Criminalisation and Detention of African Asylum Seekers in Israel: Exclusionary Policies, and the Dynamics of Race and Place

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To my family – You are everything.

Abstract

In this dissertation I advance our understanding of African asylum seekers' detention in Israel, an ethnonational state, by exploring it in relation to differential politics of belonging and postcolonialism. I focus on detention of asylum seekers in Holot detention facility in Israel's Negev Desert 2013-2018, when over 13,000 Eritrean and Sudanese men were detained for at least one year. Detention was one of multiple exclusionary policies directed at this group over a decade under the Prevention of Infiltration Law (1954). This was the only migrant group subjected to collective administrative detention on such scale and legally categorised 'Infiltrators'. I review detention's development and application to asylum seekers, tracing how detention's role changed to keep asylum seekers away from urban areas where they historically lived, particularly South Tel Aviv.

Throughout the thesis, I explore gaps between aims and impacts of detention policies on populations most affected by them. I draw on interviews with two populations: (1) Eritrean and Sudanese men detained in Holot (during detention, and post-detention); and (2) Israeli residents in South Tel Aviv. I supplement interview data with ethnographic participant observations.

Scholarship on Israel's exclusion of non-Jewish migrants is dominated by arguments about the importance of citizenship and the ethnonational boundaries of the state. I argue for a more nuanced account of exclusion to understand the heightened enforcement of migration control upon a group with distinct attributes – African, male, asylum seekers. I contend that we better understand the differential exclusion of this group through observing Israel's differential inclusion of Mizrahi Jewish residents in South Tel Aviv and the logics that underpin it. I take stock of Israel's postcolonial context, Euro-centred scales of belonging, and orientalist approach to Jewish populations, and African asylum seekers. I demonstrate how policies reflect a hierarchical value placed on human worth in an ethnonational state.

Table of Contents

Introduction: What was Holot? **9**

Main Concepts 15
Ethnonationalism 15
Postcolonialism 16
Racialised Differentiation 17

Why study Holot and South Tel Aviv? 22
South Tel Aviv 25
Holot 32
Asylum seekers in the community 35

Thesis Structure 40

Chapter 1. Migration Control and African asylum seekers in Israel: Exclusion along Citizenship and Ethnonational Lines **45**

Border Control in Israel and Administrative Detention 46
Administrative Detention from the British Mandate to Israeli Law 46
Developments of the Prevention of Infiltration Law 49
Juridifying African Asylum Seekers as Infiltrators 53

Citizenship, Ethnonationalism and Migration Control 57
Citizenship and Rights 58
Ethnonationalism and Belonging 61
Citizenship and Outgroup Migration 65

Non-citizens in an Ethnonational State 69
Foreigners in a Jewish State 70
Migration Control Enforcement 73

Conclusion 76

Chapter 2. Theorising Asylum Seeker Exclusion from City Centres **78**

Global Cities and National Politics of Belonging 87
Urban Sociology, Criminology and Migration Control 87
Race, Place, and Migration in Postcolonial Societies 94
Ethnonationalism, Postcolonialism, Race, and Place 97

Racialised Differentiations in Tel Aviv 102
Symbolic Significance of Tel Aviv in the History of the State 104
Material Marginalisation of South Tel Aviv in the History of the City 108
Differential Inclusion of Jewish Citizens in South Tel Aviv 113
Differential Exclusion of African Asylum Seekers to Holot 114

Conclusion – Ethnonational Postcolonial Hierarchies 118

Chapter 3. Research Methods, Sites and Ethics **120**

Research Methods, Data Collection and Analysis 121
Locating the Research Sample and Approach 121

Ethnographic Engagement with Diverse Participant Groups 124
Qualitative Interviews 132
Data Analysis and Theorising with Grounded Theory 135
Reflecting on the Research Process and the Researcher's Role 137
Thinking about Access and Ethics, and Managing Guilt and Reciprocity 140
Researcher Positionality 146
Dealing with Difficult Research Materials 155
Conclusion 158
Chapter 4. Israeli Residents in South Tel Aviv Discuss Life in the Neighbourhood and Detention Policy Impacts 160
Citizen Experiences of Differential Inclusion 164
Jewish Citizenship in South Tel Aviv 165
Relational Marginalisation in South Tel Aviv 174
Citizens' Perceptions of Asylum Seekers, Social Order and Disorder 181
Asylum Seekers, Social Order and Disorder 181
Race and Place in South Tel Aviv 186
Impact of Holot on Life in South Tel Aviv 194
Conclusion 199
Chapter 5. Differentiated and Excluded: Eritrean and Sudanese Asylum Seekers Detained in Holot 201
Differentiated and Excluded to Holot 206
Criminalised before Detention and by Detention 206
Racialised Compared to other Migrants and to Israelis 212
Denied Refugee Status and Rights 218
Punishment and Misery inside Holot 222
Immigration Detention as Prison and Punishment 222
Abuse by Staff 226
Uncertainty and Misery in Detention 234
Possibilities for Overcoming Exclusion 236
Conclusion 241
Chapter 6. Sudanese and Eritrean Asylum Seekers on Life after Holot 243
Starting Over, Again… and Navigating Exclusion 245
Feeling out of Place after Detention 246
Finding a Place after Being Excluded 249
Out of Progress and Productivity 252
Coming to Terms with Detention's Intentions 257
Refugees Unwelcome – Your Status will never be Affirmed 262
Your Race will never be Accepted 264
Give Up on the State and Fend for Yourself 266

Possibilities for Resisting or Overcoming Exclusion 269
Individual Resistance in Reclaiming the Refugee Category 270
Organising in the Community – Self-Governance as Opposition 271
Navigating Political Exclusion by Organising with Israelis 275
Conclusion 281
Conclusion: Racism by any other name 283

TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS

CRV – Conditional Release Visa

GT – Grounded Theory

HCJ - Israel High Court of Justice

IDP – Internally Displaced Persons

MOI – Ministry of Interior, Israel

MK – Member of Knesset, the Israeli Parliament

PIBA - Population and Immigration Authority, Ministry of Interior, Israel

UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UDHR - Universal Declaration of Human Rights

TABLE OF CASES

HCJ 4702/94 *Al Tai v Minister of the Interior et al.* 1995 ……... 51

HCJ 8276/05 *Adalah v Minister of Defence* 2006 …….. 57

HCJ 6312/10 *Kav LaOved v. Government* 2011 ..…….. 40

HCJ 7146/12 *Adam v The Knesset* 2013 ……...……...….11, 53, 54, 55, 161, 204

HCJ 8425/13 *Gebrselassie, HCJ 7385/13*
Eitan et al v The Government of Israel et al 2014 ……...……...11, 53, 54, 56, 204

HCJ 8665/14 *Desete et al v The Knesset et al* 2015 …….. 11, 53, 54, 56, 57, 79, 161, 204, 280

HCJ 2293/17 *Gersegeher v The Knesset et al* 2020……11, 117

TABLE OF STATUTES (ISRAEL)

Defence (Emergency) Regulations 1945…… 48

Declaration of Independence 1948……. 62-3

Government and Law Arrangements Ordinance 1948 …….. 48

Law of Return 5710 1950…….. 16, 63

Entry to Israel Law 5712 1952 …… 40, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 63, 76

Nationality Law 5712 1952 …… 63

Prevention of Infiltration Law 5714 1954…… 11, 23, 49, 50, 204

Prevention of Infiltration Law (Crimes and Jurisdictions) (Amendment No. 1) 1960…… 50

Basic Law Human Dignity and Liberty 5752 1992 ……..…..… 12, 55, 57

Basic Law Freedom of Occupation 5752 1992…… 12

Government Decision no. 3807 on Legal Status for Children of Illegal residents, their Parents and Siblings in Israel 2005…….. 74

Government Decision no. 156 on Legal Status for Children of Illegal Residents, their Parents and Siblings in Israel 2006 …… 74

Prevention of Infiltration Law (Crimes and Jurisdictions) (Amendment No. 2) 5767 2007… 50

Government Decision no. 2183 on Legal Status for Unlawfully Residing Children, their Parents and Siblings in Israel 2010 ……. 74

Prevention of Infiltration Law (Crimes and Jurisdictions) (Amendment No. 3) 5772 2011 ……...……9, 11, 53, 55, 204

Prevention of Infiltration Law (Crimes and Jurisdiction) (Amendment No. 4 and Temporary Order) 5774 2013 ……11, 40, 53, 56, 204, 274

Law for the Prevention of Infiltration and Securing the Departure of Infiltrators from Israel (Legislative Amendments and Temporary Orders) 5775 2014) ……11, 36, 53, 57, 203, 280

Prevention of Infiltration Law (Crimes and Jurisdictions) (Temporary Order) 2530 2016 [Amendment 6] ……. 56

OTHER PRIMARY SOURCES

Primary Sources (International)

Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees 1951…… 12, 13, 222

Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees 1967 ……. 12

Primary Sources (Israel)

Population and Immigration Authority. 2011. "Procedure Guidelines for Persons Seeking Asylum in Israel." Ministry of Interior, State of Israel ……...…….11

Proposal 904 - Law for Prevention of Infiltration and Securing the Departure of Infiltrators from Israel (Crimes and Jurisdiction) 2014 ……..... 12, 53

Proposal 161, Law for Securing the Borders (Crimes and Jursidiction) 1953 …… 49

Knesset Committee on Internal and Environmental Protection "Proposal to Prevention of Infiltration Law (Offences and Jurisdictions) (Amendment No. 4) (Employment Prohibition)" 2012 20 May 2013, 10:00 (Protocol 25) …… 88

Knesset Committee on Internal and Environmental Protection "Proposal on Prevention of Infiltration (Offences and Jurisdictions) (Amendment 4 and Temporary Order), 26 November 2013, 11:10 (Protocol 140) ……... 88

Knesset Committee on Internal and Environmental Protection "Proposal on Prevention of Infiltration and Removal of Infiltrators and Foreign Workers from Israel Law (Amendments and Temporary Order)" 02 December 2013, 11:00 (Protocol 428) …..…… 88

PIBA Director General. 2015. "Criteria for Infiltrator transfer to Holot residential facility." Population and Immigration Authority. Ministry of Interior, State of Israel …… 58, 204, 213

LIST OF FIGURES

1.	Holot Detention Centre, Negev, Israel (Photo Credit: Getty Images)	9
2.	'South Tel Aviv against the Deportation' Banner (Photo Credit: M Ravid)	29
3.	'Rehabilitation of South Tel Aviv starts with Deportation of Infiltrators' Banner (Photo Credit: M Ravid)	29
4.	Likud Party Municipal Campaign Poster reads: It's Us or Them: The Hebrew City or the Infiltrator City (Photo Credit: M Ravid)	30
5.	Likud Party Municipal Campaign reads: It's Us or Them, The Hebrew City or the Infiltrator City (Photo Credit: Tel Aviv Likud Party Facebook page)	30
6.	Snapshot of New Right campaign video. In photo: 'South Tel Aviv resident' depicted imprisoned in her home. Orange prison uniform reads 'ISC' – Israel Supreme Court (Photo Credit: Facebook page of Naftali Bennet, MK)	32
7.	Photo of Sudanese Passport. Under section: 'Countries for which this Passport is valid' a stamp states "ALL COUNTRIES EXCEPT ISRAEL" (Photo Credit: M Ravid, bold emphasis in the original)	39
8.	Racialised Differentiation Diagram	85
9.	Yosef Tishler's Candelabrum design for Neve Shaanan (Photo Credit: B Ravid, TLV100)	109
10.	Map of Neve Shaanan (Photo Credit: Tel Aviv Municipality, 2006)	109
11.	Bridges to the Central Bus Station cut across the neighbourhood with noise and air pollution. (Photo Credit: M Ravid)	112
12.	Eritrean food eaten on a shared plate outside Holot (Photo Credit: M Ravid)	126
13.	Coffee corner with coffee, tea, sugar and mint leaves for detainees to make over a camping stove and enjoy throughout the visit (Photo Credit: M Ravid)	126
14.	Clean dishes organised to be loaded at end of Holot visit (Photo Credit: M Ravid)	126
15.	At Sudanese restaurant with interviewee in South Tel Aviv (Photo Credit: M Ravid)	129
16.	Eritrean food prepared at interviewee's home in Herzeliya (Photo Credit: M Ravid)	129
17.	The walk down from Leah's apartment (Photo Credit: M Ravid)	176
18.	The view down Levinsky street, near Leah's house, under the bridge leading to the Central Bus Station (Photo Credit: M Ravid)	176
19.	Detained asylum seekers in desert outside Holot (Photo Credit: Noureldin Musa)	201
20.	Detainees walking in desert outside Holot (Photo Credit: Noureldin Musa)	206
21.	View from inside Holot (Photo Credit: Noureldin Musa)	222
22.	The road from Holot (Photo Credit: Noureldin Musa)	236
23.	Detained asylum seekers cook in desert outside Holot (Photo Credit: Sadang)	274
24.	Detainees play game in desert outside Holot (Photo Credit: Sadang)	274

Introduction.

What was Holot?



Figure 1. Holot Detention Centre, Negev, Israel (Photo Credit: Getty Images)

I was one of the first people moved to Holot. I arrived in Israel in June 2012 – at that time the 3rd amendment to the Prevention of Infiltration Law was put into place. A tribunal judge told me at that time – "you entered Israel illegally, you have to be in prison 3 years, then another facility indefinitely, or go home". I told him I wanted to apply for asylum. He said there is no option – "you are an infiltrator and you must be in prison".

Two months later I came to see him again. I told him my story and why I can't go back – the attack on my village by militias, persecution by Sudanese security forces due to my activism… he gave me a number for the Hotline for Refugees and Migrants. I called them and eventually one of their employees came down to see us in the prison and that made a huge difference for me and the other guys. It was a bit of light in the darkness we were in, like there is some hope that we might get out of there.

After that the prison gave us asylum forms, we filled them. They collected the forms two months later. In the meantime, we stayed in this closed prison, Saharonim. We organised a few protests inside of the prison, I imagine no one knows about them because we were closed off from the world.

In one protest we refused to stand for head counts and refused food. We demanded they treat us like refugees not criminals. And if Israel cannot treat us in an adequate way, it should send us to another country. After three days staff came and tore into us. Cursing, beating, took us to the yard in the sun, dragged people on the asphalt, some people still have scars…

After some days I called my brother, until then I didn't call him because I didn't have hope, I didn't want to tell them I was in prison, with no prospect of getting out.

When he answered, I sensed something was wrong. I asked him how everyone is doing, in our family, our mom – and he was silent. I asked again – 'what happened to mom?' and he said militias reached the area of our village, and mom didn't survive. I don't remember anything after that. I just remember waking up the next day. It was one of the hardest events in my life.

In September the Supreme Court decided to cancel the government's Prevention of Infiltration Law and told the state to release us. But the state went around it, and within 2-3 months prepared to transfer us to Holot. They actually worked on a Friday, which they don't usually do, in order to get by the court's order, I don't even think everything was ready, but they transferred us. On the same day we started a hunger strike, we said we won't have it, we won't be treated as criminals.

I went to meet with the head of Immigration in Holot, I told him we can't stay here for our entire lives. He said his only responsibility is - to give us food and a place to sleep. This was very difficult to accept because you can't reduce my life, a person's life, to food and a bed. Humans need much more than that.

He said if I have complaints, go to the Knesset [parliament] or the Supreme Court. So, we did. We decided to leave Holot empty and march to Jerusalem.

Most of the guys came from villages in Darfur, they had never seen a city until they had to flee their homes because of genocide. Very few had experience in political organising, except for some of us who had been student activists. So we prepared the people and explained how we should organise: not leave a mess behind us, not disturb the order, not shout things in Arabic that might sound threatening, or respond to negative comments in the street from people who don't agree with us, which we expected to receive… our only goal was to march to parliament and the Court and show we don't want to disturb the order, or threaten Israel's demographic balance, or the security of citizens, we are just refugees looking for protection…

When we were forced back to Holot, my mental state really deteriorated. I wasn't sleeping well, barely eating. Trauma from my childhood, of seeing my friends murdered by militias, started coming back to me at night in images. I thought about my mom all the time. I felt I was losing my mind. I went to the doctor there and he said take a painkiller. I went to see him a few times. This doctor, he told us he's a veterinarian – he meant that we are animals.

I took the immigration official's statement as a challenge – I never want to be that person, who settles for food and a bed. I want to develop, study, contribute something to humanity.

(Isa, former Holot detainee)[1]

[1] All interviewees have been given a pseudonym.

Infiltrator is the legal term used in Israel to refer to asylum seekers from Sudan and Eritrea who entered the country through unauthorised points along the Israel-Egypt border. Holot Detention Facility was where over 13,000 men, like Isa, were detained between 2013 and 2018 under the Prevention of Infiltration Law.[2] Given that most of this group submitted asylum claims to Israeli authorities, and the high percentages of refugee recognition rates of Sudanese and Eritreans worldwide, they will be referred to as asylum seekers hereafter.[3] I maintain throughout the thesis that the detention of African asylum seekers in Holot was a derogation from detainees' constitutional rights to human dignity and liberty,[4] and from their rights to asylum under international law.[5] These derogations were facilitated by Israel's inadequate asylum system and

[2] Over 13,000 asylum seekers were detained in Holot overall, for time periods ranging from 12-20 months, based on regulations in the Prevention of Infiltration Law (Prevention of Infiltration Law (Crimes and Jurisdiction) 5714 1954), and its amendments between 2011-2013 (Prevention of Infiltration Law (Crimes and Jurisdictions) (Amendment No. 3) 5772 2011; Prevention of Infiltration Law (Crimes and Jurisdiction) (Amendment No. 4 and Temporary Order) 5774 2013; Law for the Prevention of Infiltration and Securing the Departure of Infiltrators from Israel (Legislative Amendments and Temporary Orders) 5775 2014) [Amendment No. 3, 4, and 5 from hereon]. Amendments were contested in three Supreme Court cases (HCJ 7146/12 *Adam v The Knesset* 2013 [*Adam* from hereon]; HCJ 8425/13 *Gebrselassie v The Knesset et al*, HCJ 7385/13 *Eitan et al v The Government of Israel et al* 2014 [*Eitan* from hereon]; HCJ 8665/14 *Desete et al v The Knesset et al* 2015 [*Desete* from hereon]).

[3] Reasoning regarding this group's claims to asylum and collective protection were explained at length by William Toll, UNHCR representative in Israel in a "Request to submit an Amicus Curiae Brief to the Supreme Court of Israel High Court of Justice" (UNHCR, 2013). Israel's Asylum Procedures was outlined in Ministry of Interior Guidlines (PIBA 2011). According to state data, the number of 'infiltrators' in Israel at the end of 2020 was 31,012, comprised of 6,285 Sudanese and 21,890 Eritreans who make up 91% of the group (PIBA 2020). As of summer 2019, 4,673 Sudanese and 10,647 Eritrean asylum claims remain pending in Israel's Refugee Status Determination Unit (HCJ 2293/17 *Gersegeher v The Knesset et al* 2020, 27), meaning that more than half of the 'infiltrator' group should be afforded the legal status asylum seekers, having filed asylum requests.

[4] Israel does not have a written constitution or bill of rights, however a strong constitutional tradition has developed over time based on its founding documents, judicial activism (largely under former Supreme Court President Aharon Barak), judicial review, and the 1992 'Constitutional Revolution' (Meydani 2011; Barak, Barak-Erez, and Sapir 2013; Navot 2016; Barak 2015) that included the enactment Basic Law: Freedom of Occupation, and Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty (Basic Law Freedom of Occupation 5752 1992; Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty 5752 1992). Constitutional rights are grounded in Israel's Basic Laws which recognises the 'equal value of all persons, sanctity of life and freedom as a person; that the life, body, or dignity of a human being are not to be limited; and that every person is entitled to protection of life, body, and dignity. That there shall be no deprivation or restriction of the liberty of a person by imprisonment, arrest, extradition or otherwise' (Barak 2015, 178–79, 280).

[5] Articles 31 and 33 of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees ('the 1951 Convention') and its 1967 Protocol (United Nations Organisation 1951). The 1951 Convention provides in Article 31(1) that refugees and asylum seekers shall not be penalised, including fines or detention, for illegal entry or stay in a country if they present themselves to authorities (United Nations Organisation 1951, sec. 31(1); Costello and Mouzourakis 2016, 50–51). The principle of *non-refoulement*, not to expel or return a person to a place where their life and freedom might be threatened,

weak commitment to refugee protection (Afeef 2009, 11–14; Kritzman-Amir and Berman 2011, 619–22; Kritzman-Amir 2012; Yaron Mesegna, Hashimshony-Yaffe, and Campbell 2013, 148–52; Mann 2015, 464–72; Ziegler 2015a, 174).

African asylum seekers' detention in Holot was legislated by the state, and 'negotiated' for approval by Israel's Supreme Court over five years of amendment and litigation that will be explored in chapter one. The official aim of detention in its final arrangement was to prevent asylum seekers from settling in urban centres, particularly South Tel Aviv.[6] The legislative and juridical process has been studied at length (Ziegler 2015a, pt. C; Kritzman-Amir 2015, 27–36; Berman 2015; Rosenberg Rubins 2019, Part III), yet several gaps emerge from scholarship on the enforcement of state control upon African asylum seekers in detention, and the centrality of South Tel Aviv to national migration politics. This dissertation addresses these research gaps by exploring several questions regarding the wide-ranging effects of Israel's detention policy: How can we explain the heightened enforcement of migration control on a migrant group with distinct attributes – African, male, single, asylum seekers, as compared to the treatment of other migrant groups? How do we understand the centrality of South Tel Aviv and its residents to national politics of migration control, alongside their continued marginalisation? And how were detention policies experienced and perceived by the two populations most affected by them?

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is expressed in Article 33(1) of the Convention (United Nations Organisation 1951, sec. 33(1)). Both articles are major pillars and mechanisms of the Convention in securing rights to dignity and liberty, as well as the right to seek asylum through fair and effective procedure (Goodwin-Gill 2001; Costello 2015). Detention of asylum seekers in Israel emerged from its earliest days in contravention of these rights (UNHCR Representative 2013).

[6] Prevention of Settlement in city centres was the official legislative aim stipulated in the final accepted version of the Prevention of Infiltration Law (Proposal 904 - Law for Prevention of Infiltration and Securing the Departure of Infiltrators from Israel (Crimes and Jurisdiction) 2014). The less official aims were articulated earlier by then Minister of Interior Eli Ishai: 'We will make the lives of infiltrators bitter until they leave' (JPOST staff 2012).

This dissertation analyses the experiences and views of African asylum seekers, and Israeli citizens from South Tel Aviv, regarding detention policies, and the impacts of these on their lives, neighbourhoods, and relationships with the state. Through a close reading of testimonies, it explores state treatment of the two groups, both differentiated and excluded, albeit on opposite sides of formal membership. The findings of this research enhance our understanding of racialised differentiation in the state, their lived consequences, and how they play out in spatial dynamics.

Scholarship on Israel's exclusion of non-Jewish migrants is dominated by two prevailing arguments on the importance of (1) citizenship and (2) ethnonational (Jewish) boundaries of the state. Animosity toward migrants is widely considered to be based on competing claims around citizenship and rights (Raijman and Semyonov 2009, 16,24; Raijman 2010, 95–97; Cohen and Margalit 2015, 667) and/or racialised xenophobia stemming from increased ethnonationalism (Canetti-Nisim and Pedahzur 2003, 310; Duman 2015, 1233–37; Hochman 2017, 59–60). Asylum is seldom accessible to non-Jews due to an ethnonational immigration regime that leaves very little room for non-Jewish migration or naturalisation (Kritzman-Amir 2009, 100–103; Afeef 2009, 2–4; Shachar 1998, 234–37). Additionally, though Israel was one of the first signatories of the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees, it has not incorporated refugee law into domestic law, nor has it enacted primary legislation to regulate refugee recognition, treatment of asylum seekers whose claims are in process, or persons considered to be non-removable and therefore deserving of subsidiary protections (Mann 2015, 464–67; Ziegler 2015a, 178–82).

Over the last two decades, Israel has increasingly invested in migrant policing and deportation enforcement (Kemp and Raijman 2000, 97–101; Gil and Dahan 2007, 366–73; Kemp and Raijman 2008, chap. 3; Willen 2019, chap. 1). Israel's enhanced enforcement of migration control is not unique. Academic debates on the criminology of mobility, and in the growing

subfield of Border Criminology,[7] address the increased convergence of immigration control with penal and exclusionary practices globally.[8] Scholars have theorised immigration detention and deportation as attempts to reassert state sovereignty (De Genova and Peutz 2010, Introduction; Sassen 2015, chap. 1), to police the boundaries of citizenship (Franko Aas 2013b; Weber 2013, chap. 3,4; Kaufman and Bosworth 2013, 259–60), to create a sense of collective membership (Hughes 2007, 139–50; Gibney, Anderson, and Paoletti 2011, 548; Barker 2018, chap. 3), and to establish global racial hierarchies (Fekete and Webber 2010; Garner 2015, 202; Erel, Murji, and Nahaboo 2016, 1343). However, there is very little literature on the Israeli case that utilises criminological approaches to analyse asylum seekers' detention, or that considers the role of ethnonationalism, race, and postcolonial politics in migration control.[9]

While some sociological literature notes different degrees of animosity afforded to diverse out-groups (Raijman and Semyonov 2004b; Canetti-Nisim, Ariely, and Halperin 2008; Raijman 2012; Willen 2010a), debates in Israel still centre around the binary distinction of citizen – non-citizen, and Jewish – non-Jewish.[10] I argue for a more nuanced account of exclusion. The dissertation traces several forms of racialised differentiation in Israel, how they are enforced through state practices upon diverse groups, and their socio-spatial ramifications in Israel's

[7] For foundational texts in this subfield see for example: (Franko Aas and Bosworth 2013a; Aliverti 2013; Pickering, Bosworth, and Franko Aas 2015; Bosworth 2016a; Weber and McCulloch 2018).

[8] See for instance the Border Criminologies network that focuses on border control and its effects by bringing together work by scholars, practitioners and people subject to border control enforcement https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/research-subject-groups/centre-criminology/centreborder-criminologies/about-border-criminologies. Or the Global Criminal Justice Hub that focuses on effects of globalisation on criminal justice systems around the world https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/research-and-subject-groups/criminal-justice-hub.

[9] Criminological and border control studies of other locales increasingly trace effects of empire and colonialism on migration control and penal practices (See for example Agozino 2004; Bosworth and Flavin 2007; Cunneen 2011, 249–50; Mayblin 2017); alongside growing recognition that present day hierarchies of belonging rely on colonial and postcolonial racism (Gilroy 2003; Hall and Back 2009, 677–78; Back, Sinha, and Bryan 2012, 150–51).

[10] A popular line of explanation for enhanced animosity ranges from claims of out-group exclusivity to concerns about security and demographic threats (See for example: Ziegler 2015; Kalir 2015; Berman and Ziegler 2015).

ethnonational postcolonial context. It is to these central concepts – ethnonationalism, postcolonialism, and racialised differentiation – that we now turn.

MAIN CONCEPTS

ETHNONATIONALISM

Ethnonationalism is used in this dissertation to describe a socio-political sentiment characterised by a group's collective claims to a shared ethnic ancestry based on common origins, language and culture, with aims of national self-determination through a modernist state project with institutionalised ethnic majority control (Fenton and May 2002, 1–6; Jenkins 1997, 142–46; Smith 1996). Ethnonationalism will be discussed in the Israeli context, though it has been studied around the globe in states' foundational ideologies, political discourse, institutions, and many other aspects of collective life where ethnic commonality is elevated as an organising principle (Fenton and May 2002; Brubaker 2006, chap. 6). Two main types of modern nation-states are widely accepted within the literature on nationalism – civic or ethnic states (Kautsky 1972; Smith 1995, 5–6; Ignatieff 1994, 3–7; Brubaker 1992). These types are largely distinguished by the civic political requirements for membership in the first, versus requirements of shared ethnic origin or kinship as grounds for citizenship in the latter. Many have since elaborated on the closeness of these terms (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992, 25; Hall 2017) or the intermingling of both civic and ethnic components in all states through national symbols, myths and narratives (Smith 2009, 29; 1996; Jenkins 1997, 146–47; Gavison 1999b, 44–47).

Ethnonationalism in Israel is easily observed, as Jewishness was the central and official factor that informed the Zionist movement's efforts to establish the state and maintain a Jewish national identity. A Jewish majority population in Israel has been maintained through conscious state efforts and commitment to absorb all migrants of Jewish heritage under the Law of Return (1950). Importantly for this thesis, ethnonationalism is expressed in immigration laws, as Israel

relies on a system of *jus sanguinis* to determine the citizenship status of immigrants and their descendants. Also important is the country's ethnonational discourse, which conceives of the political community as based on a shared ethnic background, its ideological and institutional expressions, that unequally prioritise the majority Jewish ethnic group above others. The ethnonational order is realised through the state's incorporation regime – state policies, discursive practices, rights protections, and resource distribution that characterise that states' relations with those it aims to include or prioritise (Smooha 1990; Soysal 1994; Shafir and Peled 1998, 412–17; 2002, 12–20; Peled 2013; Rouhana and Huneidi 2016, 3).

POSTCOLONIALISM

Postcolonial in this thesis has a dual meaning – it refers to a time period after direct control of an imperial power, but also to lasting connections between colonialism and its legacies – physical, institutional, discursive and ideological. The lasting impacts of the imperial era and colonial enterprise stretch across the globe and texture our everyday lives. They have been long explored by scholars of postcolonial and decolonial studies who have urged us to reread Euro-American canons, critique literature and culture, and study social conditions in consideration of colonial disruptions and their aftermath (e.g. Fanon 1970; Said 1978; Césaire 2000; Mohanty 2003).

Most important for this dissertation are colonial racial hierarchies that animated settlement patterns and state practices in Israel, produced inequality among its citizens, and shaped perceptions of its Arab surroundings. Postcolonial paradigms are used to investigate the production of stereotypes and the 'inventions of the other' (Desai and Nair 2005, 5) that accompanied settlement and state building around the colonised world, as well as in Palestine (Veracini 2006; Shalhoub-Kevorkian 2015, Introduction; Rouhana and Sabbagh-Khoury 2015; Lentin 2018; Sabbagh-Khoury 2021). What Césaire called 'thingification' (Césaire 2000, 42), and Said conceptualised as Orientalism (Said 1978) are useful in understanding the essentialising of

non-Western cultures by the Western colonising dominant (Hall 1992; 2017, 101; Wekker 2016, 47). These will be explored within Israeli society (Shohat 1992; Khazzoom 2003; Shenhav 2006) and used to inform examination of the treatment African asylum seekers.

RACIALISED DIFFERENTIATION

Racialised differentiation is a term used to describe several processes of differential state treatment afforded to groups characterised by distinct racial differences. Racialised differentiation best frames, explains and informs analysis of the empirical findings that emerged in this project. I use racialised differentiation to encompass both differential inclusion (Hall 1986, 23–25; 2017, 86–87; Mezzadra and Neilson 2013, 157–66; Segrave 2019) and differential exclusion (Castles 1995, 294–95; 2005, 204–6; Squire 2009, 145–49), which describe the diverse and unequal positions and different degrees of integration of citizens and migrants in the state, and across its different sectors. I combine these approaches with several studies that examined such dynamics in Israel (Shafir and Peled 2002; Rosenhek 2011). While Hall focuses on the differential inclusion of citizens, and others have focused on differential inclusion or exclusion of migrants, I argue that both citizens and migrants are differentially treated along a single racialised scale. The state's differential inclusion of its own citizens, and exclusion of non-citizens, accords with what Goldberg describes as a 'capacity to exclude whether within or from the state… the power to exclude and by extension include in racially ordered terms, to dominate through the power to categorise differentially and hierarchically' (Goldberg 2002, 9).

Stuart Hall explored the closeness, interrelatedness, and unresolved relationship between the terms race, ethnicity and nation, stating what he sees 'as the problem of the twenty-first century – the problem of living with difference' (Hall 2017, 86). In doing so, he builds on W. E. B. Du Bois's articulation a century earlier of the problem of the 'colour line' (Du Bois, 1903). Hall explained how differential inclusion can be observed in the omnipresence of racial distinction in

nation states' differing incorporation of diverse member groups (Hall 1986, 25). Race operates as the discursive construct that organises groups hierarchically based on particular physical distinctions (Roy 2001, 77–80; Garner 2018, x), in 'the great classificatory systems of difference that operate in human societies. Race in this sense, is the centrepiece of a hierarchical system that produces difference' (Hall 2017, 33). Hall's model of differential inclusion considers unequal state treatment of racialised groups, and its manifestation across space. Scholars of Israeli society have similarly outlined a racialised ordering logic according to which the state 'functions as a central nexus connecting the constitution of differential categories of membership with processes of resource distribution that determine the position of various groups in the socio-economic hierarchy' (Rosenhek 2011, 63). Groups are distinguished within the Jewish collective, based on ethnic origins – *Ashkenazi*, *Mizrahi*[11], Russian, Ethiopian and others; as well as, and in contrast to, external Palestinian Others (Shohat 1989; Khazzoom 2003, 483; Chetrit 2010; Shenhav, Hever, and Motzafi-Haller 2002; Lamont et al. 2016, chap. 4). This relational racial order follows a Eurocentric 'grammar of social exclusion', which unequally governs Israel's citizens along hierarchical ethno-class lines (Yona 2005, chap. 1).

Mezzadra and Nielson applied Hall's original articulation of differential inclusion to migration regimes as the production of 'multiple subject positions' (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013, 268) or different 'degrees of subordination, rule, discrimination, racism, disenfranchisement,

[11]Scholarship on Israeli society is dominated by a model of four major cleavages that characterise state development and conflictual dynamics over time: National cleavage (Jews and Palestinians), religious distinction (secular and orthodox), class divide (rich and poor), and ethnic rift (*Ashkenazi* and *Mizrahi*) (Smooha 1976; Peled 1990; Mizrachi 2016; Ram 2019). Two major 'ethnic groups' (in Hebrew, plural—*edot*) make up most of Israeli Jewish society, Jews from Europe and English speaking countries are identified as *Ashkenazim* (Ashkenaz was the medieval Jewish name for Germany). Jews from the Middle East and North Africa are identified as *Mizrahim* (literally meaning 'Orientals' or 'Easterners', historically there existed a distinction from *Sephardim*; literally, of Spanish descent). Ethnic division and inequality characterised differential institutional treatment of these two groups throughout state history, privileging the Ashkenazi group of earlier settlement, and marginalising *Mizrahi* counterparts (Smooha 1976; Swirski 1981a; Shenhav, Hever, and Motzafi-Haller 2002; Chetrit 2010).

exploitation and segmentation' of migrant groups in different aspects of life (Mezzadra et al. 2015, 25). Segrave further extended their concept to describe the partial inclusion of irregular migrants through worker networks, workplaces and the broader community (Segrave 2019, 206). Castles conceptualised migrant's partial integration as differential exclusion, when he described incorporation of immigrants into certain sectors of social life and denial from others (Castles 1995). In his later elaboration on a differentiated citizenship, he discussed how migrants from different origins are classified along a hierarchy of nations (Castles 2005). I consider these various conceptualisations to account for different levels of group involvement and exclusion in society, the omnipresence of borders, and the productive aspects of bordering practices.

My contribution to this debate is in bringing together these various articulations of differential inclusion and exclusion, and analytically situating them on either side of the ethnonational citizenship axis – the formal marker of belonging in Israel. Drawing on stratified portrayals of membership, differential exclusion is understood as a mirror image of the inclusionary order, in which racialised non-citizen groups experience degrees of 'excorporation' (Bader 1997, 3) rather than incorporation. Israeli migration and rights scholars have noted that membership in Israeli society involves 'differential rights and varying levels of citizenship status for the different ethnic groups... [and] needs to be considered as a relational entity in which different groups (both citizens and non-citizens) accede to different degrees of inclusion' (Raijman 2010, 88). I develop the approach of racialised differentiation in this dissertation to enhance such an understanding of Israel's relational order and its implications for *Mizrahi* citizens in South Tel Aviv and for non-citizen, African, asylum seekers detained in Holot. I argue that dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in Israel are guided by a hierarchical scale of racialised differentiation, which is underpinned by ethnonational and postcolonial logics.

Ethnonationalism, postcolonialism, and racialised differentiation will be used in the dissertation to account for the hierarchical order that governs dynamics of race and place in Israel and is exhibited in migration control. There are three populations whose racialised exclusion is closely related to the discussions that emerge in this thesis, yet will not be expanded on due to its limited scope. Palestinians, asylum seeking women from Sudan and Eritrea, and Ethiopian Jews are all racialised, criminalised and excluded in related ways that can only be briefly noted as significant, but will be expanded on only in my future work.

Any examination of state control, rights, border policing or detention in Israel should acknowledge that Palestinians are the most widely detained, strictly controlled, severely excluded and racialised population in, and by, the Israeli state. Many of Israel's migration laws and border control mechanisms were developed for and tried on Palestinian populations. Most immediately evident in this thesis is the prolonged use of administrative detention, and the legal construction of the term 'infiltrator', that shifted over time from Palestinian border crossers (Harris 1997; Simpson 1995, 657–58; Bracha 1998), to African asylum seekers dwelling in urban areas. Enforcement of these mechanisms and others on Palestinians has been examined at length elsewhere (e.g. Rosenberg Rubins 2019; Ben-Natan 2020; Golan 1992; Gil 2010), and will not be discussed further in this thesis.

Palestinians, and their treatment by the state, are also central to consider in most discussions of Israel's social or political dynamics; whether in examining its postcolonial society, land settlement process and patterns, ethno-racial dynamics, politics of exclusion, xenophobia, labour market dynamics, citizenship discourses, socio-economic inequalities, and more (Rouhana 1997; Ghanem 1998; Shafir and Peled 2002, pt. 1; Ben-Porat and Turner 2011, 10–13; Lentin 2018). In these fields and many others, Israeli occupation of Palestine and settlement on Palestinian

lands, historically and in the present, are crucial to consider.[12] Palestinian citizens of Israel present a separate category (heterogenous in itself), uniquely included and excluded, often constructed by the state as second class citizens, enemy citizens, or a fifth column within the state (Rouhana 1997; Ghanem 1998; Sultany 2012; Roby 2015, 1; Jamal 2020). Some of these issues will be discussed in chapters two and four, in conceptualising the specific scale of hierarchical racialisation that developed in the socio-historical context of Israel as an ethnonational settler society. However, further discussion of Palestinians is not possible within the scope of this thesis. This project is devoted to a thorough and in-depth investigation of the detention of African asylum seekers and their racialised exclusion, which remains understudied to date.

A second group whose exclusion is related to this dissertation, but who will not be fully addressed are female asylum seekers from Sudan and Eritrea. There are many questions that remain unexplored regarding the treatment of women asylum seekers in Israel, though some studies have been conducted into this group's arrival to Israel, threats in their home countries, difficulties faced under severe socio-economic exclusion, survival and resistance tactics (Ghebrezghiabher and Motzafi-Haller 2015; Wurgaft 2015; Mehartzion et al. 2017). Women are racially stigmatised and excluded in ways shared by men, but also face distinctly different gendered experiences and roles, as well as intersectional forms of oppression, exacerbated in precarious situations such as seeking asylum (Crenshaw 1989; Potter 2015; Hill-Collins and Bilge 2016; Parmar 2017). We know that such difficulties affect women seeking asylum in various ways based on studies conducted across the Global North (Spijkerboer 2000; Pickering, Bosworth, and

[12] These include both relations between Israel and Palestinians as well as internal issues such as the state's treatment of *Mizrahi* Jews, and the co-constitutive effect of settlement patterns on racial formations and group trajectories (Tzfadia and Yacobi 2011); symbolic boundaries and national belonging in the case of Arab Palestinian citizens (Guetzkow and Fast 2016, 156; Jabareen 2016; Jamal 2016); categorisation of Palestinians as enemies (Willen 2010a; Rouhana 1997; Rouhana and Ghanem 1998; Ben-Natan 2020) and more.

Segrave 2014; Bosworth, Fili, and Pickering 2017; Canning 2017; 2019; Gerlach 2018a; Esposito et al. 2018). However, as this thesis focuses on detention in Holot, in which only male asylum seekers were detained, women's experiences remain outside the remit of this research.

Ethiopian Jewish citizens are the final group whose racialised exclusion and heightened policing is closely related to this thesis. Ethiopian citizens are the largest group of people of African origin in Israel (Central Bureau of Statistics 2020). Research on Ethiopian citizens largely indicates that their poor reception in the country since the 1980s has relegated them to the lowest ranks of Israel's socio-economic class system (Ben-Eliezer 2008, 936–37; Anteby-Yemini 2010; Israel State Comptroller 2012; Walsh and Tuval-Mashiach 2012), and most impoverished geographical and social peripheries (Fenster 1998; Swirski and Swirski 2002, 1–9; Guetzkow and Fast 2016, 156). Such socio-spatial inequalities produced through institutionalised ethnic segregation are indicative of Israel's relational Eurocentric scales of belonging and exclusion (Ojanuga 1993, 157; Salamon 2003; Girma 2005; Mengistu and Avraham 2015, 571–73; Abu-Rabia-Queder 2019, 4–7), and complicate the accepted binary of Israel's main ethnic cleavage between *Ashkenazi* and *Mizrahi* Jews. Due to limitations of space, these will be only briefly discussed in chapter two.

WHY STUDY HOLOT AND SOUTH TEL AVIV?

My interest in researching Holot sprang from my activism alongside asylum seeking populations since 2006, and Jewish residents in South Tel Aviv since 2011. Over the last decade, I assisted asylum seekers to understand Israel's frequently changing legal expectations of them and political discussions about them, to fulfil bureaucratic demands, apply to leave the country, seek medical services without access to healthcare, or secure legal remedies for injustices faced in the workplace and elsewhere. As they established community organisations for mutual assistance and group rights, I provided various forms of assistance and support. In the late 2010s, it appeared that asylum seekers were finally managing to gain a sense of stability despite their precarious status.

The opening of the Holot detention facility in 2013 came as a shock. Most Sudanese and Eritreans had submitted asylum requests, and they had been recognised as a non-removable population. They had lived in Israel for several years and the vast majority had not committed crimes in the country that warranted imprisonment. A Southern border fence was completed in 2012, and new border entries had ceased almost entirely. It was unclear why this specific migrant group was being differentiated from other migrant groups and summoned to detention.

As explained above, detention of African asylum seekers under amended versions of the Prevention of Infiltration Law (1954) was intended to prevent their settlement in urban centres, particularly in South Tel Aviv where they had concentrated in large numbers (Yacobi 2011; Natan 2012; Cohen 2015). These areas were blighted by extreme poverty, poor infrastructure, neglect, and a general fear of criminality that many attributed to the presence of asylum seekers. The state framed detention as a form of help for South Tel Aviv's Jewish residents as it would reduce the numbers of Sudanese and Eritreans in their neighbourhoods.

Such explanations might be persuasive to those unfamiliar with South Tel Aviv and its state before asylum seekers' arrived. Tel Aviv's Southern borough, particularly the Neve Shaanan neighbourhood, suffered from a range of structural, physical and social problems that will be detailed in the following pages. However, these problems predated the presence of asylum seekers, and a 'solution' for the neighbourhood's problems in the form of detention in Holot facility appeared nonsensical. I decided therefore to investigate the wide-ranging impacts of detention policies up close, from the city, and over time. Two research questions guided my investigation:

(1) How can we explain the heightened enforcement of migration control on a group with distinct attributes – African, male, single, asylum seekers, compared to other migrant groups?
(2) How do we understand the centrality of South Tel Aviv and its residents to national politics of migration control, alongside continued marginalisation?

Data collection took place in early 2018 across three sites: Holot Facility visiting area, South Tel Aviv, and in other communities where asylum seekers had settled after detention.[13] Fourteen interviews were conducted in each site (42 interviews all together). These sites were chosen to reach asylum seekers who were or had been detained, as well as Jewish residents in South Tel Aviv whom the state identified as the supposed beneficiaries of the asylum seekers' detention. Furthermore, South Tel Aviv was the site where migration control enforcement and anti-migrant politics played out in the most intense and publicised ways.

I established familiarity with each research site and community prior to the formal fieldwork period that took place during the first half of 2018. My prior involvement included visits to Holot since 2014, residence and involvement with Israelis in Neve Shaanan since 2011, and activist engagement with Sudanese and Eritrean communities since 2007. I therefore easily acclimated to the research sites and communities during the formal fieldwork. Participants in the research included asylum seekers, and South Tel Aviv residents, some of whom I had known for over a decade, and some I met briefly before the interview. Access to interviewees relied on pre-existing activist networks and the use of snowball sampling, in which initial informants nominate other participants who meet the criteria for the study.

Preparation for fieldwork included a well-designed research plan for six months of data collection in Holot, which was to run alongside my residing and collecting data in South Tel Aviv. Events, however, dictated a very different execution of the research plan, as the Israel government introduced a new policy of forced deportation in November 2017. It announced Holot would close in March 2018, and all single, male, asylum seekers from Sudan and Eritrea would be forcibly

[13] I refer to these multiple locations as 'in the community' because asylum seekers released from detention were prohibited from work or residence in Tel Aviv and other cities with large African populations.

deported to Uganda or Rwanda or held in Saharonim closed prison indefinitely. The change of policy reverberated on many levels – for the men in Holot, it introduced the threat of imminent deportation; it was opposed by a civic anti-deportation movement with members in many sectors of the Israeli public; and it heightened tensions in South Tel Aviv between anti-migrant and pro-migrant campaign groups.

The new policy and the closing of Holot also meant that my original plans to conduct six months of interviews at Holot had to be condensed into six weeks. While the closure of Holot was welcome news, these changes intensified the research schedule, introduced additional anxiety for all involved in the research, and affected my focus on research when urgent community needs arose. It required flexibility and compromises that impacted my research in each of the three field sites differently. The following is a brief introduction to each site.

South Tel Aviv

South Tel Aviv is rundown and crowded, inhabited by diverse populations, most of whom share the single trait that they cannot afford or manage to live elsewhere. It is characterised by shoddy and overwhelmed infrastructures, crumbling buildings, and mixed-use municipal purposing that combines commercial, industrial and residential usage in the same spaces and leads to increased air and noise pollution, overcrowding and social tensions (Marom 2009, 235–38; 2014b, 1350–51; Institute for Structural Reforms 2013; Rotbard 2015). South Tel Aviv lacks development, resources, streetlighting, cultural and educational institutions, and green spaces. Neve Shaanan is home to Israel's largest open space drug market, prostitution, and crime (Bonny-Noach and Toys 2019). All of South Tel Aviv Borough, and particularly Neve Shaanan neighborhood, which is at the centre of this research, have suffered from long-term systemic neglect and marginalisation. Chapter two expands on this history.

In the 1980s, South Tel Aviv became associated with the growing presence of migrant workers, who sought affordable housing near public transportation and informal economies. With time, migrant communities from various Asian and European countries became increasingly established in the area (Schnell 2000; Raijman and Kemp 2003; Fenster and Vizel 2006; Yacobi and Fenster 2005). While numbers have varied, non-Jewish migrants have made up a significant majority in the area for decades (CIMI 2016; Tel Aviv Municipality 2014).

Asylum seekers from Sudan and Eritrea first entered South Tel Aviv in 2007, when they were released from initial incarceration in Saharonim prison with one-way tickets to Tel Aviv Central Bus Station (Berman 2015, 185–90; Harel 2015, 65–66). Many asylum seekers settled in South Tel Aviv where they relied on pre-existing networks of migrant workers to navigate their precarious legal and economic status. Since their arrival, South Tel Aviv has attracted unprecedented attention and media coverage linking African asylum seekers with the neighbourhood's poor reputation (Tirosh and Klein-Avraham 2019, 8–10).

Media coverage and the political framing of South Tel Aviv and the 'infiltrator problem' brought the neighbourhood to national attention, and governmental decision-making on migration control (Yaron Mesegna 2015; Berman and Ziegler 2015, 155; Hochman 2015, 361–62). Hostile attitudes toward Sudanese and Eritrean migrants were articulated in official statements and government speeches, which fuelled negative public sentiment (Duman 2015; Yacobi 2011), while the Prevention of Infiltration Law that was used to regulate them was contested in parliament and the courts (Berman and Ziegler 2015; Moscovitz 2016; Weinblum 2019). Inflammatory speeches were increasingly delivered at, in, or about South Tel Aviv and its residents. The 'infiltrator problem' surged into Israeli political and public discourse (Tsurkov 2012; Tirosh 2018). Right-wing politicians and media increasingly portrayed 'infiltrators' as an existential threat to the country (Shechory-Bitton and Soen 2016; Hochman 2017; Orr and Ajzenstadt 2020, 149–57), using the

case of South Tel Aviv to garner xenophobic support for harsh policies against asylum seekers (Duman 2015).

In one of the most notable events, several right-wing Members of the Knesset (MKs) spoke at a demonstration in South Tel Aviv. MK Miri Regev (then Chairperson of the Internal Affairs and Environment Committee), stated in her speech that 'the Sudanese are a cancer in our body' (Efraim and Azulay 2012). In an interview that same year, Minister of Interior, Eli Yishai, stated:

> *many women are raped and afraid to complain, so they won't be stigmatised as having contracted AIDS… infiltrators together with the Palestinians will bring us closer quickly to the end of the Zionist dream… we established a state, and we are losing it day by day… most of those arriving are Muslims and think our land should not belong to us – the white person (Yerushalmi 2012, author's translation)*

Statements like these constructed asylum seekers as a dangerous, criminal, sexually predatory group that posed a demographic and security risk, and this threat was amplified by the media (Ben Menahem 2018; Efraim and Rimerman 2016; Smooha 2013). A far-right political party called 'Power to Israel' competed in the 2013 national elections with the promise of combatting 'infiltrators'. The party was comprised of ultra-nationalist politicians, and a young woman from South Tel Aviv, May Golan. Golan gained notoriety by fighting the 'infiltrator problem' through anti-migrant advocacy and grassroots mobilisation. Although the party failed to secure seats in parliament, Golan established the 'Hebrew City Faction' that ran for Tel Aviv Municipal Council.[14] It promised to restore security to Jewish residents of the neighbourhood, tackle the 'infiltrator problem', and safeguard its Jewish identity (STLV 2012; Maariv 2019). In April 2019, Golan was voted into parliament with the Likud ruling party. Her credentials listed on the parliament website

[14] Though the Hebrew Faction did not secure Municipal seats, it continued to operate as an NGO.

are limited to the directorship of the Hebrew City NGO (Knesset of Israel 2020). In her first day in office, Golan established the Lobby for the Expulsion of Illegal Infiltrators (Ofir 2019).

Since 2010, political discourse and media rhetoric about migration have thus contained inflammatory messages regarding South Tel Aviv and asylum seekers (Tsurkov 2012, 4–31), but also about those who have entered the neighbourhood to support them through NGO activities. News sites frequently spread stories of grandiose plans by asylum seekers and their supporters to flood the country (e.g. Globes, 2014), conquer the state (e.g. Goren, 2013) or launch a hostile takeover using violence and crime (e.g. Ifergan, 2013). Jewish citizens' rights in South Tel Aviv are framed in opposition to asylum seekers, non-Jews, and non-citizens. Older *Mizrahi* residents of Neve Shaanan have been portrayed in the media as the main Jewish minority that resisted human rights claims for asylum seekers (e.g. Hendelzaltz, 2012; Gelzer, 2014, 2016). Human rights activists were often depicted as traitors of the Jewish state, supporting its 'infiltration' (e.g. Rosenfeld, 2014; Toker, 2014; Shaked, 2019).

Tensions around migration policies in the neighbourhood reached a peak in the first half of 2018, following the government announcement of its decision to close Holot after five years of operation, and to deport single, male Sudanese and Eritreans to Uganda and Rwanda (Shalev 2017; Liebermann 2018). In response, two opposing grassroots campaigns arose in South Tel Aviv. One campaign, titled 'Rehabilitation of South Tel Aviv Starts with Deportation', advocated for the exclusionary policy; the other – 'South Tel Aviv against the Deportation' – mobilised against the policy and included asylum seekers in its ranks (Faraj, 2018).[15]

[15] South Tel Aviv against the Deportation was joined by a second movement called 'Stopping the Deportation', that was initiated by university students across the country, as well as the Standing Together Political movement. Movements collaborated on a campaign that included mass protests, public letters, advocacy in parliament, lectures and events.

Protests and arguments for and against deportation dominated the public sphere. Opposing campaigns were highly visible on the streets through an array of competing signs and banners plastered over public areas and private balconies. In March 2018, 'South Tel Aviv against the Deportation' mobilised 20,000 people to protest on the central Levinsky Street, followed by a 25,000 person protest the following month in Rabin Square (JPOST staff 2018). A handful of pro-deportation activists organised under the banner of 'South Tel Aviv Liberation Front' protested at nearly all events, with the two sides being kept apart by police.



Figure 2. South Tel Aviv against the Deportation
(Photo Credit: M Ravid)



Figure 3. Rehabilitation of South Tel Aviv starts with Deportation of Infiltrators
(Photo Credit: M Ravid)

In April 2018, Prime Minister Netanyahu announced a deal with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for the resettlement and regularisation of half of all Sudanese and Eritreans in Israel and other Western countries. Anti-deportation activists rejoiced, and pro-deportation activists responded with uproar on learning that only half of the group members would be removed. They exerted political pressure and succeeded in cancelling the UNHCR agreement (TOI Staff 2018). Events in 2018 signal how integral South Tel Aviv and its residents became to national politics (Alon 2019a).[16]

[16] In 2019 Ynet, the country's largest online news magazine, revealed a detailed account of anti-asylum seeker activists involvement in deliberations and negotiation of the UNHCR deal. The information in the article was provided by lead

South Tel Aviv's centrality to national migration concerns was also reflected in municipal politics during the 2018 Tel Aviv elections. Pre-election advertisements for the local, right-wing Likud party branch were plastered around the city with an image of Sudanese and Eritrean asylum seekers, subtitled 'infiltrator city' and juxtaposed with pictures of an Israeli flag or the signing of the declaration of independence, subtitled 'Hebrew City'. As if the imagery were not clear enough, the poster also bore the slogan 'It's Us or Them' (TimeOut 2018).



Figure 4. Likud Party Municipal Campaign Poster reads: It's Us or Them, The Hebrew City or the Infiltrator City (Photo Credit: M Ravid)



Figure 5. Likud Party Municipal Campaign reads: It's Us or Them, The Hebrew City or the Infiltrator City (Photo Credit: Tel Aviv Likud Party Facebook page)

Various candidates mentioned South Tel Aviv and migration in their municipal campaigns in 2018, and the first Neve Shaanan resident and pro-asylum seeker activist was elected to the city council (Keshet 2018). Shula Keshet, Director of the feminist *Mizrahi* NGO Achoti ('My sister' in Hebrew), and one of the leaders of the 'South Tel Aviv Against the Deportation' coalition, defeated her competitor from the pro-deportation, right wing camp (Younis 2018; Faraj 2018).

Leading up to the 2019 national election, the New Right nationalist party, led by then Minister of Justice Ayelet Shaked, held a press conference in Neve Shaanan with anti-migrant activist Sheffi Paz. The two signalled close collaboration and promised to pass an Override Clause

anti-migrant activist, Shefi Paz, and included accounts of private meetings with the Prime Minister, screenshots of WhatsApp correspondences with his political advisor, and Naftali Bennet of the New Right Party.

that Shaked framed as the flagship effort of her 'Judicial Restraint Revolution'. The Clause would enable legislators to override Supreme Court Constitutional decisions with a simple parliamentary majority, and re-enact laws that had previously been overturned by the Court (Alon, 2019b). With it they promised to curb the power of Supreme Court decisions to limit the use of detention in the Prevention of Infiltration Law.

As part of her campaign, Shaked released a video depicting South Tel Aviv residents as victims of the Supreme Court and its decisions on limiting detention and deportation. She pleads with viewers to elect her so she can continue her 'revolution' (Figure 6 and footnote):



Figure 6. Snapshot of New Right campaign video. In the Photo: 'South Tel Aviv resident' is depicted imprisoned in her home. Orange prison uniform reads 'ISC' – Israel Supreme Court (Photo Credit: Facebook of Naftali Bennet, former Minister of Education). [17]

Shaked's appearance in Neve Shaanan in the days before the election, and her use of South Tel Aviv residents' experience in her campaign, reveal the importance she accorded to this area, and the political capital she hoped to mobilise. These accounts indicate how South Tel Aviv gained

[17] The video was posted on Facebook by Naftali Bennet, New Right Party Member, and proceeds as follows: camera view enters an apartment building with a sign, 'Levinsky street,' into a dark home where an elderly woman, wearing an orange, prison jumpsuit, prepares a cup of tea and sits in her living room. Lights flash from outside – street lights and noise mix with police sirens, reflected on the woman's concerned face. She gets up from her couch and walks to a barred window. Her jumpsuit bears the acronym of Israel's Supreme Court. The woman holds on to the bars, peers at the camera through them, as writing appears: 'Elisheva Nofar' [name] SOUTH TEL AVIV [location]' A voice over by Ayelet Shaked begins: In recent years the infiltrator phenomenon, backed by the Supreme Court, has turned tens of thousands of citizens into prisoners in their own homes. In my previous term I started the process, let me finish it.' Available: https://www.facebook.com/NaftaliBennett/videos/vb.396697410351933/415507335934266/?type=2&theater

importance in national politics over time. South Tel Aviv is central to understanding dynamics of exclusion. It is in the unequal, conflict-ridden political environment of South Tel Aviv that we can observe how racialised, ethnonationalist, postcolonial hierarchies are constructed and operationalised.

HOLOT

Holot is located in the Negev desert, a one hour drive south of Beer Sheva, and a fifteen minute drive from the Israel-Egypt border. The road to Holot features 'camel crossing' warning signs, sporadic exits to military bases or training grounds, and improvised dirt roads to unrecognised Bedouin villages scattered in the desert. Approaching Holot, I would often spot Sudanese and Eritrean men walking by the side of the road or through the desert, alone or in pairs, seemingly going from nowhere to nowhere. Eventually a left turn appeared, by an abandoned petrol station, that leads to Saharonim prison, Holot detention facility and an infantry military base. A sand and gravel visits area, with a few wooden tables, was set up outside Holot. From noon, men would come out of the facility to sit on benches or walk in the desert. Conversations in Tigrinya or Arabic could be heard between detainees, or among those who spoke on their phones, or to themselves.

At the time of my fieldwork, the population detained in Holot was almost entirely Eritrean. Though every person's circumstances that led to them seeking asylum are distinct, many Eritreans described similar experiences. Eritrean asylum seekers fled life under a military dictatorship that has ruled the country since its establishment in 1993, and that has been engaged in intermittent conflict with neighbouring Ethiopia ever since.[18] At the age of 16, teens are sent to complete their

[18] Eritrea was founded in 1993 following 60 years of Italian occupation, 11 years of British rule, and decades as part of Ethiopian territory. Prior to its establishment, Eritreans were enlisted in protracted fighting for self-governance from Ethiopia in a 30-year civil war. After several years of peaceful independence, a 1998 border dispute instigated renewed fighting between the states (Bereketeab 2010; Butcher and Maru 2018; Mulugeta 2011; Plaut 2005; Selassie 2006; 2006). Protracted armed struggle and the development of military dictatorship (Hedru 2003; International Crisis Group 2010) led millions to flee the Eritrea (Divers 2014; Kibreab 2014; Mekonnen and Estefanos 2011). In 2018,

high school years at the Sawa Military academy, from which they transition into indefinite national service (Human Rights Watch 2019, 13–32), justified by Eritrea's intractable 'no war, no peace' footing with Ethiopia (Bereketeab 2009, 24–26).

Indefinite military service, the fate of many Eritreans, has been equated with indentured labour, and human rights abuses are rife, leading many young people to seek exile (Reid 2005; Amnesty International 2013). Eritrean society is highly militarised with limited protection of civil liberties. Media outlets are operated by the state, the population is subject to heavy surveillance, checkpoints control mobility throughout the country, and large detention centres hold those who dissent (Human Rights Watch 2019, 33–64; Bozzini 2014; International Crisis Group 2010). These developments over the last thirty years have led Eritrea to be one of the top refugee-producing countries in the world (UNHCR 2016). Most Eritrean asylum seekers I spoke to fled indefinite military service, state-sanctioned forced labour, poverty and systemic rights abuses.

Many of the men in Holot had been detained, abused by security forces, held for ransom, tortured, smuggled, or housed in refugee camps at least once before, either in their home country or along the migratory route. Nearly all had family or acquaintances who had managed to reach Europe, the USA or Australia, where many had received refugee status. Everyone had also lost loved ones in the conflict, while crossing the Sahara or Sinai deserts, or attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea. They were, therefore, familiar with mistreatment and relying on community

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the two countries signed a peace agreement, ending two decades of 'frozen war', and opening the border between them for free passage. Though Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize in the following year, restrictions and abuses continued in Eritrea (Taylor 2019). In 2020, violence erupted between the Ethiopian government and its Tigray region, where many Eritrean refugees live in refugee camps, signaling continued instability.

support to survive. During their time in Holot, detainees organised various protests, events and programmes to call attention to their mistreatment and to try to improve their conditions.

Some asylum seekers in detention were especially eager to have their stories heard—whether in order to report painful experiences, voice their grievances, to feel that they were contributing to a greater struggle for rights, or because they enjoyed the opportunity to speak with a young female researcher. Some detainees were traumatised; some were emotionally unwell. Research access and ethics will be further explored in chapter three, however the words of Kende, a young Sudanese detainee, help to describe participant feelings about research in this site:

> *Kende: We had visitors – Israelis, internationals, people who came to do research. We became a field of experiment, a field of study for a lot of people.*
>
> *MR: How do you feel about that?*
>
> *Kende: I really love to speak to them, because if people do not choose to research this, history will not write about us. There are racist people who don't want us to exist. So, it was good that researchers came, and it was a type of storytelling for us.*
>
> *It's not fun that somebody is randomly born in the US or Britain and has no idea what hardships we experience. I was born into this life of repeated hardships – seeing people burned and babies thrown into the fire, seeing your sisters raped, people being tortured in the Sinai, seeing people living in poverty here in Israel. If we were not very strong, we would not have survived.*
>
> *I am happy that I can tell people to learn from these challenges.*
>
> *Even though they use it to obtain their degrees, it is also a message for those who will read it – for racists who might read this, media, academics, students.*

As noted above, the new policy of forced deportation influenced the environment in Holot in various ways. Several of the detainees received deportation orders on the days before we met. Many were called into interviews where they were made to choose between self-deportation (by signing a voluntary return form) or being indefinitely held in Saharonim Prison. These orders induced higher levels of tension and fear among detainees. Many men were open about their stress,

anger and helplessness. In some ways, it made my research seem less important or pressing given the life-altering threat that was occupying the men's thoughts. At times it felt inappropriate or insensitive to ask men to sit and reflect on past experiences while they were under duress, so I would sit and listen to whatever they wanted to speak about. However, in certain cases men reached out and asked to be interviewed, in case they were deported or disappeared.

Some of the detainees became community-chosen or self-proclaimed spokespersons for an anti-deportation campaign that developed during the time of my fieldwork. Media crews increasingly came to Holot. Detainees organised hunger strikes and posted live videos on the Facebook platform to advertise and amplify their struggle. Media campaigns and events were organised at Holot by charities and grassroots anti-deportation initiatives. The intensity of events that unfolded in Holot during the time of my research exposed the myriad ways in which border control was enacted, and impacted African asylum seekers in detention considerably over a very short time. It enabled the study of extreme exclusion from society, and in Holot, as a testament to differential treatment afforded to this distinct migrant groups. Detainee experiences provide insights on how structural violence was experienced by a racialised, criminalised group in an ethnonational state.

