Norwegian University
of Life Sciences

Islamization of Social Identity in East Jerusalem; A response to identity threat

Shahd Al Ja'bari

International Development Studies
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Noragric

Department of International Environment and Development Studies

The Faculty of Landscape and Society

P.O. Box 5003

N-1432 Ås

Norway

Tel.: +47 67 23 00 00

Internet: https://www.nmbu.no/fakultet/landsam/institutt/noragric

Declaration

I, Shahd Al Ja'bari, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree.

Signature.....................................

Date..

Abstract

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has always been one of the most debated political cases. However, usually the focus is on the physical, political and economic views of the conflict. This research focuses on the psychosocial analysis of the Palestinian social identity in Jerusalem. It explores the reasons behind the Islamization of social identity among Palestinian Jerusalemites. It does so through the eyes of Palestinian females who live in East Jerusalem. The study seeks to understand how the Palestinian participants from East Jerusalem define their social identity. The definition was categorized into three groups: Islamic, Arabic and Palestinian. In addition to that, the study investigated the perceived threats posed on the participant's social identity. These threats are categorized into: threats from the Israeli occupation, the Palestinian society itself, and the corruption of the Palestinian authority. Moreover, this research compares the role of religion in the lives of Palestinian Jerusalemites now and twenty years ago. Therefore, it shows how and when the Islamization of social identity started. The results of this research are based on primary and secondary resources. I have conducted 25 individual interviews and a process of participant observation. The argument of this paper is that the Islamization of social identity in Jerusalem is a process with two main reasons behind it. First, the fall of Palestinian nationalism after the Oslo Accords and the Palestinian civil war. This led into identity crisis and created an identity vacuity which needed to be filled. Second the direct threat posed on the Palestinian Islamic identity during the Second Intifada and until now. This made the Islamic identity the salient one. The Islamic identity needed to be defended, therefore, it was prioritized and used to demonstrate the urgency of staying in Jerusalem.

Key words: Islamization, Social identity, Social identity threat.

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Chapter 1

1.0 Background and Rationale of the Study

"When you become 12 years old, God will start watching you, you have to wear the veil" this is what my grandmother used to tell me when I was a child.   For me, this was a scary statement. I did not want God to see me. However, when I thought about it, I wondered why my grandmother didn't wear the veil until only recently. Why wasn't she afraid of god seeing her when she was young.   Growing up in Jerusalem, I witnessed the change of social identity among Palestinian Jerusalemites. After the Second Intifada, many things changed. People began thinking about visiting the Aqsa more often. Men with long beards would go from house to house telling people about God. Family discussions about the veil and its importance happened more often. Women stopped me in the street and told me that what I was doing is wrong and that I should "cover myself". More and more girls started wearing the veil, and it felt weird that at most social settings I turned out to be one of the few who were still not wearing it. The reason why I choose to research this topic is my interest in knowing what the reasons of change were. I have always been interested in identities and how people define themselves.

A Palestinian is often asked to show identification. This happens at borders, checkpoints and airports. Even when applying for a job a Palestinian must fill the "nationality" blank, and they are left confused. Who are they, Jordanian, Israeli, Palestinian or simply stateless?   At least within the Israeli territory, Palestinian Jerusalemites are treated as suspects, and they are exposed to harassment and exclusion which counts as a continuous reminder of who they are (Khalidi, R. ,2010).

Palestinian social identity is complicated and can only be understood by explaining its interrelation with Arabism, Islam and other loyalties (Khalidi, R. ,2010). A Palestinian can transit between identifying himself as Palestinian in some cases, Arab in others and Muslim yet in others.   Those three identities intimately intertwine with the narrative of the "other", that of Israel and the Jewish people. Both the social identities of Palestinians and Israelis can only be considered in terms of the "other" (Khalidi, R. ,2010).   After the Second Intifada, the success of the Israeli government in achieving its goals and gaining more political and economic power contributed to shaping a clear legitimate Jewish national identity (Yiftachel, O. ,2006). In contrast, especially after the Palestinian civil war, Palestinians suffered from an

identity crisis. They had been failed by Arabic governments and most importantly, by their own leadership (Hasson, S. ,2001). Therefore, it was important for Palestinian Jerusalemites, who still lived under occupation to find an alternative identity, to fill the space which was created after the fall of Palestinian nationalism. Islamic identity was already present, and especially in Jerusalem, it was highly threatened.

It can be easily understood why so many conflict narratives whether Jewish, Christian and Muslim, or Palestinian and Israeli surround the city of Jerusalem. Jerusalem has been the centre of political and spiritual events since the beginning of the conflict (Khalidi, R. ,2010). The conflict in Jerusalem has been gradually turned into an ethnic, religious and linguistic ethnonational conflict. For Palestinian Jerusalemites, the conflict evolved over tangible resources such as identity and security. Therefore, psychosocial factors contribute heavily to the conflict in Jerusalem, and offer us a different insight into the conflict and its intractable dynamics (Kelman, H. C., 2016).

In response to occupation, in-group fractions and continuous social identity threat, the Palestinian social identity has undergone a significant change. This sequence of events resulted in deep uncertainties that weakened secular forms and paved the way for new religious collective identities (Dawisha, A., 2016). Most people turned to religion as an alternative identity that gives the power to believe. After the Second Intifada and until now, there has been a process of Islamization of social identity in Jerusalem. More and more Palestinian Jerusalemites interpreted their political failure as a punishment from god. Therefore, through deploying alternative religious symbols of legitimacy such as Islamic styles of dress, people hope to retrieve to a more "authentic" religious past. It became a general belief among the Palestinian Jerusalemites that they were headed in the wrong direction and that they needed a more religious based direction in order to triumph (Dawisha, A., 2016). The Palestinian Jerusalemites transformed religious places, such as the Aqsa mosque into a major national symbol, which serves as form of resistance and control.

1.2 Research Question and Objectives

Social identity is formed through daily practices on different levels. Identity formation works through engaging with the "other". Therefore, identities are relational, they emerge from encounters with others (Escobar, A., 2008). Social identity leads a society into forming boundaries, defining what is acceptable and what is not, what is important and what is not. Social identity is shaped by an intractable relationship between self-understanding and

cultural and historical backgrounds (Escobar, A., 2008). In this study, I argue that the Islamization of social identity in Jerusalem was a long process which formally started during the Second Intifada. There were two main reasons behind the islamization process. First, the identity crisis which happened after the Palestinian civil war and the fall of Palestinian nationalism. This left an identity void which needed to be filled with something else. Second, the constant pressure and threat to the Islamic identity in Jerusalem, which made Palestinians feel that they needed to defend this identity.

This study describes the islamization of culture among Palestinian Jerusalemites in the last twenty years. It does so by analysing people's thoughts, attitudes and beliefs regarding individual and group social identity. The objectives of this study are as following:

- To explain how Palestinians in East Jerusalem perceive their social identity, to identify what do they prioritize and what they believe in.
- To clarify the islamization of social identity in East Jerusalem, define its aspects, forms and how it demonstrates itself in the daily life.
- To demonstrate the reasons behind the islamization of social identity in Jerusalem in the last twenty years.

This research aims to achieve its objectives by answering its two research questions:

1. Was there an Islamization of social identity among Palestinian Jerusalemites in the last twenty years?
2. If there was an Islamization of social identity, what were the reasons behind it?

Chapter 2

2.1 Research Methodology

In this research I used qualitative methods for designing the research question, collecting data, analysing and reaching the results. I used qualitative research methods because I'm interested in examining a social phenomenon through the opinions, reasons and motivations of the participants. Qualitative research allows us to explore social settings and the humans living through those settings deeply. It also enables us to understand how a social group perceives its surroundings, traditions, symbols and beliefs (Berg, B. L., Lune, H., & Lune, H., 2004).

The epistemology of social constructionism which is a part of the interpretive social science approach was used in this study. Social constructionism enables us to examine constructed social phenomena which are continually being formed and changed with assumptions about the real world (Bryman, A. ,2016). Social constructionism argues that knowledge and reality are created by individual relationships in a certain society and the interactions between those individuals (Littlejohn, S. W., & Foss, K. A., 2009). One of my goals in this study is to explore how the participants define their social identity.

This social research describes the development in the social identity of Palestinian East Jerusalemites. Social identity is a subjective matter, which can only be researched by talking to people and listening to their personal and social experiences. Therefore, I require a qualitative research design to help me understand behaviour and the meaning of behaviour in a certain social setting (Bryman, A. ,2016).

For the research design, I used the case study design which entails the detailed analysis of a single case. In this study, I aimed to examine the complexity and the characteristics of changes in social identity in East Jerusalem. I followed the case study model in the literature review where I acquired detailed information regarding the case. Then the model helped me design the interview questions, collect data and finally analyse it (Bryman, A. ,2016). Since this research revolves around social identity, the findings are subjective. The case study

model in this research focuses on revealing how a certain issue emerged, evolved and how can it be described (Neuman, W. L., 2013).

In this research I used the induction theory approach. The inductive approach begins with a process of observation of a certain phenomenon. After the observation, theories are proposed to explain the phenomenon in detail. Using this method, the researcher must find certain repetitive patterns and behaviours (Bryman, A. ,2016). I chose this method because I did not have a clear explanation of the change in Palestinian Jerusalemites' social identity. I was interested in understanding the change that happened and after trying to explain it. Therefore, I could not hypothesize an answer for a social behaviour which I did not fully understand. This approach allowed me to alter the direction of the study when needed. Additionally, through the observation process I was able to use other theoretical frameworks to help me build my research question and research design (Bryman, A. ,2016). After I initiated a process of observation, data collection and reasoning of information, I analysed the collected data and drew a wider implication of the case. I was able to develop an empirical understanding of what is happening in East Jerusalem regarding social identity. Finally, I sorted the results and formed an explanation for the research questions (Bryman, A. ,2016).

2.2 Sampling Design

This study was based on non-probability sampling. The purpose of this study was not to generalize the findings on the target population, but to investigate the participants' perceptions of their definition of social identity. The target population in this study is Palestinian females residing in East Jerusalem (Bryman, A. ,2016). All the participants are part of the target population, except for one participant who is a male residing in East Jerusalem. The male was chosen based on theoretical sampling and helped reveal features that are theoretically related to this study (Neuman, W. L., 2013). The rest of the participants were chosen based on the quota sampling method. Quota sampling is applicable because even though many of the females I interviewed are women that I encountered in the neighbourhoods of East Jerusalem, I chose these women based on my judgment on who might be helpful for this study (Bryman, A. ,2016). I divided my target group into sub-groups based on gender, age, level of education, economic status and employment status. I used my judgment to choose participants who were representative of these sub-groups. Additionally, quota sampling was also used when I contacted some Palestinian NGO's which are known to

organise programs for women in East Jerusalem. I asked if they could provide me with samples which belong to these predetermined categories that would reflect the diversity of the population (Neuman, W. L., 2013). Thus, those NGO's arranged individual meetings with some of the participants. I used quota sampling because I had a limited time and budget. I had to employ my judgment on who of the participants would be useful for my research.

Concerning gender, all the participants had to be females. This is because if there was an islamization of culture in East Jerusalem, the religious restrictions would have affected mostly women. The Palestinian society in Jerusalem is a patriarchal society, the culture was already sexist in its traditions and social beliefs (Baldi, G. ,2018). If there is an islamization of culture, the religion will be used to increase the control level on women. Since my research question examines if there was an islamization of culture in the last twenty years, I was interested in women who are above forty years of age. Women in their forties and older could tell me what the difference in culture and social identity is between now and twenty years ago. I also interviewed young women from18-35 to understand their perceptions of the current situation and if they think it is different from the situation in which their mothers lived in when they were young. In this study, I was interested in the level of education the women had. I wanted to examine if the level of education is a factor with how religious people are. The interviews suggested that the level of education was not an active factor. Finally, I checked the economic and employment status to see if they played a role in how religious people are. There was nearly no difference between those who are poor, average and above the average situation.

2.3 Characteristics of Participants

2.3.1 Gender

I interviewed 25 participants of which 24 were females. Gender is an essential factor in this study. In a patriarchal society, such as the Palestinian society in Jerusalem, religious rules and constraints are mainly applied to females. Religion is used to control the way women dress, talk and behave and to restrain their rights to get an education, choose a profession and to engage in the working force. Therefore, women can feel and describe changes in the society's identity more accurately since it mostly affects them. I also interviewed one male who is the manager of a Palestinian NGO which is deeply engaged in studying and overcoming social challenges in Jerusalem.

2.3.2 Age

All the participants were residents of Jerusalem. The participants were of different age groups, 6 of them are between 17 and 30 years old, 13 are between the ages of 30-50, 4 between 50-60 years old and 2 above 60 years old (See fig. below).
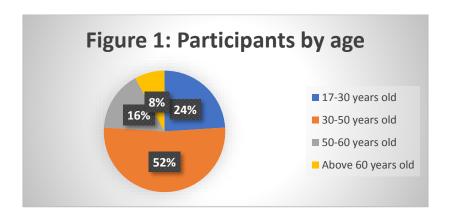

Figure 1. Participants by age

2.3.3 Education status

The participants had different education levels; 14 of them are university graduates, 4 managed to graduate high school but did not pursue higher education. The rest 7 participants had dropped out of school at different classes and for different reasons (see fig. below).
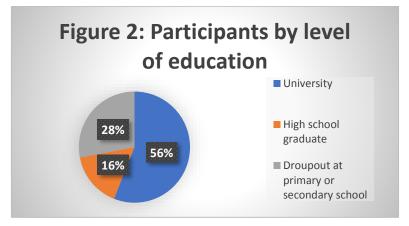

Figure 2. Participants by level of education

2.3.4 Economic status

Most of the women I interviewed were employed. They had various occupations, some had permanent sources of income such as teachers, NGO workers, gym trainers, association managers and sales women. This category had a more stable economic situation, they could cover daily needs such as food, medication, schools and rent without requesting social help. The other category were self-employed. Most of the women in this category are school dropouts, some dropped out because their families couldn't afford it, some because they got married and some because they were told that they would end up in the kitchen anyway so better to invest in finding a good husband. Women in this category found themselves responsible for families and had to find a source of income. Some of these women were single parents, some had disabled husbands, and some are widowers. These women had different projects for example, home-made food projects, home-hairdresser, home kindergarten project and home-made traditional medications projects. This category had an unstable source of income and it was obvious that most of them struggled to cover their daily basic needs. The last category of these women were unemployed, this category classifies as poor or lived under the poverty line. These women depended on social help to meet their daily needs, they lived in severe conditions, they usually rented one room which the whole family shared. Many of these women's children were in social-care programs which offer food, basic education and in extreme cases children are taken to governmental boarding schools.

2.4 Data Collection Methods

Triangulation was employed in this study in order to explore the subject from multiple points of view to improve accuracy (Neuman, W. L., 2013). I collected the data using several techniques to try to examine the situation in East Jerusalem from different angles. First, I conducted 25 face- to- face individual interviews. The location of the interviews was decided based on what was more convenient and comfortable for the participants. All the interviews were conducted in East Jerusalem. Some of the interviews were conducted in the houses of the participants, some in NGO buildings, some in schools and some in my own house. Each interview took an average of 20-30 minutes, which allowed me to elaborate on the main interview questions and discuss the topic in more detail.

I interviewed two individuals who helped me acquire a general overview of the situation in East Jerusalem. The first was a school headmaster. This woman is 89 years old and she has worked as a teacher and a school headmaster since 1949. She now runs one of the most important female schools in East Jerusalem. She provided me with valuable information about the development of social identity in Jerusalem. She was also able to provide me with pictures which are relevant to this research. The second person is the only male-participant who runs a Palestinian NGO which is very engaged in the social, economic and educational problems in East Jerusalem. This NGO had been active since 1983 and was later banned by the Israeli government. However, it renewed its work in the 90's under other names. The manager of this NGO provided me with an overview of the economic situation in East Jerusalem and the problems facing Palestinians' daily lives.

The participant observation method was also used to gather data. During my stay in Jerusalem, which lasted a month, I deliberately participated in diverse social events where I informally raised the issues of this study and engaged in topic-related conversations. During these social events people were excited to explain their points of view regarding social identity and islamization, since it affected their daily lives. Those discussions gave me a wider view on the subject and they enriched the information I was gaining from the individual interviews. They also helped me understand how is this subject discussed between Palestinian Jerusalemites themselves, what details can be discussed with social acceptance and what is considered taboo. These informal meetings served as validity checks for the information presented at the interviews. They helped me verify if there is similarity between the informal meetings and the interviews (Berg, B. L., Lune, H., & Lune, H., 2004). On the other hand, there are some disadvantages for using the participant observation method. I found that sometimes the participants were influenced by my presence. Some of their answers might have been adjusted to fit my perceived view or the group's view. It is possible that the participants did not feel fully comfortable to share their opinions (Neuman, W. L., 2013).

In this research the interview guide was designed as a semi-structured interview. There was a list of general questions to cover the main aspects of the research question. However, the interviewees had a wide latitude to answer and address the issues which they found applicable. During the interviews I picked up on the interviewees answers and asked questions which were not on the interview guide (Bryman, A. ,2016). I decided to use semi-structured interviews because the subject of social identity cannot be completely framed in a

certain interview guide. I had to hear what else was on the participant's minds, and what other issues they felt were related. The interviews were conducted during my stay in Jerusalem between October and November 2017. I used Arabic to communicate with the participants in their mother language. The interviews were all recorded, however it was agreed that all the participant's names and personal information would be confidential. The participants were sceptical about signing any papers, so this step had to be removed. The scepticism comes from the fact that I was a stranger to them, and in a city like Jerusalem anything can be used to deprive them from their rights. If the information falls into the wrong hands, the participants might be arrested or harassed.

2.5 Study Area

Figure 2: Map of East Jerusalem showing the study area

Source: (APJP, 2008)

The area covered in the study is the grey area shown in the map in category of "*Palestinian city, town, village or neighbourhood*". The participants came from varied parts of East Jerusalem, and they all live under the Israeli government.

I chose to interview only participants who live under the Israeli authorities because I argue that one reason behind the Islamization of culture in East Jerusalem was identity threats posed by the Israeli government. I aimed to understand what kind of threat the Israeli

government has on the Palestinians' social identity. In addition to that my interest in the Palestinian East Jerusalemites stems from the fact that they live in a hegemonial society. They share the same political, social and economic circumstances. They attend the same schools and share the same legal status.

