Demolishing homes – remaking identities

Social rupture and nationalism among Palestinian women in East Jerusalem

Master thesis
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Unit count: 238125

August 2008

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Acknowledgements

Many people have supported me in the process of writing this thesis and carrying out the fieldwork on which it builds. To all of them, I extend my deepest gratitude.

I particularly want to thank Jeff Halper, for inspiring me to pursue this research, and for being my anthropological support and supervisor away from home, and Meir Margalit for sharing with me his extensive insight and knowledge. Thank you also to Lucia Pizarro, Hibat Mahroum and Angela Godfrey-Goldstein for helping me each in their own way.

I am also most grateful to my informants and their families for letting me into their lives the way they did, to Abu Mousa and Mariam for their hospitality and to Elizabeth Jadon and Rana Alhelsi for being, at times, my extra ears in the field.

My appreciations also go to my supervisor Martijn van Beek for his valuable comments on earlier drafts and to Brandy Bauer for her help with language editing.

I am thankful to my family for their love and continuous encouragement.

Finally, I am most deeply indebted to Søren William Neergaard Olsen - for your untiring support during these long months of writing, for comments and inputs, but most importantly for your endless patience and unconditional love.

Preface

A life demolished by the bulldozer

My name is Um Mohammed, I used to live in Beit Hanina, and the 17th of August the Israeli Authorities came and demolished our house. It was 6 o'clock in the morning, a lot of soldiers came, and a lot of police came with them. They told us they wanted to demolish the house. My son Mohammed went out to talk to them, and they tried to convince him to collaborate with them. But we do not work as collaborators! For three hours, every time they wanted to approach the house, Mohammed cut himself with a knife and he was bleeding from his hands. He was bleeding a lot, but he didn't want to cry in front of the Jews. It's forbidden to cry in front of the Jews. For three hours he was sitting on the roof of the house, and he didn't want to come down. They came to demolish the house of our neighbour, and they didn't demolish their house, because they collaborate with the Jews, but we don't collaborate with the Jews. After a while…after three hours they wanted to approach the house. They put a ladder from behind and…they caught him. So…what could he do? There was a lot of police. He said ok mother, let me just drink water before they demolish the house. He came down from the roof and… there were peace activists who had arrived at our house and were inside. They had tied themselves with iron chains to the windows. There were many, a group from the peace organisation. Mohammed went down and drank some water. All the bulldozers were… first, they came and wanted to empty the house… the soldiers wanted to take him out. He drank water inside the house and prayed. And then, they went and brought scissors and cut of the Jews from the peace organisation and took them out of the house. Then they asked Mohammed again, if he would like to work with them. But he said no, we have been clean all our lives, we won't work with you… he didn't know what to do. Then, they started to… the bulldozers came… and demolished the house (pause). Also my son Osman was cutting himself with a knife. The situation was very difficult. Then they demolished the house. When they demolished the house, what remained? Nothing remained. I started crying and hitting myself. My three grandchildren were also there with me and they started to cry. They asked me: "grandmother, where are we going to sleep? There are no walls, no tent, nothing". The youngest girl was only three days old. This is what happened to the house.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The first time I met a Palestinian was in Gaza City in 1994, and that Palestinian was Yassir Arafat. The circumstances of our meeting were quite coincidental but the impact of it very significant. It was this meeting that woke my curiosity about the people who call themselves Palestinians as well as the cause they claim to fight for. After eleven years and several books about Palestine and the Palestinians, as well as trips to the Palestinian territories and refugee camps, this curiosity was still the driving force that led me to conduct my fieldwork among Palestinian women in East Jerusalem[1]. Thus, my fieldwork as well as this thesis reflect my desire to make my long-standing interest in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and particularly its effects on Palestinian society, part of my academic expertise. My wish to focus on Palestinian women in particular was prompted by my readings of Abu-Lughod's extensive work on women in the Middle East and particularly her statement that: "…the anthropology of Middle Eastern women is theoretically underdeveloped relative to anthropology as a whole" (Abu-Lughod 1989: 289). Although my ambitions with this study are much humbler than that of making such a theoretical contribution, I do hope to provide an ethnographic account of a group of Palestinian women that will shed light on some of the issues that shape their lives amidst conflict and societal restrictions in present day Jerusalem.

The issues I will be dealing with throughout this thesis take as their point of departure the demolition of Palestinian houses in East Jerusalem; demolitions that have taken place on a regular basis since the Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem in 1967. These demolitions, I will argue, play a specific role in the struggle for space inherent in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, particularly as this struggle is acted out in the highly contested city of Jerusalem, to which both Israelis and Palestinians hold competing claims. More importantly, however, they also deeply affect the lives of the Palestinian families that experience them. Combining notions of space and identity my aim in this

[1] I carried out fieldwork from January-July 2005 and again in February 2007.

study then is twofold. First, it is to analyse the ways in which different forms of power (governmental power and as part of this also violent power in the form of house demolitions) work to create a particular form of city space in Jerusalem. Second, it is to look into the consequences of this form of space making at the micro-level, specifically as it works through the demolitions of Palestinian houses. I do this by looking at how the demolition of houses – places imbued with social and cultural meaning – comes to shape the lives and more specifically the identities of Palestinian women. My general interest then is in looking at the political and social processes of place and identity making as they take place in, and are affected by, conflict.

1.1 Theoretical approaches to space/place, the house and identity

The notions of space and place have been part of the anthropological discipline since its early beginning and have traditionally been linked to the concept of culture and especially "cultures": the idea that human differences are to be perceived as a multiplicity of separate societies, each with their own culture. These "cultures" in turn have been perceived as inhabiting particular and separate places, the deciphering and analysis of which was to lead the anthropologist to an understanding of them (Augé 1995: 42). Hence, space has been functioning as a central organising principle while at the same time disappearing from analytical scrutiny (Gupta & Ferguson 1997b: 7). Today, the idea of the world as made up of separate "peoples" and "cultures" carries increasingly little conviction in the face of rising awareness about regional and global forms of connections as well as the deconstruction, brought about by the critical debate on ethnographic representation, of the largely invented boundedness of cultures in anthropological writing. As a result, the naturalised link between culture and place has come under revision and the social scientific interest in theorising space (border, territory, place and mobility) is growing (ibid).

Besides the seemingly naturalised and unproblematic link between cultures, peoples and space (or territory), and thus the lack of analytical examination of space *per se* in classical anthropological tradition, attention to the role of power in shaping space was also lacking. The works of scholars like Michel Foucault and James Scott have been important in making up for this. In Foucault's optic, space is a specific sort of site, namely a "container of power" (Watts 1992: 117), which he aptly illustrates in e.g. his

work about the modern prison (Foucault 1977). However, also his ideas about governmentality reflect a concern with power and space, since exercising control over populations, which, according to Foucault, is the ultimate end of government, requires controlling their distribution in space (Foucault 1991 [1979]: 100). On the same note, Scott's work on schemes to improve the human condition that have failed (Scott 1998) looks into how state power works to shape space – such as city space – through particular kinds of planning. In my analysis of the geo-political space within which my fieldwork took place, an analysis which serves as a framework for understanding the phenomenon of house demolitions, I bring together the Foucauldian notion of governmentality and Scott's ideas about spatial control through city planning to outline the processes of governmental city-space making in Jerusalem. My study, however, not only focuses on the processes of creating a particular city space in Jerusalem. It also looks into processes of *place* making or *house making* at the level of everyday life.

Studies of the house in anthropology have until recently most often been fragmented between various sub-disciplines and traditions. Studies within economic anthropology, for instance, have dealt with systems of household production or have focused on how gender representations involve the house, through the division of domestic space and the role of women in the domestic economy, while kinship studies have looked into the workings of the basic units of family and household. An actual "anthropology of the house", however, is emerging as a separate field of study within anthropology, seeking a more holistic approach to studying houses by paying attention to both their material, social and symbolic significance (Carsten & Hugh-Jones 1995: 2-5).

One of the probably best known "house studies" in social science is Bourdieu's work on the Kabyle house (Bourdieu 1990 [1977]), in which he describes the house as a model or structure of society and an important agent of socialisation, since individuals build up practical mastery of the schemes of their culture through inhabiting the ordered house. Another maybe less known approach to studying houses is found in Lévi-Strauss' work on "house societies", which introduces a new house-based form of social organisation resembling kinship (Lévi-Strauss 1983). Yet other ethnographic studies, such as that of Marianne Gullestad, about a group of young working-class mothers in urban Norway, focuses on women's everyday life in the house and more specifically on

the ways in which the house becomes a place of communicating and creating identity, e.g. through choices of house and interior decoration (Gullestad 1984). In my analysis of women's life in the Palestinian house, I draw inspiration from all three approaches. Nevertheless, this thesis is not merely a traditional anthropological study of house life in a specific cultural setting. Although I do provide an analysis of the Palestinian house as a place imbued with cultural meaning and thus as a place that frames the everyday lives, particularly of its female inhabitants, my main interest rather lies in exploring the link between houses and women's identity making – as in Gullestad's study – and particularly how the violent destruction of the house affects these identity making processes.

Theorising on and understanding identity has often fallen in the trap – much like that of theorising on "cultures" – of perceiving it as an essential, primordial and bounded "thing" possessed or owned by groups, and thereby individuals belonging to that group, or what Martijn van Beek has called *identity fetishism* (van Beek 2001). Following this line of argument, identity is seen as linked to a particular place, where the group it "belongs" to is "rooted". This understanding of identity is reflected both in public and political discourse and consequently also in people's own practices and perspectives, as I will be showing. However, this primordial link between identity and place – as with the link between place and culture – has also been critically reviewed by a range of social scientists. One of them is Frederik Barth, who already in 1969 developed his ideas about ethnic identity as a *relation* of difference created through processes of othering (Barth 1969). Equally important is the work of Benedict Anderson, in which he emphasises the *constructed* and *imagined* nature of nation-states and thus of national identification (Anderson 1991 [1983]). Hence, just as space and place making is a process of construction of difference so is identity a mobile and changing relation of difference. It is on the basis of this understanding that I build my analysis of space, place and identity making, as it is shaped by relations of power and dynamics of conflict.

Since much of this study is about *processes* whereby particular notions and ideas are constructed, before embarking on my analysis, I also wish to dwell for a moment on

some of the most important processes through which I gained the knowledge that forms the empirical basis of the analysis I will be proposing.

1.2 Storytelling and participation – fieldwork among Palestinian women

Throughout my fieldwork, accounts of house demolitions, detailing how they had happened, where they had taken place as well as people who had experienced them often became my "entry ticket", so to speak, to engage in conversation and thereby create contacts in the field. For this endeavour, as well as for most other aspects of my fieldwork, my preceding knowledge of the Arabic language became pivotal. Later, stories of house demolitions, gathered either through interviews[2] or everyday conversations, also became important sources of information about house demolitions and how they were perceived, especially by women.

However, participating and engaging in women's everyday life – cooking, cleaning, doing the dishes, drinking tea while listening in on women's gossip about who was getting married, who was not yet pregnant despite having been married for several months and who was maybe having an affair, but also the difficulties in making ends meet, especially with the latest rise in food prices – this was the way I gained insight into the everyday workings of women's lives as they went on despite the demolition of their house. Participating in weddings and funerals as well as accompanying women on their visits to friends, neighbours and family were also moments of creating data. Many of my findings thus came about through participant observation, the outcome of which was shaped by the particular position I came to occupy among my informants[3] and hence the kind of interpersonal relations I shared with them (*cf*. Gammeltoft 2003: 283).

[2] I carried out one interview with each of the five women I consider to be my key informants. In addition, I also interviewed the director of the Israeli organisation BIMKOM – Planners for Planning Rights, the director of the Israeli human rights organisation B'Tselem, the director of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD), the field coordinator of ICAHD – who is a former municipal worker and member of the municipal council – and a city planner working on the new master plan for Jerusalem. Furthermore, I tried – in vain – to set up interviews with the Chief Planner for the Jerusalem district in the Ministry of Interior as well as the vice-mayor of Jerusalem, who is responsible for the political planning and building commission, the body responsible for issuing building permits and house demolition orders.

[3] My key informants, from whom the main bulk of my data stems, were five married housewives, aged twenty-eight to fifty-five years, belonging to the poorer segment of the population. Through them, I further came in touch with a wide range of other women such as their sisters, mothers, mothers-in-laws, sisters-in-law, friends and neighbours, all of whom also contributed with important knowledge and insight. Since my informants and most of their networks belonged to a relatively poor and traditional

1.2.1 Ajnabiya aw Arabiya – foreigner or Arab?

On my way through the Palestinian neighbourhoods of East Jerusalem to visit informants, I was often met by children running ahead of me, announcing my arrival: "*jayi il ajnabiya, jayi il ajnabiya!"* (the foreigner is coming, the foreigner is coming!). I was thus almost daily reminded that my blond hair and light skin made me stand out from the rest, although, from the very beginning, I made sure always to dress modestly in long, loose-fitting pants and skirts and long-sleeved shirts and blouses. Furthermore, I also took great effort in trying to adhere to the social and cultural norms of Palestinian society by always sticking to the women: sitting in the women's room during weddings and family visits, doing women's work and always asking women for advice on different issues. Moreover, I strived towards keeping my conversations with men formal and distanced, as was appropriate for a young, unmarried woman like me. Dressing and acting in this way rather quickly earned me substantial credit, especially among the women, who came to perceive me as a different kind of *ajnabiya* (foreigner): one that understood and bothered to respect local customs and codes of conduct. Although I continued to be seen as an *ajnabiya* by most Palestinians in the street, my position among the women that became my informants gradually changed. Over time, as I spent more and more time with them, they increasingly began to include me in their local world.

1.2.2 Becoming part of a family

"When we share a meal, we become part of the same family. So when you come and sit with us and share in our meal, you become part of our family." This is how Rahaf, one of my key informants, once explained her acceptance and inclusion of me into her family. Thus, "the family", I soon learned, denoted much more than merely a cluster of biologically related individuals. It also referred to a much broader network of people, particularly women, which my informants would designate in kinship terms, although not being biologically related to them. Kinship terms were used then, rather to describe and establish social relations and social worlds (Johnson 2006: 77) as well as express their quality. Young women would, for instance, often call older women *khalti*

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segment of the Palestinian population, among whom marrying off women is more important than higher education, my findings in this thesis apply mainly to women of this socio-economic and cultural segment.

(maternal aunt), thereby indicating a relation of intimacy but also of respect towards the older woman. Being presented to others as an informant's sister or daughter or being called so in everyday interactions with them therefore indicated the degree to which the women included me in their social worlds, where particularly the vocabulary of sisterhood indicates closeness and shared experience (ibid). Part of my inclusion, then, was obviously also based on my gender, which, in a conservative and highly gender segregated environment like that of my informants', played an important role in the kind of information I could acquire. *Bint aw mijawze?* Girl (virgin) or married (woman) was often one of the first questions asked about me when I accompanied my informants on visits to their family, friends or neighbours. Although the answer always surprised them at first – an unmarried girl of my age was unheard of in their world – they would most often then agree that this was the norm where I came from, thereby moving me back into the category of *ajnabiya*. However, they would also stress, I was a different kind of *ajnabiya*, since, unlike any other foreigner they knew, I had come to learn about and share in their lives and hardships.

It was this position as both an insider and at the same time an outsider to their world that helped me acquire the particular insights on which I build my analysis. As an insider, I could share in all the trivialities of everyday life as well as the family gatherings, parties, quarrels, disputes and intrigues. On the other hand, because of being an outsider, coming from what they saw as a more free society – and eventually going back to that society – many women felt more at ease in sharing things with me that they would otherwise not share neither with their sisters, mothers nor female friends, whom they knew would judge them according to another set of standards, in turn putting their social standing at risk[4].

Moving in and out of the women's worlds also had a physical dimension since I had my own "home" in a rented apartment in one of the Jewish neighbourhoods of Jerusalem. Thus, I would come and go in my informants' houses, sometimes visiting only for the day and going back to my apartment at night, while at other times staying for most of the week. Maintaining this freedom of movement between spheres also allowed me to preserve a certain freedom from at least some of the measures of social

[4] Because of the sensitive nature of some of the information my informants shared with me, both as it relates to their families and local community but also to the Israeli Authorities, I have changed the names of the women and families who appear in this thesis, both in my descriptions and in their own stories.

control that came with living with my informants. This, in turn, made it possible for me to pursue other tracks in the field that became important for my research.

1.3 Witnessing as research

> *When I arrive to the house a little after 7 a.m. the house is already completely empty: even the windows and water taps have been removed and all of the family's belongings are piled up outside at a safe distance from the house. We wait for more than two hours, before a military jeep suddenly appears at the end of the road, followed by a whole caravan: police cars, more jeeps, vans and ambulances. They park the cars a bit further up the hill, and border police – a kind of military police – regular police, soldiers and members of the Special Forces, whose primary objective normally is to fight terrorism, start making their way down the hill. They firmly ask me to keep distance to the house, which is then surrounded by police and soldiers. A couple of border policemen with dogs go through the house in search of potential explosives, while Khaled and Leila, the owners of the house, watch them in despair. Then, we suddenly hear the sound of approaching bulldozers and soon after, two of them appear at the top of the hill and start climbing down towards us on creaking caterpillars. They position themselves on each side of the house and then come to a halt. Seconds after, they simultaneously raise their drilling "arms" and slam them into the little house in a loud noise of crushed cement and steal. I stand on the hill behind the house next to a couple of soldiers and watch it happen. The soldiers are laughing and joking and even pose for the camera when I begin taking pictures of the bulldozers in action. After only ten minutes, the bulldozers have finished their work, and start making their way up the hill again, followed by the caravan of vehicles that announced their arrival only half an hour ago. All they leave behind is a pile of rubble and a family with no home anymore.*
>
> (Field notes, July 4 2005)

Part of my fieldwork, as the above story illustrates, also consisted of witnessing house demolitions, although knowing about them in advance was not easy. To avoid clashes with angry Palestinians or Israeli peace activists at the site of these demolitions, plans about upcoming demolitions are very well kept from public scrutiny. People, who, for

different reasons, had access to channels of information about imminent house demolitions, had been provided with my phone number and told to call me at any time of the day if they heard news about upcoming demolitions. By way of using these networks, I managed to witness four house demolitions in the span of my seven months of fieldwork, while many others occurred without my knowledge or while I was otherwise busy in the field. My motivation for being present at these demolitions was to get a grasp of the implications both emotionally but also practically of the event around which my fieldwork revolved. Witnessing demolitions gave me a strong idea, as well as a *bodily experience* (Povrzanovic 1997: 159) of the feelings aroused by this destruction and, together with the individual stories of house demolitions told to me by the women when I interviewed them, gave me an experience of what Dominick LaCapra calls *empathic unsettlement* (LaCapra 1999). Empathic unsettlement, he says, is "a kind of virtual experience through which one puts oneself in another's position while recognising the difference of that position, hence not taking the other's place" (ibid: 722-23). Thus, it is an experience that links witnessing and research while offering a name to the position most aspired to by anthropologists: that of participating in the life of the people we study while avoiding the trap of "going native".

1.4 Structure of the thesis

The following gives an outline of the thesis and how each chapter unfolds a new step in my analysis. I begin the thesis with a chapter (*chapter two)* that depicts the setting of my fieldwork: the city of Jerusalem, the physical layout of which reflects the power relations between Israelis and Palestinians. Taking as my point of departure the city planning of Jerusalem I describe how planning is used as a tool of governance aiming at maintaining a Jewish demographic majority and the way in which demolitions of Palestinian houses are part of this plan.

Thus having placed house demolitions on the geo-political map, I turn, in *chapter three*, to an exploration of the significance of the house as a place of identity formation for Palestinian women before its demolition, an identity making which includes elements of individual, social and national identity.

In c*hapter four* I then set out to analyse the consequences of house demolitions for the identification of the women. Losing their house, I argue, places them in a state of

liminality according to the social order of things in their local world and, because of the economic hardship brought about by the demolition, restricts their possibilities of fulfilling certain social obligations that define their membership in the Palestinian moral community.

In *chapter five*, I further broaden the analysis of identity formation to include the aspect of national identity. The demolition of a house, I suggest, turns it into a politicised space and a place that comes to symbolise the women's attachment to their homeland. The nationalisation of women's identity, which occurs as a result, is in turn reflected in their stories about the house demolition, the content of which in different ways links up to important elements of the Palestinian national narrative. However, this framing of their experience in national terms is done in a way that reflects the women's subaltern position to this dominant narrative and thus represents a different national consciousness: one that allows them to continue to live up to the norms of femininity of Palestinian society.

Chapter 2

Security and city planning in Jerusalem

> *We must be insistently aware of how space can be made to hide consequences from us, how relations of power and discipline are inscribed into the apparently innocent spatiality of social life, how human geographies become filled with politics and ideology.*
> (Soja 1989: 6)

When I first arrived in Jerusalem to set out on my fieldwork, I drove into the city aboard a *sherut*, a white Ford Transit van with seats for 12 people, which is the lone traveller's best option of public transportation from the airport outside Tel Aviv to almost every major city in Israel. As we drove into Jerusalem, I was met with the first of what would become a continuous series of requests over the next seven months of my fieldwork, to position myself in the geographical reality of the *de facto* divided city[5]. "Where in Jerusalem are you going?" the driver asked me. "Mount of Olives", I replied. For the Israeli driver to take me into a Palestinian neighbourhood of East Jerusalem, where my destination was located, was apparently not a favoured task and therefore came at a price. He looked at me in the rear mirror and dryly said: "That will cost you an extra 10 shekel (app.14 DKK.)". Most of the other passengers looked at me as though I came from a different planet. *What on earth would a tourist want to do in an Arab neighbourhood?* they seemed to be thinking. Setting foot in a Palestinian or "Arab" neighbourhood, as they are more often called in the Israeli rhetoric[6], is something most

[5] My claim that the city of Jerusalem is divided runs counter to the official Israeli rhetoric of Jerusalem as the united Jewish capital of Israel (Weizman 2007: 25). This chapter therefore sets out to show how this claim of unity is to be understood rather in terms of Jewish building continuity across the two parts of the city and between the central urban body and the peripheral neighbourhoods (B'Tselem 1997: 38; Cheshin et al 1999: 62).

[6] The state of Israel has, since the beginning of its existence, always seen the Palestinians as "Arabs", similar to those of the neighbouring countries, thereby denying them any distinctive national identity, legitimate claims to the land of Palestine/Israel or collective rights of self-determination (Halper & Younan 2005: 4). This was summarised in the famous statement of Golda Meir, prime minister of Israel from 1969-74: "There was no such thing as Palestinians (...) It was not as though there was a Palestinian people in Palestine considering itself as a Palestinian people and we came and threw them out and took

Israelis in Jerusalem would never even dream about doing. “I wouldn’t know how to get there, and what should I go there for, anyway?” an Israeli friend once asked me. “It can be dangerous for us (Israelis) to be there, and I don’t understand why you absolutely want to live there?” This division of the city into Jewish and Palestinian neighbourhoods that I was first confronted with already on my first day in the field; the history of how it came into being, the ways it is upheld and continuously recreated as well as the assumptions behind it, is the subject of this present chapter. Through this description, I attempt to give an insight into the political reality of present day Jerusalem; a reality which played an important role in shaping my understanding of the dynamics surrounding demolitions of Palestinian houses and the consequences they in turn have for the lives and identity processes of Palestinian women.

2.1 Jerusalem – still a divided city

For the average visitor in Jerusalem, who stays at a downtown hotel, drives around in tourist buses or walks the streets of the city accompanied by a tour guide, the Jewish Israeli vision of Jerusalem as a unified city is easy to maintain. If, on the other hand, you walk or drive around the city on your own, using public transportation, as I did, you will soon come to experience an entirely different reality. A reality that reveals the great spatial divides between the two groups that inhabit the city: Israelis and Palestinians[7]. As I quickly came to realise, living in Jerusalem is not like living in Copenhagen or Geneva or any other city I had lived in before. In Jerusalem, like in the Belfast of the late 1980s**,** described by Begoña Aretxaga, “one’s address (…) is pregnant with socio-political significance” (Aretxaga 1997: 35). Thus, by settling in the city, I automatically became part of a contested space where everything from the house and neighbourhood you live in to the bus you take, the place you shop and the food you eat is seen by the local people as an indication of the party you side with in the conflict.

From my rented flat in the German Colony, one of the previously Palestinian neighbourhoods that became part of Jewish West Jerusalem following the war in 1947-

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their country from them. They did not exist.” (Kimmerling & Migdal 1993: xvi). Throughout my thesis, however, I will be using the term “Palestinians”.