ASYLUM SEEKERS IN THE COMMUNITY

Once released from Holot, men were prohibited from living or working in seven of Israel's largest cities, a law that was most strictly enforced in Tel Aviv. I interviewed asylum seekers who were released to the community following detention periods ranging from 8–20 months.[19] Most

[19] Detention length varied based on changes in legislation between 2013-2018. Initially detention was indefinite, then reduced to one year in 2014. Few participants were released after shorter time frames due to health reasons.

interviews took place in the cities – Arad, Herzliya and Jerusalem. A few interviews were held in Tel Aviv, despite formal restrictions on residence or work.[20]

Although this group of men were all asylum seekers who had been detained in Holot, they differed from each other in many ways. Of the 14 men I interviewed in the community, ten were from Sudan and four from Eritrea. Amongst the Sudanese group, there was ethnic and geographic diversity: two men were from Northern Sudan, one was from the Nuba Mountain region, and seven were from different parts of Darfur – of the Zaghawa, Masalit and Fur ethnic groups. These differences are significant in understanding the context that led people to flee their homes, and in understanding the different experiences they might have faced on the way.

Darfuri refugees all lived in rural communities in this western region of Sudan, home to some 50 ethnic groups, distinguished from the rest of Sudan by cultural make-up, languages and lifestyles (De Waal 2005, 9–10; Solevad Nielsen 2008, 432–40). Since the 1970s, tensions have grown and conflict escalated among the increasingly Arabised[21] Sudanese government and institutions in the North of the country, and local communities and leadership in other areas, including Darfur (Flint and De Waal 2005, 12–24; Ahmed and Sorbo 2013, 5–10; El-Battahani 2013, 25–26). In 2003, the Sudanese government backed Arab militias with military force to enter Darfur, with the pretext of weeding out rebel groups resistance (Tar 2006, 416–20). These militias known as *Janjaweed* committed acts of ethnic cleansing that created one of the worst humanitarian

[20] Limitations on residence in Tel Aviv and six other major cities were imprinted upon the permits of asylum seekers released from Holot, under Amendment 5 of the Prevention of Infiltration Law.

[21] A policy of Arab-Sudanese nationalism was implemented in Sudan through enforcement of Arabic language, Islamic laws, Islamic education and state institutions, political and economic connections with the Arab world (El-Affendi 2013; Ahmed and Sorbo 2013, chap. 1; El-Battahani 2013, 28–33; Harir 1994; Sharkey 2008).

crises of the 21st century (Commission of Inquiry on Darfur 2005; Flint and De Waal 2005, 97–114; De Waal 2005, 7–10; Daly 2007; Sorbo 2010).

Darfuri asylum seekers in Israel witnessed atrocities that forced them to flee their homes. All of them were persecuted, at times detained and tortured in their home country. Most still have family members living in UNHCR internally displaced person (IDP) camps in Darfur or refugee camps in neighbouring Chad and are involved in opposition movements from the diaspora. The genocide in Darfur was officially recognised and received international attention in the early 2000s (US Senate 2004). The UN estimates that since 2003, some 300,000 people have been killed, and about 2.7 million people displaced from their homes. Despite the 2019 change in regime, violence in Darfur continues to this day making a return to one's lands, as of yet, an unrealised hope.

Refugees from the Nuba Mountains, South Kordofan or the Blue Nile regions faced similar persecution to the populations in Darfur (El-Battahani 2013, 37–39). These areas are closest to the border with South Sudan and have also been affected by civil unrest since the establishment of the new state (Komey 2013). They, like Darfuris, hail from minority ethnic groups that have been targeted by the government for military conscription and subordination and forced to comply with the nationalist conception of Arab-Sudanese identity (De Waal 2005, 10; Komey 2008; Mohamed Salih 1995). Unlike Darfur, the situation in these areas is less well-known to the international community. The result is less attention to and consideration of their plight, and tensions between them and Darfuris in Israel regarding recognition and rights claims. For example, in 2007 Israel granted 500 asylum seekers from Darfur temporary residence as a one-time humanitarian gesture (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2007; Yaron Mesegna 2015, 94–98). This selective aid was offered only to Darfuris, while many of the asylum seekers in Israel who had fled other regions and faced similar persecution were not recognised as equally deserving.

Lastly, asylum seekers who came from North Sudan are part of the majority ethnic group that can be described as Arab-Sudanese. Those who fled were not victimised in Sudan due to their ethnic origin, but because they refused to partake in policing or persecution of other groups. These men were often members of well-off families in the North, but their refusal to join national service put them at risk. They too were arrested, detained, and abused by security forces. Northern Sudanese have lesser claims to group status as refugees, and they receive little recognition or concern even though they too cannot return safely to their homes.

All Sudanese asylum seekers spoke about the long standing 'enemy state' relationship between Israel and Sudan, based on the Arab League's Khartoum Declaration against normalisation with Israel (Meital 2000). Sudanese nationals are not allowed to travel to Israel (see Figure 7) as there are no diplomatic relations between the states.

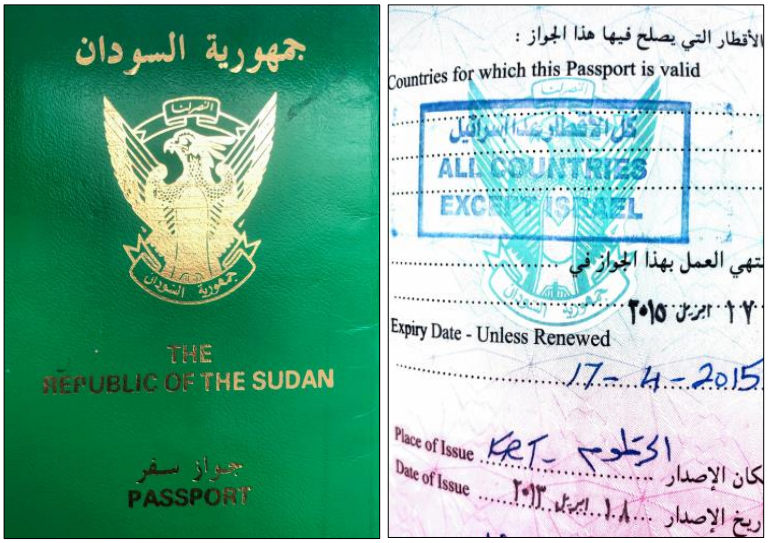


Figure 7. Photo of Sudanese Passport. Under section: 'Countries for which this Passport is valid' a stamp states 'ALL COUNTRIES EXCEPT ISRAEL' (Photo Credit: M Ravid, emphasis in bold in the original)

Sudanese asylum seekers reported being taught negative views on Israel in the Sudanese education system (Ibrahim 2017). Their choice to enter Israel often stemmed from their feeling that neighbouring Arab countries collaborated with Sudan, whereas Israel could not send them back to Sudan. Additional factors that motivated their migration to Israel include their belief that Israel

is a Western, democratic state that will respect international law and refugee rights (Ibrahim 2017; Liebermann 2018). Some also cited the Jewish people's history of being a persecuted people without a state as grounds for their expectations of sympathetic treatment (Yaron Mesegna 2015, 95–97).

Aside from their different national and ethnic origins, several notable differences were evident between asylum seekers interviewed in the community. For example, the age and the arrival time of asylum seekers into Israel directly affected their treatment by the state, and their ability to acclimate. Inconsistent imprisonment policies in earlier years included prolonged periods in state custody and alternative custody arrangements (Avigal 2014, 8–10; Berman 2015, 180–208). Some were imprisoned for over a year, while those arriving after them were not imprisoned at all. Some of those who entered as minors were sent to Israeli boarding schools where they learned Hebrew and study skills that later enabled them to pursue higher education.

Some Darfuris received resident permits, while others did not. Some Sudanese and Eritreans received tourist visas, or work visas, when the Israeli state was undecided about how to categorise them (Paz 2011, 5; Kritzman-Amir 2012; Harel 2015, 71–74). Most Sudanese and Eritreans who entered the border on foot were given Conditional Release Visas (CRV), issued in accordance with s 2(a)(5) of the Entry to Israel Law, regardless of their submitted asylum claims. The document is a 'temporary stay permit' granting permission to remain in Israel for persons for whom a removal order has been issued until their removal becomes viable. A CRV holder is not entitled to public healthcare, social services, or basic workers' rights (eg pensions, unemployment benefits, severance pay) (Ziegler 2015a, 182–84). The CRV document is marked with the statement 'This certificate is not a work permit.' Asylum seekers' employment has been allowed through a government 'agreement of non-enforcement' detailed in HCJ 6312/10 *Kav LaOved v. Government*

2011. A restrictive CRV regime, frequently changing legislation,[22] and selective enforcement increase asylum seekers' precarity and vulnerability in the workforce and society.

Different state policies overlapped in what Yonatan Paz described as an 'ordered disorder' or Karin Afeef termed 'bureaucratic ambiguity' (Paz 2011, 5–7; Afeef 2009, 11), changing and conflicting policies meant to keep asylum status out of reach and asylum seeking unsustainable (Sabar and Tsurkov 2015, 6–8). Asylum seekers with permits were able to craft a more stable life for themselves – open bank accounts, secure health insurance, obtain a driving license. Most did not. Most were given a 2(a)5 visa document, categorised as infiltrators, and had to find ways to manage or circumvent their temporary, limited and stigmatised legal status (Berman et al. 2014; Ziegler 2015a, 182–84; Sadan, Rozen, and Guthmann 2018; Guthmann and Kaufman 2019).

THESIS STRUCTURE

The first chapter reviews existing literature and frameworks used to understand the detention of African asylum seekers in Israel. The chapter begins with an overview of administrative detention in Israel laying out its key concepts and institutions, especially the detention centre Holot, and situating immigration detention in a broader socio-legal history of administrative detention and border control from the British mandate period to the present day. It then turns to the literature on citizenship and ethnonationalism to consider how politics of belonging, anti-migrant sentiments and enforcement have been explained thus far. This literature tends to construe asylum seekers' exclusion from Israeli society as a re-assertion of territorial and communal boundaries of citizenship and ethnonational belonging. Building on this literature, I then detail the antagonistic treatment of non-citizens and non-Jews in Israel arising from its ethnonational immigration

[22] One important legislation with devastating impact on asylum seekers was titled 'The Deposit Law,' enacted between 2017-2020 under Amendment 4 (Guthmann and Kaufman 2019). The law required employers to deduct 20% of employees' salaries to deposit in a separate account, accessible upon agreement to leave the country.

regime. I highlight the specific legal regime of exclusion to which African asylum seekers are subjected compared to other non-Jewish migrant groups. The chapter concludes that the two prevailing explanations for exclusion – citizenship and ethnonationalism – are important but insufficient to explain the different legal treatment of African asylum seekers, and the prominence of South Tel Aviv in national politics of migration control. It points to the need for additional theorising and a more nuanced understanding of African asylum seekers' exclusion from Israeli society.

Chapter two heeds the call of chapter one and introduces the theoretical framework of racialised differentiation, the situating of diverse practices of differential inclusion and differential exclusion upon a single relational scale, to enhance our understanding of African asylum seekers' exclusion and the prominence of South Tel Aviv in migration control politics. The first part of the chapter discusses urban sociology to underscore the centrality of cities to the dynamics of social ordering, constructions of deviance, penal control, migration and racialised belonging (Du Bois 1897; Sassen 1996; Wacquant 2008; Beckett and Herbert 2010). These are linked to insights from border criminology scholarship on penal systems, criminal justice and border control in an era of mass mobility (Barker 2012; Pickering, Bosworth, and Franko Aas 2015; Bosworth, Parmar, and Vázquez 2018; Fili, Jahnsen, and Powell 2018). The second part of the chapter turns to illustrate how dynamics of race and place played out in Tel Aviv, through a socio-historical overview of the city's uneven development and the arrival of migrant populations. Literature on Tel Aviv's symbolic significance as a global modern Jewish city is juxtaposed with evidence of material marginalisation of its southern neighbourhoods and *Mizrahi* communities along ethno-class lines, compared to their *Ashkenazi* counterparts in the city's centre and north.

The final part of the chapter introduces the explanatory theoretical framework of racialised differentiation to explain how different groups are ordered on either side of the Jewish-Citizen

axis of membership along an ethnonational and postcolonial scale of privileges, rights protections, and perceived value. Informed by research by W.E.B. Du Bois and Stuart Hall on racialised exclusion (Hall 1986; 1992; 2017; Du Bois 1897; 1898), this approach identifies racial differentiation as intrinsic to the Israeli state. Groups solidified over time through sociohistorical processes specific to each location. Difference and inequality manifested spatially, visible in racially distinct residential patterns with disparate socio-economic class and quality of living conditions, on both national and urban levels. The final sections elucidate how, in the Israeli case, a hierarchical racial social order was developed and enacted spatially through the marginalisation and exclusion of both racialised groups – *Mizrahim* and African asylum seekers – albeit differently, in the segregated spaces of South Tel Aviv and Holot.

The third chapter surveys the research process, methods and ethics. It explains the choice of mixed qualitative, ethnographic methods for data collection and analysis, and how methods were employed in different sites. The chapter introduces the use of Grounded Theory method of data collection and analysis, its applications and limitations. This is followed by reflections on researcher positionality through discussion of feminist ethics of care. Attention will be paid to issues of access, positionality and a grounded analytical approach to illuminate how research choices were made and how two parallel narratives of social exclusion became entwined in this dissertation and shaped the argument of racialised differentiation.

The first empirical narrative is presented in chapter four through study of Jewish residents' testimonies and experiences in Neve Shaanan neighbourhood of South Tel Aviv. The chapter explores the complex terrain of differential inclusion among citizens of Israel, Jews of *Mizrahi* origins, who have been relegated to the socio-economic margins of the state and the city (Marom 2014a; Cohen 2015; Rotbard 2015). Participant accounts of belonging to the Jewish collective, will be contrasted with feelings of neglect and marginalisation, relative to other parts of Tel Aviv. The

second part of the chapter focuses on residents' perceptions of asylum seekers, migration policies, and social order. Following resident experiences over time will shed light on the relational and hierarchical social discourse that residents are both subjected to, and apply to others. Though *Mizrahi* residents in South Tel Aviv are made to feel inferior compared to their *Ashkenazi* counterparts in the city's centre and north, a sense of superiority is expressed toward non-Jewish migrants that is emboldened by restrictive immigration policies.

The second narrative investigated in the dissertation is that of Sudanese and Eritrean asylum seekers detained in Holot, whose accounts will be analysed in chapters five and six. Chapter five reviews testimonies of asylum seekers during detention collected in early 2018. Detainee accounts demonstrate that detention in Holot, albeit an open detention facility, felt extremely punitive and exceptionally exclusionary due to the harms incurred by those detained. Harms emanated from conditions *in* detention – physical separation from society, prison-like setting, abusive staff conduct, and a sense of indefinite punishment as a result of frequently changing legislation, that amounted to structural violence (Weber and Pickering 2011, chap. 4; Canning 2017, chap. 3). Detainees experienced Holot as excluding them *from* society due to the racialised and criminalised nature of their detention. Racialised exclusion is made visible in detainee accounts on the uneven enforcement of state control upon them, compared to non-black migrant groups. The criminalised nature of detention emerges from their collective categorisation as infiltrators, threatening Israeli citizens and deserving of exclusion, and the disregard of their refugee claims as compared to Eritrean refugees' acceptance rates across the Global North. Taken together, detainee accounts of detention in Holot make clear that a differentiating, racialising social order was being upheld by their detention – one aimed to safeguard Jewish whiteness in the state, by excluding undesirable African non-citizens.

The final empirical chapter follows the men into the community, to examine life after detention, based on interviews conducted between 2018–2020. Findings reveal how being differentially excluded in Holot impacted men long after their release. Detention caused long-term effects on men's sense of self-worth, resilience, hope, life progress, and emotional wellbeing. The second part of the chapter shows that detention also clarified several aspects of asylum seekers' relationship to the state – that they will never be recognised as refugees; that their racialisation will forever mark them as criminalised, unwanted, and deportable; and that they must fend for themselves, even if permitted to remain in the state.

Men's testimonies about detention and life after release in Israeli communities will expose a racialised, hierarchical, differentiated exclusion as compared to citizens, other migrant groups, and refugees elsewhere. Their testimonies demonstrate how racialisation is evident in state policies that unequally distribute rights, privileges and protections to different groups. Infringement upon asylum seekers' constitutional right to dignity and liberty through detention and denial of asylum, positions them toward the very bottom of the social order, on the cusp of complete removal from it.

Based on participants' experiences the dissertation will argue that detention of asylum seekers in Holot reflected a hierarchical organising principle of race and place more generally, and reproduced the hierarchical order through its enactment of extreme racialised exclusion. The impact of detention and the spatial and temporal dimensions of exclusion inevitably extend into society more broadly and over time. Asylum seekers' and residents' testimonies will reveal that although detention was promoted for the 'alleviation of burden' from Israeli residents, Holot had done long-lasting damage to detainees, citizens, and all those living in South Tel Aviv.

Chapter 1.

Migration Control and African asylum seekers in Israel: Exclusion along Citizenship and Ethnonational Lines

This chapter reviews some of the basic concepts and main arguments in the literature to explain the exclusionary treatment of African asylum seekers in Israel, and to provide a foundation for the chapters that follow. I first provide an overview of border control and detention in Israel, situated in a broader socio-legal history of border regulation from the British mandate period to the present day, and focused on the detention of African asylum seekers in Holot facility. I then turn to the literature on citizenship and ethnonationalism to consider how membership is constructed in Israel, to introduce the context that asylum seekers face. Scholarship on border control in other Western democracies tends to consider citizenship, nationalism, and belonging as pertinent to understanding exclusion and detention. The detention of asylum seekers has been conceptualised as a re-assertion of territorial borders, but it also relies on creating communal boundaries, demarcated through the institution of citizenship (or lack thereof). In Israel, ethnonational boundaries are emphasised.

Building on this literature, in the final part of the chapter I detail the antagonistic treatment the state affords to non-Jewish migrant groups, that hinges on its ethnonational immigration regime and neo-liberal economy. This provides context, and contrast, to the differentiating legal regime of exclusion that African asylum seekers are subjected – collectively categorised as 'infiltrators', administratively detained, and repeatedly threatened with deportation, irrespective of their claims to refugee status. The chapter concludes that the two prevailing explanations for exclusion – citizenship and ethnonationalism – are important but insufficient to make sense of the different legal treatment of African asylum seekers, and the prominence of South Tel Aviv in national politics of migration control. The next chapter will therefore introduce additional theories

of differential inclusion and exclusion, that highlight dynamics of race and place in Israel's postcolonial ethnonational setting, providing a more nuanced explanation of racialised differentiation that considers Israel's socio-historical specificities.

BORDER CONTROL IN ISRAEL AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETENTION

This section reviews key trends in Israel's border control history, focusing on the use of administrative detention. It does so by following three related processes entwined in the development of detention and border control since the state's establishment. The first concerns the question of continuity and change between the British Mandate period (1917-1948) and the Israeli state, when Israel tightened administrative detention as part of its state formation and the exclusion of Palestinians, and juridified its border regime, subjecting it to more legislation and institutionalisation as part of its democratic state-building. The second revolves around the question of who is legally constructed as 'infiltrator', a category that has shifted over time from Palestinian border crossers to African asylum seekers dwelling in urban areas. The third focuses on the relationship between the state and the courts in the regulation of the border, tracing the back and forth between the executive and the judiciary through different amendments and judicial decisions. This legal dance ultimately legitimised and juridified a highly discriminatory immigration detention regime that enforced a racist population management regime upon a distinct migrant group, and abandoned state commitments to asylum seeker and refugee protections.

ADMINISTRATIVE DETENTION FROM THE BRITISH MANDATE TO ISRAELI LAW

Israel has always had the power to detain those who cross state borders without authorisation through the adoption of the British Mandate legal framework that preceded the Israeli state's establishment in 1948. This form of administrative detention, however, which includes the arrest and detention of persons without an indictment, trial or access to judicial review, was meant to be used only in cases of absolute necessity given its extreme interference with the person's personal

liberty. It is not considered a 'form of punishment for an offence for which he [the detainee] has been convicted, but for potential offences injurious to the community or for injurious acts he is suspected of having committed' (Shetreet 1984, 196). It was intended as a preventative measure justified by concerns for public safety (Zadok 2005, 1). Administrative detention has been widely used since the founding of the state (Golan 1992, 7) under the Defense Emergency Regulation of 1945, an Imperial Parliament Act which was adopted by authorities in Palestine (Defense (Emergency) Regulations 1945; Simpson 1996, 656–57). During the first 50 years since its establishment, the Israeli state mainly used the regulations to detain Palestinians for entering the country without appropriate documents or permissions (Harris 1997).

The Defense Emergency Regulations were inherited from 30 years of British Mandatory rule. Once Israel was established, Emergency Regulations were incorporated into Israeli law (Government and Law Arrangements Ordinance 1948), and the British High Commissioner responsibilities were handed over to the Minister of Defense (Gil 2010a, 11). In 1979, the Emergency Powers Detention Law permitted wide use of administrative detention due to a declared 'State of Emergency'. Israel's State of Emergency has persisted to date (Gil 2010a, chap. 2; Simpson 1996, 657; Bracha 1980, 295–98). The ongoing emergency status endows the state with exceptional powers subject to little judicial oversight (Rubinstein 1972; Bracha 1978; Shetreet 1984).

In the early days of Israeli statehood hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were displaced from their homes and on the move following the 1947–48 war. Those who crossed the new border without permits were labelled 'infiltrators' and, when apprehended, were usually detained (Simpson 1996, 657–58). In a 1998 article, Oren Bracha surveyed legal developments between 1948 and 1954 that preceded the enactment of the Prevention of Infiltration Law (Bracha 1998). Bracha cites a diversity of people who crossed the border for different reasons – family reunification, seeking

employment, tending to abandoned fields, and more. Police reporting from those early years showed that less than 10% of 'infiltrators' were involved in criminal activities (Bracha 1998, 339). Nonetheless all were categorised by the state as security threats, entering to commit crimes, terror or espionage.

Many of the new state's immigration regulations, detention and removal measures were adopted from the British Mandate and had previously regulated the entry of Jews (Harris 1997). For the sake of expediency, authority was delegated from British personnel to low-level Israeli administrators and military commanders (Shetreet 1984, 183–87). Increased need for a regulatory framework led to the drafting of the Entry to Israel Law (Entry to Israel Law 5712 1952). It was followed by the Prevention of Infiltration Law (Prevention of Infiltration Law (Crimes and Jurisdiction) 5714 1954) to enable the state's 'War on Infiltration,'[23] against groups called *Fedayeen* that crossed the border to commit violent acts, organised smuggling and trafficking.

The use of administrative detention as part of a state's national security agenda is not unique. Many states applied similar measures in the past and more recently (Gil 2010a, 10). However, the Prevention of Infiltration Law, like the Emergency Powers Detention Law, relied on Israel's continued state of emergency,[24] which has been criticised widely for its threats to the rule of law, due process, and human rights protections (Gil 2010b; Shetreet 1984, 196–218; Bracha 1978). In adopting Mandatory legal mechanisms into the new state framework, Israel tightened

[23] This was the term used in the explanatory notes of a 1953 proposal for a Law for Securing the Borders (Proposal 161, Law for Securing the Borders (Crimes and Jursidiction) 1953).

[24] Elad Gil cites a host of other laws that depend upon the existence of a state of emergency in footnote 214 (Gil 2010b, 133; Shetreet 1984, 188)

and juridified its border regime. Administrative detention was extended, grounded in legislation, and institutionalised.

DEVELOPMENTS OF THE PREVENTION OF INFILTRATION LAW

Article 1 of the 1954 Prevention of Infiltration Law defines infiltration as entry to the state knowingly and unlawfully by enemy nationals, visitors to enemy states, stateless persons or Israeli residents whose citizenship is uncertain (Prevention of Infiltration Law (Crimes and Jurisdiction) 5714 1954). The offence attracts severe punishment – up to five years of imprisonment for unauthorised border crossing, seven years for infiltration by persons previously deported, or lifelong imprisonment for infiltration with a weapon – as well as monetary fines. The law defines interactions with infiltrators as offenses – assisting, sheltering or trading with infiltrators are punishable by 5–15 years imprisonment and fines (Articles 6–8). A system of military courts for infiltrators was established to regulate the phenomenon. Articles 29–30 uphold the state's legal power to deport. According to Bracha, this legislation marked a new era in Israeli law. Infiltration was defined as a criminal offence, deserving of its own legal arrangements, entailing harsh penalties and deportation as a last resort (Bracha 1998, 352). The Prevention of Infiltration Law was maintained in this format with minor additions until 2010.[25]

Persons entering Israel from other, 'non-enemy' countries or through authorised border crossings were regulated by the Entry to Israel law. For many years, any non-Palestinians detained in Israel were held under the Entry to Israel Law. The purpose of detention under this law was their removal (Berman and Ziegler 2015, 156–58). Administrative detention for the purpose of

[25] In 1960, the law was amended for the first time to criminalise unlawful exit to enemy states (Prevention of Infiltration Law (Crimes and Jurisdictions) (Amendment No. 1) 1960). A second amendment in 2007 added Iran to the list of designated enemy states. The list included: Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Yemen, Iran or any part of the land of Israel outside the green line (Prevention of Infiltration Law (Crimes and Jurisdictions) (Amendment No. 2) 5767 2007).

removal is a widely accepted practice worldwide. International laws on refugees and asylum seekers, and domestic laws of other states, allow for administrative detention so long as a viable avenue for removal exists. According to the United Nations Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme:

> *Detention should normally be avoided. If necessary, detention may be resorted to only on grounds prescribed by law to verify identity; to determine the elements on which the claim to refugee status or asylum is based; to deal with cases where refugees or asylum-seekers have destroyed their travel and/or identity documents or have used fraudulent documents in order to mislead the authorities of the State in which they intend to claim asylum; or to protect national security or public order* (UNHCR 1986).

Since 2006, however, the use of administrative detention in Israel has been expanded with the Prevention of Infiltration Law and its application to those entering through Israel's Southern border to seek asylum (Ben-Ze'ev and Ben Dor 2019, 225).

When the first asylum seekers from Sudan entered Israel in 2005, they were held in military bases, without an arrest warrant, or public knowledge of their presence. After several months, they were moved to civilian detention facilities for persons awaiting deportation (Harel 2015, 64–66; Berman 2015, 186). Deportation and detention orders were issued under the Entry to Israel Law. However, this population was soon identified as non-removable under the international law principle of non-refoulement.[26] Many filed asylum claims with UNHCR and were recognised as persons in need of protection (Outlined in UNHCR's Request to submit an Amicus Curiae Brief to the Supreme Court of Israel High Court of Justice, 2013). Yet they were increasingly regulated by the state using the Prevention of Infiltration Law. Despite UNHCR recommendations, and increased applications for asylum, nearly all Sudanese and Eritreans who entered Israel through

[26] Israel's commitment to *non-refoulement* was solidified HCJ 4702/94 *Al Tai v Minister of the Interior et al.* Discussed at length (Ziegler 2015a, 178–80; Berman 2015, 174; UNHCR Representative 2013, 17–19)

unauthorised border points were categorised as 'infiltrators' and given a CRV, issued in accordance with s 2(a)(5) of the Entry to Israel Law. The issued permit is a 'temporary visiting permit granted to a person staying in Israel without permit against whom a removal order has been issued until his removal from Israel.

Rosenberg Rubins discusses the state's design of detention policies with the asylum-seeking population in mind, regardless of international law protections or commitment to non-refoulement, and outlines how a 'detention system stipulated by the Anti-Infiltration Law relies heavily on apparatuses of criminal law and depends on various forms of cooperation with law enforcement officials, in a manner that utilises the criminal justice system for the purpose of regulating immigration' (Rosenberg Rubins 2019, 238).

With increased number of entrants, a Detention Review Tribunal was established to provide judicial review for persons in administrative detention (Knesset of Israel 2009). Whereas tribunals have operated inside detention facilities since the turn of the century (Livnat 2010), newly expanded detention was enforced under the Prevention of Infiltration Law (rather than the Entry to Israel Law) and detention differed as there was no viable avenue for removal for those detained, and no time limit on detention (Avigal 2014, 5; Ben-Ze'ev and Ben Dor 2019, 225). An advisor to the Minister of Defense was appointed to evaluate the threat posed by each detainee. Soon after, the advisor began releasing people in large numbers, having established that these individuals were not dangerous (Avigal 2014). The combination of a large number of people being released from prolonged detention, and an influx of new arrivals in 2007, was met with increased and varied state measures. Various alternative custody arrangements were established with employers in *kibbutzim*, *moshavim* (agricultural communities), and the hotel industry in the southern city of Eilat. Simultaneously, some persons detained at the border were immediately released to city centres, due to lack of space in detention facilities. The state proposed different policies to confine asylum

seekers to designated parts of the country, but each policy was quickly superseded by a new one (Kritzman-Amir 2015, 31; Berman 2015, 185–97; Harel 2015, 66–70).

By 2010, Israeli lawmakers became invested in amending the Prevention of Infiltration Law in order to control entry of this asylum-seeking population, amendments and landmark cases will be mentioned briefly here and expanded on in the next section to show how the juridification of asylum seekers as the new infiltrators took place. Amendment 3 to the Prevention of Infiltration Law was passed in 2012: it enabled substantially longer administrative detention in prison for persons crossing the border than those allowed by the Entry to Israel Law (60 days to facilitate removal). However, Amendment 3 was struck down by the Supreme Court as unconstitutional in the case of *Adam* (2013) (Berman and Ziegler 2015, 159–61). Amendment 4 was proposed soon after. It shortened closed detention and introduced indefinite detention in an open detention facility - Holot. Amendment 4 was also annulled by the Supreme Court in the *Eitan* (2014) judgment (Ziegler 2015a, 185–87), yet Holot continued to operate. In 2014, the state introduced Amendment 5 to create a constitutionally valid detention arrangement (Proposal 904 - Law for Prevention of Infiltration and Securing the Departure of Infiltrators from Israel (Crimes and Jurisdiction) 2014, 424; Inon 2014). Closed detention in Saharonim prison was reduced to three months, followed by open detention in Holot for a maximum of 20 months. The amendment reduced headcounts to once a day and softened other disciplinary measures. The Court upheld the amendment in *Desete* judgment (2015), calling to shorten detention to 12 months.

Four statutory amendments were thus proposed to the Prevention of Infiltration Law between 2011–2015 to facilitate the detention of asylum seekers from Sudan and Eritrea (Cohn 2017, 588–92; Ben-Ze'ev and Ben Dor 2019, 225–27). These developments laid the foundation for the use of administrative detention towards a very different population than the one originally targeted, and for different purposes. Scholars indicate that detention has come to serve as a

deterrent and a tool for risk management, and population control (Berman and Ziegler 2015, 160–61). Berman notes how such goals edge immigration detention toward the known purposes of criminal incarceration (Berman 2015, 154), yet being part of the administrative toolkit lack the constitutional protections of the criminal process and risk severe derogations from basic rights protections (Gil 2010a, 143).

Scholarship on the increased use of penal measures to regulate migration globally has been described as a 'crimmigration crisis' that punishes migrants and reasserts national membership through the converging use of criminal and immigration laws (Stumpf 2006, 377–79; Franko Aas 2011, 377). These changes are increasingly justified by security and counter terrorism concerns in the Global North (Huysmans 2006, 64; Bigo 2008; Gerard and Pickering 2014, 596–600; Zedner 2019, 323–26). These trends have been similarly recognised in Israel and its treatment of African asylum seekers, which Rottem Rosenberg Rubins describes as an 'Israeli crimmigration regime' of population control (Rosenberg Rubins 2019, 274–78). Many have commented on serious threats to the rights of those subject to extreme state control, but with limited rights protections and judicial oversight (Livnat 2010, 259–60; Avigal 2014, 19–30). This evolution of the law marks a shift over time from detention of Palestinian border crossers to African asylum seekers dwelling in urban areas. The socio-legal process that formally enacted and legitimised this shift is explored next.

JURIDIFYING AFRICAN ASYLUM SEEKERS AS INFILTRATORS

Consecutive amendments to the Prevention of Infiltration Law in the second decade of the 21st century, and Supreme Court decisions on the Law (*Adam, Eitan* and *Desete* judgments), stand out as significant and require further discussion. Intense legislative efforts demonstrated state determination to expand administrative detention to African asylum seekers. Repeated litigation revealed the severity of rights infringements found by the Supreme Court, and state efforts to

redraft the law to withstand judicial review. The process provides an opportunity to study the juridification of the new 'infiltrators' through observing the relationship between the state and the courts. This relationship is integral for understanding how African asylum seekers came to be regulated under the Prevention of Infiltration Law, criminalised as infiltrators, and penalised in detention.

Dialogue between the executive and the judicial branches, through amendments and decisions regarding regulation of detention, ultimately legitimised and juridified the classification of asylum seekers as 'infiltrators' deserving of detention. Tally Kritzman Amir has analysed the Supreme Court's role in shaping policies toward asylum seekers, through examination of landmark cases on the Prevention of Infiltration Law, as guided by an 'immigration policy paradigm' that grants authority over of immigration matters to the executive and legislative branches (Kritzman-Amir 2013, 179–84).

The process began with Amendment 3 that proposed three years of mandatory detention in a closed facility. The Amendment defined infiltration as a serious offence. Article 30 included several notable changes: initial judicial review after 14 days, periodical review every 60 days, and grounds for release from detention after a mandatory 3 years detention in a closed facility (all substantially longer timeframes than under the Entry Law). Several human rights and refugee rights organisations petitioned against the amendment to the Supreme Court,[27] and in September 2013 a nine-judge panel ruled Amendment 3 unconstitutional due to its infringement of the Basic Law Human Dignity and Liberty in the *Adam* decision.

[27] Physicians for Human Rights, Aid Organisation for Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Israel (ASSAF), Kav LaOved (Worker's Hotline) and African Refugee Development Centre (ARDC) were party to the petition. Additional petitions to lower courts were submitted by the Hotline for Migrants and Refugees (previously called Hotline for Foreign Workers), the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, Refugee Rights Clinic at Tel Aviv University and the Clinic for Migrants' Rights at the College of Law and Business.

A speedy revision followed, and led to the enactment of Amendment No. 4 in December 2013. This Amendment prescribed one year of closed detention in Saharonim Prison, followed by indefinite 'open detention' in the newly constructed Holot facility run by the Israel Prison Authority (Article 32d). The facility was to remain closed overnight, and allow residents to leave the premises between 6am and 10pm, provided they returned for regular headcounts. Under the 4th Amendment, headcounts were held three times per day. Breach of disciplinary guidelines was punishable by removal to Saharonim Prison, located across the road. The 4th Amendment to the law was challenged by another petition to the Supreme Court by human rights NGOs, and struck down as unconstitutional in September 2014 in the *Eitan* decision (Ziegler 2015a, 185–87).

Following the *Eitan* ruling, the State submitted Amendment No. 5, it adjusted detention arrangements and revised the legislative aim of the Prevention of Infiltration Law to comply with the Court's constitutional demands (Inon 2014). The amendment reduced closed detention to three months, followed by open detention in Holot for 20 months. Headcounts were reduced to once a day, and it introduced the legislative aim of 'prevention of settlement in city centres.' On August 11th 2015, a nine-Justice panel of The Supreme Court of Israel, sitting as the High Court of Justice, delivered the *Desete* judgment. The majority opinion, authored by Chief Justice Miriam Naor, approved detention under the 5th Amendment, required the state to reduce detention to 12 months, and signalled the need for a comprehensive asylum policy (Ziegler 2015b). Despite state attempts to increase detention time (Lior 2015), detention in Holot was eventually kept at 12 months. The Court considered the arrangement to be a proportional infringement of detainees' constitutional rights.

In *Desete*, the Court acknowledged continued infringements of detainees' basic right to human dignity and liberty in detention (*Desete*, para. 32). However, it relied on a limitation clause of the Basic Law (Art. 8) to uphold detention as constitutional. Rights protected in Basic Laws are

conceived as constitutional rights, yet they are also relative, and can be limited by an internal clause (Barak 2015, 281*; Desete*, paras. 23–24). Article 8 of the Basic Law, the limitation clause, states: 'The rights under this Basic Law may only be violated by a law that befits the values of the State of Israel, is intended for a proper purpose, and to an extent that is not excessive' (Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty 5752 1992). President of the Court, Aharon Barak further explained:

> *The limitations clause is based on the outlook that in addition to human rights there are also human obligations; that the human being is a part of society; that the interests of society may justify a violation of human rights; that human rights are not absolute, but relative. The limitations clause reflects the approach that human rights may be restricted, but there are limits to such restrictions* (HCJ 8276/05 *Adalah v Minister of Defense* 2006).

Amendment 5 mitigated conditions and the duration of detention in Holot to satisfy the proportionality assessment under Article 8 (*Desete*, paras. 54–57), toward the 'prevention of settlement in city centres', which was accepted as a proper purpose (Ibid., paras. 61–75).

Judicial opinions set out in *Desete* included various articulations of the 'proper purpose' of detention legislation. They cited the state's right to craft an immigration policy, control demographic changes, labour competition, and alleviate burdens on its own citizens in areas affected by immigration. As the President of the Court explained in her majority opinion:

> *the primary purpose of the Law according to the aforementioned – preventing the settling down in urban cities. This purpose does not focus on an individual 'infiltrator' or the danger he poses to society; the issue is about the need to alleviate the general burden imposed upon the urban cities and particularly its residents… For this purpose, it is sufficient to detain a group of different 'infiltrators' in the Residency Centre. Indeed, it should be assumed that upon the release of a certain 'infiltrator' from the Residency Centre another 'infiltrator' will be caught in his place. I believe that this turnover created between 'infiltrators' residing in the Residency Centre and other 'infiltrators' outside realises the purpose of the Law. At any given moment, it is sufficient that a portion of the population of 'infiltrators' – according to the absorption ability of the 'Holot' Facility and other facilities which the State intends to erect – will be removed from the urban cities. This manner is a sort of 'revolving door' which infringes to a lesser degree the constitutional rights of the 'infiltrators' summoned to the Residency Centre… (Ibid., para. 100).*

Following three years of re-amendment and contestation, in 2015 the Supreme Court accepted the 5th Amendment. In so doing, it permitted one year administrative detention in Holot, for single males of Sudanese and Eritrean descent, who entered irregularly through Israel's southern border (Ben Ami, PIBA Director General 2015).

State categorisation of asylum seekers as 'infiltrators', and collective detention aimed to prevent their settlement in city centres, was thus approved by the Court. Arguably, in this case, the State and the Court prioritised the presumed interests of Israeli urban residents over the constitutional rights of African asylum seekers. The remaining sections of this chapter contextualise detention of asylum seekers within the wider literature on rights, exclusion and immigration control through discussions of citizenship, ethnonationalism and migration.

CITIZENSHIP, ETHNONATIONALISM AND MIGRATION CONTROL

Border control and immigration regimes, such as those discussed in the previous section, are used to safeguard the territorial dimensions of a polity. Citizenship, as a legal status, political institution, or collective social category, demarcates the nonphysical borders of a national collective, simultaneously marking those who belong and those who do not. Importantly, citizenship is also central to rights protections. Hannah Arendt famously pointed out that citizenship, understood as membership in an organised community that can enforce and protect rights, was crucial to regimes and definitions of international human rights, despite their claims to universality and inalienability (Arendt 1973, 292–93). Arendt's call for a 'right to have rights' as a precondition to human rights, which is not contingent upon national membership (Arendt 1973, 296–97) echoes in debates and questions of citizenship, migration and rights that still concern us to date (Benhabib 2011; Shachar 2014; Gundogdu 2015).

A singular definition of citizenship would be impossible to conjure given the long history of debate surrounding the term, as well as its multiple facets, indeterminate and shifting

conceptions (Sassen 2002; Faulks 2000, 6; Chacon 2018). Nira Yuval-Davis describes citizenship as an elusive concept due to its variable and dynamic existence:

> *It has been constructed in different ways in different societies and has undergone historical shifts within the same state and society. It has been subject to contesting ideologies from the left and the right, and used as an inclusive and exclusive organising principle, as a political mobilisation tool and as a means of the depoliticisation of the population. Also, in spite of its universalist terminology it has been applied differently to different segments of the population in each country* (Yuval-Davis 1997, 68).

Citizenship has become a central concept to explain migration, detention and deportation (Muller 2004; Benhabib 2004; Brysk and Shafir 2004; Anderson and Hughes 2015). This is unsurprising given that detention and deportation are some of the most extreme forms of exclusion from membership in a community. Studying exclusion forces us to examine what it means to belong – legally, politically, and socially to a state. Studies of asylum seekers' treatment in Israel have commonly cited citizenship, or lack thereof, as central to exclusion.

CITIZENSHIP AND RIGHTS

Citizenship serves as a political sorting mechanism that makes borders present in people's lives beyond their physical manifestation. While borders may be guarded by use of physical or institutional force (Yuval-Davis, Wemyss, and Cassidy 2019, 64–88), they are also imprinted upon their members through identification documents and political status (Torpey 2009; Muller 2004; Häkli 2015). Citizenship is effectively the political marker of membership in the community (Walzer 1997; Brubaker 1992, 21).

A second important aspect of citizenship lies in its regulation of the institutionalised relationship between members in a state through the distribution of rights (Marshall [1949]/1973:72). In his model, Marshall traces the development of rights protections and institutionalisation over time through social struggles, and participatory democracy. Marshall observed members' civil, political and social rights and duties as the relationship through which groups are incorporated into the state. Marshall's work has been followed by a voluminous

literature that has expanded our understanding of citizenship as a sociological, legal and political institution, and its importance for the distribution and protection of rights (Soysal 1994; Shafir 1998; Shafir and Peled 2002; Ben-Porat and Turner 2011).

Lastly, a third aspect of citizenship relates to the social relations constructed among its members. Beyond its institutional importance for marking boundaries and distributing rights, citizenship also has a social role within national collectivities. Citizenship fosters a sense of collective identity within the territory and differentiates members as part of a 'community of value' (Anderson 2013, 3). According to Bridget Anderson, modern nation states aspire to be communities of value, and states promote a sense of collective identity composed of shared values and characteristics 'common ideals and (exemplary) patterns of behaviour expressed through ethnicity, religion, culture, or language' (Anderson 2013, 2). Normative conceptions of citizenship prescribe who the ideal citizen should be, how she or he interacts with the state, and establish a consensus on the sharing of rights and duties with fellow citizens.

Through various forms of participation in 'good' citizenship – such as voting, military service, or paying taxes – members gain a sense of collective identity and personal stake in the polity. Good citizenship is often fostered at home through a sense of patriotism, and taught throughout social institutions and schools (Ajani 2015, Chpt. 1). A sense of comradery is garnered with fellow members, especially around constructs of a common good in which citizens can and should participate and contribute, that form a bedrock for republican sentiments (Sandel 1982; Walzer 1983). Group solidarity thus develops, entailing both a social affinity and commitment, on which the state can rely when necessary; and a framework of communal belonging on which individuals can draw. Linda Bosniak describes this effect of citizenship as 'the way people experience themselves in collective terms' (Bosniak 2006, 20). Beyond citizen rights' protections, privileges and obligations, citizenship is thus a sociopolitical marker for a collective national group.

As Ben-Porat and Turner observe: 'membership, rights, and participation are three components that make up citizenship, as well as its duties and obligations' (Ben-Porat and Turner 2011, 3).Such closed articulations of modern citizenship have been increasingly challenged by the effects of globalisation, migration, and multiculturalism (Held 1995, chap. 6; Bloemraad, Korteweg, and Yurdakul 2008, 154–55; Kymlicka 1995; Joppke 1998), as the exclusivity of citizen categories have been tested in times of mobility. Struggles unfold between diverse member groups over citizen rights distributions and entitlements.

At the start of the 21st century, scholarship on citizenship was thus largely preoccupied with the changing nature of citizenship in a cosmopolitan world. In this process, citizenship maintained its formalistic function of designating membership and rights (Benhabib 2004, 144; Tilly 2005, 173), and policing citizenship became increasingly technical with mechanised systems of travel and identification through technology and biometrics (Muller 2004; Wilson 2006). Yet simultaneously, global and de-territorialised notions of rights facilitate right protections across borders even for non-citizens (Soysal 1994, 5; Cole 2005; 2006; Benhabib 2004, 21, 142–46). The assertion of rights for non-citizens are often regarded by born citizens as posing an outgroup or minority threat, and prompt defensiveness of citizens' resources and rights (Blalock 1967; Becker 1971, chaps. 1 & 9; Quillian 1995; Esses et al. 2001, 392–95).

Opposition or discrimination against non-citizen outgroups are often viewed in the sociological literature as 'a response to a 'collective threat,' whether actual or perceived, to the interests and privileges of the dominant group' (Semyonov, Raijman, and Yom-Tov 2002, 417). Such sentiments have been recorded across the Global North (Eriksen 1995; Espenshade and Hempstead 1996; Fetzer 2000; Polavieja 2016) and in Israel (Raijman, Schmidt, and Semyonov 2003; Raijman and Semyonov 2009; Kemp and Kfir 2016a), leading many states to enhance border control (Schuster and Solomos 2002; Basok 2004; Cornelisse 2010). Safeguarding of citizen rights

is a key issue in border control. States consider citizen rights in their decisions to reinforce boundaries, allow or prohibit entrance, extend a right to remain in their territory, or extend the 'right to have rights' for those who are not their members (Yuval-Davis 1997, 74; Benhabib 2004). Exclusivity in political membership is also reinforced by ethnic notions of belonging, that may contribute to xenophobic and racist attitudes toward outsiders.

ETHNONATIONALISM AND BELONGING

Non-citizen status has been one dominant explanation for exclusionary migration control practices in Israel, and globally, ethnonational belonging is a second. This is understandable due to the importance of ethnicity to citizenship in any state, and particularly in an ethnonational state such as Israel. Israel was established in 1948 as a Jewish and democratic state. Although the state was founded by a secular, modernist nationalist movement, its Jewish character was deemed central. This arose from the culmination of the Zionist movement efforts, against the backdrop of collective histories of antisemitic persecution, political compromise with religious factions, and the myriad ways in which Judaism was sustained and incorporated into community life in Palestine and Jewish diasporic communities (Lissak and Horowitz 1978; Sternhall 1998, Introduction; Penslar 2007).

Since the nation's early days, extensive scholarly debate has been devoted to the tension that arises from Israel's definition as a Jewish and democratic state. Discussions revolve around whether these two attributes can coexist, and how they manifest in the Israeli state, laws, and society (Barak, Barak-Erez, and Sapir 2013; Gavison 1999a; 1999b; Maoz 2011; Yakobson and Rubinstein 2009). While this broad debate goes beyond the scope of this dissertation, aspects pertaining to immigration and commitments to protections of rights must be noted.

One of the earliest formal articulations of Israel's Jewish and democratic identification, with ensuing implications for immigration and rights, is found in its Declaration of Independence:

> *THE STATE OF ISRAEL will be open for Jewish immigration and for the ingathering of the Exiles…it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex… and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations… (Declaration of Independence 1948)*

In keeping with this commitment, several laws govern migration to the country, the ability to remain, and to obtain citizenship. Israel's Law of Return allows for entrance and citizenship for Jews, or those with Jewish ancestry (Law of Return 5710 1950). The Entry to Israel Law (Entry to Israel Law 5712 1952) and the Nationality Law (Nationality Law 5712 1952) establish the regulatory regime for non-Jews wishing to live in Israel permanently, or apply for citizenship through a lengthy and stringent process (Barak-Erez 2007, 184–85; Shachar 1998). Or as Sarah Willen explains: 'Let's be explicit: Given the pre-eminence of Jewishness as a criterion for citizenship eligibility, it is virtually impossible for most non-Jews to become Israeli citizens' (Willen 2019, 25). Since the state's inception, international non-Jewish immigration was, therefore, minimal and access to citizenship remained limited.

Yoav Peled and Gershon Shafir's 2002 book, *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship* provides one of the most exhaustive scholarly works on the institution of citizenship in Israel. Peled and Shafir explain that the state's Jewish character prioritises a particularistic agenda with ethnonational objectives, while its democratic commitment strives toward a universalist agenda akin to other modern western states. Peled and Shafir argue that Israel's citizenship discourse in recent decades has become an ethnonational one. Such a discourse constructs the political community as based on a shared ethnic background of the dominant group, and unequally prioritises this group through state institutions above others (Shafir and Peled 2002, 12–20). Homi Bhaba uses the term narrative to describe the ways in which national ideology provides the content for 'writing the nation' (Bhabha 1990, 145–46). By explaining the nation as a discursive project of cultural production, narrative strategy, or symbolic power appropriation, rather than historical

empirical fact, these scholars shed light on the socially constructed nature of the modern nation and allow us to examine the forces that operate in it.

The idea of an ethnic state is not a new concept in political thought. Anthony Smith traces the continuous presence of ethnicity throughout the development of nationalism and the modern state system (Smith 1986), and the way ethnicity remains omnipresent through national symbols, myths and narratives (Smith 2009). Two main types of states are widely accepted within the literature on nationalism, civic or ethnic states (Kautsky 1972; Smith 1995, 5–6; Ignatieff 1994, 3–7; Brubaker 1992). Western democratic states are usually characterised by civic nationalism, denoting that the state was created as a modern political entity, and the citizen category is a formalistic one, accessible to all who wish to become members (pursuant to state guidelines and criteria). France is often cited as the ideal example of a civic state (Brubaker 1992, 35–49). Ethnic nationalism in contrast, perceives the state as a historical entity with primordial roots, drawing on forces of kinship (real or imagined) on which citizenship is contingent. This was exemplified in early German notions of nationhood as an ethnocultural fact, that preceded the formal establishment of the independent state (Brubaker 1992, 50–72).

Smith opposes this binary distinction and claims that all nations – civic or ethnic – value and seek to maintain ethnic unity. They do so, in his view, to foster group solidarity, mobilise, and govern. States rely on 'genealogical' or ideological myths of a shared origins to promote such feelings in what he terms 'ethno-symbolism' at the service of nationalism. He therefore provides in his definition of a nation both civic and ethnic components (Smith 2009, 29). States may be secular, have a professionalised state bureaucracy, formalistic definitions of collective belonging; yet, Smith argues, they maintain an ethnic character embedded in cultural values, national dignity, pride, and often a sense of collective superiority (Smith 1995, 86). Similar arguments have been made in regard to the construction of national narratives (Shapira, Stern, and Yakobson 2013).

Nationalism is understood by many as the connection between an ethnic group and its state. It expresses the aspiration of groups to construct their 'imagined community' (Anderson 1983) through a sovereign political structure (Brubaker 2015, 119–20). While ethnic homogeneity is not characteristic of most modern states, ethnic-based sentiments maintain their strength in the 21st century. Brubaker claims that: 'globally interconnected socioeconomic, political, and cultural processes [that] have generated and sustained nationalism and politicised ethnicity as basic forms of cultural and political understanding, identification, and claims making' (Brubaker 2015, 154). Struggles over national and ethnic belonging thus remain the most vigorous forms of membership politics despite globalisation.

The concepts of ethnonationalism and citizenship, their interplay and influence on the distribution of rights, are further elucidated by Sammy Smooha's model of 'ethnic democracy' (Smooha 1990). Smooha evaluates the ethnic and democratic commitments that coexist in Israel, to produce an archetype analytical model. He explains that an ethnic democracy might qualify as democratic within the minimal procedural definition of democratic rule, i.e. equal social and political rights are extended to all its residents, including minority groups. However, ethnic democracies institutionalise superior rights and privileges for members of the dominant ethnic group (Smooha 2002, 477–78).

The ethnic democracy model has been applied to other cases outside Israel including Eastern European countries and Northern Ireland (Smith 1996; Smooha 1997; Peled 2013). The distribution of membership and rights in such a state is officially regulated by ethnic priorities. Non-citizens who are part of the ethnic group are welcomed into the collective and have easy access to citizenship. By contrast, 'non-members of the ethnic nation are not only regarded as less desirable but also perceived as a serious threat to the survival and integrity of the ethnic nation…one or a combination of biological dilution, demographic swamping, cultural

downgrading, security danger, subversion and political instability' (Smooha 2002, 478). Definitions of 'us' and 'them' develop in the process of social sorting and privilege distribution, based on proximity to the dominant ethnos.

In this thesis, I consider Israel an ethnonational state. Testaments to Israel's democratic character are evidenced by its mainstream acceptance as a Western democracy. However, it remains self-identified as a Jewish state with unequally distributed rights and privileges based on ethnic priorities. The non-citizen and non-Jewish person is found in a particularly precarious position in such a context. Similar difficulties are shared by migrants all over the world in an era of enhanced border control. I review literature on increased exclusivity of citizenship, rights, mobility, and enhanced border control worldwide, before turning to the specific inflection of border control and risk to rights in the ethnonational Jewish state.

CITIZENSHIP AND OUTGROUP MIGRATION

As explained in the previous section, the act of defining citizens included in the national collective, is inextricably tied with the exclusionary act of singling out those who do not belong. As global mobility challenges the traditional overlap between *demos* and territory, citizenship becomes an instrument for boundary demarcation or 're-marcation', and social ordering. Citizenship, Ben-Porat and Turner explain: 'often delineates a hierarchy between and within social groups in society and consequently structures the opportunities afforded by the state to different people which are included, excluded, or marginalised by the very definition of citizenship' (Ben-Porat and Turner 2011, 8). Migrants who are excluded from citizenship are subsequently marked as outsiders, strangers, and often unwanted (Wright 2011; Raijman 2012; Aliverti 2018).

A dual and seemingly contradictory process can be observed with regard to the relationship between citizenship and territory by observing inequalities in these times of global mobility. On the one hand, citizenship becomes decoupled from territorial restrictions for persons of certain

nationalities and classes, as they are allowed to travel, relocate, immigrate, or obtain dual nationalities (Bloemraad, Korteweg, and Yurdakul 2008, 166–69; Spiro 2016). Such people can navigate across borders with ease, as states facilitate smooth movement governed by shared laws. On the other hand, and for persons of other nationalities, territorial boundaries are not only still relevant, but increasingly present and unwelcoming (Bauman 2003; 2011; Gilroy 2004b; Armenta 2017; Bosworth, Parmar, and Vázquez 2018).

Inequalities in ease of travel across borders correlate with hierarchical scales of national origins (Castles 2005, 210–12), racial classifications (Fassin 2001; Bhui 2016; Parmar 2018), socio-economic class (Castles and Kosack 1985; Sivanandan 2001; Wacquant 2009; Ajzenstadt and Shapira 2012), and legal status (Shachar 2009) in line with what Hall describes as the uneven relations constructed 'between the West and the rest' (Hall 1992). Bauman recognises an emerging binary between 'tourists' and 'vagabonds' hailing from the Global North vs. the Global South (Bauman 1998, 92). Weber and Bowling further highlight the foundations for distinctions between 'valiant beggars' and 'global vagabonds' as resting on issues of race, class and foreignness (Weber and Bowling 2008, 369–71). Franko similarly discusses the distinction between 'crimmigrant bodies' and 'bonafide travelers' through focusing on the attribution of illegality as the underlining logic for governance and surveillance of particular groups in the EU (Aas Franko 2011, 342). These various articulations of binary positions of travellers from around the world, particularly Franko's developments on the crimmigrant other, help us identify how global mobility is bifurcated.

What has emerged in this context of stratified mobility and immigration enforcement, according to Franko, is extreme inequality among various groups subjected to varying degrees of border control and surveillance: 'citizens; subcitizens; supracitizens; and non-citizens. These are highly unequal positions, ranging from extreme deprivation to great social privilege. They reveal the inadequacy of the traditional liberal subjectivity, and its abstract and universal notion of

citizenship, as the springboard for articulating a discourse of rights' (Franko Aas 2011, 343). Inequalities in mobility map onto global trends of racialised discrimination in border control, often rooted in histories of colonial domination (Barker 2012; Beck 2003; Franko Aas 2007; Mignolo 2012; De Genova 2016b).

Various forms of rights infringements affect non-citizens disproportionately. These include: increased and prolonged detention of asylum seekers, detention of trafficking victims, families and children, lack of access to legal assistance or judicial review, harsh detention conditions, and disproportionate overrepresentation of foreign nationals within criminal justice systems (Barker 2012; Bosworth and Kaufman 2011; Fekete and Webber 2010; Lymperopoulou and Rizakos 2016; Weber 2002; Weissbrodt 2008; Dauvergne 2008a). Whereas citizens enjoy a range of rights protections before and upon imprisonment, usually pursuant to strategic ideas of rehabilitation and reintegration ingrained in most penal systems (Ugelvik 2013), non-citizen do not enjoy similar protections due to states' goal of removing them from the polity.

While citizens enjoy procedural protections under criminal law codes prior to imprisonment, non-citizens are often detained under administrative law, or a combination of criminal and immigration laws that compounds their exclusion (Stumpf 2006, 380–81; Zedner 2013; Dauvergne 2013). The increased use of administrative detention for migration control indicates that non-citizens are a demographic to whom lesser obligations are thought to apply (Zedner 2013; Chacon 2010). One need to only glance at the events unfolding along the US-Mexico border, or the Mediterranean Coasts to become convinced that certain non-citizen lives or rights do not matter (De Genova 2018; Campesi 2018; Hui and Zion 2018; Mayblin, Wake, and Kazemi 2019, 5; Stumpf 2020).

The selective workings of immigration regimes, enforced by increased border control across the Global North, have been widely conceptualised as state efforts to reassert sovereignty

in the face of increased mobility in a globalised world (De Genova and Peutz 2010; Kaufman and Bosworth 2013; Sassen 2015; Stumpf 2006). Several scholarly accounts on detention of foreigners have focused on sovereignty in their attempts to understand detention. In the words of Galina Cornelisse, 'Deportation and detention of unwanted foreigners make clear what sovereignty is about, both with regard to its aspect of monopolistic violence and with regard to its claim to determine the 'inside' from the 'outside'' (Cornelisse 2010, 102). Thus foreigners, marked as outsiders from the citizenry, are subject to extreme measures to physically exclude them from the polity either through detention or removal or both.

Catherine Dauvergne describes the 'worldwide crackdown on extralegal migration' as a reaction to a loss of state control in other realms, which results in diverse forms of reactivation of sovereignty, remarking those who belong within a territory and those who do not (Dauvergne 2008b, 2). Peutz and De Genova similarly argue in their discussion of deportation that 'unauthorised migration, remains a permanent and incorrigible affront to state sovereignty and the power of the state to manage its social space through law and the violence of law enforcement' (Peutz and De Genova 2010, 39). Gerard and Pickering's cite the border and administrative detention as two sites where territorial control can be exerted (Gerard and Pickering 2014, 29). Heightened precariousness of non-citizens in these spaces, demands our attention, as people's rights may be eroded or stripped away.

Migrants are also often perceived as an interference in the collective. According to Anderson, migrants and citizens are mutually constitutive, legal and normative constructs. Understood within these dynamics, non-citizens emerge not only as vying for rights, but also as a categorical opposite against which citizens of a community can define themselves (Anderson 2013, chap. 2). Where the citizen category overlaps with an ethnic one, such as in the case of ethnonational states, not belonging to the dominant ethnic group may be increasingly deemed a

contaminating threat to ethnic purity or cohesion (Peled 2013; Smooha 1990; Mizrachi 2004; Al Haj 2004; Esses et al. 2001). In the final section, I conclude by reviewing how non-citizens have fared in the ethnonational state of Israel thus far.

NON-CITIZENS IN AN ETHNONATIONAL STATE

The final section of this chapter zooms in on how non-citizen, non-Jews have been treated in the Jewish state in the 21st century. As the previous sections made clear, Israel operates a *jus sanguinis* ethnonational migration regime, and has yet to codify immigration law or refugee law in Israeli legislation (Rubinstein, Orgad, and Avineri 2009, 14; Kritzman-Amir 2012). As such, immigration matters and migrant rights are governed through a mixed use of basic laws, regulations, government decisions and internal procedures (Kritzman-Amir 2014, 510–11). In the first three decades of the state, small numbers of non-Jews entered Israel and were given leave to remain. Matters changed during the 1980s when Israel welcomed migrant workers, due to deteriorating relations with Palestinians, and enhanced economic liberalism. The first Palestinian uprising, or *intifada*, started in 1987 and was followed by failed negotiations that continued into the early 1990s. These events severed economic ties between the two entities, interrupted the movement of a cheap Palestinian workforce, and created a need for cheap labour from abroad (Bartram 1998, 305–9; Rosenhek 2000a; Drori 2009, 7–8). These events also coincided with the neoliberal shift of the 1970s and 80s that motivated Israel to open its borders to an external workforce at lower cost (Rosenhek 2011, 76–81; Ajzenstadt and Shapira 2012, 689–90). Since then, hundreds of thousands of migrant workers have entered Israel, placing it top amongst developed countries that rely on an external workforce worldwide (Willen 2007b; Kemp and Raijman 2008, 43–44; Drori 2009, 9).

At the end of 2020 the population in Israel numbered 9,267,300 people, comprised of 6,854,600 'Jews', 1,951,000 'Arabs' and 461,700 'others' ('CBS: Population Census' 2020). This distribution and categorisation in state reports reflects what Sarah Willen has described as Israel's

'Citizens, Others, and other Others' (Willen 2010a; 2019, chap. 3) to distinguish between Jewish Israelis, Palestinians who are constructed as 'primordial adversaries', and other non-citizens who are neither Jewish nor Palestinian. As noted in the introduction, close to half of the 'other' category are foreigner non-citizens whose residence in the state is either lawful and temporary, or illegal and indefinite. This final section will look more closely at this group.

Exclusionary or antagonistic feelings toward non-citizens have been identified as commonplace around the world due to feelings of national belonging, and/or their construction as cultural or economic threat (Ajzenstadt and Shapira 2012, 690).[28] In Israel, the borders of citizenship correspond with the boundaries of the Jewish collective. These legal and political concepts and processes might begin to explain the social exclusion of non-Jewish African asylum seekers like other non-Jewish migrants before them. However, they do not explain why this group has been subjected to prolonged administrative detention, and nor does it explain repeated collective deportation attempts, despite their non-removable status.

FOREIGNERS IN A JEWISH STATE

Since the 1980s, new kinds of immigration de facto opened Israel's border to non-Jews for the first time. By 2002, non-Jewish and non-Palestinian migrant workers, called *ovdim zarim* (foreign workers) in Israel, reached nearly a quarter of a million people (which comprised 8.7% of the national workforce), over half of them remained without valid permits (Kemp 2007, 671). This population soon came to be constructed, and perceived, as a demographic threat to the Jewish state, and was met with hostility by the general public and state institutions.

[28] For similar discussions in other national settings see: (Elias and Scotson 1965; Bosma, Lucassen, and Oostindie 2012; Castles and Kosack 1985; Kretsedemas, Capetillo Ponce, and Jacobs 2014)

Israel developed a regulatory regime to govern migrant populations through laws meant to ensure continuous labour supply, yet prevent permanent settlement (Rosenhek 2000a; Kemp and Raijman 2008; Kemp and Kfir 2016b). The state relied on widespread use of manpower and contracting companies that recruited from various countries for specific work sectors, and bilateral agreements with states that provided workers (Drori 2009, chap. 4; Gil and Dahan 2007, 361–62). It encouraged non-citizens to continue entering for work purposes subject to strict limitations on employment and with little regard to migrants' changing life-course or work circumstances, most notably the binding agreement (according to which worker visa and legality was bound to their individual employer), and limitations on family life such as the pregnant foreign workers directive that annuls the work permits of migrant care workers who become pregnant (Gil and Dahan 2007, 360–61; Galili 2011; Kritzman-Amir 2014; Kemp and Kfir 2016b, 379–82). Such regulations led many migrants to become illegal or undocumented in the state (Natan 2019, 3–5; Brown 2017, Introduction; Borowski and Yanay 1997).[29]

Over time, migrant workers became a severely marginalised population in the state, due to their economic exploitation, legal precarity, and ethnocultural differences (Gil and Dahan 2007, 364–65). Sarah Willen describes the ongoing and evolving process of migrant workers' exclusion in Israel as 'migrants' sociopolitical abjection – their clear and categorical exclusion from the political and moral community… various national leaders and branches of state power took discrete steps to shore up migrants' exclusion in order to facilitate their criminalisation and forcible removal from Israeli sociopolitical space' (Willen 2019, 9). Migrant workers usually resided in

[29] There are four main ways in which a person can become an undocumented or 'illegal' migrant: entering the country on a tourist or student visa, working without a permit, or overstaying its term; entering with false documents or by illegally crossing the state's borders; entering with a work permit but staying beyond the allotted timeframe; or entering to work legally, but leaving the original employers to whom they are indentured through the employer 'binding' system that forced workers to remain with the same employer in order to maintain their legal status.

ethnic enclaves in South Tel Aviv, in poor conditions among other impoverished communities, segregated from most of Jewish society aside from workplace interactions (Schnell 2000; 1999; Institute for Structural Reforms 2013; Willen 2019, chaps. 1 & 2).

