U.N. GASC. Oslo Accords. 11 October 1993.

³ The Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement (Oslo II). Washington, DC, September 28, 1995.

so in response to violent attacks initiated by Israelis and Palestinians alike. Ultimately, this led to the creation of the security wall between Israel and Palestine.

To fully understand the magnitude of Israel's checkpoint policy within the Interim Agreement, it is necessary to understand Areas A, B, and C, the territorial designations created in the peace accords. The main cities of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip were designated as Area A, where civilian and security control is in the hands of the Palestinians. Israelis are not permitted to enter Area A.⁴ In Area B, Palestinians exercise administrative authority, yet with Israel still retaining overall security responsibility. This territory includes villages, small

Oslo II Map
Outlining Areas A, B, and C



towns and refugee camps. Area B can be tricky for Palestinians in terms of mobility because they are subject to Israeli law at the checkpoints controlled by the Israeli security forces. In Area C, Israel has sole control over civilians and security activities. Area C includes Israeli settlements, military bases and lands which Palestinians are prohibited from entering or using.⁵

Today, the mobility of civilians in Palestine is significantly restricted by the checkpoints controlled by Israeli military forces. There have been countless reports of physical intimidation and humiliation of people passing through these checkpoints.⁶ To the Israeli security

⁴ The Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement (Oslo II)

⁵ Kersel, Morag M. "Oslo II Map: Outlining Areas A, B, and C." Map. Researchgate.net. January 2014.

⁶ Peteet, Julie. "Geography of Anticipation and Risk: Checkpoints, Filters, and Funnels." In *Space and Mobility in Palestine*, 99-138.

establishment, checkpoints are a necessary form of security and control. For the Palestinians, they are the means of interruption and restrictions, preventing Palestinians from building an economy or a state. Although checkpoints are shared territory under the Interim Agreement, in practice they are a space dominated by the IDF -- the Israeli Defense Force.

An example of the potential effects of a checkpoint shut-down can be observed in Ramallah. On December 13th, 2018, there was a shutdown of the city of Ramallah in the West Bank. From the 13th to the 19th there were 28 temporary checkpoints constructed by Israeli military forces, in addition to the eleven permanent checkpoints, to better restrict the flow of movement in and out of Ramallah.⁷ The shutdown was initiated by an attack carried out by a Palestinian near an illegal Israeli settlement in Ofra, resulting the killing of two Israeli soldiers.⁸ The Palestinian attack directly followed the killing of three Palestinians in separate raids throughout the West Bank, prompted by Israeli forces. These violent events prompted the Israeli army to declare Ramallah a closed military zone and proceeded to carry out extensive searches on and around roads entering and exiting the city. The total lockdown lasted for at least twenty-four hours, but exact details of how many checkpoints were reopened and at what time were not recorded.

The violent incidents that initiated this shutdown are not uncommon. Tensions between Israeli military forces and Palestinian civilians is evident in daily occurrences of one side committing acts of violence upon the other. Israel's place on the world stage is dominated by their military strength and when Palestinians pose any threat to this reputation, no matter how

⁷ PCHR. "PCHR: Weekly Report On Israeli Human Rights Violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (13-19 December 2018)." IMEMC News, December 21, 2018.

⁸ "Israel Imposes Closure, Clashes Erupt across Ramallah after Shooting Attack." Maannews.com. December 13, 2018.

small, they are symbolically threatening Israel's reputation as a whole. Israel is fearful of appearing complacent to any degree with Palestine discourse and to compensate they habitually take drastic measures to maintain total dominance. The city of Ramallah resides in Area A of the West Bank, and therefore Israel does not have legal jurisdiction within the city. However, they maintain the right to close checkpoints and administer the mobility of those within the territory.

Ultimately, Israel is partaking in consistent, incremental changes in restriction of movement by overstepping boundaries set in the 1995 Interim Agreement. Deleuze's theory of modulation is applied in the case of Israel and Palestine's unsuccessful peace process. Drastic action illicit drastic responses--moderate, inconsistent actions do not. Israel is not systematic in their military actions, nor are they repetitive in place or time. Modulation provides opportunity for confusion, surprise, and total oppression. Palestinians are trapped in an incomplete framework that fails to protect their human rights and denies them an equal position on the world stage. The deliberate actions of those with the most power to undermine their opponents ultimately trickles down into the individual lives of Israelis and Palestinians alike. Both sides are solely interested in autonomous control of movement, and violent public interactions arise, it gives them an excuse to enforce it. Nevertheless, Israel's gradual policy manipulations at checkpoints since 1993 has led to an even deeper and more violent conflict than before the Oslo Accords were signed.

Bibliography

"Israel Imposes Closure, Clashes Erupt across Ramallah after Shooting Attack."

Maannews.com. December 13, 2018.

Kersel, Morag M. "Oslo II Map: Outlining Areas A, B, and C." Map. Researchgate.net.

January 2014.

PCHR. "PCHR: Weekly Report On Israeli Human Rights Violations in the Occupied

Palestinian Territory (13-19 December 2018)." IMEMC News, December 21, 2018.

<https://imemc.org/article/pchr-weekly-report-on-israeli-human-rights-violations-in-the-occupied-palestinian-territory-13-19-december-2018/>.

Peteet, Julie. "Geography of Anticipation and Risk: Checkpoints, Filters, and Funnels." In

Space and Mobility in Palestine, 99-138.

The Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement (Oslo II). Washington, DC, September 28, 1995.

(As downloaded from ACPR.or.il)

Weinberger, Peter Ezra. *Co-opting the PLO*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006.

U.N. GASC. Oslo Accords. 11 October 1993.