[7] Many subgroups of course exist both within and in addition to these two groups. However, a description of these is beyond the scope and interest of this thesis.

49[8], I soon learned to make my way around the city, crossing the lines and borders between East and West, between Palestinians and Israelis that, although only sometimes demarcated by walls or checkpoints, are at all times very present in the minds of the city's inhabitants. At the bus stop outside my house, where only the Israeli buses officially have their signposts, I found out how to also flag down the smaller Arab buses coming from Bethlehem, driving past the Jewish settlements[9] of Ramat Rachel, East Talpiot, and through the German Colony neighbourhood on their way to the run down Palestinian central bus station just outside the walls of the Old City in East Jerusalem. From here, a multitude of minibuses serve the Palestinian neighbourhoods of Jerusalem: A-ram, Issawiyah, Anata, Beit Hanina, Shu'afat, Al-Azariya, Ras el Amoud, A-Tur and so on, as well as the major West Bank towns of Ramallah, Bethlehem, Jericho and Hebron.

Although their destination is always one of the Palestinian neighbourhoods of the city, getting there invariably means driving on Israeli controlled roads[10] that lead past Israeli settlements. When visiting my informant Jihan in the Palestinian neighbourhood of Issawiya I had to go through the Israeli settlement of Givat Shapira (French Hill), built in 1968 on lands expropriated from Issawiya and the neighbouring Shu'afat. To go to Anata where another informant, Rahaf, lived, the bus would leave the Palestinian bus station and take Road 1, an Israeli built and controlled road running on what used to be the seam line separating East and West Jerusalem, which was marked by a wall between 1949 and 1967[11]. Driving past the settlements of Ramat Eshkol and French Hill, and turning right onto the road leading eventually to the settlement of Ma'ale Adumim it

[8] In the Israeli history books, the war in 1947-49 is called the War of Independence. To the Palestinians on the other hand, it is known simply as Al-Nakhbah, "the Catastrophe", since it meant the destruction of more than 450 Palestinian villages and the expulsion of 700000 Palestinians from their land, thereby creating the still today unresolved Palestinian refugee problem (Morris 1987).

[9] Throughout this chapter, I make a distinction between *neighbourhoods* and *settlements.* The term *neighbourhoods* is used to denote the built up areas of West Jerusalem that became part of the Israeli state as a result of the war in 1947-1949 while the term *settlements* labels the Jewish communities in East Jerusalem, built on land occupied and confiscated from the Palestinians during the 1967 war and after. To hide the fact that the *settlements* are illegal according to the Fourth Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilians in War Time (Fourth GC http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/92.htm), they are most often called "neighbourhoods" in the Israeli rhetoric.

[10] That a road is Israeli controlled means that Israeli police, military police or soldiers can at any time erect a temporary checkpoint anywhere on this road, in order to check passing traffic (especially Palestinian vehicles), thereby effectively preventing Palestinians from moving freely inside the city, e.g. between their homes, shops, schools and hospitals that are often located in different neighbourhoods.

[11] This wall was torn down following the "reunion" of Jerusalem at the end of the 1967 war.

would soon after reach the Shu'afat refugee camp[12], at the entrance to which an Israeli military checkpoint marked the beginning of what, to many Israelis, is regarded as extremely dangerous territory.

The contrast between the Shu'afat camp and the settlements of Pisgat 'Omer and French Hill that surround it, are also such, that one could easily be compelled to think of having entered an entirely different city or even country. In the settlements, large, well paved, lit roads with sidewalks lead the visitor around white, stone-clad apartment blocks surrounded by small, well kept gardens. Passing by supermarkets, restaurants, medical clinics and laundry facilities, buildings are replaced by green areas and playgrounds. Streets, alleyways and parks are clean and the atmosphere almost idyllic. In the refugee camp, the picture is entirely different. From the Israeli checkpoint that marks the entrance to the camp, the paved road is replaced by a dirt road full of pot holes and barely wide enough for two cars to pass each other. Long lines of buses, trucks and cars wait to have their documents checked by young Israeli soldiers before being allowed to leave the camp. Although the camp lies within the boundaries of the Jerusalem Municipality and the inhabitants carry blue Jerusalem ID-cards[13], security checks of documents is a standard procedure. Also as a tourist with a foreign passport, one is subject to these checks.

Past the checkpoint, the road winds its way down the hill, lined on both sides by partly or unpainted grey cement buildings, with laundry hanging from almost every window. On the streets, shops and stalls abound, selling everything from the bulky plush furniture found in every Palestinian home to colourful plastic toys, fruits and vegetables, clothes in all colours, shapes and sizes, women's *hijabs* (headscarves), mobile phones and the sweet and sticky cakes that are eaten on the Prophet's birthday and other important feasts. Dark, narrow alleyways run between the houses, built so close that you can almost shake your neighbour's hand from your window. Mounds of garbage, in many places set on fire, thereby covering the camp in a nauseous smell, line

[12] The Shu'afat refugee camp is named after the adjacent neighbourhood of Shu'afat. To distinguish them the neighbourhood is called Shu'afat and the refugee camp the Shu'afat camp.

[13] There are two different types of ID-cards carried by Palestinians: the blue Jerusalem ID and the green West Bank ID. The Palestinian blue ID indicates that the holder is a "permanent resident" of Jerusalem, a status given to Palestinians residing in the annexed areas of East Jerusalem after 1967. This ID allows the holder to live and work inside Israel, to vote in local elections and to receive services provide by the National Insurance (health care, pension etc.) (Guediri & Dallasheh 2004: 7). Holders of the green West Bank ID, on the other hand, are prohibited from entering Jerusalem and Israel without a special permit and have no access to National Insurance services.

the streets, constantly reminding the passer by that the Jerusalem Municipality never ventures into this area to collect the garbage, although people here pay the same taxes as the rest of the city's population and thus are entitled to the same services.

As described above, the division of the city, which runs counter to the official rhetoric, nevertheless is a stark reality. Palestinians would never be eligible – not to mention have the financial means – to buy a house in a settlement (Cheshin et al. 1999: 60). On the other hand, the average Israeli in Jerusalem would never venture into a Palestinian neighbourhood, for fear of being attacked. To better understand how this division came into being, however, one has to go back in time and look at the way historical events and wars of the past century have shaped the geographical outline and reality of Jerusalem.

2.2 The history of Jerusalem in modern times

Due to its being thrice holy – to Muslims, Christians and Jews – Jerusalem has been religiously disputed for many centuries. However, the national struggle between Israelis and Palestinians, of which control over Jerusalem became a central part, only started emerging during the twentieth century and particularly after World War One[14]. Zionism, the Jewish nationalism as well as Palestinian nationalism, developed alongside the nationalist movements throughout Europe in the late nineteenth century. For the Zionist movement, which took its name from Zion – the name of Jerusalem in biblical times – the battle to regain independence in the biblical homeland of the Jews inevitably also meant gaining control with its historical capital (Romann & Weingrod 1991: 7-9). However, the city also had great importance to Palestinians – Muslims as well as Christians – whose most important holy places are found in the city and whose families

[14] The Zionist version of the history of the establishment of the state of Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was dominant and undisputed outside the Arab world for several decades after the war in 1947-49, since colonial historiography did not allow for another version (Swedenburg: 12-13). However, from the late 1980s a group of Israeli historians, who came to be known as the *New* or *Revisionist* historians, began publishing a series of books based on new studies of the Israeli archives, studies in which they questioned the veracity of the old version of history, especially the descriptions of the events before and during the emergence of the state of Israel (Shlaim 2000: xv-xvi; Morris 1987; Pappé 1999 & 2004; Segev 1986). In my historical descriptions I lean on the work of these new historians, although still largely disputed by the Israeli public. Many Palestinian historians, on the other hand, do not think them critical enough in their revision of history. (http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/paper/shlaimAvi.html).

had lived there for generations (Pappé 2004: 79; Romann & Weingrod 1991: 9). The violent, physical struggle over Jerusalem broke out shortly after the UN General Assembly in November 1947 voted for the partition of Palestine according to a plan drawn up by UNSCOP, the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine. Following this plan, Mandatory Palestine was to be divided into a Jewish and an Arab part, with Jerusalem as a *corpus separatum* under international control (Pappé 2004:126). The sectarian disputes between Palestinians and Jews quickly developed into regular battles, leading to the expulsion of the majority of the Arab population of Jerusalem from the western part of the city. When the state of Israel was proclaimed on May 14, 1948, the surrounding Arab countries decided to attack it. When after almost a year of fighting a cease-fire agreement was reached, the city had *de facto* been divided into a Jewish part (West Jerusalem) under the control of the newly established Israeli state and an Arab part (East Jerusalem) controlled by the Kingdom of Jordan (Krystall 1998: 6-12). The war had created its own boundaries and the UN Partition Plan, with Jerusalem as an international zone, was never implemented. Only about 1% of the Palestinian population of West Jerusalem had remained while all Jewish families had been evacuated from the Arab East Jerusalem (Romann & Weingrod 1991: 11). Thus, the division of the city along "ethnic" lines, which in many ways is still in place today, was a reality.

For the next two decades, the two parts of Jerusalem were separated by a wall and each grew within their own separate state system. West Jerusalem developed into an almost exclusively Jewish city, inspired by the urban development of the western world. Economic development was highly prioritised by Israeli policy makers and new immigrants poured into the city. East Jerusalem, on the other hand, was neglected by its Jordanian occupiers, and state controlled resources were mainly allocated to the development of the Jordanian capital of Amman (ibid: 19). Therefore, East Jerusalem remained a rather run down and economically poor city inhabited only by Palestinians. After the Six-Day War in 1967, when Israel occupied the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, the wall that divided Jerusalem was torn down and Israel annexed some 70 square kilometres of land to the municipal boundaries of West Jerusalem: the 6 square kilometres of East Jerusalem that had been under Jordanian rule, in addition to 64 square kilometres belonging to twenty-eight West Bank villages (B'Tselem 1997: 17).

This greatly expanded city was then declared "reunited" as the *holy, eternal and indivisible capital of Israel* (Weizman 2007: 25). Its status as the capital of Israel was however never recognised by the international community, since East Jerusalem and the annexed West Bank lands continued (and continue) to be considered occupied territory according to the Fourth Geneva Convention as well as several UN Security Council Resolutions (Fourth Geneva Convention; UNSCR 252, 298 and 478). The expansion of the city meant that 66000 Palestinians living in the formerly Jordanian controlled East Jerusalem and the surrounding annexed villages became part of a larger Israeli controlled Jerusalem. The number of Palestinians in the new Jerusalem was however relatively small due to the Israeli strategy for annexing land based on the principle of maximum territory containing minimum Palestinian population (Weizman 2007: 94).

Limiting the Palestinian population from the very beginning became a high priority since it was necessary to maintain and secure Jerusalem as a united, Jewish city: the capital of the Jewish state of Israel. This claim of exclusive Jewish rights is the core of Zionism and thus the ideology on which Israeli politics build. Therefore, the threat posed by the Palestinians in Jerusalem is first and foremost a *demographic threat*, considering that Palestinians have a much higher birth rate than Jews in the city[15]. However, following the two Palestinian Intifadas[16] – in the late '80s and beginning of 2000 respectively – the threat posed by Palestinians increasingly came to be regarded as *physical* as well, taking the shape of suicide bombers, stabbings and drive by shootings of Israeli citizens. In the following, I will proceed to show how Israel since 1967, as a result of this twofold threat, has created a *discourse of securitisation* that guides its actions in all matters relating to the Palestinians. I will briefly discuss the emergence and outline of this discourse, and then proceed to show how it is used to explain the actions of the state vis-à-vis the Palestinians, focusing specifically on the Palestinians of Jerusalem.

[15] In 1967, the Palestinian population numbered 68600 or 25.8% of the population of Jerusalem while Jews amounted to 197700 or 74.2%. In 2002, however, the Palestinian population had grown to 221900 or 32.6% of the population while the Jewish population had only grown to 458600 or 67.4% of the population. In a census from 2006, the distribution of the population was set to be 65% Jews to 35% Palestinians (Statistical Yearbook of Jerusalem no. 20, 2002-2003, Israel Central Bureau of Statistics http://www.cbs.gov.il).

[16] Intifada in Arabic means "to shake off", and has therefore given name to the – so far – two Palestinian uprisings opposing the Israeli occupation.

2.3 The Israeli vision of security

Since its birth as a state in 1948, Israel has always been extremely concerned with security, a notion which has been associated with the ability of the state to remain sovereign and Jewish. For many years following the creation of the state, the threat was seen as coming from outside, from neighbouring Arab countries wishing their defeat, and the way of dealing with this threat was through *defence*. However, with the occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem in 1967, the danger from within, that is, from the Palestinian population in the occupied territories, slowly came more and more to the centre of attention[17]. Accordingly, the focus gradually changed from being one of *defence*, clearly distinguishing between "inside" and "outside" territories and defining the danger as coming from outside in the shape of regular armies, to being one of *security*, the logic of which "presupposes that the danger is already inside, presented by a population in which subversive elements exist" (Weizman 2007: 106). Thus, since the outset of the Israeli occupation in 1967, "security" and "security needs" have become the basis of the way the conflict is framed by the Israeli state. Security has been used as an explanation for the actions of the state towards the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories and even as the overarching principle guiding the peace negotiations of the Oslo Peace process[18] and beyond (Halper & Younan 2005: 5; Sharoni 1995: 36-37). In order to clarify the logic underlying the way security is used by the Israeli state in its interaction with the Palestinians, I would like to turn for a moment to the definition of security.

Security is a global concept that deals with the problem of order and disorder, reflecting at the same time both the condition of order, understood as the absence of risk and anxiety as well as the political means of achieving that order (Bubandt 2005: 278). Although a global concept, there are different and interdependent levels at which

[17] Ironically, about one fifth of the population of Israel proper are so-called Arab Israelis, who are the descendents of the Palestinians who didn't flee their homes during the 1947-49 war. Since they became Israeli citizens after the war, and have since lived within the Israeli system, they are regarded as less of a threat than the Palestinians in the occupied territories, although still treated as second class citizens in Israel.

[18] The Oslo peace process took place between 1990 and 1993 and was seen at the time as a milestone in the relation between Israel and the Palestinians since it was their first time negotiating face to face. The process culminated in September 1993 with an official signature ceremony of a Declaration of Principles on the White House lawn. Already in the late '90s, however, the Oslo process was declared dead and irrelevant (Pappé 2004: 254).

security can be studied: the global, regional, national and local level. My focus in the present section is mainly on security as a political tool to achieve order, particularly as it is being used in an Israeli national context. From this perspective, I suggest we understand security as a reaction to a perceived and socially constructed threat, defined and created as such by the power relations in the given context (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998: 12; Wæver 1995: 54). This reaction, in turn, is based on a *process of securitisation*, that is, the rhetorical evocation of security as justifying a particular kind of politics (Buzan 1997: 13; Wæver 1995: 55). According to Bubandt, securitisation is thus to be understood as a discursive device for community building at various levels (Bubandt 2005: 277). However, in the case of Israel, I suggest, securitisation is in the making rather as a discourse in its own right – a *securitisation discourse* – that works towards creating a particular kind of (social) order.

2.3.1 The securitisation discourse

While clearly drawing inspiration from Foucault's ideas, my notion of a *securitisation discourse* however, does not echo the exact Foucauldian definition of a discourse as whatever constrains – but also enables – writing, speaking and thinking about a given social object or practice within specific historical limits – that is a historically specific body of knowledge (McHoul & Grace 1993: 26 & 31; Foucault 1972 & 1991[1972]). Rather, I adapt the Foucauldian notion of a discourse as *a way of speaking and thinking about a specific practice* – namely security – to a specific national and cultural setting – Israel – and focus on the strategic ways this discourse is being used by a state actor. Thereby, I add an element of state agency and strategy to the rather structural concept of discourse developed by Foucault.

Since the birth of the Israeli state, I argue, security and hence securitisation has become a basic mode of thinking – a discourse – by which the state seeks to govern the population within its territory. Thus, the securitisation discourse has become an important instrument of the Israeli variety[19] of *governmentality* (Foucault 1991[1979]); the dominant form of state power since the eighteenth century, which has as its main

[19] By emphasising here the specificity of the securitisation discourse to the Israeli form of governance, I follow the appeal of Blom Hansen and Stepputat, who, in their introduction to *States of Imagination*, call for a denaturalisation of the Foucauldian view of governmentality by studying individual states and modes of governance in ethnographic details (Blom Hansen & Stepputat 2001: 37).

aim the control, regulation and welfare of the population (Gupta 2001: 67). Although being a tool of governance, the workings of which in Foucault's understanding lie beyond the awareness of the population that it regulates, the securitisation discourse in Israel, I argue, also forms part of – and actually dominates – public speech about government policies and priorities and, over time, is becoming increasingly accepted and even somewhat internalised by the Israeli population in what echoes the *civilian militarism* described by Baruch Kimmerling (Kimmerling 2001: 208-28). The essence of civilian militarism being that "…military considerations, as well as matters that are defined as national security issues, almost always receive higher priority than political, economic and ideological problems" (ibid: 215). Thus, the securitisation discourse as a form of governmental power can be seen to work towards creating a particular kind of nation-state, as I will show in the following.

Because security in Israel is associated with the ability of the state to remain sovereign and Jewish – and hence with ethnic purity – the threat represented by the Palestinians is first and foremost a *demographic* threat or even a demographic "time-bomb", as I have previously argued (Weizman 2007: 48 & 107). Therefore, many of the security measures taken to protect the Jewish population are measures that aim at increasing their number, while at the same time decreasing the Palestinian presence. Taking the case of Jerusalem this goal is camouflaged in the use of the expression "maintaining the *demographic balance"* which is the term used to describe the official policy of the Israeli government of maintaining a ratio of 73.5% Jews to 26.5% Palestinians – the population distribution as it was in 1973 when the policy was agreed to – in the city of Jerusalem (Cheshin et. al. 1999: 32 & 52; Margalit 2006: 60).

This preoccupation with numbers or – borrowing a term from Appadurai – "fear of small numbers" (Appadurai 2006: 44) stems precisely from the Israeli nationalist goal of ethnic (Jewish) purity, in which the (Palestinian) minority then becomes "matter out of place" (Douglas 1966), a group that blurs the boundaries of the national taxonomy and represents an obstacle between Jewish majority and total purity (Appadurai 2006: 44 & 53). Thus, the Jewish population of Jerusalem, as well as Israel in general, can be described as *a majority with a minority complex* (Tambiah 1986: 58), a majority that is

afraid of becoming the minority unless this minority is effectively controlled or disappears altogether.

One of the ways in which the Israeli state tries to control the Palestinian minority in Jerusalem, or "maintain the demographic balance", is through a particular kind of city planning[20]. To further illustrate this point, I will now turn to a description of the way Jerusalem is being planned and the consequences it is having for the geographical outline of the city.

2.4 City planning

City planning is one of the schemes intended to improve the human condition described by Scott in his book *Seeing like a State. How certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition have Failed* (Scott 1998). Originating in what he calls a high-modernist ideology, defined as "…a strong version of the self-confidence about scientific and technical progress (…) and above all the rational design of social order commensurate with the scientific understanding of natural laws" (Scott 1998: 4), he shows how city planning in the 20th century has worked to turn cities into orderly and legible grids aimed at mastering the urban space and increasing state control and manipulation with its subjects (ibid: 2, 77 & 108-110). This has been done, among many things, through the use of straight lines and right angles in the design of the city as well as through functional segregation; that is creating separate zones for workplaces, residence, shopping and entertainment, thereby creating greater efficiency in the use of the urban space. According to Scott, however, as the title of his book reveals, schemes like that of the high-modernist city planning have failed in their mission, largely because of being static, standard grids imposed, in the case of city planning, on a lively and unruly space of social life constantly created and recreated by its inhabitants. As he concludes, the

[20] However, other tools besides city planning are also used in the demographic "battle". For instance, rules and measures meant to encourage Jewish reproduction while controlling and curbing Arab fertility have been adopted: abortion clinics and free contraceptives are readily available for Arab women while Jewish women are denied access to contraceptives and dissuaded from abortions. Furthermore, while Arab women have experienced an important reduction in the national insurance benefits for their children, child births in Jewish families are encouraged through incentives provided by the "Law on Families Blessed with Children" and "The Fund for Encouraging Birth", both of which offer a range of subsidies to families with more than three children (Abdo 1991: 24; Sharoni 1995: 34; Yuval-Davis 1989: 94-99).

standard grids of city planning exclude the necessary role of local knowledge and know-how or knowledge stemming from practical experience (ibid: 6 & 311).

In Jerusalem, the grid of high-modernist city planning described by Scott is somewhat reflected in what Jeff Halper calls the *matrix of control* (Halper & Younan 2005: 10-19) – although city planning is but one of the elements of this matrix – which aims at controlling and mastering not only the urban space of Jerusalem, but the entire space of the Occupied Territories. The matrix of control, as defined by Halper, is a complex system of laws, planning procedures, restrictions on movement, bureaucracy and infrastructure that "…conceal Israeli control behind a façade of 'proper administration'" (ibid: 10). The matrix, he says, resembles the East Asian game "Go", the aim of which is not to defeat the opponent like in a game of Chess, but rather to immobilise him by controlling key points on the matrix of the game. In the following, I will concentrate on the element of Halper's matrix of control most relevant for my current argument, namely the city planning of Jerusalem.

Shortly after the "re-unification" of Jerusalem, that is the annexation by Israel of Arab East Jerusalem as well as land belonging to a number of surrounding Palestinian villages to West Jerusalem, Israel started drawing up a city plan aimed at preventing the city from being divided again, as well as securing that it remain a Jewish city. This was when the policy of maintaining the demographic balance was introduced, and planners decided it was to be done through what they called the "housing potential" (Weizman 2007: 48). This implied the use of two planning policies: on one hand to promote the construction of Jewish housing and neighbourhoods, especially in East Jerusalem, and on the other to limit the expansion of Palestinian housing, thereby hindering the growth of the Palestinian population and forcing them to make their homes elsewhere (Weizman 2007: 48-49; Cheshin et. al 1999: 10).

2.4.1 The Jewish city

From the very outset, the promotion of a Jewish presence in East Jerusalem has been carefully planned. The aim is not only to build Jewish "communities" (settlements) there but also to break the Palestinian continuity and reinforce the isolation of the Palestinians in East Jerusalem into small unconnected enclaves (Guediri & Dallasheh

2004: 24). This is being done by strategically placing Jewish settlements in between and around Palestinian communities on several sides, creating wedges between Palestinian neighbourhoods, thereby preventing them from developing into a Palestinian urban continuum (see map in annex 1). While Palestinian communities are isolated from each other, a system of by-pass roads – sometimes also named settler roads – are built to connect the settlements in East Jerusalem with each other as well as with the city centre, while effectively by-passing the Palestinian communities, as the name indicates (ibid). In addition to the settlements within the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem – the "inner ring" of settlements – a later master plan from 1995 outlined what is today called "Greater Jerusalem", consisting of an additional "outer ring" of settlements built deep into the West Bank (see annex 2). This plan makes Jerusalem not only a city but a region controlling important portions of the West Bank. Via a system of roads and tunnels, the "outer ring" of settlements is connected with the "inner ring" within the municipal boundaries, thereby effectively creating buffer zones between the Palestinian communities in Jerusalem and those of the West Bank (Halper & Younan 2005: xvi).

While Jewish settlements and by-pass roads of East Jerusalem are not built along straight lines and angles, as in the high-modernist city described by Scott (1998), their design meets the same goal of increasing state control, in this case with the subjects of its governance that are caught in and immobilised by the grid. In many ways then, the city planning of Jerusalem resembles that of 19th century Paris under Napoleon, which aimed at making the city more governable and, most importantly, safe against popular insurrections (Scott 1998: 60-61). As in present day Jerusalem, the security of the state was at the centre.

Many of the Jewish settlements built in East Jerusalem in the early days of the occupation are characterised by being open communities that anyone can walk or drive freely into, thereby reinforcing the impression that they are normal "neighbourhoods" in the city. However, an increasing number of settlements, especially those of the "outer ring" such as Ma'ale Adumim, which are located deep into the West Bank, are being surrounded by fences and have manned gates or checkpoints at the main entrance. Hereby they increasingly come to bear resemblance with *gated communities* – residential developments surrounded by walls or fences and entered through a guarded entrance (Low 2003: 12), best known from the USA, where they started appearing in

the 1960s and ‘70s, while only gaining real popularity in the ‘80s (ibid: 14-15). Today, various types of gated complexes and communities are found around the world in such different places as China, Lebanon, Latin America, South Africa and Russia (Glasze et. al. 2006: 6-7).