Much has been written about public sentiments toward transnational non-Jewish migration into Israel (Nathanson and Bar-Zuri 1999; Semyonov, Raijman, and Yom-Tov 2002; Hercowitz-Amir, Raijman, and Davidov 2017), about the importance of citizenship for the allocation of rights (Raijman, Schmidt, and Semyonov 2003; Raijman and Semyonov 2009), and variation in attitudes toward diverse 'out-group populations' (Canetti-Nisim and Pedahzur 2003; Drori 2009, chap. 11; Raijman 2012). A consensus exists that the entrance of large numbers of migrant workers has been met with varying levels of animosity on the part of different sections of Israeli society and institutions (Schnell and Benjamini 2004a; Drori 2009, 168–76; Ajzenstadt and Shapira 2012, 690; 2012, 692–99).

Most studies indicate that exclusionary feelings emanate from Israel's ethnonational criteria of belonging – Jewish citizenry facing non-Jewish migration (Drori 2009, 35–40, 184–86; Gorodzeisky 2013; Raijman 2010; Raijman and Semyonov 2009; Raijman 2012). Some studies add that levels of social distance or negativity are exacerbated by proximity to the threatening out-group of Palestinians or Arabs (Canetti-Nisim, Ariely, and Halperin 2008; Duman 2015, 1240; Kalir 2015; Sarig 2008).

One of the areas in which Israel's ethnonational exclusivity has been contested, and re-affirmed, is the struggle for naturalisation of children of migrant workers who were born and raised in Israel (Kemp 2007; 2008, 106; Kemp and Raijman 2008, 190–92; Elias and Kemp 2010). Migrant worker communities and Israeli activists conducted legal, political and public efforts to prevent deportation, secure permanent residence and citizenship for children of migrant workers who were born in the country (Kemp and Kfir 2016b, 382–89). On a few occasions these efforts were

successful. For example three government decisions in 2005[30], 2006[31], and 2010[32] granted permanent residency to children of migrant workers who met several requirements such as continuous residence in Israel, being within a certain age group at the time of the decision, having learned to speak Hebrew and attended Israeli education (Kemp 2007). Altogether, 5,000 children and their families were included in these decisions. In all cases the 'anchor child', on behalf of whom the application was submitted, received permanent residence while their siblings and parents received temporary A(5) visas that must be renewed every year.

Such instances, briefly signalling that the ethnonational migration restrictions might loosen, proved to be exceptional. During the same years that the state granted membership to several hundreds of children and their families, it developed wide-reaching apparatus to police and deport tens of thousands of other migrants. Adriana Kemp explained that such processes of population management are expressions of two contradicting logics in a globalised, capitalistic system: the neo-liberal logic that aims to remove regulations and maintain a cheap labour force, and the nationalistic logic of states to prioritise national homogeneity (Kemp 2007, 117).

MIGRATION CONTROL ENFORCEMENT

In August 2002, a new Immigration Police was established in Israel, with the ambitious objective of deporting 50,000 undocumented migrants within its first year of operation (Kemp 2008, 104). An unprecedented deportation campaign followed between 2002–2005 during which 40,000 people were arrested and deported under deportation orders. Tens of thousands were 'encouraged'

[30] Government Decision no. 3807 on Legal Status for Children of Illegal residents, their Parents and Siblings in Israel (Government of Israel 2005)

[31] Government Decision no. 156 on Legal Status for Children of Illegal Residents, their Parents and Siblings in Israel (Government of Israel 2006)

[32] Government Decision no. 2183 on Legal Status for Unlawfully Residing Children, their Parents and Siblings in Israel (Government of Israel 2010)

or forced to leave through an array of hostile mechanisms (Kemp 2007, 675; Drori 2009, chap. 9; Willen 2010a, 7; 2019)[33]. Immigration police continued deportation efforts, focused on families with children, who were deemed a particular demographic threat due to their potential claims to rights (Kemp 2007, 107), and the risk that they would dilute the ethnonational character of the state (Gil and Dahan 2007, 371).

In 2008, the Population and Immigration Authority (PIBA) was founded, within Israel's Ministry of Interior (Government of Israel 2008a). The authority was to regulate and enforce Israel's population and immigration laws, oversee citizens and non-citizens, visitors of all variations, foreign workers, and their employers. A plan to deport all illegal residents by 2013 was introduced (Government of Israel 2008b). In 2009, 'Oz' policing unit was established, to move toward the enforcement of the removal policy, and focus on locating illegal foreign workers, seizing them for detention and removal which had increased over time (Natan 2015, 61).

Exclusionary state policies indicate that non-Jewish non-citizens are largely unwelcomed in Israel, aside from their role as cheap labourers in a bifurcated market.[34] As Rosenhek explains, 'excluding subordinate social groups from the welfare state is a mechanism for constituting them as a flexible and unprotected workforce that is channelled towards the secondary labour market' (Rosenhek 2011, 66). Neoliberal economics challenge the ethnonational immigration regime as

[33] Two deportation campaigns targeted migrant workers in Israel, coupled with severe anti-migrant ethnocentric discourse by public officials. The first campaign took place between 1995-2002 (Gil and Dahan 2007, 366–70). The second and wider campaign took place between 2002-2005, during which 129,000 migrants were forced to leave the country whether through deportation orders, voluntary return (Gil and Dahan 2007, 371).

[34] For an in depth discussions of the marginalisation, and exploitation in a secondary market that resembles indentured labour see (Kemp 2007, 673–77; Raijman and Kemp 2011; Wexler 2013; Kashti 2020; Brown 2017). Raijman and Kemp cite the regime of permit quotas, binding employment, utilisation of disciplining mechanisms and manpower agencies as the main mechanisms through which Israel produced an unfree workforce.

migrant populations are continuously invited in to the country for work (Kemp 2007; Gil and Dahan 2007; Drori 2009; Rosenhek 2011).

However, these two logics – ethnonationalism and neo-liberalism – do not fully account for the differential treatment and increased enforcement imposed on African asylum seekers. While all other 'foreign' groups in the country are regulated using the Entry to Israel Law, African asylum seekers are the only population managed under the Prevention of Infiltration Law. Nor do they explain the prominence of South Tel Aviv in anti-asylum seeker politics on the national level. Differential treatment across migrant groups are made exceptionally evident when the same politicians who advocated deportation of asylum seekers simultaneously called for increased imports of migrant workers (Nahmias 2014). Though programmes for asylum seeker employment (Barak-Bianco et al. 2016), or regularisation an immigration regime (Rubinstein, Orgad, and Avineri 2009) have been suggested, they are ignored. In these cases, both ethnonational interest – protection from threat of non-Jews in the state, and economic interests – potential profits associated with asylum seekers already in the country, are sidelined by the state that continues to import non-Jewish labour force.

According to PIBA, at the end of 2020, close to 120,000 migrant workers resided in Israel, 18,136 of them without legal permits, as well as 48,600 tourists who overstayed their visas, and 30,511 'infiltrators' (Population and Immigration Authority 2020). While other migrant groups largely outnumber asylum seekers, and half of them reside in the country unlawfully, rates of immigration enforcements vary vastly. Temporary migrant workers are invited into the state in increasing numbers. Persons who overstayed their tourist visas remain unlawfully and are subject to minimal immigration enforcement.

African asylum seekers on the other hand are regulated as 'infiltrators' (Kritzman-Amir 2009; Yaron Mesegna, Hashimshony-Yaffe, and Campbell 2013; Ziegler 2015a), have been

detained, and remain under constant threat of group deportation. Inconsistency in state practice is noticeable, and their differential treatment is not successfully explained through theories of citizenship or ethnonational bordering to which all migrant groups are subjected.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I reviewed existing literature that analyses and seeks to explain the exclusion of African asylum seekers in Israel. I described how administrative detention developed in the country, the dangers it poses to human rights, and explained how it came to be directed at asylum seekers over time. I contextualised the detention of asylum seekers within a discussion of the politics of citizenship and ethnonationalism in boundary marking and rights distribution or protections. Citizenship and ethnicity 'deficits' – i.e. lacking Israeli citizenship or Jewish ethnicity – have been the main paradigms used to explain or legitimate migrant exclusion in the ethnonational state of Israel.

However, explanations that focus on citizenship and ethnonationalism have failed to explain why Sudanese and Eritrean asylum seekers are subjected to disproportionate exclusion through state policies (compared to other migrant groups), including prolonged administrative detention and repeated attempts at deportation, irrespective of their claims to refugee status. This is not to say that other migrant groups in the country have not been subjected to extreme state force, social and economic marginalisation. As the last part of the chapter described, non-Jewish migrants have been constructed as unwanted foreigners, marginalised, criminalised, policed and deported.

Yet two important distinctions in the treatment of African asylum seekers must be further interrogated: (1) the state's repeated attempts at their extreme exclusion, through detention and deportation, which relies on their collective categorisation and not individual legal status or actions. They are thus the only migrant group to be collectively regulated, under the Prevention of

Infiltration Law as 'infiltrators', and the only group to have had a detention centre constructed to hold them based on their national origin and mode of entry. I argue that these facts indicate a differentiated and disproportionate exclusion (compared to other non-Jewish migrant groups) of the most extreme kind. (2) The extreme exclusionary act of detention is targeted at this group despite their non-removable status. Detention in Holot was enforced long after entry, whilst there was no avenue to deportation, for the purpose of removing Sudanese and Eritreans from urban centres. Detention policies were thus imposed with extreme disregard for this group's claims and grounds for asylum. Detention rendered them internally excluded and denied their basic right to liberty. I will address these two distinctions: disproportionate exclusion based on origin, and the penalisation of asylum seekers in the chapters that follow.

Existing explanations also do not account for the prominence of the South Tel Aviv district in legal argumentation or legislative debates around the Prevention of Infiltration Law nor do they capture the lived experiences of those subjected to or affected by detention, and the wide-ranging impacts these policies have on the ground. I argue that citing logics of citizenship or ethnicity to explain this case study misses other criteria for differential inclusion and exclusion in Israel. I will explore the case study through the framework of racialised differentiation, and contextualise it in Israel's specific socio-historical developments, before delving into the lived experiences of those groups most affected by detention policies in practice.

Chapter 2.

Theorising Asylum Seeker Exclusion from City Centres

> *… in the last decade the State of Israel is dealing with a large amount of people who illegally entered its borders and as of this time it does not have the possibility of deporting them. A significant portion of them are concentrated in specific geographic areas, in particular South Tel Aviv. In my opinion, in these circumstances there is no place to intervene in the State's position whereby there is an essential need to prevent the settling down of the 'infiltrators' in the cities.*
>
> M Naor, President, Israel High Court of Justice, in verdict:
> HCJ 8665/14 *Tashuma Nega Desete et al. v. The Knesset et al.* [73] (Aug. 11, 2015)[35]

> *The student of these questions must first ask, what is the real condition of this group of human beings? Of whom is it composed, what sub-groups and classes exist, what sort of individuals are being considered? Further, the student must clearly recognise that a complete study must not confine itself to the group, but must specially notice the environment; the physical environment of city, sections and houses, the far mightier social environment- the surrounding world of custom, wish, whim, and thought which envelops this group and powerfully influences its social development.*
>
> W. E. B. Du Bois in *The Philadelphia Negro*
> (Du Bois 1897, 5)

This chapter explores explanations for the detention of Sudanese and Eritrean asylum seekers in Israel by situating detention in a wider context, looking at its relationship with the city, particularly South Tel Aviv. The choice of theories introduced in this chapter were guided by insights that emerged from empirical data, as dictated by Grounded Theory methodology. Theories attend to two of the main research questions of this dissertation:

How do we understand the centrality of South Tel Aviv and its residents to national politics of migration control, alongside continued marginalisation? and

How can we explain the heightened enforcement of migration control on a migrant group with distinct attributes – African, male, single, asylum seekers, compared to other migrant groups?

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[35] Unofficial English translation of Supreme Court Decision HCJ 8665/14 *Tashoma Nega Desete et al. v. The Knesset et al.* (Refworld 2015). For discussion of legislative aims, see section titled: Chapter D: Holot (Residency Facility).

These enquiries are pursued through sub-questions such as (1) Why are cities important to national migration control laws? (2) How do racial inequalities manifest spatially on national and city levels? And (3) how does the detention of Eritrean and Sudanese asylum seeker fit in to these dynamics of racial inequality and migration control in Israel? The answers to these questions inform the contention that underpinning logics of racialised differentiation animate the regulation of inclusion and exclusion in Israel. As explained in the introduction, racialised differentiation encompasses the differential inclusion of citizens, and differential exclusion of non-citizens, along the same hierarchical racialised scale. I explore how this hierarchical order of differentiation manifests socially in state treatment of distinct groups, and spatially, across national and urban settings where racialised groups are segregated.

The opening quotation in this chapter, by the President of Israel's Supreme Court, makes clear that the legislative purpose of detention in Holot – the 'prevention of settlement in city centres' – largely related to removal of asylum seekers from South Tel Aviv. South Tel Aviv is the most impoverished and disenfranchised area in one of Israel's largest cities, which is home to most migrants and asylum seekers in the country.[36] Testimonies by Jewish residents from South Tel Aviv were presented in the Supreme Court and legislative committee debates. Residents of the area attended government meetings, provided input to decision-making processes, received political visits by senior parliament members, and even welcomed the Prime Minister in their homes.[37] The

[36] Precise statistics on African asylum seekers residing in Tel Aviv are unavailable due to legal limitations on their ability to register with municipal institutions or rent accommodation legally. However, OECD Expert Group on Migration's Annual Report compiled data provided by the Immigration Authority and police that states 18,324 'Infiltrators' resided in Tel Aviv in 2014, compared to 22,505 in the rest of the country (Natan 2017).

[37] For media coverage on South Tel Aviv relevance to national politics, see eg (Efraim and Azulay 2012; Efraim and Rimerman 2016; Lior 2017; Kuzin and Begno 2017; Alon 2019b; 2019a)

testimonies conveyed residents' suffering and were used to legitimate the exclusion of Sudanese and Eritreans in Holot.

The previous chapter reviewed the main literature relating to asylum seekers' detention in Israel, it explained how administrative detention developed and was directed at asylum seekers over time; and how citizenship, and ethnicity 'deficits' – i.e. lacking Israeli citizenship or Jewish ethnicity – legitimate migrant exclusion in the ethnonational state of Israel. Existing explanations do not account, however, for the prominence of the South Tel Aviv district in legal argument and legislative debates around the Prevention of Infiltration Law; nor do they explain why this specific group of non-Jewish non-citizens is disproportionately targeted for exclusion as compared to other migrant groups. I argue that citing logics of citizenship or ethnicity to explain this case misses other criteria for differential inclusion and exclusion in Israel.

This chapter suggests the perspective of racialised differentiation helps to bridge the analytical gaps indicated in chapter one. It posits that while detention is one of the foremost distinct acts of spatial exclusion and assertion of state power to exclude migrants from its territory (Cornelisse 2010, 103), it should be understood in the context of wider exclusionary logics that operate in the country, particularly in its urban centres. Lipsitz explains that cities may appear as race neutral sites, but, in fact, they 'contain hidden racial assumptions and imperatives … these sites serve to produce and sustain racial meanings; they enact a public pedagogy about who belongs where and about what makes certain spaces desirable' (Lipsitz 2011, 15). The pages that follow tie dynamics within the city to national exclusionary logics that are at play in state foundation, development, and function. I highlight relationships between race and place that illuminate how detention is fed by, and feeds into, the city and its hierarchies.

It is important to clarify how the concepts of race, racialisation and racism will be used in connection to ethnicity, ethnonationalism and place. I use the word 'ethnicity' and its derivatives

to describe groups with claims of shared culture and descent (Fenton and May 2002, 2). As discussed in the previous chapter, an important form of group distinction and identification is being part of 'a people' based on ideas of shared descent, ancestry, culture or collective history. Hall describes ethnicity as a 'strong version' of cultural identity through which people feel organically bound to a group, connected to place, and at times characterised by shared physical features (Hall 2017, 106–7). Like Phillips and Bowling (2003), I follow Fenton's (2010) preference for the term 'ethnicity' in discussions of belonging, due to an understanding that the term 'race' denotes 'biological difference, superiority/inferiority, whereas ethnicity is used to describe self-defined collectivities of people of common origin with a shared culture linked to language, religion, nationality, and ancestral traditions' (Phillips and Bowling 2003, 192). I therefore use ethnicity to describe group self-identification. In Israel, ethnicity (*adatiut*) is used to describe members of the Jewish collective who hail from diverse origins but share a common identification with an overarching Jewish category of belonging.

I use the term race to describe group categorisation frequently placed externally to essentialise and often dominate an ethnic group. Fenton elaborates on the closeness of these terms: '[r]ace, nation and ethnic group belong together in a family of concepts and bear strong family resemblances. They do not all 'mean the same thing' but they do share a common reference to the idea of a people, or 'people of this kind'' (Fenton 2010, 7). Use of the term race in this thesis acknowledges that processes of grouping people are socially constructed and political; they serve to subordinate some groups and advance others, and in that process create very palpable divisions and group dynamics. Omi and Winant define race as 'a concept which signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of human bodies,' and racial formation as 'the sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed' (Omi and Winant 1994, 55). In each location and time, different racial groups are

constructed and organised within a meaningful, relational social order that reflects the dominant political and historical context, leading Hall to describe race as a 'floating' or 'sliding' signifier (Hall 1996; 2017, 64–65) that shifts and changes with time.

Understood in this way the process of racial formation, and subsequent classification and racialisation of groups, is necessarily hierarchical and relative (Roy 2001, 79–80). It gives way to racism, which is above all a power relationship that describes 'the ways in which over centuries, bodies and culture have amalgamated and interpreted to produce 'races' which are placed in hierarchical relationships to one another' (Garner 2018, x). Back et al. similarly observe how hierarchies of belonging are based on '[c]ultures of racism [that] have frequently, if not always, scaled and ranked human diversity' (Back, Sinha, and Bryan 2012, 140). I use the terms race, racialisation, and racism to describe how groups are categorised by forces in society outside their control. Racialised groups are attributed difference, and regarded unevenly by systems of power.

A racialised differentiation perspective sheds light on such hierarchies within Israel by noting how legacies of ethnonationalism and colonialism shaped its institutions, settlement patterns, self-perception and incorporation regime, observed especially in Tel Aviv. Racialised differentiation is not a new term of art, but rather a perspective that brings together two related concepts and their various articulations – differential inclusion and exclusion.

As discussed in the introduction, inclusion in the state is stratified by 'degrees' of incorporation, or lack thereof, down a graded scale of rights, protections, and privileges (Hall 1986; Shafir and Peled 2002). Peled describes this stratification as a 'differential allocation of entitlements, obligations and domination' (Peled 2011, 278), legitimated by Israel's citizenship

discourse.[38] Decrease of privileges and protections correlates with a racialised scale of value or symbolic contribution that extends between the esteemed white, Western, Jewish citizen and the less valued, Oriental, darker skinned or non-Jewish citizen (Khazzoom 1999; Salamon 2003; Sasson-Levy and Shoshana 2014; Guetzkow and Fast 2016). Or as Zeev Rosenhek explains:

> *The Israeli welfare state grants different populations differential degrees of protection from market forces and access to social and economic resources, in accordance with ethnic and national origin, and citizenship status. Therefore… [it] not only reflects but also contributes to the institutionalisation and reproduction of the ethnic- national social order of Israeli society – that comprises Ashkenazi (of European origin) Jews, Mizrachi (of Moslem countries' origin) Jews, Palestinian citizens of the state, Palestinians from the Occupied Territories, and migrant workers (Rosenhek 2011, 63–64).*

Rosenhek's analysis is the closest articulation of what I term a perspective of racialised differentiation. It encompasses the differential treatment of racialised groups by the state, through unequal distribution of rights and protections, and includes both citizen and non-citizen groups. I add to his analysis by emphasizing the role of racial formations in this process, and positioning inclusion and exclusion on either 'side' of the ethnic-citizenship axis. Thus citizens and non-citizens are unequally included in the state, or excluded from it, according to the same hierarchical racialised logic that is based on ethnonational and postcolonial values, and priorities.

[38] Peled argues that Israel's citizenship discourse is characterised by three layers, superimposed on each other: A republican discourse of community and civic virtue used to differentiate between Jewish social groups (eg *Ashkenazim-Mizrachim*, males-females, secular-religious); a liberal discourse used to separate Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel from the non-citizen Palestinians in the occupied territories; and an ethnonationalist discourse that discriminates between Jewish and Palestinian citizens in the Israeli state.

What emerges is classificatory system of differentiated racialised groups that applies to both Mizrahi Jewish citizens and African asylum seekers. The first group is less included, the second more excluded, based on their lower positions on a hierarchical scale compared to their counterparts in the citizen or non-citizen populations. I argue that racialised differentiation is at the core of Israel's ethnonational and postcolonial society, it determines relations between the state and its inhabitants, and subsequently prescribes social and spatial realities. The following diagram visualizes the scale of racialised differentiation (Figure 8):

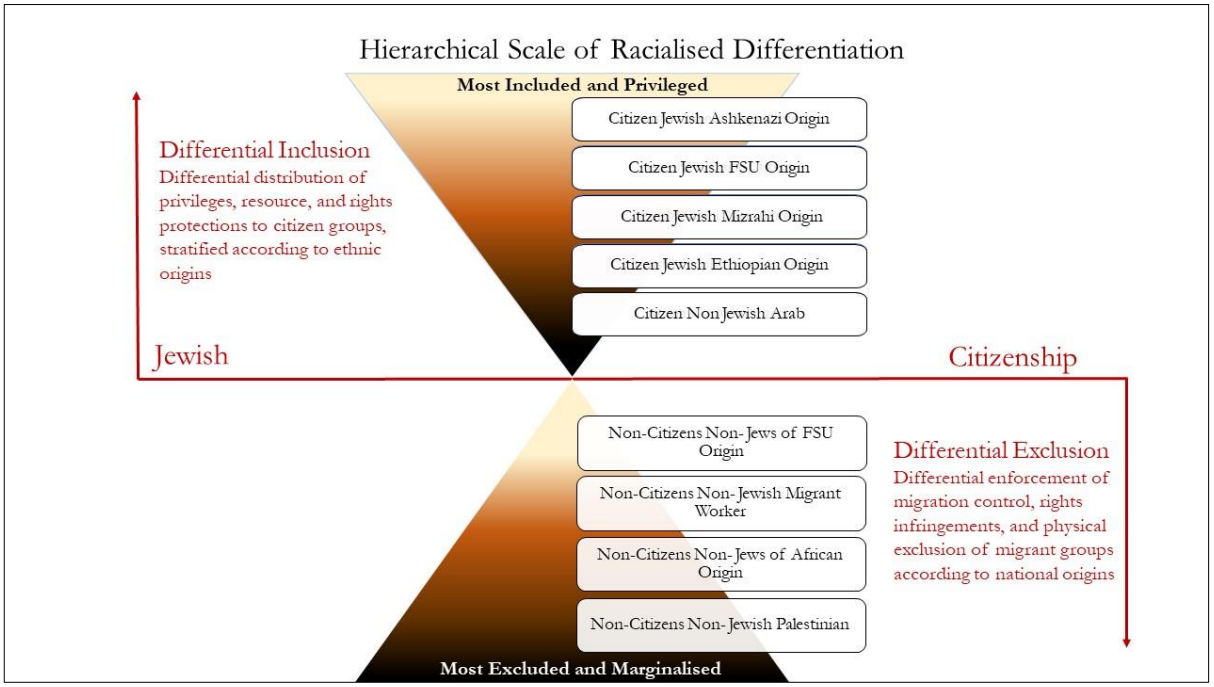


Figure 8. Diagram of Hierarchical Scale of Racialised Differentiation[39]

[39] Categories employed in the diagram and their positioning along a hierarchical scale of worth, rights privileges or infringements, are based on extensive literature on various aspects of group formation and stratification in Israel. Racialised inequality follows ethnonational and postcolonial logics that value and prioritise Jewish citizenship and European whiteness. Group categorisations and positions on the scale can be problematised and contested, given Israe's complex inter and intra-ethnic dynamics, however I have tried to show how race is employed to differentiate between groups, and reflect dominant literature on the many forms of socio-legal stratification. See for example: analysis of institutional stratification (Shafir and Peled 2002; 1998; Kimmerling 2004; Rosenhek 2011); on legal stratification (Shachar 1998; Kedar 2003); on ethnic division of labour and class (Swirski 1981a; Yuval-Davis and Stasiulis 1995; Elias and Kemp 2010; Kemp and Raijman 2000; Schwarzwald and Tur-Kaspa 1997; Rosenhek 2003); for racialised inequality in land and settlement patterns (Kimmerling 1983; Tzfadia 2000; Adler, Lewin-Epstein, and Shavit 2005; Tzfadia and Yacobi 2011; Erakat 2015); on Orientalist or differential state views of racialised groups and Palestinians (Khazzoom 2003; Raz-Krakotzkin 2002; 2005; Piterberg 1996; Massad 1996; Hirsch 2009; Jamal 2020;

A racialised differentiation framework helps us make sense of how different groups are ordered on either side of formal Jewish-Citizen membership line, along an ethnonational, postcolonial scale.

Postcolonial hierarchy refers to racial ideologies that undergirded colonialism based on ideas of European and Western supremacy, and their continued relevance in present times (Back, Sinha, and Bryan 2012, 140). These include revered ethnic origins, Western structures of knowledge, power, and representation that accompanied imperial settlement across the globe (Said 1994, 5; Gilroy 2004b, 58; Meer 2018, 1170–72), and Jewish settlement in Palestine (Shohat 1992, 105; Raz-Krakotzkin 2002; Hirsch 2009). Both asylum seekers and *Mizrahi* residents in South Tel Aviv have been excluded by visions of a White and Western-oriented national project, and the policies that implement it. I follow Du Bois, who in studying racialised exclusion in American cities, explained that 'the Negro problem' was neither the problem of African Americans nor of their white counterparts, but rather located in the nation (Du Bois 1898, 3). Bhambra builds on Du Bois's argues that one should locate race as 'a problem of the nation, that is, in the social relations between citizens and the problematic construction of a hierarchy of citizenship' (Bhambra 2014, 482). Similarly, I argue here that racialisation and spatial exclusion of *Mizrahi* citizens and African asylum seekers, though very different, similarly emanates from a problematic Eurocentric national agenda that creates hierarchies of valued citizens and less valued non-citizens.

There is growing recognition that present day hierarchies of belonging among citizens rely on colonial racism, that adapted over time to postcolonial situations (Gilroy 1994; 2003; Hall and Back 2009, 677–78; Back, Sinha, and Bryan 2012, 150–51). Criminologists and migration scholars

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Guetzkow and Fast 2016); and of the enemy categorising of Palestinians (Willen 2010a; Rouhana 1997; Rouhana and Ghanem 1998; Ben-Natan 2020). To name a few.

likewise account for the continued salience of racial and postcolonial hierarchies in states' treatment of non-citizens or foreign nationals by emphasizing connections between empire, colonial legacies, border control and penal practices (Agozino 2004, 352–54; Bosworth and Flavin 2007; Cunneen 2011, 256–57; Mayblin 2017; Mayblin, Wake, and Kazemi 2019, 3–5). This chapter explores such dynamics in Israel, and, in particular, with respect to African asylum seekers.

The first part of the chapter presents theories and literature, beyond Israel, regarding the role of global cities in national politics of belonging. It utilises urban sociology and criminological scholarship that explore relationships between border control regimes, penal enforcement and cities through dynamics of social ordering, constructions of deviance, and racialised belonging. It reviews global trends of asylum seeker policing and detention worldwide This is followed by a discussion of race and place in urban and national geographies, and migration in settler states. It focuses on the social and spatial orders produced in Israel's ethnonational, settler society.

The second part demonstrates how socio-spatial dynamics in Tel Aviv reflect racialised differentiation and inequality, by juxtaposing the symbolic importance of Tel Aviv city in national history and discourse on belonging, whilst simultaneously, its Southern areas suffer material marginalisation. Building on earlier accounts on stratified citizenship (Shafir and Peled 2002) or differential inclusion through the welfare state (Rosenhek 2011), the section highlights how privileges, rights, resources, symbolic and material capital was afforded to, or deprived from, specific parts of the city and populations along ethno-class lines. It surveys the uneven treatment afforded to South Tel Aviv's *Mizrahi* residents, compared to their *Ashkenazi* counterparts in the city's centre and north (Marom 2014a; Cohen and Margalit 2015, 678–83; Rotbard 2015, 79–80), and emphasizes racial and postcolonial aspects of the process (Bernstein 2011; Cohen 2013, 120–21; Hall 2017, 101), to explain racialised differential inclusion among citizens. The section

concludes by locating African asylum seekers in Israel's racialised order, reviewing their extreme exclusion compared to other migrant groups in the country.

GLOBAL CITIES AND NATIONAL POLITICS OF BELONGING

URBAN SOCIOLOGY, CRIMINOLOGY AND MIGRATION CONTROL

South Tel Aviv's prominence in legal and political debates on migration control signals its importance in the national politics of belonging.[40] Given that global cities and metropolitan centres are sites where globalisation's effects are often concentrated – in economic activity, increased communications, mobility, and their human consequences – South Tel Aviv is not a unique case of heightened urban social conflict arising in relation to migration patterns. Katja Franko reviewed the significance of cities (and dynamics converging within them) to understanding constructions of deviance in her chapter on 'Urban Criminology and the Global City' (Franko Aas 2013a, chap. 3). She cites the Chicago School's contribution in drawing connections between human mobility and social disorganisation in large cities:

> *[C]ities are large conglomerations of people of different nationality, ethnic origin, skin colour and cultural belonging as well as social class, reflecting the enormous gap between the haves and the have nots. Living with social difference in spatial proximity is a project fraught with difficulties… urban safety is a multifaceted project, having to do not only with questions of crime, but also with issues of fear, diversity and uniformity (Franko Aas 2013 56).*

Cities can, therefore, be viewed as microcosms of wider national dynamics, playing out in a smaller space, where community issues are distilled and intensified by physical closeness.

[40] The importance of South Tel Aviv is evidenced by frequent mentions in legislative debates regarding migration policies, eg: (Knesset Committee on Internal and Environmental Protection, 2012 (Protocol 25), 2013 (Protocol 140), 2013 (Protocol 428)); visits to the neighborhoods by then serving politicians, eg: Minister of Culture Miri Regev, Minister of Interior Aryeh Dery, PM Benjamin Netanyahu, Minister of Justice Ayelet Shaked (Urquhart, 2012; Kuzin and Begno, 2017; Lior, 2017; Alon, 2019 respectively); and extensive political discourse and media coverage studied elsewhere, eg: (Mizrachi 2011; Tirosh 2018).

Beyond the Chicago School understanding of the spatial distillation of deviance, my theoretical framework draws on earlier origins in the field of urban sociology mentioned above, not least W.E.B. Du Bois's study of Philadelphia in the late 1800s. Du Bois's focus on racial divides in the urban setting, and their connection to the American legacies of slavery, provides a useful example of connecting urban dynamics to a specific historical context. Du Bois's *The Philadelphia Negro* is one of the first systematic, empirical, scientific sociological investigations of a city (Du Bois 1897). Along with subsequent studies of other cities, and annual conferences at Atlanta University, he set the foundations for later elaborations by Chicago School scholars (Anderson and Massey 2001, 3–5; Bhambra 2014, 483–84; Morris 2015, chap. 3). Du Bois's rigorous scientific research, combined with his own lived experience, formed a rich base for the emerging field and remains enduringly relevant (Back 2017). His work informs this study of national and urban social order as it centralises the role of race in their foundation and maintenance.

The city is a site where deviancy often concentrates: many diverse groups meet in the capitalist concentration of work and business, proximate to centres of power, and distant from traditional lifestyles in less developed peripheries. Cities, therefore, provide fertile grounds for social conflict and division. A single city may be home to residents at opposite ends of the economic scale, diverse ethnic or religious groups, and cultural lifestyles. Rapid urban change can cause a loss of sense of community and identity (Lea and Young 1993, xiii; Taylor 1999, 27–34; Goldberg 2002, 173; Young 2007, 10–17; McLaughlin 2011, 59). The search for alternative forms of meaning and identity in changing cities often involves nostalgia or valorisation of old or traditional units of belonging, or resistance to change (Elias and Scotson 1965, 3, 148; Bauman 1997, 26; Young 2007, 3–5). This is particularly the case as urban life makes increased inequalities more visible due to physical proximity and communication technologies (Wacquant 2008, 7).

Melossi describes a process in Italy involving nostalgia 'for one's town, as it once was, for a sense of community, especially of political community, which seems to have disappeared… for the hegemonic role these citizens once played in the political and social life of their city' (Melossi 2003, 384–85). Franko similarly cites a mythical 'golden age' that cities claim, referring to an ideal conception of the city, lost over time (Franko Aas 2013a, 81).

Older city dwellers, those side-lined or left behind by processes of capitalism and globalisation, may find newcomer or migrant populations threatening to their social standing. In the UK, Elias and Scotson identify a differentiation process that established residents can exert to reassert their standing in the face of newcomers' arrival. Established residents can:

> *[C]onfirm their own superiority in morals and manners, symbols of their own respectability, of their claim to higher social status, of the existing social order… 'oldness' is regarded as a great social asset, as a matter of pride and satisfaction (Elias and Scotson 1965, 149–50).*

Such differentiation provides group identification and pride, while relegating problems to diverse 'folk devils' – those who can be differentiated from the group and used as scapegoats (Cohen 2002, 44; Squire 2009, 4). Migrant groups then become assessed against 'the perceived, idealised and racialised qualities of the natives. Being 'like us' in terms of language, ethnicity, and cultural background is considered a virtue in its own right' (Aliverti 2018, 127–28).

In large urban centres, differentiated groups are often constructed as oppositional, as '[a] series of binaries is set up: us-them, majority-minority, pure-impure, and with a seeming inevitability law-abiding – criminal, normal – deviant. The immigrant population is seen as a source of crime, of drugs, prostitution and violence' (Young 2007, 140). Binaries suggested by Young do not always manifest along such distinct lines, especially as communities interact over time. Research has also proven that in-group pride and patriotism need not necessarily combine with out-group prejudice (de Figueiredo and Elkins 2003). However, where strong nationalistic attitudes exist, they are often coupled with anti-immigrant sentiments and hostilities.

Nationalism, religion, racism and masculinity emerge in such settings as set frameworks that re-affirm identity (Young 2007, 141, 155). Such frameworks are increasingly adopted in those parts of the city where globalisation's negative side-effects are most acutely felt, described elsewhere and much earlier as: 'disorientation, with concomitant fear and uncertainty' (Adorno et al. 1950, 310), a 'new world of exclusion' and anomie (Young 1999, vi–vii; 1999, 48), or as discontent and 'wasted lives' in a world of unequal social ordering (Bauman 1998; 2000, 25; 2003, chap. 3). With increased movement of people across borders, migrants are particularly faced with the emerging processes of 'othering' (Sassen 1996, 218; Fassin 2001; Van Houtum and Van Naerssen 2002; Franko Aas 2007), when established communities' attempts at group restoration take shape through racial ordering (Back, Sinha, and Bryan 2012, 140). As migrants enter the polity, they also enter existing sites of social conflict, especially in cities where a sense of relative deprivation is heightened, and those with a sense of exclusion in their own homes have accumulated frustration and humiliation.

In times of increased human mobility, national social orders encounter new conflicting categories, whether that be opposition between citizens and migrants, tensions between state borders and globalized movement, or access to rights across those borders (Cole 2005; Hudson 2006; Fraser 2010, 4; Cole 2010; Sassen 2015). Saskia Sassen describes this process, and its concentration in cities, as part of globalisation, recognising that:

> *[D]enationalisation, which to a large extent materializes in global cities, has become legitimate for capital and has, indeed, been imbued with positive value by many government elites and their economic advisers. It is the opposite when it comes to people, as is perhaps most sharply illustrated in the rise of anti-immigrant feeling and various forms of nationalism (Sassen 1996, 214).*

National migration laws emerge, according to Catherine Dauvergne, as one of the most important sites for understanding the relationship between the state and its inhabitants. The term 'illegal' attributed to varied migrant groups, Dauvergne argues, 'circumscribes identity solely in terms of

relationship with the law: those who are illegal have broken (our) law… Such laws constitute the community of insiders, and also spell out degrees of belonging' (Dauvergne 2008b, 16–17). Legality and illegality are therefore reflections of the social order that a nation wishes to impose. Deviancy is constructed in opposition to legality, or the national normal, and systems of punishment are used to restore order or rehabilitate the deviant (Young 1998, 265–67; Garland 2013). Deviancy and punishment are therefore co-constitutive, as they reflect and reenforce the desired social order (Walton and Young 1998, 23; Young 2011, 103).[41] Similarly, I demonstrate through the following chapters how detention of African asylum seekers reflected, and reenforced, Israel's desired ethnic and social order.

With the entry of non-citizens across national borders, deviancy has gained the additional role of signifying national non-belonging, 'the classic distinction between the law-abiding and the criminal, 'us' and 'them', serves to confirm and reinforce the division between the foreign and the national' (Franko Aas 2013a, 79). This is evidenced by the worldwide rise in policing of foreign nationals, and the increased use of criminal law and penal systems to punish their infraction of immigration laws (Stumpf 2006, 379–91; Franko Aas 2011; Franko Aas and Bosworth 2013a; Aliverti 2018).

Irregular migration has been conceptualised by many as a perceived threat to national sovereignty and citizenship (Stumpf 2006, 402–8; De Genova and Peutz 2010; Willen 2010a; Sassen 2015). Challenges to state control of borders and membership are said to induce national anxieties across the Global North. These lead to securitisation of borders (Muller 2004; Zedner

[41] States' cultures of control have been helpfully theorised as expressions of territorial and community boundary making (Garland 2001; Wacquant 2009; Franko Aas 2013, 15) through which a state defines itself and its members.

2010, 380–81; Gerard and Pickering 2014), and increasingly penal responses to immigration (Barker 2012; Franko Aas and Bosworth 2013a; Weber and McCulloch 2018, 498). Franko Aas contends, 'defence of the border is thus transforming contemporary punishment and making it essentially connected to questions of cultural otherness and belonging' (Franko Aas 2013a, 91).

Increased criminological attention has been afforded to the heightened exclusion of asylum seekers and migrants (Webber 1996; Pickering and Lambert 2001; Weber 2002; Welch 2003), highlighting migrant precarity through interconnections of migration control and the penal state. As primary targets of border control, non-citizens lack the legal protections afforded to citizens (Bosniak 2006, chap. 3; Chacon 2014). Asylum seekers who additionally lack support systems and resources, and are highly stigmatised, find themselves in increasingly vulnerable situations (Webber 1996; Welch and Schuster 2005; Hyndman and Mountz 2008; Canning 2017, chap. 3).

Several conceptual frameworks have been developed to explain Western states' antagonistic responses to asylum seekers and irregular migration, these include stranger fetishism (Hughes 2007, 144), common sense racism (Kundnani 2001; Pickering 2001; Webber 2012), xeno-racism (Fekete 2001; Sivanandan 2002), fear (Wimmer 1997; Fekete 2009) and moral panic (Cohen 2002, viii–xxi; Orr and Ajzenstadt 2020). Leanne Weber explains how asylum seekers pose a particular threat to the national order, as their claims for refugee status and permanency 'frustrate state attempts to assert the primacy of their domestic immigration policies' (Weber 2002, 12), Lisa Malkki has similarly noted the challenges refugees pose to the 'national order of things' (Malkki 1995, 5). Claims for prolonged stays and state support are what Francesco Vecchio argues makes asylum seekers a 'least welcomed group by wealthy societies', due to their perceived demands on national welfare systems (Bloch and Schuster 2002; Vecchio 2015, 2).

Whether because they appear to threaten national sovereignty, immigration laws, or welfare systems, asylum seekers are increasingly constructed as bogus applicants, cheating, or abusing state

systems (Bohmer and Shuman 2008; Squire 2009, 3–4). On top of their perceived drain on receiving societies, asylum seekers are also unwanted due to their countries of origin that are considered less developed, threatening, or problematic. Of Europe, the UK and Australia, Hughes claims the asylum seeker or refugee 'remains represented in dominant discourses as the stranger coded as the dangerous and polluting 'outsider' in the eyes of the established 'host' community… the vilified 'other' and threat to order, safety and 'civilisation' as 'we' have known it' (Hughes 2007, 144). Such representations of asylum seekers in the Global North not only call for their exclusion, but also relegate them to a lower place on a scale of relative development, due to their origins in the Global South.

Focusing on heightened exclusion of migrants from the global South brings to light the racialised differential treatment between migrant groups. Gurminder Bhambra reminds us to notice continued impacts of historical colonial narratives and 'relations of hierarchy, domination and the inclusions and exclusions that they create' (Bhambra 2014b, 472–473). Others have similarly highlighted how colonial constructions of race remain relevant to our times (Back, Sinha, and Bryan 2012, 140), and have emerged as increasingly visible in the exclusion of non-citizens and foreign nationals from the Global South. In line with these understandings, present day criminalisation and penalisation of asylum seekers and migrants has been explored through postcolonial perspectives (Mayblin 2017; Agozino 2004; Cunneen 2011; Bosworth and Flavin 2007). Lucy Mayblin explains that:

> *[T]he process whereby asylum seekers came to be marked as different in line with a narrative of unwanted, alien, 'others' from the 'underdeveloped, non-modern world' is one which is very specifically informed by histories of 'race' science but endures today because of the continued logics of coloniality (Mayblin 2017, 37).*

Migration control, bordering, and the exclusion of others thus emerge as central to the politics of belonging and maintenance of a desired social order (Van Houtum, Kramsch, and Zierhofer 2005,

3; Anderson and Hughes 2015; Yuval-Davis, Wemyss, and Cassidy 2018, 229–31; Franko 2020), according to racialised hierarchies that rank immigration status across nations and cities (Back, Sinha, and Bryan 2012, 143). Practices of 'everyday bordering' assert belonging at the physical border, as well as within states among their residents, through 'controlling diversity and constructing hierarchies of exclusion and exploitation as well as managing discourses on diversity in the population' (Yuval-Davis, Wemyss, and Cassidy 2019, 6). Lipsitz explains that social relations take on their full force and meaning when they are enacted physically in places, deducing that 'relations between races are relations between places' (Lipsitz 2011, 5–6). I draw on this co-constitutive framing by exploring how migrant groups are repeatedly racialised in settler societies, before delving into the ethnonational iteration of race and place hierarchies in Israel. Elucidating connections between race and place will provide a steppingstone to understanding the spatial exclusion of the racialised groups studied in the chapters that follow.

Race, Place, and Migration in Postcolonial Societies

The two important socio-historical contexts for this case study are Israel's settler society origins, and ethnonational character. These are explored in turn and in relation to dynamics of race and place. Politics of race and place are particularly significant in settler societies, where the European origins and associated superiority of founders provided the foundation for state and class structures (Evri and Kotef 2020, 2). Earlier settler groups were attributed both a valued pioneering group status of a charter group, and a proximity to Europe through replication of European laws, governance, social codes and styles. Racial narratives thus underscored settlement efforts, distribution of resources, political rights, labour market possibilities. As Catheryn Dauvergne describes:

> *Settler societies were not simply colonized; they were populated by Europeans. So complete were these acts of population that the societies came to regard themselves as somehow European. For the settler society, immigration was a nation-building imperative (Dauvergne 2016, 11).*

Non-Western cultures and appearances highlight a valued white Europeanism. In this way immigration hierarchies became racial hierarchies. Later migrants, or those from diverse origins, are afforded the less valued category of 'immigrants' in the settler hierarchy, have less access to state institutions and resources, and are thus relegated to the margins of the national body as what Lorenzo Veracini described as 'abject others' (Veracini 2010).

Newcomer settlers, received as migrants, might overcome their marginalisation by adopting the national identity, privileged styles and ideologies (Sasson-Levy and Shoshana 2014), or through the presence of later migrants, or where the indigenous population is placed below them on scales of development or deservedness. The contrast with each arriving group serves to re-affirm the settled status of the founding groups. As mentioned above, newcomers' 'new-ness' highlights oldcomers 'established-ness.' Most relevant to this thesis is the translation of racial narratives to spatial dynamics. As Evri and Kotef explained 'the relation to territory-to location and movement, the distinction between those who were here before and those who were not – is the empirical fact alongside which all other differentiations (racial, cultural, class, econmic) are constructed' (Evri and Kotef 2020, 3–4).

Razack has demonstrated such processes in Canada in a volume that traces the dynamics of race and place throughout Canadian history of settlement and migration (Razack 2002). Razack traces various stages in which European settlers asserted spatial control and entitlement to settled land, from pioneering efforts of initial conquest, through physical labour, violent struggle, and immigration reception policies (Razack 2002, 4). She makes evident the persistent identification of settler societies with Europe long after their arrival, the continued importance of land and place, and the sustained use of race in the control of land. As noted by Razack, and later reiterated by Laura Madakoro, racialised categories change in relation to the dominant colonising force or culture. Migrants, including refugees, who joined settler colonial states may have been initially

socially excluded, but with time they participated in the 'perpetuation of the dispossession and displacement of Indigenous peoples' (Madokoro 2019, 5). These dynamics have been explored in the Israeli context through Kotef and Evri's investigation of 'when a native becomes a settler' by focusing on ways that Jews of Arab origins were assimilated into a desired Europeanised version of the new state (Evri and Kotef 2020).

The applicability of a settler colonial framework to analysing Israel has long been debated (Veracini 2006; Zreik 2016; Peled 2017), and its use in this thesis does not imply that Israel is a paradigmatic settler society, fitting with all aspects of the approach. Diversity characterises all colonial situations (Stoler 2006), and many complexities are involved in delineating postcolonial effects (Shohat 1992). However, a focus on the racial aspects of ideological, cultural, and political sentiments that accompanied Jewish settlement in Palestine is appropriate and useful to describe the unequal structures that developed in the state (Abdo and Yuval-Davis 1995; Shohat, Mcclintock, and Mufti 1997; Shenhav 2006).

Sandy Kedar describes the Zionist settler movement as characterised by three major ethno-classes that frequently emerge in settler societies: founders, immigrants, and indigenous (Kedar 2003, 412–14; Kimmerling 2004). Each group is endowed with associated symbolic value, rights, and privileges that gradually diminish between the European 'pioneering' group and its ethnic outliers. In the Israeli case, this hierarchical structure was populated by *Ashkenazim* (founders) who developed claims to the land through Jewish Labour, agricultural labour, and defence of the new

homeland, affording them the title of a 'charter' or 'founder' group. *Mizrahim* (immigrants), and Palestinians (indigenous).[42]

Mizrahim were part of the Jewish ethnos, and welcomed as Jewish migrants or refugees, yet their contribution was viewed by the establishment as quantitative rather than qualitative. Their large numbers contributed to demographic and military control of the land, but their non-Western identities were viewed as less valued forms of citizenry, and Jewish identity (Smooha 2004, 42–43; Shafir and Peled 1998, 415; Rosenhek 2011, 68). Eurocentric ideologies that undergirded this racial order were entwined with ethnonational ones.

ETHNONATIONALISM, POSTCOLONIALISM, RACE, AND PLACE

Israel was founded upon an 'ingathering of exiles' narrative and yet its society remains fragmented into many different sub-groups, identities and cultures. National, ethnic, religious, economic and ideological cleavages are salient and have been long discussed in academic and public debates (Lissak 2000; Raz-Krakotzkin 2002; Schnell and Benjamini 2004b, 447; Smooha 2004; Ram 2019). Israel's ethnonational ideology and migration policy attracted Jews from all over the world, but the reception of Jewish migrants' in the country has been uneven. Ethnic differences within the Jewish collective developed into racial formations that bred structural racism, evidenced by entrenched discrimination or inequality between groups (Shenhav and Yona 2008; Konrad 2015).

Most important for this thesis is the 'ethnic cleavage', predominantly denoting *Ashkenzi-Mizrahi* group conflict. Early *Ashkenazi*-dominated government and state institutions treated each later migrant groups differently. Rosenhek describes how they 'led to the institutionalisation of a

[42] These categories have been popularly used in studies of Israel's settlement process, yet it is important to note the fluidity of these concepts in relation to each other and time. For an illuminating discussion of this see Kotef and Evri who problematise the settler/native binary by showing how a group of people can inhabit both positions.

welfare state segmented along ethnonational lines. Veteran Jews (of Ashkenazi origin), new immigrants (particularly Mizrachi Jews), and Palestinian citizens' (Rosenhek 2011, 67). Inequality was also evident in stigmatised group constructions, alongside uneven resource distribution, uneven integration into labour movements and public service, and other diverging policies of migrant absorption (Shapira 1984; Grinberg 1993; Segev 1998; Yona and Saporta 2002; Smooha 2004; Chetrit 2004, 61–71).

Early accounts of Israeli sociology analysed the new state structures through institutional paradigms that considered early settlers from Russia, Poland, Western Europe and English speaking states as a cultural elite, pioneers of the Zionist vision, and fit for ideological leadership. Their *Mizrahi* counterparts were viewed as non-ideological migrants, lacking culture, and more naturally suited for physical and menial labour (Eisenstadt 1978; Lissak 1999; Helman and Watzman 2010, 139). These perceptions led to the uneven privileging of *Ashkenazi* Jews who founded and filled the state's bureaucratic apparatuses and institutions. In contrast, *Mizrahi* identities were scorned due to their proximity to the Islamic world, perceived inferiority to European culture, and incompatibility with a modern Western state vision, which resulted in socio-economic marginalisation. These views and processes have been explored at length by critical Israeli sociologists, particularly those of *Mizrahi* descent (Shohat 2001, 141; Shenhav, Hever, and Motzafi-Haller 2002; Khazzoom 2003; Smooha 2004; Shimoni 2006).

Later Israeli sociology responded by developing critical approaches such as class analysis (Swirski 1981b; 1981a; Peled 1990; Gutwein 2000), postcolonialism (Shohat 1999; Kimmerling 2004; Shenhav 2006; Chetrit 2010) and critical citizenship studies (Shafir and Peled 2002; Rosenhek 2011). I too adopt such approaches as they elucidate connections between political power, ethnicity, and class by tracing structural inequalities in state formation and operation over time. They help us to understand differential settlement, resource distribution, and resulting social

stratification of citizens throughout the country and particularly in Tel Aviv. I add to these accounts by considering where non-citizens fit, and how they relate to citizen stratification, through the perspective of racialised differentiation.

Critical explorations of Israeli society through the study of citizenship rights protections and distributions undertaken by Peled and Shafir examine forms of differential incorporation in the *yishuv* (pre-establishment, para-state institutions) to expose how stratified citizenship became entrenched (Shafir and Peled 1998; 2002); and Zeev Rosenhek who identifies similar trends through segmentation of the welfare state (Rosenhek 2011). They trace how different citizenship discourses, enacted through state laws, institutions and resource distribution, separated citizens from non-citizens (Jews from Palestinians) and, likewise, *Ashkenazi* from *Mizrahi* Jews:

> *[T]he tension between the exclusionary and inclusionary categories of membership in the yishuv and in Israeli society has been expressed in a hierarchical and fragmented citizenship structure. The state and related institutions (most importantly the Histadrut [worker's union]) have been mobilizing societal resources and dispensing rights, duties and privileges, in accordance with this multi-layered and complex index of memberships (Shafir and Peled 1998, 417).*

The nation-building process was infused with hierarchical politics of belonging, based on ethnonational and republican virtues (Shafir and Peled 2002, chap. 2). Valued virtues elevated Jewish citizenry, and were underpinned by Orientalist worldviews, as a Westernised and European Israel was contrasted with an 'Oriental' Middle East (Swirski 1989; Shohat and Stam 1994; Massad 1996; Piterberg 1996; Khazzoom 2003; Raz-Krakotzkin 2005, 165; 2017; Chetrit 2010, 17). Edward Said developed a multi-faceted account of Orientalism that explains it as a co-constitutive oppositional image to European civilisation and culture; a style of thought based on a distinction between 'the Orient' and 'the Occident'; and a Western style of domination through institutionalized control of the Orient (Said 1978, 10–11). These three facets take shape in Israeli politics of settlement and nation building – externally toward Palestinian and Arabs, or internally toward *Mizrahi* citizens (Shohat 1988; 1992, 105). These perceptions are important in

understanding the relegation of *Mizrahi* Jews to peripheral spaces, and the co-constitutive effect of settlement patterns on racial formations and group trajectories (Shenhav 2006, 34; Tzfadia and Yacobi 2011; Rosenhek 2011, 68–71).

In Israel, Oren Yiftachel described a process of racialisation of place, both within the Jewish collective and across national and urban geographies, in what he terms the 'Judaisation of land' (Yiftachel 1999) toward establishing an ethnocracy (Yiftachel 2006). Sandy Kedar builds on Yiftachel's approach through legal geography to analyse the politics of space in Israel, by exploring how 'law contributes to the social production of space, [and] what is the role of law in constructing, organizing and legitimating social spatiality' (Kedar 2003, 407). He demonstrates how marginalisation is constructed politically, economically, socially, and spatially, but enacted legally. In his analysis, Kedar brings together Israel's ethnonational and settler society contexts. While most of his work is devoted to examining the impact of these processes on Palestinians, it is also applicable when examining *Mizrahi* and asylum seeker spatial exclusion.

Spatial segregation in Israel was facilitated through stratified membership, reinforced by state institutions and resource distribution that produced lasting racial inequalities, as:

> *[D]ifferences in housing resources have had important and long- standing stratificatory effects, and their impact is still felt today in the socio- economic hierarchy between Ashkenazi and Mizrachi Jews. The gaps in the economic and social value of the housing impacted on both populations' life chances in other spheres, such as employment opportunities and access to social services (Rosenhek 2011, 69).*

As suggested above, racial hierarchies were present throughout the establishment of Israel. Racial distinction and hierarchy remains visible in the spatial segregation and unequal treatment of *Mizrahi* Jews, separation from Palestinians, and in the country's attitude toward Africans.[43] State policies

[43] The relationship between Zionist leadership and the African continent predates the founding of the state. Its role in shaping Israeli perceptions on Africa and its inhabitants cannot be overstated but will not be covered in this thesis

regarding these populations were often informed by Orientalist and colonial discourses, and are still applied to these populations and the places they inhabit (Segev 1998; Chetrit 2004, 49–51; Yona 2005, chap. 5; Bar Yosef 2013).

The literature on ethnic cleavages in Israel recounted above largely focuses on a conflictual social relations along the *Ashkenazi-Mizrahi* distinction (Khazzoom 2003, 481–82), and on the backdrop of relations with Palestinians. However, it is important to note that neither *Mizrahi* nor *Ashkenazi* are homogenous categories, and that later Jewish migrant groups such as those arriving from the Former Soviet Union in the 1990s and from Ethiopia since the 1980s', suffer from inequality and discrimination by state institutions, and from migrant groups from who came before them. Though South Tel Aviv neighbourhood of Neve Shaanan, which is the focus of this thesis, is mostly populated by *Mizrahi* Jews, any discussion of relational racialised differentiation among citizens must also include citizens of African descent. Israeli Ethiopians have been subjected to heightened institutional discrimination in housing, employment and education (Swirski and Swirski 2002; Salamon 2003; Walsh and Tuval-Mashiach 2012); public stigmatisation and criminalisation (Girma 2005; Mola 2018; Anteby-Yemini 2010; Mengistu and Avraham 2015; Schwarzwald and Tur-Kaspa 1997); and subsequent socio-economic exclusion. Discrimination and state failures to incorporate this population have been acknowledged by the state (Israel State Comptroller 2012). Fast and Guetzkow compare Ethiopian citizen's standing to that of Palestinian citizens, explaining that the two groups: 'are very similar on a range of socioeconomic indicators… [marginalised] by very different symbolic boundaries: national belonging in the case of Arab Palestinian citizens and ethnoracial inferiority or 'backwardness' in the case of Ethiopians' (Guetzkow and Fast 2016, 156).

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due to limited space. It is comprehensively surveyed in Eitan Bar Yosef's work *A Villa in the Jungle* on Israeli involvement in Africa, and Africa in Israeli culture (Bar Yosef 2013); and Haim Yacobi's book *This is No Africa* (Yacobi 2015), mentioned above.

The relegation of Ethiopian Jews to an inferior position compared to their Mizrahi counterparts, but a higher position than Palestinians, fits in the relational scale of postcolonial ordering. The role of such categorisations and how they took hold in Israel is elucidated in Haim Yacobi and Eitan Bar Yosef's commentaries on the meaning and imagination of Africa in Israeli culture and psyche (Bar Yosef 2013; Yacobi 2015). Both followed various processes by which Africa became embedded in Israeli culture as a place, an idea, and a geopolitical imaginary that generates territorial and cultural boundaries. According to Bar Yosef, representations of Africans in Israeli culture are used to 'say something about ourselves, our whiteness, our racial cleavages, and our national fantasies' (Bar Yosef 2013, 22 author's translation). Yacobi describes how ideas of Africa underpinned a contrasting definition of an Israeli national identity as modern, Western, and white. Such distinctions provided a tool for constructing symbolic boundaries, group borders, and a graded order of inclusion and exclusion that stretch from whiteness to blackness, and feeds social and spatial racialised identities within Israel (Yacobi 2015, 12). These distinctions are important to understand the positioning of Ethiopian Jewish citizens within the inclusionary order, as well as the placement of non-Jewish migrants from Africa at the edge of exclusion. The spatial manifestations of racialised differentiation are highly visible in cities across Israel, where Ethiopian neighbourhoods are infamously neglected and impoverished. I turn to examine how such socio-spatial dynamics unfolded in the city of Tel Aviv.

RACIALISED DIFFERENTIATIONS IN TEL AVIV

In this section I zoom in on how racialised differentiation took hold in Tel Aviv, through a focus on the differential inclusion its Jewish residents in the Neve Shaanan neighbourhood. Differential inclusion is illuminated by juxtaposing literature on Tel Aviv's symbolic significance as a global modern city and its importance in Jewish history, against the material marginalisation of its Southern neighbourhoods along ethno-class lines. Tel Aviv is one of Israel's largest cities and a

site where many of the nation's social and political conflicts occur. Recognising differential, racialised inclusion of Jewish citizens further establishes the bedrock for my contention that differential racial hierarchies operate in the Israeli state, before I go on to explore how African asylum seekers fit into these hierarchies.

While Du Bois directed our attention to the 'colour line' over a century ago (Du Bois 1903, 1), and while I identify a differentiating 'colour scale' that operates in the complex terrain of Israeli society today, his work nonetheless remains relevant thanks to its emphasis on the centrality of racialisation to society's operation, and its research approach. A Du Boisian sociological approach is one that employs contextualisation, relationality, historicity, and privileges subaltern standpoint in theorising racial dynamics (Itzigsohn and Brown 2020, 197–206). It is also important to note here the reason to employ Du Bois's analysis beyond that of the Chicago School, particularly given the popularity of Chicago School's studies on race in cities, most notably Robert Park's articulation of the 'race relation cycle' (Park 1950, pt. II). I favour Du Bois's work because Park's developments on race relations were framed as apolitical, aimed to produce generalisable concepts and models of universal applicability, leading some to describe it as deflecting 'sociological attention away from systemic racism and racial oppression' (Tate and Back 2015, 2).

By contrast to theories developed in Chicago, Du Bois's approach was geared toward in-depth analyses of racialised community lives rooted in specific contexts, through the use of mixed-methods, and a focus on power structures that produce them (Itzigsohn and Brown 2020, 189). I view racialisation and differential inclusion or exclusion of racialised groups as systemic political problems (Goldberg 2002; Spickard 2004; Skinner 2007). I utilise Du Bois's approach to better understand dynamics of racial social ordering (Omi and Winant 2008, 1566) in Tel Aviv.

SYMBOLIC SIGNIFICANCE OF TEL AVIV IN THE HISTORY OF THE STATE

Tel Aviv is Israel's global city, commonly considered as the epitome of modern, pioneering, Jewish national enterprise. The city, and its surrounding metropolitan area, has been home to a majority of the country's population since its earliest days (Bar-Gal 2011, 71). At the turn of the century, nearly 3 million residents, 44% of Israel's population, lived in the Tel Aviv metropolis (Choshen and Hasson 2003, 12) and it has continued to grow. Tel Aviv also holds unique historical and ideological significance in the story of the Jewish people and statehood, as the first Jewish city established following two millennia of diasporic existence outside the ancestral homeland (Harpaz 2013). It has been described as having the 'mission of being a Jewish city' (Schlör 1999, 101), becoming the 'the paradigmatic Israeli city' (Mann 2006, xi–xii), or Israel's global city, where Jewish, independent enterprise developed and concentrated over time (Troen 2011, xi).

The name Tel Aviv (Hebrew for a 'hill of spring') is the translated title of Theodor Herzl's novel, *Altneuland* (German for 'Old New Country'), about a utopian vision for a future state of Israel published in Germany in 1902. The novel included imaginations of Tel Aviv – a new, liberal, Jewish, European city in Palestine, featuring cafes, theatres, a symphony, and other bourgeois institutions appealing to European Jewish migrants in the early 20th century (Azaryahu and Troen 2011). According to Troen, such European trends were accompanied by the European ideology of modern capitalism, characterised by industrial and commercial development. These ideologies were personified in the city's first mayor, Meir Dizengoff, who moved to Palestine from Odessa to manufacture bottles for the wine-growing venture of Baron de Rothschild, an affluent banker who funded much of the Jewish settlement from France. Following pogroms in Eastern Europe at the end of the 19th century, the Rothchild family supported increased Jewish migration to Palestine, procured and developed land and industry. They and others lobbied the British Mandate government, efforts resulted in the Balfour Declaration (1917) that set the ground for the

foundation of the State. Troen describes the first mayor of Tel Aviv as a businessman and visionary who:

> *[I]magined Tel Aviv in the context of the commercial and industrial cities that were springing up across the western world... Rather than imagining European Jews as peasants working on the semi-arid Palestinian countryside, he envisioned an urban society rooted in modern capitalism (Troen 2011, xiv).*

Yoram Bar-Gal surveyed representations of Tel Aviv in geography books since its early days, to reveal how the city's symbolic meaning was reflected in teachings of its geography. Bar-Gal cites an early description of 'a European oasis in the Asian desert' (Moshe Tzusmer quoted in Bar-Gal, 2011, p. 63), consistent with the view of Tel Aviv as a European city surrounded by the Orient. Specific aspects of the city were highlighted and praised from its early years – a modern, industrial, developed European culture and economy, alongside its Jewish independence and self-rule, marking it out as what Bar-Gal calls 'the jewel in the Zionist crown' (Bar-Gal 2011, 66).

Maoz Azaryahu argues that a mythology of Tel Aviv was developed in juxtaposition to its Middle Eastern surroundings. He uses the term 'mythic city':

> *[A]n ideational construct that is constituted and shared in the sphere of public discourse and cultural signification... The mythic city consists of culturally shared notions about the city's essential character or constitutive idea. In this sense, it directs the way people think about and make sense of the city (Azaryahu 2007, 4–5).*

He explains that Tel Aviv grew in a specific space between its neighbouring 'Oriental Jaffa', on the one hand, and its roots in Jewish Europe on the other. These spatial dynamics and accompanying 'myths' impacted the way residents of the city perceived themselves and their neighbours. The images described above, and the narrative of the city resonate with settler colonial narratives of European distinction and progress. I argue that racial distinction encompasses both people and place in South Tel Aviv, and will inform the discussion of Jewish residents' experiences in chapter four.

