Military Occupation, Trauma and the Violence of Exclusion:
Trapped Bodies and Lives
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Young Women's Christian Association - Palestine

The YWCA is a non-governmental organization affiliated with the world-wide YWCA network. It aims to empower Palestinian women and improve their status through enhancing the accessibility of educational and cultural activities, create and develop their economic opportunities, and raising women’s awareness and advocating for their individual and national rights. As an organization it constantly strives to develop the body, mind, and soul of its staff, volunteers and beneficiaries so that they might become more equal members of society and active participants in the creation of a free, democratic Palestinian Society.

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Mira Rizek  
National General Secretary  
YWCA of Palestine
It’s like living in a trap. If I try to dream, they remind me: “Remember, remember, you are Palestinian and dreams are forbidden for you.” If I try to object or complain the whole world tells me, “Your history is the suffering of your people, the history of your family has not been registered in the world’s memory. I exist nowhere. I have no passport. I am unable to travel or move around. I have no health insurance. When I die here maybe there will be no need for a death certificate. No one is going to miss me anyway… We’re insects, human insects.

*May, a 24-year-old Palestinian woman from East Jerusalem*

Even the dead can’t escape them. When we bury someone here at Bab al-Sbat [a Palestinian cemetery], they have to come to see who the graves are being dug for, who the dead man is, and the papers. Sometimes they hold us up for an hour while they check the papers and then let us go on with the digging.

*Samir, a 23-year-old Palestinian man from East Jerusalem*
Introduction

This report examines the effects of violence in Jerusalem on Palestinians living in the city, the violence of exclusion, fear, persecution, political atrocities and constant trauma. It is hoped that such an examination will cast light on the “everydayness” of the gendered and raced militarization of Palestinians’ lives. The everydayness of the violence committed against Palestinians – in addition to the global denial of this violence, which is clearly reflected in the foregoing quotations – is particularly alarming given its destructive impact on the lives of Palestinian women and men living in militarized spaces, times and locations. Looking closely at the eternal and problematic triangle of the colonized woman, the dangerous colonized man, and the civilized Westerner may enable us to challenge the color line that demarcates the boundary between those who live with global oppression, local racism and the everydayness of militarization, and those who construct structural injustice and practice oppression.

In order to comprehend the violence of the global and local exclusion of women, men and children living in conflict zones – in this case in occupied East Jerusalem – I rely on geopolitical analyses of the colony, following Frantz Fanon, as well as necropolitical analyses of Achili Mbembe and Sherene Razack, among others. Such theoreticians help elucidate the actual and epistemic violence that is produced to construct the politics of the exclusion of the bodily safety and lives of Palestinians.

I argue that attempts to examine the violence of exclusion, militarization and trauma committed against Palestinians that de-politicize, ahistoricize and de-globalize it, while denying its gravity and locating it entirely within the realm of “security,” “terrorism” and “culture,” are grossly misguided and, moreover, dangerous.
The Israeli occupation of Jerusalem, and the Palestinian struggle to survive it in Arab Jerusalem, provides the setting for this essay. I concentrate my research journey on the city of Jerusalem, with all its emotional and political significance and symbolism.

The Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), comprising East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, have faced a long, complex and painful process of trauma produced by the prevailing political situation. Jerusalem bears both the political and spiritual/religious meanings of the traumatic, but equally those of resilience and resistance to the ordeal. The protracted historical experience of occupation, annexation and the displacement of Jerusalem’s Palestinian inhabitants has shaped relationships between place, space, identity politics, nationality and gender constructions in the city. This essay aims to develop an in-depth understanding of how Palestinian Jerusalemites perceive their daily acts of surviving the occupation, and the effects that place, space, nationality and gender identity have on the ways they live the everydayness of Jerusalem following Israel’s attack on Gaza Strip (27 December 2008-18 January 2009).

Firstly, it hopes to reveal Palestinians’ day-to-day experiences of military occupation, their methods of surviving and strategies of coping/adapting in the face of the psycho-social and economic-political traps and restraints imposed by Israel on Arab Jerusalem. Secondly, it aims to identify the main hardships that Palestinians encounter when facing Israel’s urban politics, demographic policies, economic, political and social restrictions and political violence. Thirdly, it makes some suggestions for directions in future research, and a number of policy recommendations for human rights and feminist activists and organizations.

The study looks closely at militarized racism and the “politics of place” in the colonial context of Arab Jerusalem. It sheds light on the ways in which individuals and their families perceive their lives as lying both “inside” and “outside” the contexts of violence, displacement and eviction. By listening to individual voices, the study seeks a deeper understanding of the effects of the
politics of place in Jerusalem, as reflected, inter alia, in the Israeli policy of segregation, the Apartheid Separation Wall, and other spatial, economic and political policies that trap and imprison the Palestinian body, mind, life and land.

In its conclusion, the study attempts to tackle one of the most urgent theoretical and methodological questions currently facing feminist politics in analyzing the history of Palestinian Jerusalemites, namely how to read, write and contend with the everydayness of colonial militarism. The study constitutes an initial step towards building a feminist theory and politics that takes account of geopolitics and spatial politics as invisible tools of gendered economic, psycho-social and political oppression, in the context of an ongoing national struggle. The study's methodology reflects the author's clear position that there is an urgent need not only to listen to and document the narratives of individuals in areas stricken by political conflict, such as Jerusalem, but also to search out and learn from the psycho-social and gender-specific voices of Palestinians who are coping with life in a conflict zone in order to construct counter-narratives and develop future politics and policies.
Conceptual Framework

Introduction

Israel's colonial ideology and bureaucracies have operated as a racialized and political machinery with the prerogative to create, decide and control the exception: the Palestinian Other. By employing race (Palestinian) as an explicit category of exception, it has created “bareness”, a state of exception for this Other. Colonial racism – embedded in the politics of exclusion, as I propose it in this paper – is a political strategy that power-holders exploit in an attempt to marginalize and endanger Palestinians’ bodies and lives, turn them into exceptions, and exclude them on the grounds of guilt by racial, class, sex, and/or gender association.

The politics of exclusion accelerates the circulation of racialized knowledge of the Palestinian Other, both locally and globally. The paper seeks to understand the efficacy of the politics of exclusion, which is reproduced and amplified by the very structure of an everyday life that is filled with violence and despair, a life that traps people, thwarting their efforts to confront power. Trapped realities may cause the trapped to internalize authoritarian epistemologies of exclusion (be it those of the local male, Israel, hegemony or Empire), and reproduce them to mirror every act of daily life. As Mbembe explains:

If subjection appears more intense than it might be, it is also because the subjects of the commandments have internalized the authoritarian epistemology to the point where they reproduce it themselves in all the minor circumstances of daily life, such as social networks, cults and secret societies, culinary practices, leisure activities, modes of consumption, dress style, rhetorical devices, and the political economy of the body. (1992: 23).

The violence of exclusion, trauma and political oppression are abuses of power and power imbalances inherent not only to local contexts, but also to global
dynamics and structures. This violence is not the result of a sudden or exceptional state of conflict, but rather an integral part of a system of political/colonial control and militarization. An incident-based theoretical analysis that studies individual cases of trauma, exclusion and harm, and that focuses narrowly on physical and psychological harm and discrete episodes of violence stands to foster an individualistic analysis of violence that underplays the political and social context. An analysis of this type may therefore exacerbate the social “trappedness” of women and men. An apolitical approach of this sort assumes, for example, that men and women possess an equal ability to speak and to be heard in militarized contexts like Jerusalem. It fails to comprehend the ways in which violence creates terror and inequalities within society, as well as within the family. It further omits to acknowledge that members of the community and the extended family are not neutral entities, and in most cases will not stand up to support the victim or shame the offenders.

**Trauma and its meanings: The Palestinian case study**

In the context of ongoing political violence in Palestine, the experience of trauma is inextricably intertwined with global and local politics, and with the prevailing socio-economic conditions. Palestinians have been in the throes of severe trauma since the early 19th century, which culminated in the Palestinian Nakba of 1948, a traumatic experience that has thus far endured for over sixty years. The legacy of suffering in people’s hearts, minds and bodies can be traced at many levels: the levels of the individual, the family, the local community, and wider Palestinian society. Thus, studying trauma also mandates that one probe the social and historical dimensions of narrating trauma. To this end, I employ Martín-Baró’s (1989) concept of “social trauma” to address the historical and societal dynamics that have and continue to injure people, in a mediated interaction between individual and society.

I argue that regarding trauma as a purely individual experience inhibits our understanding of its effects, divorces its meaning from the surrounding
historical, social, political, economic and personal conditions, and in turn compromises our ability to develop effective interventions to heal it. Trauma in conflict-ridden areas must be viewed not only as an individual problem, but also as a social one. Social trauma refers to deleterious historical and social dynamics that are maintained in mediated interactions between the individual and society.