2.4.1.1 Gated communities

The theories about *gated communities*, the reason for their appearance and popularity, the function they serve as well as their impact on wider urban society are widely discussed among urban planners, geographers and architects as well as sociologists and anthropologists (Glasze et. al. 2006). Gated communities serve such different functions as providing their inhabitants with a sense of safety and security, a sense of community and identity, shared social values, economic control and efficiency of neighbourhood management, the achievement of an ideal lifestyle as well as status and prestige (ibid). Considering these very different forms and functions of gated communities around the world, what seems to be of greatest interest is their position in and impact on the local society and context. Following this cue, I will proceed to describe the gated community in the specific context of Jerusalem, where, as I will argue, they play a particular role in the architecture of occupation.

The gated communities of Jerusalem in many ways differ from those in other cities around the world, beginning with the fact that they are state-funded and owned, unlike most other such communities around the world that are “private cities” (Glasze et. al. 2006). In addition, they are not primarily the result of a particular socio-economic development on a local, regional or global scale as similar communities elsewhere. Rather, I argue, they are the result of a political project, namely the Israeli colonisation of the Occupied Palestinian Territories; a colonisation which consists largely of “being on the land”, thereby preventing it from being given back in any future peace negotiations. While they are part of a larger colonising plan, people living in the settlements rarely perceive themselves in that optic, largely because settlements in East Jerusalem are portrayed and presented in the official Israeli rhetoric as being no more than ordinary Israeli neighbourhoods, even very nice and secure neighbourhoods linked, as I have described it, by a system of by-pass high ways and tunnels to the Jewish city

centre of West Jerusalem. People live there because housing is cheap – being heavily subsidised by the government in order to encourage people to move there – because facilities are good and the environment is calm and child friendly, reasons that resemble those of other people living in gated communities worldwide[21] (Glasze et. al. 2006).

The impact of these Israeli gated communities on the surrounding society, in a broad sense, also resembles that of gated communities in e.g. the USA by the fact that they promote the "…segregation or 'sorting' of people into homogeneous groups" (McKenzie 2006: 9). However, the segregation created by the Israeli gated communities runs more along strict "ethnic" lines of division than in the USA, where economic affluence is most often the dividing factor (ibid). Furthermore, the Israeli settlements are designed with a specific goal in mind which, I argue, is highly specific to this local context. This goal, as argued above, is the effective encroachment of Jewish interests onto Palestinian land, helping to ensure Israeli spatial presence. At the same time, through measures of fencing and gating to keep the dangerous Palestinian "other" out, the state pictures itself as taking care of the personal security of its people. As a result of the second Intifada that began in 2000, this process of securing the Jewish population through gating has been coupled with a range of measures to keep the Palestinians out that I will call *gating off* measures, measures that I will describe in a subsequent section. In order to understand the context in which gating off is taking place, and thereby how it fits into the broader picture of space making in Jerusalem, however, we first need to look into the ways in which the Palestinian neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem are planned.

2.4.2 Palestinian enclaves

While the planning of the Jewish city aims at expanding and promoting Israeli presence, for the Palestinian inhabitants "…hardly anything was ever planned but their departure", as Eyal Weizman puts it (Weizman 2007: 47). This has been done through a range of judicial and bureaucratic city planning measures which, while being more or less

[21] However, settlements of a different kind also exist, those that are built for ideological reasons. These are often built deep into the West Bank, established and inhabited by members or sympathisers of "Gush Emunim" (Block of the Faithful), the Israeli national religious settler movement. The inhabitants of these settlements see it as their national duty as Jews to ensure a Jewish presence in all of biblical Israel (Eretz Israel). These settlements often start out as a few caravans on a hilltop, later to expand into more permanent communities (Weizman 2007: 79, 88-92).

explicitly discriminatory towards the Palestinians, are at all times legal according to Israeli law (Bishara 2002: 44). The most significant of the laws on which the planning of Jerusalem is based is the *Israeli Planning and Building Law* from 1965 (Kaminker 1997: 8; Margalit 2006: 36). It has been used to place at least three important restrictions on building and urban development in the Palestinian sector.

First, it provides that a land owner needs a permit from the Municipality to erect a new building or add on to an existing one. In addition, the building has to be included within a recognised neighbourhood plan. When the law was passed in 1965, however, none of the Palestinian neighbourhoods in Jerusalem were planned, since they were under Jordanian administration. Since 1967, the Israeli authorities have prepared plans for thirteen out of nineteen Arab neighbourhoods in Jerusalem (around 60% of the land available for Palestinians), but even this development is very slow (Kaminker 1997).

Second, the Israeli state has set in place a series of complicated and extensive regulations guiding the process of how to obtain the required permit to build a house; rules that Meir Margalit has written an extensive book about, and which are characterised by the fact that they especially affect the Palestinians (Margalit 2006). They do so because the individual Palestinian family, wanting to build a house, does not have the financial means to hire legal aid to guide them through the bureaucratic jungle or to pay the heavy cost of obtaining a permit (ibid: 48-49) (see annex 3). For the Israeli contractor building a whole neighbourhood or settlement, lawyers' and permit expenses are eventually included in the sales price of the houses and apartments.

The third restriction on construction in the Palestinian sector, in turn, is tied to the size of the area within which Palestinians are allowed to build. The expropriation and confiscation of Palestinian land by the Israeli state, the lack of city plans and the limitations to the land zoned for Palestinian residence in the existing plans only leaves 9000 dunam[22] or 17% of the total land of East Jerusalem (70000 dunam) available for Palestinian construction. In addition, most of these 9000 dunam are already built up (Margalit 2006: 38; Bishara 2002: 44) (see annex 4). Adjacent open areas have furthermore often been zoned as open, public space or "green areas", effectively limiting Palestinian expansion there. Many of these areas, however, have later been re-zoned and allocated for the expansion of Jewish settlements (Weizman 2007: 50). Re-

[22] 1 dunam equals 1000 square meters.

zoning for the purpose of Palestinian building in turn never occurs. Of the above mentioned measures to restrict house building in the Palestinian sector, only the third is explicitly discriminatory, while the others cloak themselves in the robe of being universal rules that are, nevertheless, used in a discriminatory way.

While private entrepreneurs, blessed and supported by the Israeli state, have thus built houses for 225000 Israelis in East Jerusalem alone since 1967, on land confiscated and expropriated from Palestinians, Palestinians have, as we have seen, readily been prevented from building their own homes. Furthermore, since public housing in the Palestinian sector has also been purposely neglected, the housing shortage among Palestinians today is considerable, and, according to Halper, amounts to around 25000 housing units. As a result, Palestinians in need of a house are very often forced to build illegally (Halper & Younan 2005: 11 & 15).

2.4.2.1 House demolitions – a tool of demographic control

The scope of the problem of illegal house building among Palestinians in East Jerusalem, that is, houses built without the required permit from the Jerusalem Municipality described above, is significant. Recent estimates show that approximately 40-50% of all buildings in the Palestinian sector are built without a permit (Margalit 2006: 27). According to the aforementioned Planning and Building Law of 1965 such illegal houses, the owner of which has committed a criminal offence, can be rightly demolished – a right which the Israeli authorities have made extensive use of in the Palestinian neighbourhoods since 1967. Although no figures breaking down the total number of houses demolished in Jerusalem alone since 1967 exist, figures for the entire Occupied Territories indicate that more than 18000 Palestinian houses have been demolished in these past forty years (ICAHD 2008). Currently between 75 and 150 Palestinian houses are demolished every year in Jerusalem alone, as a result of this policy (Margalit 2006: 21-34).

In the official Israeli rhetoric, house demolitions are presented as a necessary and legal tool against criminal subjects, who profit economically from building illegal houses (ibid: 29). According to the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD), however, house demolitions are rather a regular political tool aiming at deterring Palestinians from building in Jerusalem and for the lack of a place to live,

forcing them to move out of the city (Margalit 2002: 28). Thus, while being legal by law, house demolitions are part and parcel of the larger city planning goal of reducing the Palestinian presence in Jerusalem. Planning and demolishing houses to limit Palestinian population expansion has not had the desired effect. Instead of decreasing, the Palestinian population only continues to increase, amounting today to around 35% of the population rather than the 27% which remains the demographic goal of the Israeli state.

2.4.2.2 Segregation

The unequal development of Jewish and Palestinian housing and infrastructure in Jerusalem outlined above, which is also reflected in the unequal distribution of the municipal budget and thereby the municipal services (Guediri & Dallasheh 2004: 21-23; Margalit 2002)**,** has led to the creation of a highly segregated city along the lines described by Jeff Halper in the following:

> *If you look at a map of the city it is clear that Jerusalem is really defined as a Jewish city. The whole dynamic, the whole road pattern, traffic patterns and the neighbourhoods that are there, and the presence…it's all Israeli. And the Palestinians have been reduced to little isolated islands. And then, within that unimpeded, large, urban space you have unimpeded Israeli planning and development and expansion. So that in fact these policies, that separate Palestinian areas from Jewish areas, Palestinian built up areas from open areas, they are all controlled by Israel, and thereby allow kind of a development of a Jewish Jerusalem, almost as if the Palestinians weren't there. They are really not in the way; they've been isolated and marginalised. And that, I think, is the biggest…the major way in which (…) the whole policy of planning, has defined the Jewish Jerusalem. It's all Jewish Jerusalem with some Palestinian islands embedded here and there, that are called East Jerusalem.*
>
> (Interview with Jeff Halper, Israeli/American anthropologist, director of Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions)

While being a legal concern of all cities around the globe, city planning, as I have shown, is not always merely a tool intended to improve the human condition that fails,

as argued by Scott (1998). Rather, in the case of Jerusalem, city planning has become "a tool in the hands of those who hold power, enabling them to regulate demographic and urban processes to suit their interests" (Margalit 2006: 36). The segregation in Jerusalem then is not only of the kind found in most other major cities of the world, where different ethnic groups reside in different neighbourhoods. It is segregation and isolation that leads to forced migration of a whole population segment, unofficially referred to in Israeli circles as the "silent transfer"[23] (Weizman 2007: 49).

As I will now proceed to show, not only city planning measures impeding construction in the Palestinian sector and expanding it in the Jewish sector are part of the creation of a segregated Jerusalem. Following the two Palestinian Intifadas, from 1987-1992 and from 2000 until today, Palestinians are increasingly seen not only as a *demographic threat*, requiring population regulation measures to be taken, but also as a *physical security threat*, in turn calling for more physical security measures – measures that also form part of the previously mentioned matrix of control described by Halper (Halper & Younan 2005). These security measures, some of which I will turn to describe in the following, add yet another element to the securitisation process, physically and mentally separating Israelis and Palestinians in Jerusalem.

2.4.2.3 Gated off communities

In section 2.4.1.1, I argued for a certain resemblance between the settlements of the "outer ring" in Jerusalem and gated communities around the world and outlined the specificity of the Israeli-type gated communities as being their particular role in the colonising effort of the Israeli state. Today, that is, after the outbreak of the second Intifada in 2000, measures are increasingly taken not only to keep the Israeli population secure within the settlements in East Jerusalem and elsewhere, but also to keep the Palestinians out of the Jewish city by means of checkpoints and since 2002 the imposing "Separation Barrier", thus creating not only gated, but also what I will be calling *gated off* communities.

[23] In many ways then, the planning of the Palestinian neighbourhoods in Jerusalem bears resemblance with the planning of the Jewish ghettos in Central and Eastern European cities during World War Two. It does so particularly in the way of drawing boundaries that separate and isolate the unwanted group (in this case the Palestinians) from the remainder of the city space, thereby creating Palestinian absence in the Jewish city (rather than Jewish absence in the "Aryan" cities) (Cole 2003).

When moving around the Palestinian neighbourhoods of East Jerusalem or driving on a Palestinian bus or in a Palestinian car (defined as such by the looks of the persons inside it) fixed and "flying" checkpoints are part and parcel of daily life. They range from permanent structures, made up of a system of stop signs, concrete block labyrinths, intended at making approaching cars slow down for inspection, and caravans or shelters, where the soldiers on duty can take shelter from the rain and sun, as well as interrogate suspected persons caught at the checkpoint, to the so called "flying" checkpoints; the latter consist most times of a military jeep, parked in the middle of the road with a few soldiers standing around it, ready to wave passing cars to a halt.

At the entrance to the Shu'afat refugee camp and its extension in the form of the neighbourhood of Anata, a fixed checkpoint has been part of daily life since 2000, even though the camp officially lies within the boundaries of the municipality of Jerusalem, drawn up in 1967. Because it is a refugee camp the Shu'fat camp and its inhabitants are perceived by Israel and Israelis as being particularly dangerous. This is so since poverty is often more severe in the camps and since camps have been known as more closely knit and conservative communities fostering and breeding more than a few resistance groups and suicide bombers in the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. According to the planned route of a major security device, currently being erected around Jerusalem as well as the entire West Bank, namely the "Separation Barrier" – known to Israelis as the security fence and to Palestinians as the separation or Apartheid Wall – it is intended to exclude the Shu'afat refugee camp from Jerusalem and place it on the West Bank side of the Barrier, thereby entirely preventing the Palestinians living there from entering Jerusalem in the future (Halper & Younan 2005 : 12) (see annex 1). By means of the Separation Barrier as well as a multitude of fixed and flying checkpoints, "dangerous elements", which indiscriminately comes to label Palestinians at random, can be kept out of the Jewish city. The communities they live in and are part of are then not only isolated and cut off from each other but also from the commercial city centre. They have in fact been effectively *gated off* from the larger city space, whether temporarily or permanently.

However, the route of the Separation Barrier as well as the placement of certain checkpoints point to the fact that they are not only to be considered as measures purely meant to provide for the physical security of the Jewish citizens of Jerusalem. In the two Palestinian neighbourhoods of Abu Dis and A-Ram, for instance, the Barrier – which on this stretch consists of an eight meter high concrete wall – runs right down the middle of the main street, thereby effectively disrupting not only traffic and business but also cutting off people from work places, schools, hospitals as well as families and friends. In addition, in A-Ram, a fixed checkpoint is also placed halfway down the main street leading from central Jerusalem to the northern Palestinian neighbourhoods. The Barrier and checkpoints cannot, then, be argued to serve only purposes of physical security. Rather, they serve the additional purpose of dividing, isolating and paralysing Palestinians and in general making their lives as difficult as possible, and are in this sense part of the larger matrix of control (Halper & Younan 2005).

That the Separation Barrier indeed is not only built to serve security purposes is also reflected in a "Security Separation Plan" prepared in 2000 by then prime minister Ehud Barak in parallel to his preparation of the Camp David peace talks. The plan outlined a scheme for Israeli separation from the Palestinians that could be put to use in the event the negotiations with the Palestinians broke down[24] (Haaretz 13/12 2007). It was approved by the Israeli cabinet in October 2000, and had the Separation Barrier as one of its central elements. According to the plan, only one of the objectives of the barrier has to do with "providing physical security for Israeli citizens, including settlers" (Halper & Younan 2005: 13). The other objectives have to do with preventing Palestinians from achieving any territorial, infrastructural or political gains and pressuring them, through closures, trade restrictions and isolation in general, to submit to negotiations (ibid). This indicates that although security in Israel is also sometimes phrased in terms of a *physical threat* against the country's citizens, it always carries an underlying notion of a threat to the Jewish demographic majority, reflected in the preoccupation with borders and territory. This, in turn, leads us back to my initial argument about security as demographic control.

[24] Since this plan unfortunately only exists in Hebrew, and furthermore is not readily available to the public, I am relying on information about it published in the English language Israeli newspaper Haaretz as well as in Jeff Halper's book *Obstacles to Peace* (2005).

2.5 Summing up

As we have seen in this chapter, the setting of my fieldwork is a very complex city, the geographical outline of which has been guided for the past forty years by a particular political interest and adjoining policies, namely the maintenance of a Jewish majority in Jerusalem aimed at securing the city's status in the future as the capital of the Jewish Israeli state. Security, and thereby securitisation, as I have shown, is in the making as a way of thinking, a *discourse* that defines the way of looking at and reacting towards the Palestinians in Jerusalem. Security, according to the Jewish nationalist notion of exclusive Jewish rights to Jerusalem, is largely defined as a Jewish demographic majority. This in turn guides the way the city is planned to endorse the Jewish presence and curb the Palestinian existence. House demolitions, I have argued, are part and parcel of this much larger securitisation scheme, as I choose to define it, that, while being framed as a legal and necessary tool to clamp down on illegal house building and generally deter Palestinians from building illegally, also serve a wider political goal of quietly transferring people from their land. In addition, as is the focus of this thesis, house demolitions target an important place for culture and identity making of Palestinians, namely the house. In the following chapter I will therefore turn to the people who are eventually affected by house demolitions, particularly the women, and look into the nature of their attachment to the house prior to its demolition.

Chapter 3

Palestinian women and house-based identities

> *When my house was finished we planted trees… I made a big garden at the door of the house. There were all kinds of fruits and vegetables and…all the things I wanted, I put them in this house. I put all my hopes in this house. That's it, this is my house and tomorrow I will marry my children and they will live in it, because my house was big, it had two floors. And I also made the décor of the kitchen the way I wanted it (…) my house was my kingdom and I lived in it like a queen.*
> (Rahaf, interview)

The first time I entered a Palestinian house on an introductory visit to a potential informant, I was immediately offered a seat in the tidy and nicely but sparsely decorated living room, which I stepped directly into from the front door. As I looked around the room, while the woman was in the kitchen making tea, I was surprised by the tidiness of the place and the absence of any signs of life being led here. After all, this woman lived with her husband and six young children in what was a three bedroom apartment, I had been told. A couple of times, different children's heads did appear in the door separating the room I was sitting in from the rest of the house behind it, to have a peak at the foreigner visiting their mother. Apart from that, I didn't get any idea of the life going on in the rest of the house. After a while, the woman's husband came home and the three of us sat and talked while drinking tea. This first visit left me with no particular impression of the kind of space a house represents. However, on this occasion I had yet only seen what Goffman calls the *front stage* of this house as well as the woman and her family's life there (Goffman 1959).

Front stage and *back stage* are two key concepts of Goffman's theory of social identity, outlined in his book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959). Phrased in a dramaturgic vocabulary, his theory describes how people create social selves in their interaction with others. The *front*, he argues, is "that part of the individual's performance which functions in a general and fixed way to define the situation for those who observe the performance" (Goffman 1959: 32). The front also acts as a vehicle of

standardisation, allowing for others to understand the individual on the basis of projected character traits. As a "collective representation" the front establishes proper "setting", "appearance", and "manner" for the social role assumed by the actor (ibid: 34-35). The actor however always attempts to present an idealised version of the front, more consistent with the norms and laws of society than the behaviour of the actor when not before an audience (ibid: 45). It was precisely this idealised version of this woman's front, played out for me as the audience, which I experienced during this first visit.

Over time, however, as I made my way deeper into both the houses and lives of this and a range of other women who became my informants, I gradually came to realise and understand that Palestinian houses in Jerusalem are not just neutral buildings, but places of lively activity and consequently often disorder. Furthermore, they are, as Amahl Bishara describes them "sites of personal, family, cultural and national memory" (Bishara 2002: 16), as I intend to show throughout the rest of the thesis. Houses are places were food is cooked, dishes are done or left for the next day, children play wild games and refuse to do their homework and conflicts arise between parents and children leading in turn to spouses quarrelling. In other words, houses are places were life is led in a multitude of different ways. Furthermore, and most importantly for the purpose of my analysis, they are to a large extent *women's places* (Radcliffe 1993).

In this chapter, I look at the underlying reasons why houses in Palestinian society have indeed become *women's places* and how this has affected the ways women lead their lives and form their identities. I begin with a historical overview of the development of women's positions and roles in Palestinian society over the past forty years, which in turn leads me to a description of the kind of life it allows women to live, largely within the space of the house. Women's attachment to the house which, I will argue, is a result of these processes, makes the house an important place of identity making for Palestinian women – an identity making which I will then set out to explore.

3.1 Palestinian women in society

Despite an active women's movement and a long tradition of women's participation in the national resistance movement[25], Palestinian women today, as many other women throughout the Middle East and North Africa, still live in a highly patriarchal society (Joseph & Slyomvics 2001: 2-3). This society is characterised by a sexual division of labour, where women are mostly active in the domestic domain, taking care of household tasks and child rearing, while men provide for the family through wage work. Although Palestinian women have a high and still increasing level of education[26], the participation rate of women in the labour market has never exceed 12% since the onset of the Israeli occupation in 1967 (Kuttab 2006: 234). This gendered nature of the labour market, however, cannot be explained only by reference to issues of choice, cultural practices and preferences or features of the Palestinian economy. It also has to be understood in the context of the forty years of Israeli occupation accompanied by continuous political instability, an ongoing and prolonged relation of dependence between the Israeli and Palestinian economies, as well as the fluctuations and changes that have characterised this dependent relationship over time (ibid: 236).

Since the beginning of the Israeli occupation, the Palestinian economy has been deeply dependent on the Israeli economy and has had only limited potential of growth because of the Israeli closure policy[27] as well as restrictions on the mobility of labour, commodities and capital. Even the Oslo Peace process in the early '90s, which brought hopes of increased independence, and thus possibilities of strengthening the economy and creating jobs, didn't do much to improve the Palestinian economy, since Israel kept control with most natural resources in the Palestinian territories as well as with roads and borders, both those linking towns with villages, the West Bank with the Gaza strip

[25] Palestinian women have been politically active at least since 1917, first by organising for social and political reforms and later by playing an important role in the national movement, both during the Great Revolt in 1936-39 and especially during the first Intifada in 1987-93 (Sharoni 1995: 56-89; Peteet 1991; Peteet 2001; Graham-Brown 2001: 29-30).

[26] According to figures from the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the overall literacy rate for Palestinian women is 87.4% (compared to 96.3% for men). Furthermore, 58.3% of girls are enrolled in secondary education (compared to 51% of boys) and 28.1% pursue higher education (compared to 26.2% of boys) (UNESCWA 2005: 30).

[27] Since the start of the Oslo peace process a permanent "closure" has been laid over the West Bank and Gaza, restricting the movement of Palestinian workers into Israel. The closure has various physical forms such as permanent, semi-permanent and "flying" checkpoints. In different places and at different times, the closure may be more or less strict; it may be permanent, spontaneous or decreed for an indeterminate length of time (Halper & Younan 2005: 13).

as well as the Occupied Territories with the neighbouring countries. The Israeli occupation has thus reproduced and strengthened the sexual division of labour that existed under Jordanian rule, where women's labour was treated as a reserve to be drawn upon in times of need, and then only in jobs that were compatible with their reproductive roles and thereby their traditional role in the domestic sphere. The decline in the Palestinian agricultural sector after 1967, caused in large parts by Israeli land expropriation, as well as the barriers created by the dependence on Israel towards building up a Palestinian industrial sector, undermined the Palestinian employment sectors. Therefore, the labour force was mainly reoriented to serve the labour intensive areas of the Israeli economy (Kuttab 2006: 236-37).

As fears of Palestinian terror increased in Israeli society, beginning with the Intifada in 1987 and continuing throughout the 1990s until today, cheap Palestinian labour was increasingly replaced by the hiring of Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union as well as illegal immigrants from Asia (Bisharat 1997: 220). This has meant an increase in Palestinian unemployment and consequently a further consolidation of women's domestic roles. Furthermore, the continuous and increasing pressure from the Israeli occupation has nurtured a wish among many Palestinians to "go back to their roots" to "traditional" culture and its patriarchal norms and values (Manasra 1993: 19). It has also prompted a rise among Palestinian Muslims, who total 98% of the Palestinian population (PASSIA 2008), in the conservative reading of the Koran and the strict application of sharia[28] on issues of women's rights and roles, in an attempt to "preserve" Palestinian culture.

This tendency, however, forms part of a larger resurgence of Islam, and particularly conservative Islam, as a potent political and social force, which has taken place in the Middle East since the 1970s (Milton-Edwards 2007: 135). Throughout the 1950s and '60s – as an expression of resistance to British and French colonialism, which had imposed a territorial division upon the region – a mixture of pan-Arabism, socialism/Marxism and anti-imperialism guided the political agenda of the region (Pappé 2004: 150). In Palestine, this was reflected in the prominent role played by

[28] Sharia is the body of Islamic religious law. It is the legal framework within which the public and some private aspects of life are regulated for those living in a legal system based on Islamic principles of jurisprudence and for Muslims living outside the domain. Sharia deals with many aspects of day-to-day life, including politics, economics, banking, business, contracts, family, sexuality, hygiene and social issues (Wikipedia).