2.6 Data Analysis Methods

In this research I used the grounded theory approach to analyse the data. The process of data analysis started with transcribing the recorded interviews. The interviews were transcribed in Arabic because that was the language in which they were conducted. Then, I conceptualized the data to organize it and classified what was important and what was not (Bryman, A. ,2016).   Next, I coded the apparent elements and concepts. Finally, through the data collection process, the repeated ideas and concepts became clear which helped me develop a theory to answer my research question. I used the grounded theory approach because I wanted to translate the beliefs and perceptions of the participants into an answer to my research question. In the analysis I chose to demonstrate the information through the quotations of the participants. I believe that using the exact words the participants used will help the reader to acquire a more accurate understanding of the situation in East Jerusalem. Of course, when I used the quotations I translated them to English since this is the language of the research paper. I did my best, so the translation is as close as possible to the original text.

2.7 Ethical considerations

In East Jerusalem Palestinians live under an occupation and are ethnically targeted and harassed. Palestinians have adapted to suspect anyone and anything, therefore they are extra careful when they share their political and social thoughts. Through the beginning of the data collection process I asked the participants if they were willing for the interviews to be recorded and if they would sign consent forms. Almost all the participants refused and were sceptical about signing anything, and some refused for the interviews to be recorded. Therefore, I decided to skip the paper signing, but I did not interview anyone who refused to be recorded. Some asked that their name would not appear in the recording itself, which I agreed to.

One of the main ethical principles is to cause no harm to the participants. I had to make sure that the participants trusted me with the information they agreed to share (Bryman, A. ,2016).

I also assured the participants that I was the one responsible for protecting them from any legal harm caused by this research. I also had to make them feel comfortable and not to stress them about signing any document. All the participants volunteered to be interviewed, and nobody felt threatened or forced to say anything. I explained the goals of the research and that it was being done as a part of a master thesis in a Norwegian university. They all verbally agreed and were glad to cooperate.

2.8 Limitations of the Study

Qualitative research is usually criticised for being subjective. It can be argued that the process of data collection and data analysis in qualitative research depends on what the researcher views as important and what is not (Bryman, A. ,2016). Other researchers might find that the focus points should have included other things, but this only paves the way for constructive criticism and more research.

One of the elements which might be considered a limitation to this study is that the participants are all, but one, females. However, this study does not aim to generalize the findings on the population, but to understand change in social identity through the eyes of females since they are the ones most impacted by Islamization. In addition, participants talked about social identity in general and included males in the information they presented. Therefore, males can be considered a control group in this study (Bryman, A. ,2016). Males do not experience the sexist treatment of the Palestinian patriarchal society in East Jerusalem, however, they suffer from the same pressure posed by the Israeli occupation. Moreover, participant observation method was used in this research and males were present there. Males gave a very similar picture of the information yielded by females.

Another limitation of the study is the sample size. I interviewed only 25 participants due to time constraints. However, this small number made it possible for me to achieve in depth interviews with the participants, so my concern was the quality of the interviews and not the quantity. Furthermore, the findings would not serve any statistical generalizations and cannot be regarded as 100% inclusive.

Finally, I was born and raised in the Palestinian society in East Jerusalem. My interest in this subject stemmed from personal experiences. I did my best to be objective and not to influence the participant's answers. However, the fact that the participants knew that I was a Palestinian, not wearing the veil and a part of this society might have led to positive or

negative unconscious biases. Moreover, the fact that I have lived through this process of social identity change means that I have some knowledge about it. I have formed my own experiences and opinions regarding this issue. This can be considered positive because I have a similar background of the participants. I also have lived through the same social, economic and political circumstances. On the other hand, it can be considered negative because of the way this issue affected my personal life. I do believe that the Islamization process had negative consequences on the position of women in the Palestinian Jerusalemite society.   I also believe that using Islam to argue that the Palestinians are the rightful owners of the land weakens the argument. This might mean that, unconsciously, I might have taken instinctual decisions in deciding which data is important and which is pointless.

Chapter 3

This chapter explores two main topics. First topic is the main concepts that this study is based upon which include, social Identity, social Identity threat and Islamization of social identity. Even though these are all wide concepts which are difficult to accumulate in one frame, they will be discussed in their theoretical and practical relevance to this study. The second topic discussed in this chapter is the former literature reviewing these concepts and the theoretical framework behind it. Some of the theoretical framework is later used in the discussion to support this study's arguments.

3.1 Identity

Identity is a multi-disciplinary concept which can encompass philosophical, legal and even musical approaches. In this study I focus on the psycho-social meaning of identity. The social identity concept, which was created by social psychologists Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the 1970's and 1980's, explores the individual's personal identity which is acquired from being a member in a specific social group (Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C.,2004).

3.1.1Social Identity

For an individual to achieve self-definition he\she identify themselves with a society that shares common features. Theories of social identity, developed by Tajfel &Turner, and others, discuss the influence of collective membership on individual behaviour, which affects the way people feel about social issues, politics, traditions, stereotypes and behaviour towards dissimilar groups (Ethier, K. A., &Deaux, K,1994). Social identities are created through daily practices and an active interaction with other civilizations. Through this interaction, a society emphasizes the difference between its identity and the identity of others (Escobar, A. ,2008). The society draws limits on what is acceptable and what is forbidden, who is included and who is excluded. In addition, a society determines its view on social elements such as gender, sexuality, spirituality, social hierarchy and other races. This suggests the inclusion of certain social elements and the marginalization of others (Escobar, A. ,2008). Through a network of social relationships, social identities are formed, altered and maintained (Abrams, D., & Emler, N.,1992). This means that any change or pressure on the social environment of a

society affects the individual identity. Therefore, during times of social instability, individuals are compelled to adjust their identities to the new social environment (Hormuth, S. E.,1990). Since identities are relational and dialogical, in the process of social transition, an individual must find new methods to sustain his\her identity. And in addition to being able to sustain the new identity, an individual must develop new ways of supporting this identity (Ethier, K. A., &Deaux, K,1994). Throughout the interviews, I was interested in researching the participants' individual social identities in relation to the Palestinian Jerusalemites society. I wanted to examine how did the social identity of the Palestinian society change with certain circumstances and how did this change affect the behaviour of the Palestinian individuals. I argue that the political circumstances forced the Palestinian Jerusalemite society into enhancing an Islamic social identity which mainly affected the lives of females and posed more social restrictions on them.

The study findings of Ethier and Deaux's (1990) suggest that change in social identity can be described by the observation of certain factors. These factors include the way people dress, the language they choose to speak, the language they must speak, their belief system and their view of their enemies. In the Palestinian Jerusalemite case, the identity the society maintained before the Second Intifada became no longer valid or useful, for a variety of reasons discussed later, therefore the society fell into identity vacuity and had to find an urgent replacement.

The new replacement was formed by the political, social and economic circumstances of the Palestinian Jerusalemite society at that time. According to Social Identity theory, when a specific identity is threatened this increases the salience of this identity (Emler, N., & Hopkins, N., 1990). The change within the Palestinian Jerusalemite identity was not sudden. The way was paved for such a change to happen by Israel's ethnocratic regime. An Ethnocracy is a regime which allows the control of a certain ethnic nation over another. In such a regime the identity and goals of the community are determined by ethnicity (Yiftachel, O., 2006). The Palestinian Jerusalemites are under constant threat of Judaization of their land, schools, neighbourhoods and history. In Israel, Judaism functions not only as a religion but as a nation. With the Second Intifada, which started in the Aqsa, Palestinian Jerusalemites felt a direct threat to their religious identity. With the failure of the Arabic nations and the Palestinian parties to benefit the Palestinian society in East Jerusalem, people resorted to the salient identity remaining, Islam.

Societies derive their self-esteem from their social identities, and therefore there is a constant comparison between a society and others (Branscombe, N. R., Ellemers, N., Spears, R., &Doosje, B., 1999). By the comparison, societies distinguish themselves by indicating their beliefs, values, history and justified aspirations. In that way, societies aim to achieve positive distinctiveness which is used by individuals in the group to obtain a respective and positive self-concept (Branscombe, N. R., Ellemers, N., Spears, R., &Doosje, B., 1999). After the Second Intifada, which ended with huge losses for the Palestinian side, the social identity and distinctiveness of the Palestinian society in East Jerusalem became threatened. Palestinian political parties failed miserably to achieve any success by negotiations (Khalidi, R. ,2010. When on the other hand, the Israelis were gaining more control. Israel started increasingly integrating its Jewish identity into the daily lives of Palestinian Jerusalemites. Jewish symbols such as flags, Hebrew street names, religious schools, the star of David and Jewish celebrations in the Islamic quarters of the Old City of Jerusalem happened more frequently and became even more provocative (Yiftachel, O. ,2006). Palestinian Jerusalemites needed an alternative showable identity to enhance their self-esteem. Thus, they embraced their Islamic identity and prioritized it in a way which made it the salient identity.

3.1.2 Social Identity Threat

Identity threats have been a point of debate in many psychological and social studies. Among the first to debate that topic was Freud in the 1930's where he considered social threat in strictly personal identity terms (Ethier, K. A., &Deaux, K.,1994). Since then, an increasing number of studies have explored identity threats within the context of ingroup and outgroup relations. These studies included, realistic threats, symbolic threats and negative stereotypes (Esses, V. M., Dovidio, J. F., Jackson, L. M., & Armstrong, T. L., 2001). An identity threat questions the values, norms, traditions, beliefs and even the existence of a certain social identity. Such threat could be legitimate, or in other situations, it could be perceived. The latter is more likely to occur when an identity is linked with membership in a certain society, for example, race, gender or religion (Ethier, K. A., &Deaux, K.,1994).

In this study, the concept of identity threat is based on the Integrated Threat Theory which was first proposed by Walter G. Stephan and Cookie White Stephan in 2000. This theory is a model and it includes four types of threats, of which three are applicable in our case. This theory argues that identity threat creates prejudice and fear among groups. The first type of threat, according to this theory, is realistic threat which is a threat caused by an outgroup.

Realistic threat, which is based on the Realistic Group Conflict Theory, is a threat to the existence of the ingroup. The ingroup feels that the outgroup is a threat to the well-being of its members, whether it was by economic or health terms. The ingroup believes that the out group is trying to end its existence in a certain place (Stephan, C. W., & Stephan, W. S., 2013). Many Palestinian Jerusalemites believe that Israel aims to achieve full Judaization of Jerusalem, and that this could only be achieved by throwing Palestinians off their land. An example for such a threat, is the "nation state" law which was passed through the Israeli parliament on the 18th of July 2018 (BBC,2018). This law says that only Jews have the right to national self-determination in Israel. This law demonstrates the policy the Israeli government has drove with especially after the Second Intifada. The use of Judaism to legally decide who is eligible to exercise rights poses a direct threat on the Islamic identity and helps turn the conflict into a religious war.

The second type of threat is symbolic threat. In this case the threat is directed at the belief system of a certain society. The belief system includes, everything that the society believes positively distinguishes them from others. This involves traditions, values, norms and attitudes of the ingroup (Stephan, C. W., & Stephan, W. S., 2013). Since the ingroup strongly believes that its belief system is righteous, the more this system is blocked by the outgroup, the more the level of threat conceived by the ingroup increases (Esses, V. M., Haddock, G., &Zanna, M. P., 1993). This type of threat is the most common one in East Jerusalem. Almost in every street in East Jerusalem there are Israeli soldiers standing and harassing Palestinians by asking for their I.Ds and doing physical check-ups for them. Further, on every Jewish entity in East Jerusalem such as government offices, settler houses and police cars, there hangs huge Israeli flags and Jewish symbols. This extends to the Israeli control over the Aqsa. When Palestinians go to pray they are asked to show I.Ds by Israeli soldiers. Moreover, there are always the racist debates in the Israeli parliament discussing the introduction of legal bans on Palestinian symbols such as the Palestinian flag or the call of prayer.

The third type of threat is intergroup anxiety. This threat is when people feel they must alter or hide parts of their identity from the society in which they live in. People need to feel that they belong, especially in unstable political, economic or social situations (Stephan, C. W., & Stephan, W. S., 2013). People change parts of their personality or beliefs, whether consciously or unconsciously, so they won't be cast away from their societies. People are concerned about negative outcomes for the self, for example being criticized, judged or

rejected (Stephan, C. W., & Stephan, W. S., 2013).   This type of threat applies to what the Palestinian Jerusalemite females feel towards their society. After the Islamization process more religious and sexist restrictions were posed on Palestinian females. By returning to religion, it was only normal for the Palestinian society to blame the way females dress and behave for the political defeats. Females in East Jerusalem suffer from identity pressure from both the Israeli and the Palestinian sides. This forces them to become willing to change parts of their social identity to ease the pressure from, at least, one side.

The Integrated Threat Theory emphasizes perceived threats, this means that the threat may not be real, but it is what the individuals in a society feel (Stephan, C. W., & Stephan, W. S., 2013). The perceived threat relies upon the relational status of power between the ingroup and the outgroup. The weaker the ingroup is the more threatened it feels, and the more the sources of threat are salient. In addition to that, the more the individual's level of identification with the ingroup increases, the more the individual feels threatened. Another factor to influence the threat is the frequency of negative contact between the two groups. If the ingroup members' exposure to the outgroup is negative, they are more likely to perceive the outgroup as threatening. The ingroup members will highlight the difference between them and the outgroup and believe that the outgroup is dissimilar to them.   According to this theory, the threats are more applicable in a conflict situation (Stephan, C. W., & Stephan, W. S., 2013). In the case of this research, many of the threats that the participants talked about are actual policies implemented by the Israeli government. However, some of the threats seemed to be exaggerated. Many of the participants believed that there is a world conspiracy against Islam and Muslims. They blamed the current bad situation of the Muslims on Israel and the West. They argued that the reason why there is ignorance, poverty and corruption in the Islamic world, is that this is what Israel and the West wants.   "The other" was also blamed for Muslims being distant from their religion. Some of the participants said that Israel wants them to be distant from religion in order for them to stay weak. Even if some of these threats have some truth in them, they seem to be extremely exaggerated. The Palestinian in East Jerusalem have little control over the political and economic events of their daily lives. This makes them feel vulnerable, weak and highly threatened.

3.1.3 Islamization of Social Identity as a Form of resistance

Islamization is society altering its beliefs, traditions, laws, economy and all aspects of life into a more Islamic version (Kennedy, C. H. ,1996). In this study, one of my arguments is that the turn to Islam in East Jerusalem is a form of resistance. To explain this statement first we must explore Scott's theory of everyday forms of resistance. Scott examines weak oppressed societies and their forms of daily resistance; how they respond to domination when they cannot organize rebellions or revolutions (Scott, J. C. ,2008). Cultural resistance, as Scott call it, is a less visible form of everyday resistance, it takes many forms such as pilfering, foot-dragging, sabotage and creating revolutionary songs and singing them in secret. In addition, Scott explores the notion of "transcripts" which are methods of speech and behaviour which particular actors use in particular social settings. These transcripts include rumours, metaphors, rituals and folktales. These methods are effective when violence can be used to maintain the status quo. Such forms of resistance demand little organization and can be used by groups and individuals without directly challenging the oppressor (Scott, J. C. ,2008). In this study, I argue that the society in East Jerusalem shifted towards Islam after the Second Intifada as a form of resistance. During the Second Intifada, and until now, the Islamic identity in East Jerusalem has been under a lot of pressure. Whether it was by the visit of the Israeli Prime Minister to the Aqsa at the beginning of the Second Intifada, by prohibiting young people from praying in the Aqsa, discussing the prohibition of the call of prayer in Jerusalem in the Israeli Knesset or by arresting religious Palestinian females who pray in the Aqsa, Israel's ethnocratic regime has put a lot of pressure on the Islamic identity. In return, Palestinian Jerusalemites started believing that they should strengthen their Islamic identity and defy the Israeli government.

The islamization process in East Jerusalem mainly emphasized the way females dress. One of the most distinctive characteristics of a society is the way people dress. An outsider may be unaware that Muslims do not drink alcohol or eat pork, or that they deny themselves sexual relations during fasting, however, the veil worn by females is such an obvious characteristic that it is the first thing one notices when visiting an Islamic society (Fanon, F. ,2004).   The Palestinians in East Jerusalem were left with only one way to resist their occupier, affirming their distinct identity. Failed by the Palestinian and Arabic leaderships, the Palestinians in East Jerusalem choose the most threatened identity they had left, the wider identity, Islam. The oppressed' s resistance, according to Fanon, mainly circles on the

maintenance of cultural and national originality. The Palestinians in East Jerusalem did not create a new identity, but rather emphasized an identity they already had. Choosing a new identity would have required modification of the society's belief system, a revaluation of its deepest stable models, which would be considered treason when the society is under occupation (Fanon, F. 2004).   To believe is much easier than to think, especially when you have lost all hope.

In the following section I explore the theories which previous scholars have written on the concepts of social identity and identity threat under conflict. The theoretical framework discussed in this section will be used later in the analysis and findings of this study.

3.2.1 Social identity under conflict

Conflicts have a big influence on the formation and transformation of a society's social identity. Conflicts shape the ingroup relations and how the ingroup relates to other groups (Echabe, A. E., Guede, E. F., & Castro, J. L. G.,1994). According to Reicher, in order to understand a conflict, we should examine how the involved groups are constructed and perceived and observe the changes in their social identities (Reicher, S. ,2004). Therefore, in a conflict situation, the focus should be on the "ideological groups" which are established on common beliefs rather than ethnicity or language (Cohrs, J. C., Kämpfe-Hargrave, N., & Riemann, R. ,2012).   During conflict, a society must maintain its social belief system, and to shape it in a way which makes it possible to cope with the circumstances. When a society is under a lot of pressure and its identity is threatened, the society must adopt a set of beliefs which encourages attachment to the country.   In addition to that, these social beliefs should generate unity and the importance of discarding internal conflicts and controversies in order to be able to face the external threat (Rouhana, N. N., & Bar-Tal, D. ,1998).