Furthermore, I argue that individual trauma in the Palestinian context should be examined as a spiral process of transgression and injury. Trauma occurs in reference to and is dependent on a given socio-political condition. I argue that this spiral process intensifies and that its duration alters over time and space, and in some instances – mainly during periods of severe trauma – it is beyond the capacity of the psychic structure of individuals and societies to comprehend and react to it. Such trauma influences people’s sense of belonging, identity, continuity, survival, life and death.

Borrowing from the literature and criticism on the deficiencies of the concept of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in Latin America (Lykes, 1996; Becker, 1995), I argue that to label Palestinians who live with the prolonged legacy of suffering and political repression as suffering from a “disorder” is fundamentally unethical. Unfortunately, the use of the term “disorder” is common to many studies, including studies led by Palestinian researchers, and even some of my own previous works. There are various reasons why suffering of this nature should not be defined as a disorder, above all the fact that anger, anxiety, sadness and depression are normal reactions to suffering and political repression (displacement, the loss of family members, persecution, economic exploitation, etc.), and the word “disorder” should be reserved for the perpetrators. In the Palestinian context, I locate the disorder in the disturbed and disturbing political context. Moreover, given the ongoing nature of trauma in the Palestinian case, not only is the word disorder in the term PTSD problematic, but also the word post is inaccurate.
The militarization of social life in Palestine, coupled with the Jewish State's institutionalized legal oppression and lies, and the regional and global denial of the right of Palestinians to acknowledgment of their history of suffering, has all adversely affected their health and sense of identity and belonging. Palestinians undergo the daily ritual of humiliation and repression. The individualization of a socio-political situation does not contribute to addressing the trauma, but, to the contrary, amplifies its effect. The question that therefore remains to be answered is how trauma and its long-term effects are to be conceptualized in a complex case like the Palestinian context, in which whole generations have been exposed to constant destruction and sustained violations of their rights.

**Geographies of exclusion and spatial analysis**

The application of spatial theory to a vast range of sites of resistance in highly politicized contexts has done much to uncover the genealogical elements of oppression (Razack, 2002). Spatial theories are not only a linguistic landscape, but also a space of memory, and an internalized terrain of subjectivity. For power, as Radhika Mohanram (1999) contends, is spatially organized. Thus spatial theory can help to uncover the methods of producing Otherness and identities – dominant and subordinate – in specific spaces. It can help us to understand ethnic formations (of the Palestinian as the Other) in specific spaces. By examining the occupation, legal regulatory regimes and territorialized and de-territorialized spaces, we learn more about the power of space, or the politics of place (Jacobs, 1996), and, primarily, about how space is politicized.

The mythology, stories and experiences of a nation relate to both its past and its present. The story of the land, the place and the location – as shared and developed by the indigenous Palestinians on the one hand, and the Israeli occupation on the other – is manifestly racial. The story of the land and place produced by the Israeli occupation forces (the story of a land without a people for a people without a land) as part of their people’s history conflicts with the
indigenous people’s personal stories and narratives. The settlers’ story is that of a land devoid of people that is then populated by “God’s chosen people.” Otherized and racialized populations seldom appear on the settler’s landscape, an absence that renders the Palestinian Other transparent.

This essay will un-map the Israeli story of Jerusalem and bring it face-to-face with the voices of Palestinian women and men, thereby uncovering the ideologies and practices of domination. In un-mapping, one must explore the relationship between identity and space, for the identity of dominance requires that the ethnic Other should be kept in place, within a confined space. The examination of the material and symbolic constitution of actual spaces, places and locations constitutes an attempt to track dominance spatially. When Israel confines Palestinians to restricted places, when it erects checkpoints to prevent Palestinians from reaching their ends, when it separates schools from pupils, land from farmers, and communities from relatives and services, it creates direct experiences of ethnic and racial spatiality.

It should be stressed that our focus on spatial politics addresses the class and gender hierarchy: it is about the politics of power, patriarchy and capitalism. For example, in order to discuss the reasons why so-called “school drop-outs”, mainly young Palestinian girls, are deprived of an education, one must also talk about the spaces of Palestinian schools and the locations in which Palestinian girls live. How safe is the route, the space between the home and school? How respectable is it considered to climb over walls, stand in line at a checkpoint, and have to interact with soldiers in militarized spaces on each and every school day? A spatial analysis can help shed new light on how oppression in the Israeli militarized context operates within various systems, including political, health, educational, economic and gendered systems.

The Palestinian Nakba: Unending trauma and persecution
In this section, I argue that the upheaval of the Palestinian Nakba and the associated loss of life, displacement and tearing of the Palestinian social fabric
that occurred prior to 1948 remains an indelible marker against which the rest of Palestinian life is measured. I further contend that this upheaval is compounded by the failure of “democracies” to stem the ongoing loss and the denial of justice. This section is intended to be neither a complete nor a critical review of the psychological effect of the Nakba; rather, it is an overview, an initial stepping stone on the path towards understanding it. I argue that knowing where one comes from is crucial to determining where one is now, and to where one might be headed in the future. Thus this section is not an attempt to understand the history of the Nakba, but to begin to unearth how this history is perceived and lived by Palestinians in 2010.

Continuing survival under difficult conditions requires what Aaron Antonovsky (1983) refers to as a “sense of coherence”; that is, that one is able to find meaning in what is happening around one and to seek ways to accommodate it into the rest of one’s life. Theorists working in the field of psychological studies of the pathological behaviors of survivors of severe trauma and genocide have designated the long-term effect of trauma alternatively as “survivor syndrome,” “persecution syndrome,” or “concentration camp syndrome”. The typical symptoms of such syndromes include guilt, chronic anger, anxiety, sleep disturbance, anhedonia, flashbacks, hyper vigilance, depression, intrusive thoughts, and other symptoms that are subsumed under the term PTSD. The generalization of such syndromes and association of all trauma survivors with pathologies is highly problematic (see Pilar Hernández, 2002). Looking more closely at the ways in which people cope with and adapt to ongoing trauma can bring to light the hardiness and resilience of survivors, and the strengths and other positive characteristics of human beings (Lifton, 1993; Higgins, 1994). The search for factors/elements/periods in family history that empower survivors and drive them on to further resistance is of seminal importance. It is also crucial to ask questions such as: Are the survivors still living in the space in which the trauma took place? Were they displaced and
made to suffer a life in refuge? How do they relate to the new context in which they live? And what is their relationship to this new context (which for Palestinians may involve, for example, being defined as a citizen in the state that caused one’s displacement, or the deprivation of civil rights on the basis of one’s ethnic and racial background)?

As the preceding sections have shown, in categories of psychiatric disorders and classifications of PTSD the notions of both “post” and “disorder” are inadequate tools for understanding and assisting people who suffer and have suffered persecution. In Palestine, the ongoing, continuous nature of trauma means that the word “post” in PTSD can only be applied to “post–Nakba”, with the Nakba as a marker of the beginning of the traumatic experience. People may display different symptoms over many years, and articulate them differently according to their shifting circumstances. Thus, the conceptualization of trauma and its long-term effects on entire generations of people who have suffered mass atrocities and the destruction of their spaces, places, social and cultural worlds, is shrouded in uncertainty.

The context of ongoing political trauma in the Palestinian case-study requires that one scrutinize the effect of the protracted suffering inflicted on Palestinians not in an individualized manner, but at the level of the group. It mandates that one focus not only on the politics of exclusion, but also investigate the effect of persecution within the context of historical injustice. Palestinians interpret the violence inflicted upon them by Israel as a social trauma connected to the historical, political and social dynamics that have brought about the loss, displacement and injury of their loved ones over the decades. Examining the effects of persecution, ethnic cleansing, the destruction of social fabric, the distortion of one’s sense of belonging, community networks and trust from the standpoint of the individual within the wider social context, offers us a means of better comprehending, acknowledging and dealing with suffering. The persecution of the Palestinians on their own land has had a devastating impact
on individuals’ personal belief systems. The first step in understanding the politics of persecution and its consequences is to take a clear moral stance against such persecution: adopting a position of neutrality towards the traumatic effect of persecution is not only untenable, but immoral.
I have said before that “Palestine” is a metaphor for dispossession and that dispossession, along with displacement, is a key feature of the Palestinian experience, indeed of Palestinian identity. This derives not only from the initial dispossession and displacement of the Palestine refugees in 1948, but more from the fact that 61 years later they and their descendents remain in forced exile, struggling to maintain their very presence on the remnants of their homeland.

East Jerusalem holds a special place in the hearts and minds of the Palestinian people, not least because it is the place, one day, they intend to establish the capital of their own state. While the international community is committed to the goal of establishing two states, with Jerusalem as a shared capital, it is difficult to imagine how that outcome can be achieved in light of the systematic settlement activity and violations of basic human rights afflicting the Palestinian community in East Jerusalem. The impact of this urban settlement activity, conducted with seeming impunity, is manifold and acute. The juxtaposition of two cultures... with its accompanying violence and tension, destroys the communal atmosphere that has evolved over decades.