Fatah, PFLP and other leftist fractions, which came to join forces under the umbrella of the PLO, in fighting for the Palestinian cause. However, the defeat of the Arab countries in the 1967 war importantly contributed to the end of pan-Arabism (Ajami 1979) since it triggered a crisis of identity in which secular nationalism and pan-Arabism were gradually discredited and their legitimacy undermined (Milton-Edwards 1996: 73 and 2006: 135 & 144). This, in turn, lead to a revival of political Islam as a force challenging not only what it saw as the failed secular nationalisms, but also the impact of Western colonialism and capitalism on the region. The Islamic revival began to take shape in the West Bank and Gaza in the early 1980s but only took a real political form with the outbreak of the Intifada in 1987, when Hamas was established and quickly gained wide popular support, to the extent that it won the election for government in 2006 (Milton-Edwards 2006: 155).

One of the norms which has gained increased popularity in Palestinian society as a result of the development outlined above, is the notion of honour and especially family honour, a type of honour which rests on men's ability to control the behaviour of "their" women (wives, sisters, daughters) – especially their sexuality – and to safeguard their chastity (Faier 2002: 190). This is largely done by keeping women out of sight as much as possible, either by having them stay at home or covered up when outside the home (Warnock 1990: 22-25; Kevorkian 1993: 173).

The increasing importance attributed to protecting and controlling women contains an additional aspect beside the purely normative, linked to a "revival" or strengthening of certain so called "cultural" values about women's proper behaviour, used as a form of resistance in the face of oppression. It is also phrased in terms of protection against the physical danger represented by the occupation and the random violence it involves. Taken in the words of Shirley Ardener "…one may be tempted to argue that when the line between hostile and favourable environments is drawn closer to the front door, the importance of the home and the status of the woman inside as its symbol and guardian, become correspondingly greater" (Ardener 1993: 11). Although men are equally, if not more, exposed to the violence of the occupation, the particular importance of protecting women relates to the fear of sexual harassment and abuse of which they could become victims – an abuse which, if successfully carried out, would hit the core of a family's

honour and good name, which rests, as I have argued above, with the women of the family (Kevorkian 1993: 172). Thereby, the arguments used to justify the protection of women, and thus keep them at home, have come full circle.

As we have seen, societal development in Palestine has had great influence on the role assigned to, and thus played by women today. The consolidation of many Palestinian women's roles as housewives, which has been one of the consequences, has been significant for their attachment to the house, which for many has become their primary centre of life. This reinforcement of the house as women's primary domain is also reflected in what I call the life cycle of a woman, which is the subject of the following section.

3.1.1 A woman's life cycle in the house

From my numerous visits in women's homes, and the stories about their lives they told me on those occasions, a pattern in their life cycle soon began to emerge, a life cycle which, as I outlined it above, is increasingly guided by religious and traditional norms and values (Manasra 1993: 8-9).

From when a girl is born until she gets married, she lives in her parents' house. As she grows older, she is encouraged to help her mother in household chores, thereby preparing her for a woman's adult life in the domestic sphere. Unlike her brothers, she is not sent out to run errands or play in the streets, which then largely becomes the domain of boys and young men. Upon reaching adolescence, her parents begin looking for a suitable husband for her; suitability is defined most often as a combination of good economic standing, proper family background and a good reputation. In the event that a girl has been allowed by her parents to pursue higher education, her future husband must express his approval of it, and his opinion on this matter is equally if not more important than her parents' view, since after marriage he becomes her legal guardian. If he disapproves of her educational aspirations, she will have to abandon them. Whether she will be allowed to work after marriage is also for her husband to decide.

Once married, the girl moves from her parents' into her husband's family home and sphere of control where, as the young wife and outsider to this family cluster, she often comes to occupy the lowest position in the family hierarchy. As one informant

described to me how it had been for her to move in with her family-in-law: “My relationship with them was very difficult because I was the youngest in the house, and each one of them tried to control me in their own way, to make me obey them. I lived with them as a maid”. Cases like Rahaf’s are not only common to Palestine. They can also be found elsewhere in the world, as in India, where the low status and ill-treatment of young brides moving into their in-laws’ house often stems from her failure to bring sufficient dowry (Kumari 1989). Furthermore, given the intimate and almost sacred relation between mother and son according to Indian kinship morality, the arrival of a new bride brings about a subtle struggle within the household for power and position (ibid: 38-39).

To climb the ladder of the Palestinian family hierarchy – dictated by patriarchy – where the older decide over the younger and men over women (Joseph & Slyomvics 2001: 2-3), a Palestinian woman must bring children into the world, preferably boys, since they will secure the continuation of the patrilineal family and earn the woman the honourable title of “Um”-someone (“Um” meaning “the mother of”) – a title given only to mothers of sons, not of daughters. Another possibility is to move into her own house, since this immediately makes her the female head of her own separate household. This may only happen after many years of saving. Several of my informants told me how they spent a number of years living with their families-in-law before having sufficient funds to be able to build their own home and establish their own household. “When I got married, I lived in a room in my parents-in-law’s apartment”, Jihan explained to me. “In addition to my husband, me and my in-laws, four of my husband’s unmarried brothers also lived there. Later they also got married and their wives moved in. Each couple had one room and a small bathroom but all shared the same kitchen. We lived there for four years”.

Once a woman has started her own household, independent of her family-in-law’s, she has taken a significant step forward in her life cycle, since she is in charge of savings and spending, child raising as well as all other matters related to the management of a household. At the same time, she is ready, when the time comes, to marry off her children and in turn begin to control the daughters-in-law moving into *her* household, thereby reaching the peak in a woman’s life in terms of autonomy and power.

A large part of a Palestinian woman's life then takes place within the sphere of the household, either that of her parents, her family-in-law or finally maybe her own. Thus, the historical development of Palestinian society over the past forty years and the impact of the Islamic revival in the Middle East in general have not only significantly affected the role and place of women in society today. They have also contributed towards defining the culturally appropriate way for Palestinian women to lead their lives, namely under the guardianship of men (fathers, brothers and husbands) and largely within the walls of the house. Together, these two aspects help explain the specific attachment of women to the house and why the house has become one – if not *the* most – important place of identity formation for many Palestinian women. In the following I now proceed to analyse the nature of this identity formation among a group of married Palestinian women, an identity which, as we will see, is twofold. First, it is personal and phrased in terms of being a housewife and mother. Second, this identity formation is also social and national, since a range of values, seen as essential to what it means to be a social person and a good Palestinian, revolve around the house and the ownership of a house.

3.2 The house and female identity

While being, as we have seen, a product of the societal and cultural development in Palestinian society, the role and identity as housewives and mothers of the group of Palestinian women, among whom I conducted my fieldwork very much also lay at the heart of their actions and utterances. Although not all of them uncritically embraced this role, especially not after the house demolition, as I will show in chapter four, being in charge of their own household and caring for their children were seen as important responsibilities, often undertaken with a certain pride. As Peteet has argued, being a good wife and mother and performing well in domesticity is important in order to fulfil norms of femininity and are therefore central elements of a Palestinian woman's identity (Peteet 1991: 139).

During my visits in women's homes, whether they lasted an afternoon or several days, household tasks and child rearing filled most of the time, interrupted only by tea and meal breaks and occasional visits by neighbours or relatives, which in turn were

occasions for the exchange of news and gossip, concerns about children's growth and school achievements as well as food prices and recipes. During a visit in Jihan's apartment, I was struck by how she managed to prepare a most elaborate hot meal for seven people while at the same time helping her youngest daughter Kifaya with her Arabic homework, keeping track of the whereabouts of her two older sons, serving me tea, biscuits, coffee and fruit and chatting about daily life occurrences. Later, when she finally sat down with me on the couch, it wasn't to relax but to sit and stuff small eggplants with a mixture of chopped chilli, parsley and garlic and put them in a large jar for later preservation. I explained to her that almost no one in Denmark would have time to do these kinds of things anymore, since both the husband and wife work outside the house. "It is better that the wife stays at home to make these things herself, instead of buying them tinned", she said. "It is also better for the children that the mother stays at home to take care of them, don't you think?"

On another occasion, during my interview with her, when I asked her to introduce herself, she did it in the following way: "My name is Jihan, I am a housewife, I have three children and I am pregnant". Hereby, she emphasised the aspects of her identity most significant to her. Later in the interview when I asked her to explain to me why the house was so important to her, she told me: "You know, the house is the basis for everything. It's the basis from which to teach my children, for nourishing them and preparing them for the future." The house then was described as a place of intimate relations, of care and nurturing and of bringing up future generations, responsibilities which, according to the traditional norms, values and customs of Palestinian society, lie with the woman (Manasra 1993: 9). Thus, through her words and actions, Jihan inscribes her identity – as woman, wife and mother – both in her domestic responsibilities and in the house, whereby she emphasises its central position in the creation and recreation of that identity.

The link between women's identities and the domestic sphere is a subject which has also been touched upon by Sarah Radcliffe in her essay *Women's Place in Latin America* (1993), which deals with the shift in the social and geographical spaces occupied by women in Argentina during the military dictatorship in 1976-83, and the way it affects their identities (Radcliffe 1993). In her background description of the

history of women's position in society in Argentina, she lays out how conservative Catholic notions of family, sexuality and female purity have led to women's lives and identities being more closely bound to the home and domestic duties than in comparably industrialised countries of the continent, despite the early emergence of feminism in Argentina (Radcliffe 1993: 105). Among the Palestinian women of my study, however, not only the domestic sphere and thus the duties and roles associated with it, was a *space* of identity making. The actual house, the *place*[29] which they had built and therefore owned, was equally important. This, I argue, has to do with the significance of house-ownership and values of household autonomy that prevail in Palestinian society.

3.2.1 Household autonomy

What is the difference between living in a rented house and a house that you own? I posed the question, which had been on my mind for a while, during an afternoon visit at Jihan's place, where she was for once sitting quietly and drinking tea with me. "Well…in my own house I can do whatever I want", she explained to me. "A rented house on the other hand is not mine. The owner can come anytime and ask me to pack my things and leave. In my own house I am also free to change and improve things…anything I want", she continued. Although rent acts are strongly supportive of tenants (Moors 1995: 46), many of the women I spoke to, who owned or had owned a house, emphasised the constant anxiety of being asked to move by the landlord as one of the major downsides about rental housing. With slight variation, often adding to it an economical perspective of the house as a capital investment, most women highlighted independence, both of a landlord, but also of their family-in-law, as the major benefit of living in their own house.

While autonomy understood as freedom from domination or dependency on others is highly valued in both Palestinian as well as other Arab societies (Moors 1995: 46; Layne 1994: 63; Abu-Lughod 1986: 79), the centrality of home-ownership as the marker of this autonomy is more of a Palestinian cultural specificity. In different Arab societies autonomy is marked in different ways, e.g. through mobile resident patterns as among the Jordanian tribespeople described by Linda Layne (Layne 1994: 63), or

[29] I make a distinction here between *space* understood as an abstract entity and *place* as a geographical and physical entity, such as a house, a town or a country.

through political organisation according to the segmentary lineage model as among the Awlad ‘Ali in Egypt studied by Abu-Lughod (Abu-Lughod 1986: 79). The link between home-ownership and autonomy in Palestine, I argue, can be explained by referring to another value of much importance among Palestinians, namely the notion of *attachment to the land* of Palestine in the face of land expropriation and population transfer – a value which is an important feature of Palestinian nationalism (Swedenburg 1995: 22). In Palestinian nationalist discourse it is the Palestinian peasant who is seen as epitomising this connection to the land through his agricultural work as well as his traditional life, which is understood as providing a picture of life “as it was” prior to 1948. Thereby, he has been transformed into a symbolic representative of the cultural and historical continuity of the Palestinian people (ibid). For residents of a contested city like Jerusalem “being on the land”, through building a house has become their way of symbolising and manifesting their attachment to the land, and their way of trying to claim their rights over it, just as building communities in the Occupied Territories to create “facts on the ground” is part of the Israeli settlement policy (Bishara 2004: 43; Halper & Younan 2005: 11). Homes thus become strong symbols of national presence among both Israelis and Palestinians, an argument that I will further explore in chapter five.

3.3 The house: a place of social and national identity

As I gradually, through my continuous presence among them, became part of the social networks surrounding my female informants, I also gained insight into more and more aspects of their social lives and relations. Hereby, I discovered how social relations among women revolve around a particular set of values that are seen as essential to being a good person and a good Palestinian; values that in turn are largely linked to the house.

3.3.1 Hospitality and generosity

Anyone, who has spent some time among Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, has experienced the Palestinian hospitality for which they are widely known and famed. When visiting a Palestinian family, juice as well as tea or coffee (or both) are usually

served within a very short time. If the visit lasts more than a couple of hours, or if it has been announced in advance, a meal of rice and meat or chicken, sometimes stuffed vegetables and/or salads, is often served at some time during the visit, followed again by coffee and sometimes fruit or even sweets. The lavishness and abundance of food and drink, as well as the host or hostess' continuous encouragement of the guest to take an extra serving, indicates that hospitality is also closely linked to generosity.

Hospitality is an important part of the Arab notion of honour on a par with protecting women's honour (Layne 1994: 54) and family honour, as earlier described. Although honour is a concept which is used in many different ways, and carries a variety of local meanings, dependent on the specific region and ethnic group within the Middle East (Bourdieu 1977; Layne 1994; Abu-Lughod 1986), it also carries a common feature in that it denotes *a structure of relations* (Eickelman 1998: 195). In the words of Bourdieu: "Honour is the basis of the moral code of an individual who sees himself always through the eyes of others, who has need of others for his existence, because the image he has of himself is indistinguishable from that presented to him by other people" (Bourdieu 1966: 211). Thus, the dynamics of honour necessarily involve those of social exchange in general (Eickelman 1998: 196). This notion of honour, as relational and as one of social exchange, also finds expression in the Palestinian hospitality and generosity. The host honours his guests with generous hospitality; a gesture which, in turn, reflects the honour of the host, his home and the family in it, and makes him an honourable man in the eyes of others.

Although men are the active defenders of honour, both their own, their women's and their family honour, hospitality, as I soon discovered, and as Linda Layne has also described, is a woman's responsibility as much as it is a man's, if not more so, since the primary locus of hospitality is the house and the house, in turn, the woman's primary domain (Layne 1994: 53-54). As I experienced it on many occasions, women take great responsibility for hosting guests appropriately, both when they are women – friends, neighbours or relatives – and mixed groups of men and women, typically family and relatives. Hosting non-relative males, however, is the responsibility of the man of the household, since it is deemed inappropriate for a woman to sit with men she is not related to.

One day, while I was staying with Rahaf, she got a call from her husband saying that his sister and brother-in-law and their children, who lived in Jaffa and therefore only very rarely came to visit, had announced their arrival later that afternoon. Although she hadn't planned to cook anything special that day, maybe just some rice and lentils, and didn't have anything in her fridge, it took her less than half an hour to organise and prepare for the arrival of the guests. Her eldest son aged ten was sent out to by chicken, vegetables and fruit as well as several different kinds of juices and soft drinks. The fruit was carefully washed and placed on a big dish on the coffee table in the nice living room where guests were normally received, unless they were very close relatives or friends. Juice and soft drinks were put in the freezer to cool off quickly, and her daughters were ordered to vacuum the whole house and clean the bathroom. In the meantime, she and I started preparing *maqloube*, a dish of chicken, vegetables and rice which is turned upside down on a large dish when served, and occasionally sprinkled with pine nuts or roasted almonds.

Although it takes at least three or four hours to prepare the dish, it was almost ready by the time the guests arrived. Rahaf put on her headscarf and went out to receive them. She made sure they took a seat in the living room and then served them tea, soft drinks and fruit, while her husband, who had in the meantime come home from work, engaged in men's talk with his brother-in-law. Every now and then, Rahaf would encourage each one of them to take another piece of fruit or offer them some more tea and juice, while we were waiting for the food to get ready. To our great surprise, they decided to leave again after less than an hour, even though Rahaf repeatedly tried to persuade them to stay and share a meal with us, telling them they couldn't leave without having eaten anything. While her husband was equally eager in his attempt to have them stay longer, it was clearly Rahaf who took the overall responsibility for hosting them appropriately in terms of serving food and drinks and emphasising hospitality and generosity, by constantly encouraging each guest to eat and drink some more. Doing so is also an important part of the Palestinian hospitality, since it underlines that nothing is spared in order to honour the guests.

3.3.2 Mutual visiting and reciprocity

Another important part of women's social life and relations in the Middle East in general (Abu-Lughod 1986: 69; Eickelman 1984; Wright 1993: 148-49) and Palestine in particular (Peteet 2001: 139; Abu Nahleh 2006: 159-61), builds on patterns of mutual visiting. Although a woman has to leave her home in order to visit others, visiting means going to another woman's home, and thus still takes place within the sphere of the house. Women, at least those from the socio-economic segment of the population that my informants belonged to, do not meet in coffee shops or other public places.

Visiting takes on various forms and ranges from going to the neighbour's to borrow a cooking pot or a cup of sugar, or sit with her for a cup of tea and a chat about daily occurrences, to visiting relatives, friends or family at the other end of town or even in a neighbouring village, or going to an engagement, wedding or funeral. A large part of these visits, which are an important way for women to maintain social ties while still adhering to life in the private sphere, are accompanied by the exchange of gifts and food. The kind of gift or food to bring, or to serve to visitors, depends on the occasion and the person one visits. For engagements and weddings, women bring gifts of gold jewels for the bride or bride to be, which adds to the dowry (*mahr*) she receives from her husband, also in the form of gold jewels; a dowry which is the woman's property after marriage and her personal economical resource that she can draw on in times of need[30].

When visiting a relative in hospital women often bring juice and different kinds of snacks or food with them, which is then shared with other visitors. A personal gift for the hospitalised person is also required. On the occasion of visiting one's sister or mother in her home, clothes for her or her children or adornments for her house are common gifts. Furthermore, certain festive occasions require a woman to bring specific kinds of food to her parents' or other relatives' house. One such occasion is the birthday of the Prophet Mohammad, where married women have to cook a dish with meat (not chicken) and bring it to their parents' home after having prayed in the mosque. On this

[30] According to the marriage contract issued by a shari'a court, a man has to pay his bride a *mahr* as well as provide her with maintenance (*nafaqa*). The *mahr* is considered the bride's property which she can dispose of freely without asking for her husband's permission or consent (Moors 1995: 85-86). Despite these legal provisions of the marriage, many women sell their dowry gold in order to help maintain the family (although this is the husband's legal obligation) or buy land or property which will then legally belong to the husband.

same occasion, the sweet and sticky Palestinian pastry *baklava* is eaten. When someone dies, women pay the closest female relatives – that is, the widow, sister or daughters of the deceased – a visit and small cups of very thick, black and sweet coffee with cardamom, only made on this occasion, are served to the guests offering their condolences.

Hence, echoing the argument first presented by Marcel Mauss in his famous book about the gift, the exchange of gifts and food among Palestinian women as an integrated part of their visiting patterns, I argue, works towards creating social integration due to the obligation towards *reciprocity* inherent in the gift and the act of giving (Mauss 1990 [1925]). The gift or the food offered reflects the existence of social relations and signifies their continuation (Abu-Lughod 1986: 69). Furthermore, the kind and size of the gift also plays a role in indicating the nature and closeness of the relationship between giver and recipient: the closer a relative or friend, the larger and more expensive the gift. But the exchange of gifts also plays into the Palestinian idea of honour, which, as I have previously described it, is relational and based on social exchange. Thus, to quote Mary Douglas in a paraphrase of an argument presented by Mauss: "each gift is part of a system of *reciprocity* in which the *honour* of giver and recipient are engaged" (my emphasis) (Douglas 1990: vii). Being a person of honour in Palestinian society, then, also rests on the ability to reciprocate gifts and services in a culturally appropriate way.

In his description of the physical order within the Kabyle house, Bourdieu concluded that embodied habits of living within the ordered home taught people about community values because the house itself was structured according to these values (Bourdieu 1977: 89-95). Although the Palestinian house is not as rigidly structured as the Kabyle house, his point is however still applicable to the Palestinian household, and is especially reflected in the display of hospitality and exchange of gifts during the mutual visiting, that I have just described. The everyday habit of serving guests in the culturally appropriate way and knowing which gift to offer to whom on a given occasion, enacts the values of *hospitality*, *generosity* and *reciprocity*, which are inherent to what it means to be a proper person in Palestinian society, largely within the sphere of the house, whereby it is appropriated and embodied by the future generations.

3.4 Summing up - house based identities

As I have shown in this chapter, due to the political and societal development in Palestine over the past forty years, which has increasingly confined Palestinian women to the house and domestic sphere, the identity formation of these women as mothers and housewives, but also as social persons and as Palestinians, is largely linked to the house. As means of conclusion to this chapter, I here put forward a new approach to identity formation among Palestinian women, which partly draws inspiration from Lévi-Strauss' notion of *house-based societies*.

The idea of *house-based societies*, sketched out by Lévi-Strauss in various writings (Lévi-Strauss quoted in Carsten & Hugh-Jones 1995: 6) is a less deterministic, rule-bound version of his structuralist model of analysis, which expands and adds another category of social organisation to his kinship theory first outlined in *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (1969 [1949]). The house, according to this idea, is a specific form of social organisation like kinship, but one in which the criteria of wealth, power and status begin to play an increasingly important role. House-based societies then "constitute a hybrid, transitional form between kin-based and class-based social orders" (Carsten & Hugh-Jones 1995: 9-10).

Because of the limitations in terms of analysing processes and agency inherent in Lévi-Strauss' structuralism, however, I depart from his notion of house-based society, which attributes to the house the quality of a form of structure that organises human life on a par with kinship. Instead, I propose that we understand the house – both its physical structure and the values it is seen to embody – in the specific context of Palestine, as a focal point and centre for the creation of three kinds of identity among Palestinian women: identities which I will therefore refer to as *house-based identities*, without, however, thereby offering a view of identity as a fixed, essential or unchanging property of individual or collective social actors.

House-based identities, I argue, are to be understood rather as the result of *processes* of identity making that take place within and are in certain ways defined by the house. The first such identity defined by and acted out within the sphere of the house, as I have shown, is the woman's personal identity as housewife and mother, which is linked to good performance in domesticity. In addition, since the house is the place for acting out

values such as hospitality, generosity and reciprocity, which are seen as pivotal to being a good person in Palestine, social and cultural identity are thus also created and recreated within the house. Lastly, as I have briefly touched upon, houses have a strong symbolic significance in Palestinian national history, where they represent the attachment to the land. Hence, houses are also essential for the creation of national identity.

My argument about the non-essential and processual character of Palestinian women's house-based identities is the subject of further investigation in the next two chapters, where I will take my argument a step further by showing how women's identities are affected when houses, and thereby their primary place of identity making, is demolished. Thereby, I seek to investigate the dynamics of identity formation in a context of societal rupture and change.

Chapter 4

House demolitions: liminality and social rupture

First, I sent the children to school. Then I went up to the roof… I went to the roof to hang up the laundry. The children were waiting for the school bus at the door of the house, and they went to school and they left the door of the house… the main entrance to the house… they left it open and went to the bus. I was on the roof and I heard a lot of noise downstairs. So, I went down from the roof and I saw soldiers, lots of soldiers and police and ambulances, and…I was alone. Nobody was there with me. I asked them: "What is the matter? What is the matter?" The soldier told me: "Get out of the house, we want to demolish it". I said, "What do you mean by get out of the house we want to demolish it? What… where do you want me to go?" And I panicked and started screaming at them that they didn't have an order and… then my mother's brother arrived. He said to me "that's it… there is nothing to do, you have to leave the house" and… he asked me, "what is best, that something happens to you or your husband or your children, or that the house disappears?" I said to him "what do you mean, uncle? Is that it? They didn't give us a demolition order and we didn't know they wanted to demolish it!" "Let it go", he said, "what are you going to do?" "But what will I do?" I said. I didn't know where to go, where would I go? My brother-in-law needs the house [that she lived in before building her own house ed.], where will I go? Then my uncle told me, "what do you want to do, this is something that happens. Such is life". And then he called my family, and my brothers came and my mother came and my sisters came and… my husband was at work and I didn't… he didn't know about this whole thing. I tried to call him, he was working underground with some electricity… underground, and there was no connection whatsoever, and then… they [the soldiers ed.] came down to us and they told us…they brought workers with them to take out the furniture. But we told them no, don't make the workers take it out; we will take the furniture out. They gave us an hour to take all our things out. I was in a state of shock, and I don't remember what happened during that hour. And afterwards, it was like I saw everything that was going on, but I didn't understand it or relate to it. And I didn't hear anything, except for the noise of the bulldozers. They told me afterwards that

> *they had been talking to me and… I didn't hear anything (…) And after it… after they had demolished it and left and everything, all of them came to my house, the journalists came and everything, and I was… like them, watching it. They told me "the journalists want to talk to you". I said to them "personally I don't know anything. Let them do what they want, but I don't know anything".*
> (Jihan, interview)

A house demolition is a major event in the life of a family, although by no means, as the word "event" might mislead one to think, a happy occurrence. Rather, I argue, using a notion first presented by Veena Das, it can be characterised as a *critical event* (Das 1995), an incident that "…shapes large historical questions and everyday life" (Das 2007: 2). Or, as interpreted by Aretxaga "…events capable of producing a change in the way people think about things" (Aretxaga 1997: xii). Although the individual demolition in itself may not be an event that shapes large historical questions, the political strategy behind house demolitions, as we have seen in chapter two, does aim at changing the demographic composition of Jerusalem and thereby, in the long term, undeniably the course of history. Furthermore, when it comes to shaping everyday life and changing the way people think about things, this and the following chapter aim at illustrating exactly how house demolitions do so, and why they can therefore indeed be labelled critical events.