Through biased information processing a society maintains the righteousness of its belief system and the wrongfulness of others (Rouhana, N. N., & Bar-Tal, D. ,1998). Under threatful conditions, society members select what facts they will believe and which they will totally ignore. This makes it almost impossible for such a society to accept criticism, in fact disapprovals will be regarded as treason (Rouhana, N. N., & Bar-Tal, D. ,1998). Further, the society will interpret events in a way which corresponds with its belief system. Similarly, the behaviour of the ingroup and the outgroup will be explained in line with desired beliefs about the self and the enemy. When the existing belief system becomes insufficient, the society elaborates new beliefs that are consistent with the old ones. These beliefs should explain

former defeats, methods to deal with the present and finally create hope for a better ending. Moreover, these beliefs should demonstrate a favourable self-perception and define national identity (Rouhana, N. N., & Bar-Tal, D. ,1998).

Rouhana and Bar-Tal have elaborated on the mechanisms used by the Palestinian society to cope with the conflict. They argued that under conditions of pressure, threat and anxiety the Palestinian society was always finding new ways to adapt its social identity with the circumstances. In addition to the human and material resources, the Palestinian society devoted psychosocial efforts to confront the Israeli occupation. By developing a set of social beliefs that explain the conflict, the self and the other, the Palestinian society has promoted the need of continuous resistance to occupation (Rouhana, N. N., & Bar-Tal, D. ,1998). The society members share beliefs which advance their uniqueness and positive difference from others. How the society perceives itself, defines its goals, hopes and fears, determines its norms, values and traditions, are all based on the society's social identity. Then, through language, stereotypes, religion, political parties, collective memory and social institutions, the Palestinian society demonstrates its social identity and emphasizes the role of every member to be a part of the fight against the occupier (Rouhana, N. N., & Bar-Tal, D. ,1998).

In intractable intergroup conflicts, the group identity is more salient and important than the individual's identity (Rouhana, N. N., & Bar-Tal, D. ,1998). It is the group identity that draws the boundaries between the Palestinians and the Israelis. The Palestinians use acts of violence, aggression and exclusion committed against them to reinforce their identity and strengthen the fact that they are the victims and that they are the legitimate side of the conflict (Rouhana, N. N., & Bar-Tal, D. ,1998). The Palestinians transform their social identity to emphasize a component which is not shared with the Israeli society, to increase their uniqueness and the inter-group differentiation. This component must support the symbols, struggle and history of the Palestinian society. In conflict situations, the group identity overwhelms the individual one, this happens because the individuals are under more stress and fear and therefore more in need of group support and reassurance (Rouhana, N. N., & Bar-Tal, D. ,1998).

3.2.2 The Importance of a Psychosocial perspective on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

One of the leading previous studies on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was done by Herbert Kelman. He is one of the first to analyse the conflict using the psychosocial perspective. According to him, psychosocial analysis provides us with a special understanding of the conflict by helping us see dimensions that cannot be seen using other theories. Kelman suggested that any theory which does not take psychosocial perspectives into consideration is incomplete for the following reasons: First psychosocial factors at the individual and group levels form and arbitrate the behaviour of societies. Psychosocial analysis addresses the processes of risk taking, intentions, reactions to threats and decision making explicitly, critically, and systematically.   Second, psychosocial analysis explains the interaction and the relationship between the individuals and the social system. Individuals act in coordinated social systems. Therefore, all the cognitive processes related to decision making, political and social reactions under conflict can be explained by understanding the interaction between the individual and the group.   Third, psychosocial analysis does not indicate that the conflict is not real.   One should not assume that the cognitive processes are unrealistic or irrational. On the contrary, psychosocial analysis is used to strengthen the findings of other theories. Psychosocial analysis argues that subjective elements influence the society's interpretation of events.   These subjective elements influence the way the ingroup perceives reality and affects its rationality.   Finally, Kelman stresses the fact that psychosocial analysis must always be understood in context.   The Israeli-Palestinian conflict should be understood as social processes formed by the actions and interactions of individuals in organized groups. These social processes are not fixed, they change with the change of circumstances. However, they are always based on deep historical and ideological roots (Kelman, H. C., & Fisher, R. J. (Eds.). ,2016).

Kelman further explores some of the qualities which should be taken into consideration when analysing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. These qualities are valid in the case of existential conflicts between identity groups. In such conflicts, the groups' social identities play a significant role and are perceived to be under threat.   The Israeli- Palestinian conflict is shaped by collective needs and fears instead of rational decisions (Kelman, H. C., & Fisher, R. J. (Eds.). ,2016). When a group feels that its existence is at stake, it becomes willing to do anything to survive. In such cases, strategic planning and logical calculations are dismissed. Second the Israeli- Palestinian conflict is an inter-social process. Most of the events happening in this conflict are not governmental, they are committed by individuals in the two

societies. These individuals can work alone or in organised groups. Third, this conflict is a versatile process of mutual influence, both societies affect the living circumstances of each other. In addition, both societies have certain power on each other, which makes it easy for both societies to believe that they are the victim. Finally, in the Israeli- Palestinian conflict the actors' reactions are not stable and cannot be predicted. This conflict is not a governmental conflict only, but it is a war of existence between two people, and this encourages individuals to act (Kelman, H. C., & Fisher, R. J. (Eds.). ,2016).

The Palestinian Jerusalemites are driven by the nonfulfillment and threats to their basic needs. These needs are not only material but mainly psychological. Many Palestinians in East Jerusalem feel that their identity, recognition, independence and self-esteem are all threatened. Therefore, fear plays a big role in the transformation of the Palestinian social identity (Burton, J. ,1990).   The psychosocial needs of the Palestinians in East Jerusalem are a driving force in the conflict.   Even though the obvious goals that the Palestinians in East Jerusalem are trying to reach are related to territory, economy, housing and security, there are collective psychosocial needs, such as identity, hiding behind those goals (Kelman, H. C. (1999).

In the case of Palestinian Jerusalemites, the fear of annihilation of their group is tied to a fear of individual annihilation. If a neighbour's house is demolished in East Jerusalem, there is no guarantee that your house will not be next. When Palestinian teenagers are arrested for no reason, there is no guarantee that your child will not be next. With no leadership to defend the Palestinians in East Jerusalem, fear becomes the focus of collective action within the society (Kelman, H. C., & Fisher, R. J. (Eds.). ,2016).

3.2.3 Use of Language in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

Language is an essential part of a group's social identity (Shannon, S. M. ,1995). In conflicts it is used as a political tool; it is used as a form of resistance where the oppressed group creates songs, gossip, proverbs to strengthen its identity and demean the outgroup's identity. It is also used to stir emotions and mobilize a group against another (Shannon, S. M. ,1995). Therefore, there is a strong link between language and power. The language chosen by a society to be used in streets, in social settings and in the household has a great influence on the society's belief system. Languages are chosen according to a society's allegiances and oppositions. The outgroup often tries to achieve language hegemony on the ingroup. It is a

weapon used to make the ingroup feel fragile, inferior and unneeded (Shannon, S. M. ,1995). In Jerusalem, Hebrew is the dominant language and even though Arabic is an official language it is usually marginalized (Ben-Rafael, E., Shohamy, E., Hasan Amara, M., &Trumper-Hecht, N. ,2006). The use of Hebrew and Arabic in Jerusalem shows how political power is distributed. An example is the use of public signs; often Arabic is completely ignored and the signs are only in Hebrew, other times Hebrew is first then English, which is not an official language, and finally Arabic. Another example is changing the names of previously Arabic villages, neighbourhoods and streets into Hebrew names (Ben-Rafael, E., Shohamy, E., Hasan Amara, M., &Trumper-Hecht, N. ,2006).

There is a special link between language and identity (Pavlenko, A. ,2005). People express their ethnic, national and cultural identities through language. The languages we speak or refuse to speak constitute a big part of who we are (Pavlenko, A. ,2005). In East Jerusalem Arabic has always been the dominant language and Hebrew is associated with the occupying government. Palestinians in Jerusalem have created a state within a state, with their own schools, markets and even colleges. The Palestinian society in Jerusalem is isolated from the Israeli one. Most people in east Jerusalem know only basic Hebrew if any (Bilaniuk, L., 2003). The Palestinian Jerusalemites consider maintaining their Arabic language a part of maintaining their identity. It is a way to negotiate power through linguistics (Bilaniuk, L., 2003). Individuals in East Jerusalem have to adjust their language to the situation they find themselves in. Together they speak only Arabic, and those who use Hebrew words in the conversation are heavily criticized. When having to communicate with Israelis, many people in East Jerusalem use English. And only if necessary Palestinians in East Jerusalem use the basic Hebrew they know. This is a method of negotiating authority and legitimacy. It is a way of resisting the Israeli dominance aiming to achieve a symbolic victory (Ben-Rafael, E., Shohamy, E., Hasan Amara, M., &Trumper-Hecht, N. ,2006).

The language children use to communicate with their parents at home determines the children's perception of culture, society and their worldview (Blommaert, J., Collins, J., &Slembrouck, S.,2005). The use of Hebrew language is associated with negative experiences to the Palestinian in East Jerusalem. Hebrew is used by soldiers to ask for I.D, to arrest someone and to send a demolishing order. It is also the language used in all Israeli governmental offices, hospitals and even during driving exams. Often the roads in the old city of Jerusalem are closed for settler groups to pass through singing provoking songs in Hebrew. Palestinians in East Jerusalem become annoyed when tourists come to their

neighbourhoods and say they are enjoying their time in Israel rather than Palestine. Hebrew is considered the language of the enemy. Therefore, ethnolinguistic identity which is defined as "…a complex notion covering both linguistic and 'ethnic' features emerges at the confluence of a sense of belonging to a language community… and a sense of belonging to an 'ethnic' community" (Blommaert, J., Collins, J., &Slembrouck, S.,2005) tells us a lot about the Palestinians' social identity. The mother tongue helps individuals form their sense of self and belonging to an ethnic group. Social Interaction using the mother tongue leads people to form their social identities. During such formation, the social interaction may be invasive, like in the case of Palestinians and Israeli occupation, which creates the mentality of the "other" (Ben-Rafael, E., Shohamy, E., Hasan Amara, M., &Trumper-Hecht, N. ,2006).

3.2.4 Israel's Ethnonational Regime

A regime is a legal, political entity which is responsible for allocating resources within a certain territory. A regime reflects a community's identity, aspirations and priorities. The state is the authority responsible for running the regime. The state provides executive institutions, laws and protection for its people (Yiftachel, O. ,2004). An ethnocratic regime has many forms, it may be an ethnic dictatorship, or a totalitarian state executing strategies of violence against ethnic minorities. Those strategies can also revolve around racism, exclusion and control. In special cases, the state could represent itself as a democratic entity because it features elections, a parliament and civil freedoms. However, at the same time it may use ethnocratic policies to empower one ethnicity over another (Yiftachel, O. ,2004).

After the creation of the Israeli state, many Zionist associations worked on achieving two goals. First the Judaization of the land and second the indigenization of the Jewish immigrants. These goals are shaped by years of Jewish persecution and a collective memory of affliction. And even though there were calls for the land grab of Palestinian land, it was represented as a form of anticolonial liberation against the British. In that way Zionism in Israel gained internal and international support (Yiftachel, O. ,2006). Judaization of the Palestinian land meant imposing a direct threat on the Palestinian Jerusalemites. Since 1967, the Israeli government has expropriated more than 2,450 hectares, owned by Palestinians, to build 11 Jewish neighbourhoods (B'tselem,2017). All the Jewish immigrants who arrived at Israel since 1948, were given Israeli citizenships as soon as they arrived. While on the other hand, the Palestinian Jerusalemites, are considered stateless and do not have the same rights as the citizens. It is very common that the Palestinians who were

born and raised in Jerusalem, as did their fathers and grandfathers, are asked to show I.D by an Israeli soldier who is eighteen years old and had just arrived at Israel. In some cases, this soldier has not even learned to speak Hebrew yet. Such situations arise the topic of identity on daily basis. Questions such as "why this soldier who just arrived here have the right to ask me for I.D and stop me at checkpoints?" orbit the minds of Palestinians daily. Such incidents provoke hate, anger and a feeling of being threatened.

Israel is a regime based on ethnonational expansion while arguing that the system is democratic. Oren Yitfachel has conducted many studies about Israel's ethnonational regime and the Judaization process that it carries out. The Israeli ethnicization process carried out in the occupied Palestinian territories is manifested in the political, cultural, economic and legal aspects of life. According to Yitfachel, an ethnocratic regime promotes the control of a certain dominant social group over another. It allows the dominant group to expand, gain power over territory and politics. Israel privileges its Jewish citizens over its Muslim ones. There are key principles which characterize Israel's ethnocratic regime; First Israel divides resources, power, rights based on ethnicity. Second vagueness of borders, Israel never determined where its borders stand exactly. This allows the Israeli state to carry out ethnic expansions and ethnic diasporas, and it also allows it to grant citizenship based on ethnic backgrounds. For example, every year Israel facilitates the immigration of Jews into Israel while it prohibits the return of Palestinian refugees kicked out of their homes. It also allows the establishment of Jewish settlements around the country and in the occupied territories, while on the other hand, it prohibits the Palestinians from building houses. Third, ethnicity is the main vehicle driving public policies and state goals. Finally, within the state people are segregated based on ethnonationalities and ethno-classes. This means that the economy is marked by ethno-class stratification (Yiftachel, O. ,2004).

Since the beginning of 2017, two ethnic parliamentary bills have been suggested with widespread support among Israeli government ministers. The first intends to annex 150,000 Jews in illegal West Bank settlements to Jerusalem. This bill aims to increase the number of Jews who can vote in the municipal elections in Jerusalem. The second bill aims to assign a separate local council for more than 100,000 Palestinians living in Jerusalem, so they are no longer the responsibility of the Jerusalem municipality (Middle East Eye,2018). According to Aviv Tatarsky, a field researcher with IrAmim, what is happening in Jerusalem can be considered "*ethnic cleansing without guns*". The minister of transport and intelligence, who has supported both bills, said that the goal of those bills is to "*safeguard a Jewish majority*".

The second bill, if passed, will reduce the Palestinian population in Jerusalem by a third. Since 1967, Israel revoked the residency permits from more than 14,000 Palestinians. This means that they can no longer enter Jerusalem (Middle East Eye,2018).

Israel seeks to achieve ethnic statehood. To pursue that goal, it must achieve ethnic territoriality. This means that it must control the land, and expand and strengthen its defence security (Yiftachel, O. ,2006). The Israeli government, therefore, acts as if it is on a survival mission so that it can pursue its goals without taking into consideration the injustice done to others. Through the media Israel broadcasts selective and manipulative historical, cultural, political and religious information. This is done to create a public state of mind where the Jewish citizen will feel that his\her existence is threatened (Yiftachel, O. ,2006).

This state of mind drives defensive policies against the Palestinian minority, and it aggravates the conflict between both societies. Israel has attempted to judaize the land since its creation in 1948. It has created an ethnically segmented society where everything is separate, the schools, the markets, the neighbourhoods and even roads. Palestinians are treated as an underclass and are excluded from access to capital or mobility within the labour market (Yiftachel, O. ,2006). Therefore, they constitute the poorest classes in Israel and are preoccupied with surviving every day. In addition to that, religion is used a weapon in the conflict. Religion is politicized and used to justify the policies carried against the Palestinians. This creates reciprocal relations, where both societies start using religion to justify attacking the other (Yiftachel, O. ,2006).

Israel has developed resilient forms of internal policies based on nationalism and ethnicity to legitimize its ethnic acts (Yiftachel, O. ,2006). This influences the social identity of both societies, as both feel that their existence is threatened and that they need to defend their social identity before it's completely erased. Using religious-based policies creates a discourse of social boundaries. These boundaries separate the two societies without the need for artificial walls or barriers. Each society starts believing that those boundaries stem from ancient history and are needed to preserve social identities. The regime, then, can use concepts such as "God given" or "religious right" to create formal and informal differences between the citizens. This helps in marginalizing the Palestinians and allocating the resources to expand the Jews (Yiftachel, O. ,2006).

The Israeli ethnocratic regime can be observed in all aspects of daily life. The Israeli armed forces, for example, have always been controlled by Jews. These forces include the army, the

police and legal means of violence. These forces also have a huge influence on the process of decision making, as they have the authority to take any decision and justify it by using the concept of "security concerns" (Yiftachel, O. ,2006). Another form of ethnocracy is the law. The legal authorities and the law itself in Israel support the goals of Zionism concerning land control, religion, politics and citizenship. One cannot travel in Israel without observing the huge number of Israeli flags hung everywhere. Israel stresses its main symbols such as the flag, the anthem and the Jewishness of the land whenever and wherever it is possible. The kosher rules and the preservation of Sabbath and Jewish holidays is controlled by the state. Ethnocratic policies have also affected the economy. Policies are set to direct capital accumulation for the advantage of Jews. This can also be observed in the government's development initiatives, taxes, employment, industry even importing and exporting authorizations (Yiftachel, O. ,2006).

One of the most obvious ethnic policies with which the Israeli government asserts control relates to settlement and housing. Ethnic composition is of a great importance in the Israeli politics. Israel established a Jewish state within an Arabic region (Yiftachel, O. ,2006). For that to be achieved, it had to control the population status. Israel denied the right of return for Palestinian refugees and, at the same time, increasingly encouraged the immigration of Jews into the land. It has also pursued an immigration policy aimed to change the ethnic structure of the land. Since 1980, the Israeli government has offered subsidized housing for Jewish settlers on Palestinian land. By the end of 2001, Israel had built eight settlements for 206,000 Jews in East Jerusalem alone (Yiftachel, O. ,2006). It has also transferred Palestinian land to the control of Jews with no legal support. This, however, has only made the Palestinians more determined to stay in Jerusalem. The Palestinians in East Jerusalem consider that staying is their purpose in life. It is their responsibility to defend the Islamic heritage in Jerusalem. Therefore, Jerusalem has always been the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Both societies are religiously attached to the land. However, the powerful side, which in this case is the Israeli society, is able to act as the rightful owner of the land and to treat all other ethnicities as unworthy to exist or achieve equality (Yiftachel, O. ,2006).

Chapter four

In order to fully understand the development of Palestinian identity, we have to understand the political and social history of the Palestinian case. As Edward Said explains in Orientalism *"... the development and maintenance of every culture requires the existence of another different and competing ego. The construction of identity ... involves the construction of opposites and "others" whose actuality is always subject to the continuous interpretation and reinterpretation of their difference from "us"* (Said, E. W. ,1995). Therefore, we have to understand the Palestinian relation with the Israeli narrative, for both exist the way they do today only under the influence of each other.