Before embarking on the data analysis that forms the core of this study, it may be useful for some readers to first set the scene by providing a factual overview of the situation of the Palestinian population of East Jerusalem. Jerusalem is a microcosm of the Zionist-Palestinian conflict in that it exemplifies the gamut of Israeli methods of political, economic and social criminality. The present history of the city, and particularly that of the last few years, is dominated by its severance from the rest of the Palestinian nation economically, socially, legally and politically. Israeli policies towards its own sovereignty and ultimate control over the Arab parts of Jerusalem have left Palestinians in a state of constant repression and chaos. Further complicating the story of Jerusalem is the growing
Jewish population living in the Arab areas, who continue to colonize houses and occupy spaces for ideological and political purposes.

Palestinian residents of Jerusalem are constantly denied access to their religious, cultural and educational institutions, exercise no control over municipal services, including schools, health clinics, electricity, water, and sewage systems, and have no role in sustaining and preserving their infrastructure, or in managing or planning the city in accordance with their needs. A complex and multifaceted regime of classification grants various segments of the Palestinian population in Jerusalem different legal statuses, limiting access to an array of rights, most obviously the right to mobility. Within a single family, some members may carry Jerusalem IDs and others West Bank IDs, and Israel’s vague and constantly shifting methods of categorization and selection divide and scatter families. Thus at every key social and political level the lives of Palestinians living in Jerusalem are controlled and micromanaged by the Israeli authorities. Furthermore, Israeli territorial claims, and the implementation of systematic and structural Zionist policies of occupying, ghettoizing and ultimately expelling Palestinians from their land and homes in Jerusalem, continue to intensify and to have a devastating effect on the Arab population.

**Historical and political background**

Throughout its history, Jerusalem has served as an important political, religious and cultural center, and hence has been the site of numerous struggles for control. Tactics of coercion and intimidation employed by the Zionist movement between 1848 and 1952 to expel Arabs from historic Palestine were redeployed immediately after the 1967 military invasion. The Badil Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights reports that approximately 430,000 Palestinians were displaced after the 1967 war, half of them for a second time (Badil, 2007). The immediate result of this second Zionist-Arab war was the Israeli military occupation of East Jerusalem, the remainder of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip,
and the Egyptian Sinai and Syrian Golan Heights. The total occupied area equates to 849 square kilometers of additional Palestinian land confiscated since 1948.

Notwithstanding its central importance to the conflict and the ever-more intensive geopolitical strategies employed by Israel to consolidate its exclusive sovereignty over the city since 1967, the issue of Jerusalem was first placed on the negotiating table only during the talks at Camp David in July 2000. From the onset of the peace talks until the months that followed the Annapolis Conference in November 2007, Israeli construction within and beyond the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem accelerated markedly, often in close coordination with Jewish settler groups and organizations.

In fact, 40 percent or 190,000 of a total of approximately 470,000 Jewish settlers in the formally-recognized OPT currently reside in East Jerusalem, along with 96,000 others who live in settlements around Jerusalem (Passia, 2009). From the outset of the military occupation in 1967, consecutive Israeli governments have relentlessly and obsessively pursued the principal aim of the “Judaization” of the Arab areas of Jerusalem. The purpose of successive campaigns of Judaization has been to alter Jerusalem’s historic, cultural and political character as an Arab capital and to establish a new geo-political reality to secure Jewish domination and Zionist territorial, demographic and religious control over the entire city. The extensive expropriation of Palestinian land and the permanent displacement of the Palestinian population is pursued through various and multifaceted mechanisms. The most nefarious of these include the establishment of massive “official” Jewish settlements in East Jerusalem, the institution of a road regime punctuated throughout its length by military checkpoints, road-blocks and “terminals,” the construction of the Apartheid Separation Wall, and the relentless campaign of home demolitions.

Today, more than 66 percent of Jerusalem is comprised of territory that was forcibly occupied by Israel at different times in its conquest. Within this area, Israel has expropriated over one-third of Arab-owned East Jerusalem for
the establishment of Israeli settlements (Passia, 2009). These settlements have been constructed in the form of two rings that encircle Jerusalem: an “inner ring” that runs within the municipal boundaries, and an “outer ring” called the “Greater Jerusalem Area” that cuts deep into the West Bank.

**The “Judaization” of the Municipality of Jerusalem**

Seeking to increase the Jewish presence and dominance in Jerusalem, successive Israeli governments have revoked the residency rights and social benefits of Arab residents of the city, imposed strict restrictions on Arab building rights, denied Palestinians travel permits, expropriated vast swathes of Palestinian land, and deliberately neglected infrastructure in Palestinian neighborhoods.

Pivotal to the calculated fragmentation of the Palestinian presence within the borders of the Municipality of Jerusalem is the Israeli regime of granting legal status and ID card allocation. The confiscation of Palestinian ID cards began immediately after the 1967 annexation of Jerusalem. In the first forty years of the Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem, from 1967 to 2000, the Israeli Ministry of the Interior stripped a total of 8,558 Palestinians of their residency rights in the city. While this is a staggering figure, the rate at which Palestinians are being denied residency rights has spiked in recent years, climbing to unprecedented levels: in the 2008 to 2009 period alone the residency of 4,577 Palestinians in East Jerusalem was revoked (Hasson, 2008). This rate is 21 times the average of the previous four decades of military occupation, and thus of all the Palestinian East Jerusalemites who have lost their residency rights since the 1967 war, approximately 35 percent did so in 2008 alone. Furthermore, 99 of the individuals who were deprived of their residency in 2008 were minors. As is evident, in order to create and consolidate Jewish demographic dominance over the whole of Jerusalem, the Israeli establishment has recently redoubled its efforts to target Palestinian Jerusalemites in a systematic manner. It should be stressed that once a Palestinian loses her or his right to residency in Jerusalem, it is impossible to return to the city, even for reasons of health, education or family.
Therefore Palestinians are effectively being denied the basic right to reside in their home-land, home-town, and home-space.

Israel's policies in Palestinian East Jerusalem bear remarkable similarities to the policies it practices against Palestinian citizens in Israel, where racially-based, discriminatory policies encompass the structural, institutional and legal levels (Kretchmer, 1998). In the case of Palestinians in East Jerusalem, racism is reflected, inter alia, in the allocation of lower municipal budgets, which results in the inadequate provision and operation of sewage systems, maintained sidewalks, public gardens, sports facilities, libraries and educational and cultural centers, all services that are abundant in Jewish areas of West Jerusalem. As stated above, Israel is constantly planning, developing, constructing and expanding Jewish-only settlements at a rapid pace within the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem in direct contravention of Israel's obligations as an occupying force under international humanitarian law, the Road Map, and the commitments of the Annapolis Conference. Increasing the Jewish presence in Jerusalem at the cost of Palestinian livelihoods is integral to the overall Zionist aim of establishing a Jewish urban belt around Palestinian East Jerusalem and safeguarding Israeli sovereignty and control over the entirety of historic Palestine.

To this end, various legal mechanisms have been adopted by the Israeli establishment, including the declaration of Palestinian-owned spaces as “green areas”. Green areas are defined by the Israeli municipal authorities as open spaces in which no construction is permitted in order to maintain a minimum of greenery in a specific space. However, in the case of East Jerusalem the designation of green areas constitutes a strategic tool for curbing Palestinian development in the vicinity of Jewish settlements, and very little of the land designated as open space is actually planted and preserved. This legal mechanism precludes Palestinian construction in the city and allows Palestinian land to be expropriated for future Jewish settlement expansion. Examples of
areas declared “green” upon which Jewish-only settlements have been constructed are Jabal Abu Ghneim (site of the Har Homa settlement) and Shu'fat (site of the Ramot Shlomo settlement). Indeed, approximately 44 percent of Palestinian-owned land in East Jerusalem has been designated in Israeli planning and zoning schemes as “green” and “open” areas (Passia, 2009). The common thread that connects all these mechanisms and policies is the Israeli goal of maintaining a dominant Jewish presence in Arab East Jerusalem. To this end, Israel seeks to cut the Old City and its immediate environs off from the adjacent Palestinian neighborhoods and to create a Jewish continuum in and around Jerusalem, thwarting any structural and political possibility for future agreements premised upon its division.