While the acts of house demolition have received growing attention over the past ten to fifteen years, although mostly from left-wing activists in Israel, Europe and the United States (ICAHD)[31], from local and international Human Rights organisations (B'Tselem 1997b; Al Haq 2004; Darcy 2003; Amnesty International 1999 & 2004) as well as from some journalists and photographers who cover the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the fate of the affected families – and especially the women – in the aftermath of the demolition has so far remained largely uninvestigated and undocumented. Only very general

[31] ICAHD, the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, whose *raison d'être* is to resist Israel's demolition of Palestinian houses in the Occupied Territories, and ultimately to end the occupation, was established in 1997 by a handful of Israeli peace activists following what ICAHD's director Jeff Halper calls the Israeli peace movement's "wake-up call": the election of the hawkish right-wing politician Benyamin Netanyahu as prime minister, following – for the peace movement at least – some quiet years during the Oslo peace process. Today, besides its activities in the Occupied Territories, ICAHD also has a branch in the USA and the UK, which help fundraise for ICAHD Israel activities (such as rebuilding houses) as well as raise awareness about the issue of house demolitions abroad.

assumptions about them “going to live with relatives” or “moving into the home space of another woman - (the woman’s) mother, sister-in-law” (ICAHD 2004; Margalit 2006) are presented in the few available writings and oral statements on the subject. The findings of my fieldwork showed a much more diverse and ambiguous picture.

Within between a few hours and few days after the demolition, the ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) brings a tent, mattresses, blankets and plastic chairs as well as a package with basic necessities such as cooking gas, a few pots and pans, household utensils and coffee, tea, sugar, oil, rice and flour to the site of the demolition. Some families manage to take out their belongings before the demolition, others have time only to rescue bigger items such as washing machines, fridges and couches and some see all their belongings disappear under the rubble. The ICRC package therefore contains a minimum of the basic items needed by people who are made homeless. Depending on the time of the year, families do live in the tent provided by the ICRC and erected next to the rubble of their house, for a shorter or longer period, while trying to plan where to go from there. While most women I spoke to had only lived in the tent for a few days, maybe weeks and more seldom even months, one informant told me of how her son, refusing to leave the land he had worked for most of his life to buy and build a house on, lived in the tent next to the rubble for nine months in rain, in snow and later under the blazing summer sun. Meanwhile, she herself had gone back to live in a small rented apartment as before the house was built, while her daughter-in-law and the couple’s four children had moved back to the daughter-in-law’s family home in Hebron, thereby effectively splitting up the family.

After a short while in the tent, some informants had gone to live with their in-laws and in one case the woman’s own sister. In most cases, however, they had quite soon found and moved into a rental apartment, some with a transitional period in the house of their in-laws or other relatives in between. Moving into the house space of another woman (Margalit 2006), then, only became relevant for a few of my informants, and those for whom it happened were lucky enough to dispose of a small, separate apartment in the house, thereby somehow still maintaining a place of some privacy. Although the women and their families then do regain a space of their own, usually within a few months after the demolition, women’s house-bound identities as housewives, mothers and proper social persons, according to the norms of Palestinian

society, are significantly and irremediably altered by the demolition as I will illustrate in the following section.

4.1 Liminality and identity

The house demolition for most women becomes a turning point, which divides their life into "before" and "after". Having largely accepted and embraced their role as housewives and mothers prior to the house demolition, many of them experience a growing dissatisfaction with this role in its aftermath. What they are going through is a crisis in their female identity; a crisis, I argue, which is the result of the liminal position they have come to occupy as women without a home in a culture where homes are *women's places* and where houses, as I have shown, are places where women's personal and social identities are created and recreated.

This position of liminality is in many ways comparable to that of refugees who, argues Liisa Malkki (1992 & 1995), represent a subversion of the categorical order of nations inherent in the way we normally think about nationalism. Refugees are "at once no longer classified and not yet classified" (Malkki 1995: 7) according to our classificatory logic, in which people belong to a particular nation, country or culture. Like individuals in the midst of a *rite de passage*, refugees are transitional beings, that, as suggested by Turner (1967) "are particularly polluting, since they are neither one thing nor another; or may be both; or neither here nor there; or may even be nowhere, and are at the very least 'betwixt and between' all the recognised fixed points in the space-time of cultural classification" (Turner 1967: 97). The notion of pollution here points back to Mary Douglas' ideas in *Purity and Danger* (1966) where she describes as polluting the things that are "matter out of place" that is, things that blur the boundaries of a particular classificatory logic whereby they disrupt the social order (Douglas 1966).

In the same way as refugees, then, are in a state of liminality – and thereby "pollution" – because they are no longer inhabitants in their country, Palestinian women whose houses have been demolished are in a state of liminality, since they no longer occupy the space that they "belong" to and identify themselves in relation to. However, while refugees are liminal *to* the social order of nations (Malkki 1995: 254), Palestinian victims of house demolitions occupy a liminal position *within* the order of nations, since their displacement doesn't cross national or even town borders. Furthermore, as I will

return to in chapter five, being expelled and turned into a refugee is an integral part of the Palestinian national narrative. Therefore, homelessness caused by acts of aggression from the Israeli state fits perfectly into the way the Palestinian nation and community is imagined (Anderson 1991 [1983]).

Nevertheless, this liminality is doubly felt by women, who do express a feeling of being "out of place" after their house has been demolished. Thus, the significance of keeping within the established social boundaries and categories of cultural classification – according to which women in Palestinian society "belong" in the house – in order to maintain social order, is reaffirmed. In the following, by telling the story of three different women, I will now illustrate the way the liminality and feeling of being "out of place", which came out of losing their house, affected the way these women identified and the way they later adjusted to the post-demolition circumstances. The stories illustrate the similarities in the way women's female identities are affected and altered, but also the differences in their way of adjusting and finding new modes of identification, an adjustment which largely depends on the gender dynamics within their family, and the way these dynamics are affected by the house demolition.

4.1.1 Liminal identities in the making – the case of Rahaf, Hanan and Jihan

The first woman whose story I will tell is Rahaf. She is twenty-eight years old and the mother of six children aged eighteen months to thirteen years. She was married to her ten-year older half-cousin at the age of fourteen and therefore left school after the eighth grade. She has been a housewife ever since. Her house, which she had lived in for nine years, was demolished only four months prior to the time when I met her. After the demolition of her house, she and her family lived for a few days in her neighbour's empty house[32] before finding and moving into the rental apartment, where she lived at the time of my fieldwork. When I met her, the house demolition was still very fresh in her mind, and she didn't like being in the new apartment, which she would even sometimes refer to as a prison. As she once said to me: "I don't want to sit at home. I go

[32] The neighbour's house was empty for a number of reasons. The house had been demolished and rebuilt four times, the last time as a peace centre, which cannot be inhabited by its owners. Furthermore, it was also still illegally built and the family, which has been deeply psychologically affected by the many demolitions, did not wish to live through another demolition. For the full story about this house, referral is made to the story of Hanan below.

outside every day…every day I try to find an excuse to go outside. I want to leave this house; I don't want to stay here." Clearly, she didn't have any feeling of belonging there since, opposite her old house, nothing there was the way she wanted it to be.

In her now demolished house, she had had a big garden with lots of trees and animals that needed to be taken care of: ducks, rabbits, pigeons, cats and dogs. Furthermore, since they had built the house themselves and could therefore do as they pleased both on the outside and the inside of it, she had put herself in charge of interior decoration as well as managing the loans and instalments to be paid on building materials, furniture, etc. Back then, she had embraced her role as a housewife and found joy in the everyday tasks of cleaning, cooking, feeding the animals, watering the plants, decorating her house, taking care of her children and administrating a household budget, which her husband had largely left for her to manage. She would always get up early to finish everything by the time her children and husband came home from school and work in the afternoon, so they could spend some time together, she told me. Now, household tasks were burdensome, and she would evade them or do them as late as she possibly could, which often meant that she hadn't finished her housework when her children and husband came home. Sometimes, she would even postpone doing the dishes or cleaning the house until eleven o'clock at night or leave it for several days, which in turn led to quarrels with her husband. She often talked to me about wanting to finish school, get an education and find a job, to do something for herself, develop herself, since she was tired of being her husband's and children's servant and spending all her time at home with nothing interesting to do.

Since the demolition had only recently happened, she hadn't yet accommodated to her new situation. When I visited her again two years later, not much had changed. She still lived in the same rented apartment and was still as unhappy with it. Since my last visit, gender dynamics in the household had significantly changed. While she most often used to ask her husband for permission to visit relatives and friends or to go to town during my first stay with her, his control over her whereabouts had become even stricter during my second visit, and she almost never left the house anymore – not even to go and visit her family, shop for groceries or take a walk down to the rubble of her old house, where she sometimes used to go to sit and cry while thinking about the house, or pick some mint in the garden next to the rubble to drink in her tea.

Furthermore, women's gossip and private talk, which often took place at times when her husband was not at home, had become more restrained, since he had extended his control of her through their eldest son who, despite his age of only twelve years, had taken on the role of listening in on his mother's private conversations and keeping an eye on all her actions and spending, later to report it all to his father. Thus, even within her own house, Rahaf was now under almost constant male control. Although she had lived in the rented apartment for several years, talking about "my house" still referred to the house that was demolished in 2004.

The second woman, Hanan, is thirty-nine years old and the mother of seven children. She used to be Rahaf's neighbour before both their houses were demolished, but unlike Rahaf, her house was demolished several years as well as several times before I met her. All in all, her house was demolished and rebuilt four times in the span of six years from 1998 to 2003. Each time, the house was rebuilt with the help of Israeli and international peace activists, as well as the support of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD), as an act of symbolic resistance to the policy of planning and house demolitions in Jerusalem. The last time the house was rebuilt, in 2003, it was turned into a peace centre to which foreign activists now come to live and learn about the situation of the Palestinians under occupation. As a peace centre, however, it cannot be inhabited by its owners, and Hanan, whose mental health is still very fragile after the many demolitions, does not want neither to live with the fear of it happening again, nor to go through yet another demolition. Therefore, she now lives with her family in an apartment at the other end of town.

Like Rahaf, she often questioned why women always have to stay at home, and dreamt about going to work and earn her own money, be independent of her husband and meet other people. Nevertheless, those dreams were hard for her to pursue, since her husband wouldn't let her (or their three unmarried daughters) leave the house unless it was in a car together with him, their eldest son or another adult male relative. However, she said, it had not always been that way. For each house demolition, her husband's urge to keep control over her had only continued to grow and today, she couldn't even go to the grocery store on the corner of her street to buy a kilo of tomatoes. Given that many years had passed since her last home was demolished, she

had adjusted to the new circumstances and continued her life as a housewife, although she didn't embrace it the way she did before and left much of the housework for her teenage daughters.

The only time she found real satisfaction in household tasks was whenever groups of foreign activists came to the peace centre, which used to be her house, to have breakfast or lunch or drink tea as part of their tour around the area to learn about house demolitions and other aspects of the Israeli occupation. Then, she would be in charge of cooking the meal or preparing the tea and serving the guests, while having the opportunity to be in her old house for a few hours. The best time of year for her was therefore the two weeks in July when ICAHD arranged for twenty or thirty activists from around the world to come and stay at the peace centre, while helping to rebuild a demolished house somewhere in East Jerusalem or the West Bank (often not too far from the peace centre). "The camp" as she had learned to call it, although the only other English words she knew was "yes" and "tea", was her opportunity to contribute to a bigger cause – ultimately the fight for freedom of the Palestinian people – as well as receive appreciation for her skills as a housewife. Cooking for forty to fifty people three times a day and keeping the house clean was suddenly a task she would undertake with great pride, since it was crucial to the well functioning of the summer camp as well as highly appreciated by participants, who always praised her food and the hard work they understood it took to prepare it. At the same time, meeting foreigners – and especially women – who sympathised with her cause and were interested in knowing about her situation greatly boosted her rather low self-esteem. Being a housewife and taking on household tasks, then, took the air of a kind of political activism[33].

The last woman, Jihan, is thirty years old, the mother of three children and (at the time of my fieldwork) pregnant with her fourth. Her house was demolished two years prior to my first meeting with her, and she now lives in an apartment belonging to her brother-in-law, who lives with his family next door. Jihan's mother-in-law lives in the apartment just below, and she often comes to share meals with Jihan and her family. In

[33] Connecting domesticity and political activism in this way, either by interpreting domesticity as a form of activism, incorporating political actions into domestic routines or mobilising domestic functions for service to the larger community, was also widespread among Palestinian refugee women in Lebanon in the 1980s (Peteet 2001).

the same way as both Rahaf and Hanan, Jihan had also begun to question her role as a housewife in the aftermath of the house demolition. She explained it to me during my interview with her: "In the beginning (after the house demolition ed.) I didn't want to see anyone or that anyone come to see me. But later, I started wanting to do things (…) We (the women ed.) are just cooking and doing the dishes and…I got bored from that, I became… I wanted to learn things".

Unlike Hanan and Rahaf, Jihan found support in her husband to go through with the things she wanted to do. He even encouraged her to start studying again and to finish school, which she had left at the age of fourteen to get married. While she refused this idea, feeling that she was too old to go to school now, she chose instead to join a women's group, where she took various small courses in micro-business management and personal development and had the opportunity to meet and share her problems with other women. Furthermore, she obtained a driver's license and planned to enrol in a Hebrew language course and maybe later get a job when the child she was pregnant with at the time had grown old enough to go to school.

Because of the opportunity she was given to fulfil some of her wishes of being more than just a housewife, she also found it easier to accommodate to her new situation, once she had overcome the first weeks of shock. Today, Jihan has taken new pride in being a housewife and taking care of household tasks as well as the upbringing of her children, responsibilities which she takes very seriously. She and her husband have also slowly started rebuilding a house in the very same spot where the old one was, since, as Jihan says, "we Palestinians have the same right to be on this land as the Israelis". Now, being a housewife is no longer Jihan's only source of identification. She also sees herself as a person with certain rights and obligations, but most importantly, as I will later come back to: she sees herself as a Palestinian.

Despite the differences in their personalities, in their family situations and in the experiences they have had with house demolitions, these three women also have at least three things in common.

First, the particular place (the house) in which the construction of their feminine identity was located (Aretxaga 1997: 24) has disappeared, in turn displacing and disrupting their identification processes. This rupture once created cannot be unmade,

even when the women are resettled in a new home. On the contrary, the discrepancy between, on one hand, the women's house-bound female identity and, on the other, the sudden absence of this place of identity making persists, even when the demolished house is replaced by a new form of dwelling. This can be interpreted from their expression of dissatisfaction with their role as housewives and from the way they struggle to accommodate their identity to the post-demolition circumstances. Although the women's perception of themselves has changed significantly as a result of the house demolition, their families' as well as societal norms for the most part try to keep them "in place" to avoid disruption of the social order.

The second common element of change in the women's post-demolition situation is the alteration of gender dynamics that occurs within the women's families, although this change has different results. In both Rahaf's and Hanan's families, male control over women's movement and choices has become even stronger than before, while Jihan, in turn, has gained more freedom in both these areas. While experiencing more freedom as a result of the house demolition is a somewhat rare occurrence, men's heightened control over their wives is much more common and a reaction on part of husbands to the loss of control over, and inability to protect their families brought about by the house demolition: two otherwise important male responsibilities according to Palestinian norms of masculinity. Furthermore, it is in line with the general development in gender relations in Palestine, which is the result of the prolonged occupation as well as the general Islamic "revival" in the Middle East, described in chapter three.

The last common feature of the women's experiences is their strong identification with their Palestinian nationality in the aftermath of the house demolition. This identification is expressed through the way they link their problems and their fate as victims of house demolitions to their Palestinianness; an identity which, it seems, is taking over the position as their primary identity hitherto occupied by their role as housewives. Thus, while on one hand bringing about a crisis in these women's female identity, the house demolition and the liminal position of women, in which it results, on the other hand strengthens their national identification, as I will elaborate in chapter five. Before turning to the subject of national identity, I propose we stay at the ruins of the house for a few more minutes to also get a grasp of the economic consequences

brought about by the falling rubble – consequences that, in turn, come to play a significant role in remaking women's social identities and relations, which, as shown in chapter three, are also linked to and take place within the walls of the house.

4.2 The house demolition: a multifaceted disaster

Witnessing a house demolition not only means witnessing a human and emotional catastrophe. It also means witnessing an economic disaster. To the average Palestinian family, building a house is an investment that requires many years of savings, often combined with selling the women's dowry (gold jewellery), loans from family and friends and buying building materials on credit. With an annual income of between 6420 DKK and 67800 DKK (DWRC 2006: 10) a disbursement of between 250000 and 500000 DKK – which was the price range of the houses my informants had built – is an enormous expense. For a family that has put all of its economical resources, and even more, in the building of a house, its demolition leads to a life of constant preoccupation about money. Even after the house is demolished, instalments on loans for materials used to build the house, or furniture left in the rubble, still have to be paid and often items lost or damaged in the course of the demolition have to be replaced. Furthermore, rent for the family's new home also adds to the expenses.

Poverty and money, especially the lack of it, were subjects of much worry and consequently of much discussion among my informants. Almost every time I visited Rahaf and Um Mohamed, they would talk about their lack of money and the consequences it had in terms of paying rent, buying food or paying for children's school fees, clothes and other necessities. At the same time, however, talking about and especially receiving money was a social taboo. Often, Rahaf would end a long explanation about her economical problems by scolding herself saying "…but money isn't everything in this world, I don't want money from anyone"; this although one of her primary goals during the months I spent with her was to try and find ways of receiving financial compensation for her lost house[34]. Several times I witnessed how

[34] One of her strategies in this regard was to use me as "assessor" and chaperone when meeting with officials from the Palestinian Authority and others who could help her with such compensation. By bringing me to these meetings she would first of all more easily get her husband's permission to go, and secondly, bringing a foreigner would make her negotiation with Palestinian Authority personnel easier,

Rahaf and her husband would refuse to accept cash from their families when we visited them. Once, Rahaf's sister-in-law had to forcefully place a bank note in her brother's shirt pocket and, on another occasion, Rahaf literally quarrelled with her mother for about fifteen minutes, because Rahaf refused to accept a hundred shekel note her mother wanted to give her. This combination of frequent discussions about money, but at the same time refusal to accept anything from anyone, indicated that the women, despite their desperate economic situation, tried to maintain their pride, which is linked to the cultural significance of autonomy described in chapter three. While receiving money from other people is culturally inappropriate, borrowing money as well as buying on credit is not only acceptable but also very widespread. Mostly, though, buying on credit was done at the local grocery store, while money for buying larger items or paying bills had to be borrowed from friends, neighbours and family. The extensive borrowing, and the difficulty many women had in paying back these loans, put their social ties, which now constituted their only economical safety net, under heavy pressure and conflicts often arose as a result.

Although the poverty experienced by my informants cannot be blamed on the house demolition alone, since poverty for many was already a fact of life before it, losing their most important, and for the majority their only, economic asset (the house) was a significant and serious step down the poverty ladder. The increased poverty proves particularly difficult for women, who, on the one hand, cannot contribute to the family economy by working outside the home[35], but, on the other hand, often have the main responsibility for managing a household budget, which only keeps shrinking day by day. The majority have long since sold their dowry, which was their only personal economic safety, in order to contribute to the house building, whereby they have become entirely dependent on their husband's income. Most importantly for the purpose of my study, however, the difficult economic situation impacts on the women's ability to take part in, and maintain social relations, which, as I have previously shown, are

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since they would want to keep their good image as a government who supported their citizens in the eyes of an outsider.

[35] None of my informants had more than a secondary education (eighth grade) but might still have been able to find unskilled jobs in house cleaning, child care, clothes production and sale or house based production of different kinds. The biggest obstacle for most was their husbands, who would not allow their wives to work, since this would reflect badly on their ability as males to provide for their family; a responsibility enjoined on them by societal and religious norms.

closely linked to the exchange of food and gifts. Furthermore, it also makes it difficult for them to live up to the values of hospitality and generosity when hosting guests, in turn affecting their ability to maintain personal and family honour.

4.2.1 New challenges: women's struggle for social survival

"We are not going to that wedding, forget about it. I don't have the money!" Rahaf is quarrelling with her thirteen-year-old daughter, who wants to go to her cousin's wedding. But Rahaf knows that they cannot afford going. It would require not only one set of new clothes for her and her six children: they would need new clothes for each of the three days that the wedding lasts, money for her and her two daughters to have their hair and make-up done in a beauty parlour as well as a gift of gold for the bride and of money for the groom. And then there is transportation back and forth for seven people and snacks for the smaller ones, when they get hungry in the middle of the long celebration. Rahaf knows exactly how expensive such a wedding is, and she also knows that cutting down on costs by wearing the same clothes for three days, not going to the beauty parlour or not bringing a gift, will reflect negatively on her and her social skills and is therefore better avoided. Therefore, she doesn't even want to discuss the possibility of attending.

Finding ways of *coping* with the economic hardship she is experiencing following the demolition of her house has become a matter of everyday life for her, and the ways she – and other women in the same situation – does it are manifold. What many of the *coping strategies* have in common is, that they first and foremost affect women's social ties since these, much more than men's, are maintained through mutual visiting – visiting which in turn requires display of hospitality or the exchange of gifts and thereby ultimately spending money, as described throughout chapter three.

Coping strategies, according to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), can be divided into two kinds: action oriented strategies, where the individual in question tries to handle a difficult situation by acting on it, and strategies that focus more on tolerating, minimising or accepting the situation (Lazarus & Folkman 1984: 138-39). My interest in the following is primarily centred on action oriented strategies, since these are reflected in the everyday actions of women, and therefore are more easily detected.

One such strategy used by my informants, as well as described by Abu Nahleh and Kuttab in their studies about Palestinian women's coping strategies in the continuous conflict (Abu Nahleh 2006; Kuttab 2006), is to limit their participation in social events, since they most often imply the exchange of gifts and food, buying new clothes and other expenses. Social events can be anything from parties such as engagements, weddings or birthdays, to visiting family or friends. For some, even social obligations, such as visiting a sick mother in the hospital or a sister who has given birth, are avoided, since they also imply bringing a "get well" or "congratulations" present. While one might argue that paying a visit to sick relatives is more important than bringing them a gift, such an argument entirely overlooks the existence of important cultural and social norms that individuals strive to fulfil in order to maintain their social standing. Not bringing a present to a sick relative indicates one's inability to fulfil the obligation of *reciprocity* inherent in gift giving in general, as described by Mauss (1990 [1925]), as well as one's incapacity to adhere to the culturally appropriate way of reciprocating, according to Palestinian norms of what it means to be a good and honourable person.

Furthermore, since, as we have seen in chapter three, the exchange of gifts and food also reflects the existence of social relations and signifies their continuation, failing to participate in such exchange may, in utmost cases, be conducive to the weakening of social ties. So, while avoiding social events quite evidently impedes the maintenance of social relations, failure to adhere to cultural norms of how to form part of social networks and be a proper social person in Palestinian society also reflects negatively on a person, thus placing the women in an almost insurmountable dilemma. Regardless of the strategy they choose, it comes at a price, whether it is the loss of honour and social standing or the loss of sociability.