Tel Aviv's various 'names' signal its significance to national political discourse: 'The First Hebrew City' frames Tel Aviv as a beacon of Jewish national revival in the ancestral homeland (Schlör 1999). 'The Nonstop City' is a marketing slogan officially adopted to promote Tel Aviv in the 1990s signals a modern, dynamic city, a hedonistic and secular culture, and liberated nightlife (Tel Aviv Municipality, 2015). 'The White City' was a title bestowed on Tel Aviv in 2003 when designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in recognition of its Bauhaus architecture (originating from Germany), described as a 'Modern movement in a new cultural context' (UNESCO 2003), or a 'Cosmos built on Sand' (Boness and Hueck 2014, 6). These various names portray a city that was constructed in the spirit of European and Western capitalism and culture.

Oppositional descriptions of a modern and European Tel Aviv and its Middle Eastern environment invoke Orientalist imagery and attitudes toward the surrounding region and its inhabitants. Rotbard explains how Tel Aviv's architectural history 'can be seen as a part of a wider process in which the physical shaping of Tel Aviv and its political and cultural construction are intertwined, and play a decisive role in the construction of the case, the alibi and the apologetics of the Jewish settlement across the country' (Rotbard 2015, 2). Contrasts were drawn not only between *Ashkenazi* Zionist settlers and their Palestinian or Arab neighbours, but also toward the settlers' *Mizrahi* counterparts (Segev 1998; Shohat 1999; Shenhav 2006, 67–72). Smooha explains that though Zionist society followed an assimilationist model of a 'Jewish melting pot', asymmetry between ethnically distinct earlier and later settlers played out politically, socially, economically, and spatially. Ethno-class division and inequalities were reproduced through colonial worldviews, as the *Ashkenazi* charter group saw the *Mizrahim* as:

> *[T]he mirror opposite of themselves and what the new society should be: Mizrahim represented the most despised Arab or Levantine backwardness… As Europeans, Ashkenazim saw Jews from Moslem lands as Arabized Jews infected with inherent mental inferiority and underdevelopment (Smooha 2004, 53).*

Mizrahi attributes were also the mirror opposites of those promoted in the ideal of Tel Aviv as a city characterised by modernity, sophisticated Western culture, aesthetics and order (Hirsch 2009). Tel Aviv became symbolic of the hegemonic Western-oriented Zionist culture that settled and planned the state (Shavit and Biger 2006). Western ideals came to dominate Israeli society over time as qualifiers for integration and upward mobility, while Eastern origins within the Jewish collective were diminished.[44]

Although Tel Aviv city was modelled after European and American metropoles, its many residents hailed from diverse backgrounds (Helman and Watzman 2010, chap. 5). Azaryahu explains that, from its earliest days, the Jewish population in the city was diverse, with inhabitants differing in 'origin, class, language and culture, family structure, accommodation, and living conditions' (Azaryahu 2007, 4). The starkest difference can be observed between the city's North and South boroughs. As in many other metropoles around the world, polarity and separation between affluent and poor populations develop over time. Distinct populations settle in different parts of cities that reflect residents' social capital and economic standing, and these are reflected in the cost of housing, quality of education facilities, availability of public spaces, functionality of infrastructures and access to institutions (Lipsitz 2011; Nightingale 2012).

In Tel Aviv, Southern neighbourhoods became home to impoverished *Mizrahi* residents, or those who migrated more recently; while Central and Northern neighbourhoods remained predominantly inhabited by *Ashkenazi* Jews (Choshen and Hasson 2003, 13; Marom 2014a). I turn

[44] Diminishing of Mizrahi ethnic importance or group pride coincided with the denigration of non-Ashkenazi ethnic groups since the 1950s (Swirski 1981b; Shohat 1989; Smooha 2004, 61–62; Raz-Krakotzkin 2017). Mizrahi scholars, artists and activists have made tremendous strides to reintroduce Mizrahi perspectives, knowledge, traditions and art forms into mainstream Israeli culture and highlight historical institutional silencing (Shenhav and Yona 2008; Chetrit 2010; Bitton 1976; Hever 2012; Keissar 2016; Motzafi-Haller, Hever, and Shenhav 2002; Abootbool, Motzafi-Haller, and Grinberg 2005).

to sketch the historical disenfranchisement of South Tel Aviv, focusing on Neve Shaanan, and argue that unequal urban geopolitics must be read through intra-Jewish racial differentiation.

MATERIAL MARGINALISATION OF SOUTH TEL AVIV IN THE HISTORY OF THE CITY

The southern-most borough of Tel Aviv consists of five neighbourhoods that border Holon city to the south, and Jaffa to the west. According to Tel Aviv Municipality data (last published on the website in 2014), homes in this borough are the smallest in the city, space per dweller is below the city average, and the number of residents who own their homes is around half of the city average (Tel Aviv Municipality, 2014). The borough's architecture is a sharp contrast to the city's northern and central areas, which were constructed earlier to house *Ashkenazi* settlers and were initially designed by Scottish colonial town planner, Patrick Geddes (Welter 2009; Rubin 2011), followed by later modernist planners (Marom 2009, 94–139). While plans for the city's north considered the importance of green and public spaces, environmental quality, alongside strategic growth; settlement in the Southern boroughs was unplanned, overcrowded, and poorly built (Marom 2009, 58-71. 176-246).

Neve Shaanan neighbourhood was founded in the early 1920s by an organised collective of largely homeless Jews. Half were displaced by riots in Palestinian Jaffa, the other half were newly arrived immigrants, hailing from different ethnic backgrounds, mostly of Yemenite descent. They established a 'collaborative corporation' to purchase land (Rotbard 2015, 69–70). The association chose a plan for the neighbourhood, to be constructed in the shape of a seven-branched Menorah (candelabrum, Figure 9), an ancient symbol of Jewish history (Ravid 2008).



Figure 9. Yosef Tishler's Candelabrum design for Neve Shaanan
(Photo Credit: B Ravid, TLV100)



Figure 10. Map of Neve Shaanan featuring the half-constructed candelabrum
(Photo Credit: Tel Aviv Municipality, 2006)

The plan, inspired by ideologies of Jewish renewal, was never fully realised due to insufficient funds and lack of municipal support. Only half of the planned candelabrum was constructed, and the Tel Aviv Central bus station was built in place of the unrealised half (Figure 10).

Tali Hatuka traces Tel Aviv's development through changes in its architecture and devotes a chapter to southern neighbourhoods in her book (2010). Hatuka sees urban architecture and planning (or lack thereof) as reflections of power relations, prioritisation or marginalisation. She argues that increased inequality can be identified in the inadequate development of Neve Shaanan from its earliest years. Hatuka describes a conflict-ridden area, only partially annexed to Tel Aviv in 1927 (until the conquest of Jaffa in the 1948 war) (Hatuka 2010, chap. 4). Similar evidence of institutional neglect emerged from Deborah Bernstein's historical work in the city archive. She brings forth records that indicate haphazard development throughout South Tel Aviv, at the 'periphery of Tel Aviv in terms of their facilities, infrastructure, urban planning, the mixed nature of their housing, living conditions, and composition of their inhabitants' (Bernstein 2011, 127).

Bernstein presents letters of complaint from resident committees of various Southern neighbourhoods in their early years, that report of overcrowding, unpaved roads, inadequate drainage or sewage systems, that subsequently caused damage to property, personal injuries,

disease, along with unsanitary and unhygienic conditions. She describes the neighbourhood in stark contrast to the rest of the city as,

> *[M]uch more crowded... [the] labour force was predominantly blue collar, with many merchants, peddlers, and some unemployed… [with a] higher proportion of teenagers, both boys and girls, who were employed as laborers and domestic cleaners than could be found in the neighbourhoods of Tel Aviv proper. The living conditions were far poorer than to the north, as was the infrastructure (Bernstein 2011, 132).*

What emerges from these accounts is that South Tel Aviv was regarded from its earliest days as a marginal part of the city, deprived of investments reserved for other areas and populations. Research by the Institute for Structural Reform suggests that this historical marginalisation has continued over time to maintain inequality and separation (Institute for Structural Reforms 2013).

In the late 1920s, Neve Shaanan neighbourhood association was dismantled by the municipality and the area became heavily policed, as it was considered to be a volatile space with pervasive criminality related to its *Mizrahi* population (Hatuka 2010, 131). Tammi Razi's examination of neglected children in Tel Aviv, while still a city in Mandatory Palestine, shows how institutional perceptions of *Mizrahi* Jews' cultural and social inferiority contributed to their criminalisation by para-state institutions and discourse (Razi 2009). Neglect and criminality became inextricably associated with *Mizrahi* identity, and with South Tel Aviv, viewed through an Orientalist lens by the *Ashkenazi* establishment.

The disparity in material development of the two parts of Tel Aviv was so stark, that it has been titled a 'Tale of Two Cities' (Helman and Watzman 2010, 141). Nathan Marom similarly describes '100 years of segregation', as he traces the development of Tel Aviv as a 'purposeful act of spatial distinction' (Marom 2014a, 1348). According to Marom, ethno-class distinctions across the city solidified to form boundaries between its groups, corresponding to social hierarchies. *Ashkenazi* settlers aspired to superior European models of modern urban development in public spaces, sanitation, architecture and more. Such design was meant to improve material conditions

but also symbolically distinguish the first Hebrew city from Jaffa, its Ottoman neighbour. He writes:

> *…spatial distinction emerged just as much in response to the objective (and rather dismal) living conditions in Jaffa at the time — as perceived from a particular 'European' point of view (Europe's 'civilized cities') of a Jewish upper-middle class ('people of distinction') — i.e. from a privileged position in social space. Orientalist perceptions evidently shaded the decision of Tel Aviv's founders to segregate from Jaffa; yet it was a more complex calculus of 'poorieantalism' that distinguished not only between a backward 'East' (Jaffa) and a modern 'West' (Tel Aviv), but also related objective differences in urban space to a social class hierarchy cutting across ethnic categories (Marom 2014a, 1349).*

Spatial exclusivity coalesced around relational social categories, forming contrasting segregated residential patterns along Jewish ethno-class lines, and the Arab periphery (Mann 2006, chap. 5; Marom 2014a, 1354). Tel Aviv thus emerges as a microcosm of national ethnonational and postcolonial socio-spatial relations.

Disenfranchisement persisted as the city developed. In the 1940s, Neve Shaanan was transformed by the construction of a Central Bus Station, and Building Plan F, which allowed construction of four-story buildings in which the bottom two floors were reserved for industrial and commercial activity and the upper floors were residential (Schnell 1999, 24). The operation of a major transport hub near mixed industrial and residential spaces bred conflicts between various stakeholders: businesses, residents, city council and private developers (Marom 2009, 235). These proved detrimental to quality of life, and still plague the area today.

Following a 1948 aerial attack by the Egyptian Airforce on the Central Bus Station, construction of a new terminal began in the 1960s. Works spanned three decades, as the station became one of the largest transportation hubs in the world. It was envisaged as 'A City under One Roof,' with an indoor shopping mall, cafes and restaurants (Neuman 2015). Despite its ambitious plans, the New Central Bus Station became a brutalist, maze-like, crime-ridden cement mass in the heart of the neighbourhood (Yacobi and Fenster 2005, 193–94; Institute for Structural Reforms

2013). Construction required eviction of nearby residents, as concrete bridges were erected to carry buses overhead (Figure 11). This marked the start of Jewish emigration from the neighbourhood, as the social fabric and surrounding area became overrun by construction, transportation and pollution (Hatuka 2010, 138–43).



Figure 11. Bridges to the Central Bus Station cut across the neighbourhood with noise and air pollution. (Photo Credit: M Ravid)

A second process that accelerated the departure of Jews from the area was the arrival of large numbers of non-Jewish migrants who settled in South Tel Aviv, making the area less attractive for Jewish residents who wanted a higher quality of life in more homogenous communities (Schnell 1999; Raijman and Kemp 2003). As discussed at length in chapter one, the 1980s saw the bifurcation of labour in Israel into two separate workforces - a national one, where Jewish citizens are legally employed and protected in diverse professions, and a secondary one characterized by frequent breach of labour laws, poor working conditions, lack of stability, dirty, dangerous, or difficult work (Rosenhek 2000b; 2003; Kemp and Raijman 2008). Migrants resided in poor urban

neighbourhoods, mainly in Neve Shaanan where deteriorated housing remained vacant following the flight of Jewish residents, and they could live among their communities. With time they would be joined by African asylum seekers (Schnell 2000; Yacobi 2011).

Many of Neve Shaanan's buildings were destroyed, abandoned, or neglected. Other spaces were used for industrial purposes – parking lots, bulk commercial storage, seedy entertainment, or leisure venues. Since many of the migrant residents were not officially registered as tenants, a significant discrepancy grew between the number of inhabitants and the resources allocated to the area, as they were contingent on the municipality records of tax-payers (Nathanson and Achdut 1999). Neve Shaanan became notorious for its 'physical and social deterioration, such as the area of the central bus station that draws migrant worker and refugee populations' (Tel Aviv Municipality Website, 2014 author's translation).

These earlier processes of settlement and neglect indicate political and social difficulties that shaped the area as it now stands. They are also telling of the process by which the area became segregated, racially and spatially, as the national ethnic divide intensified in a small urban centre. A stark contrast emerges between the symbolic significance of Tel Aviv in the nation's history, the development of its affluent northern neighbourhoods, and the material degradation of its southern neighbourhoods.

Differential Inclusion of Jewish Citizens in South Tel Aviv

The dramatic contrast between Tel Aviv's neighbourhoods described above paints a vivid picture of systemic racialised inequality that characterised Israel's development, and was highly concentrated in Tel Aviv. Jewish residents of the city are largely divided by socio-economic and ethno-social status in specific neighbourhoods, unofficially segregated between an affluent *Ashkenazi* North, and an impoverished *Mizrahi* South (Marom 2014a; Rotbard 2015, pt. 2; Cohen and Margalit 2015). Observing this divide shows how uneven rights and resource distribution

manifest spatially, produce distinct group and place trajectories, and align with existing accounts of stratified Israeli citizenship along ethnic lines (Lipsitz 2007, 12; Shafir and Peled 2002; Motzafi-Haller, Hever, and Shenhav 2002; Shenhav 2006; Rosenhek 2011).

While most existing accounts of stratified citizenship focus on ethno-class inequality, I choose to use the term racialisation to describe the power dynamics and subjugation involved in the treatment of *Mizrahi* Jews. Disparities in group treatment are not only indicative of ethnic difference or conflict, they demonstrate how one ethnic group was racialised by the State, based on its origins, and a chain of negative connotations attached to it (Bhambra 2016, 961; Shenhav, Hever, and Motzafi-Haller 2002). Inequalities also reveal how state power was wielded to provide more support for prioritised groups. Drawing on Du Bois's and Hall's work, I find geographical disparities visible in Tel Aviv to be contoured by race lines (Hall 1986, 23–25). The Europeanness and whiteness of Tel Aviv is asserted by distinguishing it from its neighbouring Oriental cities to its south (Cohen 2013), while the Ashkenazi upper class in its northern and central neighbourhoods are differentiated from their impoverished southern neighbours.

Differential Exclusion of African Asylum Seekers to Holot

I turn to consider where asylum seekers fit in the national and urban dynamics of race and place, and racialised differentiation. Chapter one explained that non-Jewish migrant groups are all formally excluded from belonging in Israel due to their non-Jewish otherness. However, varying levels of socio-economic exclusion, negative political discourse, heightened legal enforcement, and the extreme act of detention indicate that differential levels of exclusion are at play.

Most research on the exclusionary treatment of outgroups in Israel describes a relational scale of rights provisions, or discrimination, that stretches between Jewish citizens and Palestinian non-citizens and locates non-Jewish migrants somewhere in between. Adriana Kemp has traced the ways in which policies of labour migrant recruitment and control 'enacted the racialisation of

a new category of immigrants previously unknown in Israeli society: that of non-Jewish and non-Palestinian labour migrants, therefore adding a new stratum of disenfranchised people into an already complex and tension ridden society' (Kemp 2004, 269). Rebecca Raijman has focused on the different ways in which transnational labour markets intersect with Israel's '*de jure* ethno-racially hierarchical citizenship regime' (Raijman 2010, 89–90). She describes the hierarchical regime as constructed through uneven restrictive immigration policies (Raijman, Schmidt, and Semyonov 2003), exclusionary modes of governance (Raijman and Kemp 2003; Rosenhek 2000b) and hostile political and public sentiments (Raijman and Semyonov 2004b; Raijman 2012; Hercowitz-Amir, Raijman, and Davidov 2017) that re-enforce the outgroup distinction and positioning of non-Jewish migrants.

Sarah Willen has also traced the change in migrant worker's treatment over time, at first viewed as a benign cheap labour force, they were later constructed as a criminalised group through what she describes as a 'biopolitics of Otherness' and repeated deportation campaigns (Fassin 2001; Willen 2007a, 23). Willen develops a three-layered biopolitical structure to describe a racialised sociopolitical hierarchy in Israel that contrasts Jewish citizens with 'real' Others (Palestinians), and 'other' Others (non-citizen, non-Jewish migrants) (Willen 2010a). In this hierarchy, Palestinian citizens have been formally included, but remain highly excluded through interlocking systems of discrimination and criminalisation that have positioned them as a disadvantaged, unwanted underclass (Rouhana and Ghanem 1998; Rabinowitz and Abu-Baker 2005, 7; Sultany 2012; Erakat 2015). Willen points out that migrant workers were criminalised through the enforcement of policies previously reserved for Palestinians – racial profiling and threat of state violence through deportation. While these accounts and others rightfully record the discrimination and racialisation of treatment of non-Jewish migrants in the Jewish state through

relational hierarchical positioning of outgroups, they fail to account for the unequal treatment between diverse groups of non-Jewish non-citizen migrants.

African asylum seekers are the only migrant population that was collectively detained in Holot to fulfil the aim of excluding them from city centres, long after their arrival. Men were detained as 'infiltrators', under the Prevention of Infiltration Law. At the end of 2020, state data reports that a total number of 31,012 'infiltrators' resided in the country (Population and Immigration Authority 2020). As of summer 2019, asylum applications of 4,673 Sudanese and 10,647 Eritreans remained pending in Israel's Refugee Status Determination Unit (HCJ 2293/17 *Gersegeher v The Knesset et al* 2020, 27). These numbers indicate that more than half of the 'infiltrator' await asylum request processing and decision, and should therefore be afforded the legal status of asylum seekers. However, Eritreans and Sudanese are still the only migrant groups in Israel to be titled infiltrators, regulated by a 2(a)5 Conditional Release Visa which, alongside its securitising connotations, is temporary, and offers no access to social, welfare or health rights (Yaron Mesegna, Hashimshony-Yaffe, and Campbell 2013; Ziegler 2015a; Sadan, Rozen, and Guthmann 2018).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, at the end of 2020, 17,494 migrant workers resided in Israel without legal permits, and nearly 50,000 tourists unlawfully overstayed their visas (PIBA 2020). Higher numbers of visa overstayers and migrants without permits lived in the country in previous years, far exceeding the numbers of Sudanese and Eritreans (PIBA 2014; 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018). Yet Sudanese and Eritreans are the only migrant group managed under the Prevention of Infiltration Law, who were subject to spatial exclusion through long term administrative detention (now abolished) and who faced threats of deportation.

The 'tourist visa overstay problem' has long been debated in the Israeli parliament as this group had risen in number since 1992, including an all-time high of 139,000 people in 2001 (PIBA 2016; Natan 2019, 81). Between 2002–2004, 111,000 tourists from Eastern Europe entered the

state, and 22,500 (approximately 20%) overstayed their visa and remained unlawfully (Barda 2005). While visa overstayers have consistently been the largest group of foreigners without legal status, they are significantly underrepresented in the removed population in recent years (Natan 2015, 78–80). Some estimate it is more difficult to locate this group for removal as they have settled in numerous cities across the country and blend in with the local population (Natan 2019, 81).

In this dissertation, I use the framework of differential exclusion, as part of the wider analytical perspective of racialised differentiation, to build on the formulations cited above and fill in certain analytical gaps that they have not addressed. Processes of migrant racialisation (Kemp 2004, 270), exclusion along an ethno-racial hierarchy (Raijman 2010, 89–90), and racial profiling toward enactment of state force (Willen 2019, 130) indicate that exclusion is differentially rather than uniformly enacted. The racial objectification described above involves assigning suspect or threatening connotations and reduced moral worth to certain groups. Such processes have been similarly noted elsewhere concerning the racialised risks involved in racial profiling (Glaser 2015), reliance on colonial racial categories (Simpson 1996), and increased use in border and migration control (Weber and Bowling 2008; Ham, Segrave, and Pickering 2013).

Observing these processes in Israel through the perspective of racialised differentiation makes clear why African asylum seekers are hyper-excluded, relative to all other migrant populations in the country. Differential exclusion of African asylum seekers manifests legally and socially through their extreme criminalisation and rights-deprivations, and has been spatially enacted through their relegation to South Tel Aviv, and removal to Holot. Contextualised in the analysis of racial hierarchy and spatial exclusion provided above, detention of asylum seekers and their physical removal from city centres relegates them to the lowest end of the hierarchy of rights protections or deservedness, or, one might argue, even off the scale through persistent efforts to exclude them physically from the polity.

CONCLUSION – ETHNONATIONAL POSTCOLONIAL HIERARCHIES

In this chapter, I argued that if we are to understand the heightened exclusion of African asylum seekers, relative to all other migrant populations in the country, we must look at Israel's differential scales of rights, protections, and state regulation. Stratified inclusion was found to be evident in discriminatory privilege and resource distribution that breeds systemic socio-economic inequalities, and its corollary of spatial exclusion of some citizens.

In this chapter, I propose a theoretical perspective that identifies racial differentiation as intrinsic to the state, formed through specific sociohistorical processes that manifest spatially in diverse racisms between national and urban levels. I argue that the same hierarchical logics that underpin incorporation, also guide exclusion. The chapter locates racialised differentiation as a hierarchical classificatory system of differentiated groups, on either side of the Jewish-Citizen axis of formal membership. It identifies a diminution of privileges and state protections that correlates with a racialised scale of value or civic contribution. On one side of the ethnic-citizenship line, we find the differential inclusion of Israel's *Mizrahi* citizens, that manifests socio-politically in reduced privileges and entitlements, and is spatially evidenced in their marginalisation in South Tel Aviv. On the other side of the ethnic-citizenship line, we find the differential exclusion of African asylum seekers, that manifests legally and socially through their extreme criminalisation and rights-deprivations, and is spatially enacted through their detention in Holot. I argue that the poor treatment of both groups follows the same ethnonational and postcolonial racial organising logic.

Understanding how ethnonational and postcolonial priorities manifest socially and spatially, sets the foundation for analysis of empirical data derived from my research in South Tel Aviv and concerning detention in Holot in the chapters that follow. Approaches explored in this chapter challenge the commonly accepted binary distinctions – criminal-legal, citizen-foreigner, Jewish-non-Jewish, white-black – to produce a fuller explanation of the exclusion of asylum

seekers. They also help to answer questions of how the fates of African asylum seekers and South Tel Aviv residents became so entwined, so central to national politics of migration control, yet remain so marginalised in these subjects' everyday lives. Having introduced the framework of racialised differentiation, in the next chapter I turn to discuss my research methods and process, before delving in subsequent chapters into empirical data on the lived experiences of exclusion.

Chapter 3.

Research Methods, Sites and Ethics

In this chapter, I outline the methods and methodological challenges involved in the study of African asylum seekers' detention in Israel. I describe methodological choices regarding the research sample and ethnographic engagement with groups and surroundings where the study was based, as well as for interviews and data analysis. I also reflect on the challenges, limitations, and sensitivities of the work. As described in the preceding chapters, the study of asylum seekers' detention and exclusion from city centres involved the investigation of several perspectives: those of male asylum seekers from Sudan and Eritrea subjected to detention, and their Israeli neighbours in South Tel Aviv.[45]

This study relied on ethnographic research methods borrowed from the field of anthropology, a grounded approach to data collection and sociological analysis, and theories from criminology and related disciplines to evaluate the research findings on detention and social exclusion. Critical strands in all these disciplines emphasise the importance of a reflexive process that scrutinises researcher positionality, ethics, and emotions. I explore and navigate these complexities by adopting a feminist ethics of care.

The empirical research observed strict academic procedures of ethics and data protection to ensure participant safety. It also conformed with disciplinary guidelines of rigorous, methodical data collection and analysis that strives to produce non-biased, well-founded, and reproduceable knowledge about the issues studied. Of equal importance is the positioning of this research within traditions of critical social sciences that challenge positivist epistemological and ontological

[45] As explained in the previous chapters, according to the state, Israeli citizens in South Tel Aviv were the intended beneficiaries of detention policy.

conceptions of the social world, and approach such concepts as objectivity, representation, and facts with care. Ethnographic methods serve this aim as they rely on long-term, deep, and continued interaction with the sites and communities to produce situated, experience-based knowledge (Haraway 1988; Cerwonka and Malkki 2007, 163–65). Following Cerwonka and Malkki, ethnography is understood in this work as 'simultaneously a *critical theoretical practice*, a *quotidian ethical practice*, and an *improvisational practice'* (Cerwonka and Malkki 2008, 164 emphasis in the original). Data gathered through ethnographic research is therefore aimed at authentically reflecting participants' subjective, personal experiences to produce a comprehensive account detention's impact, rather than countable, factual data (Rubin and Rubin 2005, 3–4).

The core purpose of this study is to enhance our understanding of a complex social phenomenon and its wide-ranging implications. As Hannah Arendt observed: 'Understanding, as distinguished from having correct information and scientific knowledge, is a complicated process which never produces unequivocal results. It is an unending activity by which, in constant change and variation, we come to terms with and reconcile ourselves to reality, that is, try to be at home in the world' (Arendt 2005, 307–8). This chapter sets out how the research unfolded with the aim to further our understanding of racialised social exclusion.

RESEARCH METHODS, DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

LOCATING THE RESEARCH SAMPLE AND APPROACH

The research relied on ethnographic engagement with the everyday lives of groups affected by detention and exclusion policies across three sites: Holot Facility, the community,[46] and Neve Shaanan neighbourhood of South Tel Aviv. I used a mix of qualitative, ethnographic research

[46] This term describes a more diffuse site, as asylum seekers were ordered to dispersed in communities outside Tel Aviv after release from detention.

methods, whereby semi-structured interviews were complemented with participant observations to best represent participants' experiences across sites (Denzin 1997, 4–5; Falzon 2009, 7–9). I interviewed fourteen participants in each site. Observation was made up of a variety of research activities that included continued presence and note-taking in field sites, informal conversations with interlocutors in their daily environments, and 'hanging out' in and around researched communities (Roy 2016, 82; Rodgers 2014, 48). Observation and informal conversations are distinct from formal interviews. I therefore made distinct transitions between the two methods, for example, I would move location to avoid noises and interferences when an interview commenced, ensure participant comfort, re-establish consent, and then turn on the recorder. These steps clarified a shift in the interaction style and purpose. Even if, at times, it felt unnatural, it was helpful to mark a clear formality shift both for interviewees and interviewer.

Data-gathering took place across two years (2018–2020), though most of the data were collected during an intensive six-month period of fieldwork in the first half of 2018. In the first instance, participants were identified through activist networks with which I had previously connected in South Tel Aviv and Holot. At the end of each interview, I also asked participants if they knew of anyone else who might want to participate, and they would suggest their neighbours or friends. In this way, early interviews led to additional interviews with diverse members of participants' communities through snowball sampling (Given 2008; Russell 2006, chap. 6). This was important to ensure sample diversity. I also made the conscious decision not to interview anyone in public office or a representative role. This choice was guided by previous research I conducted with legal and political actors involved in the Prevention of Infiltration Law in 2015, who often provided party-line and political-messaging responses to interview questions. These past interviews made me more interested in the lived experiences of those subjected to, or impacted by, detention policies, rather than those who engage with these policies as professionals.

This participant sample was chosen for several reasons: firstly, I interviewed these two groups because of their antagonistic coupling in legal, political, and media discourse on migrant exclusion and detention. As discussed in the introduction, South Tel Aviv's Jewish residents and African asylum seekers are pitted against each other in media portrayals, political and legislative discourse around the Prevention of Infiltration Law, and are regarded as vying for competing interests. They are the two populations most directly and practically affected by, and mobilised in, the struggles surrounding migration control policies. I argue that their unmediated contact with policies and effects of exclusion, from 'opposing sides', makes them the most competent informants in the study of this topic (Holstein and Gubrium 1995, 19–21; Hill-Collins 1991, 257), and provides a robust basis on which to draw conclusions. The choice to speak with these two groups produced occasionally opposing views on detention's impact. Incongruities made for an increasingly intricate picture and pointed at directions for further exploration and explanation.

Secondly, although detention is the focal point of the project, a holistic understanding of detention's impact must trace not only life inside detention, but also the space left behind once detention is enforced, and examine how lives are impacted after detention is over. Previous research has shown that detention can continue to affect the lives of individuals after they leave in diverse ways (Klein and Williams 2012; Gerlach 2018a, 122–47; Turnbull 2018, 132–33). I sought not only to understand experiences of men during their time in Holot, but detention's wider implications, and what they tell us about the dynamics of race and place in an ethnonational state.

Lastly, I was able to interview these two groups due to my unique access and established networks of trust, coupled with a strong sense that they had been left out of important conversations, decision-making, and knowledge production processes directly relating to their personal rights and interests. Interviews thus provided a much-needed opportunity for participants to tell their stories. Participants felt validated when their experiences were valued and perceived as

important for wider audiences. I consider my participants experts on the impacts of policies to which they were subjected. Below, I describe my methods of entry to each field site.

Ethnographic Engagement with Diverse Participant Groups

One of the core methods of ethnography is participant observation, which Bernard Russell describes simply as 'getting close to people and making them feel comfortable enough with your presence so that you can observe and record information about their lives' (Russell 2006, 342). Yet the nature of closeness, or participation, varies greatly when engaging with diverse and distinct groups. In this section, I describe varied participant positionalities that I relied on to approach each group and site under study.

The three researcher positionalities that I used to approach each site are similar to those Ines Hasselberg has described in her research of deportation in the UK, following Joanne Passaro's approach to utilising positionalities 'along a participant-observer continuum' (Hasselberg 2016, 11–18; Passaro 1997, 156). Hasselberg and Passaro sought diverse positionalities from which they could access hard-to-reach populations when snowballing proved ineffective. In my case, my participant positionality in relation to migrant communities and South Tel Aviv residents was long established, access to communities, and snowball sampling worked very well. However, in each site I was a different kind of participant – visitor, activist, or neighbour; and in all sites my researcher role needed to be emphasised upon re-entry. Each position was based on shared experiences or opinions between myself and participants in each site, attributes we have in common, or joint interests around which we connected. For example, I held the same nationality with Israeli participants, and a joint commitment to migrant rights struggles and activism with asylum seekers. All positionalities co-exist as part of my activist-researcher identity, which combines an academic concern for knowledge production and an activist commitment to care.

Researcher – Visitor in Holot

My initial engagement with men detained in Holot as a researcher took place at the end of January 2018 at Ben Gurion University in Beer Sheva. I was invited by an Israeli activist to a 'graduation' event of a programme that brought detainees to hear lectures at the university. This activist and the detainees I met through her at the event became gatekeepers to the community detained at the time of my fieldwork. Over the month and a half that followed, I travelled to Holot eight times to conduct interviews with detained men. Each visit lasted on average five hours, during which I conducted two interviews of approximately one hour each. The rest of the time was spent sitting, observing, and partaking in informal conversations in the gravel-sandy area outside the centre where detainees sat on a few benches, and visitors could join them.

Many hours were spent reflecting on the arid atmosphere of detention in the desert. Visits were planned around extreme the weather conditions that characterised the place and limited the viable time I could remain outside the facility. I visited from the time midday heat slightly alleviated, until right before extreme cold of night set in. Another reason for these timeframes was that most men tried to sleep through the first part of the day to pass the time. If I arrived before noon, I would see very few of them outside the centre, though occasionally some walked, exercised, or travelled out for an appointment at earlier hours.

Sitting outside Holot, after midday, I waited for men to exit the centre for the afternoon. I usually messaged one or two men (of those I had met at the university) in advance, so that they would know I would be there and they could check if anyone wanted to be interviewed. These men and others slowly emerged from the facility. Some sat in groups on the few picnic tables in the visitation area and others would go for walks. A 10-minute walk away from the facility, one detainee opened an impromptu field café under a large tree. Many of the guys would go there to drink coffee, beers, or purchased snacks if they could afford to.

Men shared stories in groups, joked, moped, walked around aimlessly, and in some cases spoke to themselves. I usually arrived on my own with large amounts of Eritrean food that I purchased in advance from restaurants in Tel Aviv or Beer Sheva (Figure 12). This was my small way to lighten up detainees' day with good and familiar food, to foster a comfortable dynamic, and show my appreciation for the men's willingness to speak with me. Detainees who came out of the centre would look over curiously. Some continued walking in the desert, some offered to help, others shyly inquired about the food, and many eventually joined in eating.

Gatherings around food in the visitation area were high points of positive interactions. They provided opportunities to chat, connect, and arrange while we prepared food and distributed it among those present. We stretched whatever I brought among however many dozens of men came out each day. After eating, we boiled water on my camping stove and made tea and coffee for everyone to enjoy into the evening (Figure 13). Food and beverages made the research encounter more pleasant. Men helped me unload dishes and boxes, clean them after use, and carry them to my car (Figure 14). Fresh cooked Eritrean food was appreciated, as was female presence and attention, both of which were scarce in Holot.



Figure 12. Injera and Shiro, traditional Eritrean food eaten on a shared plate outside Holot (Photo Credit: M Ravid)



Figure 13. Coffee corner with coffee, tea, sugar and mint leaves for detainees to make over a camping stove and enjoy throughout the visit (Photo Credit: M Ravid)



Figure 14. Clean dishes organised to be loaded at the end of Holot visit (Photo Credit: M Ravid)

At some point in every visit, after at least two hours of 'hanging out', I conducted one or two interviews. Word got out about my activities and participants often initiated interviews because they wanted to be included, had heard from friends about the opportunity, or observed my meetings with others over time. I would separate from the group to a side table, far enough to ensure privacy, together with whoever wanted to be interviewed. Participants were thus entirely self-selected, which was advantageous to ensuring informed consent and voluntary participation.

There were, however, also risks entailed in participant self-selection, namely that those who faced language barriers would be left out or that only confident, outspoken men would volunteer. These risks were mitigated with the help of my first interviewee, Yonas, who turned into an important interlocuter, translator and unofficial assistant. Yonas spoke English and Hebrew and was very interested in and supportive of my project. After our interview, he mentioned his special connection to the older men detained in Holot, whom he helped with language barriers in bureaucratic tasks, and he insisted they should be included. He connected me with three older men whom I would not have reached if it were not for his initiative. In those cases, we established consent both for their participation and for his presence as a translator. I asked Yonas and other more talkative acquaintances to spread the word that I was interested in hearing from everyone, and managed to reach a very diverse group of participants in detention.

In all interactions, it was important to establish consent and participant understanding of the conditions, aims, uses, outcomes and limitations of the research – most importantly that their anonymity would be safeguarded; that there were no legal, political or other tangible benefits to participation; and that participation was voluntary and could be withdrawn at any time without any repercussions for doing so. I did not ask for written consent as I formed the judgement that it would be inappropriate in this setting. Men were reluctant to sign papers, and were often untrusting of institutions, outsiders and bureaucracy. Instead, I explained the content of my consent form

multiple times, in different terms, at the start of every interview. I restated repeatedly that I am not a lawyer and did not work for NGOs, that I was only a student, and wanted to tell their stories through this research, possible in articles or books in the future.

Repeated and prolonged visits facilitated a sense of familiarity, trust, and mutual appreciation between detainees and myself, which allowed for meaningful interviews. I also attended events in Holot in addition to days reserved for interviews. Frequency of visits, events and protests increased toward the closure of the facility, and the looming threat of deportation. During this period, public and media attention increased toward Holot. Observations and informal conversations during events informed ideas developed for this thesis regarding inclusion and exclusion, around interactions with Israelis, and the men's relationship with the state. For example, listening to messages activists gave to the media, or seeing what slogans they produced for protests, enhanced my understanding of their narratives and experiences. Along with past knowledge I obtained through community activism, these observations affirmed my sense that the interview sample was sufficient, as did interview content saturation as additional interviews were yielding little new information (Schutt 2004, 299; Hood 2010, 161–64).

Researcher – Activist in the community

Interviews in the community were conducted with asylum seekers who had been released from Holot after detention periods ranging from 8–20 months.[47] Once released, men were prohibited from living or working in seven of Israel's largest cities, a law that was most strictly enforced in Tel Aviv. Most interviews therefore took place in other cities – Arad, Herzliya and Jerusalem – although a few interviews were held in Tel Aviv despite the putative restrictions on residence or

[47] Detention length varied based on changes in legislation between 2013-2018. Initially detention was indefinite, then reduced to one year in 2014. Few participants were released after shorter time frames due to health reasons.

work.[48] Interviews were usually held in cafes or restaurants, or on several occasions in men's homes. I reached participants through personal connections and further snowballing.

Finding public locations to meet was important given that I was a young, single woman planning to meet men on my own. However, meeting in public places meant interviews were sometimes interrupted, or conversations distracted. Sometimes these were welcome breaks, as they allowed me to reflect on notes, re-organise thoughts, or take a pause from a difficult topic. Locating quiet spots in regular venues was helpful to minimise interruptions.

For the most part, meeting in restaurants that served the participants' traditional foods made for a welcomed treat and fostered a comfortable environment that eased the initiation of the interview (Figure 15) (Sabar and Posner 2013, 202). On the occasions that asylum seekers preferred to meet in their homes, they insisted on cooking for me (Figure 16). Although I was cautious not to burden participants with my visit, I also knew that hospitality and food sharing is an important source of pride and dignity in both Sudanese and Eritrean traditions (Sabar and Posner 2013, 206–7), I therefore accepted their invitations, appreciated their hospitality, and enjoyed delicious food.



Figure 15. Sharing food with an interviewee at Sudanese restaurant in South Tel Aviv. Traditional Asida with Bamia and Tagalia sauces, *Ful wa'Gibna* and Asmara buns (Photo Credit: M Ravid)

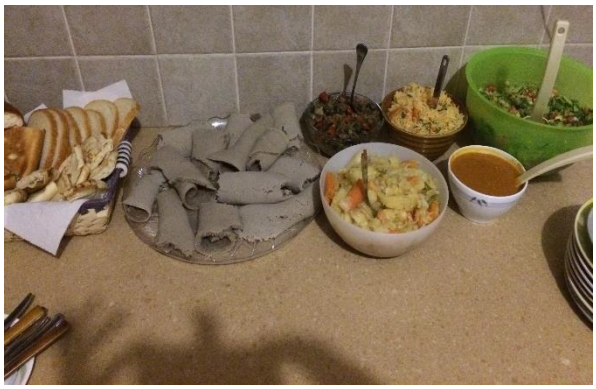


Figure 16. Food prepared at an interviewee's home in Herzeliya. Traditional Eritrean Injera (flatbread made from teff grain) with Shero, Alicha, Berbere and salad (Photo Credit: M Ravid)

[48] Limitations on residence in Tel Aviv and six other major cities were imprinted upon the permits of asylum seekers released from Holot, under the 5th amendment of the Prevention of Infiltration Law.

Research participants included asylum seekers I had known for over a decade, and some whom I met briefly before the interview. Half of the participants knew that I was conducting the research due to previous acquaintance and volunteered to participate. The other half I either met during my observations in Holot, community or anti-deportation events, or were invited to participate by other participants. All but two men agreed to have their interviews recorded. In those two cases, I relied on note taking and attributed their refusals to feelings of distrust that they had acquired throughout their lives in authoritarian regimes in other countries and in Israel.

Using activist connections was, therefore, crucial to gain access and trust from participants in the community. These prior connections, however, also necessitated clear verbalised separation between peer conversations and the research interviews. I therefore reiterated my researcher role and its limitations in all interviews and established clear, professional boundaries around the meetings by explaining the distinctions between this work and other forms of activism I was involved in, as well as describing the role of a researcher, and the process of a PhD.

Researcher – Neighbour in South Tel Aviv

Testimonies of Israeli residents of South Tel Aviv neighbourhood of Neve Shaanan were collected through interviews in the first half of 2018. My initial entry to the field site and access to participants was facilitated by previous acquaintances from the Neve Shaanan community garden, an initiative that provided a safe space for elderly Jewish residents to meet, and where I was involved for several years. Garden members agreed to be interviewed and further connected me to friends and neighbours. I snowballed (Morgan 2008) through these initial connections, attended several town hall meetings, neighbour gatherings, and protests at which I was introduced to additional participants.

Participant recruitment strategy was informed by previous research. I conducted interviews in Neve Shaanan in 2013, and read additional accounts on neighbouring areas (Shamur 2018; Ravid 2019). I also received access to materials collected by Tel Aviv municipality. Municipality staff knew me as a community activist and allowed me access to over 20 transcripts of interviews they had conducted with Israeli residents and initiatives in Neve Shaanan. These were collected as part of a wide ethnographic research project conducted by the municipality in the neighbourhood in 2015 (interview n=52)[49]. Contextualised within my previous knowledge of the neighbourhood, and municipal sources, I felt confident that my participant sample was adequately representative of the Jewish community living in Neve Shaanan, their diverse backgrounds and opinions.

Typically, I interviewed participants at cafes and on four occasions at residents' homes where I felt welcomed, comfortable, and safe. I met elderly residents in their homes for several reasons. Firstly, they preferred it as a more convenient place to meet. Secondly, they enjoyed hosting and feeding me when I came, often insisting that I visit again, take food or gifts with me, and call at any hour if I needed a place to stay overnight. Lastly, our connections and friendships were unusual due to the different political, ethnic, and class backgrounds that we came from. In most spaces where elderly *Mizrahi* residents spent time outside their home, there was a consensus of anti-immigrant sentiment, and harsh feelings toward outsiders, especially *Ashkenazi* activists and NGOs that assisted migrants and asylum seekers (as I did). We played down our friendships when we met in public venues or protests, so as not to provoke peer scrutiny or antagonism.

Jewish residents, in particular the elderly, for whom there were no community or cultural organisations in the area, suffered from the changes in their neighbourhood. Synagogues had

[49] I was provided access to the Neve Shaanan research summary presentation. I requested to view in full only the interviews conducted with Israeli residents, and not the entire research sample. This material informed my thinking and data collection process, but none of it was directly cited within the thesis that relies only on original data I collected.

closed and public spaces felt foreign, as most people around them looked different and spoke other languages, or were considered to be unsafe due to criminal activities. These residents had become a minority in the neighbourhoods where they grew up, raised children, and purchased their homes. Many felt extremely lonely and disenfranchised. Interviews provided opportunities for them to speak of these experiences, alongside their opinions regarding detention policies, discussed at length in the next chapter. Establishing a friendly and neighbourly rapport, which relied on shared concern for the neighbourhood, facilitated access and meaningful engagement with this group.

QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

42 semi-structured interviews were conducted overall with asylum seekers detained in Holot (n=14),[50] asylum seekers in the community (n=14),[51] and Israeli residents of Neve Shaanan neighbourhood (n=14). In total, 28 African asylum seekers and 14 Israelis were interviewed. This respondent sample was deemed sufficient as it allowed for diversity among participants in each group, but also reached levels of interview saturation evident when later interviews provided little new insights that indicated main themes had been captured (Schutt 2004, 299).

As described above, all interviews were held in person at a place determined by participants: cafes, restaurants, respondents' own homes, and in the visitation area outside Holot. All but two of the interviews were audio recorded with permission from participants, and later transcribed verbatim. In interviews, participants recounted the impact of detention: how they

[50] All participants in this group were Eritrean due to the make-up of Holot detainees in 2018, most Sudanese nationals were detained in earlier years.

[51] This sample included ten Sudanese men and four Eritreans.

experienced life during the years in which detention took place, whether in Holot or South Tel Aviv, and how they contextualised their views on detention in their life stories in Israel.

I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews for several important reasons: firstly, I anticipated that one-on-one interviews would elicit the most detailed, authentic, and open conversations with my participants (Arksey and Knight 1999, chap. 3). Away from peers, external listeners, or media outlets, participants could speak freely without fear of social or political repercussions. Such exchanges would not have been possible with a more public method such as focus groups. I assured participant confidentiality (reminding them that their testimony was to be anonymised), and restated my aim to listen and learn from their accounts. Respondents decided how long an interview would be and knew they could stop or retract statements at any time.

I also hoped the interview could be a beneficial opportunity for participants to process and reflect on their experiences through the meaning-making processes involved in speaking about life events. Previous scholarship has likened interviews to therapeutic or counselling encounters in that they explore personal accounts and provide a space for cathartic, subjective, unscrutinised communication of feelings or difficult experiences (Birch and Miller 2000, 190; Cotterill 1992, 601; Hutchinson, Wilson, and Wilson 1994, 162–64). Of course, an opposite negative effect could also result, as participants recount traumatic or difficult experiences. To gather data while making sure I did as little harm as possible to participants, I constantly sought ways to navigate these sensitivities. A thorough awareness of participants' backgrounds helped mitigate against this, as did heightened sensitivity to the interview environment and rapport (Leech 2002). I expand on these in the next section's discussion of ethics.

Secondly, interviews were semi-structured and allowed great freedom for participants to provide full narratives of their experiences. Often one open-ended question would suffice – for example, 'Please tell me a bit about yourself and how you got to this place' – for participants to

give rich accounts of their life stories. If participants asked for guiding questions, gave brief accounts, or spoke off-topic, I followed up with additional questions prepared in advance. Through their re-telling of past events, ongoing experiences, and worldviews, participants constructed narratives and tried to describe and explain their situations (Birch and Miller 2000, 190).

Such rich accounts would not have been attained through survey or written formats of inquiry due to language and literacy barriers. In most cases, my participants reported what seemed like honest, thoughtful responses. Their accounts did not need to be authenticated or triangulated, as my research did not seek to verify or falsify facts within my participants' testimonies. Rather, my research focus was on their subjective experiences and thought processes by which they made sense of detention policies.

Lastly, my aim was not to provide an objective or all-encompassing survey of what all members of a group thought about the subject, as one might gather in a wide scale quantitative study. The sample and testimonies in this thesis are not meant to represent entire populations from which participants were randomly selected, or to be used comparatively. Instead, they are meant to promote a nuanced understanding of detention's impacts. Use of interviews and grounded theory helps uncover the depth and complexity of group members' experiences, and try to explain their experiences by reference to recurring trends and themes (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Charmaz 2006, 5–6).

I have done my best to convey participants' testimonies faithfully and without distortion. At the same time, I acknowledge risks of miscommunication due to language barriers and the transcription and translation processes. To mitigate these risks, I sought participant clarification if I was unsure that I had understood them correctly, re-listened to interview segments repeatedly, and did not include unclear responses.

Data Analysis and Theorising with Grounded Theory

I approached both data collection and analysis with a Grounded Theory (GT) method that consists of 'systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analysing qualitative data to construct theories 'grounded' in the data themselves… data form the foundation of our theory and our analysis of these data generates the concepts we construct' (Charmaz 2006, 2). My reason for choosing GT was that theory-guided qualitative research would have required a theoretical framework from which to derive categories of analysis, and I could not locate adequate explanations for asylum seekers exclusion in Israel in the existing literature. I therefore turned to GT, which provides a rich iterative process of constructing theory by moving back and forth between empirical data and emerging analysis in a spiral of data collection, analysis, coding, and theorising (Glaser and Strauss 1967, chap. 5).

I systematically employed several essential elements of GT. These include theoretical sampling in which categories are developed from data rather than applied *a priori*, a constant comparative analysis between cases and categories throughout the process, and theoretical saturation to determine the end of data collection, when data no longer adds to category development (Hood 2010, 152). I was flexible in adopting other aspects of GT such as memos and codes that emerge from the data and are used to steer collection and organise findings. The method's openness and flexibility allowed for such choices to be made during the entwined process of data collection and analysis (Bryant and Charmaz 2010, 9–11, 17–18). As interviews unfolded, questions could be directed to further investigate recurring themes, while remaining open to explore additional theoretical possibilities that arose. This is part of the theoretical sampling that some deem crucial for GT, by which categories are developed from ongoing analysis rather than approaching data with purposeful *a priori* terms (Hood 2010, 157–59). For example, one trend that stood out early on in most Holot interviews were the detainees' re-assertions of their refugee status.

These repeated references signalled their importance and led me to ask detainees to expand on their claim. They proceeded to explain that they merited refugee status on the grounds of the traumatic experiences they had suffered, comparison to refugees elsewhere, or refugee claims already submitted to the Israeli state. These responses provided for a rich analysis of the complex meanings of refugee status for those detained.

GT involves detecting discursive trends and repeated themes from the very start of data collection by noting phrases that were repeated, topics that stood out, frequently restated and the discussion of certain dynamics (Gläser and Laudel 2013; Ritchie and Lewis 2013, chap. 9). During interviews in South Tel Aviv, a theme that emerged was the frequent discussion of garbage. By paying increased attention to garbage references and synonyms, I gathered that residents were not only referring to physical waste that overwhelms the neighbourhood, but also relating to forms of human waste, feelings of being disposable, or devalued. They used such terms to describe their own treatment by the rest of the city, and the municipality, or speaking derogatorily about asylum seekers and migrants. References included 'we are the country's garbage dump' or 'the North dumped all of their mess on us'. These themes generated concepts of differentiation that informed the inquiry, through continued dovetailing of data collection and analytical reflection.

I transcribed interviews fully and translated Hebrew interviews to English. Once all interviews were gathered, I reviewed the data from each site again, and began the process of thematic analysis to extract salient information from transcripts (Gläser and Laudel 2013, 9). This involved a first overview to identify recurrent issues, attitudes, or views and those relevant to the research question. Topics were then reread and grouped into primary themes used to construct an initial framework. This was followed by a return to the transcripts to index remaining data into the fitting themes. At this point new themes emerged and others came together, related content was sorted into its place in a logical framework that began to take shape. This process was reviewed,

refined, and repeated several times over through use of constant comparative analysis of themes, and with other theoretical categories throughout each cycle. Themes were added, others divided, or modified. The data was then organised in a digestible way to present findings to others (Spencer et al. 2013, 295–310). Finally, as is common in grounded theory research, the literature review was written after the field research to identify the theoretical concepts and frameworks that help explain the independent research findings. In particular, I sought theory to move beyond description toward explanation.

Informed by concepts that emerged from the field, I ventured into wider academic literature. Empirical data directed me to issues of racialised exclusion, inequality and differentiation, migrant detention and criminalisation. These led me to a larger body of literature on race, ethnicity and urban sociology, as well as criminology. In this realm, I repeatedly encountered Stuart Hall's writings on the forms and effects of racialised differentiation on the social world. This is perhaps unsurprising given Hall's lived experiences of navigating the world as a racialised man and migrant, which shaped his intellectual, political, and theoretical work which is considered central to fields of Criminology, Sociology, Cultural studies and more (S. Hall and Schwarz 2018). Connecting with Hall's work led me to further readings of his counterparts and predecessors, most importantly, William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (Du Bois 1903). Delving into Du Bois's sociological approach to studying racialised populations and racial differentiations in urban centres helped orient my analysis and methods (Du Bois 1898; Itzigsohn and Brown 2020).

REFLECTING ON THE RESEARCH PROCESS AND THE RESEARCHER'S ROLE

> *Living a feminist life does not mean adopting a set of ideals or norms of conduct, although it might mean asking ethical questions about how to live better in an unjust and unequal world… how to create relationships with others that are more equal; how to find ways to support those who are not supported or are less supported by social systems; how to keep coming up against histories that have become concrete, histories that have become as solid as walls.*
>
> (S. Ahmed 2017, 1)

Reflecting on the researcher's role involves consideration of the ways in which a researcher's worldviews, abilities, traits, and experiences might influence the research process. My identification with feminism is crucial throughout my research and for these considerations. I begin by explaining the ethical terrain of conducting research with detained and disenfranchised communities, and the ways I navigated it. I continue by exploring various pre-determined positions that apply to me and potentially impacted the research. Finally, I consider difficulties that emerged from the research process and methods adopted to overcome them.

It would be disingenuous to suggest that the methods used in this thesis were guided by a coherent theoretical or methodological approach from start-to-finish, such as feminist, anti-racist or community-based methodologies (although this is how, retrospectively, I came to understand them). I read and familiarised myself with such theories in preparation for fieldwork,[52] but embarked on a loosely structured research plan that could adapt to changing or sensitive circumstances in a way that others have called 'mediating messiness' of fieldwork or 'improvising theory' (Billo and Hiemstra 2013; Cerwonka and Malkki 2007). Critical theories informed my practice, aligned with my personal commitments and worldviews, and in turn shaped my choices, behaviours and focus throughout the research. I am a feminist, anti-racist, community activist: these commitments guide my work, as others have confessed before me (Mountz 2002; Nagar 2014, 179–81; Ahmed 2017, 14–16).

Cope describes feminist epistemology as knowledge production with constant awareness of socially constructed difference, which focuses on gender relations and roles, but also cites other axes along which power hierarchies are constructed and upheld (Cope 2002, 44–45). Similarly,

[52] My research was informed by feminist approaches to criminological and sociological fieldwork (Caulfield and Wonders 1994; Creese and Frisby 2011; Gelsthorpe and Morris 1990; Stanley 1990; Nagar and Geiger 2007)

Collins explains that 'race, gender, class, citizenship status, sexuality, and age shape any group's social location in the transnational matrix of domination' (Hill-Collins 1991, 245), naming black women as one of various subordinated groups whose subjugated knowledge must be investigated in the production of critical social science.

Being academically rooted in a feminist perspectives shapes research design and operation, including what topics we choose to study, who participates in knowledge production, how we approach participants, what we consider valuable data and how we analyse it (Oakley 1998; Stanley 1990; Stanley and Wise 2002; Hill-Collins 1991, 252). My choice to research detained and disenfranchised communities reflects my commitments to a critical feminist worldview. It followed similar questions to those framed by Ahmed in her introduction to *Living a Feminist Life* cited at the top of this section – how do we create more equal relationships? How do we find ways to support those who are not supported or are less supported by social systems? And how do we reproduce their accounts and report their experience? These questions and others motivate my approach to ethics, reciprocity, positionality, and care discussed next.

It is impossible to reflect on research dynamics without invoking social categories that seem significant to research relationships. Analytical categories are useful, but also involve a risk of reifying the very categories we seek to describe and critique, using them into existence (Smith 2013, 264–65; da Silva 2007, 25–31). Israel has a complex landscape of groups and categories and is known to be a highly divided society along lines of ethnicity, religion, levels of religiosity, socio-economic status, legal status, political affiliation, and more (Smooha 1976; Shafir and Peled 2002; Dahan Kalev 1999; Shenhav 2006, chap. 2). In the following section, I refer to categories and stigma attributed to groups related to the research. This is not to say that I support these categorisations, but that they emerged as socially meaningful to the analysis.

THINKING ABOUT ACCESS AND ETHICS, AND MANAGING GUILT AND RECIPROCITY

Few, if any, researchers have spent prolonged periods of time amongst both asylum seekers and Jewish residents in South Tel Aviv. Any existing research either examined policy impacts on asylum seekers (Yacobi 2011; Guthmann and Rozen 2019; Mehartzion et al. 2017; Wurgaft 2015; Anteby-Yemini 2015; Fenster and Vizel 2006) or experiences of Jewish residents in South Tel Aviv (Schnell and Benjamini 2004a; Mizrachi 2011; Cohen 2015; Shechory-Bitton and Soen 2016; Shamur 2018; Ravid 2019). None explored how the two are related and interconnected, despite the efforts of community activists in South Tel Aviv to convey how the fates of the two communities are intertwined (Keshet 2014; Slutzker Amran 2017; Madar 2015). I sensed the importance of bringing those experiences to the fore, and in interrelation, to discuss the impact of Holot comprehensively.

My unique access to field sites and participants was based on my previous experience as an activist with the researched communities. Familiarity was fundamental in gaining trust, obtaining consent, and being adequately immersed to be able to carry out ethnography. Ethical considerations were bound up in every part of the research praxis, as I tried to mitigate the inevitable asymmetrical power relations between myself and participants from the outset (Sultana 2007, 375).

There has been increasing emphasis in criminology[53] over the last decade to take account of issues of reflexivity, representation, and power inequalities when researching detained or incarcerated populations (Phillips and Earle 2010; Bhatia 2014b, 163; Bosworth and Kellezi 2017; Damsa and Ugelvik 2017; Fili, Jahnsen, and Powell 2018, pt. 3). This is often achieved by employing lived experience and participatory approaches to studies of penal power, imprisonment

[53] Parallel discussions have taken place in related disciplines that increasingly use ethnography as a mode of data collection, see for example, in geography (Sultana 2007; Mullings 1999; Nagar 2002; Mountz 2002).

or detention (Piché, Gaucher, and Walby 2014; Walby 2016; McLaughlin 2011; Bosworth 2012; Canning 2017, chap. 5; Hill 2004; Dupont 2008). Such approaches promote a commitment to research built around principles of ethics, consent, participation and reflexivity in attempts to disrupt the characteristic power dynamics of research with populations subjected to state control (Ferrell and Hamm 1998; Schlosser 2008; Ugelvik 2014).

Though asymmetrical power relations are inherent to every research encounter, they are exacerbated when interviewing people considered to be vulnerable. I addressed the innate inequalities of the research encounter by caring for participant wellbeing, and by shifting power or authority in interviews wherever possible (Yuval-Davis 1997, 88; Mountz 2002, 189–90). I reiterated participants' 'ownership' of the interview data, valued the information they reported and their voluntary participation, and related to them as experts on their experiences. These practices were guided by a feminist ethics of care.

Feminist scholars who developed the care tradition critiqued positivist social science, 'objective' conceptions of knowing, and masculinist and Euro-centric knowledge production (Cope 2002, 46–48; Tronto 1993, chap. 2; Hill-Collins 1991, 205, 251–57; Oakley 1981, 31–40). Jane Tronto emphasises the central values for an ethics of care: attentiveness, responsibility, competence, and responsiveness in the research process (Tronto 1993, 127–37). I combined these values with Patricia Hill Collins' guidelines toward a black feminist epistemology as I focused on the primacy of lived experience, used dialogue as a method for knowledge production, and employed both listening, speaking and representing with care and personal accountability (Hill-Collins 1991, 256–77). Egalitarian, dialogical approaches are useful to bring forth historically disenfranchised voices of structurally oppressed groups. Egalitarian dialogue refers to bell hooks' description of 'talk between two subjects, not the speech of subject and object. It is a humanizing speech, one that challenges and resists domination' (hooks 2014, 131). I sought experience-based,

situated knowledge, and paid attention to emotional and personal affect as a valuable part of knowledge production (Stanley and Wise 2002; Haraway 1988, 581; Clarke 2012; Cotterill 1992, 594). This occurred when I devoted time to discussing feelings that came up in interviews and assured participants that it was okay and to feel them and speak about them.

This research for the dissertation received ethics clearance through the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC).[54] The review was thorough, as the asylum seeker and detained men in this study are considered to be vulnerable participants.[55] Categorisation of vulnerability in research implies inequality that results from reduced autonomy or respondents' inability to determine their lives and make decisions freely (Silva 1995; Moore and Miller 1999). Asylum seeking men in detention were indeed vulnerable in such ways as they lacked legal status, were held against their will, and were socio-economically disadvantaged. However, they were also incredibly strong in other ways, such as their ability to survive hardships, move on from trauma, organise in a foreign land, and navigate the extremely harsh conditions stacked against them, individually and communally.

While filling out my risk assessment and ethics review forms, I became concerned with the ways that vulnerability is defined and employed in the bureaucratic process of academia. It felt as though the working definitions of vulnerability or risk inadvertently reaffirm stereotypes and hierarchical power relations. I therefore opted for a more egalitarian, caring approach to my participants and research. Ethics of care are concerned with responsibilities and relationships more

[54]Research Ethics Approval (CUREC 2) Ref No: R54536/RE001. Social Sciences and Humanities Interdivisional Research Ethics Committee. 05/12/2017.

[55] Israeli participants in the research included men and women in South Tel Aviv. Some might be socially and economically disenfranchised, compared to me, however are not categorised as a vulnerable group.

than formal requirements, they are bound to concrete situations, they evolve and must be judged in their specific context dynamics (Sevenhuijsen 1998, 15).

The stories of asylum seekers I interviewed were sometimes upsetting, and my biggest concern was a risk of re-traumatisation of the research participants in the process. I always invited participants to interview twice, but never more. It was important that they understood the purpose of our meeting(s), and that I was interested in hearing their stories, therefore reiterating my interest was useful to clarify my intent and interest. However, I never wanted to pressure anyone into participation. If ever a participant became upset during an interview, I always suggested a break, a drink of water, words of sympathy or validation. I would then offer to move to another question, emphasise that we need not speak of upsetting memories, and never pushed a point that seemed difficult or upsetting.

Israeli interviewees in South Tel Aviv can be viewed as my peers and equals, in terms of legal status, civil liberties, and socio-economic status (in some cases). However, asymmetrical relations still arose at times due to our inner-Israeli group affiliations (discussed at length in chapter two), and the cultural and political capital historically associated with each group. I strove to achieve comfortable conversations by establishing meaningful consent (Alderson and Morrow 2006; Duncombe and Jessop 2012, 111–12; Leech 2002), ensured a genuine understanding among participants of my position, the purpose and likely consequences of the research, how data would be stored, and reiterated their control over the interview. This entailed heightened sensitivity, transparency, and humility in discussing personal and difficult experiences.

Much of the research process was accompanied with guilt regarding my unearned privileges when faced with the harshness of detention, my ability to leave the research context, the instrumentalist nature of data collection, and the way my country was unjustly treating research participants. The most satisfactory ways I found to minimise these feeling was to engage in honest

dialogue and indirect or asymmetrical reciprocity (Sultana 2007, 375–76; Domosh 2003, 107; Young 1997, chap. 2) wherever possible, to foster respectful and non-hierarchical interactions.

I hoped that through an active interview exchange I could express empathy and offer participants words of validation and that their experiences were significant (Birch and Miller 2000, 198; Holstein and Gubrium 1995). Several detention scholars have noted the lack of counselling or psychological support in detention and that detainees often expressed appreciation of the researcher's interest and care (Gerlach 2018a, 85–86; Kellezi and Bosworth 2016). Others have pointed to the possible positive effects of participants having the opportunity to speak about traumatic memories (Deprince and Freyd 2006). However, it was not always easy, possible or advantageous to foster a 'therapeutic setting', particularly given the data goals of the interview, my limited counselling training, and researcher position (Cotterill 1992, 598). I therefore tried to ensure participants' ease, willingness to speak, and let them steer the interview in hope that it would provide some relief. However, I approached them as respected peers and experts on their own situation, not recipients of counselling. I prepared contact information of relevant hotlines or NGOs in case participants needed further conversation or assistance. My approach was usually well-received, as confirmed by Mohammad who said: 'I'm grateful that, for the first time in 11 years, someone has sat with me and listened to what I have to say.'

While methods of 'inviting intimacy' are recommended by some academics as a means of securing trust, and with it the sharing of more sensitive or valuable data (Birch and Miller 2000, 199–200), I preferred to remind participants of my (limited) professional role and maintain some distance to safeguard their wellbeing. I was also concerned that pre-planned friendly behaviours could be insincere, misleading, and not conducive to an equal exchange (Mamali 2019, 242; Oakley 1981). I thus aimed for a pleasant yet professional approach, and distinguished interviews as separate research exchanges. It was also helpful to maintain a distinction between friendship and

friendliness (Cotterill 1992, 595), to steer and set limits on research interactions. I was very honest with participants about all parts of the research aims, possible outcomes, and limitations, as well as my feelings of guilt, where appropriate (DeLuca and Maddox 2016). This was in line with what Case and Haines called 'reflective friend research' (Case and Haines 2014, 59–60). Friendliness and honesty helped to avoid misunderstandings and allow participants to process ambivalent feelings.