**Conquest and settlement beyond municipal borders: The “Greater Jerusalem” plan**

The Israeli settlement enterprise in and around Jerusalem – which extends far beyond the city’s municipal borders – is aimed both at the creation and preservation of a Jewish majority within the city, and securing a dominant Jewish presence around the city. In this regard, the “Greater Jerusalem” plan adds to the expanding settlements located within the municipal borders of Jerusalem, and stipulates a significant increase in the existing 96,000-strong Jewish settler population living around the city. In essence a political initiative, the Greater Jerusalem plan strives to establish a metropolitan Jerusalem area with a population ratio of Jews to Palestinians of 70:30 (Passia, 2009). Through geographic and demographic manipulation, the Israeli government seeks to expand the area of the city of Jerusalem to cover approximately 30 percent of the West Bank, stretching from Ramallah in the north to Hebron in the south, and from Jericho in the east to Bet Shemesh in the west. This area amounts to in excess of 440 square kilometers, less than a quarter of which lies within the internationally and legally-recognized pre-1967 borders of the Israeli state.
The tactics pursued by Israeli urban planners and demographers that underpin the government-initiated Greater Jerusalem plan are two-fold: firstly the dispersal, displacement and expulsion of Palestinians from their land, and secondly the initiation of construction plans to double the size of settlements in the area covered by the plan. These settlements are then to be connected to one another – for example, Givat Ze’ev will be connected to Agan Ha’Ayalot and Geva Binyamin to Neve Ya’akov – to create an “outer ring” of exclusively Jewish areas around the municipal borders of Jerusalem. The Greater Jerusalem plan is a manifestly ideological and political endeavor born of Israel’s Zionist vision of a metropolitan Jerusalem composed mainly of Jews, to extend over some 30 percent of the Palestinian West Bank.

**Israel’s multi-faceted regime of territorial control**

*Checkpoints, roadblocks and terminals*

Following the Madrid-Oslo peace process of 1991-2000, a gradually accelerating process of accumulating land illegally confiscated from indigenous Palestinians in Jerusalem has been accompanied by Israel’s intensified use of “protection” or “security” measures to “safeguard” this stolen land, upon which Jewish settlements have subsequently been built. In order to “secure” the often armed and militant settlers from the unarmed civilian Palestinian population, successive Israeli governments have adopted increasingly oppressive and humiliating measures, including erecting a network of roadblocks and military checkpoints, laying bypass roads that consume Palestinian agricultural land, and further land confiscation. There are currently twelve routes and crossings through which Jerusalem can be entered from the West Bank. However, Palestinian traffic into Jerusalem is limited to just four barrier crossings: Qalandia from the north, Gilo from the south, the Shu’fat Refugee Camp from the east, and Ras Abu Sbeitan, which is mainly used for pedestrian residents of Abu Dis and Al-Izzariya. The other eight routes and crossing points are closed to West
Bank Palestinians, and their use restricted to residents of Israel and non-Israelis with valid visas, a clear expression of Israel's Apartheid-like policies towards the Palestinians (Passia, 2009).

These colonial and racially discriminatory structures allow the Israeli regime to spatially dominate, monitor and control every aspect of the Palestinian existence in Jerusalem and the wider West Bank. The erection of the Apartheid Separation Wall has made a particularly significant contribution to the further fragmentation and isolation of the Arab community in Jerusalem.

The Apartheid Separation Wall
The Wall, alongside the associated regime of permits and access gates, restricts the freedom of movement of all Palestinians in Jerusalem, whether they have already been displaced or continue to live in their homes. The time spent in passing through checkpoints, for instance, presents an obstacle to the lives of as many as 94.7 percent of Palestinian households in and around Jerusalem (Badil, et al., 2006). The final length of the planned wall is 790 kilometers, of which approximately 167.3 kilometers are to be built in and around Jerusalem, a stretch known as the “Jerusalem Envelope.” In mid-2008, the Israeli government announced that about 50 percent of the construction had been completed; at this time the barrier in the Jerusalem area had annexed 228.2 square kilometers or 3.9 percent of the West Bank (Passia, 2009). Once complete, the Apartheid Separation Wall will isolate and detach over 230,000 Palestinian residents of Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank, and separate over 2 million Palestinians living on the “eastern” side of the Wall from East Jerusalem. For instance, in Walajeh, Kufr Aqab and the Shu’fat Refugee Camp the Wall severs either the entire neighborhood or a large portion of it from the metropolitan East Jerusalem area, thereby detaching Palestinians not only from Jerusalem but also from each other. In addition to losing massive amounts of their historic lands, these Palestinians are trapped in a devastating state of legal limbo. They hold Jerusalem ID cards but are denied access to East Jerusalem, and are
simultaneously excluded from access to basic services provided by Israel due to their lack of Israeli residency status.

Moreover, once complete, the Apartheid Separation Wall will also annex to Israel three major settlement blocs surrounding East Jerusalem – Givon, Adumim, and Etzion – along with the appropriated land, which is vital to Palestinian population growth and socio-economic development (Passia, 2009). The Wall will stunt the future development of Palestinian localities, at the same time as large areas of “open space” and “green areas” are retained as reserves for the future expansion of Jewish settlements. The overall situation of Palestinians in Jerusalem continues to grow increasingly complex and difficult as the Wall imposes further restrictions on Palestinian freedom of movement, infringing the Palestinian right of access to land and other fundamental rights, including the right to an adequate standard of living.

**The Wall and forced displacement**

The restrictions placed on Palestinian freedom of movement by the Wall are a significant cause of the forced displacement of Palestinians in Jerusalem. While displacement is not new to the Palestinian people – indeed, 46.1 percent of Palestinians in Jerusalem are refugees who have already been displaced on at least one previous occasion – the Apartheid Separation Wall has generated a new wave of displacement. As Badil reports, 32.9 percent of all Palestinians in Jerusalem have changed their previous place of residence as a result of the Wall. 20 percent have done so involuntarily, with 83.3 percent of the latter having been forcibly displaced once in their lives, 9.3 percent twice, and 7.4 percent three times or more (these figures do not include forced displacement resulting from the wars of 1948 or 1967) (Badil, et al. 2006). Further, 49.2 percent of Palestinians in Jerusalem who have been forced to change their previous place of residence as a result of the Wall are refugees, indicating that both refugees and non-refugees are affected by the Wall and its associated regime.
Female-headed households are particularly badly affected by forced displacement caused by the Apartheid Separation Wall. Female-headed households account for 10.2 percent of all Palestinian households in Jerusalem, while a total of 13.7 percent of all households that have changed their place of residence are headed by a female (Badil, et al. 2006).

_The violation of social, economic and cultural rights_
According to most indicators, the economic conditions of Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem are no better than those of Palestinians living in the rest of the West Bank, despite the fact that approximately 39 percent of the Palestinian labor force in Jerusalem works in Israel and accordingly earns higher wages. Unemployment rates among Palestinian Jerusalemites often exceed those in the rest of the West Bank, and are particularly devastating on the eastern side of the Wall. Thus in 2006, the Palestinian unemployment rate was estimated at 15.7 percent in the Municipality of Jerusalem as a whole, but stood at 26.3 percent on the east side of the Wall (Badil, et al. 2006). Unemployment rates continue to climb as the Wall and its associated regime limit the sources of employment available to Palestinians on both sides of the Wall to largely unskilled positions in the fields of cleaning, commerce, restaurants and hotels, construction (mainly of Jewish-only areas including the settlements), mining, manufacturing, and transportation. Since employment is dependent on mobility, the multitude of Israeli restrictions imposed on Palestinians has created a dearth of work opportunities.

Palestinian private property, commercial goods, and agricultural goods such as crops, farm machines, green houses and livestock have also been damaged on a vast scale by the construction of the Wall and its associated regime. Indeed, as many as 10.2 percent of all Palestinian households in Jerusalem, and 19.2 percent of those who own land, have had all or part of this land confiscated as a result of the construction of the Wall (Badil, et al. 2006).
The Palestinian right to participate in cultural and religious life and community affairs has also been severely impaired by the Wall: more than 56.3 percent of all Palestinian households, particularly in the Jerusalem area, experience restrictions on their cultural and social activities because of the Wall and its regime (Badil, et al. 2006). Most severely impaired is the ability of Palestinian households on the east side of the Wall to visit holy sites, with 91.8 percent either being denied access or facing extreme difficulties in visiting places of worship.

Violation of health rights
Deteriorating health conditions are another major concern for Palestinians in Jerusalem. The underdevelopment of the Arab areas of East Jerusalem is caused in large part by underfunding, discrimination and marginalization as a direct result of Israeli settler colonial rule, particularly in Jerusalem. A survey conducted by Badil in 2006 confirms that numerous Palestinian households, the vast majority of which reside on the east side of the Wall, face extreme difficulties in accessing health services. 34.5 percent of households, 88.3 percent of which live on the east side of the Wall, are separated from hospitals, clinics and other medical centers in the city (Badil, et al. 2006). Moreover, the Wall has also impeded the movement of doctors, nurses and medical staff to hospitals and other medical facilities, with a disproportionately harmful impact on women, especially the sick, elderly and pregnant.