The city of Jerusalem has been of a religious importance to Jews, Christians and Muslims from the day these religions existed. The fight over this city has created heroes, in the eyes of some, and criminals in the eyes of others for all the Ibrahimic religions. Jerusalem, therefore, constitutes an identity symbol for all the inhabitants of Palestine now and in the past (Khalidi, R. ,2010).

4.1 The Establishment of an Israeli State

The Ottoman Empire lost its control over Palestine after the First World War. British control was established by the Sykes-Picot agreement in 1916. Shortly after, in 1917, the Balfour Declaration was issued, in which Palestine was promised to be a "national home" for the Jewish people. Britain officially administered Palestine from 1920 to 1948. Starting in 1922 the borders of the current Palestinian\Israeli territory was considered "Palestine" by the British (Smith, C. D. ,2010).

The British conducted a census in Palestine in 1922. Palestine had a population of 757,000 of which 78% were Muslims, 11% Jews and 10% Christians. However, the number of Jews started to increase rapidly after Britain facilitated Jewish immigration to Palestine (Smith, C. D. ,2010). The Palestinians initiated many revolts against the British's decision to facilitate Jewish immigration, including the 1920 Jerusalem revolt and the 1936 Arab Revolt of Palestine. The British responded by expanding their military control and punishing anyone who criticized their decisions (Bright, J. ,2000). During the Second World War the Jews sided with the British and few years after the war in 1947 the British government announced

its desire to retreat from Palestine and asked the United Nations to reach a decision about dividing the territory between Arabs and Jews. On the 29th of November 1948, the United Nations adopted resolution 181. It recommended dividing Palestine into three sections "*Independent Arab state alongside a Jewish States, and the Special International Regime for the City of Jerusalem*" (Bright, J. ,2000).   The announcement lead to a civil war which ended in the Nakba. The Nakba, known also as the 1948 Palestinian exodus, happened when more than 700,000 Palestinians fled the war or were expelled from their homes. Moreover, between 400 and 600 Palestinian villages were destroyed (Bardi, A. S. ,2016). On the 14th of May 1948, the state of Israel was established.

4.2 The Occupation of Jerusalem

After 1948 and the declaration of the Israeli state, the city of Jerusalem was divided into two sections, the Western part which was under Israeli control, and the Eastern part which was under Jordanian control (Golani, M., 1999). However, in 1950, the Israeli government announced that Jerusalem was the capital of Israel. Later, in 1967 the rest of Jerusalem was occupied by the Israeli military.   The international community did not recognize East Jerusalem as a part of the Israeli State and established their embassies in the city of Tel Aviv (Golani, M., 1999).

The Palestinians in East Jerusalem are considered stateless when it comes to their legal status. They hold Israeli travel documents, which are not passports. In those travel documents the nationality is listed as "undefined". Some of the Palestinians in East Jerusalem also carry Jordanian travel documents, in which the nationality is defined as "not Jordanian citizens" (Khalidi, R. ,2010). Therefore, Palestinians require traveling visas to almost everywhere in the world. They are subjected to humiliation on every border, they need to explain why they are holding two passports but are, at the same time, stateless.   Within the Israeli territory, the Palestinian East Jerusalemites must carry an Israeli I.D to be identified when needed. They are considered as residents of Jerusalem and not citizens. Therefore, their legal status is continually changing in meaning and implications (Kelly, T., 2006).

In 1994, the Palestinian Population in East Jerusalem reached 170,000 which constitutes 28% of the city's population. The Palestinian population resides in the Eastern part of Jerusalem. On the other hand, the Jewish Population constituted 72% of the population with 406,000 residents. The Jewish population lives in the Western part of the city, except for a few Jewish settlers who reside in the Palestinian neighbourhoods (Hasson, S. ,2001).

Since the occupation of East Jerusalem, the Israeli government has adapted varied policies to decrease Palestinian growth and expansion. One of these policies is called "green areas". Those areas are Palestinian undeveloped land which were confiscated or on which building became prohibited. Nevertheless, two large Jewish settlements were built on "green areas" in the northern and southern parts of Jerusalem (Hasson, S. ,2001). Another used policy is municipal strategies. Even though, now the Palestinians constitute almost 37% of the population in Jerusalem, it is estimated that only 4 to 5% of the municipal budget is directed to them (Chiodelli, F., 2016).

4.3 The First Intifada

After the occupation of the rest of the Palestinian territories in 1967, Israel enforced a repressive military rule on the Palestinians. Many policies were used to harass the Palestinian daily life, including I.D checks, curfews, house demolitions, killings, road closures, arrests (many without trial) and even forced displacement within the country (Harms, G., & Ferry, T. M. ,2017).

The Palestinians started an uprising against the Israeli occupation in December 1987. Mass demonstrations spread throughout the Palestinian occupied territories in response to Israeli oppression.   Many forms of resistance were used in the First Intifada including strikes, boycotts, refusal to pay taxes, throwing of stones and hand-made bombs (Harms, G., & Ferry, T. M. ,2017).

The Intifada lasted 5 years during which 277 Israelis and more than 1,603 Palestinians were killed (Harms, G., & Ferry, T. M. ,2017). However, the Intifada was considered a success by the Palestinian community in as much as they were united and there was a harmony between the Palestinian leadership and the people. In addition to that, this Intifada showed the world that the Palestinians living in East Jerusalem do not consider themselves a part of the Israeli state but a nation under occupation (Harms, G., & Ferry, T. M. ,2017).

The Palestinian Liberation Organization became the official representative of the Palestinian people after the first Intifada. In 1993, the PLO recognised Israel's right to exist and agreed to the two-state solution (Khalidi, R. ,2010).

4.4 The Second Intifada

Also known as Al-Aqsa Intifada, it started in September 2000, when the leader of the Likud Israeli Party, Ariel Sharon entered the Aqsa to reinforce the fact that Jews have the right to visit the Aqsa. This visit was considered highly provocative by the Palestinians who demonstrated during visit by throwing chairs, garbage cans and stones at the Israeli police. Israel responded with tear gas and rubber bullets. The day after Sharon's visit, riots broke in Aqsa (Harms, G., & Ferry, T. M. ,2017). The Palestinians threw stones at the Wailing Wall. The Israeli police fired back using real bullets resulting in the murder of seven Palestinians. In the following days, riots erupted also in the West Bank and Gaza. The Israeli military entered those areas and killed 47 Palestinians in five days. The riots escalated, and the Palestinian citizens of Israel joined in the unrest. Sharon was elected as Israeli Prime Minister in 2001(Harms, G., & Ferry, T. M. ,2017). The Palestinian militias used suicide bombings in the Second Intifada and Israel responded by using warplanes and airstrikes. The numbers of attacks reached its highest levels in March 2002. This month witnessed 15 suicide bombings in which 130 Israelis were killed (Harms, G., & Ferry, T. M. ,2017).

In 2003, Israel started building the separating wall to isolate itself from Palestinian communities. Israel argued that the wall was necessary to stop suicide bombers. Much Palestinian land was confiscated for building the wall. In addition to that, the wall completely separated East Jerusalem from the rest of the Palestinian community (Khalidi, R. ,2010).

During 2004, the conflict in Gaza strip escalated quickly. The Islamic militias fired Qassam rockets on Israeli territory. Israel responded by a series of armoured raids and the assassination of Hamas leaders (Harms, G., & Ferry, T. M. ,2017). In 2005, Mahmoud Abbas was elected as president of the Palestinian Authority. His strategy was to conduct peaceful negotiations with Israel and stop the violence. However, Hamas leaders disagreed and continued launching rockets. Abbas ordered the Palestinian police to arrest all those who launching rockets from the Gaza Strip (Harms, G., & Ferry, T. M. ,2017).

Abbas and Sharon declared a truce in February 2005. This truce was rejected by Hamas. Israel decided to disengage from the Gaza Strip, and all the Israeli settlements in Gaza were to be evacuated. This disengagement plan was carried out in August 2005(Harms, G., & Ferry, T. M. ,2017). The Second Intifada ended in 2005, after the disengagement and the beginning of the official peace negotiations between the Israeli government and the PLO.

During the Second Intifada more than 3,350 Palestinian and 1,000 Israelis were killed (Harms, G., & Ferry, T. M. ,2017).

4.5 The Palestinian Civil War

Also known as the Fateh-Hamas conflict. Fateh is a Palestinian political party which controls the PLO. Fateh members constitute most of the Palestinian government, and the current president, Abbas, is one of their members. On the other side, Hamas, is a Palestinian Islamic resistance movement and is now the leading government in Gaza (Harms, G., & Ferry, T. M. ,2017). The conflict between the two parties started in 2005, when they disagreed about the continuation of violence against Israel in the Second Intifada. The disagreement escalated in 2006, when Hamas won the Palestinian Legislative election. Both parties failed in creating a shared government. This led into the separation of the government, in which Fateh took control of the West Bank and Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip. Both parties' members began engaging in violent clashes which included assassination, throwing people from roofs, shootings, arrests and accusations of treason. More than 600 members of both parties were killed during the violent crashes. The reconciliation attempts between Fateh and Hamas all failed, and they continue to be in dispute until this day (Harms, G., & Ferry, T. M. ,2017).

The Palestinian civil war facilitated Israel imposing a blockade on the Gaza Strip in 2007. Everything which comes out and in to Gaza is controlled by both Israel and Egypt. The borders between Gaza and Egypt usually shut and open only in certain short periods (Winter, Y., 2016). This caused the collapse of the economy in Gaza, spread of poverty, cuts of fuel supplies and therefore causing electricity crisis. In that way, Gaza became into a huge open-air prison (Winter, Y., 2016).

4.6 The Aqsa Mosque July Events

The Aqsa Mosque, also known as Al Haram Al Sharif and Temple Mountain, is one of the holiest places for both Muslims and Jews. It located in the Old City of Jerusalem in the Eastern side. Muslims believe that prophet Muhammad on his journey to the sky stopped at the Aqsa Mosque and therefore it is the third holiest site in Islam. It is argued that the mosque was built on the remains of the Second Temple making it the holiest site for Jews (Sway, M. A. ,2015). Currently, the southern section of the Aqsa wall is used as a place of worship for the Jews, also known as the Wailing Wall. Muslims believe that the Wailing Wall is where the prophet fastened his winged steed "Al Buraq" during the night journey

from Mecca to Jerusalem. Therefore, it is also considered a holy place for them. The mosque has been a point of conflict since the establishment of the Israeli state. The conflict begins with the naming of the mosque. Jews call it Temple Mountain, while Muslims call it Al Haram Al Sharif or Al Aqsa. Both sides only recognize their own naming, choosing to be completely oblivious to the history of the other (Khalidi, R. ,2010). The conflict around the mosque has also taken violent forms, for example in October 1990 18 Palestinians were killed by Israeli forces after the eruption of riots inside the mosque (Harms, G., & Ferry, T. M. ,2017).

Since 1980, there have been Jewish requests to rebuild the Temple in the Aqsa Mosque. Through the years these requests became so frequent that both sides became accustomed to them. However, since the Second Intifada Israeli settlers have increased their break-ins of the Aqsa. Currently, there is a break-in almost every day (Freas, E. ,2017). Jewish settlers started visiting the Aqsa to celebrate religious and political holidays. Those visits became so provocative for Palestinians that they are perceived as a direct threat to the Palestinian religious identity. The Israeli army usually imposes movement restrictions on such events (Freas, E. ,2017). During the movements restriction, the settlers would wonder around the Islamic quarter chanting "The Temple will be rebuilt, the City of Zion will be restored. And there we will sing a new song and journey up" (Middle East Monitor, 2017).

On the 14th of July 2017, three Palestinians from Um Al Fahem (Hold Israeli citizenship), opened fire in the Aqsa Mosque against the Israeli police. Two Israeli officers were murdered, and the attackers were shot dead. As a response the Israeli government decided to close the Aqsa Mosque for two days. During those days, the Israeli government installed metal detectors at the entrance of the mosque (Omar, A. M., 2017).

The Palestinian Jerusalemites, with the leadership of the Islamic personnel of the Aqsa, refused to enter the mosque until the metal detectors were removed. The Islamic leadership in Jerusalem called upon the Palestinian Jerusalemites to protest until everything is returned to the way it was (Omar, A. M., 2017). People began protesting by gathering in huge numbers daily in front of the Aqsa gates from 5 am to 10 pm. The Israeli government responded by installing more security cameras. Even though the protests in front of the Aqsa gates were almost completely peaceful, other violent protests erupted around Jerusalem in which four Palestinians and three Israelis were killed (Omar, A. M., 2017).

The Palestinian protest campaign was highly organised. People volunteered from all over Jerusalem to bring meals, water, even dessert to those who are protesting. People took shifts, some would go to work and some would protest (Omar, A. M., 2017).   The protests included, men, women and children.   Palestinian Jerusalemites simply refused to leave. This continued for 13 days, until Israel's police chief, Roni Alsheich, ordered the removal of the metal detectors and the extra security cameras. The situation returned as it used to be before the July attack, and the Palestinian Jerusalemites considered it a huge victory (Omar, A. M., 2017).

4.7 History and the Development of the Palestinian Identity

During the last half century of the Ottoman governance in Jerusalem, there was an alteration from an Islamic system of justice and education to a more Western-based system. This change was mainly apparent in Jerusalem which was the centre of legislation and governance in Palestine. Before this alteration the Islamic Court of Jerusalem was responsible for all legal matters (Khalidi, R. ,2010). In addition to that, the mosque schools were the places where people got a basic and a higher education. These schools also served as career training centres which offered people an opportunity to work within the Islamic Ottoman government. Around the middle of the nineteenth century, the system started shifting to a more secularized Western- based model. New courts, run by a staff trained in Istanbul, were established. These courts were based on Western models and legislation. Islamic courts were restricted to personal status.   Moreover, the number of Islamic schools markedly decreased, and they were replaced by secular schools open to the entire population (Khalidi, R. ,2010).

The decline of institutionalized religion in Jerusalem led to a decline in the social identification of religion among the society. This was reinforced when the British mandate began. The British continued with the secularization of the government institutions. The judicial system was modelled on the British one. A High Court with appellate jurisdiction was installed (Laqueur, W., &Schueftan, D. (Eds.)., 2016).   This enhanced the shift to secularism and secular nationalism.   Arabic nationalism was the successor to religious identification (Khalidi, R. ,2010).

Through the British mandate and the establishment of the state of Israel, Pan-Arabism became the main national and social identity in Jerusalem and across Palestine. This identity

was strongest from the mid 1950's till the 1967 war, when it was put forth by the Egyptian president Gamal Abd Al Nasir (Khalidi, R. ,2010). It was a common belief among Palestinians that the Arabs were the only ones who could help free Palestine from Jewish threats. Palestinians felt that they belonged to wider single nation who would not leave them behind. However, after the loss of the 1967 war and the occupation of the rest of Palestine, the Syrian Golan Heights and the Sinai Peninsula Pan-Arabism started to decline. The increasing difficulty of dealing with Zionism encouraged the Palestinians to act as a part of a wider identity, whether it was the Ottoman or the Arabic identity. However, subsequent failures contributed to the tendency of Palestinians to feel abandoned and alone (Yiftachel, O. ,2006). Palestinians understood that the Arabs were not as strong or united as they thought. Now many Palestinians perceive Arabic governments as corrupted and traitorous (Khalidi, R. ,2010). Therefore, Palestinians came to feel that they were in conflict with the whole world. Arabic attitude towards the Palestinian case and the presence of Palestinian refugees on their soil began to change. Moreover, Britain and the U.S were perceived as unconditional supporters of Israel. Therefore, Palestinian nationalism seemed to be the only solution to a growing problem.

A new effective and organized Palestinian leadership emerged in the late 1960's. This leadership paved the way for Palestinian nationalism to take over.   Even though the Palestinians remaining in Palestine were separated into small geographic territories governed by military rule, the Palestinian identity began to acquire unique characteristics.   People believed that even if Jewish settlements surrounded their localities and more of half of their land was confiscated, they could still struggle to achieve liberation (Yiftachel, O. ,2006). Many national-cultural symbols emerged at this point such as Al Ard (the land), Al Zaytoun (the olives) and the Key (symbolising the return of the refugees). Those symbols became very popular, and they were drawn on walls in the streets, used in political speeches, poetry and literature.   The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), also became effective in this period. The Palestinians built their national consciousness around the PLO, and embraced its goals in achieving liberation (Yiftachel, O. ,2006).

The development of Palestinian nationalism witnessed the creation of several Palestinian political parties with varied perspectives. First, there was the secular mainstream which united under the umbrella of the PLO. This included Fateh and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PELP). These parties represented the views of the majority of Palestinians until the end of the First Intifada (Khalidi, R. ,2010). Furthermore, Palestinian

parties with radical Islamic perspectives began to emerge. Hizb al Tahrir al Islamic, The Islamic Liberation Party, as well as Hamas, the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood became active in the late 1980's. Even though these parties had Islamic perspectives, they defined themselves as Palestinian in terms of membership, identification and organization. These parties became popular in the First Intifada and until the Palestinian civil war (Khalidi, R. ,2010).

After the Second Intifada, Palestinians began losing faith in the corrupt PLO. Therefore, the Second Intifada was less dependent on Palestinian political parties and more on the people themselves. Sharon's visit to the Aqsa constituted a direct threat to the Palestinian Islamic identity. Sharon described his visit as "*to demonstrate Israel's undeniable sovereignty over the entire united Jerusalem*" (Khalidi, R. ,2010). Unlike the First Intifada, the Second Intifada developed into an armed guerrilla war and a circle of violence and counter violence was created. Then the Second Intifada ended with a huge loss for the Palestinian society. One of the main disadvantages in the aftermath was the building of the Separating Wall. Even though the Wall was first built by Israel to stop suicide bombings, it quickly turned into a tool to widen territorial control (Yiftachel, O. ,2006). The Separating Wall resulted in the complete isolation of Jerusalem from the rest of the Palestinian territories. Moreover, the Palestinians living in the rest of the occupied territory were not allowed to enter Jerusalem. This caused a feeling of isolation among the Palestinian Jerusalemites (Khalidi, R. ,2010).