Another widely used coping strategy that has a negative impact on women's social networking, but also their honour and social standing, is limiting *hospitality*, an otherwise important cultural component of more informal social networking (Kuttab 2006: 268). Since hospitality not only implies receiving guests, but also duly serving them drinks, snacks or food whether they come announced or unannounced, it is particularly burdensome on families and women with very limited economic means. While it might be difficult for women to avoid receiving guests altogether, limiting the abundance and quality of food and drinks – for instance, serving tea instead of

expensive fruit juices or soft drinks – might be an alternative strategy. This, in turn, means not adhering to the norm of *generosity* closely connected to hospitality and therefore part of what can be labelled the "honour code" of sociability in Palestinian society: *hospitality*, *generosity* and *reciprocity*.

4.3 Summing up

Throughout this chapter, I have analysed the ways in which Palestinian women's personal and social identities are affected and altered as a result of the house demolition. The demolition, I have argued, brings about a feeling of liminality and of being "out of place" brought about by the divergence between the situation of homelessness and the women's house-based identities. Despite women's subsequent wishes to explore new forms of life outside the space of the home – wishes which are a reaction to the rupture brought about by the demolition of this home – attempts to pursue such new paths are largely opposed and counteracted by husbands as well as societal norms, which try to keep women "in place". Second, the house demolition also affects women's social relations, first and foremost as a result of the financial troubles that come out of the demolition of such a large, economic investment as a house, at a time where families' means are already scarce. The ensuing poverty and chronic lack of money forces women, who do not earn their own money, but are mostly dependent on their husbands' income, to take on a range of *coping strategies* – strategies which have a negative impact on their sociability. These include avoiding social events and limiting hospitality, two areas of social networking that entail continuous and substantial spending.

However, these strategies not only impede women from taking part in, and having a social life. They also reflect negatively on their social position and honour, which is measured by the extent to which a person is able to live up to the values seen as essential to being a good social person in Palestine – values which, most importantly, include *hospitality*, *generosity* and *reciprocity* or what I have called the "honour code" of sociability in Palestine. Thus, while women struggle to find ways of making ends meet these are often at the expense of maintaining social relations in a culturally appropriate way.

Chapter 5

The house and the homeland

National and ethnic identities, as well as their creation, are linked to or associated with particular places. This argument, albeit formulated slightly differently, has been presented by both Allen Feldman and Begoña Aretxaga in their respective work on the conflict in Northern Ireland (Feldman 1991: 76-78; Aretxaga 1997: 24-42). That the argument not only applies to the situation in Belfast, but also indeed to that of Jerusalem, was revealed to me already on my first day in the field as I drove into Jerusalem, as described in chapter two. Then, *place* denoted particular neighbourhoods and roads inside the city, each of which could either be classified as Arab/Palestinian or Jewish/Israeli. In this chapter, I will illustrate how places, to which national or ethnic identity and its creation is linked can in fact be much smaller in scale, as exemplified by houses and more specifically their demolition.

In the previous chapters, although mainly centred on the consequences of house demolitions for women's personal and social identities, I also briefly touched on the issue of national identity, by pointing out that women talk extensively about themselves in terms of their national belonging and Palestinianness after the demolition of their house. They do so for two interconnected reasons, as I will argue in the following. First, they emphasise their national identity because of the *politicisation* of the house space which is the result of its demolition and the shattering, not only symbolically, but also very physically, of the dividing line between the private, domestic realm and the sphere of formal politics, which occurs in the house demolition. Furthermore, women's national identity comes to the foreground because their experience with the house demolition in many ways mirrors the Palestinian national narrative, which largely centres on the notions of suffering, destruction and expulsion of the Palestinian people from their homes and land.

5.1 The politicisation of place and space-bound identities

According to Keith and Pile (1993) "…all spatialities are political because they are the (covert) medium and (disguised) expression of asymmetrical relations of power" (Keith & Pile 1993: 38). While I agree with this statement, I further argue that space and places become particularly and distinctly political in times and situations of violent conflict, where these asymmetrical relations of power are further accentuated, as reflected in my description of the geographical outline and city planning of Jerusalem throughout chapter two. However, this politicisation of space, as I will argue, also very aptly applies to smaller scale and local places, as for example a house and more particularly a demolished house. By virtue of being forcefully torn down by the Israeli authorities – either the Jerusalem Municipality or the Ministry of Interior[36] – a demolished Palestinian house becomes a highly politicised space, that is, a contested site where the struggle for, and dynamics of power inherent in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are played out.

The politicisation of the house, which is the result of it becoming a target of invasion or destruction, has also been described by Aretxaga in her study of women, nationalism and political subjectivity in Northern Ireland in the 1970s and early 1980s (Aretxaga 1997). During "the troubles", as the locals call the conflict in Northern Ireland, house searches were a routine part of security operations conducted by British soldiers, and this form of state violence perpetrated in the space of the house, says Aretxaga, was interpreted in nationalist culture as the embodiment of English violence to the Irish nation. When invaded in this way, the house, then, lost its position as the epitome of private space and intimate relations (ibid: 52).

Looking at a setting closer to that of my informants, Julie Peteet also describes how the domestic sphere became politicised in the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra/Shatila and Tel al-Zataar as a result of the massacres committed there in the fall

[36] The Jerusalem Municipality and the Ministry of Interior have separate areas of responsibility when it comes to house demolitions. The Municipality is responsible for demolishing houses that are built illegally in areas within the zoning plan, while the Ministry of Interior is responsible for the illegal houses built in open space; that means within areas that have not yet been planned. Furthermore, both entities operate with two different kinds of demolitions: administrative demolitions and demolitions in accordance with court orders. Administrative demolition orders are issued for houses that have not yet been finished and that are not inhabited, while demolition orders following a court order are issued for houses that are finished and inhabited and whose inhabitants have taken their case to court. The latter type of demolition is the most current (ICAHD 2004: 5).

of 1982, where houses were shelled and searched and civilians killed inside them (Peteet 2001: 138; Sayigh 1994: 117-122). Since domestic boundaries and the notion of the house as a safe place were thus torn down, house spaces in the aftermath of the massacres were no longer understood solely as private spheres of intimate relations. Quite to the contrary, domesticity came to be associated with struggle and militancy and domestic duties were expanded to include certain political activities such as attending militants' funerals, demonstrations and political lectures (Peteet 2001: 138).

What is interesting for the purpose of my argument is not only the ways in which private space and private places are politicised in the event of conflict, but as much how this politicisation affects those who inhabit these places. In the case of Palestinian women, as I have already argued, the politicisation of the house space, which is the result of its intentional demolition as part of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, leads to a shift in the women's identification, away from their feminine identity as housewives towards a stronger identification with their national identity as Palestinians.

In order to fully understand how and why the house demolition, and the politicisation of the house space which follows, strengthens the women's national identification, I suggest we combine the idea of the *politicisation* of the house with the notion of what – borrowing a term from Maja Povrzanovic – I call *space-bound identity* (Povrzanovic 1997: 154). My idea of space-bound identity in the specific context of Palestinian women who had their house demolished is a combination of two perspectives: those of George Bisharat and Maja Povrzanovic, writing on national identity of Palestinians and Croatians respectively (Bisharat 1997; Povrzanovic 1997).

In Bisharat's perspective, "identities are spatialised in the contest between groups for the control of space" (Bisharat 1997: 205). Furthermore, he argues, identities are most strongly spatialised when the connection between peoples and places is somehow challenged (ibid: 204), an argument that very precisely reflects the reaction of my informants to the house demolition. According to Povrzanovic, in turn, who uses the term *space-bound identity* to denote the strong sense of belonging to a specific place or a specific region, this identity emerges "out of the violent destruction of concrete life-worlds of the highest emotional, but also practical, material importance as places of people's daily interactions" (Povrzanovic 1997: 160).

The way I suggest we understand the space-bound identities of my Palestinian informants, then, is as stemming from the combination of a struggle between them and the Israeli authorities for the control of a particular space, which building and destroying homes is an example of, and the violent destruction of their emotional, practical and material life-world in the shape of the house. Losing the battle for space, so to speak, while at the same time losing their life-world, strengthens their sense of belonging to it.

Furthermore, by a "metonymical operation" (Aretxaga 1997:52), the house when destroyed comes to stand for and represent the land of Palestine. This is reflected in the women's equation of *house* and *homeland*, as expressed in their conversations with me. "For me, the house is like… homeland", Jihan said to me. "If you don't have a homeland, you don't have anything and it's the same: if you don't have a home, you don't have anything", she continued. Others, such as Um Mohamed, although she didn't directly equate the two, also talked about house and homeland interchangeably. "When your house is demolished, what is left for you?" she asked me during my interview with her. "All your life is demolished (…) but we will never leave our land. This is our homeland where should we go? We will never leave our homeland and our children. Tell her, Ali (to her grandson ed.) tell her about your house… whether you love your house and your country." The house, then, becomes a powerful symbol of the women's national belonging, thereby echoing an argument presented by Hilda Kuper and paraphrased by Low and Lawrence-Zuñiga, stating that "...the power of sites lies in their capacity as symbols to communicate through condensed meanings, especially as they are activated during the drama of political events" (Low & Lawrence-Zuñiga 2003:19).

The meanings inherent in the symbolic equation of house/home and homeland/nation when the house as symbol is "activated" – that is, demolished – in turn points to the role houses and house destruction plays in the Palestinian national narrative, and leads us to my second argument about the nature of the national identity making processes among female victims of house demolitions. In this my second argument, I will show how women's national identification is reinforced through a process of mirroring their experience with house demolitions in the Palestinian national narrative – a narrative which, in turn, depicts the way the Palestinian community is imagined (Anderson 1991 [1983]) and thus what it means to be a Palestinian. In order to properly build up the

argument, I start with an overview of the most important elements of this national narrative and the process of its creation.

5.2 The making of Palestinian identity and the Palestinian national narrative

"A Palestinian national identity, like those of other modern nations, has been created – invented and elaborated – over the course of the last two centuries." (Kimmerling & Migdal 1993: xvii). Taking as my point of departure this perception of national identity as a recent construction[37], an approach also advocated by Anderson and Swedenburg (Anderson 1991 [1983]; Swedenburg 1995), I will set out in the following to explore some of the major events and processes that have contributed to the shaping of the Palestinian national identity and national narrative. Since a total overview of the history of Palestine and the processes of Palestinian identity formation is beyond the scope and interest of this thesis, I will focus on the aspects that are significant for the framing of my informants' stories. Thereby, I set the scene for my subsequent analysis of the ways in which my female informants link their personal story to the broader national narrative.

5.2.1 Rooted in the land – the territorialisation of identity

During the past hundred years, Palestinian society and Palestinian identity have undergone dramatic changes and many different identity narratives have been at play throughout this period. Before World War One, three types of identity or identification had particular importance: the religious connection with the Holy Land, connection with

[37] Nevertheless, most nations allege to be distinct essences whose claim to a territory, and thereby identity, is predicated on their uninterrupted possession and occupation of this territory since the beginning of recorded history. Joan Peters' study *From Time Immemorial: The Origins of the Arab-Jewish Conflict over Palestine* (1984) is an example of a study supportive of this idea. Throughout her book, she argues that most of Palestine's Arab population was not native but consisted of migrants, attracted by opportunities offered by Jewish settlements, and thus did not constitute a people with a connection to the land of Palestine (Peters 1984). This idea about rights being consistent with connectedness to a territory is also reflected in the idea about cultural property, a strategy according to which "…groups have a collective, proprietary right to the objects, ideas, practices, and *land* they engender or *to which they have in the past been connected*." (my emphasis) (Bishara 2002: 4). In Israel, this idea of cultural property has been further developed, adding to it an element of rights according to feelings. Through homeland worship (hiking and getting to know the details of the terrain) and ecological activism (planting trees and protecting the environment), Israelis portray themselves as the rightful owners of the land, since they – opposite the Palestinians who purportedly despoil and neglect it – protect it and thereby show they care for it (Swedenburg 1995: 55-64).

the Ottoman administration, and local patriotism, that is, the feeling of being rooted in a particular region, town or village. This link between people, their identity and a particular place, as exemplified by local patriotism and later more specifically exploited by its ideological "rival" nationalism, has been dealt with at large by Liisa Malkki in her article *National Geographic: The Rooting of Peoples and the Territorialisation of National Identity among Scholars and Refugees* (Malkki 1992). The naturalised bond between people and territory, and thus the territorialisation of national identity, she argues, is reflected both in nationalist discourses, in ordinary language, in scholarly studies but also in people's non-discursive practices, such as bringing soil or seeds from their country with them when leaving it, or kissing the ground upon their return to it[38] (Malkki 1992: 25-27). The naturalisation of this connection, she further argues, is routinely conceived in specifically botanical metaphors, implying that "people are often thought of, and think of themselves, as being rooted in place and as deriving their identity from that rootedness" (ibid: 27), roots that are often expressed as being arborescent in form.

The notion of attachment to, and rootedness in, the land also plays an important role in Palestinian nationalist discourse, as briefly mentioned in chapter three. More specifically, this is reflected in the romanticised role ascribed to the Palestinian peasant in the nationalist representation as the symbolic representative of the cultural and historical continuity of the people through his "traditional" lifestyle as well as the people's connection to and rootedness in the land expressed through his agricultural work. Furthermore, and thereby following Malkkis' second argument, rootedness in the land of Palestine is also evoked through the arborescent symbols of the olive tree and the *zatar* (wild thyme), who, in the words of Swedenburg: "…have been elevated through constant invocation in poetry and songs, to almost sacred symbols of the relation of the people to the Palestinian soil" (Swedenburg 1995: 22). Therefore, uprooting of Palestinian (olive) trees in connection with Israeli land expropriation and

[38] Another important conception in modern nationalism, argues Anderson, is the existence of a link between territory and national sovereignty. As he phrases it: "…state sovereignty is fully, flatly, and evenly operative over each square centimetre of a legally demarcated territory" (Anderson 1991: 19). This argument quite accurately reflects the understanding of many Palestinians, who see national self-determination and territorial sovereignty as inseparable as well as crucial to the survival of the Palestinian people (Sharoni 1995: 32).

house demolitions, as well as the ban on gathering wild thyme imposed by the Israeli military in the West Bank (ibid: 59), are strong symbols of Palestinian dispossession.

5.2.2 The categorical "other" – identity in opposition

The three forms of identity that had importance to people living in the area today known as Israel/Palestine before World War One, as described above, were however significantly affected by the war and the consequent dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. Hence, people's connection with the – no longer existing – Ottoman State lost its significance as did gradually also their religious affiliation. Instead, and as a reaction to the colonisation of large parts of the Middle East by the British and French, and the national boundaries that were drawn as a result of their colonial aspirations[39], pan-Arabism gained increasing support among the Arabs in Palestine. The liberation of Palestine even came to be linked with the wider effort to solve the pan-Arab entanglement (Pappé 2004: 150). Together with local loyalties, pan-Arabism then became the focal point for Palestinian identity in the years after World War One (Khalidi 1997: 153-57 & 193; Kimmerling & Migdal 1993: 195-96).

With the spread of modern education, transportation and the print press, local loyalties and the connection with a particular town or village were gradually supplemented by a sense of belonging to a larger entity (Khalidi 1997: 153), a development which echoes Anderson's description of the emergence of modern nationalism (Anderson 1991 [1983]: 32-36). This connection with a greater geographical entity (Palestine) was further strengthened because of the isolation of what became the British Mandatory State of Palestine from the surrounding Arab countries during the period from 1917 to 1948. Since Jewish immigration to Palestine saw a boom in the same period[40], it also became increasingly clear that the Palestinian national

[39] During a meeting in 1916 between Sir Mark Sykes of the British Foreign Office and his counterpart in the French Foreign Ministry, George Picot, the Arab Middle East was divided between the two countries into new political entities. The agreement known as the Sykes-Picot Agreement, allotted Lebanon and Syria to the French while Iraq and Transjordan were to be British. Palestine was to be ruled jointly by the two. However, the Sykes-Picot agreement was never applied to Palestine, which came to be ruled solely by the British until 1948 (Pappé 2004: 66-67).

[40] Jewish immigration to Mandatory Palestine boomed in different periods and for various reasons throughout the period 1917 to 1948. The fist wave of immigrants followed the Balfour declaration in 1917, whereby Britain committed itself to help establish a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine and was brought on largely by post-war troubles in Eastern Europe. Later, in the mid 1930s

narrative was inevitably intertwined with another and maybe even more potent narrative, that is, the narrative of the Jewish people, which lays claim to the same territory (Khalidi 1997: 146). The development of Palestinian identity, then, on a par with that of other identities, involved, as Edward Said has noted "…establishing opposites and 'others' whose actuality is always subject to the continuous interpretation and re-interpretation of their differences from 'us'" (Said 1995: 332).

The process of ethnic, and later nationalist dichotomisation (Eriksen 1993: 111), whereby Arab Palestinians constituted themselves as different from the Jewish/Israeli "other", thus echoes the findings of a range of scholars who have argued – each in their own way – that ethnic and national identity is a continuing "production" (Hall 1994: 392) of a *relation of difference*, which is created in confrontation with and in opposition to a categorical "other" (Gupta & Ferguson 1997a: 12-17; Bisharat 1997: 204-205; Barth 1969; Billig 1995).

In his introduction to the book *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organisation of Culture Differences* (1969) Barth dismisses the idea, often at the centre of attention of anthropological studies of ethnicity at the time of writing, that the "cultural stuff" of ethnic groups is what defines them and gives them their distinct identity. Instead, he underlines the importance of *boundary maintenance* for ethnic identity, that is, distinguishing between members of, and outsiders to, an ethnic group, a distinction which, in turn, is based on self-ascription and identification derived from selected cultural traits – chosen by members of the group as significant to them – but also on ascription by others (Barth 1969: 10-13). Thus, Barth understands ethnic identity as created in the process of social interaction on or across ethnic boundaries and thereby in opposition to that which lies beyond these boundaries.

In a setting fraught with a long lasting territorial conflict, as in the case of my field of study, interaction between groups is often limited and rather takes the shape of confrontation, I argue. Thus, in such an environment, maintaining boundaries, clearly distinguishing "them" from "us", becomes even more important and ethnic identity is understood even more in terms of opposition to a categorical "other" (Bisharat 1997:

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came yet another wave of Jewish immigrants, sparked by the rise of Nazism in Europe (Morris 1987: 4-5; Pappé 2004: 93). Throughout the period, immigration and settlement of Jews in Palestine was promoted by the Jewish Agency - the Zionist leadership of pre-state Israel – while the British mandatory administration oscillated between support to Jewish immigration, as expressed in the Balfour declaration, and attempts to limit this immigration, e.g. through the White paper of 1939 (Pappé 2004: 107-109).

205). This argument is also advocated by Swedenburg in his study about popular memory and the Palestinian national past (Swedenburg 1995), where he calls the Palestinian nationalism a "defensive" nationalism as opposed to what he labels Israel's "exclusivist and expansionist brand of colonial nationalism" (Swedenburg 1995: 6), a form of nationalism which, from the very beginning, has denied and dismissed the Palestinian presence and has tried to erase all traces of their past existence. Most importantly, he notices that the Palestinians acquired their notion of a distinctive national identity mainly in relation to these Israeli actions of erasure, and that their self-representation is therefore being formulated largely in *opposition* to Israel and thus "inversely specular", as he calls it (ibid).

5.2.3 Displacement, memory and resistance – identity from exile

World War One was not the last major, historical event that lead to dramatic change in the lives of Arab Palestinians. The UN General Assembly's approval of the partition plan for Palestine in November 1947 became the next significant event. The decision, which was opposed by all the Arab countries, led to clashes and civil war in Palestine, later developing into a regular Jewish/Arab war that lasted until 1949 (Pappé 2004: 126-141). This war resulted in yet another turn in Palestinian identity formation, since it meant the expulsion of large numbers of Palestinians from their lands, villages, towns and homes[41], as well as their exposure to a range of traumatic events that changed their lives for good. The Palestinian "Nakhbah" (Catastrophe) – the shattering of the Palestinian community in the war (Kimmerling & Migdal 1993: xv) – passed into their national historical consciousness as a period of "unexpected, unnatural, and forced exile" (Bisharat 1997: 207), and provided them with a collective history and a common fate that they could gather around. None were masters of their own destiny anymore and all were subject to the power of foreign and largely hostile new authorities (Khalidi 1997: 194).

[41] No accurate figures of the number of Palestinian refugees from 1948 exist. However, various sources give indications of possible numbers ranging from about 520000 (given by Israeli spokesmen) to 900000 or a million (given by Arab/Palestinian spokesmen). In his book *The birth of the Palestinian refugee problem*, Benny Morris opts for the loose, contemporary British formula of "between 600000 and 760000 refugees". Between 69000 and 102000 Arab Palestinians were left in Israel after 1949 (Kemp 2004: 78, Morris 1987: 298). For more details on this issue see Morris 1987.

Those who stayed in what became the state of Israel on May 14, 1948 became a minority, regarded even as a "dangerous population"[42] (Kemp 2004: 74), subject to the rule of a Military Government and its administration through a range of emergency regulations and laws, that were continuously extended until 1972 (ibid: 73-82). Those Palestinians who fled their homes during the war became refugees in the Egyptian controlled Gaza Strip, the Jordanian controlled West Bank or in the neighbouring countries Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, where they came to live in refugee camps. For many years, these camps were made up of tents, since the refugees, the hosting countries and the international community hoped for their return to Palestine, and therefore regarded life in the refugee camp as a temporary condition[43].

As time passed, with no signs of Israel willingly letting refugees return to their homes, the tents slowly turned into houses and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNWRA) was created to take care of providing Palestinian refugees with services such as sanitation, schools and health care. But living conditions in the hosting countries were not easy. First of all, poverty was stark, since many refugees had left large parts of their belongings and valuables behind. In addition, refugees were often socially, politically and economically marginalised in the receiving countries, who regarded the Palestinians as a threat to internal homogeneity, unity and even security, as e.g. in Lebanon and Jordan (Sayigh 2002: 59-62; Layne 1994: 25). The Six-Day War in 1967, only nineteen years later, brought additional suffering to the Palestinian people when the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem were occupied by Israel and an additional 250-300000 Palestinians were made refugees, half of them for the second time (Kimmerling & Migdal 1993: 209; Sharoni 1995: 63).

Since, as we have seen it, a vast majority of Palestinians were thus expelled from their homes in one way or another as a result of the war in 1948[44] and 1967, forced

[42] The constitution of the Palestinians in Israel as a "dangerous population", Adriana Kemp suggests, is a result of the pairing of the national goals of the dominant ethnic group (the Jews) and the continuous concern of the state with population management and surveillance (Kemp 2004: 74). The danger posed by the Palestinians, then, is largely linked to their status as a minority and thereby their blurring of the boundaries of the social taxonomy of nationalism, as described in chapter two (Appadurai 2006: 44).
[43] While the war was still ongoing, the UN General Assembly even passed a resolution on the return of refugees (UNGAR 194) stating that: "Refugees wishing to return to their homes and live in peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date…" (UNGAR 194).
[44] The causes and circumstances surrounding the Palestinian exodus in 1947-49 still constitute one of the great controversies in the history of Israel/Palestine. The official Israeli version of history states that

expulsion, refugeeism and life in exile also became central elements of the Palestinian collective, national story and thus identity, leading the famous Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish to refer to Palestinians as "travel suitcases" (Abdo 2002: 120). However, refugeeism and exile were not only incorporated into the national narrative. According to Benedict Anderson, exile also plays an active role in the *creation* of national identity. Exile, he suggests, serves as a vehicle for the emergence of national identity, an argument presented in his writings about long-distance nationalism in *The Spectre of Comparisons* where, borrowing a citation from the 17th century politician-historian Lord Acton, he declares that "exile is the nursery of nationality" (Anderson 1998: 59). Nationalist feelings, says Anderson, first emerged in the early 16th century among the European immigrants in the overseas colonies of North and South America, who, through their life in exile, became aware of the hybrid nature of their identity, being non-English (that is displaced) Englishmen and non-Spanish Spaniards or, as they were named by the colonial powers that they had migrated from, "creoles" (ibid: 60). It was as a response to this hybrid identity that the purities of nationalism arose. Thus, the later rise of nationalist movements, who were often led by these "Creole pioneers" (Anderson 1991: 47), should be seen as projects for coming home from exile, for solving this hybridity, argues Anderson (Anderson 1998: 65).

Just as in the case of the early nationalism, or at least nationalist feelings of the creoles of the American continent, Palestinian nationalism also became distinctive through the Palestinian experience of exile, an experience which, according to Bisharat, became *the* constitutive experience of Palestinianness (Bisharat 1997: 205). In this process of creating a Palestinian national identity from a position of exile, *memory* also came to play an important role, I suggest. Since Palestine for the majority of Palestinians was only a remote geographical entity, which they no longer inhabited, their Palestinianness largely came to be linked to the way they remembered places, events and the way of life to have been before 1948.