Violation of education rights
Education for the approximately 430,000 Palestinians living in East Jerusalem is in an appalling state that has further deteriorated with the tightening of Israeli control over the city and the adoption of additional discriminatory policies and practices. The construction of the Apartheid Separation Wall and the multiple military checkpoints and roadblocks erected in and around the city have aggravated the existing situation, particularly among Palestinian women and
youth. As a result of the Wall, for example, only 43.9 percent of the Palestinians in the Municipality of Jerusalem aged five and above have attended school, 24.7 percent attended but left early, 24.6 percent attended and graduated, while 6.8 percent have never attended school (Badil, et al., 2006). Non-attendance and drop-out rates are higher among Palestinians living east of the Wall, who are cut off from the West Bank where they hold residency, than among those living to the west of the Wall.

The Wall and its associated regime have forced 80 percent of Palestinian university students and over 75.2 percent of elementary and secondary school students to use alternative roads to reach school and university. Approximately 72.1 percent of university students and 69.4 percent of elementary and secondary school students have been absent from school due to lack of access (Badil, et al. 2006). While the poor economic situation of most Palestinian families in the Jerusalem area is also a cause of the low turnout rates, the increasing restrictions on movement clearly exacerbate an already difficult situation for Palestinian students, violating their rights to education and social development.

The Jerusalem Light Rail System
Approved in 1999 by the Israeli government, the Jerusalem Light Rail System has been advertised as an ecological and economic necessity aimed at alleviating traffic and congestion in the city. It has been trumpeted as a transportation system that will serve both the Jewish settlements and a number of Palestinian neighborhoods. However, the main aim of the project is evidently to connect the illegal settlements in East Jerusalem – Neve Ya’akov, Pisgat Ze’ev, the French Hill, Ma’alot Dafna and Ramot – with the city center in West Jerusalem, to the social and economic detriment of the Palestinian Arab population in and around the municipality. In clear contradiction of international law, the Jerusalem Light Rail System is an integral part of the attempts launched by successive Israeli governments to alter the physical character, demographic composition,
institutional structure and status of Palestinian-owned land. The project consolidates the Israeli military occupation, settlement policies and illegal annexation of East Jerusalem. First, it absorbs Route 60, one of the main roads used by Palestinians to access Jerusalem and to travel between the northern and southern West Bank; significantly, the Palestinian Authority was not involved in determining its route (Passia, 2009). Second, many potential Palestinian passengers in the area are unable to use the railway as their access is blocked by the Apartheid Separation Wall. Third and finally, several Palestinian families have had their land zoned as “green areas” for parking and pick-up areas associated with the rail system, and been denied decent compensation for the loss of their land. The Israeli authorities have required these families to prove that they would be able to make more profitable use of the land, despite the fact that most are unable to afford to build shops, initiate other profitable enterprises or build homes to obviate the confiscation of their land. Once complete, the Jerusalem Light Rail System will further displace, dispossess and marginalize Palestinians in and around Jerusalem, and make a major contribution to the worsening social and economic conditions in which they live.

Building restrictions and home demolitions

Living under the Israeli regime of control, it is extremely difficult for Palestinians to obtain building permits: in 2007, the Israeli Ministry of the Interior and the Municipality of West Jerusalem announced that between 15,000 to 20,000 or 40 percent of all of buildings in East Jerusalem had been constructed without the required permits (Ir Amim, 2009). Indeed, for every Palestinian building erected with a building permit, approximately ten buildings have been declared by Israeli authorities to have been constructed without official permission (Margalit, 2007). Applications for building permits are out of the financial reach of the majority of Palestinian households. The related costs include fees for opening a case, road, sidewalk and land development, water and sewage development, and water mains connection (Margalit, 2007). The Israeli planning
regime presents another major obstacle for Palestinians in obtaining building permits, and has designed a mere 12 percent of land in East Jerusalem for Palestinian residential use. Moreover, these areas have already been intensively developed, while Palestinians are systematically denied access to other areas, many of which have been earmarked by Israel’s city planners as public buildings.

Once a structure is declared “illegal,” the residents of the household are punished in one of two ways: either through the imposition of heavy monetary fines or issuance of demolition orders. The former is a major generator of income for the Municipality of Jerusalem: between 2001 and 2006, for example, an average of 25.5 million Israeli Shekels was collected per year through fines extracted from Palestinians for “illegal” construction (OCHA, 2009). An increasingly common measure employed by Israel is the three-six month imprisonment of Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem for failing to obtain an official building permit, which is imposed on top of the demolition of their homes (Margalit, 2007).

Arguably the most severe measure taken by Israel against Palestinian residents of Jerusalem is a home demolition. Since 1967, the Israeli authorities have demolished approximately 2,000 Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem. According to the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, 843 homes were demolished between 1994 and 2008, along with the issuance of some 3,000 demolition orders that remain pending against Palestinian residents in and around Jerusalem [OCHA, 2009. Since the beginning of 2009, 1,052 demolition orders have been issued and 23 structures have been demolished in East Jerusalem, despite estimates by the Municipality of Jerusalem that the rate of natural growth in the Palestinian sector requires the annual construction of 1,500 new residential units (Ir Amim, 2009). A report released by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in May 2009 states that more than 28 percent of all Arab homes in East Jerusalem are vulnerable to home demolition, having being built “illegally,” notwithstanding
the fact that the number of requests for building permits filed by Palestinians has more than doubled from 2003 to 2007 (OCHA, 2009). Thus it appears that Israeli policies and practices of “Judaization” have rendered it effectively impossible for Palestinians to acquire the correct permits.

In conclusion, the racially discriminatory basis upon which Israeli policies and decisions are constructed affects the lives Palestinians at various critical levels. The Israeli occupation regime does not merely separate family members from one another, but rips apart the very fabric of Palestinian society by isolating entire communities. The fragmentation of Palestinian communities by means of closure, the Apartheid Separation Wall, the denial of access to basic and vital social, economic, educational and health services and support systems, the denial of building permits and home demolitions, etc., continue to extract a heavy toll on the lives and development of Palestinian Jerusalemites. Furthermore, the overwhelming burden of these measures is shouldered by the most disadvantaged segments of society, including women and children.
Methodology

The study seeks to foreground the voices of Palestinians from various locations in Arab Jerusalem in order to reveal how Palestinians use silence and the scream, obedience and resistance, tears and laughter, activism, agency and suffering in an attempt to confront and cope with the continuous, sometimes invisible, and often unpredictable racial oppression to which they are subjected by Israel.

In an attempt to interrogate the intersection between space, politics and gender realities, the politics of space was examined through the matrix of the oppressive politics of the Israeli occupation in the context of Arab Jerusalem. The methodological approach adopted rests on two major foundations. The first pertains to Edward Said’s (1978) perceptions of the way in which the Otherization of the Middle Eastern individual, when juxtaposed with the oppressive machinery of the state – via its institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrine and law – can be used to manipulate history. The second foundation is varied feminist methodologies that have to come to be subsumed under the rubric of “decolonization”. Decolonizing methodologies challenge the quotidian assumption that research is “culture free” and can ever obtain outside ideology, and that researchers may occupy a moral “high ground” from which to observe their subjects and make neutral judgments about them, safe from the interference of bias. Decolonizing approaches take into account the gaze of the colonized, in our case the occupied (Smith, 1999). Decolonizing methodologies produce research that is committed to making the voices of subalterns heard and seeks to learn from them, while illuminating dark spots and unnoticed personas. Thus, contextual histories of space and place, the politics of location and cultural considerations are respectfully interwoven.

The proposed research methodology entails more than simply listening to the voices of Jerusalemite men and women, and providing the relief that comes
from words and insights that help to explain certain experiences. It involves more than revealing underlying texts and giving voice to intuitive knowledge, for this alone will do little to improve the material conditions of the oppressed. While our efforts cannot erase the trauma or prevent it from recurring, it can help to bring the voices and stories into the spatial and political analyses of the hegemonic power. The past and present of Palestinians, their stories, local and global, their spaces, places, communities, culture, language and social practices may all be spaces of marginalization, but they have also become spaces of resistance and hope (Smith, 1999).

Work on this study began in May 2009 and was completed in December 2009. The author was aided by four research assistants and supported by the academic and administrative team at the YWCA in Jerusalem. A total of 42 interviews were conducted with young Palestinians, aged between 18 and 28 years of age, 22 men and 20 women, 22 of whom were married and 13 of whom were parents. Three additional interviews were conducted with young couples with children. The sample was a sample of convenience and the interviews took place at a location suggested by the interviewee in which they felt they could speak freely. Interviews were therefore conducted in homes, hair salons, internet cafes, bus stations and colleges. All interviews were conducted by two research assistants, one male and one female, and were recorded only with the consent of the interview subjects (in just three cases). It should be noted that prior to the interview the participants gave their verbal or written consent confirming their willingness to share their experiences and participate in the study.