During the Second Intifada the numbers of settlers living in occupied Palestinian territories increased from around 200,000 to nearly half a million (Yiftachel, O. ,2006). The Palestinians' defeat had significant outcomes especially the division between Fateh and Hamas. This division weakened the Palestine resistance and contributed to the growing social alienation between the Palestinians in Jerusalem, Gaza and the West Bank. The division between Hamad and Fateh grew more destructive with time. Fateh refused to accept the victory of Hamas in the Palestinian Legislative election in 2006 and cooperated with Israel and the US to bring Hamas down. On the other hand, Hamas' rule in Gaza was oppressive and corrupt. This caused an identity crisis for the Palestinian society which lost their trust in leadership and moreover, in Palestinian nationalism (Khalidi, R. ,2010).

Even though, the Palestinians lost faith in their leadership, they never accepted the Israeli occupation. The protection of the land and staying in Palestine was considered vitally important by the Palestinians. Palestinian Jerusalemites, unlike Palestinians in Gaza and the

West Bank, still lived under the Israeli government. After the Second Intifada, Palestinian Jerusalemites had to find other forms of non-violent resistance. Having lost almost everything, losing Jerusalem seemed as an unimaginable catastrophe for the Palestinian Jerusalemites. Islamic values and symbols of resistance, such as Sumud (which means steadfastness in staying in the land), and Rebat (which refers to the duty of guarding duty of land) started spreading among the Palestinian Jerusalemites (Yiftachel, O. ,2006). The Aqsa mosque became a symbol of Jerusalemite identity. It served as a statement of resistance and religious identity (Hasson, S., 2001).

Chapter 5

This chapter presents the findings of this research, each followed by an analysis and discussion. Here, I will explore the findings of how the participants perceive their social identity, threats on their social identity and how it is to live in Jerusalem.

5.1 Participants' perception of social identity

This section explores the understanding and perception of women about the concept of social identity. it is based on the answers to the first interviews' question "How do you define your identity?". The interview question was deliberately put in a general form to make sure the participants' answers were not influenced by the question's form, by my own perception of identity nor by the goals of this study. Based on the participants' replies, the answer to this question could be divided into three main categories; (I) Islamic identity, (II) Palestinian identity and (III) Arabic identity. I will explore each of these categories individually and explain its relation to the other two.

5.1.1 Islamic identity

The vast majority of the participants said they had a combined identity that defines who they are. This combined identity circled around three elements; Islamic, Palestinian and Arabic. However, the difference was which of those three sections they felt they belong to more. Fifteen participants said that the Islamic identity forms the most essential part of who they are. They expressed that Islam determines every small detail in their lives and without it they were completely lost. There are varied reasons why these women felt that their Islamic identity should be prioritized. First, the sense of belonging to a wider identity; these women expressed that they feel safer knowing that they belong to the global Islamic community. They feel that Israel, with the help of the United States, is determined to achieve a complete Judaization of Jerusalem. Therefore, believing that Palestine is a part of the Islamic nation helps them feel that they are not alone and that they can fight the "conspiracy" against them. *"The relation to Islam is much stronger than the relation to any state"* (participant number 18). People in Jerusalem feel powerless and unable to control their daily circumstances, thus belonging to a larger community, to an identity that unites them with 1.6 billion people makes them feel safer and stronger.

Second Islam connects Jerusalemites to a more "glorious" past. Living in a degrading present with no vision of a better future leaves people with only the past to look up to. Many of the participants believe that being devoted to Islam might turn them to a victorious nation, as they believe the Muslims once were. Through talking with the participants, I understood that many Jerusalemites believe that they have become a weak nation because they distanced themselves from the teachings of Quran and the prophet. Therefore, having a religious awakening seems to be the solution to all their problems; a way to revive the past. Strange enough, such an awakening mostly depends on how women dress, think and behave. In patriarchal societies, such as the Palestinian one, women are usually blamed for the defeat and the current disgraceful circumstances. This quote is from a brochure distributed by Islamic preachers to women and men in the streets of East Jerusalem tells women how to properly dress to defend Islam: *"Sister, you the immaculate one… the daughter of Khadija, Aisha, Asma and Safiah (Wives of Muhammad) … the daughter of Islam… do you know that the enemies of Islam can only fight Islam through you… how can you accept to be a weapon used to destroy Islam instead of being a holy brick in Islam's wall ?!!!"*.

On the first page of the brochure there is an explanation on how you should answer the women who refuse to wear the Islamic dress. The explanation is demonstrated through a conversation between a religious woman and a woman who is "displaying her beauty":

- *The beauty displayer says: I love god and that's enough.*
- *Religious woman: "Say If you love Allah, then follow me, Allah will love you" (Quran).*
- *The beauty displayer: religion is lenient.*
- *The religious woman: "Allah desireth for you ease" (Quran). God ordered the Islamic dress for leniency.*
- *The beauty displayer: "And thought it was insignificant while it was, in the sight of Allah, tremendous" (Quran).*
- *The religious woman: "you think it is not a big deal but for god it is" (Quran).*
- *The beauty displayer: I'm still young I will wear it when I'm older.*
- *The religious one: death doesn't differentiate between the young and the old.*
- *The beauty displayer: I will wear the Islamic dress after I get married*
- *The religious woman: god's slaves can be deprived from blessings… god might deprive you from getting married*
- *The beauty displayer: my husband does not want me to wear the Islamic dress.*
- *The religious woman: There is no obedience to the creation, in the disobedience of the Creator*
- *The beauty displayer: I will wear the Islamic dress when I'm convinced.*
- *The religious woman: "It is not for a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decided a matter, that they should [thereafter] have any choice about their affair". (Quran)*
- *The beauty displayer: the Islamic dress hampers me in work and education.*
- *The religious woman: a woman's chastity is greater than everything else and god's satisfaction and his heaven are more expensive than everything else.*
- *The beauty displayer: I'm afraid of people mocking me*
- *The religious woman: you get the pride and the reward, the prophet was mocked, this is the way of the prophets and the saints.*
- *The beauty displayer: I can't stand the Islamic dress in the summer and in the heat.*
- *The religious woman: "Say the fire of Hell is fiercer in heat" (Quran).*

The second part of the brochure shows women what can be considered the right Islamic dress. According to the brochure an Islamic dress should be applied to the following characteristics:

- *"It must cover the body.*
- *Does not outline the body and is not transparent.*
- *It must not be colourful or decorated.*
- *It must not be perfumed.*
- *It must be loose, wide and not tight.*
- *It must not be similar to men clothes.*
- *It must not be worn with the intent of being popular among people."*

On the brochure we can see a drawing of what is considered a rightful hijab and what isn't.

While most of the women I interviewed believe that the content of the brochure is right. Some of the participants expressed fatigue and anger from such a phenomena, *"I refuse to identify myself as a Muslim in front of the society because then they will allow themselves to interfere in my privacy, in the way I dress… and even though I identify myself as an Arab only, they insist on identifying me as a Muslim, for example I see someone from the neighbourhood and he asks me: are you ashamed of being a Muslim?! Why are you not*

wearing the veil? They don't give you the chance to identify yourself, the society wants to identify you, they want to shape you and tell you what to do" (participant number 6).

 Third embracing Islam to fight the Israeli society's "degenerate" values. The participants expressed that when god sees that people are devoting their lives to him and following his rules he will protect them from copying the decadent Israeli way of living. Women expressed their concern about the "openness" the Israeli society is trying to force on them. They fear that their girls will be influenced by the way Israeli girls dress and act. They fear that their girls will wear revealing clothes, have boyfriends or sex before marriage. Young girls might be deceived to think that this "freedom" is good for them, and that's how the Israelis will truly defeat them. *"The occupation tries to advocate things that will destroy our community, we have to be more religious to fight these things,"* (participant number 21*).* The Palestinian society in Jerusalem is a patriarchal traditional society that has a daily interaction with the more open-minded Israeli society, therefore people fear that their girls will get influenced by the interaction. To prevent such a thing religion is used control the girls. People believe that constantly telling girls about the torments of hell, relating the honour of the family to girls' virginity, and how copying the Israelis is considered infidelity, will help preserve the Jerusalemite society's identity and way of living.

Fourth a hope for a better ending. The participants expressed their despair and misery from their current living situations. You could tell that people are looking for any glimmer of hope to cling. Religion gives them what they need to pass by their days. Some of them claimed that the Quran states that the state of Israel will come to an end one day, so they just have to believe, and god will change everything to their benefit. Others hoped for a better ending after they die. They believe that if they are religious and patient enough to bear everything they go through while being thankful to god, god will reward their patience with heaven. Some participants expressed that their stressful lives in Jerusalem are a test from god, and that if they accept their destinies they become the warriors which god chose to protect Jerusalem. They protect it by remaining there and never leaving no matter how impossible life becomes. This kind of resistance is called Ribat in Islam, which means bond, that people should stay bonded to their land to protect it from enemies, *"Living in Jerusalem is a form of Ribat, Jihad and Sumud, we pay so many taxes and everything is so expensive, we have to stay here, if everyone takes the easy solution and leaves, Jerusalem will be empty and there will be complete Judaization"* (participants number 10).

5.1.2 Arabic identity

Six of the participants said that being an Arab is how they identify themselves first. They felt that the Arabic culture is the more inclusive identity that should unite them with others. Arabs share the same language, history, religion and tradition but most importantly they share the same suffering. *(My first identity is Arabic, because when bad things happen around the Arab world, I feel so much pain, I feel that all Arabs share the same pain, the same post-colonial problems*) (participants number 1). However, almost all the participants expressed their distrust of the Arabic governments, *(I don't trust Arabs or their role concerning our situation, they have failed us many times…the fear is from the Arabs themselves who are selling us to Israel, they even buy houses from us and sell it to the Jewish people) (*participant number 14). There is certainly a decrease in the number of people in Jerusalem who support Arabic nationalism. Through living in Jerusalem, it can be easily noticed that Many Jerusalemites feel that they have been betrayed by the Arabs, that they were abandoned and left to face the Israelis all by themselves. It is also a common belief in Jerusalem that Israel and its allies are behind the conflicts in the surrounding Arabic states. Some people claim that it is in Israel's benefit to keep the surrounding Arabic states weak, so they won't unite and threaten Israel's security.

5.1.3 Palestinian identity

Four of the participants said that being a Palestinian is what defines them the most. Some of these participants consider that the fact that they were born in Palestine determines who they are. They believe that being a Palestinian grants them a special and a specific identity. Being a Palestinian defines their heritage, history and traditions. It also defines the conflicts that they must go through as a nation. Being a Palestinian ties them to the land, and proves that they are the righteous owners of it. Palestinian nationalism's popularity has also decreased since the Palestinian civil war in 2006. The conflict between the two main Palestinian parties has lead the people to believe that these parties are corrupt and if there is a solution it won't be through those parties. These parties continue to stay in power; Fateh in Ramallah and Hamas in Gaza, therefore Palestinian nationalism is still mainly shaped by the same parties who ran the conflict. The conflict continues to our present days, the two parties have completely failed in the reconciliation process. All the participants said that both parties are completely useless when it comes to Jerusalem.

- *"We are supposed to benefit from the Palestinian authority, but unfortunately they don't do their job well, if you belong to Fateh you have a priority"* (participants number 21)

- *"The Palestinian Jerusalemites are marginalized from Israel on the one side, and the Palestinians from the other side whether it was Fateh or Hamas"* (participant number 5)

- *"I don't even hear about Fateh and Hamas any more, that's because they are completely useless to the people in Jerusalem"* (participants number 7)

- *"No one cares about Jerusalem, not the Palestinian authority, not the Arabs, Jerusalem is alone"* (participant number 13)

- *"The people in Jerusalem were abandoned a long time ago, there aren't any Palestinian associations or international ones that help us here, I'm a school headmaster at one of the most popular and crowded schools in Jerusalem, here we teach the orphan girls for free, and even though we have a huge responsibility and role, still nobody is helping us"* (participant number 15)

- *"All parties talk in the name of the people in Jerusalem, they ask for donations in the name of people in Jerusalem, but nobody actually cares about them, not from an economic aspect, not from a social aspect not even from an educational aspect even though our education is being Judaized now"* (participants number 11)

- *"No one whatsoever has an organized program to benefit the people of Jerusalem, only individual initiatives, but not a strategic plan, this is because of the Oslo agreement which Israel only uses now for its own economic and national security interests, through the Oslo agreement Israel was successful in isolating the Jerusalemites from the rest of the Palestinians"* (participant number 25)

5.2 Participants' Perceptions of Threats to Social Identity

After the participants expressed their perceptions of identity I asked if they feel that their identity is threatened and if so, what are those threats. What were the things that prohibit them from fully expressing who they are? The answers can be categorized into three main groups: Occupation, society and Palestinian Authority. The coming section will analyse discuss these threats in detail.

5.2.1 Israeli Occupation

The participants expressed that the main threat to their social identities is the Israeli occupation\Israeli government. They claimed that the Israeli policy in Jerusalem has one goal which is the total abolition of the Palestinian identity. This goal is achieved through identity pressure on several aspects in the daily life; these aspects can be divided to: 1) religious freedom, 2) Housing, 3) Economic life and 4) education. I will address each of these topics individually in the coming section.

Religious freedom was the most debated topic when talking about identity threat in the interviews. The female interviewees believed that Muslims in the state of Israel experience a lot of oppression and racism. As soon as these women are identified as Muslims, which is easy because most of them are wearing the veil, they were treated differently, "*Just because I'm wearing the veil I get treated completely differently. Even if they knew I was a Muslim but I was not wearing the veil I would be treated better. It's like their problem is the veil I'm wearing. They won't help at all*" (participant number 19), "*When I'm wearing the veil everything is different they don't even want to help me anymore. They will treat the Jewish and foreigner much better than they will treat the Muslim. It's like my veil has become a dishonourable thing*" (participant number 4). Even when these women are not wearing the veil and they can't communicate in Hebrew they are mistreated, "*Because I don't know their language I feel that I'm less than them, like I don't know anything. They treat me like I'm an intruder while they are the intruders here*" (participant number 16).

Women talked about fearing to exist in Jewish areas, they fear being attacked or humiliated or even becoming a terror suspect and being shot. Engaging with Israeli society can't be avoided though, it is necessary when medical treatment is needed, in governmental offices, airports, universities, schools and daily in the streets. Many women mentioned that in hospitals Jewish women are always prioritized over Islamic women "*If you are a Jew you are put on the top, if you are a Muslim you are on the top of the criticism list*" (participant number 9) "*We also suffer from racism in hospitals. Only because we are Muslims we are the last to be taken. Even if you were in a hospital room first and then a Jewish person needed this room, they will make you leave and give them the room*" (participant number 21).These women felt vulnerable, dependent and outcast, "*when you are wearing the veil, they don't look at you the same anymore, we have always lived with Jews in this neighbourhood but today we are afraid of them and they are not afraid of us*" (participant number 20). Afraid to

express their religious identity in Jewish areas, these women are isolated and trapped in the East Jerusalem area, but even there they were not completely free.

 More and more settlers are settling in East Jerusalem, and these settlers require security protection at all times. East Jerusalem is flooded with soldiers at every corner, soldiers that provoke people by stopping them with no reason asking for their I. D's and physically searching them. Islamic identity, therefore, is the most threatened identity in East Jerusalem according to these women. The only sanctuary these women could escape to was the Aqsa mosque, the only place where they felt they could completely be themselves. But this was also about to change, and the latest events in the Aqsa will be discussed in a later section.

According to the participants, Israel is trying to decrease the Palestinian population in Jerusalem. This is being achieved through many racist policies which include accelerated construction of Jewish settlements, forceful and illegal house seizures, land grabbing and prohibiting Palestinian house building. The women described it as "impossible" to get a house in Jerusalem, they feel that their existence in Jerusalem is highly threatened and that they can't guarantee that their children will find houses to inhabit in East Jerusalem, *"Our existence here is threatened, they can break into any piece of Palestinian land they want an take it and it will be their… they don't want us to own houses, they charge our existing houses with high taxes they don't want us to be here, they wants us to leave and they are doing their best. Owning a house in Jerusalem is like a dream, even those who own houses get a lot of fines, guaranteeing that our children will find a place to live in here is impossible. How can we give them something that we don't have"* (participant number18). Since 1967 the state has expropriated more than a third of the land annexed to Jerusalem, most of it privately owned by Palestinians, and built 11 neighbourhoods on them, used only by Jewish inhabitants (B'tselem, 2017).   Palestinian Jerusalemites can't even guarantee that they won't be kicked out of their houses for no apparent reason. They all agreed that there is a systematic policy designed to make them leave the land, *"We are all threatened here, Israel cares about the land and it doesn't care at all about the humans who live on it, they do everything to empty the land of its original inhabitants, whether it was by using expensive taxes and fines or by prohibiting us from building"* (participant number 13). Continuing to live in Jerusalem became a battle for these women, a battle of survival. They believe that this is their destiny and that god will reward them with heaven in return, *"Our existence in Jerusalem is threatened, the government can find any reason and order you to leave your house, it's very easy… lately, I feel that we are under a lot of pressure because we are living here, sometimes*

I think we might end up as the Syrians… they want to take away everything from us, we have to fight in order to stay here" (participant number 5). Having no other option people started to build illegally on top of their own houses, often having what they built demolished, and even though people know there is a high chance what they build will be demolished, they go through the whole expensive procedure relaying on hope that the authorities will never find out, or that they can bribe someone within to overlook their file. From 2004 until the end of September 2017, Israeli authorities demolished more than 730 houses in East Jerusalem completely ignoring their role in forcing the Palestinian population to build without permits (B'tselem, 2017). Other people just split their houses to make room for their children and their families *"I fostered in him the fact that he must stay here since he was a child, I'm even considering splitting my house in half, so he can have his own part and get married in it"* (participant number 10). Another method people use is living outside Jerusalem while registering a fake Jerusalem address (usually their parents') for the authorities. That way they will continue to be registered as living in Jerusalem and won't face problems with the Israeli government *"When it comes to housing, we are trapped in a small box"* (participant number 5). *"We have a piece of land and we want to build something on it, in order to get a building license our application has to go through 18 governmental departments, now it has been a year since we applied and the application has gone though one department only, the lands are so expensive now because they are scarce, getting a license takes forever and costs a lot, how can we build houses then, it's an evacuation policy"* (participant number 15). Another evacuation policy mentioned by the women was Israeli settlers in Palestinian neighbourhoods. Almost 3,000 Israeli settlers live in Palestinian neighbourhoods (B'tselem,2017) making the lives of the Palestinians there unbearable. Palestinians endure through daily harassments by settlers who are protected by the Israeli police. This harassment includes violent confrontation, invasion of privacy and falseful accusations, all aimed at driving the Palestinians out of their houses. Palestinians of course, cannot afford to leave their houses and live elsewhere because of the bad economic situation.