Palestinians were encouraged to leave their homes by leaders from the surrounding Arab countries that propagated the message through radio broadcasts. However, Israeli revisionist historians' research in archival materials has revealed that a large percentage of Palestinians were more or less deliberately expelled by Jewish forces with the tacit or even explicit consent of the Zionist leadership (Bisharat 1997: 206; Morris 1998; Segev 1986). Besides the Palestinians who fled to the neighbouring countries, others – amounting today to around 300000 people – were internally displaced within Israel as a result of or immediately following the war, when the state of Israel confiscated large amounts of land owned or still inhabited by Arab Palestinians for Jewish settlement (Abdo 2002: 123).

While Palestinian nationalist goals of self-determination and of creating an independent Palestinian state have never been fully reached – thus characterising Palestinian nationalism more as a liberation movement nationalism than an official state nationalism (Abdo 1991: 22) – continuous Palestinian hardship, struggle for existence and repeated defeat, both in exile and under Israeli occupation, has also been overcome and survived: the Palestinian people still exist. Therefore, this unremitting struggle and the recurring defeats, far from undermining Palestinian national identity, have been incorporated into the national identity narrative as triumphs and heroic perseverance against impossible odds (Khalidi 1997: 194-95).

This doesn't mean that Palestinians no longer see themselves as a people that suffer, but rather that they identify as a people for whom suffering and the overcoming of this suffering and repeated defeat are important premises for their identification. This in turn is reflected in the role played by *sumud* (steadfastness) in the Palestinian resistance. *Sumud* started out as a passive, non-violent resistance strategy against Israeli occupation and supremacy in the beginning of the 1970s. Behind it lies the assumption that Palestinians, merely by staying on their land, are defending their nationality. Those who practice *sumud* refuse to move away despite the political, economic and physical injustices committed against them (Tamari 1991: 61-62, www.sumud.net). Thereby, the *sumud* strategy once more underlines the connection of the Palestinian people with their land and their conception of being historically rooted in the land of Palestine[45]. Sustaining the pain, as expressed in the *sumud* strategy, I suggest, might even be understood as part of the *rite de passage* – in the case of the Palestinians a very long and still on-going one – from which nations are born, according to many nationalist myths (Eriksen 1993: 112); a *rite de passage* in which the nation has to fight its adversaries as part of the nation building process (ibid).

Thus, as we have seen, three big events – or *critical events* (Daas 1995) – in the Palestinian history came to bear particular significance for the development of a Palestinian national identity: World War One, the war in 1947-49 and the Six Day War

[45] In his article, Tamari also describes how *sumud*, defined as a long-range accommodation strategy, was challenged by a more activist, nationalist strategy which considered the existing Palestinian institutions that embraced *sumud* elitist and nepotistic, and emphasised the need for a resistance based on popular mobilisation (Tamari 1991).

in 1967. In the course of the historical period covered by these three events, several elements of the Palestinian national narrative came into being, the most important of which – for the sake of my analysis – are the idea of the rootedness of the Palestinian nation in the land, the creation of a Palestinian identity in opposition to the Israeli "other" and the collective memory about destruction, expulsion and life in exile but also steadfastness against all odds. In the following, I will now turn to the stories of my informants in an analysis of the ways in which they, through these stories as well as their actions, link themselves to the above mentioned elements of the national narrative and thereby actively recreate their national identity.

5.3 Linking women's stories to the national narrative

When, in this section, I talk about the *stories* of my informants, what I refer to are not only words, well structured into narratives with a clear beginning and end, as we often understand a story. Rather, the stories are to be understood as a combination of the words, actions and mimic expressions of my informants, and thus as the way in which I came to know them as individuals through both observations and conversations. A story, in the way I have chosen to use the word here, is thus not only expressed through words, but also through silences, ways of acting, reacting or not acting as well as through emotional expressions such as tears, laughter and anger – in short, all possible aspects of human reaction and interaction.

While large parts of the stories that were shaped by words were recorded during my interviews with the women, a multitude of details also came to light in the course of daily and late night conversations over the span of the seven months I spent in the field. The stories in this present section are thus a combination of the women's own words, my descriptions of their actions and representation of the feelings they expressed, elements which all bear significance for our understanding of their national identification in the wake of the house demolition.

5.3.1 Being on the land

"Do you want to accompany me down to the land (*il ard*)?" Rahaf would ask me once in a while, mostly in the beginning of our acquaintance. "The land", I soon understood,

meant the place where her house had once stood, and where a huge pile of rubble next to a small garden with young trees, grass and her children's old swings were now the only remains of what had once been. Since I was of course curious to see the place, and later to listen to the stories and memories about her house that being back at its rubble would foster, we would often take these small excursions. On one of these occasions, I had a particularly vivid experience of her attachment to "the land", even after the demolition of her house had prevented her from living on it. When we arrived at the site of the house, the first thing that caught our eyes was the Red Cross tent, erected next to the rubble after the demolition six months earlier, which had now been torn down, while the mattresses, that used to lie neatly inside it, were scattered around it. What we saw when we entered the garden came as an even greater shock to Rahaf. All the figs and apricots had been stolen from the trees and in the middle of the garden a big, black spot indicated that someone had tried to set the grass on fire. The trees surrounding the black spot also looked burnt. Furthermore, the vine, that used to cover a small patio and provide the family with a shady corner at the far end of the garden, had been halfway torn down. Finally, the two dogs that were kept in a large doghouse and that Rahaf's husband used to come and feed every day after work were gone. "We planted those trees from seeds," Rahaf told me, pointing to the now despoiled trees, "now they have destroyed them too…everything is destroyed". Tears came into her eyes as she continued to inspect the damage done to the garden. Fortunately, she found that her mint and *zatar* bushes had been left untouched.

At the time, I admit, I wasn't quite able to understand how some stolen fruit and burnt trees in a garden that she only seldom visited could create such grief. However, it made me realise the great importance she still attached to the land where her house had once stood. Furthermore, if we put her reaction and feelings into a larger perspective, they begin to make sense in a whole new way. As I have shown in the previous section, one of the important elements of the Palestinian national narrative is the people's connection to and rootedness in the land, a connection which is symbolised e.g. through the importance attributed to the olive tree (as well as trees in general) and the *zatar*. Thus, in a sense, Rahaf's connection to her homeland (Palestine) goes through her continuous connection with and rootedness in its soil, symbolised by the trees, mint and thyme that she planted in her garden. That garden, then, should be seen not just as any

garden, but as a little piece of Palestine and its despoilment as a challenge to her national belonging.

Although some women like Rahaf, but also Hanan, who occasionally hosts peace activists in her old house, do continue to visit the site of their old house, whereby they reaffirm their continuous rootedness in that land and thus the land of Palestine, many never go to see their demolished home or the land it was built on again. Instead, I argue, they confirm their national belonging by other means, most importantly by talking about their demolished house. Because of the metonymical operation by which the house – when demolished – comes to stand for the homeland, as earlier described, the women talk about and remember their homeland every time they talk about their demolished house. Thus, borrowing a term from Michael Billig, they *flag* the homeland if not daily then on a regular basis (Billig 1995: 93-127).

As citizens of modern nations, says Billig, we are constantly reminded of our national identity through the daily flagging of this identity, a flagging which is most often discursive and takes place through everyday, banal words and routinely familiar habits of language[46], which is why he calls this type of everyday, taken-for-granted nationalism *banal nationalism*. The use of small words such as "we" as well as the definite article as in "*the* people" are but a few examples of such banal discursive practices (ibid: 94). While Palestinian women's talk about their demolished houses is not so much about using small, banal or familiar words that point to the nation, it still is a way of flagging the homeland. It is so, I argue, because talking about the demolished house calls a place to mind that – as a result of its demolition – has come to symbolise the nation as well as the struggle for recognition and existence as a nation, a struggle which, as I have previously described it, is an important element of the Palestinian national narrative and thus an essential part of modern Palestinian nationalism. As such, talking about one's demolished house is thus a very potent way of flagging the nation

[46] Although *flagging*, in Billig's argument, is primarily to be understood as a range of discursive practices and not as literally flying the national flag, I did at least on one occasion witness such a literal national flagging in connection with a house demolition. After the house had been demolished and the bulldozers had left, a couple of young men climbed the rubble and found a piece of wire, with which they tied a Palestinian flag to the tallest concrete slab at the top of the rubbles. Hereby, they indicated that not only the house, but also the little that was left of it, was Palestinian and thus part of the homeland.

and the struggle for existence that characterises it, albeit not in quite as banal a way, as in Billig's argument.

5.3.2 Expulsion and exile: remembering places – remembering Palestine

> *Five years after we had started living in the house, we were having lunch together at about one o'clock, and then they [Israeli soldiers ed.] started pounding loudly on the front door. So, my husband went and opened the front door, and they started to say, you have to get out of this house, we have to demolish it. And then Omar [her husband ed.] started arguing with them saying: this is my house and I'm not going to leave it. My children and I were inside the house and we closed the door. The soldiers were fighting with my husband outside, beating him, and then they tied him to the electric pole, and my children and I were hiding inside the house with the doors locked, and then they started throwing teargas through the windows. So, we brought some water and threw it on the teargas canisters that they threw in, to try and turn them off…throwing water on them. Then, they started pounding on the door, as much as they could, until the door broke. The soldiers came in and hit the girls and pulled them from their hair and from their wrists until blood flowed from their wrists… trying to pull them out (she starts crying). And they beat me on my head with something and they were pulling me from my hair. They took us outside with force in the end. And I… because they hit me on the head I lost consciousness and I didn't wake up until they took me to the hospital. I woke up in the hospital confused and crying and screaming saying I wanted to go home, I wanted to see my children. I left the hospital and I went home and saw the house was demolished. All of the children were scattered, each one in a different place. I started looking for the children. My six-year-old son Samir was lost, I couldn't find him anywhere. I started searching frantically among the rubble. In the end I found him between two rocks… asleep. Then we sat together in a tent that was erected next to the remains of the house (…) Then, the second day in the morning… that day was the blackest day, it was something else completely. I didn't feel drunk, didn't feel alive… didn't feel dead… didn't feel anything.*
>
> (Hanan, interview)

Hanan's story of what happened on the day her house was demolished – although being unique to her – is not as such an exceptional story. In many ways, it resembles that of most of the other women, whose stories I recorded, most particularly in the way it is told as a story of forced expulsion, of someone unexpectedly knocking on your door one day, telling you to leave your house after which they destroy it. Thereby, Hanan's and other women's experiences with house demolitions reflect and link up to that part of the national narrative which tells the story of the Palestinian people as one of flight, expulsion and refugeeism, beginning with the Palestinian "Nakhbah" in 1948. The women's experience of a kind of refugeeism similar to that of 1948 is further underlined by different other elements in their stories, as exemplified in the following excerpts from my interviews with Um Mohammed and Hanan:

> *Then, the second day (…) the Red Cross came… and put up a tent for us and we lived me and the children, we lived in the tent. We lived nine months in the tent. (pause – she sighs). We saw lots of things; they came to us from the peace organisations and things like that…but nothing. Then, we had lots of snakes and scorpions… how is that for the children? A snake bit me here in the finger (she shows me a scar in her little finger). We couldn't stay anymore… we couldn't stand it. Our situation was difficult. Our situation was very, very difficult (she sighs). What could we do? We couldn't stay in the tent. So we looked for a house to rent.*
> (Um Mohammed, interview)

> *After the house was demolished the second time, we were living for a long time in the tent. And then, while we were still in the tent the winter came and we were unable to stay there, because of the rain and the winter. So we rented a small apartment and also went to live there because the school was about to start. We had to do something.*
> (Hanan, interview)

Post-demolition life in a Red Cross tent with basic Red Cross supplies, as also described in an earlier chapter, bears strong symbolic resemblance with the life of Palestinians after the flight from Palestine in 1948, where they gathered and were accommodated in large Red Cross tent camps in the neighbouring countries. Furthermore, several of the women had also kept the keys to their demolished house, in an act similar to that of

many Palestinian refugees from 1948 – keys that, as described by Lasse Tørslev, act as symbols or even metonyms of concrete houses of the past (Tørslev 2007: 48-49).

In addition to the elements of the women's stories that bear resemblance with those of the national narrative, the women also make use of the same tool as used in the creation of the Palestinian national narrative from a position of exile in their own national identity formation process, namely *memory*. Thus, they illustrate the empirical implications of John Gillis' argument that "the notion of identity depends on the idea of memory, and vice versa" (Gillis 1994: 3). In our post-modern era, where the idea of (national) identity as territorialised is being challenged by globalisation, the rapid expansion of capitalism and the increasing mobility of people in which they result, identities are increasingly coming to be if not completely de-territorialised, then at least very differently territorialised, argues Gupta and Ferguson (Gupta & Ferguson 1997b: 36-37). Instead of being connected to specific, physical places – or well demarcated territories – identities, then, come to be attached to imagined or *remembered places* (ibid: 39).

For my informants, their demolished house represented such a *remembered place*, a place to which they attached their national identity, much in the same way as Palestinians all over the Diaspora attach their national identity to *remembered* Palestine, as previously argued. Their memories of the demolished house, however, were not only memories of a physical structure and of the underlying, political reasons for its demolition, as I presented them in chapter two. Therefore, I suggest, the women's memories must be perceived as *popular memories* (Swedenburg 1995: 27), since they do not merely reflect Palestinian national history, which is largely composed of "plots" relating to international and regional political events[47] (Sayigh 1998: 42-43). Rather, their memories are about daily life and family life as well as how this was affected by a political event (the house demolition). Thus, they contribute with different perspectives to a more comprehensive national history, not only dominated by men and issues of politics and national elites, as argued by Sayigh (ibid: 43). Nevertheless, my informants'

[47] However, as noted by Swedenburg (1995), Palestinian memory not only consists of an "internal" struggle between popular and official memory and nationalist views. It is also the site of an "inter-national" struggle between Palestinian and Israeli memories and views of events; a struggle which is further "trans-nationalised" by the fact that both Palestinians and Israelis are connected to important diaspora populations and institutions (Swedenburg 1995: xxix).

memories of the house and life inside it did reflect a national consciousness, although from a subaltern position and hence not always in line with the official national history.

For Jihan, who joined a women's committee after her house was demolished, memories of life as it unfolded in the house prior to the demolition were phrased in terms of providing food and shelter as well as raising children and preparing them for the future; tasks which she considered her contribution to the endurance of the Palestinian nation. In this, her discourse resembles that of Palestinian women in the Lebanese refugee camps, described by Peteet, who considered reproduction as well as raising children in a nationalist environment a primary contribution to the struggle (Peteet 2001: 144). "The house was the basis for everything", Jihan explained to me. "If for instance you want to teach your child, you do it from home, when you prepare them for the future you do it from home…anything. If there is no house, all these things don't exist either. In my opinion, having a house is more important than studying, because… how can my child study if he has no place where he can be free and independent? Where will my child study if he doesn't have a free space?" In Jihan's case then, the *politicisation* of the house, which occurred in the demolition, clearly played an important role in the way she retrospectively remembered and understood her life and role in the house as being part of the national endeavour. In this way, Jihan's experience with the house demolition can be seen as strengthening her national consciousness.

However, not all of the women articulated their memories of life in the house as being part of the national enterprise in this way. Instead, many remembered the house and living in it as being a fulfilment of their right *as Palestinians* to live in their own house, and lead normal lives. "I was living in my house, cleaning it, cooking meals for my family, helping my children with their homework, just living a normal life", Rahaf said to me and then rhetorically asked: "Why then was my house demolished? It's my right as a Palestinian to live on this land and to have my own home". Similarly, Um Sliman remembered the time when she lived in her house as fulfilling. "We bought the land and built the house and lived in it and planted some mint in the garden. We were having a great time; we felt we had achieved something. And then they came to demolish it and our lives were shattered".

As I have illustrated through the above examples, memories – like identities – are thus not fixed things, but representations or constructions of reality, which are constantly revised to suit our current identities, as argued by Gillis (Gillis 1994: 3). Furthermore, this creation of memory, or what Gillis calls "memory work" (ibid), is embedded in relations of power and thus serves particular interests (ibid: 4). Because of the inter-national and trans-national power struggles in which Palestinian memory is entangled, Palestinian "memory work" serves to assert the right of Palestinians to exist and to live on their land. Thus, I argue, Palestinian memory not only works to create a Palestinian historical past, but does so in opposition to an Israeli memory that tries to erase it. Thereby, it becomes an important part of the Palestinian resistance and creation of self in opposition to the Israeli "other".

5.3.3 Resisting "the other"

> *It was… on November 29, 2004 at six o'clock in the morning. I woke up from my sleep, and for the first time in the nine years I had lived in the house, for the first time I didn't go to the window [to look if the bulldozers were coming ed.]. I swear, that was the first time I didn't go to the window. I went and prayed, my husband prayed…my husband and my children (…) And we finished, they got dressed, they ate breakfast and they went to school and my husband to his work, and I started thinking about what I wanted to do at home. Then…on my door "doo, doo, doo, doo" (she imitates the sound of someone pounding on the door), on the door… a loud noise on the door. My two small boys…one was 3 years old and the other a year and eight months… they cried. I went to open the door and there was the son of one of the neighbours. "What's wrong?" I asked. He said… "the bulldozers are coming and soldiers, take care the house… they have come to demolish the house". I looked out of the window and I saw… something terrible, like you see in a Dracula movie. One hundred soldiers' jeeps… three bulldozers, of the big ones….three ambulances… I took the phone and called my husband. I told him "come down". My husband… still, I didn't know how to dial the number on the cell phone. Three times I dialled my husband's number wrong. I didn't know how to dial the number. There was… between him and me there was only about fifty meters. He was in the car and I was in the house down the hill. But one of the*

Bedouins that live up on the hill told him "don't go back down, Abu Ali, there are soldiers" (…) There were soldiers all over, they covered the whole area: up on the hill, down the hill… and the road here was closed, I don't know why. The whole area was closed. It was forbidden to go up and forbidden to come down. I called my family for them to come, my brothers and sisters, for them to come and sit with us. But nobody could come down, it was forbidden. All of them were there, standing up on the hill (…) We called the lawyer [who was handling their case in court ed.], but the lawyer had closed his phone. So…we were…we didn't know what to do in the house. I…saw the jeep pass near my house… and then, they left the house. They went to the neighbour's house… they didn't come to my place. It was the neighbour's house; they demolished the neighbour's house. So, I thought: that's it… it's not for me this time. But from inside, something told me it was for me, not our neighbours. So, they demolished our neighbour's house… and they stayed there four hours or three hours… they spent three hours demolishing our neighbour's house. That's it, we said, they left, they will not come to our place. But they came down… I saw them come down by foot. Because my neighbour, I can see him from my house, he is exactly above my house. I saw them come down by foot and I told my husband: it's our turn. I sent my two young children out of the house… and I stayed inside. So… I don't know what happened between me and my husband when I closed the door. He was calling me and shouting to me… "come out, come out, come out!". I didn't want to come out. Then the head of the Civil Administration [who was responsible for the demolition ed.] said, "I only want to talk to you". So he told me "come, come out… the house will be demolished. Whether you are inside it or you are outside it. It's a shame that you should die and your children are outside. You have six young children, come out to them". I told him "I don't want to come out". I was saying… bad words to him. I told him… if my father comes down, I will talk to him. He said "come out, it's better for your own sake. Don't die and leave your children". I didn't want to come out. This was all I had in the world. My children… they have God. If I left the house and the house was taken away, I …I wouldn't have a house, where would I go with my children afterwards? (sighs) So… my husband and I…I agreed to talk to him. The soldier told him… he told him "go to her, go down to her", it was forbidden for anyone to come close to the house. In case there was a bomb or something like that. He told him… "go down to her and talk to her and I promise we won't demolish the house". My husband came and talked to me… he told me…that's it…

he said, that's it, tomorrow God will give us another one… come out. He cried with me. He told me, tomorrow I will make you one that is better than this one, tomorrow you will have a house that is better than this one…if God wants, he will give us one... a house. I told him, for thirteen years I have been waiting for this house… after thirteen years they come to demolish it? I will go crazy… but I don't want to come out. He pleaded for me to come out but I closed the door after me. And stayed inside. Approximately another hour passed…I… refused to open the door. They said: "we will demolish the house now". I thought, that's it, there is no hope. My husband was begging them "only half an hour, only half an hour more. No one can get her out of the house but her father. She loves her father very much, she is afraid of him so ["fearing" someone is a sign of respect ed.]…her father will be able to get her out of the house." (…) So my father came down and he said "I might die soon"… he has diabetes, so I… all the talking with the soldiers and my husband and all of them was through the window. But when my father came I said, "that's it", I saw my father with diabetes and he will die soon. What will happen to my father? So my father was talking to me saying "we will make you another one, come out, I swear we will make you another one, another one" and so on. So finally I left the house… the house demolition didn't take five minutes… the house was gone in ten minutes. From the middle, from the top, from the bottom they demolished it. Something that I had built up for thirteen years …was gone in ten minutes.

(Rahaf, interview)

One of the things that stand out in Rahaf's above memory of her house demolition is her description of how fervently she resisted it. Unlike her husband and father, who both tried to convince her to leave the house and had thus given up, she was ready to fight for and die inside the house. This same kind of resistance is also found in Jihan's story in chapter four, where she emphasises how she was arguing with the soldiers, protesting the demolition, while her maternal uncle was trying to convince her to let go.

Because of its non-violent nature and its emphasis on the women's intention to stay put, this form of resistance is an example of the practicing of *sumud* (steadfastness), the non-violent resistance strategy which emphasises the Palestinian's connection to their land, described in an earlier section. But women not only remember their actions and reactions in terms of resistance and steadfastness. Some of them even explicitly talk

about their steadfastness as for instance Um Mohammed. After a long explanation about the disastrous effects of the house demolition on her and her family's life, she finishes her statement by raising her head proudly and declaring: "…but thank God we are still here. We are still here and we will stay here until the last hour of our lives, for the Al-Aqsa. Even if they kick us out (…) I can only praise God and thank him, and say we will always be steadfast, we will never surrender!"

In their resistance to the house demolition, both the actual act, but also the physical displacement that it leads to, women practice *sumud* in what seems then, I suggest, to become a "weapon of the weak" (Scott 1985). By phrasing their memories of house demolitions in terms of resistance and thereby steadfastness, or by explicitly confirming their steadfastness, these women, I argue, confirm their participation in the national struggle that defines them in opposition to the Israeli "other". However, by practising *sumud*, a strategy that emphasises passivity, and furthermore by doing it with the goal of saving their house – the place to which their traditional, gendered roles are linked – they place themselves as active participants in the struggle in a way that allows them to continuously live up to the norms of femininity prevalent in Palestinian society, and especially in the socio-economic segment that they belong to, about compliance, domesticity and chastity.

5.4 Summing up

My aim in this chapter has been to show why and how women increasingly identify and recreate themselves as Palestinians more than as housewives in the aftermath of the house demolition. My approach towards answering this question has been twofold. When the house is demolished, I have first argued, it ceases being merely a piece of Palestinian property, imbued with life and cultural significance, as described throughout chapter three. Instead, it becomes a focal point in the struggle for political and territorial power which characterises the Israeli-Palestinian conflict at large, and thus becomes a *politicised space*. This, in turn, leads to a strengthening of the women's *space-bound identity*, understood as a particular form of attachment to, or identification with, a place or space brought about by the loss of it. Furthermore, the demolition also serves as a

trigger for the metonymic equation of home and homeland, thereby further emphasising the national significance of the house.

In the process of unfolding my second argument, in turn, I have shown how the women, through their stories and experiences of house demolitions, in a multitude of different ways link themselves to elements of the Palestinian national narrative, most importantly the idea of being linked to the land, of being Palestinian in opposition to the Israeli "other" and of being a people defined by its experience of exile. Moreover, women's narratives, I have argued, are created through memory much in the same way as the national narrative. However, women do not simply systematically reproduce the official nationalist discourse through their stories. Rather, they create their stories on the basis of their *popular memories*, which reflect a different national consciousness, one that more aptly illustrates the lived realities of Palestinian women and allows them to continue to live up to norms of women's behaviour according to the Palestinian cultural codex.