The study covered five geopolitical areas within the municipal borders of Jerusalem, including villages, towns and refugee camps:

1. The Old City of Jerusalem (9 interviews)
2. The Shuafat/Anata refugee camp (8 interviews)
3. Silwan (9 interviews)
4. Beit Hanina (8 interviews)
5. Sheikh Jarrah (8 interviews)

The interview subjects were asked the following questions:

1. What does it mean to you personally to be a Palestinian from Jerusalem?
2. What are the main issues that concern Jerusalemites today?
3. Please share an episode concerning yourself/family or friends in Jerusalem and that had a significant impact on you?
Data Analysis

Trapped Bodies and Lives: Ethnic cleansing and the violence of exclusion

They're suffocating us, hemming us in on all sides.

*Marwa, 27 year old from Beit Hanina*

Here in the neighborhood there is terrible discrimination. Their only aim is to expel us from here. But they can't take something that isn't theirs. For example, four years ago there were some serious problems with the Jewish children. In the morning we would find the garbage at the shop door, or find the keyholes closed over with a plank of wood. Once they threw something with a disgusting smell and smoke coming off it into the shop. We complained to the police more than once but nothing happened. In the end I brought the Israeli media who did an interview with me and other Arab shop owners here, and they put it in the newspaper with photos. After that the problems got a bit easier. But the boycott became much worse, to exhaust us and kick us out of the city. Worse still, some of them come to try to buy the shop. We tell them that this is *waqf* property, so if you want it go and buy it from the *waqf*.

*Samir 24 year old, from the Old City*

This is the story of my little brother. We all have Jerusalem IDs and everything was as normal. But my mother gave birth to him in a hospital in al-Bira. Obviously they didn't give him a West Bank ID because he's originally from Jerusalem. At the time we had a lot of problems going on and we didn't get round to going to get him an Israeli ID number. And a year later when we did go they refused to give him one. The guy said we need papers and certificates. It became a family unification case. We kept working to solve the case but they wouldn't give him an ID. There were court hearings and all sorts of legal issues. Once the Interior Ministry froze the family unification process and so we had to wait. Imagine, he's now 18 years old and is still living without an ID. If they catch him in the street they have to detain him. He can't pass through the check point or go anywhere. If you see him with family unification papers on him it's because he’s afraid of being arrested. He has become isolated from people. He asks you, "What am I? I can’t study, get married, can’t work or do anything. My life is pointless." We all live on tenterhooks because of him. My mother blames herself for giving birth to him in a hospital in
the West Bank. My father blames himself for not getting the papers sorted out straight after he was born. And apart from that, we’ve given the lawyers everything we have, but it’s all been for nothing.

*Nahida 25 year old from Suafat*

In these and other quotations gathered in the interviews conducted in this study, Palestinians from Jerusalem express a strong sense that their bodies, daily movements, and actions are under tight control, of being “trapped.” My theoretical analysis for understanding these quotations requires that we theorize globality and postcoloniality in order to fully comprehend how global forces and conditions – including the “War on Terror,” the development of “security justifications,” the politics and industry of fear and proliferating violence – and local forces – including internal displacement, geo-politics and house demolitions – all shape the contours of Palestinian daily life in Occupied East Jerusalem. Understanding the interplay between local and global forces can inform our thinking and reading about the workings and physics of power, as echoed in the various voices that portray the everyday lives of Palestinians in Jerusalem. It is hoped that by learning from Palestinians’ voices we can develop a better understanding of the ways in which trapped Palestinian communities and individuals – as described by some of the interview subjects – living in enclosed enclaves in East Jerusalem are not only controlled, restricted and excluded, but also survive and resist traps.

The majority of interview subjects stated that their ethnicity as Palestinians and the politics of their identity as Palestinian Jerusalemites has exacerbated the separatist politics of exclusion and “trappedness”. Most of them shared details of the state’s structural oppression, supported and promoted by the global denial of the ongoing trauma and loss of the Palestinians. The timing of the data collection, which was conducted after the Gaza War (late 2008 and early 2009), clearly deepened the interview subjects’ mistrust of the world’s
ability and willingness to shield them from Israeli state violence. As one interviewee stated:

The world has fallen silent and no one is acting. This is something ingrained and it’s getting worse, especially in Gaza. And we are here, and it’s all connected to the Judaization of Jerusalem. And it’s given them room to go further. God only knows, there’s nothing we can do.

The attack on Gaza had a profound effect on the narratives provided by the interview subjects, and surfaced mainly in discussions of their sense of helplessness, but also of their agency and resistance. It appeared in every interview we conducted, in various guises. Some began a sentence with a statement such as, “Just look what happened in Gaza.” Others relied on Gaza as evidence of the world’s denial of justice and fairness, or ended an interview by asking what could be done in the future if, as one person maintained, “after our displacement in 1948, and after all they did in Dir Yasin, Jenin, Sabra and Shatila and now Gaza, the world is still supporting them.” In Sheikh Jarrah many people refused to be interviewed (an obstacle that we faced only in this area, possibly due to the fact that a large number of houses were either evicted or demolished in Sheikh Jarrah during the course of the data collection). Significantly, all of the interview subjects from the neighborhood questioned our need to talk to them, wondering why, since the world had turned a blind eye to the atrocities in Gaza, anyone would care about the demolition of houses or eviction of families in Sheikh Jarrah. The connection between Gaza, the history of injustice and Jerusalem was apparent in most of the interviews.

Several respondents expressed the fear that Israel was in control of the world and its media, using the attack on Gaza as an example. One young woman stated that the world was powerless to stop Israel from abusing Palestinians, adding that, “Israel is in control over many power centers in the world, first and foremost the media.” They were also found to be highly critical of the failure of the Palestinian leadership to acknowledge their failings and losses, particularly
during the various rounds of so-called peace negotiations. The perceived failure of the Palestinian leadership to pay due attention to people’s suffering was found to exacerbate the respondents’ sense of insecurity, inhibit their hopes for a better future, and increase their sense of “living in a trap,” as one respondent put it.

The feeling of being trapped and persecuted was apparent in an interview conducted with a married couple. The husband explained that, “I live and feel racism in every act,” during the course of his work at an Israeli supermarket. He explained that Jewish employees enjoy various privileges and discounts that are not granted to Palestinians. He also stated that, even if he were to receive the same salary as a Jewish employee, the very fact that he is a Palestinian itself imposes financial burdens and economic hardships. As he explained:

First of all I am married with three children, and the house is rented, not my own. I have a house in al-Ram, but I have been renting it out for four years because of my ID, the Wall, the closures, and because I had to get humiliated at the checkpoints in order to get to work. Instead of leaving the house at seven, I have started to go at five.

When asked how much moving from his own house to a rented house had affected him he answered:

A: First of all it has a psychological effect, because I feel so defeated now when I go to see it empty, and we can't live in it. Second, all the people I know live near my old house… I mean, when I moved I didn’t know anyone here, and I really felt like I was in exile.

His wife interrupted, “I got so bored being on my own, not knowing anyone, not being close to anyone.” These quotations illustrate how Israeli spatial politics force Palestinians to relocate from one place to another, imposing not only an additional financial burden on the family, but also extracting a heavy social and psychological cost. Another young mother explained the effect of Israeli policies and violence on her family and in particular on her two daughters:

The thing that upset and scared me the most happened about two months ago. The army came at 3 o’clock in the morning to arrest
my brother-in-law at the house. They were wearing masks and you couldn’t see who they were. They surrounded the house from all sides. Then they started banging on the door like crazy. I have two daughters and a son, and if you’d seen how they almost died of fright and started to cry and shake before they took him. Later they came back and the same incident was repeated twice in one week, at the same time and in the same way, on the pretext that they were searching the house. And ever since that time the girls haven’t gone to sleep without crying, and they don’t want the light to be turned off, or even the door closed. And if they hear any movement they start to scream. We’re thinking of taking them to see a psychiatrist, they’re suffering so much.

A subject the appeared in over half the interviews was the hardships faced by Palestinians in crossing military checkpoints and the Wall to reach their workplaces, including the money, time, and emotional energy they have to invest in doing so. Twenty-eight of the interviews highlighted the daily ordeals and severe financial difficulties that face Palestinians in East Jerusalem, and the often insurmountable obstacles associated with running their own business successfully, which have left many of them with no option other than to work with and for Israelis. Nevertheless, despite the psychological hardships facing Palestinians trying to cope with the daily humiliations within their militarized and policed spaces, respondents repeatedly expressed the view that they needed to work harder – mainly for Israeli and Jewish employers – in order to overcome demonization and ridicule at the workplace.