Guilty feelings emerged when participants spoke of experiences of injustice or loss that I could never fully understand and was sorry to hear. I responded by listening, validating, and offering sincere sympathy. They gave their time in speaking, and I reciprocated by listening (Ribbens 1989, 586–87). I expressed an interest in their feelings and opinions, even if not directly related to my inquiry. In one case, an 85-year-old man told me an hour-long story of a long-lost love from his youth. Though unrelated to the interview, I listened intently as he derived comfort from telling this story and clearly wanted to be heard. When my participants described pains or injustices inflicted by the state, I felt guilt at how my country treated them. But I also felt that I was helpful to participants for whom I could provide an outlet for their grievances, and many expressed their appreciation at being listened to.

Finally, I shared food with participants. This proved one of the best ways to show appreciation of their contribution and indirect reciprocity. I explained I had a research budget to cover such expenses, so no one would feel discomfort at me paying for, or bringing, food. In a few cases when participants hosted me at home, I brought a box of chocolates or cookies. I also accepted refreshments and food, when I felt acts of hospitality were desired, and I was hungry.

Feelings of guilt re-emerged in the analysis and writing process, when I had to decide which parts of my data to explore further, and inevitably leave other parts out. The process of dividing up participants' stories and deciding which parts are interesting, valuable and worth retelling is difficult, both ethically and substantively (Arksey and Knight 1999, 141). There are many things I

had to omit, and it felt unfair that my research interests directed my decisions about what to include. One way to mitigate this feeling was to choose the GT approach in which participants' experiences guided theorising and interpretation. Another way was to decide that I would publish a future work – an edited collection of asylum seekers' testimonies that will include more of their accounts, as well as a piece about women's experiences.[56]

RESEARCHER POSITIONALITY

Reflections on the social positions of researchers and participants are crucial to discussion of power imbalances, dynamics of marginalisation, and representation that can arise in the research encounter (Nagar 2014; Sultana 2007; Rowe 2014; Merriam et al. 2001). Positionalities include pre-determined attributes such as age, social class, ethnicity, gender, and citizenship status, as well as chosen positions such as worldviews, personal and political beliefs that influence the researcher's epistemological approach, behaviours, methodological and analytical decision making. In reflecting on these attributes, I aim to acknowledge, deconstruct, and disclose my positions and their potential impact on my research (Lumsden and Winter 2014; Dupuis 1999).

The positions I inhabit shaped all my interactions at basic and profound levels. In some ways, I was an insider to the settings and groups I was researching – I conducted fieldwork in my home country, and among communities I had been welcomed into. However, the fact that I visibly stood out, had dramatically different life experiences, and could leave at the end of the day, impacted my interactions with participants in detention and in South Tel Aviv. It signalled to

[56] Additional avenues for future research, aside from asylum seeker testimony narratives and asylum seeker women experiences, include application of thesis insights to racialised exclusion of Ethiopian Jews and Palestinians. These topics emerged as pertinent, relevant or adjacent to my research, and feelings of guilt surround my silence about these groups in this dissertation. However, they could not be adequately addressed at this time, and will be addressed later.

interviewees that although I might be interested in their circumstances, I was not subjected to these strictures daily and that I was an 'outsider'.

There has been a long scholarly debate on the insider or outsider position of researchers, and its effect on different parts of the research process. Merton's early distinction between the two positions explains that 'insiders are the members of specified groups and collectives or occupants of specified social statuses: Outsiders are non-members' (Merton 1972, 21). Despite this seemingly binary distinction between positions, Merton explained that multiplicity and heterogeneity of identities in social groups, cross group exchange, category overlap, interrelatedness, and change blur the lines of distinction. Since Merton, many have explored the advantages and drawbacks to each position in establishing access, credibility, rapport and understanding (Abu Lughod 1988; Mercer 2007, 5–7; Weiner-Levy and Abu Rabia Queder 2012). Some have recognised advantages in both, or the ways in which positions shift, intersect, become permeable or conditional (Merriam et al. 2001; Merton 1972, 37; Mullings 1999, 338; Mercer 2007, 13; O'Connor 2004; Potter 2015)

In this section, I explore details in my personal biography that may have afforded me a 'lived familiarity' with, or *a priori* knowledge on, the groups I researched and contributed to my position as an insider (Holmes and Gary 2020, 5). I also point out those aspects that limited my capacity to know and understand the participants, or that complicated my research encounters with them. I concur with earlier claims that researchers may straddle both positions, that positions are relational and shifting (Mohammad 2001; Mullings 1999, 342; Yuval-Davis 1997, 88), and hope that such fluidity contributed to my work.

Race, Ethnicity, and National identity

I am a white, *Ashkenazi, kibbutznik,* citizen of Israel who interviewed African detainees in a facility opened solely for black men, and *Mizrahi* Israelis in one of the most marginalised urban centres of the country. Racial, social, and class differences are abundant between these classifications, visible

to the naked eye. And yet, in Israel's complex racial and ethnonational politics, being white did not necessarily feel like the most significant categorisation. Rather, citizen status among asylum seekers and *Ashkenazi* ethnicity among Israeli participants proved the most present attributes that impacted research engagements.

Barriers to research stemming from racialised difference could include resistance to participate, limitations on understanding and representation (Edwards 1996). Criminologists have long reported feelings of upset, shock, injustice or guilt when encountering the overrepresentation of minorities within criminal justice systems (Kaufman 2015, 44; Phillips 2012; Bosworth and Kaufman 2011), and the racialised differences between themselves and research subjects that impact research relationships (Earle and Phillips 2015; Parmar 2018; Armenta 2017; Parmar, Earle, and Phillips 2020). However, in my experience, earlier knowledge and community engagement prepared me for the systemic racism so clearly evident in Holot and South Tel Aviv, and ways to work to approach them. Furthermore, it is important to note that I do not seek to represent the experiences of racialised participants, nor claim authority to speak on their behalf (hooks 2014, chap. 7), but rather I present their accounts as a significant contribution to our understanding racialised social exclusion.

Joint work with African asylum seekers on anti-racist politics brought me closer to participants as it facilitated open dialogue about diversity (Hasan 1999, 330; Kobayashi 1994, 73) and acknowledged difference and barriers. Race rarely came up among us (though it was mentioned frequently in the interviews discussed in chapters 5 and 6, when participants discussed their treatment in Israel). Jokes would occasionally be made by detainees about my low survival chances with such fair skin in the desert sun, or the ways their dark complexions made them less visible after sundown. But otherwise, racial categories were not frequently mentioned or pointed

out between us, nor did they feel like a hurdle or preoccupation. Ethnicity and citizenship status on the other hand were invoked far more frequently and were a cause for distance.

My citizen status was referenced many times during interviews with asylum seekers, and by those who did not want to speak with an Israeli due to their negative experiences in the country. Citizenship indicated my privileged position and therefore limited understanding of men's predicament as asylum seekers with no legal status, which I usually accepted with confirmation and validation of their feelings. Sometimes, men directed accusations and grievances toward the state at me, as a citizen. This was unpleasant, especially considering the discord I feel with the current Israeli government and what it represents. But it was also understandable. These men were treated poorly by the state, had no other outlets to express their frustrations, and very few open conversations with Israelis. In certain moments, I came to represent the state for some of them or was perceived as a relevant address for their complaints against the state. Alison Mountz reported similar exchanges in her work with migrant communities (Mountz 2002, 191–92). Although I did not like or agree with this association, I tried to understand the source of their hostility and not be upset. For example, Mikaele, a young asylum seeker from Eritrea, once explained to me in anger:

> *Being refugees is really hard Maayan. Say thanks to god that you are near your family. Really. From the bottom of my heart, I was very angry at all the people of Israel, I think you forgot what happened to you when you were refugees.*

Mikaele directed his complaints regarding mistreatment at me, conflating me as an individual with an abstract image of all Israelis. Though I was sitting with him, listening, and empathising, he still addressed his general frustration to me.

On many occasions, men would ask me for explanations, justifications of state policies, and expressed anger or pain at the ways they had been treated. Although it felt unfair to be blamed for state actions over which I had no control, I listened to this feedback, as I hoped it would provide relief for them. Furthermore, equating me with the state also had its advantages – if they

viewed me as a representative of the state's negative behaviours, then I could also use this conflation to apologise on behalf of Israelis. I could remind them that there is a diversity of opinions among Israeli citizens and that many people support them.

For asylum seekers who had lived in Israel for several years, my *Ashkenazi* ethnicity signalled several facts about my socio-economic status and probable political affiliations. *Ashkenazi* women (with curly hair) are common attributes among activists who work with asylum seekers. Of course, there are *Mizrahi* human rights activists, and plenty of *Ashkenazim* who are not pro-migrants. However, in a country where ethnic groupings have evolved into such salient categories deployed in everyday life, with distinct attributes and associated stigmas, participants could easily 'place' me (Parmar 2018, 191–92) quickly as a privileged ally.

Whereas my *Ashkenazi* ethnicity encouraged trust among asylum seekers, it proved a greater barrier in my interactions with participants in South Tel Aviv. Residents of South Tel Aviv are constructed as a group – *Mizrahi*, poor working class, marginalised by the city, the state, and its institutions. In sharp contrast, their interviewer was an *Ashkenazi* academic from a *kibbutz* north of Tel Aviv, whose background and vocation connoted the opposite end of the internal hierarchy of Jewish citizenry. Our differences occasionally stirred frustration in participants, were mentioned in anger, or as grounds for my inability to understand or care sincerely. I always listened, kept calm, and expressed sympathy for their feelings even if I did not agree with their opinions.

Here too, my past activism proved helpful to navigate animosity or suspicion. Interviewing people I knew from my time as an activist was easier and more comfortable as they treated me as a friend and oftentimes exempted me from the *Ashkenazi* grouping because I was with them in 'their causes' and had shown consistent solidarity. With participants I did not know, I would cite my associations in the neighbourhood to convey my commitment and care for their histories. I made sure to tell research participants that this was part of the reason I was interviewing them – I

wanted to give a platform and emphasis to their testimonies that have been repeatedly side-lined and neglected, distorted, and stigmatised. Reiteration of my respect and understanding for their frustrations, acknowledgement of my limitations and inability to know what they have been through, and confirmation of the injustices they faced, were helpful in overcoming early antagonism.

It was sometimes difficult to distinguish the role of an activist or caring citizen from the positionality of being a researcher, a difficulty commonly noted in the research literature (Kallius, Monterescu, and Rajaram 2016, 4; Ceglowski 2000, 96–99). Community needs always took precedence over research activities if ever the two conflicted, as my research never felt as urgent as these needs, and, as a consequence, at times it suffered delays. If research participants asked to discuss specific needs, I requested that we separate that discussion from the interview and promised to return to the topic at the end of our meeting.

Gender

Out of the 42 people I interviewed, 33 were men. Five of them were Israeli, 10 Sudanese, and 18 Eritrean. My gender, young age, and non-married status, combined with other factors such as perceived approachability and appearance impacted my research interactions with men. In most cases this was not directly articulated, but I felt my feminine presence contributed to men's willingness to sit and speak with me at length. At times it made people feel more at ease, men enjoyed the attention, and occasionally it brought on flirtation from the side of participants. For the most part, I felt that men's interest and comfort in speaking with me was harmless, an inescapable part of normal human interaction and pervasive gendered dynamics that never raised safety concerns. Luckily, I, like most women I know, have garnered ample experience in navigating gendered dynamics or unsolicited advances in professional and academic settings (Moreno 1995, 186; Løvgren 2019, 3–6). I therefore had a toolbox of responses for such situations ranging from

humour, overlooking, side-stepping, or firmly quashing advances and returning our focus to the interview process. In such circumstances, it helped to have interview questions to turn to.

Apprehensions regarding gender dynamics arose when I feared that my caring and empathetic researcher approach would be mistaken for romantic interest (Ribbens 1989, 587; Gill and Maclean 2002, 124). This concern was enhanced by the fact that most of my research participants were young single men in detention, or after detention, and deprived of interactions with women. Furthermore, most came from traditional societies where intimate conversations with women were usually reserved for close relationships. For these reasons, I tried to behave and present professionally in interviews, conduct them in public places, or at the homes of men I knew and trusted. I dressed modestly, avoided cosmetics or perfume, and kept physical contact to a minimum of cordial gestures of greeting or farewell. I adopted such habits and mannerisms over the years of working with men in cross-cultural settings (Ross 2015, 183), whether in the field or at Oxford. I cut my hair short before fieldwork, leading some to assume I was interested in women (in both locales), and wore loose clothing. Such modifications in appearance have been reported by female ethnographers as tactics to avert sexualised attention (Løvgren 2019, 15–17; Rito 2009, 61). In my case, such tactics were mainly used to manage in the research environment of South Tel Aviv, and not in response to participants, all of whom were extremely respectful.

On one occasion, I cancelled an interview because I feared the man who had agreed to participate in the research harboured hopes for a romantic relationship. I preferred not to conduct a private interview, due to the risk of confusing or misleading him. On several occasions, men made romantic advances after interviews were held. In these instances, I felt uncomfortable and worried that I had not been clear enough. It also made me realise that our cultural differences made for different understandings of situations regardless of my attempts at clarity. I always politely refused and reiterated my professional role.

During interviews with Israelis in South Tel Aviv, my gender also positively influenced people's willingness to meet and speak openly. I believe it made women interviewees more comfortable, as I could relate to their gendered experiences in the neighbourhood. Most of my Israeli male interviewees were either married or attracted to men, two factors that helped reduce risks of romantic interest. Nonetheless, on one occasion upon completing an interview, a single Israeli gay man whom I interviewed suggested that we might parent a baby together after I finish the PhD. It seemed my interviewing skills impressed him. I laughed it off through his insistence on his being serious accompanied by explanations of how it could work, and left the interview as fast as I could on good terms.

Gender awareness and vulnerability felt most acute in field sites, on the way to interviews, or during participant observations. Concerns about safety are a part of routine life for most women and are not unique to research situations. However, doing lone fieldwork with vulnerable groups or in precarious settings can bring female researchers into closer contact with risky situations (Jamieson 2002) that male researchers need not face (Moreno 1995, 185–86). My heightened awareness to potential gendered harm and sexual assault kept me alert at all times, knowing the well-evidenced risks for female researchers (Ross 2015; Moreno 1995, 166–68, 185–87; Løvgren 2019, 11–19; Hanson and Richards 2019, chap. 3; Clark and Grant 2015). However, most of my field site visits were conducted without incident. Men I met in detention and in the community were respectful, kind, and concerned that I felt comfortable and safe. On most occasions they would offer to walk me to my car or next meeting.

Safety

There are physical risks and threats to safety associated with doing lone fieldwork in precarious environments (Jamieson 2002), many of which are connected to the previous discussion of gender. Before leaving Oxford for fieldwork, I attended workshops on conducting fieldwork in my home

country, undertaking sensitive fieldwork, and dealing with vicarious trauma with the aim of being better prepared. Jo Boyden describes the ways in which conflict and risk make an ethnographer's task of participant observation impossible at times (Boyden and Berry 2005, 238). Boyden writes about war zones, and others have similarly described work interrupted by violent conflict (Thuo 2013, 25–26). I would not compare the situation in my field sites to such extreme sites of conflict, yet gendered safety concerns came up in site visits for interviews held in the desolate area outside Holot detention facility, as well as the busy metropole of Tel Aviv (Williams 2009, 156; Løvgren 2019, 7; Sharp and Kremer 2006, 319).

South Tel Aviv is an area in which Israel's prostitution economy, drug markets, and related vagrancy are concentrated. I created tactics to deal with my fear and sense of danger, as many ethnographers have done before me (Williams 2009; Huggins and Glebbeek 2009), such as walking in busy and well-lit areas, avoiding walking alone late at night, speaking on the phone as I walked, carrying a metal water bottle as a potential weapon, and more. I fostered a habit of walking in the middle of empty roads, where street lighting is better and from where it would be harder to be grabbed and pulled into an alleyway. These tricks unfortunately did not help protect me against Israeli drivers who frequent the area to solicit prostitution at all hours of the day. Men often slowed their car and drove beside me or tried to solicit my attention.

My precautions did not prove useful when on a sunny mid-day in 2019 I was violently assaulted by a mentally unstable man in the middle of the street. I was lucky to emerge from this event only with a slightly fractured nose and bruising to my face, but traumatic feelings remained for months, and follow-up exchanges with police proved re-traumatising. I remain unable to delve deeply into intellectual or academic inferences from this event. Though markedly different and incomparable, I relate to what Eva Moreno has written about her survival of rape in the field: 'Any idea that I should put my situation to anthropological use felt blasphemic... There was nothing

professional in what I was going through. I could barely hold myself together' (Moreno 1995, 184). Such events make research tasks such as transcription, analysis, and prolonged periods of lone thinking quite difficult. As others have mentioned before me, it becomes very difficult to balance between prolonged research, ongoing engagement, and the need to protect one's wellbeing (Schneider 2020, 174–75).

Upon my return to Oxford there was no official response or protocol for such an occurrence. My supervisors were supportive and understanding and offered alternative resources for assistance. However, navigating systems on my own was a challenge considering my emotional state. I got through this period with the support of family and friends. I wished there were a better institutional framework to manage response to such events, their impact on researcher welfare and research progress. I hope that one day a holistic, streamlined framework might be put together for researchers returning from difficult experiences in the field.[57] Continued work in stressful and difficult circumstances is not beneficial to clearheaded reading, writing, or timely progress and thus impacts the research as well.

DEALING WITH DIFFICULT RESEARCH MATERIALS

Earlier in this chapter I elaborated on the advantages of familiarity and proximity to the communities I researched and discussed my embeddedness in my research setting over the previous decade. However, such closeness and long-term exposure was coupled with heavy emotional implications. These were compounded by my encounter with violence in the field, and

[57] Research on disciplines with high rates of practitioner traumatisation has offered organisational suggestions to mitigate trauma: adequate salary and time off, orientation, professional training, and supervision to feel competent and supported; security training; access to medical and mental health support services (Pearlman and Mckay 2008; Figley 1995; Killian 2008). At universities optional workshops or training are increasingly offered by to prepare for challenges of fieldwork, however safeguards are in no way entrenched in the institutional culture and researchers are left to seek out support on their own. Risk management, ethics and insurance strategies have been devised largely to safeguard the university, rather than ensure researcher wellbeing (Schneider 2020, 174–75).

repeated exposure to traumatic testimonies. In this final section I reflect on challenges of working with difficult topics and settings, and how they might be overcome to sustain the research process.

Negative emotional effects are a known side-effect of working with disadvantaged populations, difficult contexts, or traumatised groups over time. Repercussions include researcher burnout, secondary trauma or vicarious trauma. Though these terms were largely developed from observations and study of therapeutic and care professions (McCann and Pearlman 1990; Pearlman and Caringi 2009; Sexton 1999; Canfield 2005), or occupational stress (Maslach and Leiter 2016; Toppinen-Tanner, Kalimo, and Mutanen 2002; Maslach and Leiter 1997; Schaufeli and Enzmann 1998), they have also come to be associated with qualitative research (Johnson and Clarke 2003; Warr 2004; Kiyimba and O'Reilly 2015) and border control research in recent years (Bosworth 2014, 84; Bosworth and Kellezi 2017, 130–31; Bosworth 2017b; Gerlach 2018b, 148–50).

I tried to safeguard my wellbeing by finding practical ways to reduce exposure to trauma and tension, such as moving out of South Tel Aviv for the second half of the fieldwork period, and choosing only to interview outside Holot Facility. I knew that requesting permission to enter Holot would require stressful interactions with the authorities. I also thought it could be degrading, upsetting, or polarising for the men I interviewed to see me in the Facility, interacting with staff, and for them to be seen in what they felt was a degraded position. Outside the facility, even if for a short while, we were on a more equal footing and they could choose to speak to me or not.

Asylum seekers usually held back from sharing some of their worst experiences in great detail due to cultural norms concerning what men should speak about with women, and a desire to avoid upset. As Ibrahim explained simply: 'A Sudanese man, from the age of six, is not allowed to cry. We can talk about emotions, but it's a different culture, we don't cry.' Though this was helpful to my wellbeing, it was also liable to obscure or underplay the true extent of damage being done to respondents' wellbeing. Men tried to keep their composure, but I sensed when topics were

painful indicated by shaky voice, prolonged silence, or other mannerisms. Musa confirmed my assumption of silence as indicative of difficulty:

> *Sometimes I think, if we would have stayed in Sudan maybe we wouldn't be alive, they would have killed us. People here think our lives are ok, but really it has been hard. People ask, why are you quiet? don't you know anything? but they don't understand how much trouble we have been through, how much pain we hold.*
>
> *People keep wanting to interview you, but it's just painful. Two days ago, someone from abroad wanted to have an interview and I said no, I have no more strength.*

Knowing the challenges faced by men in sharing their feelings led me to take extra precautions never to pressure them and to be attentive to their state. It was difficult to balance between their desire to give their testimony and the difficulty of recounting it. It was also difficult to balance my desire to record it, with my concern to do no harm. Constantly striving for the right equilibrium involved emotionally-taxing alertness and self-scrutiny (Killian 2008).

After fieldwork was over, I transcribed all interviews verbatim. This involved listening to stories for a second time, slowly, and with more time to ponder the details. Research on social science transcription has indicated this part of research as particularly emotionally draining (Warr 2004, 581–82; Gerlach 2018b, 151–52; Liamputtong 2007, 89; Kiyimba and O'Reilly 2015, 49). It took me several months after my return from the field before I could transcribe, with intermittent experiences of what Yuen calls 'emotional paralysis' (Yuen 2011, 81), to describe a sense of despair and hopelessness emerging from exposure to other people's suffering. I started with the 'easier ones', interviews I remembered as less traumatic and shorter, and suffered through the rest.

Listening to interviews for a second time in some ways proved harder than conducting the interviews themselves. During the interviews, I had maintained a more professional position, in order to support participants telling difficult stories. As I listened to interviews in the quiet of the office or my home, there was more space to consider what was being said. Sometimes I cried, stopped in the middle, was overwhelmed with anger, sadness, or shame. I would occasionally need

to shower after completing a transcription, rest, or take the rest of the day off to relieve stress. It helped to push through transcribing, file the audio files away, and know I need not listen to them again. I took notes during each transcription, of ideas connected to the analysis, but would usually take a few weeks to work on other tasks before beginning analysis. This benefited a slightly removed examination of data, combined with more emotive transcription and field notes.

Many things that were routine to the shared experiences of detention, emerged as highly disturbing in retrospect. I felt this acutely after Holot facility was closed, and men were released back to the community to resume their lives as before. It made men's suffering in Holot seem pointless and cruel. In transcribing and analysing data, I implemented role-changes in my head in order to overcome upsetting content and context of my work. I set up a professional environment to work in. I tried not to transcribe in my own home, in order to separate my personal life from difficult materials. And when I had to work from home, I set up an 'office corner' where materials would be contained. This research process enabled analysis of interview materials and field notes with care, to best reflect participant experiences, and evaluate exclusion's wide ranging impacts.

CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed and reflected on the methods and methodological challenges involved in the study of African asylum seekers' detention in Israel, its impact on, and relationship with South Tel Aviv. Research encounters, like all forms of human interaction, are fraught with power imbalances. This is especially the case for studies of disenfranchised communities. Methodological considerations and choices reflect an awareness of risks and complexities entailed in such work, and attempt to mitigate them. The choices of ethnographic engagement, qualitative interviews, and grounded theory approach aim to provide in depth and honest reporting of complex participant experiences. Employing a feminist ethics of care throughout the research process entails attentiveness, responsibility, and use of dialogue to produce knowledge in an egalitarian way.

Together, these can change the ways we understand Holot, Neve Shaanan neighbourhood, and the lives lived and lost between them. I turn to discuss interview data in the following three chapters about lived experiences of, and perspectives on, exclusion and detention.

Chapter 4.

Israeli Residents in South Tel Aviv Discuss Life in the Neighbourhood and Detention Policy Impacts

In this first of three chapters that delve into interview data, I describe and analyse Jewish residents' accounts of life in Neve Shaanan neighbourhood in South Tel Aviv, where they live alongside large communities of asylum seekers and migrants. The analysis contributes to the thesis that we need to acknowledge the differential inclusion of *Mizrahi* citizens in South Tel Aviv in order to grasp the differential exclusion of African asylum seekers. Meaning, we need to understand how *Mizrahi* citizens have been marginalised within broader Israeli society, how this positioning shapes South Tel Aviv residents' experiences, how they view themselves and African asylum seekers, and what this teaches us about national dynamics of race and place.

This chapter is based on 14 in-depth interviews conducted in the first half of 2018. Subjects covered in the interviews focused on the period between 2013–2018, when detention in Holot was implemented for male asylum seekers from Sudan and Eritrea. As discussed at length in the introductory chapter, though detention was contested, it was ultimately deemed constitutional by Israel's Supreme Court, under a newly introduced legislative aim – 'prevention of settlement in city centres.'[58] The state's argument for, and the Court's acceptance of, this legislative aim relied heavily on anti-migrant testimonies from South Tel Aviv residents. South Tel Aviv became identified with urban insecurity, brought on by the presence of African asylum seekers. Detention in Holot was proposed as a remedy for residents' suffering. Legal, political and media discourse thus framed

[58] As discussed in previous chapters, Sudanese and Eritreans are the only migrant group in Israel's history to be subject to widescale collective administrative detention (over 10,000 people detained between 2013-2018), under the Prevention of Infiltration Law. The law was contested three times in the Supreme Court *(Adam, Eitan, and Desete* verdicts).

Israeli residents' wellbeing, their rights to safety and quality of life in opposition to asylum seekers' rights to liberty or freedom of movement.

This chapter introduces a theoretical contribution to existing literature on South Tel Aviv and migrant communities through the focus on differential inclusion. Observation and emphasis of Jewish citizen experiences of being differentiated, racialised, and marginalised problematises dominant binary explanations of citizenship and ethnonationalism as grounds for inclusion or exclusion. It contributes empirically by describing in depth experiences of a diverse resident group through qualitative methods. Most existing studies on residents' experiences in South Tel Aviv, or public attitudes toward migrants, rely on statistical analysis to inform theories on belonging, membership, rights and group threat (Raijman and Semyonov 2004a; Kemp and Raijman 2000; Schnell and Benjamini 2004b; Schnell 1999; Soen and Shechory Bitton 2015). Contemporary qualitative studies on South Tel Aviv resident experiences remain few (Shamur 2018; Ravid 2019; Cohen and Margalit 2015; Taslitsky 2013; Anteby-Yemini 2017) and often focus on a specific group, usually political activists.[59]

This dissertation joins past research in recognising the importance of ethnonationalism and citizenship in residents' self-identification, relationship with the state, and relative to fellow citizens and residents of Tel Aviv. However, analysis of resident testimonies in this chapter challenges key assumptions about belonging, intra-group divides based on binaries of citizenship and ethnicity used to explain migrant exclusion thus far (Raijman and Semyonov 2004a; Kritzman-Amir 2009; Ziegler 2015a; Shechory-Bitton and Soen 2016). I argue instead that by understanding

[59] See for example Cohen's research that focused on the *Save the South* campaign activists (Cohen 2015), Taslitsky's thesis researching experiences of members in The Action Committee of Southern Tel-Aviv (Taslitsky 2013). An important exception is Tal Shamur's ethnographic research in Hatikva neighbourhood which produced rich accounts of diverse resident experiences. Shamur records marginality, loss of identity and symbolic membership that he describes as 'melancholy' that envelopes life in Hatikva neighbourhood (Shamur 2018, 15, 137–57)

the differential inclusion of *Mizrahi* citizens in South Tel Aviv we can better understand the differential exclusion of African asylum seekers in Holot. I thus contribute to existing theory by introducing and implementing differential inclusion (Hall 1986, 23–26) as an analytical frame. It highlights several layers of citizen experiences in the neighbourhood, the centrality of racial formations and postcolonial hierarchies to resident experiences, and how such social constructs shaped residents' views on African asylum seekers.

Though all participants interviewed for this chapter were Jewish and Israeli citizens, they varied in age and in the duration of their residency in this area. Some residents were as old as 85 and lived in the neighbourhood for over 30 years, a majority group ranged in age between 28–50 who have lived in the area over a decade, and several 'newcomers' moved to the neighbourhood as recently as 2013. There were other differences too. Ten participants were of *Mizrahi* or mixed origin, while four were *Ashkenazi*. All but one owned their apartments in the neighbourhood, which implied socio-economic stability, yet some homeowners were working class (able to purchase their homes through government programmes) and others middle class. Participants' political opinions on national and local issues were also not the same. For example, older residents expressed fervent ethnonational sentiments, while younger residents rejected them. Ethnonationalism thus emerged as significant to all participants, however in ways that vary across generations and have yet to be explored in existing research.

In addition to recording interviews and informal conversations, I conducted hundreds of hours of participant observation in the neighbourhood. Observation was also informed by ethnographic data gathered by Tel Aviv Municipality research in 2015. The use of in-depth interviews, rather than surveys, uncovers complexities and variations in resident accounts of differential inclusion.

Part one of the chapter explores Jewish residents' feelings of being differentiated in South Tel Aviv. It begins with residents' narratives of life in the neighbourhood, expressions of belonging to the symbolic boundaries of Jewish state, reassertions of their contribution to it, or evaluations of Jewish presence in the neighbourhood. Feelings of belonging are contrasted with accounts of neglect, marginalisation and disenfranchisement, telling of an unequal, graded social order relative to the rest of the city. Resident testimonies of differential inclusion move us beyond dominant explanations of exclusion along the formal criteria of ethnonationalism and citizenship to belonging. Marginalisation of *Mizrahi* Jews in impoverished South Tel Aviv, in relation to the city's central and northern areas, indicates socio-spatial dynamics of differential belonging within the ethnonational class.

Part two of the chapter explores participants' stances toward African asylum seekers and migration policies. It pays special attention to their statements on asylum seekers and social order, their articulations of hierarchical scales of group value, and the relationship between race and place. Resident opinions about the impact of Holot are explored, with respect to the neighbourhood as well as broader, national migration policies. Participants describe African asylum seekers as a particularly racialised, gendered, and criminalised group in some residents' accounts. Testimonies contextualise asylum seekers' presence in South Tel Aviv within its' wider history as a marginalised, racialised area. Residents' opinions on detention tell of relational socio-spatial dynamics in which *Mizrahi* citizens are marginalised compared to their *Ashkenazi* counterparts within the ethnonational body, but can look down on asylum seekers who remain in a far lower position. Symbolic membership in the Jewish citizen collective, even if in a degraded position, endowed citizens with a superior position to those non-Jewish migrants, especially of African origins. Gradations of belonging and exclusion thus emerge from testimonies, that indicate a relational, racialised hierarchical scale that is animated by postcolonial ideas of valued culture and origins.

The chapter presents more than just a description of citizen life in a racialised and marginalised part of the city, where asylum seekers reside, and from which they were excluded. It provides a complex and contextualised view of how racialised differentiation operates in Tel Aviv, how it is experienced by a group of citizens, and how it changes across generations and time. Citizens experiences of differential inclusion, and how they shape their lives in the state, help explain African asylum seekers' differential exclusion in the chapters that follow.

CITIZEN EXPERIENCES OF DIFFERENTIAL INCLUSION

> *On August 16, 1993, the new Tel Aviv Central Bus Station was opened with a festive event featuring the then-Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Mayor Shlomo Lahat and other official delegates. The next morning, tens of thousands of buses flooded the little streets and allies around the monstrosity. The horrible noise, the thick smoke – I thought it couldn't get worse. I was wrong. Evidently the stepsons and daughters of the state can always expect the worst. The smoky buses were joined by drug dealers and pimps who turned the neighbourhood into a hub for the trafficking of women and for drug dealing — with the encouragement of the state. Doesn't every democratic state need a backyard to safeguard its front yards?*
>
> Shula Keshet, executive director of Achoti (Sister) - for Women in Israel
> Tel Aviv City Council Member from South Tel Aviv (Keshet 2014)

The 'stepson and daughters' of the state referenced in the quotation above are predominantly *Mizrahi* residents of Neve Shaanan neighbourhood. This section discusses the most dominant theme in resident testimonies about life in the neighbourhood – their sense of partial inclusion or unequal membership in the Jewish family. The Jewish identity of the state, city, or self were frequently entwined in descriptions, explanations, legitimations, or life stories of participants and are explored first. These are followed by equally dominant accounts of anger, disappointment, disillusion at being marginalised, neglected, or discriminated against by the ethnonational 'family' to which they nominally belong. Discussed together, these testimonies provide a vivid picture of the varied ways in which hierarchical differentiation is experienced.

JEWISH CITIZENSHIP IN SOUTH TEL AVIV

This section reviews how ethnonational politics, and discussions on belonging to the Jewish collective, emerged as extremely significant in everyday lives of citizens in Neve Shaanan. The Jewish identity of the state, city, or self were frequently entwined in descriptions, explanations, legitimations, or life stories of participants. Ethnonational sentiments were repeatedly brought up to emphasise resident inclusion in the Jewish polity, contribution to Jewish citizenship, or critique of ethnonationalism by younger residents. As ethnonational citizenship forms the bedrock for inclusion in the state, this theme sets the backdrop against which differential inclusion will be examined.

Most of the older residents who live in South Tel Aviv are *Mizrahi* Jews, born and raised in Middle Eastern, Asian or North African Muslim countries, as Jewish minorities prior to the establishment of Israel. They tend to perceive migrants as a threat to the Jewish identity of the state, interweaving their opinions with personal stories and Jewish collective history. Haim and Sarah, who insist on being interviewed together, are a married couple in their 80s and have lived in Neve Shaanan for over 55 years. Although they met and married in Israel, both have similar arrival stories and enjoy recounting their journeys. They came from a neighbouring Arab country, as teenagers, by foot. They walked at night and hid in the brush by the day, until they crossed the border.

Older residents seldom reflect on similarities between their journey and those of asylum seekers today, as their ethnic connection to Israel legitimated their unauthorised border crossing. Haim describes his fears and difficulties having lived as a young Jewish boy in an impoverished Arab city, before finally coming to Israel, where people were 'more developed'. Sarah remembers the sadness she felt at leaving her parents behind, 'crying, sad, missing my mother', and the shock of moving from a financially stable family home to the poverty and estrangement she faced upon

arrival in Israel. Sarah and Haim moved to Neve Shaanan in 1963, with four daughters, to a one-bedroom apartment that they eventually purchased with municipal social assistance and loans. They previously lived in another South Tel Aviv neighbourhood that repeatedly flooded in winter, due to poor infrastructure. In the early years enjoyed the city bustle, proximity to family, and Haim's work as a milkman. With many *Mizrahi* Jews settled nearby, Haim describes a sense of community alongside impoverishment:

> *Only millionaires had cars. We had bicycles, walking, carriage drawn by horse or donkey. This neighbourhood was charming. Plenty of people, everyone would talk to each other. What was bad about it was the buses – before the central bus station, it was hard to walk down the streets. The smog was hard, but still – we were happy. Neighbours would speak to each other, say Shabbat Shalom [Jewish Sabbath greeting], we wouldn't lock our doors – kids would come and go freely.*

Another participant, Micky, speaks of his mother's childhood in the neighbourhood. He explains it was always very multicultural, 'like today, however, it was Jews from all over the world, and doors were open wherever you went. There was a feeling of safety.' For these three residents, a sense of community, freedom, familiarity and safety sprang from a shared ethnic background (Smith 1996; Bauman 2001). Haim and Sarah recall how Neve Shaanan used to have a large community from their country of origin, but over time people left, or died. Synagogues closed when non-Jews moved in. With time they have come to feel like a minority in their neighbourhood, these feeling are coupled with anti-migrant sentiments. The combination of disgruntled feelings and anti-migrant sentiments have been recorded across established communities worldwide, as residents face changes of global migration (Elias and Scotson 1965; Young 1999; Pratsinakis 2018).

Leah arrived in the neighbourhood shortly after Haim and Sarah and describes it similarly: 'Jewish, everyone was Jewish. Not like today, when it's really become like Africa.' She opposes asylum seeker presence in the neighbourhood, due to their disturbance of what she describes as a more peaceful, Jewish-dominated, status quo:

> *I don't care for the infiltrators, they don't respect our religion or our Sabbath. I want to rest on Sabbath in the Jewish state. They need to know that if they're coming into our country they need to respect our laws and not open a church behind my house, making noise on Shabbat and Yom Kippur [Day of Atonement]. It's unheard of – would I go to another country and do whatever I want? I couldn't. Even in France, Jews can't do what they want – with the antisemitism they face now…*

Her statements express feelings of threat or anxiety that have been identified as central to negative public opinions toward migrants in Israel (Ben-Nun Bloom, Arikan, and Lahav 2015; Canetti-Nisim, Ariely, and Halperin 2008; Kalir 2015). Older residents often justify their claims for Jewish exclusivity by citing historical persecutions of Jews and present-day conflicts, intermingled with references to threat and anxiety for Jewish security or population majority. Leah explains her antagonistic feelings in the following way:

> *I don't hate anyone, God forbid, everyone deserves to have a place – let them find one in Africa – Africa is massive. We are a state that you can barely spot on the map. Tiny. So, we need goys [non-Jews] here? Especially Sudanese? Who are Muslims? As if we don't have enough Muslims who want to kill us, now we need them among us? When rockets were flying overhead [in a recent military operation] I went down two flights of stairs in my building, and I found them [African migrants] laughing. I said, "go the hell back to your country – rockets are falling on my home, do I go to Sudan?"...*
>
> *Jews didn't have a country, they fled from place to place. My ancestors – we also fled – in the expulsion from Spain. We didn't have a country, and now we do. We were kicked out of everywhere, and in Germany we were killed, so we established a state. Herzl bought this land to make our state. So why do we need all of Africa here.*

Her statements resonate with public discourse of 'asylum seeker securitisation' (Stevens 2013; Huysmans 2006). Like Leah, those accounts associate asylum seekers with security risks. Their numbers are considered a demographic threat that forms a 'security and demography nexus' in Israel (Berman and Ziegler 2015; Ziegler 2015a). Some scholarship on asylum seekers' securitisation in Israel explains xenophobic mobilisation as part of a 'Palestinianisation of asylum seekers', which associates asylum seekers as dangerous allies to Palestinians against Israel (Duman 2015, 1238; Yacobi 2011; Kalir 2015). Participant accounts indicate otherwise. References to

Palestinians were invoked to describe wider threat or victimisation, they were not directly associated with asylum seekers at any point. Asylum seekers were perceived more as a demographic threat than a security one.

Many of the older people reference the Holocaust in explaining their feelings toward migrants. For some, the Holocaust symbolises an ever-looming existential threat that demands safeguarding the Jewish collective:

> *Sarah: If we have a problem where would we go? Who would take us? Egypt? Syria? That's what happened with Hitler, nobody received us. And now, where would we go? To the land of the negroes? Our situation is very difficult. Terrorists aren't looking for peace… No one said anything during the Holocaust… No one had our back, we need to take care of ourselves.*
>
> *Haim: It's like they are taking away our country. We don't have a synagogue, no school, no kindergarten, no park to sit at. We want to go to the garden – it's all negroes – we can't sit next to them, we feel lonely…*
>
> *Sarah: [cuts in] our state is gone.*
>
> *Haim: We don't hate them, but we want our country for ourselves. We're afraid for our country… [they go back to discussing Arab aggression…].*

Elderly *Mizrahi* residents reference the Holocaust as part of a narrative of collective Jewish history, even though their families did not experience it first-hand. *Ashkenazi* residents recount their family histories, like Micky who describes how his family came to Israel after the Holocaust and settled in South Tel Aviv in the 1940s. His account includes mixed references to Jewish flight, refugee status, living in squalor, but also a moral commitment that stems from such experiences:

> *My grandparents came after the Holocaust, in 1946, from Hungary. My mom was born here. They used to live like refugees – a one-room apartment, two families, Primus stove for cooking in the stairway. On Neve Shaanan Street.*

While Micky objects to asylum seekers' presence in the neighbourhood, his family history leads him to make exceptions toward some. He expresses special interest in helping children of refugees, and explains 'my grandmother was not allowed as a child to attend schools because she was Jewish,

so morally – I can't be against children.' Other residents also invoke a sense of moral commitment and identification with migrants and refugees, based on past experiences of persecution.

These two opposing interpretations of a Holocaust legacy – as a continued collective threat, or moral responsibility – characterise the Israeli 'politics of compassion' toward asylum seekers (Paz 2011; Willen 2010b) that relies on the Holocaust to justify both exclusionary and humanitarian responses. Whereas older residents cite the Holocaust to evoke existential threat, Michele, who lives in the neighbourhood with her husband and teenage daughter, says she becomes angry when she hears Israelis mobilise against asylum seekers. She explains that 'it takes [her] back to the Holocaust, to my grandmother, grandfather and the ways Jews were excluded.' She cannot fathom that Jews protest against Sudanese people who also experienced a genocide.

References to the Holocaust, Jewish history, and struggle for statehood are used to legitimate anti-migrant sentiment, and also to express control of place and re-assert belonging to the symbolic boundaries that govern it. Residents interweave assertions of their Jewish identity and history, as they discuss neighborhood dynamics. Jewishness and belonging are also frequently mentioned in connection to distribution of rights, and competition over limited resources. Older residents tend to speak of citizenship or formal membership to the nation, more than younger ones. Sarah describes rights as a good that should be reserved for citizens. She expresses concern about increased numbers of migrant and subsequent claims to rights:

> *Our country is small, and we have plenty of problems already… I don't care that there are other people, I know they have rights – but you can't bring first the Thai people, and then others, and they all have children. Every negro starts bringing children and they think if they bring kids, they will have rights here.*

Sarah fears migrant childbirth in Israel will lead to overwhelming numbers, formal belonging, and rights claims. Her husband is more willing to share rights, but only for a limited time: 'we can give them rights like work, hospitals – all the good conditions we have in Israel. For 2–3 years. But not

more because then they'll have children.' His readiness to accept migrants is limited by the threat of permanency and demographic threat. He makes sure to explain that the threat is well founded as migrants never bring just one child 'they bring dozens, they don't care. So now we have the negroes, the Thai, the Chinese, they're all having babies.' Feelings of cultural distinction that arise in competition around allocation of material and social rights are known to be a common response to immigration worldwide (Esses et al. 2001; Scheepers, Gijsberts, and Coenders 2002; Gorodzeisky 2013; Ben-Nun Bloom, Arikan, and Lahav 2015). In Israel they have been conceptualised as a prism through which we can evaluate 'degrees of membership' in Israeli society, or as representative of the country's incorporation regime (Shafir and Peled 2002; Raijman and Semyonov 2004a, 4; Rosenhek 2011). Both approaches describe a relational scale of rights entitlements based on levels of belonging to the ethnonational collective. Cohen and Margalit term ethnonational protectionist attitudes, such as those expressed by Haim and Sarah, as acts of 'defensive urban citizenship.' In such cases, anti-migrant attitudes reflect marginalised residents' protection of their rights to the city and its resources (Cohen and Margalit, 2015).

Several participants emphasise citizenship in their discussions on belonging and community. Alma describes how being the only Israeli citizen homeowner who lives in her building makes her feel 'foreign'. She is frustrated by her non-citizen neighbours' neglect and destruction of shared spaces. Having lived in South Tel Aviv for 26 years, she strongly believes that the influx of migrants from Africa to the area had had a negative effect, which should be resisted. She explains how large numbers of African migrants negatively affect the neighbourhood:

> *Once they started coming in masses, just masses of them, you start feeling more and more alone. Like you're the strange one, they look at you like – 'what are you human doing here?' And they tell you – 'it's not a place for Israelis'… It's a terrible feeling.*
>
> *For those coming from the outside, it looks beautiful – cosmopolitan. On Saturdays you see their ceremonies, the church, groups marching… it's all so nice. But when you're inside it, that*

> *niceness creates a feeling of foreignness and isolation – like you're out of place. As if this is your home, but you are not at home in it.*

Her words capture Cohen and Margalit's notion of a 'hollowed-out urban citizenship' that occurs in light of 'incongruence between national citizenship not just as a legal category, but as a rightfully earned status of belonging [that] is sharply contrasted with a compromised sense of citizenship at the urban level… often described in terms of feeling out of place in one's neighborhood, street or residential building' (Cohen and Margalit 2015, 675).

Alma explains that she lived alongside foreigners peacefully until increased numbers of African asylum seekers had created problems. She insists she does not racially discriminate but rather is bothered by their numbers: 'the main problem is their amount, relative to us.' She explains that when 'infiltrators' built their community at the expense of her own, she became active as a pro-deportation advocate.

Yana similarly describes frustration at being a minority citizen in her neighbourhood, which is 'at the heart of Israel's most modern, central town, and there is nothing Israeli about it.' While she approves of migrant presence in Israel, and even provisions of state assistance, she feels migrant settlement has gone too far:

> *It's very hard for me that there are no Israelis. Almost none. I have no problem living with foreign communities, but I want to feel slightly like I'm in my own country. I want a café near my house, a clinic, a normal supermarket – the basics, nothing fancy. Just to feel like I'm in my own country. On the Sabbath I walk around, and I am anywhere but Israel.*

For Yana and Alma, as well as for the elderly residents mentioned above, feelings of cultural threat, of being a minority citizen group in their national home are cause for antagonism toward non-citizens, as discussed in previous research on out-group threat (Schnell 1999; Raijman 2010; Kemp and Raijman 2000; Drori 2009). Testimonies resonate with the conceptualisation of citizenship as a membership marker in a 'community of value' (Anderson 2013), often used to differentiate citizens from non-citizens (Anderson, Gibney, and Paoletti 2011). Such feelings amongst older, or

'established', citizens are understood as forms of re-asserting or constructing national belonging, identified worldwide in light of globalisation (Elias and Scotson 1965; Young 1999; Bauman 2001). The desire for Jewish presence in the neighbourhood fits also with what Nissim Mizrahi terms a communitarian struggle for honour (Mizrachi 2011, 58–59), which becomes increasingly pronounced among disenfranchised groups due to a degraded sense of belonging.

Ethnonational politics were mentioned by all participants, however while older residents felt Jewish citizenship was positive and important to safeguard, other (usually younger) residents opposed or criticised Israel's ethnonational citizenship regime. Such opinions have been typically left out of existing literature on South Tel Aviv and will be shared here. In discussions on the Jewishness of the State or the neighbourhood, several participants resisted ethnonational discourse, and repeatedly explained the role of the media in propagating an ethnonational threat, that did not exist on the ground to serve ulterior political agendas. Armando, for example, opposed the presence of Sudanese and Eritreans in his neighbourhood and spoke harshly about them, yet did not view them as a threat:

> *With respect to Jewish identity, they're a drop in the population ocean, and there is no demographic threat to the Jewish majority. It's BS… this issue is important in the neighbourhood, but on a national level? It's a load of crap, it has no serious significance. It's a few tens of thousands of people in two and a half neighbourhoods in Tel Aviv. That's all it is. There is no danger here for the Jewish state.*

Michele similarly described media and political framing of asylum seekers as a national identity threat as political manipulation: 'There is no demographic threat here, Eritrean women are not coming off planes to have babies here… it's exploitation of residents' feeling of neglect and fueling their hatred.' Claims of cultural threat by asylum seekers were therefore understood as a form of scapegoating, covering up for the state's disinclination to serve its citizens adequately. This view was consistent among most interviewees. Natalie similarly reacted incredulously to the supposed threat: '40,000 people?! Come on! It doesn't make even a small demographic shift.' She explained

she was 'not really Zionist anymore.' She felt personally and positively connected with Judaism yet did not think Judaism should be relevant to the state. With regards to national identity and the citizenship regime, she suggested a 'bi-national state, that's on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict front… and that asylum seekers will integrate into our society, that their kids and grandkids will marry Israelis.'

For residents like Nikki, ethnonationalism is a source of conflict. She explains that migrants' 'lack of access to citizenship, and subsequent rights, services and equal participation in society, is at the heart of the problem,' due to Israel's Jewish migration regime. She expands:

> *I believe Zionism is racism and there shouldn't be a Jewish state here. That's the main cause for problems. There's no immigration law, no citizenship attaining process for people who have lived here over a decade – whether refugees or not.*

Nikki's critical approach to the state's citizenship regime is shared by many of the younger participants (in their 20s and 30s). Most express this stance as a cosmopolitan, liberal worldview rather than explicitly anti-Zionist. These participants hold post-national, bi-national or secular democratic visions for the state. Many resist the ethnonational discourse about the neighbourhood, and insist it is used to advance alternative political aims. They repeatedly criticise how ethnic criteria for inclusion in the State creates to unequal distribution of rights, differentiates between groups, and produces conflict. As Leila explained:

> *Supposedly politicians elevate South Tel Aviv to the national agenda, but they've turned it into 'South Tel Aviv vs. the Refugees.' As if its 'Us vs. Them.' There's no reason for things to be like this. Why are they making us fight over crumbs, when some people enjoy the entire cake… they brought them all here, contained them here, and now you see how Bibi reaps the benefits. It creates headlines on how Bibi is helping South Tel Aviv residents, but actually, he could have done something long ago to resolve this problem and he didn't.*

This opinion was repeated by residents, that amplification of ethnonational conflict is part of a symbolic boundary demarcation for political aims, rather than concrete concern for the situation on the ground.

Counterviews to the ethnonational citizenship regime, and the Jewish nature of the state, have not been explored in academic scholarship on South Tel Aviv to date, though they have been hinted at in the literature about multiculturalism and migrant integration in Israel and elsewhere (Shafir and Peled 2002; Benhabib 2004; Soysal 1994). They provide an important insight to the field by presenting heterogeneity of opinions within the Jewish community in South Tel Aviv, as well as change over time and generations. Changing attitudes across generations can be attributed to a diversity of experiences, especially with regard to the state. Younger participants were born into a stable reality of a strong Israeli state, while older residents lived through Jewish persecution abroad, struggles for statehood, and the difficult conditions of its early decades. These factors, alongside difference in levels of religiosity, a changed political landscape, and individual life experiences have bred a diversity of stances regarding the Jewish nature of the State, and Jewishness of Neve Shaanan. Nonetheless, all participants reiterated how ethnonational inclusion was central to dynamics in, and discourse about, the neighbourhood (whether they agreed with it or not). All explained how systemic neglect of the neighbourhood compared to other areas of the state and city degraded their sense of inclusion.

RELATIONAL MARGINALISATION IN SOUTH TEL AVIV

> *No community services, sidewalks were messed up, no green areas, trash everywhere, rats… no sense of security. Tel Aviv Municipality didn't need to choose my neighbours, but it shouldn't turn a blind eye to crime, drugs, and prostitution. Criminal activities continue on the street and the police does nothing…*
>
> Mark, Neve Shaanan resident

All residents spoke at length about Neve Shaanan's neglect and breakdown. Older people cited historical difficulties, lack of municipal planning and lack of attention from the early years. Their testimonies highlighted how symbolic belonging to the Jewish collective was degraded by material marginalisation. Haim and Sarah recalled various neighbourhood ills, including overwhelming

noise and dust of the old bus station, lack of green spaces, no good schools or spaces for kids to play. All were exacerbated by the difficulties of working-class life shared by older residents, as earlier research has demonstrated at length (Schnell 2000; Hatuka 2010; Bernstein 2011).

Residents who moved into the neighbourhood at later points described their shock upon arrival, when they discovered extreme neglect and lawlessness, unknown in other parts of the city. For some, like Mark, finding a neighbourhood like 'the Wild West' was not a deterrent as it brought down housing prices and enabled him to circumvent laws himself. He divided his property illegally and rented it out to migrants for extra income.

Rebekah recalled that 'Neve Shaanan resembled a site where a nuclear bomb had landed, nothing looked like civilisation, even trees don't grow here.' She, like Mark, moved to the neighbourhood in 2008, because that is where she could afford to buy. Both addressed their surrounding neglect through community activism. They were frustrated with municipal authorities that ignored public complaints about hazards, allowed infrastructures to deteriorate, and did not adequately remove trash, or light streets. When Micky moved to the area five years after Rebekah and Mark, he faced similar longstanding problems:

> *Tons of problems, all around. I mean – not only the infiltrators, or the refugees – whatever you want to call them. There're a thousand other problems accumulated over many years. From air pollution to vandalism, tons of crime, rats, nothing is clean, huge amounts of sewage continuously flow into Neve Shaanan. Filth everywhere…*
>
> *There's no infrastructures, there were no sidewalks, wherever you looked there were drug dealers, prostitutes, and all sorts of junkies. No lights in stairways, electricity was disconnected. It was scary.*

All interviewees cited structural, longstanding issues that created a hostile and hazardous environment. Each resident was bothered by different kinds of lawlessness or crime. For Natalie, the presence of 'people in prostitution, junkies or drug dealers' was more disturbing than the

presence of asylum seekers. For others, the increased arrival of asylum seekers exacerbated an already difficult reality, adding to pre-existing layers of physical and social neglect.

These layers of neglect were visible in Leah's building, and the environment she had observed since moving to Neve Shaanan in 1967. At the time we met she lived on the sixth floor of an old building with no elevator, and a harrowing staircase (Figure 17). The climb up and down the stairs was full of hazards. Light fixtures in the dark and steep stairway never worked, making it difficult to spot crumbling steps, trip hazards of garbage, 'junkies' or needles. She recalled opening her apartment door one day, when an unconscious man perched against it fell inside. The ground floor entryway was often occupied by drug users at any hour of the day, cooking or consuming drugs. If drug users were not present, their food leftovers, drug paraphernalia, or excrement were often left behind. Her home was located one block from the Central Bus Station (Figure 18) with an entrance slightly below street level, which made it a convenient stopping point for both drug users, drug dealers and travelers in need of a lavatory. All these factors restricted Leah's mobility, she ventured out once per day, escorted by her son.

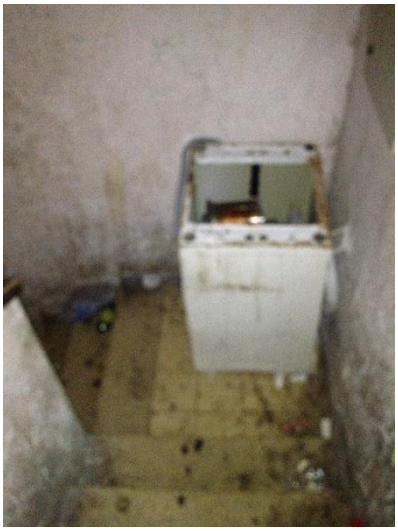


Figure 17. The walk down from Leah's apartment (Photo Credit: M Ravid)



Figure 18. The view down Levinsky street, near Leah's house, under the bridge leading to the Central Bus Station (Photo Credit: M Ravid)

Leah believed migrants and asylum seekers exacerbated her difficulties. She was one of the last Israeli residents in her building. The bottom half of the building formerly housed industrial spaces in accordance with Municipal Building Plan F that assigned mixed-use of residential and industrial purposes to the same property. The large spaces had since been illegally divided up into small units and rented to migrants. She explained resentfully how hard it was to live there, communicate, or build neighborly relations. As a citizen she also suffered municipal sanctions that migrants did not:

> *Old residents have died or moved. The bottom 3 floors in our building were made for industrial purposes, with only 12 apartments built above them. Then people with money bought those big spaces and split them up to rooms, rooms, rooms. Now think about it – each one of these rooms needs a shower and bathroom [all illegally arranged] … One time I got a water bill for 3,500 shekels [roughly 900GBP]. They said the meters were broken, or a pipe burst – is that my fault?… I blame those who own the place and rent to them… only five residents in the entire building are Israelis.*
>
> *The situation is not good. The stench, no cleaning, no house committee. Everything they have in their house, they throw out the door… There's constant turnover, I don't know them, how could I know them… I don't know – Eritrean or Sudanese, I can't tell the difference. For me it's the same… you can't throw your trash out the window – take a look outside [she points out an unplanned garbage dump in the back of her house] – do they behave like this in their home? And then the municipality gives me fines – A 700 shekels [roughly 150GBP] fine for garbage in the yard, and I live on the 6th floor?!*

Leah grouped all African migrants together. She knew they were neither citizens nor Jewish. She did not care for their stories as she was unable to understand them, and because of her own difficulties caused by their presence. Her anger and blame were also directed at the municipality, and wealthy landlords who divided up their properties without bearing the cost or responsibility for damages incurred. Leah felt as though migrants' rights are prioritised while she, a citizen, is struggling, disregarded by the institutions meant to serve her. Lisa Anteby Yemini described this kind of alienation felt by most south Tel Aviv residents as an 'erosion of their urban rights' with regard to both non-Jewish migrants and in comparison to residents of north Tel Aviv (Anteby-Yemini 2017, 11).

Residents' harsh feelings often stemmed from material strife as well as from their acute awareness of their relative standing compared to other parts of the city. They repeatedly cited neglect not only as an objectively difficult experience, but as one that was intensified by a sense of degradation compared to the north and centre of the city. Leah recalled: 'the mayor said – I contained all the migrants in South Tel Aviv – like what? We're your garbage dump? You don't want them to make a mess and get the rest of your city dirty?' Relational disenfranchisement was experienced as intentional and demeaning. Alma argued that Jewish residents of South Tel Aviv were excluded and disregarded in their city, as the municipality concentrated migrants in southern neighbourhoods, and catered to their needs. She described a feeling of being 'completely dismissed, made to feel totally invisible, and not taken seriously,' that produced a sense of being unwanted. Such feelings of neglect and degradation have been identified as motivating forces in anti-migrant sentiments, when marginalised populations 'relegated to the lowest economic and identity echelons of urban society with little chance of ever moving up (or out) – resort to practices of resistance towards ethnic 'others' who are perceived to be infringing upon their modest turf' (Cohen 2015, 171).

Alongside economic and material marginalisation, residents felt their neighbourhood was criminalised through police disregard of heightened criminal activity that was allowed to continue in plain sight. Micky explained inaction as policy, as police was: 'not bothered that whore-houses continued to operate in Neve Shaanan, as schools opened up nearby and children walked by exposed to everything, so long as it doesn't spill over to other parts of the city.' He described Tel Aviv's mayor, who used to be a school principal, as a hypocrite, who 'would never allow for a whore-house to operate within a several mile radius of his school.' As evidence for the deliberate policy of concentrating criminality, Micky shared a story from his own building:

> … *a crime family from Jaffa took over one of the apartments in my building and turned it into a Cash Machine [slang for a place people come to withdraw drugs]. 24 hours a day people*

> *would come looking for drugs... And really – under the supervision of the city and police. They allowed for it to operate, it was convenient for them that it was concentrated in one place.*

Drug use and prostitution remained ubiquitous on Micky's street, continued uninterrupted, most hours of the day. His street and these activities were in sight of the police station located at the end of the block.

Michele explained that 'the municipality has a vested interest that the area remained a slum.' She perceived the long-term deterioration of South Tel Aviv as a form of economic governance used to bring down property value and draw private investment. Leila also cited area devaluation as a catalyst for gentrification. It enabled the municipality to 'make deals with real-estate tycoons who are slowly buying up the neighbourhood. This way they can also push out the indigenous [*Mizrahi*] Jewish residents.'

At least two ethnicity/race divides were conjured in testimonies – one between affluent *Ashkenazi* citizens of Central and North Tel Aviv, and impoverished *Mizrahi* citizens in the South; a second between South Tel Aviv's Jewish population, and its non-Jewish migrants. Alma's account of belonging was telling, as it demonstrated how social hierarchies played out spatially across the city, and how they were felt by those relegated to a 'lower' place:

> *Every day, all around us, we feel like we don't belong, we're not a part of something. Leave me one place, to speak my language. To be with people who share my problems… People in North Tel Aviv don't get it, they take these things for granted. AND they call us racist. Why not, reduce us, make us even smaller.*

Alma's feelings of being excluded from, and stigmatised by, residents of North Tel Aviv expressed her sense of being differentiated: she is part of the Jewish collective and seeks to be with people of her own ethnic origin, but she is looked down on by those who inhabit a higher place in the intra-Jewish hierarchy.

Mark echoed this sentiment when he described the recent media and political attention afforded to South Tel Aviv as cynical: 'a place that has been neglected for so long, that suffered from such deep, foundational, intentional policy problems, and suddenly they use it as an excuse for the State of Israel's demographic problems… quite tragic to blame this on the weak.' In his commentary, Mark noted the power differential by those in government and their marginalised citizens. Natalie also discussed politics and power differentials, in connection to ethnic divides: 'What do they [politicians] mean by 'South Tel Aviv residents'? As far as our, mostly *Ashkenazi* Likud government is concerned – they just need to quiet down some *Mizrahi* grievances. South Tel Aviv has been made into some symbol of a '*Mizrahi* monster' that must be fed so it remains contained, kept within its lines.' The graded scale of worth and power noted by Alma, Mark and Natalie mapped on to national ethno-class divides, inequalities and stigmas (Smooha 2004; Mizrachi 2016; Chetrit 2010; Peled 1990; Bernstein and Swirski 1982), and was mirrored in the socio-spatial dynamics of ethno-class segregation of Tel Aviv (Hershkovitz 1983; Schnell and Benjamini 2004b; Marom 2014a; Rotbard 2015, pt. 2; Cohen and Margalit 2015, 678–83).

Participants recounted how life in extreme and continued marginalisation in Israel's global city produced a strong sense of material inequality, and social degradation in their national home. Residents felt differentially included in the Jewish polity, along ethno-class lines, and in relation to the city's north. Experiences of differentiation were made clear in restatements of geographical inequality throughout the city's history that remain present in everyday lives, and their interplay with dynamics of class and ethnicity (Hall 1986, 23–25). Cohen and Margalit similarly conceptualised the bifurcation of Tel Aviv along economic, political and ethnic lines as a fragmented 'relational urban citizenship' in which *Mizrahim* in south Tel Aviv are at once a part of the Jewish majority ruling the state, and a marginalised minority within it (Cohen and Margalit 2015, 678–83). The next section discusses how this differentiated, disenfranchised group of

citizens experience life alongside asylum seekers in the neighbourhood, and how these fit in Tel Aviv's socio-spatial order of ethno-class division.

CITIZENS' PERCEPTIONS OF ASYLUM SEEKERS, SOCIAL ORDER AND DISORDER

ASYLUM SEEKERS, SOCIAL ORDER AND DISORDER

Most of those I interviewed conceived asylum seeker presence in South Tel Aviv as one more social problem intermingled with a long line of social and physical hazards that surrounded them. Social problems with African asylum seekers were most commonly related to concentrations of young, single, men, and their involvement with alcohol and crime. This section examines how residents perceived this racialised and criminalised group in their neighbourhood.

Most interviews included the common use of the word *Hamara* – an Arabic word used to describe a social venue, café or pub where people (mostly men) sat, smoked, played games, consumed alcohol and passed time. This was used to describe Eritrean and Sudanese social venues, ubiquitous in the neighbourhood. When Guy first moved from central Tel Aviv, he was struck by the number of *Hamaras* in the area where 'Eritrean and Sudanese men sit and drink, and it doesn't look good.' He described a sense of state-permitted chaos and wished order would be enforced in the neighbourhood. He blamed state policies toward asylum seekers for the phenomenon, as 'people don't have work permits, so they sit, get bored, drink, get drunk, look for ways to get money… they lose their way.'

Residents associated *Hamaras* with substance abuse, violence and illegality. Armando described his first years in the neighbourhood being greatly impacted by such behaviours:

> *There was a real feeling of lawlessness. Really. It was hard. The street was hard. Police were understaffed... Tonnes of homeless Africans in the gardens. Hamaras as far as the eye can see. A lot more fights, because alcohol fueled it.*
>
> *A shit environment. Fights, stabbing, and mainly – most importantly in my experience – a total lack of consideration for the other. In almost any interaction with this community…*

> *There's significant variation among the African population – there's families, who want to have peace and quiet and a less violent environment. But the unmarried young men, who steal, drink and get drunk… they're intolerable.*

Indeed, many participants associated these places and behaviours with a specific category of people – single, male, African asylum seekers (more often Eritreans). Though South Tel Aviv was full of diverse populations, many of them engaged in illegal activities, this group seemed to stand out as particularly 'disrespectful' and 'disruptive.' A gendered, racialised and criminalised category thus emerged through such repeated references. Micky similarly described them:

> *… you know the Shabab [youth in Arabic, refers to single Eritrean men]? I'm not saying it in a racist way, I'm telling you what I see with my own eyes. The Shabab, not everyone, I'm not generalising, but there is not a single day that there isn't violence with them in the Hamaras. Listen it's impossible... Sudanese, Darfuris, that were my neighbors, we used to sit and talk, it was fun. They don't have a drinking culture… Eritreans – the drinking, and violence, is terrible.*

Armando and Micky's use of Arabic words – *Hamara* and *Shabab* – alongside descriptions of violent and disruptive behavior of this population, is indicative of group image construction. Micky exhibits awareness for using racialising terms (by proclaiming he is not racist) but continues to employ them in a derogatory way. Associations with Arab terms or culture conjures Orientalist imagery often used in Israeli ethnic relations, in which European cultures are deemed refined, civilised, law abiding and superior. Contrastingly, Oriental cultures, and particularly Arabs, are considered unbridled, violent, lawless, and inferior. A group image is placed upon single male asylum seekers through their association with 'backwards' Arab tropes (Khazzoom 2003; Said 1978; Massad 1996), regardless of most Eritreans being Christian and not speaking Arabic.