According to the 2017 report of The Association for Civil Rights in Jerusalem 76% of the residents of East Jerusalem and 83.4% of the children live below the poverty line. The women blamed the Israeli authorities for the severe economic situation in Jerusalem, and they claimed that the Israeli government is deliberately causing poverty in East Jerusalem so that people will get tired and hopeless of the situation and leave. Many of the people in Jerusalem worked as shop owners, but isolating Jerusalem from the rest of the Palestinian territories

decreased the demand and many business owners ended in complete bankruptcy *"The economic situation for most people here is very bad, most people live under the poverty line. For example, the market in the old city, there is almost nobody who goes there, people can't come here from Gaza or the west bank, we have nobody to buy from us. Even if I want to go get something from the old city, I will be harassed by the soldiers, I will be examined, if they suspect anything they can shoot at us"* (participant number 13). People in East Jerusalem therefore suffer from high rates of unemployment, many university educated people can't find jobs, so they end up unemployed or having cleaning and cooking jobs in the Israeli areas. However, having such jobs is not a "luxury" for every Palestinian. A Palestinian who has ever been to jail even for just an investigation, cannot be hired. This is a drastic measure because the Israeli governments arrests high numbers of children without any charge and just to intimidate them. From January 2014 through August 2016 more than 1,737 Palestinian boys from East Jerusalem, aged 12 to 17 were arrested. Around 70% were released later without pressing charges or being taken to trial (B'TSELEM, 2017). All people in East Jerusalem are also required to pay taxes to the Israeli Jerusalem municipality like the other Jewish inhibitors of Jerusalem. The municipality, on the other hand, refrains from investing in East Jerusalem's infrastructure, for example: sewage systems, roads, electrical grids and schools. In 2017 there was a shortage of 2,557 classrooms in Palestinian neighbourhoods. The Palestinians constitute 40% of population in Jerusalem, they only have six family health centres while the Jewish neighbourhoods have 27(B'tselem, 2017). *"Israel put us in a certain frame, if we make for example 10NIS a month we will need 11 NIS to be able to live, it's like they don't want us to breathe"* (participant number 5). What people earn from their jobs in East Jerusalem is barely sufficient to cover basic needs of living, and the women expressed that this is the situation because the authorities want to keep the people busy with surviving. When the people cover all their basic needs they might start demanding their other rights. *"There are many other reasons for poverty for example we have more than 20,000 families in Jerusalem which are waiting for family reunion for years and they can't work during this time, those all live under the poverty line, there is huge social and economic gap between the two communities"* (participant number 25). Since 1967, Israel has adopted a strict policy aimed at preventing East Jerusalemites from "reunification" with spouses from the West Bank or Gaza. Therefore, many Palestinians apply for family reunion and wait for years for the decision which has a high potential of being rejected.

The Jerusalem municipality places the responsibility for the lack of 2,557 class rooms on the lack of land upon which to build on (IrAmim, 2017). The lack of classrooms leads a 33% dropout rate meaning that 33% of the Palestinian students fail to complete 12 years schooling every year (IrAmim, 2017). Women also attributed this failure high rate to poverty, "*Many of our children are dropping out of schools because education is expensive, and their economic situation is bad, and they have to help their families survive*" (participant number 9). Such facts led the women to believe that the educational situation in East Jerusalem is deliberate and a way for the Israeli government to guarantee that the Palestinians remain ignorant and never reach high positions. Lack of classrooms is not the only educational threat the women fear, they also mentioned the change of curricula. The teachers I interviewed claimed that the Israeli Ministry of Education is deliberately changing the Arabic curricula which are used in East Jerusalem to make the students forget their Palestinian origins. "*Even though we study the Palestinian curriculum, in order for the Israeli ministry of education to authorize it, they make a lot of changes, they remove the Palestinian flag from the book, they change the maps, they write Israel instead of Palestine and they write that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel, they want to produce a generation which doesn't belong to Palestinian nationality*" (participant number 5). The change of curriculums does not only threaten the Palestinian identity, the teachers claimed, but mainly the Islamic identity, "*Through the curriculums they try to delete our identities by minimizing the importance of religion, of the Arabic language, instead they want us to do playing activities, learn about fashion. In the past the first thing a student use to learn is the Quran and the Hadith, therefore he would grow up to be aware of his Islamic identity and his Arabic language, it's becoming worse*" (participant number 10). The teachers also noticed that there is a huge pressure on children to learn Hebrew in schools and end up at Hebrew universities. This, they felt, was also a policy to dismantle the Palestinian and Islamic identities, "*They force us now to learn the Hebrew language in schools, children used to start learning Hebrew from the 3rd grade now it's from the first grade, children used to have only three classes of Hebrew a week now its five, and now there are all kinds of offers to go learn in Hebrew universities and study the Hebrew curriculum, and if this continues we will have a generation that acknowledges the existence of Israel, so we will lose our Jerusalemite identity*" (participant number 1). The teachers also expressed fear of discussing anything related to their Islamic or Palestinian identity in class for fear of losing their jobs or even their teaching authorization, "*As a teacher who work in the Israeli system I try to discuss topics that are related to my Palestinian identity in class, I can't tell my students that this is our country and that we have to defend it, I feel that I could*

be charged for every word I say, even when I have material in the books talking about Palestine or our identity we try to minimize the discussion because we are living in a very sensitive time, we are under so much pressure and racism we could lose our jobs for discussing our identity" (participant number 4) .This common belief that the Islamic religion is threatened led women to send their children to Islamic associations, so the children can memorize the Quran and be "true Muslims". The women said that the turnout for Islamic after-school study programs was very high and that the studies are very serious. They also said that sending their children to participate in Islamic after-school activities made them feel like a part of their burden was lifted. This is a guarantee, for some of the participants, that their children would not forget their religion, which is a huge part of who they are.

5.2.2 The Palestinian Society

The second source of identity threat, according to the participants, is the Palestinian patriarchal society itself. The debate with the women around this subject was hard to comprehend, as for me the debate seemed contradictive. The women said that there is a lot of pressure on the way they dress, behave and think, however they themselves use the same methods to pressure their daughters. In this section I will demonstrate what the woman said concerning the society they live in. The women agreed that the identity pressure in the Palestinian Jerusalemite society is mainly on females. They felt that no matter how educated, intelligent and strong a woman is, she still needs a man to be able to function in the society. Religion is used to put pressure on the women from the time they are little girls. They must sit properly, dress properly, and avoid communicating with males at all costs. When a girl reaches puberty, she is pressured to wear the veil and when she is fifteen she is pressured to wear the whole Islamic dress. Of course, this cannot be generalized but it was the case with almost all the women I interviewed. Wearing the veil became a necessity for girls in the Jerusalemite society, even if the girls did not want to wear it. "*As a teacher I saw a lot of girls in the first and second grade who are forced to wear the veil, if I ask her why she is wearing the veil she will answer that's what my father wants*" (participant number 8). The reason behind the phenomena is not people being more religious, but it became a part of tradition, parents wish to protect their girls from imitating Jewish girls; to protect them from "openness and freedom", "*People now are more afraid for their daughters, the Israeli community is very open, which means we are more exposed to immorality… it's not about being religious, it's about separating ourselves from them, we don't want our girls to be like their girls*", (participant number 14). Women also said that the veil protects the girls from

sexual harassment, it preserves the honour of the family and the girl's reputation, *"The veil has become a part of our traditions because it protects the girls from sexual harassment, and from people talking about her from behind her back"* (participant number 5).

In a way covering the girls is a demonstration of identity, the Palestinian Jerusalemites want their girls to be identified as Muslims, an identity they feel is under a lot of threat and pressure and therefore should be protected, *"People believe that you have to wear the veil when you reach a certain age, it doesn't really matter if you are religious or if you pray, it's part of traditions* (participant number 4). Girls who are not convinced to wear the veil but still want to belong to the society and decrease the amount of criticism they receive on daily basis, wear the veil without the rest of the Islamic dress. This solution, however, does not seem to always function, *"My son goes to Bierzeit University and he keeps telling me how angry he gets when he sees the girls who wear the veil without wearing the full Islamic costume, they insult the veil by doing that. What is the veil in Islam? The veil is to cover your head and body with baggy clothes, the only thing you're allowed to show is your face and hands. This happens because parents make their daughters wear the veil against their will, they say let her start by covering her face then she will get used to covering the rest of her body, but this is wrong. She should start with the full Islamic costume"* (participant number 10). This woman, who is a teacher, seems to want the girls to wear more "appropriate" clothes so that her son would be satisfied. This type of patriarchal behaviour is evident in almost all aspects of life in East Jerusalem. Women must do what men want, and even though women think that what men want is oppressive, they still defend it and try to apply it. Women are the ones responsible for raising the children in this society, therefore if a girl commits a "mistake" or doesn't want to wear the veil, the mother is the one to blame, "

> *The girls now wear the veil willingly… it should start in the house, it starts when your girl is 7 years old, you tell her to sit properly because there are males around…she gets used to it, you plant religion within her without you or she paying attention to it, it goes level by level, then she starts feeling that it's wrong to wear something that might draw attention to her in the street, she knows that she becomes a prey, then she asks you about it and you tell her that girls who show their bodies are cheap, god wants to preserve us that's why he tells us to cover ourselves. You convince her, you don't force her so that she doesn't take the veil off behind your back. My daughter wore it when she was only 11, I told her she didn't have to, but she said she wanted*

to, and when she got engaged her fiancé asked her to wear the full Islamic costume
*and she agreed, she is convinced" (*participant number 20).

This woman was totally convinced that her daughter wore the veil willingly, completely overlooking the fact that she raised her daughter to feel that it's wrong to wear anything but the veil, and that at the end it was the daughter's fiancé who asked her to wear the full Islamic dress. Many girls submit to their parents' will and wear the veil, "*Many girls wear the veil just to satisfy their parents and stop them from nagging*" (participants number 15), "*Many girls feel oppressed, they leave the house with the veil and when they reach schools they take it off, because they are forced to wear it*" (participant number 8). Girls also wear it to protect themselves from being blamed if they were sexually harassed, "*I'm surprised when girls who wear the veil and don't wear the whole Islamic costume get annoyed when they are sexually harassed in the streets, it just doesn't make sense what they are wearing, its either they wear the whole thing or just don't wear the veil*" (participant number 14). So, girls are left with no choice. Whatever they do they will always be sexualized and criticized, sadly even by other females. Some of the women said that females are more criticized if they wear the veil without the full Islamic costume "*Even if a girl is wearing more moderate clothes but not wearing the veil she will be criticized more by the society, it's a part of tradition, if we want to praise a girl you say she is wearing the veil and not she is religious*" (participant number 13), and some said the females are criticized more if they don't wear the veil at all, "*If a girl is religious, but she is not wearing the veil she will be criticized more than a girl who is wearing the veil but is not a good Muslim*" (participant number 23), "*It's better for a girl not to wear the veil than to wear it and insult it by wearing inappropriate clothes and makeup, these kind of girls are more criticized in the society*" (participant number 5). The point which they all agreed upon was that the veil is a part of tradition now and it can't be avoided.

The women also agreed that twenty years ago the veil was not popular at all. Almost all the women who were above forty didn't wear the veil at all until twenty years ago. They said that their mothers and grandmothers didn't wear it neither, *"My mother and all the wives of my uncles did not wear the veil when they got married even when they had their children, but now they all wear it and all the young girls in the family wear it too"* (participant number 2). So what changed? Most of the women I asked were not sure what changed but they tried to guess. The main guess was that people turned to religion because they had nowhere else to turn to. People felt helpless and fragile, they felt that their religious identity was under attack and that they should show the Israelis that they will never give up their Islamic identity and

that they will never be like them, "*It all started because we didn't want our girls to look like the Jewish girls*" (participants number 14). It seems that the veil spread because there was a wave of turning to religion in Jerusalem twenty years ago after the beginning of the second Intifada. The second Intifada was a religious struggle, it started in the Aqsa Mosque and ended with huge loss for the Palestinian Jerusalemites. The Palestinian society was already conservative, but there became more focus on females' religious appearance. The society felt that its religion was under attack so committing to religious appearances was an attempt to show the Israeli society that the Jerusalemite Palestinians have a strong Islamic identity that they intend to keep. This attempt was a way to give people psychological stability, a way to show that even after the loss, they won't give up their religion. "*The veil became more popular because of the political events, we wanted to show them if you have the wailing wall, we have the Quran which is more important than everything else*" (participant number 20), "*I don't know why our mothers and grandmothers did not wear the veil before, it certainly wasn't a part of our traditions… life now is more difficult, so people were looking for something to save them from the difficulties they face , so religion became the thing that comforts people, makes them feel that they haven't lost everything , makes them patient*" (participant number 18). Even though the religious wave might have started as a way to strengthen identity, in a patriarchal society it quickly became a way to control women, "*The increase wear of veil has a lot to do with how we judge women, if I see a girl wearing the veil my first thought is that she is a good moral girl, but when you see someone who is not wearing the veil you think she's immoral, not religious, she doesn't have principles. If I want to ask about someone and the first thing they said she is religious therefore she is a good person without really caring about anything else, religion became like a cover, you can be a bad person but if you seem religious you will be more accepted*" (participant number 13). Since the veil started being used to judge females' morality and the honour of their families, males started forcing the females to wear it, "*If a girl decides not to wear the veil she will face a lot of pressure especially from the males in the family, that's why they make the girls wear it when they are young, so they can get used to it, but if she is older it will be harder to make her wear it*" (participant number 1). "*The veil now is a tradition, when the girl has her period she is forced to wear it, that's why many females wear the veil here in Jerusalem but as soon as they leave Jerusalem to another city, or abroad they take it off. On Facebook they post their pictures with the veil, on Instagram they take it off, they are not convinced*" (participant number 6). "*The veil is more popular now because men are forcing their wives and daughters to wear it. Some girls wear it to get married. As a headmaster I saw this*

happen through the years, when I started working here almost no one was wearing the veil, with the years the numbers increased, even the teachers try to pressure the students to wear the veil" (participant number 15). Another way of making the girls wear it is shaming them and filling them with guilt for not fully covering their bodies. This happens when girls are blamed if they are sexually harassed, "*If a girl gets sexually harassed here she is the one to blame, it's like we have given men an eternal pardon they can do anything they want, and they don't have to worry about it, the female is the one to blame*" (participant number 6), "*Now more girls wear the veil not because they are religious, but it's to protect them from men. If you were wearing something seductive men can attack you. Now the idea that an uncovered piece of chocolate gets covered with flies and a covered piece of chocolate is protected is very common among young girls, that's what their parents tell them. They don't explain religion to them, its only for a girl to protect herself*" (participant number 4). "*Most parents in Jerusalem force their girls to wear the veil, girls don't have a choice, they have to wear it because their father wants them to*" (participant number 9). Some of the women also mentioned that girls and their parents could be blackmailed and publicly shamed if the girl is not wearing the veil, "*Recently a bunch of boys took pictures of girls who are not wearing the veil and spread them on Facebook criticizing the father and saying that he is a cuckold for allowing his daughter to dress like that*" (participant number 6). Using social media to shame girls who are not wearing the Islamic dress is very popular in East Jerusalem. The photo shown below is of a Facebook post in a page called "Ask Beit Hanina", which is a neighbourhood in East Jerusalem with a population of 27,000. This page has more than 49,399 followers.

من باب النصيحة فقط للبنات 👌 😊 😊 انا عارف ما في ولا
بنت رايحه تعلق بس خذيها نصيحه
انا شب وبعرف شو نيت الشباب فيكي بس نصيحة يابنات
بدي احكيلك ياها بالعامية للبنت الي بتطلع بالجنز والفيزون
مع حجاب وبدون حجاب
ترا الموضوع كلو من اولو لاخرو مقرف
لا تغرك كثرة نظرات الناس الك...
بدك افسرلك هالنظرات شو هي "واحد نظرة اشمئزاز ،واحد
ثاني نظرة اشباع وشهوه ،وواحد نظرة انو وين ابوها او
اخوها او حد من عيلتها يضبها
لاتحكي هاي حرية شخصية لانو الشارع ماعملوه عشانك.
مساحتك المخصصة الك ولحريتك هي بيتك
ضلي لفي فيها وخذي راحتك لتشبعي ماحدا بحكي معك
لا شب بقبل يتزوجك بهالمنظر ولا احنا بعجبنا هالمنظر ولا
حتى انتي راضية ع حالك بس عشان يحكو عنك مزه
متحضرة بالعربي ...
خلي بالك الفيزوون حقو 30 شيكل
وأقل جلباب او عبايه حقو 50 شيكل
والغالي للغالي والرخيص للرخيص
الخلاصه "استري حالك قبل لا يسترك الكفن

وللبنات الي بتحكي هاذا سبورت فش بالدين اشي اسمه
هيك ...

The translation is *" An advice only for girls, I know that none of the girls will comment but take it as an advice, I'm a guy and I know what are guys' intention for you, an advice for girls who go out with Jeans or tights, with veil or without veil, this subject from its beginning to its end is disgusting, do not be fooled by the way people look at you, do you want me to explain these looks for you, one is a look of disgust, another is a look of lust, and the other is a look of someone who is wondering where is the father or the brother or any male of the family of this girl who can cover her. Do not dare to say this is personal freedom because the street is not yours. The space for you and your freedom is your home. Keep wandering in the streets as much as you want, nobody will talk to you, nobody will marry you when you dress like that, we don't like the way you dress, even you are not satisfied with yourself, but you just want the people to say that you are pretty and modern. Take into consideration that the tights cost 30NIS while the cheapest Islamic dress costs 50NIS, so the expensive is for the expensive one and the cheap is for the cheap one. In Sum cover yourself before the death shroud covers you, and for the girls who think this is a casual way to dress I'm telling you that the religion doesn't include anything like that".* This example gives a small insight on the type of pressure used against females in East Jerusalem.

The following pictures were given to me by a school manager in East Jerusalem, these are student photos from the 80s-90s and now.

The first picture is for the class of 1984, and as we can see only 3 out of the 60 females in the picture are wearing the veil.

Image 1: Graduation photo of 1984

The following are pictures from the early nineties of middle-school students at the same school. At both photos none of the students are wearing the veil.