All respondents explained, in various ways, how their bodies, time and space were controlled by the Israeli military structure. For instance, the previous quotations reveal how one family was obliged to move into rented accommodation from fear of losing their Jerusalem residency. They also show how one family was forced to leave their home two hours earlier than usual every morning in order to cross military checkpoints to reach their workplaces on time. The interviewees shared their sense of being in exile in their homes, which added to their sense of frustration, humiliation and oppression at the loss of the family network and support upon moving to a new house. In the words of
one young man, “Maybe exile is better than standing at the checkpoints or being forced to take a place far from your family, and ending up being exiled anyway.”

Other voices revealed not only how Palestinians feel fearful and live with a sense of being in exile at home, but also the constant, unpredictable suffering that Israeli racism inflicts on them with every step they take. One married women explained the encounter with racism and discrimination that permeates all aspects of her family's lives as follows:

Once my young daughter had to spend the night at the Bikur Kholim hospital. An orthodox nurse came to kick my husband out of the hospital. She said, “That’s it, either you sleep here or he does,” even though there were Jews in the same room, mothers and fathers with their children.

When asked to share a story that had deeply affected her, another woman shared her profound feelings of humiliation and pain:

There was an incident with my father ten years ago, when he was working on the roads. He was with employees of the municipality when he was hit by a car driven by a Jewish woman who had been drinking. He was hurt badly and had to go to hospital. The hospital made a mistake by not giving him anything against gangrene. And when he got gangrene and they amputated both his legs. He was crippled [she began to cry] and bedridden for nine years. The Jewish woman’s license was taken for six months, but he got no compensation in nine years. The day he died, when they were burying him, they called to say that he had been awarded a million Shekels in compensation. But when they found out that he had died they only gave us 30,000 Shekels. Even on the day he died I only just managed to get to their house, because they live in the Old City and there was a closure that day, and so I had to cross through several military checkpoints.

She fell silent and her husband continued, “Basically the Arabs are always on the outside, on the margins. No one sees them except when they die.” His wife then responded, “Do you think they see us when we die?” This woman’s story reveals her sense that every aspect of her life was dominated by her identity as a Palestinian. She shared the story of her father and the way in which the Israeli legal system has discriminated against them, and failed to take her father’s injury
and loss seriously. The long, harrowing story of her father and her family following her father's accident and subsequent death highlights the everydayness of the suffering of many Palestinians and their sense of living in a trap in militarized areas.

The current section presents and discusses more Palestinian voices. It is divided into sections that address: the experience of persecution and being trapped; economic traps; spatial politics: trapped spaces and places; the breakdown of the social support network; agency and resistance; and the gendered nature of traps and resistance. The narratives teach not only of the everydayness of suffering and victimization, but also of the ways in which survivors of militarized and structural oppression accept life’s hardships and even perceive them as a mode of resistance. The heavy burden of their everyday encounters, and the presence, absence and limitations of their agency are productive entry-points for gaining an understanding of the ways in which Palestinian families, and individual men and women, survive their long history of domination, their lived realities and their need to prioritize pain. They further illuminate how Palestinians find ways to fulfill their needs and desires as individuals, families and as a community.

a. The experience of persecution and being trapped

The first story I can remember is from kindergarten. I used to go there by foot because it was close. It was 1989 or so. One time soldiers were standing on the road. They caught me and started throwing me between them from one to the other. I was shaking, totally petrified. I could barely believe it when they let me go. I went to school and as soon as the teacher asked me what was wrong I burst into tears. After that I used to hate going to school. I was scared to go out of the house on my own. The army even use to storm the school sometimes, and as soon as they entered the school I would wet myself with fear. We continued to go to school. We grew up and went to Rashidiya [the name of the school]. The army used to provoke us all the time and to stop us at the school gate, because they aren't allowed to enter by law. They demoralized us and distracted us from our studies. When I finished the
matriculation exam I went to enroll at Abu Dis and I studied there for a while, even though I’m terrified about the future because Israel doesn’t recognize it. We’re sometimes dependent on Israel in every aspect of our lives.

The previous quotation was provided by a 25-year-old man, who further explained:

When I was in high school I would sometimes study outside under the trees. Once I had my exams the next day. A soldier came up to me and asked me what I was doing. I told him I was studying. He took my book and sat down, making fun of me. He threw the book on the ground. I complained to the waqf office but they just sent me to the Israeli police. The soldier wouldn’t leave me alone and didn’t return the book until he had made me strip off my clothes in front of everyone.

His interview revealed how the experience of being attacked while studying and his sense of insecurity had affected his every step and every decision, including finding a job, visiting family or friends, acquiring an education and even going to a health clinic to access medical care. The constant uncertainty and insecurity that Palestinians in East Jerusalem live with was also expressed by a 24-year-old woman living in the Old City:

What I’m most scared of is not feeling secure. For example, our house has very high roofs. If anything happens in the neighborhood, like a riot in the Old City, the army comes. Whatever time it is they knock on our door and go up onto the roof because they can see out over a large area from there. Sometimes I’m scared of nightfall.

Same feelings of uncertainty, insecurity and feeling trapped was also apparent in an interview with another woman living in a village, a 27-year-old married mother of three:

You know, they’ve really choked us. Like when my brother wanted to get married to a woman from the West Bank. He suffered so much with her. Every time they went out somewhere even to the checkpoint he was humiliated and detained. He paid a lawyer to deal with the family unification case. I mean they block you in your marriage, money, family, even your house. We don’t even have
freedom anymore in choosing where to live, where to work and even where to study. Put simply, we’re trapped.

A 22-year-old man from the same village stated:

My uncle’s house is next to ours. They have a building and they were fined for 200,000 Shekels for building without a license. They have been sent a demolition order and now they have very little time. They opened a case and filed an appeal, and it all got very complicated. There are twelve families in the building and they have nowhere else to go. They’ve worked on it their whole lives and put all their money into the building. You should see them now. They don’t speak to anyone. They are destroyed mentally and financially. They can’t sleep. They are absolutely terrified that they might come at any moment to demolish their home or kick them out of it. God help them. One of my cousins was so scared that he even bought a house in Sheikh Jarrah so that if they demolish that house there would be somewhere else for them to go. But it turned out that the house has problems, and they recently sent him warnings. So he’s crying blood for himself and his money. But what can we do? We’re powerless. Our troubles are far from over.

Another young man from Sheikh Jarrah whom we interviewed described his sense of living in a prison:

I am always targeted, someone who they keep on oppressing until he can no longer hold his head up and make something of himself in this society. You always feel as if you’re living in a prison, not living a normal life like everyone else in the world.

A sense of being incarcerated in all areas of life was clearly apparent in the narrative of a young female history teacher who explained that even the material she teaches at school is controlled by Israel:

Because I teach history you are prohibited as a teacher from adding even one letter [to the curriculum], especially about the history of Jerusalem or Palestine. That’s also stifling of learning and marginalization.

Her husband interrupted her to argue that he had more serious concerns. He stated that he was most troubled by the fear of losing his friends, and his words reveal his strong sense of persecution and fear:
What scares me the most is that your life is no longer safe in this city. I had a friend who used to come to visit me a lot, and I used to go to see him, hundreds of times. Then suddenly, a while ago, people called me to tell me that a Jewish guy had killed him next to Jaffa Gate. You must have heard about him, Amjad Abu Kheder. He had nothing to do with politics, nationalism or anything like that, and imagine that someone killed him. They also said that the man who killed him was mad. I mean, you start to think you shouldn’t even leave the house. It’s as if they’re deliberately trapping us in our own homes.

The sense of being caught in a trap, of “trappedness”, was also evident in an interview conducted with 29-year-old mother living in the Old City. She told of how Jewish settlers had taken over a number of rooms in the vicinity of her house, something that gave her and her family the sense of living under constant surveillance:

A short while ago, when my son was ten years old, he was playing outside the house, and some of the Jewish settlers’ children were bullying him. Then a guard went over and beat him. He came home crying, and so my husband and his brothers went outside to see what was going on. They found over twenty Jewish guards waiting for them outside. They got into a big fight. They beat each other up, and they broke my brother-in-law’s leg and fractured my husband’s finger. They even beat the women and children. They came from all over the neighborhood. The police and ambulances came, and of course they took us all, men and women, to the police station, and held us there from seven o’clock in the evening until two o’clock in the morning. They questioned us, humiliated us, made us sign a guarantee, and indicted my brother-in-law, who had hit a guard and broke his nose. They also took my husband to court and banned him from entering the neighborhood for two weeks. They kept him away from his house and his children, and if he came home or to the neighborhood he’d be arrested. We asked them to see the CCTV recordings so they would see that it had all been in self-defense. Of course they didn’t agree and gave us a thousand excuses. Imagine the terror we have lived with, me and my children. We sleep in the house by ourselves and they’re all around us, ready to explode. You wouldn’t believe it. My youngest son stole a guard’s gun and threw it over the wall when they were in a fight. They were hitting and screaming, girls as well as boys. This is it, either we will die or stay here with our dignity. There’s nothing
they haven’t done, and we have to defend ourselves by whatever means we can.