Many of the women I spoke to were fearful of Eritrean men's drinking and violence. Alma explained how she planned her work schedule and negotiated walking routes to avoid risk, meaning: threatening African asylum seekers. She claimed she could tell the difference between African ethnic groups and, similarly to Micky and Armando, associated Eritrean men with

increased criminality, substance abuse and violence. Physical characteristics thus became 'signifiers of difference' (S. Hall 2017, 39) that assumed a host of negative connotations:

> *You have to make constant calculations – do I walk on this street, or take the other? You plan a route ahead, what time will you return? When will it get dark? I walk in the middle of the road… it becomes second nature, it sits in your subconscious and once in a while you catch yourself, like 'WTF?' Why do I need to be thinking of all of this?*
>
> *You see more Eritrean junkies. Some Sudanese, but I see mostly Eritreans, you can tell by the body type… One time a guy walked toward me, totally high, looking at me… I felt like a prey. And I'm not the kind of person that imagines things or gets hysterical, or talks like a victim… But what if one of them comes up to me, all high, and punches me because he's on a trip. What would I do? How would my pepper spray help? You have to have your battle instincts ready all the time.*

Alma's fear and insecurity in her home environment was channelled toward risk management that relied on racialised and criminalised constructs of Eritrean asylum seekers. Yana tried not to generalise about Sudanese and Eritreans. Yet, she was frustrated by the ways asylum seekers contributed to the area's lawlessness:

> *I live in constant conflict – on one hand there are the good people among them who just want to live in peace, I mean among the foreign community, the Africans. On the other hand, I can't ignore the fact that there are others here – refugees or not – that take advantage, steal, vandalise, destroy property, that you just want… not even deport them, stick them on a rocket and blast them out of here. Like, get the fuck out, what are you doing here? It makes your blood boil. It's upsetting. And you can't say anything, 'cause you don't want your head bashed in. There's no police enforcement, they just let them go. If they commit crimes and are allowed to carry on, what do they learn from that?*

While these two women acknowledged that non-African men also posed risks and misbehaved, they attributed excessive drunken and violent tendencies to Eritrean men. They associated African men with dangerousness, volatility, disorderly conduct that remained unsanctioned and unaccountable to authorities (Haldrup, Koefoed, and Simonsen 2016). Women's narratives fit with what has been described as a moral panic constructed around asylum seekers at large and specifically in Israel (Cohen 2002; Welch 2003; Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994; Orr and

Ajzenstadt 2020). Moral panic has been identified in the discursive construction of Asylum seekers as threatening, polluting, and conspicuous in public space, yet outside of police vision and control (Orr and Ajzenstadt 2020, 152–55), relegating them the role of 'folk devils' deserving of harsh treatment.

Yana acknowledged that she was influenced by politicians and the media portrayals of asylum seekers as sexually violent. She had never interacted with Sudanese or Eritreans before living in the neighbourhood, but had 'read all these terrible posts online, that strike fear in you… [my] level of anxiety rose… [I] would walk around totally on edge, in hysterical fear.' After moving into a flat in the neighbourhood she described how her views had changed: 'I was not nonchalant you know, but not living in fear and not in anxiety.' She sounded almost surprised that in four years of residing in Neve Shaanan, she had not experienced significant harm, 'no robberies, no sexual assault or rape attempts.'

Indeed, none of the residents interviewed (of whom nine were women) had experienced a violent or sexual assault by an asylum seeker. Yet, they continued to view the men in these terms. Leah explained she was 'not asking for much, just to live in peace and quiet, to walk around freely.' She recalled earlier years, when she was never afraid to walk around alone at night, but now: 'I'm afraid I'll be assaulted in my stairway – like my neighbour. A Sudanese or Eritrean guy attacked her, 17 years old, took down his pants and grabbed her – she's 53.' Residents usually cited violent occurrences as cautionary tales. These stories justified fear and reinforced a group image of violent, black males that pose an imminent threat.

Though police and research data does not indicate overrepresentation of asylum seekers in criminal behaviour, residents exhibit a fear of potential criminality and risk associated with this group (Shechory-Bitton and Soen 2016). As Ajzenstadt and Orr explain in their research on asylum seeker group construction, systemic criminalisation in such cases is not dependant on actual

deviancy but rather serves to 'define the moral boundaries of a society/nation… to consolidate and reproduce a shared identity within those boundaries, to establish the dominance of a particular model of citizenship, and to develop hierarchies of citizenship, nationalism and deservingness' (Orr and Ajzenstadt 2020, 144). The criminalising construction of African asylum seekers thus differentiates them for exclusion from the social and national order.

While Leah depicted difficulties and fear related to living amongst asylum seekers, others emphasised that difficulties were inherent to the neighbourhood, rather than asylum seekers. Nikki stated confidently: 'I have no fear. I've never been afraid, and I've never had a negative experience [with asylum seekers].' In fact, she explained that Israeli men who try to solicit prostitution are far more of a problem: 'It sucks – but that too, I'm not afraid of it, I'm infuriated by it.' Leila felt similarly, she avoided streets where Israeli men solicit prostitution, she explained frustratedly: 'Even if you tell them – I'm not a prostitute – they try to convince you, to negotiate – like how much money they will pay, and maybe you say yes.' She described a sense of entitlement that Israeli men arrive with, concluding a passionate outpouring with the bottom line: 'It's disgusting. But they're men. That's a problem of its own.' Leila related these difficulties to wider social and economic issues that plague the neighbourhood and explained her view of how better social order could be achieved:

> *If you want to help South Tel Aviv, you have to recognise them as refugees. Currently, they can't rent outside of South Tel Aviv because they don't have necessary documentation to rent, there's no encouragement for them to settle elsewhere… problems here are far more systemic. Even if you took all the refugees out of here, they wouldn't be resolved. People need a lot more support, it goes far deeper than who you have for a neighbour, or how many people live in the neighbourhood.*
>
> *These are deeper problems, of disenfranchised neighbourhoods, of populations that are surviving in meagre socio-economic circumstances. It's very convenient to keep talking about asylum seekers, keep sticking to that mantra… people start believing that if they deport the refugees, the next day the sun will shine brighter, everything will be perfect, their problems will be resolved.*

Leila felt safe in South Tel Aviv, as an activist in a Feminist *Mizrahi* NGO and alongside migrant communities. She and others described a sense of confidence that stemmed from familiarity and community connections with neighbours who are asylum seekers.

In Nikki's case, asylum seekers would greet her on the street and have friendly chats. This kind of familiarity, she made clear, was part of what drew her to the neighbourhood after several years of working with migrant communities through NGOs: 'I moved here because of the foreign community. That was my driving force, I felt more at home with it.' She recalled a story that exemplified her sense of comfort in this place in contrast to general tales of insecurity, 'A few years ago, I fell on the street and sprained my ankle. Immediately, three people ran over – helped me, lifted me, carried me. So, for me – maybe because I know the [asylum seeker] community and I have friends here, it's great.' Nikki's sense of security was based on finding community with those outside her ethnonational group. Such accounts are rarely reported, as South Tel Aviv residents are popularly constructed as communitarian, xenophobic or racist. They are important to show both heterogeneity of opinions, and changes over time.

Race and Place in South Tel Aviv

Most interviews and conversations regarding South Tel Aviv include references to race and difference. Yet racial differentiation is yet to be thoroughly explored in existing literature on migrant exclusion, that locates exclusionary attitudes or policies in discussions of citizenship or ethnicity (Raijman and Semyonov 2004a; Schnell and Benjamini 2004b; Kritzman-Amir 2009) with few exceptions (Yacobi 2011; Cohen 2015, 175; Anteby-Yemini 2017). At times, residents reflected the closeness of these terms – race, Jewish identity of the state, with existential security or demographic threat:

> *Sarah: It's our country. There's only one Jewish country, that's it. They have many other countries. All the countries around us, support them. Maybe if I had support… I would speak nicely.*

Haim: But Sarah – you're being racist.

Sarah: When you don't have security in your own country – remember how hard we had it? How much we suffered here? As far as I'm concerned, every Arab can get the hell out. They can all be pushed to the sea, as long as I don't have to leave this place. I will never leave this place. It's the only place we have.

Haim: Ok, but you're being racist. Black people don't really bother us. They took them to that prison. Then they released them… Didn't matter for us.

Haim and Sarah's fear of becoming a minority or losing their country fits within national narratives of collective victimisation and threat. Fear justifies exclusion of racialised others, perceived as threatening. Sarah's conflation of African migrants with Arabs showed she chose not to distinguish between groups, but rather focus on threats they collectively posed to the Jewish state. Their conversation exemplified the process by which asylum seeker were added to the ever-present looming existential threat to the state and were not based on individual acts or group numbers. A national narrative of perpetual threat, thus projected negatively upon any groups who did not fit with their image of a Jewish community of value (Anderson 2013).

Past research shows that diverse groups are viewed as more or less threatening based on perceived economic, rights, security threats as well as social distance (Raijman and Semyonov 2004a; Canetti-Nisim, Ariely, and Halperin 2008; Ben-Nun Bloom, Arikan, and Lahav 2015; Hochman 2017). Importantly, constructions of threat reflect State narratives of ethnocentric protectionism, also instilled in its members, rather than any particular fact in the racialised group being projected upon (Du Bois 1897; Bhambra 2014).

Leah insisted she had nothing against black or white people, that 'every person needs to live on this planet with one body and one soul.' She shared frustrations about intra-Jewish ethnic divides that she encountered upon arrival to the country: 'I wasn't thinking about *Mizrahim* or *Ashkenazim*, and when I hear about it I get really irritated – we are all Jews – Yemenite, Moroccan, Polish – what the hell? - we are all Jewish… I wasn't thinking white skin or black skin – Jewish is

Jewish. Ethiopians? Also Jewish!' Leah's racial egalitarianism was framed within ethnic boundaries, and she concluded her speech with the statement: 'But the infiltrators I don't care for.' Her comments suggested she did not conceive ethnonational exclusion as racist, but rather a marker for rightful and natural belonging.

Micky tried to explain the racialised antagonistic feelings of older residents as a kind of 'intuitive dread' that elderly people develop toward all those who don't look like them. Guy explained racism as generational, and a coping mechanism when faced with a difficult and changing reality. He explained racial anger as a way that elderly, disenfranchised people let out their frustrations at their dire circumstances:

> *Who can they let their anger out at? Obviously, the guy living on their street. He's the one they see, so that's where they let out their anger. It come out as racist, but I don't think it's racist. I think it's a matter of accepting the Other who you're not accustomed to. But that comes from education, and motivation, and when the situation in your home is deteriorating, you're not really motivated toward that. And older people I'm not sure they have that space, the desire, or the capacity to open up now. I'm 32, and I've been here for seven years… so it's easier for me.*

Justification and explanation of an imagined ethnonational threat are one example of how residents used different proxy terms for racialised group discrimination. Yana described discriminatory rent practices in her building, justified by disorderly behaviors of asylum seeker tenants: 'Eritreans don't live in my building and never will. It's a new building and there's a rule that none are allowed to rent here. We have Filipinos, Chinese, but Sudanese and Eritreans no… it's a collective agreement.' She legitimised racial bias by maintaining that certain groups were incapable of orderly conduct.

Alma refers to 'cultural difference', as she proclaims: 'No one can say about me that I'm racist – I work with people from all backgrounds.' She explains that she met asylum seekers in the past and got along with them on an individual basis: 'the problem is not the people, or colour of

their skin. Maybe it is slightly their culture, because I do think their culture is very problematic.' When comparing different groups of migrants in South Tel Aviv, she brings up culture again:

> *So, there's a lot of Ukrainians now, so what? It doesn't compare to what was happening here in 2008, 2009, 2010… to the masses [of Eritreans and Sudanese] in Levinsky garden, the homelessness, levels of violence, doesn't compare. There's also lots from the Congo, Philippines, Thailand. Ok. It's not the same… It's a combination of numbers and very specific culture, it becomes problematic.*

Micky bases his hostilities on Eritreans' lack of liberal values regarding homosexuality: 'See today – we are meant to put up the gay pride flags for pride month, and I'm still deliberating if I should put my flag up. It's stressful. A gay friend who lives nearby and was spat on [by Eritreans]. They don't accept it, Eritreans can't come out as gay…' Differences in culture were frequently mentioned.

Examined together, these testimonies made evident that asylum seekers were racialised, even if coded in other terms. References to culture have long been used as metaphor and metonymy for race (Appiah 1985), or to mask racial meanings (Said 1978; Gilroy 2004b; Aliverti 2018). Furthermore, we see that racialisation practices do not strictly abide by white-black/brown distinctions, but are textured by a relative scale of ideal attributes – a sense of order, culture, and set of values consistent with Eurocentric constructions of civilisation, and liberal worldviews (Hall 1992; Quijano 2000, 533; Khazzoom 2003; Raz-Krakotzkin 2005; Hirsch 2009; Mizrachi 2016). In discussions of race cultural difference is often used to describe a 'structure of opposition' that correlates racialised groups with 'subtle difference of temperament, belief, and intention' on a hierarchical scale of valued traits and behaviours (Appiah 1985, 35–36).

Recurring references to education also indicate a hierarchical scale of valued attributes, by referring to a linear scale of knowledge and behaviours that can and should be learned. These resonate with the civilising narratives of colonial regimes (Said 1978; Hall 1992; Hirsch 2009, 1–4; Bar Yosef 2013, 27). Participants' references to inferior culture or education are not necessarily

malevolent, but they indicate differing levels of value placed on certain cultures and knowledge. Haim, for instance, shares his own experience of moving up from a 'backwards' Arab country, through to life in developed, modern Israel. He expresses understanding for the education migrants must undergo: 'Especially me, that I used to be so stupid, and now I've become modern. They will also come stupid and learn.' This statement reflects a self-stigmatisation of *Mizrahi* citizens based on group representation in Zionist discourse over time and in contrast to their *Ashkenazi* counterparts (Shohat, Mcclintock, and Mufti 1997; Cohen 2015, 175). Guy similarly invokes the need for education in the asylum seeker community:

> *You find greater percentages of misbehaviour and less… comprehension. Less knowledge of how to deal with certain situations. I can tell you about myself, when I was young, I didn't know how to act in every situation and I learned over the years. So, you can educate people, you can explain to them.*

Leah believed dynamics with her neighbours improved as she taught them how to act. In earlier years, when she discussed her neighbors, she reiterated angrily: 'this not a jungle, it's a city.' In a later interview, she articulated this difference in educational terms:

> *You just need to explain a bit. Listen – not everyone knows. Even a little child, growing up, doesn't know – you have to tell him – sit here, do that, do your homework. I guess they didn't know to clean back there. Here they live in a building, they live in a city…*
>
> *Sometimes I come out and tell them – this is not a jungle and it's not a desert. This is a building, and it needs to be cleaned. You can't throw trash down the stairs. And they listen. You have to talk to them nicely and explain to them, I guess they don't know all of this…*

Haim, Guy and Leah's comments on education reflect well-meaning attempts to overcome difference and help migrants acclimate to the local way of life. However, they are rife with paternalistic undertones as migrants are compared to children and their ignorance os assumed. This approach is reminiscent of the treatment *Ahkenazi* Jews extended to *Mizrahi* Jews upon their arrival to the state, when the former took on a social and institutional role of adults, guiding the latter's maturation process toward a modern European civilisation (Massad 1996, 57). References

to deserts and jungles formed an Orientalist image of an African Third World, deemed underdeveloped and uncivilised (Said 1978; Khazzoom 2003; Mizrachi 2004; Hirsch 2009).

While many of the respondents associated asylum seekers with 'backwards,' Orientalist tropes, they also made direct references to a preferred Western or Eurocentric culture. In one instance Micky angrily shared a recording from his phone, of Eritrean music being played at night in his building. He pressed play and explained, 'this is what I hear 24/7 [he presented his phone that played loud Eritrean music], and it's not Tchaikovsky or Vivaldi!' he exclaimed, upset. Micky assumed an unstated understanding and agreement between us – two *Ashkenazi* Jews – that European classical music is preferred. He also demonstrated his familiarity with 'superior' European culture, and thus distinguished himself from the less cultured, uncivilised noise of non-European others.

Leah was also disturbed by the loud music that was played outside her house on weekends. Her complaints included racialised references to African music as primitive, and Africans having limited knowledge of civilised, Western, city life. Hearing music played on loudspeakers, she asked: 'Is this what they did in Africa? Where did they learn to do this?' Her image of African music does not include electric instruments or equipment. She explained: 'They don't have that over there – maybe Tam Tam drums – they live in jungles there. We live in the city here.'

Yana associated limited familiarity with city life to excessive alcohol consumption. She explained that drinking led to violent behaviours in populations coming from the 'Third World,' more than it did among 'Western people.' She, like others before her, was cognizant of the racialisation and criminalisation implicit in her statement: 'I know I'm not being politically correct here, but the drinking is excessive. It's over the top and becomes violent, especially at night. So certain people need to be put in their place.' Leah and Yana's remarks portrayed Africans as less developed and limited, providing a useful contrast for self-identification (Yacobi 2015, 136; Hall

2017, 54–55). They expressed a sense of superiority and ownership, considered themselves more knowledgeable and determinant of the space, and contrasted their own actions to asylum seekers' behaviour and being, which requires control or containment. These fit in with longstanding practices of establishing white superiority based on relegation of black people to a seemingly natural inferior position in the social order, rooted in colonial hierarchies (Wekker 2016, 74).

Alma invoked a similar relational stance in doubting refugee's claims, due to their resistance to detention and deportation: 'for people who supposedly experienced everything they describe, Holot should have felt like a five-star hotel.' She described a list of amenities provided in Holot – meals, activities, lodging and healthcare. And concluded with its location in the desert: 'so it's in the middle of nowhere, but that makes sense.' This remark implied that refugees, or those coming from the Global South, should settle for less than people like her. Detention and exclusion should be perceived by them as a fitting arrangement, according to Alma's logic. Refugees or Africans are thus configured as belonging to specific kind of place, separate to that enjoyed by citizens or white people. This is a common worldview among citizens around the globe, that they themselves are in their rightful place, while migrants also have a rightful place – just not here (Barker 2013, 17; Franko Aas 2014, 533).

Armando also identified asylum seekers with their 'appropriate' places, outside of the Western world. He described their origins in other social orders, disrupted by migration that bred criminality and despair:

> *Eritrean people come from a tribal, or semi-tribal society where elders have some respect or authority. This entire young generation arrives here, without elders, parents, uncles, or grandparents. It's like a children's summer camp gone out of control. And these kids get exposed for the first time in their lives to phones, girls walking around in shorts, tons of alcohol, drugs, nice cars, electric bikes. So many temptations that they have no access to. They know they are outside of it and have no possibilities of social mobility. So it creates a huge frustration. Nothing good can come out of it.*

> *Young kids will grow up feeling social rejection. They know they are unwanted by Israeli society. Their lives are plagued by real, serious, economic destitution. Where will they go? To crime.*
>
> *Not everyone obviously, but yeah – that's what you do when you feel rejected and poor. When you're in contact with the Western world but you are so impoverished, it brings out jealousy and bitterness that you don't even know.*

His analysis expressed typical racialised perceptions of asylum seekers as criminal (Webber 1996; Weber 2002; Barker 2012; Dauvergne 2008b); as unable to succeed, unable to control their urges or frustrations in a Western setting (Hall 1992; Weber and Bowling 2008; Mignolo 2012). Thus group stigma of African asylum seekers, which was described above as posing a demographic threat to ethnonationalism, citizen rights, security, and public safety, is also racialised.

Taken together, the views held by *Mizrahi* residents of South Tel Aviv clearly referred to a hierarchical scale of valued culture, behavior, and social order – oriented toward a superior White European civilisation – in which they were both racialised and racialising agents. They maintained a higher position in the social order, compared to asylum seekers, based on perceived cultural knowledge, experience of life in the city and a sense of ownership over space. Some also recognised their relationally lower place on the same scale than their *Ashkenazi* brethren, in what I have termed a racialised differential inclusion. Cohen conceptualises residents' antagonistic attitudes from such a position as defensiveness, 'a territorial strategy, which demarcates group boundaries in the face of other collectivities, both 'below' and 'above' the city's hierarchical axis of citizenship' (Cohen 2015, 171). In short, these testimonies made clear how hierarchy is based on ethnonational and postcolonial scales of value, and that the relational axis must be extended across both sides of the formal citizenship criteria. Hierarchical racialised differentiation in Tel Aviv also helps explain how African asylum seekers came to be differentially excluded from the city to detention Holot.

IMPACT OF HOLOT ON LIFE IN SOUTH TEL AVIV

> *How many people could Holot hold? 3,000? From the entire country? That's nothing. It means like 1,000 people were taken from Tel Aviv. That's negligible. Unnoticeable. Insignificant. I also don't think that to solve one ghetto's problem you open up another ghetto. Doesn't make sense. It didn't solve anything, it just created more distress – more unemployment, more loitering in the garden, more desperation that leads to alcoholism.*

Leila, Neve Shaanan resident

Israel's official legislative aim in detention was to prevent settlement of African asylum seekers in city centres and alleviate the burden of their presence from South Tel Aviv. According to Leila, and most other research subjects: 'It did the opposite.' Leila lived in the neighbourhood for over a decade, and her grandparents had lived there upon arrival from an Asian Muslim country. As she settled in the neighbourhood she became involved in diverse community activism with *Mizrahi* residents, as well as asylum seekers and migrants. She perceived these struggles as connected.

Leila contextualised the harmful effects of detention policies, on asylum seekers and South Tel Aviv residents, in the wider ethno-class divides endemic to Israeli society. She referred to the *Mizrahi* population's historical socio-economic marginalisation and explained how asylum seekers were framed as an external enemy, to distract disenfranchised Jews from the fact they have been excluded in their own home (Shohat 1988; Shenhav 2006).

When asked if detention policies in Holot improved the situation in the neighbourhood, 13 out of 14 participants said 'No'. Some residents hesitated, some asked when Holot had operated and tried to make sense of trends in the area over those years. Most people suggested that not only was Holot ineffective in alleviating social burdens in South Tel Aviv, it made matters worse, as it pushed asylum seekers into desperation and illegality.

Armando was extremely outspoken about wanting Sudanese and Eritreans out of South Tel Aviv, yet in response to the question about Holot's impact he said:

> *It was too small a number to be felt. The maximum amount they could have there was 3,500, no? That's nothing. It wasn't felt in the neighbourhood at all. The rationale behind it was to make their lives miserable so they would leave… just to harm them.*
>
> *It only helped in the sense that it increased the rates of voluntary departure, which I think is a great thing. Even involuntary – I don't care – it's a way to exert pressure, not as effective as the government had hoped, but still… the threat of being jailed was enough to make people leave.*

Mark couldn't recall the years in which Holot operated but noted a gradual and consistent improvement over time, explaining that 'until 2011/2012, the neighbourhood looked like a refugee camp. People sleeping in empty lots on cardboard boxes, public gardens overflowing, on rooftops, in stairways. People looking for physical shelter.' He theorised that 'when the border fence was closed the phenomena calmed down, they dispersed, found jobs, a normalisation began, sort of settling down.' Despite Mark's recollections, Holot opened after that shift he described when 'settling down' had begun. And it aimed to unsettle those who had managed to 'normalise' their lives in the country.

Many residents expressed critical views of detention as a cruel and unjust practice. Guy said he 'didn't feel any change in the neighbourhood' and did not believe detention was the right policy. He wished the state had examined people's asylum claims, granted refugee status and supported this group. Natalie described detention as 'terrible', lamenting its environment, especially since detainees were not criminals:

> *A ton of people crammed in a place with poor sanitary conditions…with nothing to do. And they didn't commit a crime, to lock up people just doesn't make sense, to say the least. And they have no future after they are released.*
>
> *The whole process of putting people in a state of total helplessness. Total lack of control over their future, their lives. It's awful.*

Rebekah similarly reflected on the injustice of detention, even if asylum seekers were not refugees. In her opinion even if asylum seekers came to find jobs, their long-term detention was still cruel:

'why would you lock them up? You can decide – either you let them fend for themselves, or you kick them out. But you don't put them in jail. It's a prison. It's a prison of despair.'

Residents who worked with migrants in NGOs and community initiatives had further insights on the effects of detention on the asylum-seeking community. As stated, at the outset of this section, Leila suggested that Holot had made matters worse on the streets:

> *people [asylum seekers] started to be afraid – when they'd go to renew their visa, they could be summoned to Holot. So, some people I know, who used to renew visas regularly, stopped going to the Ministry of Interior because they were afraid. They resigned, or were fired, and couldn't find a new job without a visa. They became more dependent on the community, staying with other people. They'd have less of a personal life. It only increased the duress. And even those who'd figured things out in the country… it's like something in them broke again.*

Leila described the destructive effects of living in a perpetual state of detainability (De Genova 2016a; Costello and Mouzourakis 2016, 48).

Increased rough sleeping and vagrancy also became visible when groups were released from Holot and returned to the city. Contrary to the legislative aim of 'prevention of settlement' and 'alleviating burdens,' many residents noted that the environment in South Tel Aviv deteriorated since Holot opened, compared to previous years. Armando remarked how the return of the previously detained populations was acutely felt and visible in the neighbourhood's central Levinsky garden, where homelessness decreased over the years, but reappeared in 2018 with Holot's closure. Life on the street following detention was associated with other problematic behaviours: 'Some are probably broken, in some way or another because of being detained. I see more African junkies, which is something I'd never seen before... connections with Israeli criminals and junkies, and violence at all these levels, that the police conveniently condenses in the Garden area.'

Nikki similarly described deterioration in the neighbourhood since Holot opened and viewed detention as part of a longer story of ongoing desperation and criminalisation of asylum

seekers. She was troubled by the fact that 'asylum seekers who used to be 'normative' are now 'on the streets, using drugs, using alcohol'. She explained Holot was part of something greater: 'a situation, of being stuck for ten years, Holot was just a small piece of a larger framework of oppression and exclusion.' Resident testimonies thus reaffirmed accounts of asylum seeker subjugation and criminalisation through detention (Webber 1996; Barker 2012; Welch 2003; Bosworth and Kaufman 2011). Residents attested to how release of asylum seekers after detention correlated with increased illegal activities in the neighbourhood, when some returned to the city traumatised, with no resources or shelter, no right to work or rent. Some slept on the streets, and some reverted to substance abuse.

Most residents did not know that prevention of settlement in city centres was one of Holot's stated aims. When asked, respondents described the reference to their wellbeing in the legislative process and media as: 'cynical', 'lip service', 'criminal', 'disgraceful', 'atrocious' and 'BS.' Most explained no impact or improvement was felt in Neve Shaanan by detention's implementation, and referenced continued deterioration and neglect during the same years. Leah could not quite understand how Holot was at all related to South Tel Aviv. I described the legislative process and aims to her. She doubtfully said, 'I don't know, I didn't see it. So, if those get taken, other ones come – what's the difference?' Armando asserted that the lawmakers do not care about South Tel Aviv at all, and argued that if they did, they would have done something to change the reality on the ground. Natalie indicated the absurdity of framing the aim of detention in such oppositional and simplistic terms, of two populations pitted against each other:

> *Alleviating stress from South Tel Aviv residents? … ridiculous. It would be like claiming that alleviating stress from women would be accomplished by simply locking up all men. It doesn't provide a solution for anything… This attempt to tie detention to the wellbeing of South Tel Aviv residents is really criminal.*

Two residents – Micky and Alma – regarded the detention policy as effective. Both were also affiliated with pro-deportation campaigns. Micky described a sense of relief on the streets, with reduced numbers of asylum seekers and conflicts. Alma argued that detention was more important as a 'matter of principle', and attributed Holot with positive changes to the neighbourhood:

> *Since they put them in Holot, and there was talk of deportation – Suddenly! Suddenly you could walk down the street… there's like something in the air, like wow, I can just walk down the street.*
>
> *In the beginning there were loads of gatherings, circles of mourning in public spaces, lots of weddings… then over time, maybe Holot had something to do with it… there became less and less. Then with the whole deportation option, then you really felt like you could finally take a breath.*

Alma described a feeling of empowerment in the neighbourhood tied to detention policies, and the role anti-immigrant activists played in promoting them. She described the presence of asylum seekers as taking up her air and space and felt liberated by their exclusion. As she spoke, she stretched up, sat straight, and gestured with her arms as she explained the sense of sudden confidence to walk down the street. Having a detention and deportation machinery behind her reinforced her sense of ownership over the space. Though neither her fears nor her newfound confidence stemmed from any physical contact or change, she felt stronger when a sense of order was enforced by the state in which her superior position was reinstated. Physical exclusion of asylum seekers reaffirmed her sense of belonging and entitlement to the place.

Shifting feelings of confidence, between inclusion and exclusion in the collective, was epitomised by Leah's recollections of political attentions, promises, and outcomes over time:

> *Leah: A year or two ago, the Prime Minister came to South Tel Aviv to see how the residents live. They introduced me to him, and I told him we were only three Israelis left in our ENTIRE building. I felt like I'm not in Israel anymore, I felt like I live in Africa… He said it's a real catastrophe that they are all burdening South Tel Aviv. And that they need to be dispersed throughout the country.*
>
> *MR: And did he say what he planned to do about it?*

> *Leah: That I don't know. Until now they haven't done anything. Each one of them comes by, talks, says 'I will I will I will' – like Deri [the Minister of Interior] he came to my building and saw everything. Miri Regev [Minister of Culture] she came… I went to parliament to speak, you know... And here we are, everything's the same. Nothing moved. I decided I'm done. There's nothing to do, I can't fight all these wars…*

Leah became a well-known representative image of Neve Shaanan, based on her many appearances in media, Supreme Court sessions, and political visits to the neighbourhood over time. Her story exemplified the narrative of South Tel Aviv Jewish resident suffering amidst the threats imposed by asylum seekers on the neighbourhoods ethnonational identity. The above quote by Leah, illuminated the process by which differential inclusion of Tel Aviv's *Mizrahi* residents took place. The first part of the quotation was a telling example of South Tel Aviv's thirst for being embraced and acknowledged as part of the Jewish collective: the community of value; as contributing members upholding its symbolic boundaries. She felt proud to be recognised at the forefront of a national struggle. The second part showed how hollow such statements of belonging turned out to be, when juxtaposed with material realities of marginalisation, neglect and ethno-class distinction. Leah was disappointed, fatigued and felt alone in her home. This was reiterated in more explicit terms by Nikki:

> *Clearly everyone is taking the piss. No one cares about South Tel Aviv. I don't think any of the politicians who come here give a shit about me. And they don't do anything. The neighbourhood is in terrible shape. That's what instigated South Tel Aviv against the Deportation campaign. This feeling of – 'not in our name'… They can't put this injustice on us AND use us to commit this atrocity at the same time.*

CONCLUSION

These final quotations, and empirical data relayed in the first section advance the theoretical framework of differential inclusion, moving beyond dominant explanations of migrant exclusion due to ethnonational and citizen criteria. Residents describe socio-spatial markers of differential belonging within the ethnonational body – notably the marginalisation of *Mizrahi* Jews in impoverished South Tel Aviv, in relation to the city's central and northern areas. Continued

material strife and neglect, by state and municipal institutions, indicate that their belonging to the national collective is differentiated and intermittent. It is conjured symbolically as ammunition in the struggle around national migration policies, but not affirmed in the daily lives of residents.

The second part of the chapter includes insights on citizens' attitudes toward asylum seekers and detention policies, and their effects in the neighbourhood. African asylum seekers emerge as a particularly racialised, gendered, and criminalised group in some residents' accounts. These perceptions were tied to group categorisations – constructed images of those who belong less – rather than from substantial events. Racialised group categories indicate a scale of belonging that is relational and hierarchical. *Mizrahi* citizens are positioned lower on the ethnonational scale than their *Ashkenazi* counterparts, but can look down on African asylum seekers who remain in a far lower position. Their higher position is gained through formal citizenship, symbolic membership in the Jewish collective, and knowledge of desired European hegemonic culture, to which they were acculturated when they were the Oriental 'other', as common in settler societies (Lawson and Tiffin 1994, 6). This location endows them with a superior position to those 'other' migrants they now perceived as lacking.

Analysis in this chapter presents heterogeneity in resident views and experiences, between generational groups and over time, which remains unexplored to date. It argues that racial hierarchies of ethnonational postcolonial preference designate racialised groups as excludable. Understanding how differential inclusion is experienced by *Mizrahi* citizens in South Tel Aviv, facilitates a more erudite understanding of differential exclusion of African asylum seekers in Holot. Experiences of detention will be explored next.

Chapter 5.
Differentiated and Excluded: Eritrean and Sudanese Asylum Seekers Detained in Holot



Figure 19. Detained asylum seekers in the desert outside Holot (Photo Credit: Noureldin Musa)

This chapter discusses testimonies of Eritrean asylum seekers detained in Holot in the beginning of 2018. The chapter argues that asylum seekers detained in Holot experienced racialised differential exclusion from society, compared to other migrant groups, and punitive exclusion in Holot intended to produce harm. Taken together the men's experiences tell the story of a state's border control regime that inflicted structural violence upon a racially differentiated migrant group and hollowed out the category of asylum beyond recognition. Testimonies illuminate how state policies intentionally punished African asylum seekers, and how state-inflicted harm outside of detention was connected to exclusion in detention as interlocking strategies of discipline.

In a 2012 interview Israel's then Interior Minister, Eli Yishay, described Sudanese and Eritreans a threat to national security and the Zionist dream and ordered their arrest. Though this

group was long granted collective protection, he explained: 'until I can deport them I'll lock them up to make their lives miserable' (Efraim 2012). And indeed, between 2013–2018, over 13,000 Sudanese and Eritrean asylum seekers, a non-deportable population, were held in Holot open detention facility (Alon 2018). Men were detained in Holot after having lived in Israel for extended periods of time (some as long as eight years), without trial, many with pending asylum claims (Bar-Tuvia 2017), in order to prevent their settlement in city centres and pressure them to leave the country "voluntarily" (Lentin and Moreo 2015, 899; Gerver 2017, 638).

Early restrictive functions of the facility were eased under different iterations of the 1954 Prevention of Infiltration Law, after Israel's Supreme Court repeatedly ruled that detention in Holot unconstitutionally infringed upon the human dignity and liberty of detainees (Yaron Mesegna and Ramati 2017, 71–76; Rozen and Guthmann 2020, 32–43).[60] In 2015, a period of one year's detention in Holot was approved by the Supreme Court, with the declared aim of preventing asylum seekers from settling in urban centres.

This chapter draws on a close reading and analysis of 14 interviews, and approximately 50 hours of participant observation at the Holot visiting area over the course of seven weeks in early 2018. Though all interviewees were Eritrean men between the ages of 18–60 who had been in Holot under one year,[61] they differed from each other in many ways: age, time spent in Holot, time spent in Saharonim Prison prior to Holot, and prospects of being deported or released. All the

[60] Amendment 3 legislated to hold all infiltrators for three years of administrative imprisonment and was struck down as unconstitutional (*Adam* Decision). Amendment 4 legislated the establishment of Holot open facility for indefinite detention, with roll calls three times per day, following a year of imprisonment for all newcomers, and was struck down as unconstitutional (*Eitan* Decision). Amendment 5 was accepted by the Court as it reduced administrative imprisonment to three months and detention in Holot to twenty months, later reduced to one year with one head count per day (*Desete* Decision).

[61] In 2018 the detainee population in Holot was almost entirely Eritrean. This is due to the fact that Sudanese asylum seekers entered Israel earlier (since 2005, whereas Eritreans started to enter in 2007). Detention criteria summoned earlier arrivals to detention first and extended to later entrants over time (See PIBA Detention Criteria 2015).

men had experienced prior incarceration in Israel's Saharonim Prison or elsewhere,[62] trauma along the migration journey (Nakash et al. 2015), and forced military conscription in Eritrea (though some fled when drafted).

This chapter explores dominant themes that emerged from testimonies. Themes included: discussions of Holot as prison, abuse by Holot and immigration staff, feelings of indefinite punishment under changing policies, experiences of being unjustly criminalised, racialised, and denied their deserved refugee status and appropriate treatment. Importantly, when men were interviewed about their experiences in detention, they reported on exclusionary treatment from their earliest days in the country, long before they were placed in Holot.

By considering pre-detention experiences as related to those in confinement, the chapter illuminates the co-constitutive relationship between harm on the outside and in detention through state strategies of control and group criminalisation. Detention in situated within a longer process of migrant criminalisation, racialisation and exclusion through interlinking state laws and practices. Wonders and McDowell term the enmeshing of various state actions and discursive practices aimed to regulate migrants' mobility in, or exclude them from, society as 'global disciplinary strategies'(McDowell and Wonders 2009, 54). They explain how anti-migrant discourse, immigration policies, and state technologies of control are used to mark migrants and keep them away from the public. Alison Mountz and colleagues observe an emergent 'circular rationale that legitimizes detention: migrants might be criminals, necessitating detention; migrants must be

[62] Most asylum seekers were held in Saharonim Prison established in 2007 to detain African asylum seekers who entered Israel from Egypt. Those who entered earlier were held in several other prisons, including: Ktziot Prison that housed asylum seekers who entered between 2004-2007, as well as security prisoners, and criminal offenders. Ktziot held up to 500 asylum seekers in two wings comprised of tents that held 250 bed each. Maasiyahu Prison in Ramle that held both criminal offenders and large numbers of undocumented migrants from 2000-2009. Givon Prison in Ramle that held criminal offenders and undocumented migrants awaiting deportation in two separate wings (Rozen and Guthmann 2020, 4–8; Berman 2015, 185–207).

criminals, because they are detained' (Mountz et al. 2013, 527). In such ways border control systems stigmatise populations subjected to their control, and produce structural harms.

Men repeatedly described their time in Holot as punishment in different ways, most frequently by referring to the anguish it induced, a common claim from detention research across the world (Franko Aas and Bosworth 2013a; Longazel, Berman, and Fleury-Steiner 2016; Gerlach 2017; Bosworth 2017a; Bosworth, Franko, and Pickering 2018; Gashi, Pedersen, and Ugelvik 2019; Ugelvik and Damsa 2018). Following critical scholarship on carceral institutions, punishment in this chapter is understood as pain or suffering which is experienced in state custody, or inflicted by state institutions upon those under their control (Sim 2009; 2013; Scott 2013). Analysis of detainee experiences produces a nuanced picture of Holot as an extremely punitive arrangement for those detained.

The chapter utilises the term structural violence (Galtung 1969, 170; Weber and Pickering 2011, chap. 4; Canning 2017, chap. 3) to describe what detainees relayed about punitive state treatment. Galtung's early definition of structural violence includes types of violence that can be indirect, whose perpetrators are hard to locate, but are nevertheless harmful, intentional, and applied through man-made and operated structures (Galtung 1969, 170). Structural violence has become central to analyses of how migration control systems operate punitively upon those in their care. Victoria Canning, uses structural violence to describe diverse forms of state force operating through the British asylum system that inflict 'physical, social or emotional harm to people seeking asylum… that are avoidable but politically implemented as a means not only to control and deter asylum populations, but to cause harm' (Canning 2017, 47–48). Similarly in Israel, asylum seekers contextualised detention in a long chain of exclusionary policies designed to harm them, and pressure them to leave, that amount to structural violence.

Asylum seekers also emphasised the extreme and differential exclusion from society to Holot. Similar strategies of geographic isolation have been employed around the world (Mountz 2020, chap. 4). Denmark for example, also operates open detention facilities in geographically remote locations, thus inflicting harm through isolation in ways similar to Holot (Lindberg and Amit 2020, 250). Men experienced their physical removal from society, and deprivation of liberties in detention, as extreme exertions of state power to isolate them and construct them as deviant. Detainees often emphasised the unfairness of detention by comparing themselves to two other groups (1) other migrants in the country and (2) Eritrean asylum seekers in other Western countries with high refugee recognition rates and subsequent rights.

Men felt racially differentiated in their distinction from other migrant groups, physical separation from society, and denial of rights. As only African asylum seekers were collectively categorised as infiltrators, summoned to detention based on group criteria (rather than individual cases), and faced repeated threats of group detention or deportation, they felt highly criminalised, racialised and dehumanised. These feelings were frequently reported in detainee testimonies. Individual agency and responsibility were stripped from these men, and their individual actions or stories ceased to matter. As De Genova states regarding migrant detention elsewhere, migrants 'are penalized simply for being who and what they are' (De Genova 2016a, 4), and being undesirable to the state.

A feeling of injustice was exacerbated, as men applied for refugee status but their claims remained unchecked, and their difficult experiences were disregarded. Taken together, men's testimonies showed how being racialised as black located them at the bottom of Israel's social and economic hierarchy, rendered them exploitable, deviant, punishable and less deserving of human rights. The final part of the chapter discusses detainee references of moments and opportunities when differences were overcome.

DIFFERENTIATED AND EXCLUDED TO HOLOT



Figure 20. Detainees walking in the desert outside Holot (Photo Credit: Noureldin Musa)

CRIMINALISED BEFORE DETENTION AND BY DETENTION

Differing state treatment of African asylum seekers began before Holot, when detainees were grouped together, criminalised, and racialised compared to other migrant groups. Group differentiation is evident in their categorisation as 'infiltrators,' heightened enforcement of exclusionary policies that were experienced as state punishment of their stay (Human Rights Watch 2014a). Asylum seekers in Holot highlighted their collective stigmatisation by focusing on several dominant issues: restrictive legal status that pushed them to the margins of employment and residence, media construction of criminal group image, a securitising group categorisation as infiltrators, and detention that marked them as deserving of punishment. These shed light on the productive aspects of state punishment as a social institution in service of the state and the order it wishes to impose within its boundaries (Garland 1991, 156–57; De Genova 2002, 422).

Detainees typically traced the start of group criminalisation to their initial entry into the country, when they were released from prison with a bus ticket to South Tel Aviv, with no support services, or clear legal status. Their earliest months were recounted by men as the first steps in a long process that set them up to fail. Most slept on the street and struggled to get by. For everyone, this was a difficult period that led to construction of a negative group stigma that had remained with them ever since. They described being relegated to Israel's social margins, pushed to illegality or informal economies, and being made vulnerable to exploitation. Such feelings have been documented elsewhere, in accounts of Western immigration regimes (Bhatia 2014a; Webber 1996; Willen 2007a).

Tesfay had escaped Eritrea at the age of 18 after four months in the army where he felt scared, stressed and under duress. He was 23 when we met, extremely shy and soft-spoken. He described his experiences of being tortured in the Sinai desert, and as I sat before him it was hard to fathom that such a gentle young man had experienced so much brutality. Like everyone, he was smuggled through the Sinai by a Bedouin smugglers. Smuggling network developed extortion operations over time in which thousands of people were held against their will and tortured for ransom.[63] Tesfay was forced to pay $10,000 for his release. He described his first steps in Israel:

> *We didn't know anything, in Saharonim they didn't explain anything to you. They just gave us these bus tickets… Then you got off at Tel Aviv Central Bus Station on the 6th floor and that's it. This was where life began. You have no idea what to do, where you're going, it's as if you've fallen into a totally different world, and you don't understand and you don't know – so we were just looking for black people to ask. Everyone kept directing us to Levinsky garden. I slept there for three weeks. There was no one to receive me.*

[63] Different people paid varying amounts of ransom based on the circumstances and decisions of the smugglers. For those crossing the Sinai early and smoothly, the amount of $3,500 was usually mentioned. In cases where people were held longer, and had families abroad, larger sums between $10,000 to $30,000 were extorted under the imminent threat or use of torture. This has widely been reported and researched elsewhere (Lijnders 2012; Shayo 2013; Gittelson 2012; Human Rights Watch 2014b).

As Tesfay mentioned, most of the men I spoke to experienced homelessness, as well as hunger and poverty, amid a more general sense of disorientation brought about by a new place. Wussu recalled a similar beginning without support, guidance or access to services when he was first released:

> *Where do I go from here? There was no one to receive me. I didn't know anyone. Nearly two months I slept in the garden. 54 nights. I'll never forget it. There are metal awnings over benches in the garden, I climbed up and slept on top of them.*

Wussu explained how the release to South Tel Aviv contributed to their construction as criminals. Having lived in the country and in that area for so long, men knew of Neve Shaanan's historical neglect and marginalisation, as well as the illegal activities and informal economies that proliferated in that setting. They understood their relegation to a space plagued with criminality, at Israel's socio-economic margins, as an intentional signal that this was where they belong.

Tesfit compared the Israeli state's treatment of asylum seekers with garbage disposal, reminiscent of Zygmunt Baumans articulations on wasted lives (Bauman 2003). He displayed awareness and empathy for Israeli residents' difficulties relating to the arrival of asylum seekers in their neighbourhoods, but also conveyed the inability of asylum seekers to go elsewhere:

> *I think about South Tel Aviv all the time, about how it is suffering. But the state, from the very beginning did this, from the start they threw us in the garden, like rubbish. Some of us managed to save ourselves, and others didn't… Living in the garden, like garbage. We would stand in long lines waiting for food, that people donated and distributed. This is how life started.*
>
> *People asked me why I didn't live elsewhere. I tried to rent in other places – with a visa that says I can't work here, it's too hard... so you rent where they allow you to rent in cash [South Tel Aviv]. Really no one wants to live there… The apartments are so small. You pay too much… None of us wanted to live there, and we didn't want to stink the place up. That's what they say about us, that we stink. But South Tel Aviv was a mess before us.*

Asylum seekers were left in South Tel Aviv. Most were unable to leave it, and, instead managed in it through informal economies, among migrant communities and impoverished Israelis. The state's

unwillingness to receive asylum seekers, and disregard of their needs can be understood as a form of violence in and of itself through 'inaction, poor decision making and their subsequent consequences' (Canning 2017, 48). The State disregarded avoidable harms to both asylum seekers and Israeli citizens living in the area.

Many detainees viewed their relegation to Israel's socio-economic margins as intentional. The stigma they faced was amplified by Israeli media. Tesfay recalled this negative group image construction from the very beginning of their presence in the country, when media crews arrived in Levinsky garden where he slept upon arrival:

> *Lots of people came from the news, with cameras, taking pictures. We didn't know what they wanted, or what they were saying.*
>
> *They were advertising about us that we are making the country dirty. That's what they wrote about us, Maayan.*
>
> *When I heard the news, I couldn't believe it – we didn't have language; we didn't know where we were going to sleep; we didn't know what we were going to eat. The state threw us out there, and after two weeks they came around saying we were making their country dirty, sleeping in the garden.*
> *What were we supposed to do? We had nowhere to go.*

Such disbelief at media coverage has similarly been reported by asylum seekers elsewhere, whose depiction as criminal, illegal threats induced frustration and insult (Fiske 2016, 59–60). Tesfay's account touched on several important points. Though state actions and policies placed asylum seekers in South Tel Aviv, they were being blamed for their own predicament. At their greatest moment of vulnerability and helplessness, asylum seekers were depicted to the Israeli public as 'dirty' and hazardous. Men felt strongly that they were not only blamed for their presence but scapegoated for other troubles in the impoverished and neglected areas of South Tel Aviv. As Yonas explained:

> *In the media, the government was talking about refugees only the negativities and they say we are incapable people, and we are very crime makers, and most of the time they talk about the*

> *slum of South Tel Aviv. But let me ask you a question – who is the reason to make that crime or that situation? We refugees didn't create South Tel Aviv.*

Men described how media and political discourse criminalised them to the Israeli public. They frequently cited MK Miri Regev who called Sudanese a 'cancer' in the nation's body (Efraim and Azulay 2012), MK Eli Ishay who warned that they spread disease (Yerushalmi 2012), and PM Netanyahu who described them as a threat (Lior 2017). Representations in media and political discourse designated their ethnicity – Eritreans and Sudanese – as synonymous with thieves, rapists and criminals. Tesfit explained that the public internalised these stereotypes. He recalled a landlord who refused to rent a flat to him, insisting Tesfit was going to steal the Air Conditioner and refrigerator because he is Eritrean, and the media reported that they stole.

Men in Holot repeated how being titled 'infiltrators' associated them with terrorism, violence and criminality. Tesfit explained how this label made Israelis fear them:

> *They put this law of infiltration in 1950s for people who came into the country to kill Israelis. The minute they started calling us by this name, every Israeli automatically thinks of that – he thinks it's the same threat, they group us with the same people. But we didn't infiltrate. We came to seek asylum.*
>
> *So this is what people know from television and newspapers: infiltrators, work migrants, scary… so from the entire country, they are afraid to come to South Tel Aviv... The government has been working on this for a long time.*

Tesfit's rejection of the 'infiltrator' category and subsequent treatment of asylum seekers as criminal was an important act of self-definition and agency. Men's resisted the categories placed upon them by insisting on their humanity and refugee status.

Most asylum seekers had lived in Israel for several years before detention in Holot, and managed to move on to stable routine lives despite their precarious legal status.[64] When the state summoned asylum seekers to Holot, they felt categorised again, marked as deserving of exclusion. The progression from anti-migrant discourse to restrictive policies, and eventually detention, fits with Wonders and McDowell's descriptions of interlinking disciplinary strategies meant to keep migrants 'in their place' (McDowell and Wonders 2009). Men were summoned to detention when they renewed their visas. They were ordered to report voluntarily to detention at a gathering spot from which a bus would depart to Holot, or arrive to Holot directly. Those who would not report voluntarily would be sought by immigration police in raids and arrests, and incarcerated in Saharonim closed prison for three months as punishment.

Men understood being detained upon arrival as part of the process of seeking refuge. They felt they had already 'served their time' for unlawful entry and did not warrant additional detention. Wussu was frustrated by his lack of control over the criminal stigma placed upon him: 'If a person has done something bad, you can say that about him. But you can't say about an entire people – they are thieves... I live peacefully, respectfully. If they say we are all thieves? What can I say?'

While Wussu felt helpless in the face of criminalised group construction, others resisted such categorisation by complying with and upholding state laws, including reporting to detention. Many of those detained described their compliance with detention as a form of resistance to group stigma of being criminals, troublemakers, or job seekers. This was the case for Nati, who was 27 and fled Eritrea after ten months in the military, and two months in prison under accusation of intended defection. When Holot opened, Nati understood his options in Israel to be illegality,

[64] Detention criteria in Holot was based upon ethnicity (Sudanese or Eritrean) and year of border crossing. Beginning in 2013 the MOI summoned detainees starting from earliest entrants. Men who arrived in subsequent years were detained once early entrants finished their detention and space was available.

detention, or deportation. He, like others, hoped to show that he was a law-abiding refugee, who could not return to his country of origin, and therefore chose detention. Nati understood detention as part of a wider state system geared to criminalise asylum seekers through pushing them to illegality:

> *They want us to be illegal. They want us to work without a visa, so that we've done something illegal, and they can deport us. So there will be something to point at and say – "now you're not a refugee, now you're a troublemaker".*

Men were collectively punished and stigmatised regardless of their efforts to abide by state laws. Their individual agency or compliance was disregarded by the state, as they were grouped together in detention. Their experiences of being categorised as deserving of punishment based on their origins and migration status fit with what Katja Franko has described as the development of the 'Crimmigrant Other' category (Franko 2020) by which illegality comes to define an existential condition rather than specific acts.

The treatment of the men I interviewed also resembles what Nicholas De Genova similarly framed as 'de facto legal non-personhood' whereby 'with detention, the effectively rightless condition of deportable migrants culminates in summary (and sometimes indefinite) incarceration on the basis of little more than their sheer existential predicament as 'undesirable' non-citizens' (De Genova 2016a, 4).

Racialised Compared to other Migrants and to Israelis

Participants described their detention in Holot as racially motivated. They were familiar with Israel's ethnic and racial social order and were aware of their differentiated status as Africans living in the Jewish state. Although men mentioned acceptance or even positive interpersonal dynamics with Israeli citizens (explored in the final section of this chapter), they felt negatively and racially classified by the state. Research on the intersections of race and criminalisation in other countries is increasing (Angel-Ajani 2003; Fekete and Webber 2010; Armenta 2017; De Genova 2018) as

well as work on how borders and migration restrictions are increasingly informed by racialised, gendered and classed forces of capitalism (Hernández 2011; Bosworth, Parmar, and Vázquez 2018; Parmar 2018). By examining the ways in which racialised asylum seekers are treated and controlled, we can evaluate the operation of race as a 'master category, a kind of template for patterns of inequality, marginalisation, and difference' (Omi and Winant 2015, viii).

Racialisation was visible in how detainees were clumped together – Eritreans and Sudanese – into one group deserving of the same harsh treatment as 'infiltrators.' Media and political discourse on asylum seekers homogenised them as 'African job seekers' or under a group description as 'Sudanese' (though 75% of asylum seekers in Israel came from Eritrea). Group stigma which was promoted in media coverage impacted the way asylum seekers were viewed and treated by the Israeli public, as Tesfit explained:

> *They don't even know who we are, and what brought us there. All they know is we are work migrants and infiltrators. They would even call us Sudanese. They had no idea we are Eritrean. They just see us as infiltrators.*

Literature on media coverage of asylum seekers supports these feelings, of collective stigmatisation (Hochman 2015; Tirosh 2018; Tirosh and Klein-Avraham 2019). In detention men pointed at structural and institutional racism they faced compared to other migrant groups. As Filmon explained:

> *It is totally clear. Because we are black, they are doing this to us. If we were white, they wouldn't do this. There are plenty of white people here – asylum seekers, refugees, I don't know. They get treated like humans. Just us, because our colour is black, they do this to us. It's racism. Really, it's racism.*

They described detention in Holot as disproportionate state control over their lives, compared to other migrant groups (discussed in chapter one). Racial and ethnic differentiations were mentioned frequently. Through comparison, men demonstrated that the aim of Israel's immigration regime –

maintaining a Jewish state – was not equally enforced. Migration control was selective and racialised. As Wussu aptly described:

> *There are so many more people here who came from other countries – Ukraine, Philippines, Chinese – they don't say one word about them. They don't say a cancer in our body. They don't call them infiltrators. They didn't open Holot for them. They didn't enact the Deposit Law for them. Suddenly – for Africans, they do all of this… They all have other religions. But this is a different issue, it's the issue of colour.*
>
> *They say it's a Jewish state. Also, it's a state for white people. Do you know how many non-Jews live here? They just don't want people from Africa...*
>
> *How are we different? We clean their streets; we clean their toilets; we clean their homes. Once we step outside their home, they call us niggers. Inside their house, they can't say anything, they need us. Once we leave, they say it.*

Wussu's words combined interpersonal, economic, and political aspects of daily life, marked by racialised differentiation. In comparing his treatment with that of migrants from other countries, he draws attention to racial motivations, against the common claim that Israel excluded them based on non-Jewishness or lacking citizenship.

Men believed that a separate set of standards existed for them. They were singled out as a group who deserved punishment without rights or justice (Franko Aas 2014; De Genova 2016a, 6). Being singled out for detention felt painful and dehumanising. As Tewelede described: 'it is really difficult to be a human in here' and Berry explained 'they treat you like you are not human.' These men felt they were denied equal rights or dignified care due to the colour of their skin and their presence as 'undesirable' non-citizens. Once they were racialised and criminalised by state practices, exclusion, abuse and dehumanisation naturally followed across all levels of society.

Wussu listed some of the most extreme cases of abuse suffered by members of his community. He described an inequity in access to safety and rights protections, as citizens harmed asylum seekers with impunity:

> *An Eritrean guy was killed in Beer Sheva, and no one said anything. A young girl was murdered, and no one said anything. An Eritrean guy here in Tel Aviv was burned, and no one said anything. A family's house was torched in Jerusalem, and no one said anything. A guy in Bney Brak was stabbed, and no one said anything. If an Eritrean would have committed any of these crimes, the world would have been turned upside down.*

As with testimonies gathered from Israeli residents in South Tel Aviv, stories of crime and suffering circulated among asylum seekers as well. An 'objective truth' is not the aim of presenting these stories, but rather the way in which stories shape views and experiences. For Wussu telling of a double standard in the policing of crimes committed against Eritreans revealed that deviance and punishment were interrelated. Criminalised and racialised, he explained how asylum seekers were first relegated to Israel's social margins in South Tel Aviv, and later to Holot. He framed these processes as intentional political acts:

> *Everyone who wants to make a move in the government does it in our name. He says, 'I will deport them, if you elect me'. People who live in South Tel Aviv have a lot of requests for the government, but instead of fixing their problems, politicians say, 'Ok, some here hate the black people, so let's focus on that.'*
>
> *Eli Yishay [former Minister of Interior], what did he say? "This is a Jewish state, it is a white state. If you elect me, you won't see any of this black people on the street." Why do they only speak about black people? They know the people hate black people, so they speak to that. They give the people what they want. That's politics…Someone who says about another human being that they are a cancer in your body. And why? Because of their skin colour? Their religion? How they [Israeli people] put them in the government, I don't understand.*

Like Wussu, many asylum seekers stated that they felt like pawns in the hands of politicians, who drew on racial prejudice to produce exclusionary policies. As elaborated in chapter two of this thesis and elsewhere (Institute for Structural Reforms 2013; Schnell 1999; Shamur 2018; Margalit and Vertes 2015; Yacobi 2011), South Tel Aviv was the politicised centre of immigration politics, where anti-immigrant protests, violence, political tours and visits were common. Participants repeatedly described how they ended up in South Tel Aviv due to governmental policies, and limited possibilities. As Teklu explained:

> *I lived in South Tel Aviv for four years total and it was fine. Not really fine, but I managed. Neighbours were Thai, Russian [migrant workers from other places]. In my building there were no Israelis. We wouldn't interact with them, just go from home to work. I never had problems with Israelis.*
>
> *They dumped us out there in Levinsky. Everyone, they dump them there. That's why that entire area is black people. It's the black people area. Because if I have nowhere to go, I can go there, I can find someone to help me find a job, get paid, get a place to live with friends. Any African – Eritreans, Sudanese, doesn't matter – we help each other.*

Being relegated to Israel's social margins made men feel that they were viewed as worthless people, unwanted by wider society. Their lives did not seem to matter in Israel. Exclusion from housing, employment, basic services, or rights protections revealed a Jewish and white racial ordering of the state and protection of its valued members. Being relegated to the bottom of the social order has long dehumanised asylum seekers around the world (Mountz 2020, xxii), and in turn made their abuse, degradation, and, ultimately, mass detention viable.

Risk of abuse or harm was exacerbated for certain people. Older men, for example, who lack language skills, often struggled to understand their environment[65]. Such was the case with Avaye who was 57 at the time we spoke, a father of ten who left his family in Eritrea in 2010 after being repeatedly drafted into the military. Two of his brothers were killed in the military, he was held in military prison, was unable to support his family or conduct a free life. In Holot, Avaye was respected as a father figure, and a religious man. He barely spoke Hebrew and we communicated through a translator, but he made blessings over me several times, gave speeches in Tigrinya to the men, or led us in prayer during my visits. Before Holot, he reported being assaulted by his former employer, and had a case against that man pending in court. He was

[65] The upper age limit for detention in Holot was 60 years old. Any person that approached that age is considered 'old' within the context of detention, and in comparison to the majority of men detained ages who were as young as 18. Men of the older age group would have entered Israel in their 40s and many did not manage to learn Hebrew.

flabbergasted by the fact that he was assaulted and yet he was the one held in detention like a criminal. He described the attack:

> *It was my employer and his friends. He told me to work all night, and I couldn't. He said you have to. Maybe because I'm black… They took me from the place, hid me, and beat me. I called the police, and they sent me to the hospital. I have evidence for this... Until now I am fighting for compensation.*

Avaye expressed he did not know why he was beaten. The only way he could make sense of it was by assuming that his employer was angry because he did not obey him. Avaye also believed that his employer treated him this way because he was black.

Heilu, who also did not speak much Hebrew, recounted the previous four years he had spent in prisons around the country, held for a crime he claimed he had not committed. According to Heilu, he had developed a good relationship with his former employer and his family, until one day they accused him of sexually assaulting the employer's wife. Heilu did not understand the accusations or court proceedings, but had served time in four different prisons before being held in Saharonim for three years, then transferred to Holot. He described his experiences in court and in prison as frightening, and it was clear he remained confused and fearful:

> *It was very difficult because there were criminal people [those in the prisons where he was held]. They hated me. I was afraid. I was very careful and did what they asked me.*
>
> *I told them in court that I did nothing [to the woman], but nobody cared… Since then I am very afraid of the white people. When I see them, I am very scared. I don't trust any of them.*

What emerged from these accounts was that racialised difference was acutely felt in situations of uneven power dynamics, such as employer-worker relations, legal and criminal proceedings. Asylum seekers remained unable to protest effectively against their treatment. They felt abuse was allowed because they were viewed as racially inferior and less deserving of rights protections or due process.

Whether these were the 'real' motivations of actions against them, or the 'facts' of the stories, is impossible to ascertain. What is important in these testimonies is that men felt their blackness made them inferior and vulnerable. That they were expected to obey or tolerate harmful treatment at the hands of Israeli institutions or white Israeli citizens, without ability to defend themselves. Detention reaffirmed the salience of racial categories, and hierarchy of rights. It defined black asylum seekers as meriting exclusion of the most extreme kind from Israeli society, solely based on their origin and mode of entry, disregarded of their claims to asylum and the protections those entailed.

DENIED REFUGEE STATUS AND RIGHTS

Men insisted that they were refugees through continued reference to their refugee claims, their backgrounds, asylum-seeking journeys, and the refugee status of their peers in other countries Though European states increasingly criminalise and detain refugees and asylum seekers (Dauvergne 2008a; Bhatia 2015; Costello and Mouzourakis 2016; Bosworth and Vannier 2020), the refugee category remained meaningful to the men in Holot, who continued to hope for regularised legal status and rights. Participants insisted on their entitlement to refugee status. These claims helped men maintain feelings of dignity, humanity and reassert themselves as political subjects that did not need to be detained, as recorded in other locations (Squire 2009, 166). Men's self-identification as refugees also highlighted the deep injustice they felt at being detained where they sought protection, transformations of justice have similarly been recorded in the use of immigration detention elsewhere (Franko Aas 2014; Costello and Mouzourakis 2016, 47–49; Bosworth 2017a, 83).

For Filmon, his detention was illegitimate because he was a refugee who had not committed a crime:

Really, Holot, is a hard place. Because without nothing, I didn't do anything wrong out there, and they tell me to come in here – that's hard.

I don't want citizenship. I am a refugee, and I need to get what refugees deserve.

Nati similarly reflected on the unfair treatment afforded to him and to those detained before. His year in detention seemed 'lucky' compared to the indefinite detention allowed in Holot until the Supreme Court curbed such practices in 2015. Disregard of people's past experiences and their refugee claims he argued, was unjust:

In the beginning, they were here [Holot] for 20 months, a year and a half, for nothing. They're not criminals, they didn't do anything. People ran away from war, ran away from dictatorship, and came to seek asylum – seeking a life for now, until they can go to their homes.

I ran away from prison, and instead of accepting me they put me in prison.

The painful irony that Nati pointed out was acutely felt by others in detention, who felt unjustly punished. Many were angry at being denied the refugee category they deserved. Their anger increased when they were not only punished, but also criminalised, instead of being offered sanctuary Men knew they were criminalised in political discourse, as Wussu quoted the Prime Minister:

Netanyahu said we are worse than terrorists that come in [from] Sinai. Terrorists come in to kill you; refugees come in to seek safety. How can you compare [them]?