Image 2: Middle school students in the 1990's

Image 3: Middle school students in the 1990's

The following are the pictures of middle-school students at the same school taken in 2016. In the first photo we see that most of the 13-year old girls are wearing the veil. In the second we see that 33 are wearing the veil while 22 aren't.

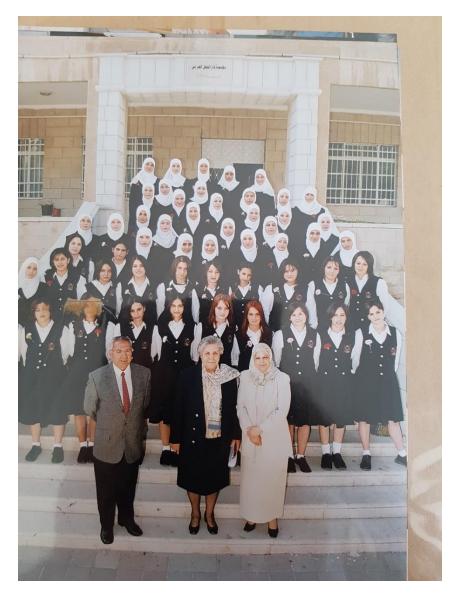**Image 4: Middle school students in 2016**

Image 5: middle school students in 2016

5.2.3 Palestinian Authority's Corruption

Few of the participants mentioned the Palestinian Authority as a factor that threatens their identity. They said that the corrupt Palestinian Authority does not represent the people of Jerusalem, on the contrary, it uses the Jerusalemites to receive donor money and steals most of it. Some of the women said that the only people benefiting from the Palestinian Authority are the people who belong to Fateh "*Some people because they don't belong to Fateh, don't even get the monthly bread support, which some people in East Jerusalem really need*" (participant number 21). The women also said that the Palestinian Authority arrests people if they become religious, "*Here there is a lot of pressure on those who becomes religious especially by the Palestinian authority, they do not want anyone to be a real Muslim or to belong to an Islamic party*" (participant number 5). Some of the women also accused the Palestinian Authority of refusing to

help them as soon as the later knew the former has a Jerusalemite Israeli I.D. The women believed that being away from god causes corruption. People steal because they do not fear god. Therefore, the cause of corruption in the Palestinian government is being distant from religion. Most of the women believed that the government should be an Islamic one, so that it won't steal. This starts when the Palestinian population itself becomes religious.

5.3 The participants' relief source

After hearing about all the identity influences and pressures, the women talked about, and how they were living under so much stress, I asked what\whom they turn for relief, or to find peace. 17 participants said they turn to god to find relief. These women said that when they feel exhausted and worn-out from everything they go through on daily basis they turn to praying, reading the Quran and listening to religious lectures in the Aqsa, *"When I'm troubled I go to the Aqsa, I'm sick I have diabetes, and when I'm tired I go there and I feel relieved I feel that I'm in the most beautiful place on earth"* (participant number 22). The women explained that there is nowhere else they can turn. They feel that, as Jerusalemites, they were completely abandoned, *"You can't turn to any Arabic country anymore, they all want you to make peace with Israel, now we can only turn to god, only he can save us now"* (participant number 1). The women also explained that some people have reached a point of helplessness where the only choice left is to commit suicide, the most popular method being to stab a soldier. The stabber will be killed instantly and will be considered a martyr by the society, *"We should be able to turn to the world for help, to the United Nations, to the Palestinian Authority but it's all useless… there is nothing we can turn to, people start exploding, young people go and stab a soldier to get killed. When I see that my children are hungry, their future is black, there is nothing to regret. People commit suicide by going to stab a soldier, they have no other alternative"* (participant number 13). According to the Israel Ministry of Foreign affairs, between 1 October 2015 and 1 October 2016 there was a total of 193 stabbings of which 89 were attempted stabbings; 174 shootings; 64 vehicular attacks; and one bus bombing. 225 of these attackers were killed in place (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018). Of course, not all these attackers' goal was to commit suicide. Some had patriotic intentions, but according to the women, many of the attackers just wanted to be killed. The women believed that god is the only force which can change their hopeless situations, *"I turn to god and when I'm troubled and I trust that he will help me out"* (participant number 23), *"Religion makes me psychologically comfortable, the closer I get to god the easier my life becomes, the more beautiful it becomes, our religion is beauty"* (participant

number 12). On the other hand, 2 of the participants said that they turn to family to find relief but without finding a solution to their problems, "*Sometimes I try to turn to friends, but there are never solutions, you can't talk to someone else about your problems because everyone has the same problems*" (participant number 14). Another 2 said they believe leaving the country and finding a better place to live is the only solution, *"There is nothing that I can turn to here, we can only turn to immigration*" (participant number 8). The remaining 4 participants said there was completely nothing to turn to, "*Nothing makes me feel relieved, that's because there is no solution, relief happens when you find a solution to your problems*" (participant number 16). The Palestinian Jerusalemites have not gained any triumphs by seeking the help of International organizations, Arabic countries or any Palestinian parties. Therefore, Jerusalemites have lost their trust   with everyone who pretended that they wanted to help them, "*The complaint to anyone but god is humiliation*" (participant number 9). This has caused an identity crisis in the national and cultural aspects; however, a source of relief has been found that hasn't been lost yet, God. Palestinians in Jerusalem turned to Islam when their national identity fell into deep crisis. The religious identity helps them keep a certain balance in their lives. The Islamic identity won't ever fail them because it makes them believe that such overwhelming circumstances are only a test from god with a promise of a better eternal life. They only have to believe.

5.4 The Aqsa Mosque's July events

As explained earlier, the Aqsa Mosque has a very special place in the hearts of the Palestinian Jerusalemites. It is the last place In Jerusalem where they can be themselves, away from daily harassment and I.D checks. "*Al-Aqsa is safety for us, nowhere else is safe, when your house can be demolished, your suffocating with taxes, this is our safe heaven*" (participant number 14). The Aqsa has always been a place of conflict between the Muslims and the Jews. A brief history of the conflict is described above in the historical background section. On the 14th of July 2017 there was a shooting incident between three Palestinians and the Israeli Police. The attack resulted in the deaths of the three Palestinians and two Israeli police officers (Omar, A. M., 2017). For the first time since 1969, Israel decided to close the Aqsa for three days and it installed new measures of control of the gates to Aqsa, including surveillance cameras and metal detectors. The Palestinian Jerusalemites refused to acknowledge the new measures of control and refused to enter the Aqsa until they were all removed (Omar, A. M., 2017). Palestinians began gathering every day in front of the Aqsa gates peacefully protesting the situation. Even though Israel used more than 3,000 police and border police units to control the demonstrations, often

violently suppressing them, the Palestinians refused to leave (Omar, A. M., 2017). What was shocking is that this turned into a social movement. People started bringing food for the protesters, bringing dessert, water and everything the protestors needed to stay there. People also started taking shifts in protesting, so that the Aqsa gate was never left empty. This kind of peaceful resistance was completely new for the Palestinian Jerusalemites. Even the Muslim Trust that administers the site called for a boycott of prayers if the new control measures remained. The Palestinians continued protesting daily until the 27th of July when Israel decided to remove all the new control measures and return to the pre-attack situation (Omar, A. M., 2017). The Palestinian Jerusalemites considered this to be a huge success for which they were responsible for. I asked the women if they were surprised by the way the Jerusalemites united to defend the Aqsa and most of them said they were. "*At the beginning of the events I was very surprised, then I was very excited and happy, we united*" (participant number 17), "*I was surprised by the latest events in al Aqsa, we were always accused of being traitors , and that we have shared interests with the Jews, but after everybody else let us down, we had to unite we had to take matters into our hands, especially when it comes to Al-Aqsa, the only thing we believe in, the only true thing left for us*" (participant number 14). "*Our reaction surprised the whole world and especially the Israelis, we have never felt more threatened and that's why we united*" (participant number 1), "*I was surprised that people were so brave, they were not afraid because they have reached the point of apathy, they don't have anything to lose*" (participant number 16). The women said that the people in Jerusalem had nothing else to lose, and that explains why they would risk arrest and even being shot for the Aqsa, "*We only awake when we are about to lose the thing, this mosque is a part of who we were, if we lose it, it's like we are losing our honour, I'm so glad that people united, they finally realized the importance of the mosque for us as Jerusalemites, but this shouldn't stop now, we should always stay in the mosque, we should show them that we will never give it up*" (participant number18). This event made the Palestinian Jerusalemites more secure about their ability to change their circumstances, "*The huge numbers of people which came to defend the Aqsa made us feel so strong and proud*" (participant number 21). The Aqsa became the identity symbol of the Jerusalemite Palestinians, "*Al-Aqsa is the gate through which the Palestinians can show god that they are still faithful and belong to their homeland, and if we lose it, everything is over, we will lose the fact that we are Palestinians*" (participants number 5). "*Al Aqsa does not only represent our Islamic identity, but our identity as Jerusalemites, if we lose it, what else do we have?*" (participants number 17), "*What do we have left in Jerusalem but the Aqsa? Nothing*" (participants number 10), "*We can't imagine a Jerusalem without the Aqsa*" (participants number 11).

The latest Aqsa events reminded the Palestinian Jerusalemites of the Ibrahimic Mosque massacre in Hebron. This massacre was carried by an American-Jew named Goldstein. On the 24th of February 1994, Goldstein shot 29 people dead who were praying at the mosque (Wagemakers, J., 2013). This event led to the division of the Ibrahimic mosque in the same year where 60% of the Mosque was assigned to Jews (Wagemakers, J., 2013). *"You can't even guarantee your right to pray in the mosque, my Islamic identity is threatened. First, they wanted to stop the call of prayer in Jerusalem, then they started closing the Aqsa mosque whenever they wanted, and they check the identities of everybody who wants to pray, and they prohibit the young people from entering the Aqsa. They also attack the Palestinian women who go to pray, their goal is to empty the mosque of people and delete the Islamic identity of this mosque. The Jews want to control the Aqsa mosque by allocating time for Jewish visits, now Jews enter the Aqsa every morning, this is like what happened in the Ibrahimic mosque, now its separated and it's so hard for Muslims to get in, it belongs more to Jews now, this is what they want to do here"* (participant number 13). Through this study I have developed an understanding of the importance of the Aqsa to the Palestinians in Jerusalem. For them it represents what is left from their dignity, it is the only sanctuary, it the symbol of both their Islamic and Palestinian identities. The woman believed that it is their destines to protect the Aqsa from every danger. *"I was so happy when people united, they can take everything our houses, us, but when it comes to Al-Aqsa we are there. People in Jerusalem love this mosque more than they love their houses more than they love their children, they would sacrifice everything for it"* (participant number 7). *"Al-Aqsa is very spiritually important for us, even though Mecca is more important in Islam, but Al-Aqsa is different for us, our hearts are attached to it, I don't know what it is, you feel safe when you are there"* (participant number 20). *"The Aqsa is our most precious property, the young children go there to play and listen to Quran while the older people go there to learn the Quran, even the retired people go there to socialize, the Aqsa is a place for prayer and a place for meeting, it's the space we use to breathe, to feel safe"* (participant number 4). Most the participants believed that it was religion which united them to defend the Aqsa and it was god who made sure they would succeed this time. "*People felt that we are about to lose our religion the only thing we have left, it was like the Israelis were insulting god himself and we had to defend him*" (participant number 23). "*People got much more connected to the Aqsa after the latest events, it's like our main goal in Jerusalem became to defend the Aqsa, and its only normal to become more religious when you go to the Aqsa more often, when you are in the Aqsa you feel that you are much closer to god*" (participant number 22). *"The Aqsa means our Islam… Islam united us to defend our Aqsa"* (participant number 9).

In order to answer the research question, a comparison has to be made between the role of religion in the lives of Palestinian Jerusalemites now and twenty years ago. To make this comparison I asked the women above 30 years old about the difference between the role of religion in their lives when they were in their 20s and during the present time. On the other hand, the participants who are younger than 30 years old were asked to compare the role of religion in their lives now and how it was in their mothers and grandmothers lives. In the following section I will analyse the information given for this question in two categories, first the role of religion before the Second Intifada, and second the role of religion in our present lives.

5.5.1 Role of Religion before the Second Intifada

All the participants agreed that people twenty years ago were not religious. People did not know much about religion; however, they were traditional and conservative. Women did not use to wear the veil, and men didn't judge them for that. I asked the participants why they think people were less religious back then. Some women thought that it was because people before were ignorant, *"In the past our families were not religious because they were not aware or educated"* (participant number 10). Before not everyone had the chance to attend school, there was no internet, or modern ways of communication. Other women said that the reasons people were not religious before is that people were not as stressed as they are now, people's religious identities were not threatened as they are now, *"People in Jerusalem were not religious before, I feel that the pressure from the occupation has turned them this way, people now care a lot about the way women and girls dress, in the past our mothers and grandmothers did not wear the hijab and they did not feel that they have to wear it"* (participant number 8). This relates to what the participants said before about turning to religion to be different than the Israeli society and to defend their religious identity which is under a lot of pressure. Many of the participants agreed that the situation before was better for women, and that women had more freedom when it came to what they chose to wear, *"It was so much better before, people were not extremists, they didn't try to control the way females dress"* (participant number 6). *"Twenty years ago, women in Jerusalem were allowed to leave the house without wearing the veil, even is this little village, now it's different now even little girls are judged if they leave the house without wearing the veil, religion now is a priority to everyone"* (participant number 9). Many women said that the difference between before and now is mainly demonstrated with young people, young people now are much more religious than their families used to be 20 years ago, *"Religion now is more important for people here, this came from the young people, in the past you would only find old people in Al-Aqsa mosque who go there because they are bored, but today its filled with young*

people, there is awareness, in the past we used to follow traditions, traditions would tell you what is allowed and what is forbidden but now religion is stronger than tradition, people are more aware now because of the political events, when you feel trapped, you become closer to god, we used to be far away but now young people are returning to religion" (participant number 20). Women also said that they raise their children differently than how they were raised. The women were raised according to tradition but now they raise their children according to religion, *"Now we raise our children differently. I have three boys who are all religious, but my husband isn't, he was raised in a house where religion didn't matter, now when he sees his children praying he does the same sometimes, but he is still not committed"* (participant number 22). One of the women I interviewed, who is in her late 80's, said that the veil didn't even exist when she was young and people didn't know much about religion, *"I went to school under the British mandate, we did not have religion in school back then, but when I graduated, I learned a lot about Islam and I became a religion teacher without even wearing the hijab"* (participant number 15). People before identified themselves with Palestinian political parties, and the most popular parties were left parties such as Fateh and Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, however, after all the Palestinian parties failed their supporters, people gave them up and turned to religion instead.

5.5.2 Role of Religion In the participant's daily lives

The role of religion in the lives of Palestinian Jerusalemites is more extensive than it used to be twenty years ago, *"I believe that religion's role in Jerusalem has increased a lot, between 80% and 90% of people in Jerusalem are religious"* (participant number 21). The women said that religion plays an essential role in their lives, *"Religion implies everything in my life, how I dress, how I treat people, my work, when I want to do something, the first thing I consider is my fear of god"* (participant number 10), *"I'm more religious now than 10 years before…religion is the curriculum by which I live my life. It exists in all the small details of my life"* (participant number 14). The question is what drove these women to be more religious, and for that there were different answers. Some women said that it was despair that led them to god. They are hoping that through being close to god, they will be heard, and their prayers will be answered *"Prayer is very essential in my life, when I need something I ask it from god, even when I make mistakes god forgives me."* (participant number 2). For those women, religion has made it easier to accept their

destinies "*Everything bad that is happening to us is written upon us by god, so we have to accept it and be thankful*" (participant number 21). Some women said that Palestinian females had started imitating Israeli females and slowly defying traditions, so serious measures were taken to "protect" the females, "*Spreading awareness in Jerusalem was very powerful… we realized then that immorality was spreading among the Palestinian females, like wearing makeup, short and tight clothes, this led girls to believe that they are free to do anything, but if the parents allow their girls to go out like that, she can do everything else*" (participant number 5). Some said that religion helped them raise their children with an Islamic identity. This was necessary since all former identities were broken, "*Religion is a priority in our lives because if we are able to preserve our religion then we are able to preserve our identities, if I raise my children according to Islam I won't have to worry that they will lie or do something wrong or give up their identities in the future*" (participant number 9), "*Religion helps me raise my children correctly, I try to teach them the morals of Islam because these are the top morals… even though Islam is more important for me than my children, they keep me so busy I can't do everything I want to do for god*" (participant number 19).

The following are some of the women's stories about becoming more religious:

- "*Religion makes me feel clean on the inside and out, when I listen to Quran I feel that my troubles are disappearing, I used to listen to music before, but some people advised me to listen to Quran instead, I used to feel really pressured, from the economic situation and my boys were away, but then listening to the Quran comforted me a lot*" (participant number 22).

- "*Religion plays a huge role in my life, I take the true Islam that the prophet came with and not Islamism, twenty years ago I was a Marxist, away from religion, but slowly I became closer and closer to religion*" (participant number 13).

- "*I have always been I believer, now I'm more committed to Islam, to my veil, I feel that I'm very close to god now, I always ask god for forgiveness because I wasn't committed to Islam before, I feel guilty when I'm not committed*" (participant number 1).

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- "*Twenty years ago I was ignorant, we used to wear the hijab only when we get married, and we would wear a short skirt with it, now I'm aware of what my religion requires, now when I go out I even wear long pants under my Islamic costume, you can never know what could happen, in case I had to run away from something I will be fully covered*" (participant number 22)

Many of the women said that it actually isn't easy to be religious, it's highly demanding and sometimes religious requirements do not make a lot of sense for them, but they believed that god is wiser than anyone can ever be, and therefore he knows what is best for them, "*I try to do my best to stick with the teachings of Islam, but it's becoming so difficult, now the world is so modern and globalized, it hard to stick with the teachings that were logical thousands of years ago, some people can, the prophet said that this day will come, when holding to religion will be like holding a burning coal, I wish that I was more religious*" (participant number 18).