Chapter 6

Conclusion – a nationalist framing of house demolitions

The main objective of this thesis has been to look into the ways in which house demolitions in East Jerusalem shape the lives of a group of Palestinian women who have suffered from them. More specifically, I have aimed at exploring how the loss of their houses has influenced the identity making processes of these women, which, I have argued, are largely centred on the house in a range of different ways. Although the thesis in its point of departure is about the destruction of the house, it in fact revolves around the house represented in a multitude of different shapes: the house as a *woman's place*, the house as a place of social and cultural relations, the demolished house, the *politicised* house, the *house as homeland* and the house as a *remembered place*. Thus, I have shown, the house isn't merely a structure made of steel and concrete; it is a place entangled in tightly knit "webs of significance" (Geertz 1973) on a least two levels. First, Palestinian houses – and their demolition – are entwined in relations of power and political strategies, as they are played out in the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians and particularly in the city of Jerusalem, the status of which is one of the most contested issues in the negotiations for Israeli-Palestinian peace and a future Palestinian state. Second, houses are furthermore places embedded with cultural and social significance, which is recreated and acted out in the daily interaction that takes place within the house.

By beginning the thesis with a geo-political outline of the city of Jerusalem, and the policies that have shaped it at least since the Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem in 1967, I have aimed at locating the acts of house demolitions within a broader political framework, which on an overall level is guided by the nationalist goals of the State of Israel: to be a Jewish state. Inspired by theories of discourse and governmentality, I have argued that demographic control over the minority population (the Palestinians) has become an important part of the *securitisation discourse,* in the making since Israel became a state in 1948, by which the state seeks to govern the population, especially in

Jerusalem. Demographic control, in turn, works through a particular mode of city planning of which house demolitions are an integral part. Placing house demolitions in this political framework is not merely a question of contextualisation, but is moreover important for our understanding of the women's identity making processes in the aftermath of the demolition.

What is equally important for this understanding is an insight into the cultural and social significance of the houses for the women who inhabit them. Due to Palestinian societal development since 1967, Palestinian women's lives today are largely centred on the house, I have argued. Thus, they identify, and are socialised to identify, primarily as housewives and mothers. Furthermore, and following this link between a woman and her house, her private and social life also revolve around a range of cultural values that are associated with, and enacted within, the house, most importantly the values of autonomy, hospitality, generosity and reciprocity as well as the honour gained by acting out these values in a culturally appropriate way. In addition to being the centre of personal and family life, the house must also be understood as the locus of specific forms of social organisation and of women's social life. Finally, the house also has a strong national significance for the women, since it represents their presence on and *attachment to the land* of Palestine; the latter is an important feature of the Palestinian national narrative.

Since the house, then, embodies a range of cultural, social and national values, it also becomes the place within, and in relation to which, the women create and recreate their personal, social and national identities. The demolition of the house and the rupture it represents therefore must be understood as much more than merely the destruction of a human shelter. Rather, it should be seen as a form of disruption of the social order of things, which comes to bear great significance for the way the women think of, and place themselves in society, but also for their options of acting in the domestic, the social and the political sphere – that is, in this case, the larger conflict between Israelis and Palestinians – in the aftermath of the demolition.

First, I have argued, losing their house places the women in a liminal position according to the social order of things, where women belong to the domestic sphere, a liminality which persists even when they move into a new home. This rupture, however,

while creating important changes in the women's attitudes towards their identity as housewives, only seldom leads to equal changes in the choices they have of creating a new personal identity; quite to the contrary. This, in turn, can be explained by the changes in the intra-household gender dynamics brought about by the demolition, causing men to tighten control over their (female) family members and keep them "in place" to compensate for the loss of control experienced in the house demolition.

Second, the economic hardship, brought about by the loss of the house negatively affects the women's ability to properly enact the cultural values of hospitality, generosity and reciprocity that are an important part both of their social networking, but also of their social identity according to the norms of what it means to be a proper social person in Palestine. Thus, while struggling for, and finding ways of making ends meet, these are often at the expense of maintaining social relations in a culturally appropriate way, which in turn either affects their social standing or forces them to avoid sociability.

As a way of making sense of their experience and situation in the face of the significant rupture and changes brought about by the *politicisation* of the house as a result of its demolition, the women purport to the Palestinian national narrative as an explanatory framework. More specifically, I have argued, they link their stories of demolition and their memories of the demolished house to particular elements of the Palestinian national narrative that seem to reflect this experience. However, they do so in a way that not merely echoes the official national narrative, but reworks it from a subaltern perspective, that is, the perspective of women in a male dominated society. The nationalist framing of the house demolition, understanding it as being part of the political struggle with the Israelis for land and even mere existence, and the strengthened nationalist consciousness of the women in which it results, in turn leads to significant changes in women's identification. These changes may not constitute a revolution, but they do shape women's understanding of themselves as being first and foremost Palestinians, and furthermore Palestinians who are more strongly determined to fight back the Israeli "other" in their own, quiet way.

The main findings of my thesis thus suggest, that while effectively disrupting the personal and social life of women, and presenting them with a range of difficult choices

in terms of accommodating to it, the house demolition strengthens their national identity and thus their determination to stay in Jerusalem.

6.1 Women, conflict and social transformation

Looking back at the findings of my thesis, I see my work not only as providing an ethnography of the lives of a particular group of women, but also as contributing to a number of much broader discussions within anthropology. From the very outset, by referring to Abu-Lughod's preoccupation with the underdevelopment of the anthropology of Middle Eastern women, I placed my study within this particular field of study – a field, however, which Abu-Lughod herself has also criticised as following only particular disciplinary and geographical trends as well as often being fraught with old Orientalist assumptions (Abu-Lughod 1989). By focusing on a geographical place that has so far been rather peripheral to anthropological theorising on the Middle East, namely Palestine, I hope to have contributed towards the unsettling of some of these trends. Following one of Abu-Lughod's suggestions for a renewed approach to the anthropological study of the Middle East and Middle Eastern women, my work has furthermore centred on some of the pressing issues of women's everyday lives as these are affected by conflict and military occupation (ibid: 300). What I hope to have combined is an analysis of the overall political strategies that guide a particular military occupation with an understanding of some of the ways in which these strategies, in turn, come to shape the lives of those women who live under the occupation.

In addition to the focus on women's lives as they are affected by conflict, much of this thesis also revolves around issues of space and place and particularly the link between processes of space/place and identity making. By doing so, it significantly adds to the critical discussion about space and place in anthropology, a discussion which challenges the territorialisation of culture and identity by emphasising the importance of understanding the connections between place, culture and identity as social constructions to be explained (Gupta & Ferguson 1997a: 4). More specifically, my study feeds into this discussion by providing an analysis of the mechanism through which identity is constructed in relation to both physical but also imagined space, particularly as these spaces are shaped by a situation of violent conflict.

From a broader perspective, then, I see my work as feeding into Mark Duffield's idea of conflict and war as social transformation. In his critical work on global governance and the new wars (2001), Duffield questions our perception of war as merely leading to breakdown and disruption. Instead he proposes we understand and study wars as important forms of social reordering and social change, that give rise to new forms of agency, legitimacy and principles of social organisation (Duffield 2001: 136-37). With its focus on the changes in women's connection to space and identity brought about by events connected to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, I see my work as providing an example of the kind of study requested by Duffield, one that illustrates the ways in which a specific conflict leads to particular forms of social change.

The aim of this thesis, then, has not only been to provide a critical analysis of house demolitions as creating social rupture, although this, indeed, is one of my main conclusions. Rather, I have also looked into the ways in which this rupture gives way to new forms of identification among Palestinian women, which may, in the long run, prove counteractive to the overall strategy behind the demolition – that of gradually moving the Palestinians out of Jerusalem.

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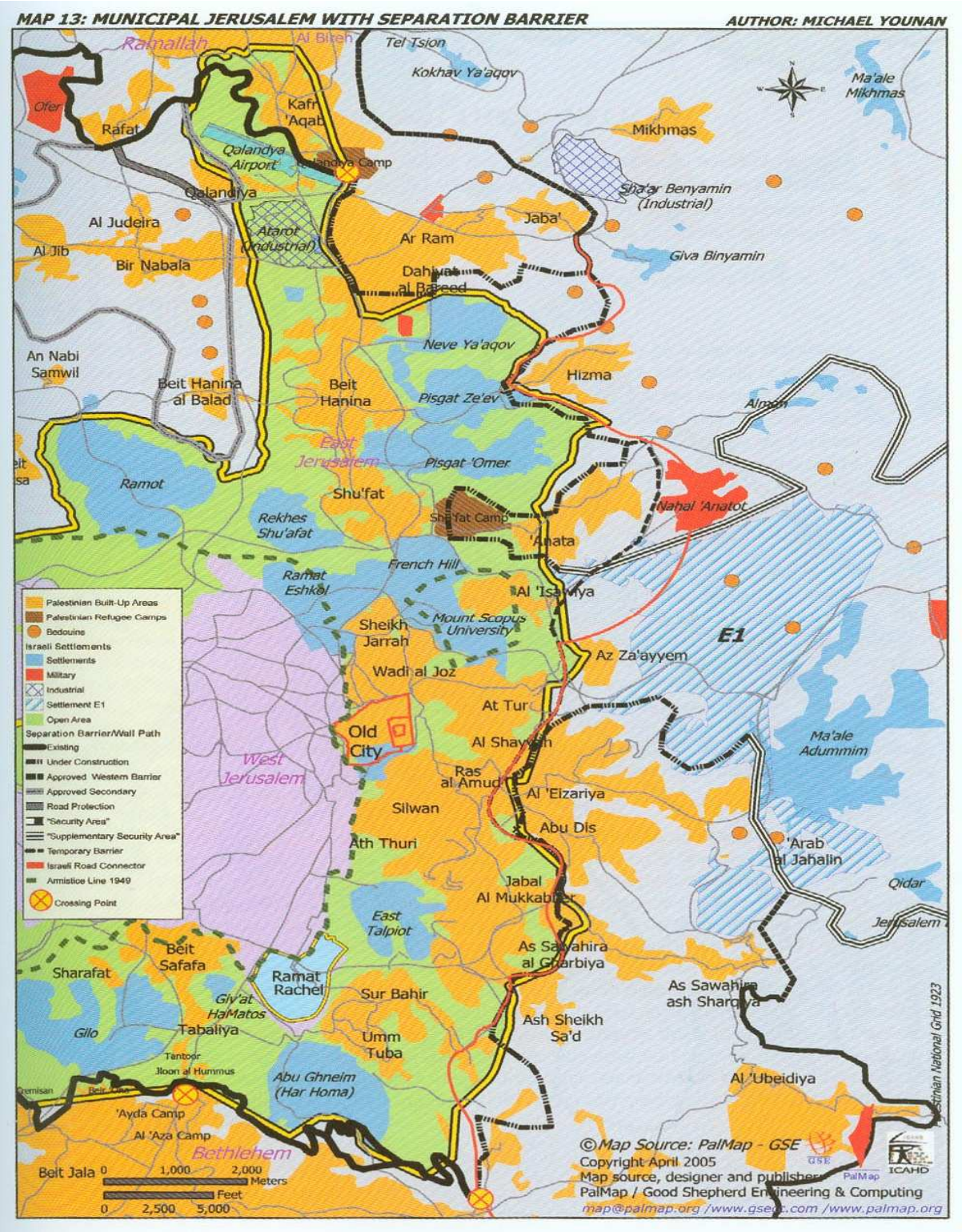
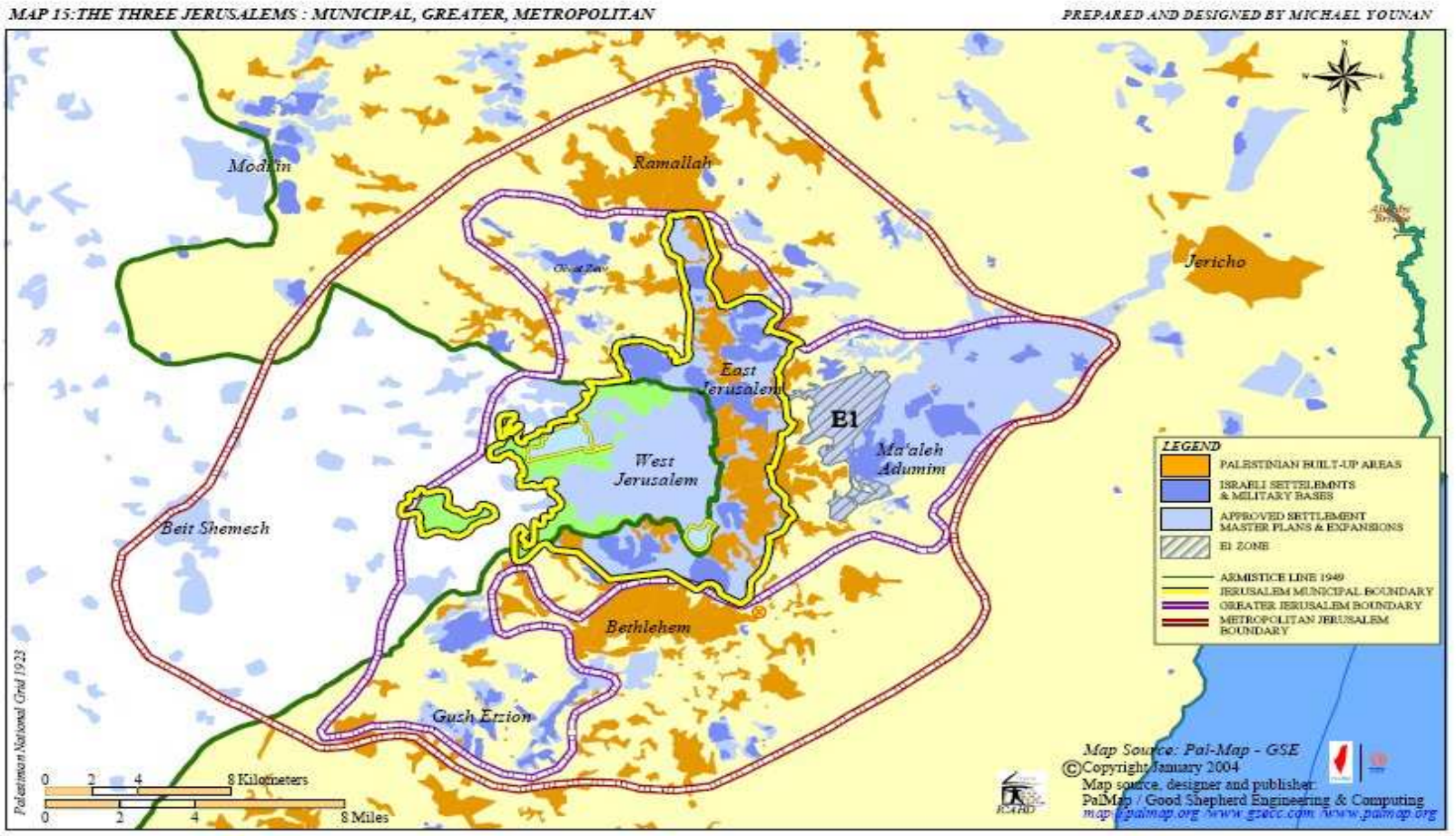
Annex 1 – Map of Jerusalem with "Separation Barrier"



Source: Jeff Halper & Michael Younan (2005) : *Obstacles to Peace. A Re-Framing of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict.* The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD)

Annex 2 – Settlements of the "inner ring" (Municipal boundary) and "outer ring" (Greater Jerusalem)



Source: Jeff Halper & Michael Younan (2005) : *Obstacles to Peace. A Re-Framing of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict.* The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD)

Annex 3 – Fees for obtaining a building permit

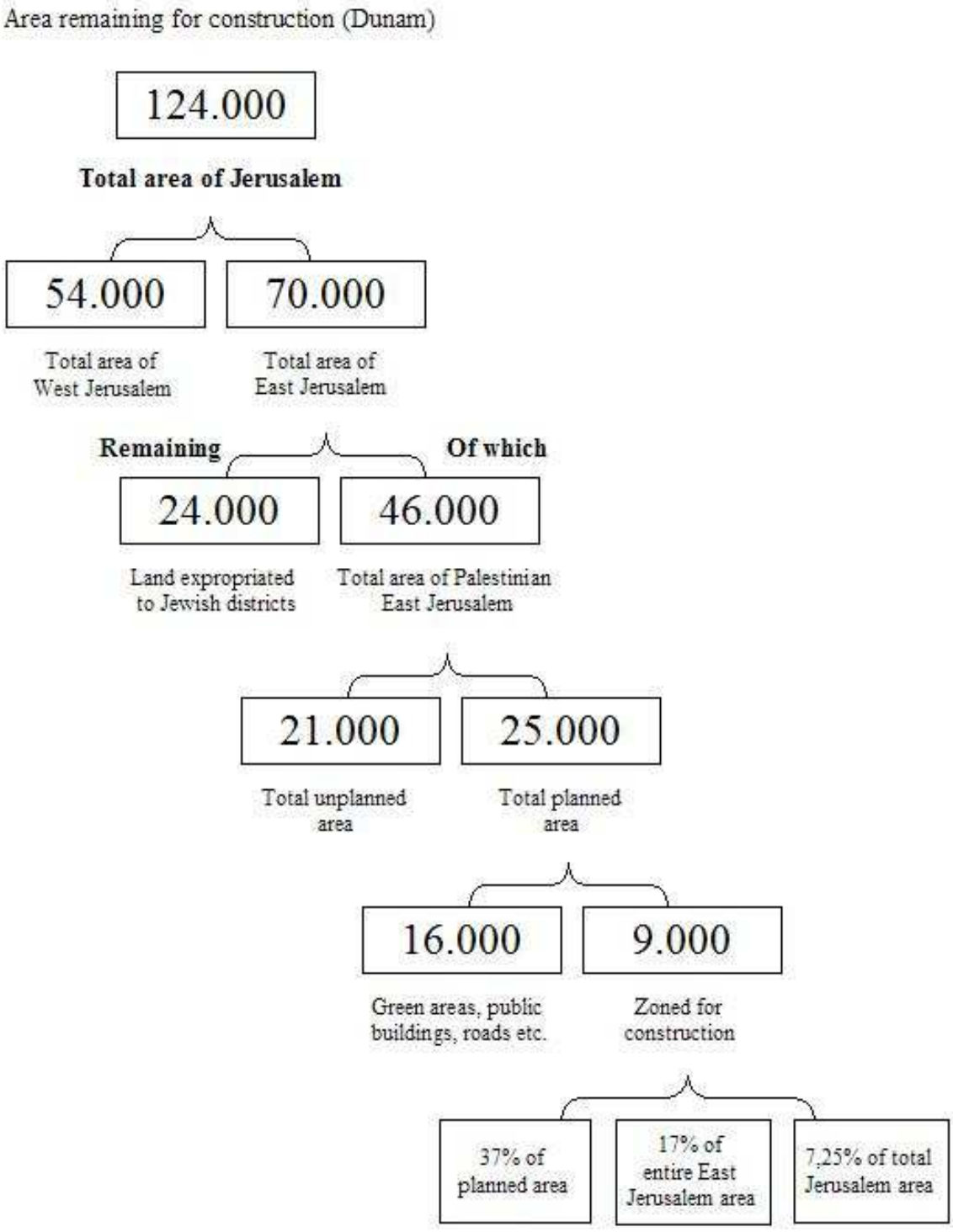
Table of fees and levies for obtaining building permit for a 200-sq.m house on a half-dunam lot

(Before excavation for sewage pipes, architect's fee and lawyer's fee)

Opening of file	About NIS 2,000
Road development fee – building	NIS 14,800
Development fee –lot	NIS 18,500
Sewage fee – lot	NIS 15,525
Water mains connection fee	NIS 5,025
Water mains development fee	NIS 17,606
PRP	About NIS 15,000
Betterment levy	About NIS 12,800
Total	**About NIS 109,492**

Source: Meir Margalit (2006) : *Discrimination in the Heart of the Holy City*. The International Peace and Cooperation Centre. Jerusalem

Annex 4 – Land available for Palestinian construction



Source: Meir Margalit (2006) : *Discrimination in the Heart of the Holy City*. The International Peace and Cooperation Centre. Jerusalem

Dansk resumé

Husødelæggelser og identitetsdannelse - Socialt nedbrud og nationalisme blandt Palæstinensiske kvinder i Østjerusalem.

Hvert år bliver mellem 75 og 150 Palæstinensiske huse i Østjerusalem revet ned af de Israelske myndigheder som resultatet af en politik, der har fundet sted siden Israel besatte Østjerusalem under 6-dages krigen i 1967. Disse husødelæggelser er det empiriske omdrejningspunkt for dette speciale, som bygger på mit feltarbejde blandt Palæstinensiske kvinder hvis huse er blevet ødelagt. Ved at kombinere ideer om rum og identitet undersøger jeg, hvordan forskellige former for magt, som blandt andet kommer til udtryk i husødelæggelser, har til formål at skabe et bestemt byrum i Jerusalem, samt hvilke konsekvenser disse husødelæggelser får for de kvinder hvis liv de rammer.

Som udgangspunkt placerer jeg husødelæggelser i en større geopolitisk kontekst, nemlig i relation til den form for byplanlægning som foregår i Jerusalem ud fra statens nationale mål om at gøre Jerusalem til den evige og udelelige hovedstad for den jødiske stat; en planlægning som har bevarelsen af et jødisk demografisk flertal som et af sine vigtigste mål. For bedre at forstå konsekvenserne af husødelæggelserne for de Palæstinensiske kvinder, analyserer jeg dernæst husets betydning for disse kvinders liv i dagens Jerusalem.

Som følge af den generelle samfundsudvikling i det Palæstinensiske samfund, foregår kvinders liv i høj grad i og omkring huset, hvorfor de også primært identificerer sig som husmødre og mødre. Samtidig knytter deres sociale liv og identitet sig også til en række vigtige værdier, som forbindes med og udspiller sig indenfor hjemmets fire vægge, nemlig autonomi, gæstfrihed, gavmildhed og reciprocitet, samt den ære der er forbundet med at leve op til disse værdier. Derfor er huset både omdrejningspunktet for kvindernes personlige og sociale identitet. Samtidig har huset også en stærk national betydning for kvinderne, idet det repræsenterer deres tilknytning til landet Palæstina; en tilknytning som er en vigtig komponent i det Palæstinensiske nationale narrativ.

Set i lyset af kvindernes personlige, sociale og nationale tilknytning til huset, skal en husødelæggelse derfor ikke kun betragtes som nedrivningen af en bolig, der efterlader kvinderne og deres familier uden tag over hovedet. Den skal også forstås som et brud på den sociale orden, der efterfølgende får stor betydning for kvindernes identitetsdannelse. Husødelæggelsen placerer kvinden i en liminal position i forhold til den sociale orden, hvor kvinder hører til i huset. Selvom

bruddet ofte får kvinderne til at gøre op med deres identitet som husmødre, får de kun sjældent mulighed for at skabe sig en ny identitet. Det skyldes at deres mænd ofte reagerer på det tab af kontrol de oplever ved husødelæggelsen, ved at øge kontrollen over deres koner i et forsøg på at bevare den sociale orden.

Udover kvindernes opgør med deres identitet som husmødre, fører husødelæggelsen også til betydelige forandringer i deres sociale status. De økonomiske vanskeligheder, som tabet af huset medfører, gør det sværere for kvinderne at leve op til de kulturelle værdier om gæstfrihed, gavmildhed og reciprocitet, som er en vigtig del af deres sociale identitet, fordi de associeres med dét at være et godt menneske i det Palæstinensiske samfund.

Husødelæggelsen har dog ikke kun personlige og sociale konsekvenser for kvinderne. Ved nedrivningen sprænges nemlig grænsen mellem det private og det offentlige rum, hvorved huset bliver ”integreret” i den Israelsk-palæstinensiske konflikt, som en brik i det politiske spil om rum. Denne politisering af huset er med til at styrke kvindernes nationale identifikation, hvilket blandt andet kommer til udtryk ved, at de kobler deres historier om husødelæggelsen og deres minder om det ødelagte hus til det Palæstinensiske nationale narrativ. Kvindernes historier afspejler dog ikke blot direkte det officielle narrativ, men bliver fortalt fra deres underordnede perspektiv, som kvinder i et mandsdomineret samfund. Dermed afspejler historierne en anderledes national bevidsthed, som gør det muligt for kvinderne at blive ved med at leve op til det Palæstinensiske samfunds normer om hvad det vil sige at være en god kvinde.

Igennem min undersøgelse sandsynliggøres det, at husødelæggelser nedbryder kvinders personlige og sociale liv og stiller dem overfor nogle svære valg i forhold til at tilpasse sig deres nye situation, samtidig med at de styrker kvinders nationale identitet og derfor deres beslutning om at blive i Jerusalem. Dermed indskriver specialet sig i en række større antropologiske debatter om kvinders liv i konflikt, om skabelsen af rum i konflikt og derfor mere generelt om de samfundsforandringer som skabes af krig og konflikt.