Some insisted on their rightful status against external categorisation. Men reiterated their reasons for fleeing, and repeated their grounds for asylum. For example, Tewelede argued against his external categorisation, by restating his asylum claim:

Earlier I got upset – someone called me an infiltrator. I said to him, you can call me whatever you want, but I'm a refugee. You can call me a work migrant and infiltrator, but I'm a refugee. I came here seeking political asylum.

Tesfit resisted external categorisation as he explained how seeking asylum differed from seeking work. He described asylum seeking journeys to protest his designation to another status:

> *You can't call refugees infiltrators. You have to call them asylum seekers. An asylum seeker doesn't come off the airplane to the first country he decides. He leaves in whatever way possible for him – by sea, desert, underground – he comes to seek asylum.*

In all these cases men resisted categorisation as criminals, security threats, or work migrants. They displayed knowledge of the legal definitions of refugee status, process of seeking asylum, and the rights afforded by these categories. Men repeatedly argued that detention was an extreme contravention of their refugee claims. They protested that the decision to detain them did not consider difficult past experiences or individual efforts to comply with state laws.

Those in detention repeatedly said authorities treated them worse than animals and viewed them as human waste. Like Filmon, they explained their poor treatment and disregard in terms of their criminalised, racialised, group stigma:

> *The Israeli people don't get it, they have no idea – they are told Holot is a hotel, that Eritreans hang out here, don't work, get money, get food. They don't understand that we were put here by force, without anything. They think maybe we were troublemakers; they don't know some of us are asylum seekers.*
>
> *They should check every person individually – the ones who make trouble, should go to prison. The human being seeking asylum, should get asylum.*
>
> *Every person should get what is right for his case. Just because you are black, they say, 'Black man – you don't deserve nothing here.' But Israel didn't sign that document [1951 Refugee Convention] only for white people. Every human is human. God created all of us.*

Racialised, criminalised group exclusion was experienced as particularly unjust in light of Israel's commitment to refugee rights protections. Yonas similarly reflected on how being denied services afforded to refugees elsewhere, worsened asylum seekers' problems:

> *They dumped us in South Tel Aviv, so what do they expect from us? The state doesn't let us work, doesn't let us eat, doesn't let us learn the language – it's the state's own doing, destruction, fault. And now it blames this on us?*
>
> *South Tel Aviv was troubled before, but who forced the refugees to be there? And who forced refugees to be in trauma? In depression? in anxiety? If they don't offer us any place to live or*

> *work or anything, what do they expect from us? And instead of helping us, they oppress us, they take from us, or force us to leave the country, or discourage us.*
>
> *Some give up. They think it is a solution to drink alcohol. I don't deny that there are a few refugees that do bad things. But the reason is the Israeli government, they push them to do bad things. They become discouraged people; they become insane.*

By citing denial of services, and comparisons with peers who had received refugee status in European countries, men highlighted their unjust treatment. There is an irony in detainees' mentions of asylum rights elsewhere, given increased evidence of the erosion of asylum worldwide (Squire 2009; Bosworth and Vannier 2020; Mountz 2020). Nonetheless, refugee status still held promise for those detained, as Johnny explained:

> *I didn't do anything to get here. I didn't dream of becoming a refugee and being away from my home. But it happened. Even now I pray the situation in our home will be safe, and I can go back. I hear people say we are work migrants … but migrant workers... they take their passports, go over [to work], and go home. They can travel, they don't escape from the country, they come by plane. If I was here for work I wouldn't stay away for so long from my family. Seven years, I haven't seen my mom and my dad and my siblings.*
>
> *I wish I would get my rights, I wish I would get status here. We are asking for protection here, but what we get is the opposite. I see people, my friends who were standing in line with me [in Sudan], I see them abroad and they get rights after a few months. Then I see here that no Eritrean gets refugee status. We have the same story, but nobody gets rights here.*

Similarly to Johnny, others in detention had friends or family members who received refugee status in Western states. Imagining they would be better off in a state with a functioning asylum system, asylum seekers in Israel felt increasingly degraded, disappointed, and harmed by detention in Holot. Insisting on refugee status was a way to cope with feelings of unfair punishment.

PUNISHMENT AND MISERY INSIDE HOLOT

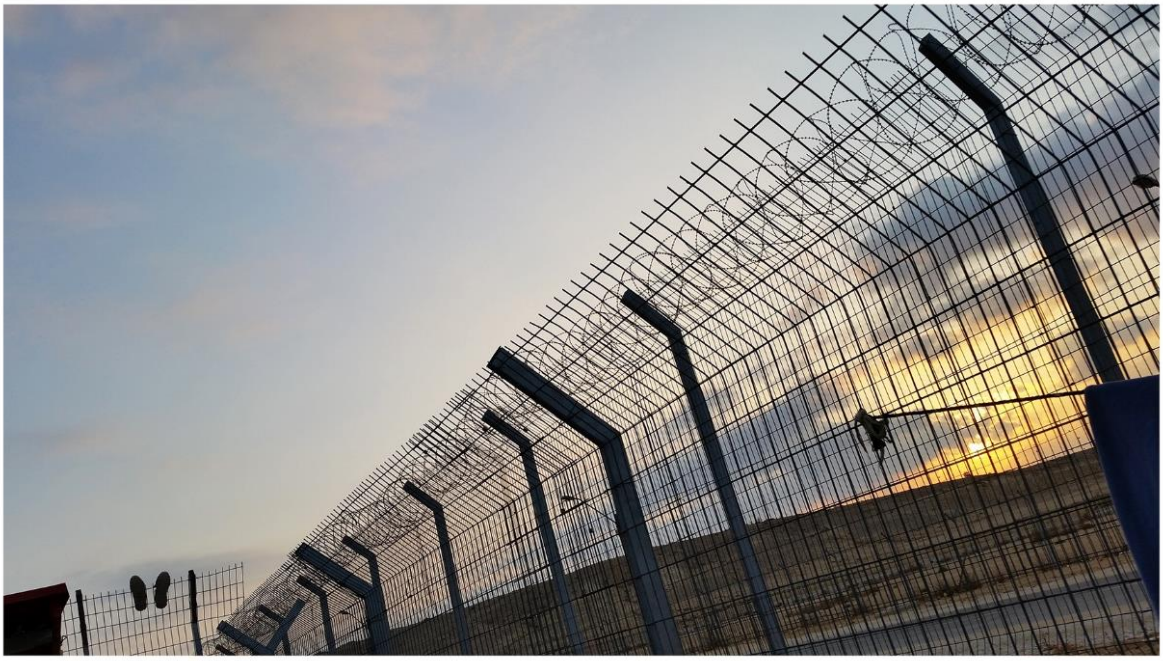


Figure 21. View from inside Holot (Photo Credit: Noureldin Musa)

IMMIGRATION DETENTION AS PRISON AND PUNISHMENT

Administrative detention under immigration laws is not a form of criminal punishment, but rather is meant to facilitate immigration related procedures and should be used sparingly (Silverman and Massa 2012, 679; Sampson and Mitchell 2013, 98–100; Bosworth and Vannier 2020, 54). And yet, all the men interviewed in Holot referred to the facility as a prison and to the time they spent in detention as punishment. Such descriptions fit in with critical literature on immigration detention as punishment from around the world (Hernández 2014; Bosworth 2017a).

Detainees explained that though Israel could not deport them, and could not directly injure them, it nonetheless found alternative ways to make their lives miserable. Men described detention as prison where they felt dehumanised, degraded and excluded in the most extreme ways. They acknowledged that Holot was an open prison, from which they could step outside throughout the day. Nonetheless, they maintained it was a prison – based on its appearance and location,

conditions, and treatment inside. Holot was operated by the Israeli Prison Service, and those employed in Holot were Correctional staff.

Detainees were well-placed to evaluate the conditions in detention as all had experienced different types of internment and punishment prior to arrival in Holot. In Eritrea, prisons were used to control citizen dissent and resistance to forced conscription, in a strategy that led to mass incarceration (Amnesty International 2013). During their migration, some men were locked up in transit countries, including Egypt, Libya, and Sudan (Lijnders 2012; Achtnich 2017). Finally, all had experienced initial incarceration upon entry to Israel,[66] as the state placed all new entrants in closed prisons for purposes of initial screening (Berman 2015, 185–92; Rozen and Guthmann 2020, 36–40). Some had also been confined in other Israeli prisons if they had been charged with a criminal offense or if they did not report to detention when summoned.

Berry, who entered Israel as a minor and was 23 when we spoke, referred to Holot as a prison where refugees were being punished. He had previously served three months in Saharonim and had been held in Holot five months when we spoke. I reminded him that the government says Holot is not exactly a prison. He provided his account of the place:

> *You can't bring anything in – if you want soap, toothpaste, you can't take anything inside. You have to buy what they have inside. It's a prison. So we can come out here and walk around a bit, but it's a prison. It's not a refugee camp – where they have decent food, teachers that teach you the law. Here there's nothing. The guards – you have to abide by their rules. One or two of them are good, but most of them are rude. They shout at you, punish you by taking your card and giving you a fine.*

Berry emphasised control on movement, punishments, and forced dependency in Holot. As mentioned in previous studies on IRCs in the UK, the prison-like appearances of centres, and lack of autonomy with regards to life in them contribute to detainees' feelings of being criminalised

[66] Most new entrants were held in Saharonim for a minimum of two weeks and up to two months. If the prison was full, as occurred on several occasions, asylum seekers were either held in other facilities, military camps, or released.

and punished (Gerlach 2018a; Bosworth and Turnbull 2015; Bosworth 2017b). Although men cited conditions in Holot that made it better than Saharonim, they referred to it as a prison nonetheless.

This view was shared by Yonas. Like many asylum seekers, Yonas received a summons to enter Holot when he went to renew his visa, after having lived in Israel for six years. Yonas described growing up in a loving and well-off family in Eritrea . Like many others, he fled to escape indefinite military service, and hoped to continue his education abroad. He tried to study and improve his life in Ethiopia and Egypt, but found little stability or opportunity and so had decided to continue his search. In Holot and in his late-20s, he remained ambitious, wanted to study and gain skills. He brought many books into Holot, ranging in topics from electronic know-how, financial proficiency, English language learning, as well as motivational and self-help texts. While he acknowledged the open aspects of Holot he still referred to it as a prison:

> *In Holot, it is a prison, I have nothing. But I found the opportunity to learn, teach people, with a smart phone to speak to my family. But Saharonim it is a closed prison; it is hell… A lot of people in Holot, they lose their minds, they start talking to themselves, they get depression and anxiety.*

This view, of Holot as a 'prison with some opportunity', fits with the image promoted by the state. Men in Holot indeed had additional freedoms to those in closed prisons. Those freedoms and connections to the outside world furthered the feeling that detainees were not dangerous or criminal, and made it more difficult for men to understand detention's purpose.

The lack of viable activities in the surrounding desert and the difficult conditions within the centre – prohibitions on studying, ill prepared food, frequent biometric recording, restrictions on movement, and degrading staff treatment - induced emotional and psychological hardships akin to those experienced in prison and detention centres elsewhere (Coffey et al. 2010; Kellezi and

Bosworth 2016; Steel and Silove 2001; Liebling 2011). Johnny, who was 23 and nearly done with his year in detention, oulined the similarities and differences between closed and open facilities:

> *Saharonim is very difficult. People don't know what the guards do. It's very hard. You can't sleep. All the time, even if you don't make problems, they shout at you. They bang on the doors at five in the morning. Three times per day, they make us go in the rooms, in and out. It was very hard…*
>
> *Holot is also difficult – I can say this is also a prison – how can you call this a detention centre? All the time shouting, like a prison, they just keep pushing you. They make you stand in lines, you're always in a rush to get in and they make you wait. Anything you want – they hold you up. It's not a detention centre, it's a prison like Saharonim, the only difference is there it is closed and here it is open.*

Detention in Holot thus felt like prison. Despite mitigation of conditions compared to closed incarceration, the central aspects of detention remained punitive – infringements on detainee liberties, and assaults on their dignity.

Given that the only alternative to detention was to sign a voluntary return agreement and be sent to Rwanda (Gerver 2017, 638; Bolzman 2018, 22–25), most interviewees did not feel they had any other choice than to accept internment. Teklu did not report to Holot when he was summoned. He was 25 when we spoke, having arrived from Eritrea in 2011. He said managed well in Israel, worked and saved. Once Holot opened and his visa expired, he feared he would be summoned to detention and therefore did not go to renew his papers. He continued to live and work in the southern city of Arad for some months with an expired visa. He fled when immigration police came to the city, hid, and worked at a farm in the desert alongside Palestinian workers, and a few other asylum seekers. Over time he felt it was not sustainable to continue hiding: 'Not having a visa was a problem everywhere – with work, with the bank. I thought, how long can I stay illegally like this? So I brought myself here [to Holot].' Teklu described himself as always getting along with people and work. In Holot he seemed stuck, debilitated and troubled. His comments, as those of all other interviewees, relayed great emotional stress, helplessness caused by detention.

Men were effectively forced into detention if they wish to comply with the law. However, abiding by the law did not regularise or change their status, nor allow them to remain in Israel. Many, like Filmon, who had complied with their summon to Holot, had expected to receive fair treatment by the state in exchange. As Filmon described:

> *I went to renew my visa, and they said to go into Holot. So that's what I did. Whatever the law decided, whatever they told me – I did. On that same day I came in here. I entered, and since then I've been here – 11 months. Now they gave me a paper that says go to Saharonim – either Saharonim or Rwanda. I'm not Rwandan. I'm Eritrean. I can't return to Rwanda.*
>
> *And why? I haven't made any problems. I stayed here for a year, and now they say Saharonim – it's really hard. Because there's no choice, I decided – I'll finish there [Saharonim] as they say. If they say ten years – ten years. if they say one month – one month – I'll finish my time there. As long as they don't use force. Until my country has peace, and we can go back, I'm not going anywhere. Better to die here. Why should I die in front of my mother.*

Though detainees abided by the law, constantly changing legislation and imminent threat of deportation effectively signalled to them that they are 'outside the law' (De Genova 2016a). Regardless of how compliant these men were, they could never secure legal status.

ABUSE BY STAFF

Poor treatment in Holot took on various forms in which staff used their power to deprive detainees of services, spoke harshly to detainees, or prolonged their discomfort. Detainees described these actions as forms of abuse. Massay, had turned 60 before we met, which was the upper age limit for detention in Holot. He had served in the Eritrean military for 10 years and when the army tried to re-draft him at 52 he fled. He has seven children whom he left behind, three in school and two in the military. Two others had sought refuge in other countries. Massay suffered from several health issues brought on by detention and worried that he was unable to support his children and burdened their already-difficult lives. He strongly felt that Holot staff did not care about his health, age or wellbeing:

I've been six months in Holot. I feel terrible. Today I was at the hospital. I go all the time. I have a lot of problems. It's really difficult for my mind, blood pressure. I can't sleep at night. They sent me to Beer Sheva to see the doctor [shows me a document in Hebrew from the hospital in the nearest city]. In the hospital they checked me all over. She [doctor] gave me a letter and said I will get a response. Until now I haven't heard anything.

I went to see the Immigration. I told them, 'I'm 60. I don't need to be here in prison.' There's one woman there. She was really difficult – she got angry and said, 'Why are you saying you're in prison? Only Saharonim is prison.' She scared me. I told her, 'According to your law, over 60 should not be here.' She said, 'Ok. In March we close. Until then I won't check.'

I'm really upset, but what can I do? I don't have language, it's their place. What can I do?

Massay's experience displayed one of many ways that detainee suffering was induced by deprivation of services. The immigration officer's response exemplified both forceful exhibition of power over those detained, and an abuse of her position that prolonged rather than mitigated the pains of detention.

Yerus, like Massay, also described poor healthcare by Israeli immigration authorities and in Holot. He was 48 at the time of the interview and spoke little Hebrew so we conducted the interview with the help of a translator. Yerus fled Eritrea after prolonged military service, three years in an Ethiopian prison while the two countries were in conflict, and continued military service once returned to Eritrea. When the state tried to draft him for a third time he left. Four of his five children also fled. Yerus walked using a cane and explained that he suffered a workplace injury in Israel when a tractor ran over his leg while on a construction site. He was intermittently hospitalised and operated on twice over a three-month period. Once able, Yerus went to renew his by-then expired visa at the Immigration offices in Bney Brak, he travelled from Jerusalem on

crutches.[67] Though he explained to Ministry of Interior (MOI) staff that he was late to renew his visa due to his injury, they rejected his account. He recalled:

> *They said 'your visa is expired, so we will apprehend you'. They tied me up and took me away to Ramle prison for seven days, then they moved me to Saharonim. The officer said he couldn't accept me because of my injury, they sent me back to Ramle for two months. Then Saharonim for twenty days – all together it was three months, then moved me to Holot.*
>
> *Since I arrived in Holot, my foot has not been ok. Three times I've had to go to the hospital in Beer Sheva on my own. I had to take public transport, pay travel costs, and pay for my cane and other medical needs.*

The deprivation of medical and support services, neglect of detainees' health problems, and the added obstacles posed to their wellbeing by detention, were experienced as intentional abuse and disregard. These were compounded by perceived disrespect and disdain by immigration staff. Detainees felt staff treated them as inferior, undeserving of care, and intentionally used their authority to make men's realities harder. Such accounts have been recorded by refugees held in detention centres elsewhere, as Behrouz Boochani described medical services on Manus Island:

> *A twisted and convoluted system that takes pleasure in observing sick human beings. When someone falls ill, the doctors and nurses have the perfect opportunity to unleash their power complexes. A prisoner is reduced to a useless piece of meat to be destroyed. Would the Kyriarchal system want it any other way? To see a defenceless piece of meat and then destroy it by subjecting it to a predetermined system subjecting it to the system until it swallowed up by it, subjecting it to the system until what is left is thrown away, back to the country or homeland from which the refugee fled (Boochani and Tofighian 2018, 303).*

In Holot, like in Manus, lack of care and deprivation of services communicated to detainees that they were worthless. Some of those I spoke to, described irreparable harm from unhealed injuries to significant mental health problems.

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[67] This journey would require an entire day, traveling at least three separate trips on public transportation in each direction given the distance between cities.

What the state described as medical services in Holot emerge as a farce from men's testimonies of being offered only painkillers for any variety of ailments and problems, a common claim in detention literature and reports (See eg Silove, Steel, and Mollica 2001; Kellezi and Bosworth 2016). Seeking health services outside Holot involved travel, costs, bureaucracy, and long waits in a system that did not accommodate or care for them.

Meetings with immigration personnel employed by the Ministry of Interior (MOI) were cited as the most extreme source of anxiety, emotional duress and humiliation.[68] All men described their meetings with the MOI and its staff negatively, whether in the MOI office in Holot, or in the main MOI office in Bnai Brak before detention. Common words used to describe their feelings towards the MOI included 'pressure', 'fear' and 'stress'. Such emotions were related both to direct exchanges with MOI staff, as well as interactions around such exchanges that included prolonged travel, waits, and repeated rejections. MOI meetings were framed by participants as some of the most direct abusive interactions with the state, in which staff enforced state exclusion and added personal touches of hostility in their encounters.

Abuse by staff included threats, sanctions, and degrading treatment that men experienced as unwarranted. Filmon explained:

> *Staff here act very badly to us. You don't do nothing and they treat you like… There is one guy who's causing a lot of problems for us. After a month you're supposed to get two days off. When you come to get your day off he says 'no, you can't go out.' But I'm entitled to it… if you ask why he starts shouting at you, giving you the run around… but I'm entitled to it. He says no. He doesn't give you a reason. This is force.*
>
> *People should know this. Immigration [staff] should know – people who behave well deserve the same. They deserve to be treated like human beings. Everyone in the world is different, right – in our skin colour, in our hearts, we're not the same – but everyone deserves to be*

[68] This includes the Population, Immigration and Borders Authority located in the Ministry of the Interior.

> *treated as human – if someone asks for his freedom, you have to tell him why you're not giving it to him.*

Filmon's description of how staff revoked privileges to punish detainees was one of many examples in which people described forceful, high levels of control, and institutional violence inflicted upon them. Similar systems have been described in other accounts of immigration detention in other parts of the world (Canning 2017; De Genova 2016a).

In February 2018, at the time of these interviews, Holot was on the verge of closure as a new policy of deportation or indefinite incarceration was introduced. A large group of detainees began a hunger strike at this time. Men would be reprimanded or punished in different ways that included restrictions on movement between wards and out of the centre, financial fines and other threats. Wussu recounted a conversation where staff threatened his life, freedom and safety during the hunger strike: 'They threatened me, tried to scare me – they said they could kill me, told me to shut off my phone… said they would send me to a criminal prison…'. Abuse and force described by Filmon and Wussu were cited by many of the men as acts intended to break their spirits, so they would sign voluntary return forms and self-deport from Israel.

Also during the hunger strike, Nati described conversations with Holot personnel which exhibited a devaluation and disdain for detainees' lives:

> *Now [during the strike] staff are saying, 'It's a shame you're making us throw away food'. THAT'S THE SHAME? [author's emphasis] They throw away our lives here.*
>
> *First, they said stay here for a year, a year passed, and they want to put us in Saharonim indefinitely. That's throwing away our lives! Is food is worth more than our lives?*

Harsh treatment in Holot followed years of MOI abuse before detention, when asylum seekers would go to renew their visas. In June 2020 a disturbing undercover exposé was aired on a major Israeli news show revealing systemic abuses, service deprivations, and humiliations experienced at Israel's MOI office in Bnai Brak, where all asylum seekers must renew their visas (The Source

2020). Long before the exposé, detainees cited this institution and its employees as a major instigator of suffering and stress. A recent Human Rights report scrutinised the lack of redress for abuses by the MOI's Population and Immigration Authority (United States Department of State 2020, 27). Tracing such treatment by MOI staff outside and inside Holot highlights the consistent hostility and structural violence to which asylum seekers were subjected by state representatives. It is a common thread that interweaves several parts of the same process – asylum seekers' estrangement and exclusion.

As Wonders and McDowell have traced, detention and other technologies of control grow upon earlier exclusionary practices such as anti-migrant discourse, increasingly restrictive immigration laws and policies (Pickering and Weber 2006; McDowell and Wonders 2009). Such a gradual process was pointed out by detainees through their references to MOI treatment that preceded detention. Wussu described the first few years of life in Israel were good as he managed to create a stable life for himself. With time he observed an escalation in hostile discourse about asylum seekers, and worsened treatment by authorities. The state imposed bi-monthly visa renewals, and increased pressure to participate in the voluntary return program. He described how his summons to Holot unfolded:

> *At the end of 2016 I went to renew my visa, they said go to Holot. I went to Holot – it was full. They said come back every month and renew your visa here. At the MOI in Holot.*
>
> *I would go by bus from Ramle to Tel Aviv, Tel Aviv to Beer Sheva, Beer Sheva to Holot. I would wait outside, give them my visa at 8am, at 3pm they would return it to me and say go home. Four times I came for this. Sometimes, as I sat there I thought – why do all of this?... When you look at this government – I wouldn't stay one minute if I had a place to go.*

Wussu's description exemplified authorities' disregard and disrespect for the time, efforts and emotional state of the asylum seekers it serviced or detained. In early years asylum seekers could renew their visas at Interior Ministry branches in their city of residence. Regulations changed and by 2017 only two MOI offices served the 34,000 asylum seekers living in Israel at the time (Sadan,

Rozen, and Guthmann 2018).[69] Visa renewals entailed long travel times for asylum seekers from all over the country, and long waiting times in the outdoors, exposed to the elements with no facilities. At times hundreds of people had to sleep on the street overnight or return over several days to be admitted. The difficult wait outside the MOI preceded hostile treatment inside.

Berry admitted in blunt terms: 'sometimes I just wanted to kill them.' Such a harsh statement can be attributed to his straightforward personality, as well as to the built-up anger he had accumulated over time. Initially, Berry did not want to speak to me at all. He hung out in a group of younger detainees who sported trendy hairstyles, had tattoos and smoked cigarettes. Only after several visits, as he got to know me socially, and saw others speak to me, did he indicate that we should talk.

In time, Berry confessed to the extreme stress and anxiety that plagued him, his trouble sleeping and thinking calmly, and how he would self-medicate using alcohol to escape or 'get a bit of quiet in his head'. He displayed signs of emotional duress as he spoke nervously, fidgeted, and his hands trembled as he lit one cigarette after another. In 2015 Berry had decided to leave Israel by signing a 'voluntary return' form and received a ticket to Rwanda, however his flight was cancelled due to a standstill with the programme. He remained in Israel, and was eventually detained. He got agitated when he spoke about the MOI and remembered injurious feelings from his earliest encounter with the agency that compounded over time:

> *I think that I will never be able to live in Israel all the way. When I have to go into the MOI and I don't know what's going to happen, and they don't treat you like a human being. They're so rude... They shout at you, make you angry. They don't speak nicely.*

[69] The two MOI branches were Bney Brak and Eilat, Israel's most Southern city located a five hour drive past the Arava desert. Immigration and visa services were also present in Holot.

For example, if a person comes and interviews you, does he know your story or do you? He asks why you came here, and you try to explain – my country is a dictatorship, and he starts shouting at you and giving you the answer – 'that's not the case, you came here to work'… And because you are human being, it starts to make you emotional and upset… one time he threatened to slap me with the phone…

Every two months you have to go renew your visa, so every two months they fuck with your head. Every time there's new laws. They say bring your pay slip, then they ask for an apartment contract – every time they ask for something else. It's too much pressure, I hated living here. I said to myself, I can't live like this so I decided to fly – if I die, I die, if not I'll go through Libya and go to Europe where they know what we've been through, and they treat us like refugees.

Berry felt so degraded, dehumanised, angry, and helpless that continued migration and known threats in Libya and the Mediterranean Sea seemed preferable to this continued, abusive limbo.

Abuse of power to control detainees' time and infringe upon on their freedoms was also described by Tewelede who fled Eritrea after 12 years of forced military service. He left a wife and four children behind. One of his sons had arrived in a European country as a minor, and Tewelede tried to reunite with him. He approached Holot immigration office to advance his process to leave the country. Although he acted in accordance with the law, entered Holot when summoned, and pursued a legal trajectory to exit, his time and freedoms were abused so severely he equated staff treatment with torture:

Being a human being here is very difficult. They torture you all the time…

Yesterday they called me in at 8:30am to the office. They took my card so I couldn't go anywhere. I sat there all day waiting and no news. There was lunch. I asked for food. They didn't give me any and I couldn't go [because they had his card]. Then at 3:30pm, they gave me back my card and said go, come back tomorrow. Does that make sense?

I came the next day, again no answer until 12pm. I asked for my card so I can go eat lunch. I came back from lunch, and they brought me in for a disciplinary hearing. One guy attacked from here, another guy attacked from there, shouting at me. I said listen – if you want to give me a hearing – one guy can talk to me, a translator, but that's it – you don't all come in and don't harass me. If you want to bother me, I want to have my lawyer present for this hearing.

Tewelede felt he was under attack. He described staff withholding of assistance that would enable him to leave Israel and join his son, deprivation of food and limitation of movement as abuse. These were some of the ways in which penal authority was enforced upon detainee's everyday life in Holot, often described as mental or psychological 'torture' intended to harm men and pressure them to leave.

Uncertainty and Misery in Detention

State enforcement of detention had joined a long line of earlier exclusionary legislation that included economic penalties, work and residence prohibitions, social and health rights deprivations. Continued enforcement of such policies constituted structural violence by the state – 'multilateral forms of violence which cause physical, social or emotional harm, or indeed death, to people seeking asylum' as it compounded past traumas, induced stress and despair (Canning 2017, 47).

Detention in Holot physically controlled and limited asylum seekers' movement, work, and residence in Israel. Katja Franko has studied the ways in which through 'perceived deviance, the crimmigrant other can be, and often is, sanctioned by complete and permanent exclusion from the community' (Franko, 2020, p. 37). For these men, physical exclusion felt like indefinite, unforeseeable, and unpredictable punishment based on frequent changes in the laws. As Tewelede described:

> *I came here willingly, according to the court order. I came in a dignified way to Holot, an open prison, for one year. Now they are changing the law and saying Saharonim, Rwanda, or we will keep you indefinitely.*

Men in Holot struggled to cope with the uncertain legal terrain. They faced futures that they could not control or prepare for. Similar accounts have been recorded in other sites of immigration detention (Hasselberg 2016; Turnbull 2015; Gerlach 2018a), where uncertainty exacerbates suffering. Frequently changing policies of detention, imprisonment or deportation produced a

feeling of legal limbo. Men reported harsh feelings of confusion, helplessness, and personal despair, alongside concern for others involved. As Yonas said after receiving a deportation or indefinite incarceration order:

> *I am confused right now – what the hell? It's an impossible choice, a lot of thoughts run through my head – what should I do, how long will I be in prison, what will be the result? It's shit. It's very stupid… More than that, I worry about my mother, sister, brother; I think about other people here – those in trauma, depression, uneducated, incapable, in anxiety – the government oppresses them, pushes them. I'm quite angry.*

Extensive research has demonstrated that uncertainties of immigration detention negatively effect the mental health of detainees (Engberg, 2013; Kellezi & Bosworth, 2016a; McLoughlin & Warin, 2008; Robjant, Hassan, & Katona, 2009; Steel et al., 2011; Steel & Silove, 2001). Depression, anxiety and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) are more likely to erupt the longer people are held in detention and are plagued with feelings of ambiguity and disempowerment. Damage to mental well-being can consequently be experienced as a form of violence (Cleveland et al. 2018; Robjant, Hassan, and Katona 2009; Steel and Silove 2001).

Filmon told me of his last interview by immigration staff inside the facility as an example of heightened uncertainty and helplessness at the hands of state officials. Filmon had finished a year of detention in Holot and was due for release but was now threatened with either indefinite incarceration in Saharonim or "voluntary" departure under a new forced deportation policy (Bolzman 2018, 25–29). He recalled how immigration staff turned off the camera that recorded the session when it came time for him to sign a voluntary return form. They pressured him to sign a paper in Hebrew that he could not read, and punished him with a fine when he refused. When we spoke, he had no idea what would happen the next day:

> *Tomorrow I either get a visa for one month, or maybe they will tell me tomorrow go to Saharonim. I think every day they decide something different. Whatever they say, I will do. I keep my word. Because I am a refugee, I keep my word, and I do what they tell me. The problem is they take people and make them sign things without understanding what they sign.*

> *Yesterday they took six people, today five people to Saharonim. They tell them 'go to a third country or Saharonim.' Some said they will go to Saharonim, and staff said 'ok – sign,' and they take them. We don't know what they signed; we don't know where they take them – maybe they will take them to a third country.*

Filmon depicts an immigration system marked by inconsistency, dishonesty, and threats of force. Detainees did not trust staff and believed they constantly worked to get them out of the country. He also reiterated uncertainty about the future. Frequent changes in legislation and staff control over detainee's lives were experienced as malevolent use of force and authority.

POSSIBILITIES FOR OVERCOMING EXCLUSION



Figure 22. The road from Holot (Photo Credit: Noureldin Musa)

Despite the pervasiveness of structural violence, men frequently described attempts to challenge their exclusion. These efforts included both resistance acts within detention, as well as points of inclusion or partial integration in Israeli society. They were achieved through acts of everyday resistance, migrant, and citizen solidarity, similarly uncovered in previous studies (Papadopoulos and Tsianos 2013; Sivaramakrishnan 2005; Squire 2009, chap. 7,8; Mountz 2020, chap. 6). Accounts of resistance teach us that even when subjected to long term structural violence aimed

to harm them, deny their agency, or devalue their existence, asylum seekers found ways to reassert their humanity, develop political subjectivities and fight for their rights.

Men in Holot organised protests against their treatment or conditions in detention, found ways to pass the time, and sustain their spirits. In these ways and others, men reported alleviating some of the harmful impacts of detention. Diverse resistance initiatives in detention will be expanded on in the next chapter. However, a dominant theme brought up by detainees while in Holot was connections to Israeli citizens as a way to overcome their exclusion. Connections to Israelis might have been emphasised due to the fact that a widescale civic struggle against deportation was taking place at the time of interviews, or because of my Israeli identity and activist position. Participant may have wanted me to feel comfortable and appreciated, and therefore included positive reflections in their testimonies. Nonetheless, connections to Israelis were frequently mentioned by men interviewed in detention.

People's accounts about their lives in Israel before Holot demonstrated it was possible to overcome exclusion through friendships and personal connection. Most of the men in Holot generally spoke positively about Israeli people, their experiences and personal interactions with them. In some cases, such as Wussu's, good relations with an Israeli employer had made it possible to circumvent restrictive legislation. He described his relationship with his employer as family:

> *I started working at a hardware store, first as a cleaner, then as stock filler, after one year I became supervisor. I would sell at the register… until Holot I worked and lived in Ramle.*
>
> *My boss gave my landlord a guarantee check for me to rent an apartment. Six years I stayed in the same apartment. They were like my family. They took me on trips. I would fix things in their home, help them with the shopping…*

Connections with Israelis enabled many asylum seekers to overcome state exclusionary practices and partially integrate into employment or housing market. Marie Segrave described similar collaborations in Australia as sites and strategies of 'differential inclusion' (Segrave 2019). A sense

of trust and care was fostered by some of the men in detention with their Israeli employers, co-workers or friends. Some spoke of Israel and Israelis enthusiastically in comparison with other countries or people they had encountered in the process of seeking asylum. For example, Bini, who was in his early 30s and soon to complete his year in Holot, compared Israel to the harsh treatment in Eritrea, Sudan, and by Bedouins in Egypt's Sinai desert:

> *Sinai was very difficult. Especially for women. In Sinai they [Bedouins] took girls to another building and fuck them, is it ok I use this language? they take them, they mess them up, ask for ransom. So many women died in Sinai, so many Eritreans, anyone who didn't have money, who didn't get the ransom paid. Parents sold their homes to send money. Sometimes they send money and the person was already dead.*
>
> *When we came into Israel, the soldiers said welcome. They took us from the border; if someone didn't feel well, they took them to hospital. I like Israeli soldiers. I like Israeli people. There is no place like Israel... Israel is very good.*
>
> *I went to study and work and live in Tel Aviv. I made a lot of Israeli friends there. Then I found a job in Modiin. I was there for a long time and I made a lot of friends. I'm just finishing my year here, and my friends there they are calling and saying 'come back to us.*

In these and other accounts, detainees described close relationships where ethnic or racial differences were overcome. Some had exceptional stories of connections with Israeli society. For example, Massay found friendship and comradery once he moved to live by Israel's Arab villages. After his initial incarceration in Saharonim, he looked for work in Tel Aviv. He explained that he could not find a job, and boarded a random bus one day to look elsewhere:

> *I got on a bus to Hadera. I found another guy like me, and we found work and a place to stay in the area, working in all the Arab villages – Kfar Kara, Umm al Faham, Arara… I stayed there for eight years. I never went back to stay in Tel Aviv. Four of us were renting in the Arab villages and working for Jews. I worked in cleaning. I made a lot of good friends, guys my age, until now they keep in touch with me.*
>
> *MR: Arab guys?*
>
> *Massay: No, Jewish.*
>
> *MR: Ethiopian Jewish?*

Massay: No. White – like you [he laughed]. When they heard I'm going to Holot, they said, 'Why? You're too old for this. When they release you, come back to us.

My repeated questions to Massay reflected my surprise at discovering that this older man with limited language skills had fostered friendships with Israeli men his age. I witnessed such friendships between younger people who were well-versed in Hebrew and urban popular culture that they shared with Israeli peers, but was surprised to discover such connections in rural parts of the country and among older men. The repeated mentions of the term 'us' by several of the men when talking about Israeli friends is indicative of close relationships that cut across ethnic differences, language barriers and citizen status.

In some of these encounters, ethnic difference provided educational moments. This was Filmon's experience of work at a Hassidic Yeshiva[70] in Jerusalem. In his description, he exhibited a deep familiarity and understanding of the place by using specialist terms specific to the religious context, which I was surprised to hear:

I was the cook for these religious guys. There were 105 lomdim [men studying religion]; it was a big place. So after some time, one of the melameds [religious teachers] came to speak with me. He asked, 'Where are you from? I told him. He asked, 'Are there tomatoes in your country? What do you eat there? Do you eat pork?... You eat snakes, right?'… You eat humans?' I asked him, 'How does one eat a human?' I just kept saying no to everything he asked me. Then he left and talked to other guys, and they came back shouting and cursing at me. My boss came in and asked what happened, and by this time I had language. I could explain to him well with my good Hebrew. I said, 'What do you think? I'm a human just like you. You're white, and I'm black, but our blood – the same. Our Lord in Heaven created all of us as humans. You think Israel is the only country?' I explained everything to him. And after that we got on fine.

Though confronted with racial tropes of African backwardness or cannibalism, Filmon was able to get by using conversational skills and knowledge of Israeli society.

[70] School of Jewish religious learning.

Difference presented opportunities to teach but also to learn. Cultural difference was described by many as a topic of conversation, often approached with sincere curiosity. Tewelede described interactions around ethnicity, language and racial difference in his work at a nursing home:

> *Because I was a teacher, I like taking care of people. The work is not physical labour, it's work with your mind. You meet all sorts of people who came from so many backgrounds – those who came from Germany and suffered through a lot, and they are older people, so they teach you.*
>
> *I remember one day, this woman named Ruth – she was abused in Germany, and she was a really good woman. One day she asked me, 'You are a really nice man. Do you like it when people correct your Hebrew or no? Because some people get upset by it.' I said to her, 'Ruth, I'm happy for you to correct me. I want to learn the language, so please fix my Hebrew…'*
>
> *You know, it's little things, but I remember. And it was good for me. I respect them also when they correct me. They are trying to make me a better person. Really, I liked them. They are good people. They have been through so much in their lives, and they don't care about the colour of the person – if they are black or white, they see you as human. If you respect them, they like you. They taught me everything.*

Participants explained that interpersonal relationships and friendships with Israelis impacted their understanding of detention as an act of government, and not representative of all Israelis. For example, Johnny said he loved being in Israel: 'I have some friends who are waiting for me to come back. They were really sad that I had to go to prison, and they stayed in touch and gave me hope.' Nati believed such sentiments were held by a majority of Israeli society, as he explained: 'Most of the people of Israel we know are with us. The only hope we have is the people of Israel, that they are against the deportation. When you are here, talking to us, it gives us hope.' Positive exchanges were fostered around food, music, and sporting events during events organised outside Holot by Israelis who came to visit and connect with those detained and protest their exclusion.

Despite positive connections, it remained clear that the friends outside Holot or those who protested alongside asylum seekers were white and citizens, and as such, would never be subjected

to the same treatment by the state. Though detainees valued connections with some Israelis, many eventually revealed experiences of racialised harm or abuse. For example, Tesfay described interaction with Israelis over the years in good terms, and only toward the end of his statement did he reflect on the casual racisms encountered and their lasting impact:

> *Being Eritrean, when we started our lives here, we lived a lot of people in one room. With what you get paid here, you can't pay rent on your own. Your family paid a lot of money [ransom] that you need to start making back, so you split a flat with seven guys. And if you see someone you know living on the street, you take him in.*
>
> *For those who don't know us, it's a problem. They think we're different, bad people, terrorists, scary. But once they know us, they see. Once they know, they understand. I had lots of Israeli friends from working at a restaurant, a café…*
>
> *Sometimes I hear bad stuff... For a refugee, if you don't have your own country, of course you will face this – not just here, all over the world. You hear the racism, and it drives you crazy, but there's nothing to do. You have to get used to it. You have to deal with it, otherwise you lose your mind. Sometimes at work you hear this stuff. They'll say, 'Get out of here you n****r.' Sometimes you go home, close the door and cry alone. You ask why did I deserve this. But what can we do?*

Tesfay's resolve in the face of racial abuse indicates that while good personal connections might exist, being Eritrean, black and a refugee relegates these men to a lower place in the social and economic hierarchy of the state. Whether exemplified by the types of jobs asylum seekers could find, housing conditions they could afford, or social interactions they were subjected to.

CONCLUSION

Testimonies explored in this chapter demonstrate that detainees experienced Holot as exclusionary and punitive. Punishment in Holot, understood as suffering experienced in this form of state custody or inflicted by Holot staff upon those under their control, included acts of humiliation and abuse by staff, harsh material conditions, limits on movement, and intentional prolonging of uncertainty or service provisions. Men expressed that such treatment intended to harm them and

pressure them to leave the country. They believed that though Israel could not deport them, or directly injure them, state representatives found alternative ways to make their lives miserable.

Those detained repeatedly compared themselves to other groups: Eritrean asylum seekers who received refugee status abroad, other migrant groups in Israel who were treated differently, and Israeli citizens. Comparisons highlight systemic criminalisation, racialisation, and dehumanisation at the hand of the state. They are read as informative texts rather than objective facts, that reveal how exclusion in detention is experienced by those subjected to it. Those detained used comparisons to emphasise injustices incurred in the agonistic terrain of border control. As asylum seeking becomes increasingly out of reach around the world, those in detention still try to find hope in other locations and treatment of other groups through which to pull themselves out of their extreme isolation. They thus held on to the idea of refugee status and rights.

Men explained their differential treatment was indicative of the social order that was being upheld in Israel through their detention – one of Jewish whiteness, reinforced by exclusion of its undesirable African non-citizens. Detainees' recounted state policies to exclude them from mainstream public life that preceded detention. Detention in Holot formally and physically enforced this separation, along a continuum of structural violence. Seclusion and containment reified their lower place in the economy and society based on a racialised hierarchical social order.

Chapter 6.

Sudanese and Eritrean Asylum Seekers on Life after Holot

This chapter explores testimonies drawn from ethnographic research conducted with men formerly detained in Holot Detention Facility. It is based on interviews with 14 asylum seekers who were held in Holot, for different periods of time between 2013–2018, and released to live in Israeli communities[71]. Interview data is complemented by informal conversations and participant observations conducted over hundreds of hours spent visiting asylum seekers around the country between 2018–2020.[72] Issues examined include retrospective accounts of detention, life after detention, and relationships between former detainees and the state. The findings suggest that having been unsettled by the state,[73] and held in a space of extreme exclusion from society, detention clarified asylum seekers' relationship with the state. Detention emerges from testimonies as a central mechanism in the state's wider effort to relegate black asylum seekers to their fitting place – either outside of the polity, or in an inferior, impoverished, criminalised position within it.

As discussed extensively elsewhere, detention is one of the most extreme acts of exclusion that states can inflict upon unwanted persons in their midst (Bloch and Schuster 2005, 509–10; Bosworth and Turnbull 2015, 51; Walters 2002, 284–86). The chapter examines the repercussions of detention on individuals, and the narratives they developed about them. It argues that African

[71] The 14 men interviewed after detention are a different group than men interviewed while in detention.

[72] In the first half of 2018 I lived in South Tel Aviv for six months. Aside from first seven weeks that were largely devoted to research in Holot, I spent full days in Sudanese and Eritrean community centres, restaurants, cafes in Tel Aviv. I attended community meetings and protests in which I conducted informal conversation, recruited participants and took notes. I conducted interviews in Tel Aviv and Arad. In 2019 I returned for a second field visit, spent one month in South Tel Aviv and conducted interviews. In 2020 I conducted several more interviews in Tel Aviv, Herzeliya and Jerusalem, based on snowball sampling between participants.

[73] The legislative aim of asylum seekers detention was 'prevention of settlement in city centres', as stipulated in the 5th Amendment to the Prevention of Infiltration Law, discussed at length in preceding chapters.

asylum seekers in Israel live under continued exclusion, in which their attempts toward integration or inclusion are disrupted by the state through repeated reminders of their detainability and deportability, referring to the threats of physical removal that creates an 'anomalous juridical status' (De Genova and Peutz 2010, 14; Lentin and Moreo 2015, 896–97; De Genova 2016a) over time. Policies to detain and threats to deport Sudanese and Eritreans contribute to such a status, mark this distinct group for exclusion despite their non-deportable status and pending asylum claims.

Detention in Israel, like in other locales, thus emerges as a productive enterprise that not only exerts pressure upon asylum seekers to leave, but also imprints the border upon them, marking them with illegality even after detention, when they are allowed to remain (Hall 2010, 894; Mountz et al. 2013, 526). In this way, as noted elsewhere, a border becomes 'both an idea and a transgressive category of practice that cuts through the capital city of the nation-state and moves along with the border subjects who bear it – the refugees and migrants' (Kallius, Monterescu, and Rajaram 2016, 10). Men continued to face state practices of internal bordering or moving borders (Segrave 2019; Pham 2009), erected before them wherever they went.

Like studies of immigration elsewhere, I find that the continuing detainability and deportability of asylum seekers irrevocably shapes their relationship with the state beyond detention, with intention to degrade and harm them (Canning 2019; Suárez-Krabbe and Lindberg 2019). Importantly, men's testimonies about detention and life after in Israeli communities expand our understanding of the relationship between race and place. Their observations on, and responses to, being unsettled by the state expose a racialised, hierarchical, differentiated exclusion compared to citizens and other migrant groups, and suggest ways to overcome it.

The chapter proceeds in three sections. It starts by describing how men returned to the community after detention, the presence and enduring effects of being unsettled that permeate asylum seekers' lives long after release, and how they navigated their exclusion. The second section

outlines how men came to understand the intentions of their confinement by focusing on their strongest memories from detention, and lessons they derived from their lived experience under state control. In the final section I examine participant accounts and strategies of overcoming exclusion. While men interviewed in detention contextualised confinement within previous exclusionary policies, those interviewed after detention highlighted its continued presence after release. Taken together accounts reveal state intentions to push asylum seekers beyond the limits of society and their capacity to withstand degradation. Detention epitomises state enforcement of exclusionary laws in the most visceral of ways.

STARTING OVER, AGAIN… AND NAVIGATING EXCLUSION

After release from detention, men felt they had to start over in Israel, even though most had already lived in the country for several years. Some hoped detention would serve an immigration related role, as it is traditionally used across the globe (Silverman and Massa 2012, 679), where reception centres are used to ascertain people's identity and asylum claims, and detention centres hold people pursuant to deportation. Men thus assumed detention would be used to review their asylum case, facilitate their resettlement elsewhere, or pressure them to self-deport by signing up for voluntary return to their country of origin or a third country (Rwanda or Uganda).

Men's expectations reflected their knowledge of other people's asylum-seeking experiences, as well as efforts to find meaning in a system in which they had so little recourse. As sadly diagnosed by Alison Mountz, we are seeing 'the death of asylum' around the world, as asylum is under threat of disappearance through its erosion in state laws, policies, discourses, and practice. According to Mountz, those seeking asylum are set up for 'social death', as the status they strive for remains out of reach and increasingly devalued (Mountz 2020, xx). In Israel, those released from Holot received the same legal document they held before detention – a Conditional Release Visa for non-removable foreigners, with added prohibitions on living and working in Tel Aviv and

six other cities with large concentrations of asylum seekers (United States Department of State 2020, 29). Thus though the State could not deport these men, it managed to reiterate their exclusion, undesirability, and hopelessness of asylum through detention, as a strategy of internal control (McDowell and Wonders 2009, 55–56; Broeders and Engbersen 2007, 1593).

Men were released with no support services, accommodation, or referrals for aid. They did not have savings with which to rent a home. Many could not return to cities where they had previously lived and established community networks, so some resorted to living on the streets. They navigated internal Israeli dynamics of inequality, ethnic division, and segregated residence patterns when trying to find a place to live and work. Special attention was paid to their relationship with South Tel Aviv. All these factors influenced the lives they built after detention.

Feeling out of Place after Detention

Although they returned to live among the Israeli public, asylum seekers felt singled out and identifiable due to their race, collective detainment, and group categorisation; marked for non-belonging and denied progress. As Silverman and Massa described, immigration detention creates a 'racialised and criminalised space; and a form of experience that shapes how individuals are able to participate in society' (Silverman and Massa 2012, 682) as it removes individuals to the edges of the juridical and social order (Walters 2002, 286). Those detained continued to feel singled out long after the physical separation and deprivation of liberties in detention, as the symbolic meaning of border walls and fences differentiated them and remained with them (Khosravi 2019, 414).

Mohammed described his release from Holot was an unusual case, as it followed a month-long hunger strike and he was released in an extremely poor physical state. He had fled his home in northern Sudan when his refusal to serve in the military was met with surveillance and violence by security forces. After seven years in Israel he was sent to Holot. In detention he repeatedly approached staff with grievances and complaints about conditions. He decided to go on a hunger

strike after being ignored. His strike ended with his release. His account demonstrates strong feelings of disregard and lack of systemic solutions that remain after release:

> *After 38 days of hunger strike, they took me to the office and told me they won't take responsibility over me anymore. Two immigration officers took me out of Holot. I had no strength, nowhere to go, I thought I would die on the way. I just wanted to live in dignity.*
>
> *It's crazy that they let me out like that, with nothing. I started walking to the border with Egypt. From 9pm to 4am I walked. As I was walking police came and offered to take me back, a representative from UNHCR called and said 'come back we will help you' and I refused – Do you know how long I had been waiting for solutions, and got nothing?*
>
> *I didn't make it to the border. Border police stopped me and said don't move. I tried to take some water, but I lost consciousness… When I woke I was in Ashkelon. They put in a feeding tube and left me. I had to find my way from there.*

Other men released from detention may not have been in such extreme physical state as Mohammed, but all had to forge their way after being set back a year in all aspects of life. Those who were fortunate to have family, friends or connections managed to find a place to stay until they could find work and earn wages to pay rent. Residence and work restrictions made it difficult to resume life, as the men were restricted from living in cities they knew. As Kende described:

> *You haven't worked and don't have papers because you've been in detention for a year. Then you are told not to go to the same city where you lived before, so you must find a new way to go. I decided to move to Haifa. The beginning was very hard because nobody takes care of you, you have no money, no place to stay, in a new city. I was lucky to have connections. I managed, I lived and survived with the help of good people, Israelis and Sudanese. I found a place and a job, and I continued my activism.*
>
> *Some people, until today [four years later], are living homeless because of this detention.*

All the men I interviewed managed to rebuild a relatively stable life, through their connections and individual capacities to recuperate. I did not interview men who remained homeless after detention, nor those who were mentally unwell. The findings therefore do not reflect the experiences of the most vulnerable asylum seekers. Nonetheless, interviewees relayed difficulties

of others, and expressed awareness of their good fortunes and different circumstances, relative to most. Amad recalled the difficulties of finding a place upon release:

> *When I was released, I didn't have money to start a new life. Most of us who didn't have a place to go because everyone had two or three guests at their homes. I had to move from city to city… looking for a place. I didn't have money, but Israeli friends gave us cheques for rent, that we paid back over time, it helped a lot to start a new life. But this is a big difference between me and other people. Because those who didn't have friends to help stayed in a house that the community rented. Like 30 people in one place.*

The experience of being out of place, with no resources to start over, relying on individual assistance or organisational charity was not new to these men. Everyone in Holot had been detained earlier upon entry and created a life for themselves over several years before being summoned to Holot.

Adda compared the release from Holot to asylum seekers' initial arrival in the country. He explained how the need to start over after being dislodged, a second time, broke men's spirit and made some give up on ever finding a place of refuge in Israel:

> *When people first came into the country and were released from prison they set up their lives, found jobs, figured things out. When they were taken to Holot and all of that was taken from them, they were broken, their hope was taken away. They had hope, and it was taken away. It's very sad for me, it hurts me to go to Tel Aviv and see these people on the street who have been broken down.*
>
> *Some of the impact of Holot is with me all the time.*
>
> *I still don't have status – that's part of Holot.*
>
> *The fear that the state might deport me – that's Holot.*

Feeling out of place and unstable, constant fear and uncertainty remained with men after release, fitting with what Griffiths described as 'a context of continual crisis' (Griffiths 2013, 263). Though legal status is determined by laws, detention demonstrated to asylum seekers how the state could exert its power to exclude them at any time. Through detention they felt law's effects in the most visceral ways. It led them to understand that no matter how long they remained in the country,

and what life they established, their presence was in fact conditional, uncertain, and could be disrupted at any time. They had been marked and re-marked as unwanted and expendable through repeated assertions of their detainability and deportability (Griffiths 2013, 279–80; De Genova 2016a; Bosworth 2017a, 80).

Finding a Place after Being Excluded

After detention in Holot, all asylum seekers were banned from living and working in Tel Aviv, and most did not want to live there due to poor conditions in the neighbourhood, and negative feelings about past experiences. Amad recalled fear and feelings of unsafety when anti-immigrant protests would take place in the area. Mikaele reported that his sister was assaulted on the street in a racist attack. Most asylum seekers tried to leave Tel Aviv, but many ended up returning due to limited employment, housing, and services elsewhere. Among my post-detention interviewees, nearly half resided in South Tel Aviv at the time of the interview, defying residence restrictions.

Ibrahim conveyed an acceptance of his exclusion, and how subsequent decision-making was shaped by it, when he spoke of his reasons for living in South Tel Aviv:

> *The Prime Minister said we are taking over – so what's the difference if I live in Haifa or Tel Aviv. Why do we live in Tel Aviv? Schools, hospitals, government offices – we can't, like Israelis, go to any institution we want, only the ones around Tel Aviv – like UNHCR, Gesher [mental health clinic]… We can't leave, not allowed to drive, fly…*
>
> *Neve Shaanan today, is better than 2009 – there used to be dangerous druggies everywhere. There were no restaurants, no clothing shops, no space. When I first left custody, I didn't want to live in Neve Shaanan, that's why I went to Eilat. Today I'm in South Tel Aviv.*

Prior to his detention in Holot, Ibrahim lived and worked in Israel's Southernmost city Eilat. Since detention he faced difficulties in maintaining employment and increasingly relied on aid organisations. He admitted he did not like Tel Aviv but was resolved to get by on casual work and stay put. He seemed disheartened and exhausted by the task of starting over. He preferred to live 'unlawfully', in a migrant enclave with no legal or regular work, to trying to build a life elsewhere

once again. He felt defeated by the state, gave up on belonging in it, and lived in a position of continued illegality after detention. Asylum seekers responded to their exclusion differently – some overcame it, some worked around it, others accepted it.

Ibrahim seemed to have accepted his exclusion, he situated himself within it, and interacted minimally with Israeli society. His choices show how exclusion irrevocably impacted asylum seekers through dislocation from society, delayed progress in life goals, and depressed position in the workforce. De Genova described similar processes elsewhere as 'an interruption of migrants' time [by detention]... even if the end result is only that migrants are released when actual deportation has proven to be unfeasible, the rhythms of their lives and their larger life projects are profoundly fractured' (De Genova 2016a, 6). Shahram Khosravi similarly discussed these temporal disruptions when 'People categorised as refugees, asylum seekers or undocumented people are seen to belong to a racial time, a non-white time that legitimises bordering them, exposing them to differential inclusion but also to exclusion, i.e. detention and deportation. The other belongs to a different time, a racial time, and thereby to a different place' (Khosravi 2019, 417). These racialised differentiations remained with asylum seekers beyond Holot.

Many asylum seekers chose a different path (which will be expanded on in the final section of this chapter), that of connecting with members of the Israeli public to overcome exclusion. After Holot, some asylum seekers were invited to live with Israeli families. Others were helped by Israelis to find apartments to rent. Adda recalled:

> *When I got out of Holot in 2015 – I first stayed on a Kibbutz with a family for a month and then moved to Herzeliya. I love this place, it's amazing, the population is totally different than Tel Aviv. People don't meddle in your life, even if you are a foreigner, you don't bother them, they're not afraid of you. Maybe it has to do with the quantity of people, that there are not that many of us here.*
>
> *It could also have to do with levels of education, and socio-economic levels, that the Israeli people here really have their lives sorted. Even if there were many of us here, we would not be*

treated here in the same way as in South Tel Aviv [where poor Israelis struggle]. Also, more people here are left-wing, they support human rights, I think they would be more understanding. Many people say that if asylum seekers were dispersed around the country, it wouldn't bother South Tel Aviv as much.

Sadang similarly expressed how he wanted to avoid the crowded and tension filled environment in Tel Aviv. He managed to rent a home in Rishon LeZion with the help of Israelis who provided cheques and guarantees. He described how living outside of Tel Aviv enabled him to avoid the everyday encounters and reminders of exclusion:

Rishon LeZion was my favourite place to live. It was the first time I experienced that people on the street don't look at you in a strange way, you come into a shop and they greet you with a smile. It was my first time going to the bank and trying to open an account, you won't believe me – it took me less than 30 min to open the account! The guy was so nice, we were talking about Sudan, he gave me a debit card and after two months they offered me a visa card! In Rishon I felt like an Israeli.

Then one day I came to Tel Aviv, to Neve Shaanan and wanted to buy something – I gave the shopkeeper my card and he said – 'you stole it'. I said no, I showed him my documents. He said he'd never seen an African with a card like that, and he wouldn't let me use it.

The difference between the places is obvious… Tel Aviv is a metropolitan city, there are different groups of immigrants, possibly illegal people, a lot of black-market activities going on. But when you go to Rishon LeZion, first of all people are more educated, its less crowded, crime doesn't happen that much, so trust is higher. Rishon also has a mixture of different communities too – Russian, Ethiopian, French, people from all over. But when the density is small and crime doesn't happen regularly, there is no reason not to trust people.

Many asylum seekers gained insider understanding of the politics of socio-economic and ethnic settlement patterns in Israel. Some like Sadang and Adda, chose to live in towns outside of Tel Aviv where resident populations had higher socio-economic status and higher levels of education, where they found a more tolerant environment. This was not necessarily the case for all asylum seekers who moved out of Tel Aviv, however. Majir returned to live in the Southern city of Arad, where he had resided since his arrival in the country:

> *In the whole time, living in Arad, I worked at the same hotel. I had no problems with the people at work or with neighbours. Sometimes there could be some misunderstandings, some people can be racists.*
>
> *Overall, it is a very closed-minded place. Over the years I learned how to react – Arad, Dimona, this area [Southern worker towns] – is very closed minded. I don't blame them, because they live in a place where they don't have many opportunities to open themselves to other people. People in the centre of the country, most of them are educated, have exposure to other people and cultures. In Arad they are mostly workers.*

Majir described several interactions with co-workers, neighbours and landlords in which racist comments made to reduce his self-worth. His informed understanding of the backgrounds of those living in his area helped him understand these dynamics, as he attributed antagonistic behaviours to the lack of education, resources or opportunity that characterises Israel's geographic and social periphery. Asylum seekers' understanding of differentiated categories of belonging within Israel's ethnonational order (discussed in chapter 2 of this thesis), helped them make sense of their own location, and employ strategies to find a place for themselves.

Out of Progress and Productivity

Detention not only interrupted asylum seekers' efforts to settle, but also hindered their progress in work and integration to the society around them. Men described how detention delayed their life plans, and workforce progress. Though much of the literature about time and detention reflects on the injurious effects of uncertainty and waiting in detention (Griffiths 2013; Turnbull 2015; Hasselberg 2016), testimonies of previously detained asylum seekers also show how time wasted and lost continues to adversely affect their lives after release.

Asylum seekers and refugees around the globe struggle to survive in low-skilled and low-wage settings often outside 'formal' employment markets or working in precarious cash-in-hand jobs (Dwyer et al. 2016). This experience is shared by asylum seekers in Israel and was compounded by their second round of detention in Holot. Ibrahim recalled his relegation to the bottom of the labour force hierarchy from the earliest days of his arrival. He had completed

university studies in Khartoum before he fled persecution by security forces due to his political opposition. He described asylum seekers' introduction into the workforce in 2007 in terms reminiscent of animal or slave ownership:

> *They dumped us to work in agriculture. In my entire life, I never planted a flower. I don't know why they thought we came here to work. When we spoke to the contractor they released us to, he didn't speak to us respectfully, he spoke with force – like someone who has bought you, like an animal.*
>
> *He said 'you can't go, I bought you all with money, no one will leave here on his own, I will call the police.' I told him – if you bought us with money, show me – who sold me to you? They thought we were just here for work. Like mules.*

For Ibrahim, his position of inferiority and exploitation was therefore clear from the start. He made sense of repeated detention in Holot as a way of preparing them for continued work: 'I thought maybe they are letting us rest, so we have the strength to work a few more years.' Like Ibrahim, Majir also recalled how his early life in the country was controlled through his workforce position. He had arrived in 2010 and went to work at a hotel by the Dead Sea:

> *Information about the law, IDs, Documents – everything was given to the hotel through the manager. It wasn't ok. I didn't come here looking for work or money. I asked some days off after receiving a salary, went to UNHCR office and applied for asylum.*

After filing his asylum claim, Majir continued to live and work in the same place. He abided by the law, advanced in his workplace, established positive relationships with his employers and co-workers. He therefore could not understand being summoned to detention in Holot a second time.

> *I had been in Israel 5–6 years, why take me now? I know other countries detain you for some time when you enter. If it was at first when I entered, I can understand, but after years – I don't understand.*

Musa similarly could not make sense of detention given the contribution of asylum seekers to the labour force and the economy.

> *I don't know why they made Holot, I don't understand, they put Holot up when people were working, they were paying taxes, paying rent, shopping and selling, and they stick them out there with nothing.*

What these testimonies show is that even when asylum seekers were able to overcome their initial precariousness in the workforce, a second round of detention in Holot undid, delayed, or crushed such progress. Stephen Castles refers to migrants' participation in the labour market, but denial of access to citizenship, welfare services, and political life as differential exclusion (Castles 1995, 294). Mezzadra and Nielson argue that migration detention facilities further delay the time and speed of migrants' movements into labour markets (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013, 132) so that integration is hindered. I extend their arguments from the sphere of labour to social life, and emphasise the selective inclusion or exclusion of specific groups based on their countries of origin (Castles 2005; Walters 2002, 275). Above testimonies show how racialised exclusion reified a desired ethnic socio-economic ordering in which African asylum seekers are relegated to the lowest ranks.

Majir was able to return to his workplace after Holot. He mourned the time wasted and its effects on his wellbeing, yet managed to resume progress. Others, like Ibrahim and Musa, were less fortunate. Both had been steadily employed before being detained in Holot. They lived in Southern cities and rented homes with friends. They were socially active, supported community members and initiatives. After his detention, Ibrahim lived in South Tel Aviv, picking up casual cash-in-hand work. He became depressed and sought help from a refugee mental health charity. He often spoke of feeling hopeless. Musa similarly struggled after detention. He lived with friends in Herzeliya for a while and eventually moved to South Tel Aviv. He managed to work enough to pay rent but struggled with depression, avoided social contact and despaired.

Another interviewee, Mikaele recalled the difficulties of what he described as 'picking yourself up from the concrete,' as he remembered the homelessness of most asylum seekers when they first entered the country. In the beginning he described unstable, precarious work, and conflict

with employers. He found work at a hotel in the South as a dishwasher, then moved to housekeeping. He felt as if he was being watched and pressured, poorly paid and had no avenues for advancement: 'They just want you to stay in the same place. They don't let you make progress ... I like working at hotels, but I wanted to move forward.' After his time in Holot, Mikaele described problems of mood, anxiety and alcoholism. He was no longer able to deal with workplace dynamics as he had before.

When I first met Mikaele, he was sleeping in a storeroom in the back of a shop with another Eritrean friend who was just released from Holot. Both were 23 years old and had entered Israel as minors. He remembered, 'I was back in Tel Aviv, we couldn't find work, and really we were in a bad situation. I think I spent a lot of my money on alcohol. You know, I have a lot of pain, and alcohol just soothes me.' His return into the workforce after Holot was challenging, he found work at a hotel again but said that his capacity to tolerate his position and treatment had lessened. He reported feeling pressured, degraded, and paranoid:

> *I felt like something was eating away at my brain, like so much pressure it will blow up. I couldn't sit calmly to drink a cup of coffee. I didn't know what was happening. I don't know why it is. I didn't feel good, and the salary wasn't worth it (because they took off 20%) so I told them I have to go.*
>
> *When I first came into this country – I liked smiling, singing, dancing, playing – since I arrived, I feel like I'm being watched, and can't do what I want. Like they are looking at my face, like they want to eat my face. It's not normal. I used to love light. Since I start feeling this way, I turn off the light and darkness calms me. It's like this since the first job after Holot. Sometimes I hear voices call my name.*

The mental health impacts that remained after detention additionally hindered men's ability to create stable, productive lives. Though an inferior position in the job market and society had been expected upon entry, and in some cases overcome, its second iteration after detention was unsurmountable for some.