So how did religion spread so fast among the Palestinian Jerusalemites and who was responsible for it? Apparently, it spread through different methods. Some women claimed that twenty years ago, during the Second Intifada, many people who belonged to Palestinian Islamic parties took it as their own responsibility to spread religious awareness among people. These persons would go door to door advising people of how to be religious and how important it was at such a time, and sometimes they would even harass women who did not wear the veil, "*These people used to walk in streets and harass girls who are not wearing the hijab and even hit them, this forced the parents to force their children wear the hijab.*" (participants number 13). Suddenly the streets became full of people distributing flyers, booklets and handbooks about Islam. Religion classes became very popular. They were held at the Aqsa mosque, other mosques and even in people's houses, "*Through those twenty years awareness spread by interacting with people, going to the mosque for religious lessons… instead of staying at home and gossiping we went to take religious lessons*" (participant number 22), "*Religious awareness is spreading through regular meetings, everybody tries to enlighten the other, some people even host religious classes at their homes*" (participant number 7). In the present day, people are contributing to the spread of religion in their own ways. Some of the teachers I interviewed said that even though they are not religion teachers, they felt it's their responsibility to enlighten the children more about their religion, "*In the past people were not religious because they were ignorant, they didn't get a proper education, now as a teacher the first thing I do when I have a new class, is not teach the curriculum, but to spread religious awareness. If I have girls in my class who are not wearing the hijab, I try to guide them into wearing it, to make them understand what god requires from them at their age*" (participant number 10). Many parents send their children to learn Islam after school classes, "*There are many events in mosques now where they teach children from the 4th grade to high school grades about Islam*" (participant number 10).

Another method widely used to spread religion in East Jerusalem is social media, through Facebook pages, WhatsApp and many other applications people try to influence each other, *"Now we have more religious awareness because of social media…we share things through WhatsApp"* (participant number 10).

The women agreed that you can mainly see the difference in the role of religion now and before in the lives of young people. Young people these days are more religious than young people twenty years ago, and this makes sense since they were raised differently. Additionally, young people, are the group most suffering from identity threats and pressure. Twenty years ago, the Palestinian national identity was clearer, and most people belonged to Palestinian parties or National Arabic parties. But young people today fell into identity crisis, the parties had no role in the Jerusalemite lives' anymore, and the Arabs abandoned the Palestinian case. What was left is religion, which is always there, waiting to be embraced. *"What's different now is religion among young people, they are really more religious… this happens because young people are not satisfied with how things are in their lives. They believe that its anger from god"* (participant number 4).

Through the interviews, I tried to determine how women felt about religion being used to control them. Some women avoided the topic, and some put it in another context, these women said that it wasn't religion but the love of control that makes men act the way they do, *"Females here are really afraid men pressure their sisters or daughters or wives… and men control them, how they dress, where they go and it's not because men are that religious, it's because they want to control the women, even child marriage is back again"* (participant number 17). Some women said that men took only what they wanted from religion and disregarded everything else that gave rights to women. They also said that religion is not really like that and no one is applying it correctly, *"Religion in Jerusalem is mostly related to the way people dress, to the veil, where is a girl going, who is she talking to, people don't even care about the main principles of religion, like praying, fasting and how they are treating each other"* (participant number 8). Some of these women said that it is expected that holding on to your religion is going to be difficult. That the end, it is a test from god, *"Holding on to your religion now is like holding a burning coal"* (participant number 18).

Some participants were more expressive about religious control, and expressed how religion is used to control them, to frighten them and to deprive them of their rights, *"Religion's role in my life is a source of fear, my understanding of all religions is that you shouldn't harm*

anyone else, if you want to pray then go ahead but don't harm anyone else, now there are these unemployed group of men who took it as their job to go turn from house to house to guide people to Islam, I don't need this in my life, I don't need to deal with someone who comes and gives me a look because he feels that he is better than me just because he prays and fasts, and if I ask him how do you know that I don't pray or fast, he says because I see the way you dress, he judges me, they have reached a point where they do god's job on earth and decide who deserves god's mercy or not… religion scares me I always wonder what are these people willing to do to prove to god that they are on his side" (participant number 6). Some said that men are using religion to isolate educated women from the society, stereotyping them as controlling, unclean, mixing with other men at work and staying out late. It is common in East Jerusalem to say that marrying an uneducated young woman is better because men can raise them the way they want. This made child marriage popular. "*We live in a patriarchal society. Now child marriage is very popular again, they do not want their daughter to bring shame on them, they say it's better for a girl to get married than to get an education. As a teacher I see that lot, the educated girls stay unmarried here, many times males with very high education come and marry a girl who is only sixteen.*" (participant number 13).

Before the Second Intifada, Palestinian Jerusalemites were closer to their Palestinian and Arabic Identities, but now they prioritize their Islamic Identity. This change has many causes; the pressure on the Palestinian identity from the Israeli occupation and the Fateh-Hamas conflict, which ended the Palestinian party role in defending the cause, all affected the Palestinian identity. On the other hand, the political and economic circumstances of the Arabic states showed that they have their own problems to deal with. They couldn't achieve a nation-state model or social equity, which made people lose their former connection to the Arabic identity. In the meantime, people had no other option but to turn into the wider identity, Islam. People wanted to achieve a balance with their identities, but their political and social identities were threatened which caused psychosocial crisis, which made them turn to the unknown. It is much easier to say god knows, god will solve it, have faith.

Chapter six

In this chapter I will discuss the findings and results of this research. First, I will summarize the reasons behind the process of Islamization in East Jerusalem. Later I will briefly explore the effects of the Islamization process on Palestinian females. Finally, I will present the conclusions that were reached.

6.1 Reasons behind the Islamization of social identity in East Jerusalem

Through this research I was able to find that there was a process of Islamization of the Palestinian Jerusalemite social identity. I call it a process because it started twenty years ago, and it is still happening. The circumstances which paved the way for an Islamization of social identity started after the First Intifada. The PLO signed the Oslo Accords in 1993, in which they agreed to recognize the state of Israel. This agreement excluded Jerusalem and the illegal settlements in the West Bank from the land which will be transferred to the Palestinians (Makovsky, D., 2018). Before the agreement took place, Israel imposed restriction on who could represent the Palestinians. One of these restrictions was "*no one from Jerusalem*" (Khalidi, R. ,2010). Having agreed to that, the PLO was considered traitorous by most Palestinian Jerusalemites. During the same period, Hamas refused to make peace with Israel or to recognize its existence. It did not participate in the Oslo Accords. This boosted Hamas' popularity among Palestinian Jerusalemites and presented Islam as a viable alternative for Palestinian social identity. Hamas members were willing to sacrifice their lives for the liberation of Palestine. This gave Islamism credibility within the society. The result was that Palestinian nationalism started including Islamic themes and credentials (Khalidi, R. ,2010).

The Second Intifada was a religious one. It started in the Aqsa mosque after Ariel Sharon entered to demonstrate "Jewish sovereignty". This move was considered a direct threat to the Palestinian Islamic identity. Palestinian Jerusalemites needed to defend their religion and their Islamic symbols. During this Intifada people became more religious. The salient identity was the highly threatened one. When an individual feels that a part of her\his identity is threatened, this part becomes the most salient and important one, at least until the threat is gone. At this point, all the attempts to pressure the Islamic identity were seen as highly threatening and their defence was prioritized. In 2006, Hamas won the legislative

elections and Fateh refused to form a government with Hamas which led to the Palestinian civil war. The war was shocking for the Palestinian people. It was hard to imagine that one day Palestinians would be killing each other. The two parties became so occupied with attacking each other that the main issues for the Palestinian people were ignored. This split between the two parties, which lasts till now, decreased both of their popularities. It also caused a fall for Palestinian nationalism. Almost all the participants agreed that both parties are completely useless for the Palestinian Jerusalemites.

This created a social identity crisis for the Palestinian Jerusalemites who still lived under occupation and needed a clear identity to defy "the other".   The fall of Palestinian nationalism created a vacuity which needed to be replaced. People needed something to identify themselves with to confront the clear and strong identity of the Israeli side. There is a common belief among Palestinian Jerusalemites that if the Israelis acquire any rights to visit the Aqsa or to make the Aqsa a part of the Jewish religious identity, this will be on the expense of their social identity and rights. It is also believed that the intention of the Israeli occupation is to destroy the Islamic ideology. Thus, there is a zero-sum view of social identity in Jerusalem *"fulfilment of the other's national identity is experienced as equivalent to destruction of one's own identity"* (Kelman, H. C.,1999). Therefore, there is an effect of negative interdependence between the Palestinian Jerusalemite social identity and the Israeli one. If one of both sides seeks to reinforce their identity they need to negate the other group's identity (Kelman, H. C.,1999). This was clear through the interviews, participants constantly compared themselves with the Jewish Israelis. Some said that the Jews have the Wailing Wall where Muslims are not allowed so why should the Jews be allowed in the Aqsa? Some said that the Jews want to dance and sing in the Aqsa which is disrespectful especially as Muslims use it only to pray. Some said if they have their book we have the Quran which is more important, etc. It is as if the participants were trying to prove their legitimacy and right of ownership of the Aqsa by negotiating the illegitimacy of the Israeli Jews.

Most Palestinian Jerusalemites do not recognize the right of the state of Israel to exist. It is referred to as the "Zionist Entity". They hold feelings on anger towards its symbols, such as the flag, the lions and the Hebrew language forced on them (Kelman, H. C.,1999).   Both the Palestinian and the Israeli sides put much effort in keeping the demonic image of the other. Those who affirm this image are considered loyal, in contrast of those who try to humanize the other and are considered traitorous (Kelman, H. C.,1999).   Through the talking with the participants, I understood that religion is used now to affirm the identity of people. The

participants told me that, especially with females, religion is used to judge if they are good and moral people or not. If a female is not wearing the Islamic dress she might be accused of "being similar to the enemy" and "destroying the image of Islam in Jerusalem". This tactic is used to keep the group's cohesion, and to identity the group's uniqueness. By reinforcing difference, the group avoids making any compromises that might threaten their national existence (Kelman, H. C.,1999).

The Islamic identity was the one chosen to fill the vacuity because at that point, and until now, it constitutes a central part of the conflict. The prioritized conflict in Jerusalem now is the conflict over the Aqsa. Palestinian Jerusalemites are deprived of many economic, civil and educational rights. However, the most debated topic is the "safety" of the Aqsa. It is discussed daily through the news, newspapers, social media and informal discussions. This is mainly because it is the last place which symbolizes the Palestinian Islamic identity and is still, relatively, under Palestinian control. Defending it became a part of the ingroup's self-definition. The Palestinian civil war forced Palestinian Jerusalemites to revise the way they define their social identity. The loss of the Aqsa will do the same thing. Only this time, it is hard to speculate what\where the Palestinian Jerusalemite would turn to.

The more the Islamic identity is threatened the more it will be reinforced by Palestinian Jerusalemites. On the 18th of July 2018, the Israeli parliament passed a bill which defines the country as an "exclusive Jewish state" (BBC,2018). This bill degraded Arabic from being an official language and announced that the pursue of building Jewish settlements is a national interest. The bill also states that "*Israel is the historic homeland of the Jewish people and they have an exclusive right to national self-determination in it*" (BBC, 2018). The Israeli government is constantly using religion to legitimize its illegal acts against the Palestinians. This also drives the Palestinians to use religion to legitimize their existence and their acts against the Israeli Jews.

The Islamization of social identity cannot be restricted to the Palestinian Jerusalemites. There is a wave of Islamization in most of the Arabic countries (Dekmejian, R. H. ,1995). This suggests that Islamization is also a regional wave. One third of the world's Muslims now live as minorities in different countries. Many of the other Muslims are living in countries which suffer from bad economic situations, war and internal conflicts (Roy, O., 2004). This issue is discussed by Oliver Roy, who argued that the process of Islamization is not a backlash against westernization but one of it's consequences. Additionally, Roy argued that,

like everyone else, individual Muslims have varied potential identities which are highlighted and shifted according to necessity (Roy, O., 2004). This argument corresponds with my argument is this research. The participants said that they have three main identities; Islamic, Palestinian and Arabic. However, the most threatened identity tends to be the salient one. In case of the Palestinian Jerusalemites this happens to be the Islamic one.

The beginning of this wave could be traced to the Iranian Islamic revolution in 1979, which reinforced the power of Islamic movements in the Arabic world (Dekmejian, R. H. ,1995). In addition, Turkey's involvement in Palestinian-Israeli politics also reinforced the Islamization of social identity in Jerusalem. Some of the participants informed me that many of the new Islamic associations in Jerusalem, which are responsible for spreading religion and teaching the Quran, are financially supported by Turkey. In this research I have focused on the Palestinian Jerusalemite case and particularly on the local reasons behind Islamization. This does not indicate that there is no global effect on this process, however the limits of this study did not allow me to conduct further research.

6.2 Features of Islamization in the daily life of Palestinian Jerusalemites

The Islamization of social identity in Jerusalem demonstrates itself in different aspects of daily life. First, it has affected the way females dress. Through twenty years, the veil spread quickly and widely among females. Some females wore it by choice, some were forced, and some got used to it since they were children. The Islamization of social identity mainly affected women. It restricted their work, dress and education options, in addition to the ability to choose a life partner.

The participants agreed that women are criticized no matter how they dress. Those who wear the veil are criticized because the rest of their clothing is not applicable to the conditions of the Islamic dress. They are often harassed and told to either wear it right or lose it. On the other side, the women who choose not to wear it, are also criticized and stigmatized as immoral. The criticism does not only affect the girls, it also reaches their families which makes the parents, in some cases, force their female children into wearing the veil. It seemed to me that the women were highly stressed about satisfying the society when it came to the way they dress. This is because the rumours could affect their "honour" and make their lives even more unbearable.

In the beginning, it seemed controversial to me that the same women who complain about the society's patriarchy, or even those who don't, force the same circumstances on their daughters. Since most women are the ones responsible for raising the children, the women are the one criticized if her daughter is not wearing something "decent". I wondered why the women would force the same thing that was forced upon them on their daughters. However, I understood that those women feel pressured from all sides, so they have to stay in the safe side. Therefore, the submission to the society's rules is only a way to decrease the pressure put on them.

Most of the women I interviewed are religious. They also use religion to measure morality and to decide what is right and what is wrong. They judge each other based on what they wear. And some of them believed that sexual harassment is justified when women are wearing something "attractive". The Israeli laws were built to protect women from sexual harassment, violence and insults. If a Palestinian woman in East Jerusalem decides to file a complaint to the police against someone who sexually harassed her, the law will be on her side (Holland, K. J., & Cortina, L. M., 2016). However, she will be accused of cooperating with the enemy, or ruining a man's life for a "silly" mistake that she is probably responsible for. In addition to that, rumours will start building up about her reputation, and if she knew the man before and just acted out of revenge because he left her or something similar. That is why most women choose to stay silent.

The Islamization of social identity in East Jerusalem can also be seen with the increasing number of people daily visiting, praying, and staying in the mosque. The Aqsa July events demonstrate the importance of the Aqsa for the Palestinian Jerusalemites. This can be easily understood if one follows the historical events in East Jerusalem. East Jerusalemites consider that they lost everything after the Second Intifada. They became completely isolated from the rest of the Palestinian society. They face harassment, arrest and violence on daily basis. They live under an ethnocratic occupations which favours Jews and applies racist policies against the Palestinians. Most of them live under the poverty line, many are unemployed or work at cleaning, cooking and other basic jobs in the Jewish market. They feel that the only thing left which represents them and symbolizes their identity is the Aqsa mosque. Therefore, many of them are willing to do everything and anything to protect it.

The Islamization of culture became even more clear when the participants were asked about their relief source. Most of them turn to God to seek help in times of distress. When

something bad happens to them they explain it as a test from God. When something good happens to them they explain it as a reward from their patience. In both cases they are thankful. It seems that their desperation and hopelessness of what is happening on land led them to the sky. It is so much easier to say, "God knows", "if god is willing", "it is written by god" when have no control over your circumstances. In addition to that, the participants made it clear that they seek good because there is no one else to turn to. No one can help them solve their problems.

6.3 Conclusion

This research aimed to explore the Islamization process of Palestinian social identity in Jerusalem. To achieve this goal, I researched the Palestinian Jerusalemites' social identity, social identity threats, the Aqsa July events and participants' perception on the role of religion in their lives. The study compared the Palestinian social identity in Jerusalem between now and twenty years ago. It also examined the females' perception of social identity threat posed by the patriarchal Palestinian society itself. The research reached the conclusion that there was a process of social identity Islamization among Palestinian Jerusalemites in the last twenty years. The reasons behind this process are: first, the fall of Palestinian nationalism after the Oslo Accords and the Palestinian civil war. This led into identity crisis and created an identity vacuity which needed to be filled. Second the direct threat posed on the Palestinian Islamic identity during the Second Intifada. This made the Islamic identity the salient one. The Islamic identity needed to be defended, therefore, it was prioritized and used to demonstrate the urgency of staying in Jerusalem.

I would like to end this research by proposing questions which are related to this study. First how can the social identity which is used by both sides of the conflict and which is utilized to adapt with the conflict be changed? Would the eradication of the social identity threat resources help? What if the level of threats increases? Will people become extreme? Can we apply the same logic on the immigrants who left their lives in Western countries and joined extremist groups? Can racism lead the victims to extremism or even terrorism? How can minorities integrate in certain social settings when their social identity is threatened?

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Appendices

Interview Guide

(Translated from the original one in Arabic)

Introducing questions

1. How do you define your individual social identity?
2. What threatens your social identity?
3. What\who do you turn to when feeling distressed or in need of help?
4. What is the role of religion in your life

Questions about living in East Jerusalem

1. Do you feel that your existence in Jerusalem is threatened?
2. Can you tell me about your economic situation?

Questions about the political parties

1. Have you ever belonged to a certain political party or any other assemblies?
2. Do you feel that any of the Palestinian parties are currently benefiting the Palestinian Jerusalemites? and how?

Questions about the Aqsa July events

1. What is your opinion of the Aqsa July events?
2. Were you surprised by the Palestinian Jerusalemite reaction or was it expected?

Questions about the role of religion in the Palestinian society

1. Do you define yourself as a religious person?
2. What is religion's role in your life today?
3. What was religion's role in your life twenty years ago?
4. Why do you think that the number of girls wearing the veil increased dramatically in the last twenty years?
5. Has religion increased or decreased in importance for the average Palestinian? If there has been a change what were the reasons behind it?

6- Who will the society criticize more, a girl who is the wearing the veil without the full Islamic dress, or a girl who is not wearing the veil?