Amad is in his early 30s, originally from Darfur where he escaped genocide in his village. He completed a degree at a university in Khartoum, but when he was forced to enlist in national service, he fled the country. He entered Israel in 2010, was detained upon entry and then lived and worked in Tel Aviv until 2014 when he was summoned to Holot and held for 18 months. As soon as he entered Israel, he started learning English and prepared to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) exam, alongside work and activism. He described a sense of lost time as one of the main impacts of detention:

> *Almost two years of my life don't count, in this time I could have done a lot. Imagine, I would have graduated by now, if I was in a normal country, and maybe started doing something for my future. But two years have been wasted.*
>
> *All of a sudden they say you are going to Holot and all your efforts are cancelled. And after two years I got out and I have to start from the beginning.*

Amad's account reveals how the ability to make progress in life is tied to a sense of being settled. Detention in Holot not only removed asylum seekers from what stability they had secured but also set them back in processes they had initiated, such as studies in Amad's case.

Research elsewhere has demonstrated how government policies deliberately set asylum seekers back to maintain their vulnerability in workforce and society, and enable their continued exploitation (De Genova 2002; Castles 2003; Dwyer et al. 2016). In Israel, exclusionary policies make racialised groups increasingly vulnerable to market forces and exploitation. Exclusion thus reproduces their subordinate positioning in the labour market and greater society (Rosenhek 2011, 65; Human Rights Watch 2014a, pt. VI).

Testimonies reported above make evident that detention of African asylum seekers not only demoted them in the workforce, or unsettled them from a stable physical place, but also stole their time (Khosravi 2018; 2019, 416–21) with detrimental effects to their sense of self, future, and the world (Griffiths 2014, 2005). Khosravi's articulation of 'racial time' is useful in describing

temporal bordering processes that target racialised migrants for differential inclusion or exclusion. Containment of racialised migrants shows how differentiation operates 'not only spatially but also temporally through keeping them in a prolonged period of waiting, constantly delaying them, postponing their arrival and future plans' (Khosravi 2019, 417). As asylum seekers tried to resume life after detention in Holot, they faced obstacles for a second time and with diminished resources. The state relegated them, once again, to a subordinate position in work and social life.

COMING TO TERMS WITH DETENTION'S INTENTIONS

While men were plagued by uncertainty regarding their everyday survival, future plans, and legal status, they repeatedly stated they gained clarity on one front – their relationship with the state. Detention crystallised several important points to asylum seekers who remained in Israel on release: that their refugee status would never be officially affirmed or respected, that their racialised presence in this space would never be accepted, and that the state would never help them and they must fend for themselves. Retrospective accounts on detention and life after show how State intentions regarding black asylum seekers were made abundantly clear.

In line with testimonies in the previous chapter, in which men described their detention as torture and abuse, those I spoke to in the community also highlighted the injurious aspects of their administrative confinement. I recount several testimonies to outline those experiences most emphasised by men after detention - of being dehumanised, treated as non-persons, or their most basic needs ignored or deprived. Importantly different than interviews discussed in the previous chapter, men interviewed in the community had faced longer detention times and more stringent conditions due to their earlier detention in Holot when the facility first opened.

Some men interviewed in this chapter were among the first to enter the country in the early 2000s, and others were the earliest to be detained in Holot at the end of 2013. These men were thus subject to harsher conditions and treatment than those detained later, when protests,

interventions by human rights organisations, and court decisions had improved some aspects of detention (See Guthmann 2018, 23–32). Early legislation permitted longer detention timeframes, heightened closure of the facility, more frequent head counts, and poor provisions.

Men regarded harms incurred in detention in ways that resembled Downes description of the burdens of incarceration, of feeling assaulted by the state (Downes, 1988: 179). Harms were experienced physically, mentally, and understood as a deliberate strategy used by staff to break their spirit and pressure them to leave the country. I bring these accounts in the chapter on life after detention as they show how State technologies of control (Pickering and Weber 2006) meant to keep migrants 'in their place' (McDowell and Wonders 2009, 54), were understood by those subject to them, and how State control effected men long after their return to public space.

Isa fled the genocide in Darfur and was among the first detainees to be placed in Holot. He was transferred directly from Saharonim prison where he had been held for three months after crossing the border in 2013. Isa described how authorities rushed to transfer several hundred asylum seekers from Saharonim to Holot, even though the facility was not quite ready. He alleged physical abuse was used against detainees to intimidate and quash resistance. His account traverses between Saharonim and Holot as he was moved back and forth. It exhibits the closeness and intermingling between incarceration and detention, punishment and regulation (Stumpf 2006; Hernández 2014). He recalls how in Saharonim prison they had been forced to stand in the yard for long hours in the sun, then removed by force to their cells, with men injured by being dragged on the asphalt. He describes how control and isolation was used to break protest efforts:

> *We started another hunger strike because that was the only tool we had. They came and picked me up with all my stuff, took me to a tribunal, and then to another prison for isolation. A small room, four cameras around the room, a cement bed with no mattress… they started bringing a plate of food into my room, though I was on hunger strike, with a lot of garlic. They left it there the entire day, and the next day brought in a new plate. They did this for 17 days.*

> *After a week they started coming in for medical checks. I was totally secluded at this time – in the room there are no options to communicate with the outside world, no tv, lights on all the time so you don't know what is day and what is night. Every 30–40 minutes they come in to check that your hands and feet are chained, mess up the room, and let you back in. I think it was a tactic to break me.*

Throughout his time in custody, Isa experienced and witnessed physical abuse, poor material conditions, assaults on emotional health of detainees and humiliating treatment. According to Isa, abuse included assaults on detainee wellbeing through direct action as well as deprivation of services, which can be understood as part of the structural violence directed at asylum seekers.

Degrading treatment by staff bears the additional effect of communicating to detainees that they are undeserving of respect or decent care. It is well documented that for refugees with experiences of past trauma, detention can contribute to re-traumatisation and increase mental health problems (Steel and Silove 2001; Silove, Austin, and Steel 2007; Silove, Steel, and Mollica 2001). Inflicting additional difficulties and depriving support from people in such situations exacerbates and produces further harm and vulnerability (Canning 2019).

Abuse in the form of deprivation of basic needs was mentioned by many. Musa got a summons to Holot in 2014 and managed to get his detention postponed with the help of Physicians for Human Rights and the Hotline for Refugees and Migrants organisations. He suffered from asthma, as well as from old injuries from torture he faced in Sudan, having been persecuted due to being of Nuba ethnicity. He explains detention in a facility in the desert away from medical services was deemed unsafe by doctors. A year after his detention postponement he was summoned a second time and despite his lawyers' efforts was forced to report to Holot:

> *We went to court in Beer Sheva three times, and the judge said I should go to Holot, where there are doctors who can help me, rather than being on the outside with no one to help me. I went. Every week I had to travel to the hospital in Beer Sheva by bus for care.*
>
> *I was there for nine months. I had a hard time because I couldn't walk outside like everyone because of the dust. They didn't help me with anything, and finally released me early.*

Musa felt he was detained without care, and his medical problems ignored. He had to travel independently to a hospital due to lack of medical facilities, and the quality of his most basic need – breathing – was disregarded. While Musa's breathing was hampered, Ibrahim remembered being deprived of rest:

> *Sometimes you were sleeping in your bed, staff came in, woke you. Your cupboard was organised – they mess it up. Bed was made – they turn it over – it takes two hours to put everything back in order.*
>
> *They don't see us like human beings, they see us all the same – dangerous, thieves…*

Mikaele recalled another basic need – food – not adequately provided in detention. Mikaele described:

> *The food was disgusting. Not cooked properly. All of it felt bad. Some people made their own food outside, brought coffee, beers, card games – but immigration [staff] destroyed it.*

Other men similarly reported undercooked, oversalted, spoiled or expired food. Most men lost considerable weight and reported that they reduced food consumption in Holot to the minimum. Such experiences had left detainees injured and degraded. Many found this dehumanising treatment depressing.

The negative effects of detention compounded past trauma and harm, as Majir described: 'No one wants to be a refugee. The things you experience in this status, destroy you. You already feel less, all the time you feel less. You miss the courage of telling your opinion. You miss your self-esteem. Like everything you ask for is mercy.' He recalled being depressed in Holot, staying inside, remembering his grandfather's murder when their village was raided and burned in Darfur. He reflected on repeated feelings of helplessness and memories of past trauma. The pains of detention therefore added injury to the insult of being excluded; and unjustified abuses added insult to the injury of being detained refugees. Similar accounts have been recorded by asylum

seekers and refugees mistreated elsewhere (Khosravi 2010, chap. 2; Boochani and Tofighian 2018; Bhatia 2020, 285).

Detainees described their abuse as deliberate and directed at pushing them out, aimed to make them miserable so they agree to sign up for voluntary departure. They expressed that such punishment was not warranted or justified given that they did not commit a crime, did not face trial, and could not leave the country due to risks in their countries of origin. For Sadang, the concept of detention was understandable, but the poor treatment could not be justified:

> *The prison? I get it. We came here and we didn't ask for anything, just to be safe, and they offered us safety. They wanted to curb the influx of refugees coming in here and it's a small country, so I can understand. For me as long as I'm safe, alive, its ok. But what really bothered me was the bad treatment. Immigration staff humiliates you like you are nothing to them... I asked for medical service and I got bad treatment, the staff insulted me. We wanted to go out of the gate, they made fun of us.*

He described how such acts extended beyond occasional events, or the whims of individual staff member:

> *It's individual acts but statistically 60% of them are doing this, so I think it's systematic.*
>
> *I, as a human being, couldn't implement such orders. Humiliating a person for no reason, except that I have more power or authority than him? Ahhh it doesn't make me feel good.*

The power differential was also pointed out by Simang:

> *What happens in Israel is that refugees are simple people, yet the state and its personnel are fighting a war with them all the time, feeling that they have power over them. And that makes them feel strong.*
>
> *I can't understand that… It's good to be strong, but be a hero with someone your own size. For instance I'm Simang, I'm 35 year old, if I find a child and I beat him and feel that I am a hero it is terrible.*

Men's descriptions reveal how detention provided a platform to exercise and reinforce State power and control directly over their lives. The institution and its staff constantly reminded men of their disempowered, unwanted, inferior place. It appeared that in detention the state thus tried to

reestablish the border (Walters 2002, 267), and desired social order, that men managed to overcome by settling in the country. Detention emerges from men's testimonies as the strongest, all-encompassing (citing physical and mental harms, deprivations of the most basic needs - breathing, resting, eating, and maintaining dignity), and most directly inflicted strategy of discipline they had faced since arrival to Israel. With the aim of marking them as excluded.

These findings correlate with previous literature on the productive nature of detention, at the intersections of wider systems of social management and exclusion. They echo Mary Bosworth's insights on the ways in which detention works to produce 'non-citizens' (Bosworth 2012, 130). The productive effects by which exclusion marks the boundaries of the collective have been elaborated extensively (Franko Aas 2013b; Franko Aas and Bosworth 2013a; Yuval-Davis, Wemyss, and Cassidy 2018; Bosworth and Kaufman 2011; Weber 2013), with important emphasis on racialised aspects of immigration control aimed at maintaining a desired social order (Bosworth 2016; Hudson 2006; Aliverti 2018; Angel-Ajani 2003; Anthias 1992; Armenta 2017; Bhui 2016; Vázquez 2018). In Israel, detention served to reiterate to detainees that they were unwanted due to their non-citizen, non-Jewish, and racialised group identity. Three lessons from detention were repeated most frequently by participants that will be discussed next: that asylum is out of reach, that blackness marks them as inferior, and that the State will not accept or support them.

REFUGEES UNWELCOME – YOUR STATUS WILL NEVER BE AFFIRMED

Prior to detention, many asylum seekers living in Israel hoped that their status would improve. As mentioned above, they believed that being summoned to detention might be a part of their immigration process, however their release with the same legal status as before clarified that refugee status was not imminent. Adda described his disillusioned realisation from his time in detention:

> *Before Holot I didn't feel this way, the country opened up to us and gave us some sort of protection, even if the protection wasn't perfect… after you've been in a place for a long time, and this is how they treat you still – any hope to resume a normal life here disappears, because the disappointment is so great.*

Adda's traces how repeated exclusion led to newfound clarity that he was unwanted. As Bosworth had pointed out, detention in this way serves to confirm asylum seekers' identity 'They are always, already non-citizens, excludable and deportable' (Bosworth 2012, 134). Others similarly described Holot as clarifying their place. Amad cites this as one of the main impacts of detention: 'it made me sure that I'm not welcomed in this country. So I still have to find a way out of here.' Like Adda, he compared his early hope of fair treatment of his asylum claim, his disappointment, and eventual understanding of his situation:

> *Holot wasn't built to solve the asylum seeker problem – they said we will evaluate your case, check your asylum claim, but they didn't do that. I had an interview but until now I have not received a result, it's been six years.*
>
> *Holot was used as a tool to pressure us to leave the country. Every so often there would be a person from immigration authority that would come to tell us 'do you want to go back to your country?' or offer you money as incentive to go. They didn't pay attention to the fact that it's not safe for people to go back.*

In this way, the true aim of immigration detention emerges, to circumvent non-refoulement by pressuring people to self-deport. Detention made clear to asylum seekers that they would never be recognised as refugees in the country or treated accordingly. Some of the men accept this message as part of their ongoing displacement, such as Isaac, an Eritrean man in his late 20s:

> *I came to the state, she didn't come to me. I have a problem in my country, I came here, they know my problem. If they accept me or not – it's their decision. I can't complain about why they don't accept me because Europe does the same, the US does the same, these countries have their laws. As long as I can get by, go to work, I'm doing fine, I can't control if they accept me or not.*

While some, like Isaac, resolved to accept the treatment they were subjected to, others were upset by it. Simang was pained by his detention in Holot, citing the abuse of power and maltreatment of

refugees. Detention made clear to him that the state would go to great lengths not only to deny him official status, but also to deprive him of his rights:

> *It's not about your refugee claim… these people don't like you, it doesn't matter how much you fight, they won't give you status. If you were a normal person in their view, they would have investigated your reasons and given you status. But here, you are hated.*
>
> *In Holot I was thinking, how much do they hate me? how far are they thinking about the disturbances that they can do to me.*

Detention subjected men to deprivations and abuses that left them feeling hated, dehumanised, and rejected. Everyday maltreatment made clear to the men detained how they were perceived by the state. Release from detention with unchanged legal status confirmed that their refugee claims would remain unacknowledged. Kende traced maltreatment of asylum seekers to the hostile environment and political discourse outside:

> *To understand the policy of a specific country you must experience life in it. When I was in Holot I actually felt safer, because I only saw black people. No one could discriminate against me. The situation outside was worse than inside.*
>
> *And now – I have the same visa [as before detention], so nothing improved. From 2015 Israel became one big prison.*

Kende's words make important connections between asylum seekers' maltreatment, and failed recognition of refugee status, and between hostile treatment and racialisation. Men's removal to detention was a form of identification of their rightful place – outside of society. Though detention enforced physical isolation, social exclusion stuck with those detained far beyond Holot's confines. A disappointed expectation of being recognised as refugees was frequently repeated, as well as a sombre acceptance of their degraded racialised grouping.

YOUR RACE WILL NEVER BE ACCEPTED

In the same way that Holot clarified that recognition of their refugee status remained elusive, it also solidified the men's position as a racialised degraded group. Many of the men attributed

racialising and criminalising attitudes to right-wing politicians and media discourse. Ibrahim recalled particularly dehumanising treatment from his very first days in the country, while in state custody in 2005: 'After three days in Ktziot prison, they put us all in a line, naked, and had dogs sniff us. Even in Sudan, when they would put out cigarettes on my body, I wasn't naked. I wanted to die in that moment, I thought why did I come to this place?' He confessed that he had never shared this information before as he felt so degraded that he didn't want to speak of it. But sitting in South Tel Aviv two years since his release from Holot, he reflected on prison, detention and his relationship with the state over time and outlined how early experiences and later ones connected:

> *From 2010 I started to feel it – they jumbled all of us together, and I understood they were throwing all of us to the garbage.*
>
> *In Holot I saw they were treating me as if I'm dangerous and I'm not dangerous. It made me understand that we are not considered human. That made me stronger, to confront that with dignity, to see reality. I used to think this was a democracy – but now I know that its only reserved for specific people. Not for Africans.*
>
> *Now Tel Aviv is a prison, one big prison. A prison is not just being closed up [he motions with his hands being handcuffed, behind bars]. A prison can also be open. [He points at Levinsky garden across the street] sometimes I see people here... Dead. Without being dead, they are dead.*
>
> *Here, they assess a man according to his colour, not his heart, not his brain. This is prison in another way, because of your colour.*

Ibrahim's testimony makes clear how throughout and even after detention men continued to feel imprisoned by the racialised and criminalised classification they were afforded.

Like Ibrahim, Kende spoke of the differential treatment afforded to other groups of non-Jews in the country. He compared the numbers of African asylum seekers to other migrant groups residing unlawfully in the state. He cited statistics from Ministry of Interior reports, and argued that race was in fact the deciding factor for their exclusionary and harsh treatment. He further

explained how racial markers and targeting continued to challenge asylum seekers beyond their time in detention:

> *Being white or black plays a big role in Israel, there are a lot of Russians who don't believe in Judaism who are allowed to stay. In 2015 there were 92,000 people from Eastern Europe here with no visas yet they were living in Israel without restrictions, without harassment and discrimination. Another 15,000 people were undocumented but they were not black so they don't get caught. So, it is the logic of skin colour, and they hide behind Judaism. This is the logic of segregating asylum seekers from migrant workers, this is why they call us infiltrators.*
>
> *In this country, everything depends on papers. If you want to go anywhere you need your ID. An ID we don't have. We have our own identity – this colour skin and this hair is totally an identity... it plays a huge role in Israel, in recognising our difference. We are easy to catch. If someone is Russian or white person from anywhere in the world it's hard for police to recognise… but if you are black it is obvious, you stand out and they look for you.*

In Israel, an ethnonational state, being singled out and disproportionally targeted for control compared to other non-Jewish groups, emphasised to the men that the discrimination they faced was racially motivated. Repeated iterations of racialised exclusion were strongly felt in Holot and remained with men later. As Isa explained:

> *Holot had an immense impact on people. It made people look differently at Israel… they realised, the State doesn't want us to connect to Israel, to the Israeli public – they always want to keep you from belonging, connecting.*
>
> *It was a reminder – you don't belong here. You need to cleanse all the relationships you made and start from nothing elsewhere. I think this made people disconnect, and not seek connections.*

As they deduced the strong exclusionary message of their time in detention, men carried newfound understandings and adjusted expectations to the next chapter of life. These understandings were harsh yet sobering. While some lost hope and did not manage to recover from their disappointment and mistreatment, others channelled disappointment to greater self-reliance.

GIVE UP ON THE STATE AND FEND FOR YOURSELF

A surprising finding in the data was that many of the men spoke of positive developments in their personal lives after Holot. Juxtaposed with most of the literature on detention at large, and in

Holot specifically, this finding initially seemed unexpected and unusual. It was difficult to understand how the men could report that they felt abused, denied of status and rights, dehumanised, racialised and rejected, yet speak positively about some aspects of detention and life after. Though seemingly contradictory, these experiences were reconciled by men in productive ways. Men channelled their feelings of disappointment, rejection and arrested development toward self-reliance, empowerment, and progress.

Some men went so far as to appreciate the effect of their time in Holot. Isaac stated, 'I feel good when I think about Holot, because after Holot I got my life in order.' When he first entered Israel, he was in his mid-20s having defected from the military in Eritrea after seven years of forced service with no end in sight. He lived in Tel Aviv, worked, and went out with friends who spent most of their money on alcohol and parties. He shared multiple stories of brawls and trouble with police. He explained that Holot brought about an important transition in his life:

> *If I think about my life before and after, if I didn't go to Holot maybe I would still be throwing my life away. In Holot I had time to think, to look around. At that time I didn't have any money, I looked at others around me and I saw that I was throwing away my money and I was on the wrong track. And I had the time to reflect on it.*

Much like Isaac, Samuel described how a similar process of reflection, realisation, and life adjustment resulted from his detention in Holot:

> *When I got out of detention I went to Petah Tikvah, I lived and worked with friends from Holot. It was different than the beginning, it felt like a new life… I say it's a new life because before Holot I would go out a lot, with friends, spend all my money, drinking and partying. When I was in Holot it gave me time to think about my life, look at other people's lives and I said when I get out I have to work and save money, I have to organise my life.*
>
> *Our lives were changed by Holot – some people quit smoking, some people started praying, you met all kinds of people and learned what they are thinking about, and working on – you made new friends, and we made a good life for ourselves to pass the year.*

While Isaac and Samuel attributed such realisations to encounters with others in detention, others referenced a changed relationship with the state as an outcome of detention. As Sadang explained,

'for some people who lived here before, once they were released, they set goals for themselves. Meaning, they understood – I lived here for four years, they put me in a prison for 1.5 years, and I'm still in the same situation, so I better to do something for myself.' Detention therefore taught men that they would not find support in the country and had to fend for themselves. Some did not manage to channel exclusion to positive directions. Sadang described different impacts:

> *Some people lost motivation, they are in trauma, the road for them is not clear, so it's difficult to make a general assumption. Overall Holot was a bad experience, but sometimes from bad experiences some good can happen.*
>
> *Before Holot – people were still in shock somehow, we didn't know what will happen, we would just go to work and go home. People thought ok – let me wait, perhaps they will give me papers, or they will throw me out.*
>
> *Going to Holot, and coming out, cleared something up. For some it worsened, they came back with trauma; but for some it helped set goals. Before, they were playboys, drinking, working, don't give a shit about life. But when released they said ok, I'm not going to work for anyone else, I'm going to be my own boss, I'm going to pursue my profession.*

Simang similarly described this process about his own experience and decision making:

> *I wanted to study before I went to Holot, but there were always policy changes – I was afraid that I would start studying and they would deport me in the middle. I thought I'd better wait a little and see what happens and hoped for a better outcome, or I will study when I get out from Israel.*
>
> *But when I was in Holot, and when I got out, I thought – age is flying, and still you are thinking about when the situation will improve. Better to start studying and if the situation gets better, fine. If it doesn't, you still study. Before Holot I was hopeful that things would get better next year. Or we will have a referendum in Sudan… But after Holot, I understood that things are not going to get better soon, so I better take care of my life.*

After experiencing one of the most extreme acts of exclusion that a state can enforce, men emerged with profound clarity about their relationship with the state. Similar understandings have been reported elsewhere, as detainees lose faith in state systems and seek alternate solutions for their migration predicaments (Fiske 2016, 62).

Men's insights from detention and life after illuminate the far-reaching impact of detention on participants' approach to the state, and relationships between themselves and others in it. Men's testimonies exposed a racialised, hierarchical, differentiated exclusion compared to citizens and other migrant groups as they were subjected to heightened enforcement of state control, deprived of rights, degraded, and denied protections or assistance. Detention marked asylum seekers for exclusion far beyond the facility of Holot, and thus expands our understanding of the relationship between race and place, a relationship that relies on unequal group entitlements to place, livelihood, and time to reenforce a desired social order.

POSSIBILITIES FOR RESISTING OR OVERCOMING EXCLUSION

> *I was in a difficult place, I didn't understand why life hates me. Everything I went through was hard, but it made me stronger. I can write, I can express myself, share my feelings.*
>
> Ibrahim, detained in Holot in 2014

The sections in this chapter thus far have outlined a transformative process experienced by asylum seeking men in Israel, through their time in detention and after. Interestingly, some of the most important insights that men shared and emphasised focused not only on negative feelings of trauma, disappointment, unsettledness, rejection and despair, but also on positive outcomes of detention, lessons about their place in Israeli society, their relationship with the state, and the need for self-reliance to navigate their exclusion.

In this final section I review asylum seekers' individual, collective and collaborative actions as important sites of resistance to exclusion. Various works outline migrant resistance to detention in the global North by focusing on diverse strategies through which detainees reassert their agency or push back against detention and deportation regimes (Bailey 2009; Campesi 2015; Fiske 2016, chaps. 2–5; Esposito et al. 2018; Mountz 2020, chap. 6). Similar initiatives in the Israeli contexts will be explored in sections on individual resistance and community organising in Holot and after.

Additionally, I find Paul Gilroy's articulation of 'oppositional work' useful to describe intentional ways of overcoming or circumventing state enforced exclusion and differentiation, through demotic, multicultural conviviality (Gilroy 2004a, 108). Such efforts emanate from everyday exchanges with citizens, as well as intentional collaborations, discussed in the final section.

INDIVIDUAL RESISTANCE IN RECLAIMING THE REFUGEE CATEGORY

Former detainees' identification as refugees made it harder for them to accept their maltreatment, but also served to re-affirm their rightful status. Insistence on asylum added legitimacy to men's claims by relaying on international human rights norms and laws. As Simang explained: 'The state of Israel is having a battle with refugees for 10 years. This is a human rights issue, a refugee issue, there shouldn't be an argument about it.'

All the men interviewed identified as refugees. Additionally, most had considerable knowledge of what such a legal status should entail, as well as relevant national or international policies. None had expected to be denied adequate processing of their asylum claims at the hands of a democratic state. Many, like Kende, were familiar with Israel's history, its commitments and connections to international refugee laws, and therefore expected better treatment:

> *Refugees are people who have international laws that protect them, and Israel is a signatory on those conventions, and is one of the countries that actually formed the refugee convention and had a hand in writing the UDHR. It is a country that knows about refugees.*

Men were also aware of Israel's commitment to non-refoulement and hoped their claims would be assessed while in Holot. Others thought it might be a temporary arrangement before they were given asylum elsewhere. As Adda recalled:

> *I thought maybe this facility would be used to relocate people. I never thought that from Holot they would try to send us home because the danger to our lives still exists. Some people decided to go that route, back to Africa, and again through the Mediterranean, and some paid with their lives.*

These men did not doubt that they were refugees deserving of protection, and they expected Israel to abide by international refugee law. Their detention was considered increasingly painful in light of those two facts. Isa described how their protesting efforts insisted on refugee recognition:

> *We said we are refugees, we don't want to be in prison, we will stop the hunger strike only if you release us, give us adequate treatment for refugees, or send us to another country. Our goal was to march to the Parliament and the Court and show that we don't want to disturb the order, or threaten Israel's demographic balance, or the security of citizens, we are just refugees looking for protection.*
>
> *From the beginning Israel should have treated us as refugees. To create such a compound, so far away, so separating, especially for refugees, didn't seem reasonable to me. When I got out I realised the discourse around us wasn't at all about why we came, or what we have been through. Until today no one really talks about WHY these refugees ended up in Israel, only about whether we are infiltrators or migrant workers.*

Detention was therefore experienced as doubly unjust and abusive as it targeted refugees whose only known transgression was crossing at unauthorised border point, which should not be considered illegal based on the motivation of seeking refuge (McAdam and Chong 2014, 50). Participants thus believed they were entitled to protections rather than punishment, and consistently reclaimed and insisted on the refugee self-identification to resist their treatment. They did so individually and collectively.

ORGANISING IN THE COMMUNITY – SELF-GOVERNANCE AS OPPOSITION

Collective actions of organised resistance, such as hunger strikes or other forms of protest, were initiated by Sudanese men in state custody as early as 2006. Hunger strikes were also held by detainees in Saharonim prison who were intended for continued detention in Holot when it opened in 2013. Upon their transfer, hundreds of asylum seekers planned a march out of Holot, to protest their continued detention. Isa, cited at length in the opening of the dissertation, was transferred to Holot for indefinite detention (under the 4th amendment to the Prevention of Infiltration Law). He became one of the lead Sudanese organisers among those detained and recalled how quickly men expressed that their treatment was unjust, and decided to protest:

When they moved us to Holot we had an assembly... elected some representatives, spoke to the Eritreans, and agreed to walk out together the next day and leave Holot empty…

After 48 hours had passed, they took us back to Holot. Immigration brought us in one by one to interrogate us about what had happened, why we protested. When it was my turn, the official that received me called all the rest of the immigration staff and said look who it is. They formed a circle around me and started clapping and repeating the slogans I used in the protest – 'we are not criminals'... 'we are refugees' ... They were mocking me. They were repeating the statements to show – this is what you shouted, and yet now you are back here, back under our control no matter what you do.

The next day we started a strike again, in coordination with the protests in Tel Aviv. Some of the guys in Tel Aviv bought me a phone, it's the same number I have until now, and we started being in communication.

Community resistance thus developed in Holot from the march to Jerusalem upon its opening (Blumenthal and Nahshoni 2013), and continued throughout the five years it operated. Isa framed organised resistance as a response to the poor treatment received: 'the statement of the immigration official – only bed and food, I took it as a challenge – because I never want to be that kind of person, who settles for food and a bed. I want to develop, study, contribute something to humanity.' Acts of community organising thus emerged in opposition both to detention policies and the degrading treatment and devaluation of asylum seekers' lives.

Once in Holot, asylum seekers continued to organise within the facility. Simang described their organising as running 'a country within the country':

You have the Holot administration which belongs to the state and they are supposed to rule us, and we as refugees we kindly don't agree that this is our rule of law. And we organise ourselves and build our own administrations, and sometimes we have contradictions because you have two different administration bodies and each one has different goals.

We had a committee that started from the rooms – each room (10 detainees) was represented by one person. Then each ward was represented by two people who advanced to the next administration level. They were divided into bodies: media, foreign affairs, internal affairs – totally like a government.

We had negotiations, with Holot's staff – about what we are supposed to have and didn't have, like we didn't have health care. But negotiations didn't always work, so we said we have

> *to escalate – and some people went to Saharonim for that. Then we said we have to break down the rule of signing [headcounts] three times per day because it was crazy, you cannot leave to go anywhere at all. We negotiated for a long time and this did not succeed, so we said we have to take another step. We decided not to sign all at once. We knew if 3,000 people are here and none of them sign they will have a problem… Then after that we had a march to the border, we were there for three days, we negotiated and did not succeed at all and in the end they used force on us.*

Simang recounted these examples with pride. Men's alternative formations of self-governance in the face of state efforts to control and contain them felt like meaningful opposition. Through organised efforts men were able to negotiate and improved some of their conditions in Holot such as provisions of blankets, installation of air conditioners, and the opening of classrooms. Resistance not only improved material conditions, it also provided men with a sense of worth and strength. Though they were not always successful, Simang recalled how he realised: 'that resistance is good rather than surrender or giving up.'

For many, involvement in opposition activities also helped pass the time and sustain hope during their detention. As Adda described:

> *Holot at first was very boring, but then we started organising activism, inside the facility, inside the wards, to handle the immigration forces. They treated us really badly, and we organised against it. I was so busy with activism inside Holot that I didn't feel the time pass. Of course, sometimes you feel stuck, and I don't know how other people who weren't active handled it, but for me it was really helpful to be active and busy, it motivated me.*

Despite their detention, men refused to be discarded and ignored. Oppositional efforts sustained men's spirits as they rejected the dehumanising, criminalising, depressing effects of being subject to detention.

Acts of resistance took diverse forms, aside from protests, that enabled a more dignified life within a degrading context. When speaking to Sadang about Holot, he maintained a calm and almost nostalgic tone and discussed mostly the positive aspects, or silver linings, that could be found in detention:

In the first week you just sleep, meet new friends, and talk. Mostly we talked about our history, how life was beautiful back home. The first month – wow, I was like a PhD student, with books, pens, studying all the time. Then things started changing and it became more like a prison. The summer started it was very hot, and they started annoying us. We had to sign in three times per day; you have to stand in line all the time – for breakfast, lunch and dinner; the medical service was terrible; immigration start abusing people – in the beginning they said we could go out to see our friends or Tel Aviv, then they stopped allowing it. About six months in complaints began, then protests and hunger strikes.

The second six months were really tough, but the last six months became kind of normal. Every 10 days you get 160 shekels. You find your group of people, each puts in 100 shekel, then you send someone to Beer Sheva to buy pots and oil. You walk far away from Holot, to find your spot in the desert. Each group of people had their own territory where they buried supplies in the ground. Immigration comes around to look for things to confiscate, so we hide them. Then when we came, we took them out. We cooked, stayed out and played our games, we passed the days. [See figures 23 and 24]

Congregating in groups, cooking their own food, removing themselves from the control of the detention centre (even if for only a few hours at a time), were additional ways in which men exerted agency and resisted the treatment they were subjected to.



Figure 23. Detained asylum seekers cooking in the desert outside Holot (Photo Credit: Sadang)



Figure 24. Detained asylum seekers play a game in the desert outside Holot (Photo Credit: Sadang)

Reassertions of control and self-governance fit with scholarly accounts of resisting detention elsewhere (Campesi 2015; Hasselberg 2016; Fiske 2016, 55) that facilitated both external goals related to conditions, as well as internal existential purposes. Finding strategies to pass the time or even 'enjoy' detention was a common coping mechanism mentioned by many, which included not only activism but also leisure activities, such as organising football tournaments.

Men's activities inside Holot was deeply meaningful to them. They created opportunities for empowerment in the face of disempowering circumstances. Narratives of opposition and resistance enabled them to endure and make sense of harsh treatment, with a sense of purpose and motivation. Men emphasised these narratives to make sense of the time spent in detention, they found strength and pride in their individual opposition and survival in the face of policies that marked them for exclusion, inaction, and helplessness.

NAVIGATING POLITICAL EXCLUSION BY ORGANISING WITH ISRAELIS

A popular strand of resistance to exclusion developed through collaboration and connection with Israeli citizens. These included oppositional work with Israeli Human Rights NGOs, civic initiatives and through individual interactions. Paul Gilroy describes oppositional work as political, cultural, artistic, and scholarly efforts that emerge from below to connect diverse groups separated by the state through collaboration. In the Israeli case, I add legal collaborative efforts to that list. According to Gilroy such efforts are characterised by 'demands for hospitality, conviviality, tolerance, justice, and mutual care' (Gilroy 2004a, 108), these proved to be positive and productive ways in which asylum seekers overcame state exclusion.

My interlocutors followed Israeli news and politics closely and were aware of negative media and political debates about them. In interviews, men made repeated connections and distinctions between political discourse about them, the role of South Tel Aviv in political discourse, and the Israeli public. They highlighted the political motivations for detention, as they made sense of their framing in public discourse. Understanding themselves as a small part in the larger politics of Israel enabled some to navigate and withstand false, hurtful, and criminalising discourse about them. Kende similarly explained:

> *Since Netanyahu took office everything changed and Israel started showing a different face to refugees and asylum seekers. Everything is so badly driven by politicians. Miri Regev [Likud MP] called us a cancer in Israel's body, that needs to be isolated. This deeply hurt us and our*

> *reputation. Since then we've been treated badly, because there is no way to repair what is broken.*

Negative political discourse was frequently invoked as explanations for the hostile environment asylum seekers had to navigate after detention. Importantly, the distinction between the Israeli government and politicians, and the Israeli public, was one frequently repeated throughout interviews. As Ibrahim argued:

> *I think it's politics. If Sudanese are dangerous, or bad – like they say we are, then why do they rent us homes? Businesses? Ask the shop owners they will tell you we're 100% fine. Israelis borrow money from Sudanese shops because there are connections, there is trust. All of this, you don't see – you see what politicians do, creating conflict – all of it is politics.*

Participants reiterated how their relationship with South Tel Aviv has been politically constructed as necessarily harmful and antagonistic, to serve political aims. They contextualised these conflicts within the racialised discourse in Israeli society (discussed in chapter 2). As Adda explained:

> *One of the reasons for Holot was that politicians said it would help South Tel Aviv, but it didn't give a solution. Politicians like Gideon Saar – wanted to get to higher places, and they used this. They didn't care about all the money that went into Holot, instead of being invested in those neighbourhoods. They didn't care about the refugees that left and what happened to them, as long as they left the borders of this state.*
>
> *I don't think they are against us personally, they did it to get ahead. Their advisors told them to get on this topic because Mizrahi Jews live in South Tel Aviv and that is their electoral base.*

Distinction between Israeli politics and the Israeli people was repeated by all participants. Collaborations with Israelis were devised to resist exclusionary dynamics.

Isa described 'a clear distinction between what the government represents, Israeli society, and the non-governmental institutions. I never in my life imagined that I would be where I am today. I'm not sure this could have happened in another country, in the face of such resistance from the government.' He recalled being visited by human rights NGOs while in prison, and remembered 'it made a huge difference for me and for the other guys in there. It was a bit of light

in the darkness we were in, like there is some hope that we might get out of there'. His next encounter happened when Holot opened, and Israeli activists joined asylum seekers as they marched to parliament:

> *The first time I met the Israeli public was at the march to Jerusalem at the end of 2013, and I think that was one of the most important points for me. If I hadn't met you guys, I'm not sure I would have stayed in Israel, and I'm not sure I would be alive today. You [Israelis] showing up was really, really important. Tears rolled down my face.*
>
> *After we were arrested and returned from Jerusalem a lot of people felt broken. I told them- the whole time when we were in prison we saw a very specific character of Israel, of immigration officials that shout at you, disrespect you, treat you with racism. When Israeli activists showed up we saw another side of the country. It was so important for several reasons:*
>
> *First, someone stood beside us in solidarity – we've never had this before, even in Sudan, when we experienced genocide, and still are; the rest of the country - no one stood beside us, or acknowledged it, they even bully us.*
>
> *Second, we learned that not all of Israel are like the immigration officials, that there are Israelis that believe in human rights, it gave us hope. I think it was part of what made a lot of people stay.*

For many asylum seekers, the continued visits, interventions, and support from Israeli activists and organisations during detention provided relief and hope. Some described their collaborations with Israelis as totally shared endeavours. Such as Kende:

> *Human Right organisations and we as [Sudanese] activists decided to fight against detention, with petitions submitted to the Supreme Court, against indefinite prison, or three years in prison. We were in a fight with the Court, government, parliament - petition after petition were being submitted because it was illegal according to international law to detain us in this way.*

Kende and others expressed a sense of unified resistance with Israelis. Collaborating around shared goals presented a way to overcome policies of exclusion.

At least two interviewees were personally involved in landmark legal cases and cited these actions as extremely significant. Adda was one of several lead appellants in a petition to the Supreme Court against the 5th Amendment to the Prevention of Infiltration Law (*Desete* Decision),

whose outcome affected all asylum seekers in the country and reduced detention time in Holot. Musa initiated legal collaboration with Israeli human rights lawyers to advance recognition of the genocidal acts committed in the Nuba Mountains region in Sudan, and demand status for those who fled it:

> *In 1992 when they killed my family [militias in Sudan], they threw me in a hole in the ground. They hit me on the head, they broke my arm. I wished I would have been killed with my family, but God wanted me to be alive and tell this story…*
>
> *One year ago someone came from the US embassy in Khartoum with journalists that went to Nuba, he called out organisations in Israel for neglecting Nuba people.*
>
> *I told my lawyers of my experiences, and that no one works for Nuba people. They listened and we made a case for the Nuba people in the Court. Then they learned about Blue Nile region, and we tried to make appeals for people from these other locations.*

In his description of these shared legal efforts, Musa demonstrates several important aspects of re-asserting his presence, self-worth, and agency. These emerge as forms of resistance to oppression, persecution, and denial of his personal and community experience. Musa and his lawyers contributed their strengths and expertise to advance the cause. Musa undertook the role of educator, leader, and advocate for his community and ancestors as a source of pride and dignity. Working alongside Israelis who respected his experiences and tried to help, realigned power imbalances that characterise everyday life as excluded and undesirable subjects (De Genova 2016a).

A notable artistic collaboration involved a theatre troop called Holot Theatre that had a mixed cast of Israeli citizens and detainees, and performed shows based on their experiences in detention around the country (Holot Theatre 2014; Kuftinec 2019). They worked together in egalitarian ways, and raised awareness and opposition to exclusion to wide Israeli audiences. On several occasions, artistic initiatives engaged detainees in projects of photography or performance (Amir 2014; Holot Detainees 2017). And activists from the Negev Centre for Refugees organised

academic lectures at Beer Sheva University to which nearly 100 detainees were bussed twice a week for a term. Many collaborative initiatives took place during the five years of Holot's operation, and some continued after its closure. Many asylum seekers interviewed attributed Israel's failed mass deportation campaigns to successful Israeli public protests in 2018. As Amad recalled:

> *In 2018 there was a huge campaign for deportation, and at the same time I was preparing for my studies. All of a sudden I didn't know where I was going to be, if I'm about to be deported, but was also trying to prepare for exams so I don't miss another opportunity.*
>
> *The deportation threat was very real. If not for the voice of the Israelis it might have succeeded… our community protested a lot, but the last demonstration was led by Israelis. Many got involved, signed petitions, even rabbis. And that's why the struggle succeeded.*

Asylum seekers used collaborations with Israeli citizens to reclaim their place and presence in the state. They expressed feeling supported by not having to face continued exclusion and deportability alone.

An acute need to collaborate with Israelis emerged around access to housing. After detention, asylum seekers lacked savings with which to pay a deposit and enter a housing contract, cheque books, bank accounts, guarantors or previous pay slips. Collaborating with Israelis who used their privileged access and status in the housing market helped to secure accommodations for asylum seekers. Housing after detention was also provided by employers, host families, or facilitated with the help of Israeli citizens. Sadang remembers this difficulty when starting over after detention:

> *Then came the challenge of finding an apartment, and here our Israeli friends helped us. One friend explained that it's good she is Ashkenazi, she dressed up in fancy clothes and jewelry, a nice car, she changed the way she spoke – She wanted to show that she is Ashkenazi and that she is rich. And she found us a really nice place in Rishon LeZion. She paid the commission and other friends gave us the cheques and guarantees and everything.*

In this example, the Israeli friend of Sadang not only used her citizen's privileges of access to cheques and financial resources, but also used the social capital of being *Ashkenazi* to benefit his

position in the housing market. I too have used my social position in this way, twice, when I signed as a guarantor for asylum seekers renting in Herzeliya. The landlords in both cases did not bother to ascertain that I had a steady income (which I did not) or savings in my bank account (that was close to empty). My *Ashkenazi* countenance and confident demeanour was sufficient proof that I was of high social, and presumably economic, standing and therefore reliable. Collaborations with Israelis enabled asylum seekers to overcome their official exclusion by relying on their allies' professional skills, citizen or social privileges. In many cases, connections with Israeli citizens facilitated options or access for asylum seekers to otherwise unattainable services or goods.

Interpersonal connections also countered feelings of exclusion. Isaac recalled that when he was released from detention he connected with a citizen's initiative that matched former detainees with Israeli families. He reflected on his stay with a couple in a city north of Tel Aviv:

> *Every morning they asked me- how do you feel, how did you sleep, what would you like to eat. The mom would make me coffee when she got up in the morning before I left for work. It was hard for me because I never experienced this kind of respect in my life, I'm not used to it. Maybe if I grew up in this way it would be different, but I didn't know such kindness.*
>
> *I was embarrassed, I didn't want to be around such dignified people, I couldn't wrap my mind around it, I wanted to be alone. I couldn't contribute in any way, they didn't even let me take out the rubbish. It was hard. I never thought there would be such people in Israel. I will never forget them in my whole life.*

A sharp contrast emerged when Isaac was welcomed, respected, and taken care of after many years of feeling devalued, unwelcomed, or of lesser worth. Though such hospitality might have been difficult to accept at first, it impacted him significantly. By staying with a host family he avoided homelessness, saved money, and was able rent on his own.

Meaningful connections with citizens did not take place only in moments of heightened legal and political drama, around planned protests, or grassroots collaborations. In fact, most asylum seekers resisted the exclusion enforced upon them by the state through their everyday

interactions with Israelis. Routine encounters were no less important than organised ones in producing a convivial culture in which they felt secure. As Isa described:

> *I met non-activist Israelis in 2014 when I started working in Ashdod, I think I was very lucky. I went to work in a supermarket and my boss Yossi accepted me so well, he told all the other employees to treat me as one of them. I never felt like a stranger, they invited me to their events, and I became part of their group and learned Hebrew really quickly.*
>
> *These are really strong ties, these early encounters… For me it added an additional understanding to the word refuge – They gave me the refuge I was looking for. It made me realise that documents might be important for legally walking around and working, but what is really important is that you find people that accept you, that is what they gave me.*

Through daily social interactions, as well as shared legal and political endeavours, asylum seekers and Israelis weaved networks for support and oppositional work that made asylum seekers feel safer and more accepted. They were able to overcome divisive rhetoric and discriminatory regulations to create convivial pockets of acceptance and inclusion in an otherwise highly differentiated and stratified society that marked asylum seekers for exclusion.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has examined retrospective accounts of asylum seekers' detention in Holot, and their lives in Israel after detention. It explored the repercussions of unsettling exclusionary practices on individuals, and the narratives they developed about them. It has argued that the state's repeated acts of exclusion differentially marked African asylum seekers as detainable and deportable.

Detention was an extreme performance of the state's power to exclude and denigrate a racialised group in its entirety, and provided several points of clarity for asylum seekers: that the state will never affirm their rights as refugees; that their racialised grouping will forever mark them as criminalised, unwanted, and deportable; and that they must fend for themselves. For those who were able, these understandings led to oppositional work that offered subversive ways of overcoming state enforced exclusion and differentiation.

Oppositional work within detention and after, with fellow asylum seekers and with Israelis, provided hope. It gave men in Holot, and afterwards, a sense of purpose and sovereignty over their own lives, amplified through their unified efforts to resist exclusion. In some cases, it provided resources that helped asylum seekers manage life after detention, reclaim their place and presence in the state, and renegotiate power imbalances through shared acts of solidarity. Through intentional acts, as well as unplanned daily interactions, a convivial culture could be imagined and pursued among neighbours, co-workers, activists, friends, and family to overcome state efforts at differentiation and division.

Conclusion.

Racism by any other name

When I set out to write this dissertation in 2016, several things were visible to the untrained eye. Detention in Holot looked like an extremely exclusionary act that was reserved only for asylum seeking men from Sudan and Eritrea. South Tel Aviv was neglected, impoverished, and segregated from the rest of the city, and it was the main site where political and media debates about migration policies and detentions erupted.

My thesis set out to explore these initial impressions through ethnographic engagement with the two populations most affected by migration control policies and the politics that surround them: African asylum seekers and Jewish residents of South Tel Aviv. Long term, in-depth research into these communities' experiences, data collection, analysis and theorising, led to the conclusion that asylum seekers and South Tel Aviv residents experienced being racially differentiated and excluded along a hierarchical scale of human value and rights deservedness. The detention facility at Holot has since closed, and although this thesis examines racial differentiation and exclusion in a bounded timeframe and through a focus on detention, these issues remain a significant source of racial injustice in Israel today.

Previous literature about the exclusion of African asylum seekers in Israel largely explains how citizenship and ethnicity 'deficits' – i.e. lacking Israeli citizenship or Jewish ethnicity – are the main factors motivating exclusion (Eg Kritzman-Amir 2009; Berman and Ziegler 2015; Hercowitz-Amir, Raijman, and Davidov 2017), contextualised in a wider literature on anti-migrant sentiments (Eg Kemp and Raijman 2000; Raijman and Semyonov 2004; Raijman 2012; Willen 2010; 2019). This dissertation emanated from the realisation that the focus of explanatory frameworks on citizenship or ethnonationalism misses other criteria for differential inclusion and exclusion in Israel. Much of the existing research was, in effect, colour-blind, with few exceptions (Kemp 2004;

Yacobi 2011; Anteby-Yemini 2017). Literature relies on state produced binaries of belonging – citizen and non-citizen, Jewish and non-Jewish – to explain exclusion. In so doing, existing explanations fail to capture the disproportionate exclusion and differentiation taking place in the treatment of African asylum seekers compared to other migrant groups. Existing explanations also did not methodically examine the centrality of South Tel Aviv to legal and political discourse around migration control. Most importantly, existing literature falls short in recognising systemic racism that animated exclusion and marginalisation both in Holot and of South Tel Aviv, how they are related, and how they fit in the wider political and spatial aspects of exclusion in the country.

In this thesis I advocate for the use of a racialised differentiation perspective that brings together theories of inclusion and exclusion in their various articulations (Hall 1986; Castles 1995; Squire 2009; Mezzadra and Neilson 2013; Segrave 2019), to account for different state treatment afforded to groups based on racialised attributes and their legal, social, political, economic, and spatial ramifications. Viewing the study through a racialised differentiation perspective elucidates hierarchies within Israel by noting how legacies of ethnonationalism and settler colonialism shaped its institutions, settlement patterns, self-perception and incorporation regime, observed especially in Tel Aviv. I connect between dynamics in the city, to inclusionary and exclusionary logics that are at play on a national level and in migration control. In this thesis I argue that if we are to understand the exceptional exclusion of African asylum seekers, relative to all other migrant populations in the country, we must look at the differential scales of rights, privileges, protections, and population regulation operating in Israel.

I explain and substantiate what is evident on the ground upon arrival to South Tel Aviv or Holot (during its operation): that Israel is a racially stratified society, in which *Mizrahi* citizens are systemically marginalised and segregated in socio-economically impoverished areas such as South Tel Aviv, and that non-Jewish Africans are relegated further down Israel's social, economic, and

spatial realms, evident in their exclusion from South Tel Aviv to Holot. I argue that racial hierarchy in Israel relies on ethnonational and postcolonial scales of group worth and rights deservedness. My argument is informed by critical writings on racism, inequality and differentiation, migrant exclusion, migrant detention and criminalisation (Eg Goldberg 2002; Castles 2005; Franko Aas 2007; Back, Sinha, and Bryan 2012; De Genova 2018; Bosworth, Parmar, and Vázquez 2018; Franko 2020). Though this study is based in criminology and emanated from a focus on immigration detention, the search for a full explanatory framework ventured into related fields of citizenship and nationalism, urban sociology, race and ethnicity, and postcolonial studies.

In this dissertation I contribute to criminological research, particularly the subfield of border criminology, through an in-depth exploration of an Israeli case study. It helps draw Israel into comparative and interdisciplinary debates that highlight its deviation from international norms of asylum protections and procedures. Others have recently signalled the disappearance of asylum (Mountz 2020), and blurring lines between punitive practices and appropriate responses to asylum (Costello 2015; Bosworth and Vannier 2020). I provide evidence in this thesis that Israel has joined other Western states in hollowing out the institution of asylum from the promise of universal protection it entailed.

Israel's devaluation of asylum stands out with particular hypocrisy given the state's foundational story as haven for persecuted people, it's involvement in drafting the Convention on the Status of Refugees, and its immigration regime that is geared to provide asylum to Jews across the world. Israel's selective application of asylum, and selective enforcement of migration control covered at length in the thesis, follows ethnonational racist hierarchies and thus makes a farce of its international commitments. Israel should be scrutinised and held accountable for systemic racism and abandonment of refugee protection. Israel's ethnonational iteration of boundary construction and control should be further explored, contrasted, and compared with other locales

to guard against the insidious ways that racism creeps into seemingly mundane and legitimate state practice.

Studying the detention of African asylum seekers in Israel, with consideration of South Tel Aviv, also contributes to the socio-political literature on ethnonationalism by fleshing out the impact of racial differentiation. Israel is a highly stratified ethnonational state in which ethnic inequalities within the Jewish collective bear significantly on uneven rights distributions and group trajectories, that have produced ethno-class segregation and uneven socio-economic development around the country (Smooha 1976; Shafir and Peled 1998; 2002; Khazzoom 1999; Tzfadia and Yacobi 2011). Those who lack citizenship or Jewish ethnicity are largely excluded from the polity. Debates on ethnonationalism can be enriched by thesis findings that highlight interconnections of ethnonationalism, postcolonialism, and criminalisation.

The dissertation also adds to debates in migration studies, criminology and border criminology, on exclusionary policies and anti-migrant sentiments across the Global North and in Israel. I used criminological perspectives and scholarship on race and place (McDowell and Wonders 2009; Franko Aas and Bosworth 2013a; Pickering, Bosworth, and Franko Aas 2015; Armenta 2017; Bosworth, Parmar, and Vázquez 2018; Franko 2020), to study exclusionary policies and antagonistic sentiments directed at African asylum seekers in Israel.

Firstly, the thesis highlights how African asylum seekers are criminalised on Israel as in other places through the increased overlap between 'foreign' and 'criminal' categories (Stumpf 2006, 381–82; Franko Aas and Bosworth 2013b; Pickering, Bosworth, and Franko Aas 2015; Armenta 2017; Franko 2020), and expands on the securitising Israeli iteration of this trend – the 'infiltrators' category. Second, it sets out how such constructions are used to legitimate rights deprivations of asylum seekers, and how they are subsequently pushed into illegality and held back from progress and integration, as in other locales (Squire 2009; Dauvergne 2008a; 2013; Gerard

and Pickering 2014; Bhatia 2015; De Genova 2016a; Dwyer et al. 2016; Canning 2020). Finally, it traces the uneven ways in which such processes take place, when state control is enforced upon a racialised group of migrants, and, in so doing, it illuminates the centrality of racial hierarchies to migration control (Fekete 2001; Kundnani 2001; De Genova 2016b; Bhui 2016; Bosworth, Parmar, and Vázquez 2018; Aliverti 2018), observing the particularities of an ethnonational state.

This study is greatly influenced by Du Bois and Hall's writings on the forms and effects of racialised differentiation in very different times and contexts (Du Bois 1903; Hall 1986). Their study of racialised populations and racial differentiations in urban centres helps orient my analysis and methods, and shift my analytical gaze (Du Bois 1898; Itzigsohn and Brown 2020). What emerges is the understanding that examining migrant exclusion through a focus on citizenship and ethnicity 'deficits' – misleads us as to the causes of the predicament faced by African asylum seekers. Rather than examining what traits or status migrants lack, we should examine, highlight, and criticise how states differentiate, degrade, and exclude different groups according to hierarchical racial scales (Goldberg 2002; 2006; Parmar 2018; Bosworth, Parmar, and Vázquez 2018). Above all, we should try to understand why.

Throughout the dissertation, I traced several kinds of racial divisions in Israel, how they were enforced through state practices upon diverse groups, and their socio-spatial ramifications in the context of Israel's ethnonational postcolonial society. Racialised differentiation was chosen as the framework that most adequately captures the empirical findings that emerged in this research project. It incorporated past work on differential inclusion (Hall 1986, 23–25; 2017; Mezzadra and Neilson 2013; Segrave 2019) and differential exclusion (Castles 1995; 2005; Bader 1997; Squire 2009), that explore the diverse and unequal positions and partial integration of citizens or migrants in states. It also corresponds with studies on stratified and graded membership in Israel (Shafir and Peled 2002; Yona 2005; Migdal 2006; Shenhav and Yona 2008; Rosenhek 2011). Finally, a

racialised differentiation framing heeds the call of previous migration scholars in Israel for a comprehensive approach that can be used to understand both citizen and non-citizen exclusion (Raijman 2010, 88; Kemp 2020).

The theoretical contributions made by this thesis are threefold: (1) a racialised differentiation perspective encompasses and connects diverse articulations of inclusion and exclusion of both citizens and migrants; (2) it locates the cause for migrant or asylum seeker exclusion in the state rather than in those subjected to state control, by situating racialised differentiation in specific socio-historical developments – ethnonationalism and postcolonialism in the Israeli case; and (3) it accounts for the discriminatory treatment of both racialised citizens, and racialised migrants – in Israel's case, *Mizrahi* Jews in South Tel Aviv and African asylum seekers' in Holot.

Firstly, I demonstrated that both citizens and migrants are treated differently along a single racialised scale of privileges and rights protections. This understanding creates a foundation for a shared discussion that can accommodate a depth and variety of literature on differentiating state practices and effects. Such framing analytically situates inclusion and exclusion on either side of the ethnonational citizenship axis – the formal marker of belonging, rather than specific sectors of society and economy, to uncover the state's impact on and production of racial categories and inequalities.

Second, I identified hierarchical racial differentiation as intrinsic to the state, underpinned by ethnonational and postcolonial logics. Racialised hierarchical worldviews were formed through the specific socio-historical processes of the Zionist settler movement, and played out spatially in diverse racisms between national and urban levels. Graded privileges and protections from the state, correlate with a racialised scale of value, or civic contribution, and guide discriminatory practices and policies. Every state has a distinct socio-historical context that must be explored to

fully understand the racial dynamics involved in the construction of national identity, ideology, and subsequent stratifications and hierarchies.

The final theoretical contribution is a synthesis of the two insights provided above. It suggests that the same hierarchical logics that underpin state incorporation regimes also guide exclusion. Therefore, on one side of the ethnic-citizenship line, we find the differential inclusion of Israel's *Mizrahi* citizens that manifests socio-politically in reduced privileges and entitlements and is spatially evidenced in the marginalisation of those living in South Tel Aviv. On the other side of the ethnic-citizenship line, we find the differential exclusion of African asylum seekers who were legally and socially criminalised, deprived of rights, and spatially excluded in removal to Holot. I have argued that the poor treatment of both groups follows the same ethnonational and postcolonial racial organising logic that developed in Israel.

The thesis also makes empirical contributions of data collected through situated ethnographic research with Neve Shaanan's Jewish residents, as well as asylum seekers detained in Holot and their experiences post detention. Little attention has been afforded to interconnections between the two groups. It expands the reach of past empirical studies on South Tel Aviv that focused on distinct group experiences or other neighbourhoods (Eg Schnell 2000; Cohen 2015; Mizrachi 2016; Shamur 2018). It uncovers complexities and variations in resident accounts between generational groups over time, which remained unexplored hitherto, and indicate changes in the area that require further study.

The research fleshes out racialised group categories, relational and hierarchical relationships around belonging and power that play out across Israel's global city. In Tel Aviv *Mizrahi* citizens experience being positioned lower on the ethnonational scale of value than their *Ashkenazi* counterparts, but they are still able to look down on African asylum seekers who remain in a far lower position. Their higher position is gained through formal citizenship, symbolic

membership in the Jewish collective, and knowledge of a desirable Eurocentric hegemonic culture. However, diverse opinions across generations and over time indicate that postnational and pro-migrant attitudes are also present, and perhaps growing in the neighbourhood. For nearly all residents, increased interaction and connection to migrant and asylum-seeking communities reduced antagonisms and enabled positive neighbourly relations across different ethnicities and citizen statuses. All participants from Neve Shaanan reported that the detention of asylum seekers in Holot between 2013-2018 did not improve the state of the neighbourhood, and some argued it had made matters worse. Most residents criticised the policy as nonsensible, unjust, and cruel.

Another empirical contribution is the research findings that resulted from long term ethnographic engagement with asylum seekers detained in Holot and after detention. Chapter five demonstrated that the men experienced detention in Holot as an exclusionary and punitive arrangement. When the men in Holot compared themselves to other groups: asylum seekers from their countries of origin who received refugee status abroad, other migrant groups in Israel who were regulated differently, and Israeli citizens, they felt criminalised, racialised and dehumanised.

Indeed, many of those whom I spoke to felt criminalised before detention as exclusionary political and media discourse about them led to public fear of them, degradation and exploitation in Israeli society. They experienced their exclusion as racially motivated. The structural violence inflicted upon them through detention made clear their lower place in the economy and society and suggested that they were viewed as inferior and less deserving of rights. Differential treatment thus reflected the desired social order of the state, imposed by detention – one of Jewish whiteness, reinforced by exclusion of its undesirable African non-citizens.

The effects of detention followed men after their release, as the state's repeated policies of exclusion differentially marked them as detainable, deportable, and illegal. As reviewed in chapter six, pains of detention were experienced as aimless and particularly unjust abuses of power by the

state, as asylum seekers knew themselves to be refugees deserving of better treatment. The exertion of the state's power to exclude and denigrate a racialised group in its entirety provided several points of clarity for asylum seekers: that the state would never affirm their rights as refugees; that their racialised grouping would forever mark them as criminalised, unwanted, and deportable; and that they must fend for themselves. For those who were able, these understandings led to oppositional work that offered subversive ways of overcoming state enforced exclusion and differentiation.

Detention kept asylum seekers in a hierarchically prescribed inferior position in life plans, and progress, as well as precarious and exploitable positions in the labour market and society. By contrast, resistance efforts within detention and after it, alongside fellow asylum seekers and Israelis, provided hope. They gave men in Holot, and afterwards, a sense of purpose and sovereignty over their own lives, amplified through their unified efforts. In some cases, these collaborations provided resources that helped asylum seekers manage life after detention, reclaim their place and presence in the state, and renegotiate power imbalances through shared acts of solidarity. Through intentional acts such as political organising, litigation, and alliance building, as well as unplanned daily exchanges; a convivial culture could be imagined and pursued among neighbours, co-workers, activists, friends, and family to overcome the state efforts to differentiate and divide.

This research highlights serious violations of people's human rights and damage to the concept of asylum through the punitive use of immigration detention. Israel thus contributes to the troubling trend of threatening, hollowing out, or killing off the institution of asylum (Costello 2015; Bosworth and Vannier 2020; Mountz 2020). It does so by disregarding the promise of universal human rights protections it entails. Israel's selective adherence to principles of asylum and refuge emphasises a racist devaluation of some lives over other.

In sum, this dissertation has argued that detention of African asylum seekers in Holot reflected and reproduced a hierarchical organising logic of race and place that operates in Israel. Situated participant observation, in-depth accounts, and analysis of both asylum seekers' and Jewish residents' experiences show harmful impacts of detention. Social, spatial, and temporal dimensions of exclusion inevitably extend into society more broadly and over time. Not only did the detention of asylum seekers in Holot did not lessen difficulties in South Tel Aviv, but the threat of confinement pushed many asylum seekers into illegality and precarity. Detention disrupted the settlement of detained asylum seekers but in so doing it also disrupted progressing with their lives, healing, professional development, and contribution to society. In the meantime, Neve Shaanan remains as neglected and dilapidated as before, deprived of resources, infrastructures and plagued by criminality and marginality. Many asylum seekers returned to Neve Shaanan after detention burdened by lasting damage to their self-worth, progress, resilience, and in some cases suffering from compounded trauma.

Lived experiences of detention policies and their wider implications provide greater clarity as to Israel's intentions in its racially differentiated migration control regime. Testimonies clarify that state policies are aimed at keeping African asylum seekers in inferior socio-economic position and precarious illegality to re-assert a national order and superior self-image. South Tel Aviv's *Mizrahi* residents are implicated in this process, as they are called upon to promote its legitimacy, while they continue to suffer racial discrimination and marginalisation by the state. These measures are underpinned by ethnonational postcolonial racist worldviews that developed in Israel's socio-historical context.

Writing this conclusion in 2021, several things are still visible to the untrained eye looking at migration politics in Israel. South Tel Aviv remains neglected, impoverished, and segregated from the rest of the city. African asylum seekers still live mostly in South Tel Aviv, alongside all

other non-Jewish migrant communities, where they face unprecedented impoverishment, food insecurity, and health emergencies in the year of Covid-19. The pandemic caused crisis across the globe, but it also highlighted extreme injustices that existed before, as marginalised groups with diminished resources struggle to survive.

We must acknowledge the forces that underly differentiation and exclusion in Israel, and the world, if we are ever to counter them and produce a more socially just society. Testimonies presented in this study have already suggested several courses we could pursue to resist racism – as academics, activists, or neighbours. Experiences show that people learn to live with diversity, rather than be divided by it, when difference becomes familiar. Where inequalities produced by racial differentiation are acknowledged, collaborations can be used to re-negotiate uneven distributions of rights and privileges and resist exclusionary state practices.

Egalitarian, collaborative endeavours that are politically conscious of divisive state efforts to promote a Eurocentric Jewish social order, such as those traced in this thesis, must be sought. Such endeavours should include citizens and non-citizens, Jews and non-Jews, Jewish citizens of all ethnic backgrounds, and Palestinians. Activists and academics should acknowledge, and produce knowledge on, the socio-historical conditions that create structural inequalities, legitimate state violence, and facilitate discrimination. Only once we recognise injustice and understand its sources, can we resist and bring about change.

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