The experience of living every day under the constant surveillance of Jewish settlers was raised by all respondents from the Old City of Jerusalem. The installation of cameras and hidden recording devices increased their sense of being trapped not only spatially by Jewish settlers, but also by the use of hidden and visible surveillance devices by the state’s security guards. Similar sentiments were voiced by the interviewees from Sheikh Jarrah. Many respondents from this neighborhood expressed fear of being videotaped or overheard by extremist Jewish settlers, with the support of the Israeli security services.

All but two of the interviews conducted with residents of the Old City and Sheikh Jarrah indicated that the Palestinian Authority was not a source of support for Palestinians, something that exacerbates the sense of being trapped. In the words of 29-year-old Nadia:

There’s no one left in the neighborhood except us. There are only Jews around us now, and we’re sure our turn is coming. We built a house in Jericho and bought land in Beit Hanina to at least give ourselves some security, because if they come to kick us out no one will be able to help. I mean, who wants to help us? Israel, which wants to take the house, or the [Palestinian] Authority, which only cares about money? Believe me, when we go to Jericho we’re afraid that we’ll come back to find the Jews inside our house.

As the previous section indicated, many of the interviewees discussed the ways in which the politics of their identity as Palestinians affects their everyday lives, be it by making them reluctant to allow their children to play outside, curtailing their free movement, preventing them from keeping in close contact with family and friends, and even by causing them to lose friends suddenly and senselessly. The following section takes a closer look at the sense of being trapped among Palestinians, focusing on economic traps.
b. Economic traps

Many interview subjects shared their experiences and the effects of finding themselves caught in an economic trap. This section draws on the various voices and narratives gathered in the study to shed light on how Palestinians in Jerusalem perceive economic traps.

We learn from the following narrative how the imprisonment of a family member exacerbates the financial burden on the family, and may even prevent other family members from exercising various rights. The narrative was provided by a 25-year-old man whose brother is a political prisoner. As a result of the financial burden that the imprisonment has placed on the entire family, he has been prevented from pursuing a university education:

My brother has been sent to prison for 20 years, and has so far served five years. The first direct effect on me was that I wasn’t able to go to university for a certain amount of time because we needed every shekel to pay the lawyer to reduce the sentence from 25 years to 20 years. But a lawyer who can do that won’t even speak to you until he gets 30,000 dollars.

Interviewees also revealed that financial hardships caused problems for individuals who have been able to complete their university education, but whose qualifications are not recognized by Israel, something that prevents graduates from finding jobs in the Jerusalem labor market. In the words of a 20-year-old female interview subject:

What bothers me sometimes is that I wonder, okay, after I graduate where will I work? Because, as you know, Abu Dis University isn’t recognized.

As her statement implies, acquiring an education from a Palestinian university does not necessarily enable one to find a job and overcome economic difficulties since the Al Quds University in Abu Dis, for example, is not recognized by the Israeli authorities, and in order to work legally in Jerusalem one must abide by Israeli laws and regulations. A young female respondent pointed out that, with a
Palestinian education, one is subject to discrimination even in seeking employment as a kindergarten teacher:

The biggest source of discrimination against us is in education. I have been a kindergarten teacher for eleven years, and I applied for a course at David Yellin [Teachers’ College]. But they rejected me, saying that I had done [my degree] in Abu Dis, and Abu Dis isn’t recognized, and that I had to start from zero. It’s as if you don’t have a degree. And I’ve seen Jewish teachers there and spoken to them, and it turns out that they’re working without finishing university, but only have work experience certificates. And that’s for a low-level position, so imagine if we applied for something higher? We’d obviously be thrown out.

She added that Jewish women who are less educated are more likely to find employment in the Ministry of Education, simply because they are Jewish. Another, male, interviewee shared his experience of applying for a job in a local clinic as a laboratory technician. As he told us, “The clinics prefer people who graduated from Israeli institutions. And we don’t speak Hebrew, and therefore our chances of being employed are even lower.”

Economic difficulties, and specifically parents’ inability to find work and support their families, were also found to have a damaging effect on family relations and people’s perceptions of their roles as parents. As a 25-year-old father explained:

It seems that it will be our turn to end up on the street tomorrow without shelter. And on top of that I’m out of work. I’ve started to escape from the house in the morning when my children are still sleeping because I feel ashamed when they ask me for something and I have to tell them I have no money. I come back when they are asleep. Their [the occupiers’] goal is to make us leave, drive us out of our houses and kick us into the streets. They don’t even want us to have money to educate our children with. But even if they demolish our homes we’ll stay here, homeless. It is a matter of steadfastness, of deep belief. Even if they gave us villas outside the city it would be impossible for us to leave Silwan [village]. We were born and brought up here. Our roots and our land are here. And they come here just like that, move in with no right and rob us of our rights.
The previous quotation is one of many that demonstrate the spiral effect of economic hardship on Palestinians. It creates rifts within families, causing a father to flee his home and children. It also showed how this spiral effect was restricted to Palestinians’ fear of being uprooted from their homes, but also of finding themselves in a situation that is “impossible to live in.”

The constant sense of economic and psychological persecution facing the Palestinian unemployed, self-employed or those with Israeli employers was found to have exacerbated the tensions between the two adversarial groups (Jews and Palestinians). These tensions in turn damaged Palestinians’ opportunities to find work and feel secure in their jobs, and influenced the attitude of many Jewish employers towards Palestinian employees. For instance, as a 23-year-old male interviewee explained:

I used to work for Jews. On Fridays I always used to go to pray at prayer time, and they never prevented me. But one day [my boss] didn’t want to let me go. I had a fight with him and left. He fired me and I sat at home for six months, and they haven’t given me any compensation for those days.

In addition to being employed and earning an income, this man also wanted to preserve and develop his identity as a Muslim Palestinian by practicing his religion; however, doing so caused him to argue with his employer, lose his temper, and in turn his job.

A 26-year-old man described his search for a place to serve his apprenticeship following his graduation from pharmacy school. He explained the difficulties he faced, many of which stemmed from the fact that he was a Jerusalemite and wanted to avoid transportation costs by working close to his family, whose financial situation was difficult owing to his father’s unemployment and his sister’s failure to find a job as an engineer:

I sent an application to the Bikur Kholim hospital. They accepted me on condition that I sign a paper that my work hours would be unpaid, even though there’s nothing in the law that says that they should be. But they hit me where it hurts. They know how much I need to work and I need the training.
The expression he used of being “hit where it hurts,” that is, being controlled by the power of the system and its economic, social and psychological ramifications, also appeared in other interviews. All interviewees who were working or used to work in Israeli workplaces discussed the financial burden involved in merely reaching work and the daily humiliations and racist remarks and policies they encountered. They also spoke of their need to contend with their Jewish employers’ fear and mistrust of them, and their marginalization in the workplace. In the words of one young woman who once worked as a cleaner at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, “Each bite and each meal I ate or paid for with my salary as a cleaner was laced with pain and poison.”

Twenty-three interview subjects also discussed the serious financial burden that Israel’s home demolitions policy places on Palestinian families. One woman shared the following narrative with us:

They sent us court decisions and demolition orders. We hired a lawyer because they imposed enormous fines on us. The first fine was for 80,000 [Shekels], and as soon as you finish paying it they fine you again. From then to today we’ve been paying fines every month, in monthly installments. It’s as if you’re renting and it’s not your own house. And of course the fine doesn’t cancel the demolition order. We’re now trying to straighten up the area so they’ll agree to give us a building permit. But of course they’re still humiliating us, and we don’t know what’s happening. But as long as we’re paying them money they’re staying quiet. God forbid.

Her words, like those of many other respondents, provide an insight into the well-orchestrated and engineered racist regulations that Israeli bureaucracies and bureaucrats employ to ensure that Palestinians live their lives in the shadow of unending financial burdens. The same woman added that while her house was her own property, she was required to pay almost $2,500 in fines every three months, a sum that is higher than the cost of renting a house, in addition to the costs of hiring a lawyer and making payments to the municipality’s engineer. Moreover, despite these payments, the threat of losing her home continued to
loom over her and her family. The following narrative was shared by a young mother:

They put us under siege and totally paralyze our lives by arresting, insulting and humiliating the young men in public and at every checkpoint, by forcing us out of our big, spacious homes and leaving us crammed in tiny rooms in Jerusalem, surrounded by their security cameras, and left with the fines and all the other payments that we can never afford to pay. They’ve destroyed the life that every human being is entitled to live.

Several interview subjects stated that their salaries and national insurance payments are spent solely on paying the fines, lawyers’ fees, the costs of the bulldozers that demolished their houses, and similar expenses. Their statements highlight the serious need to study the economy of militarization, and more specifically the financial costs paid by Palestinians for the occupation.

The economic situation of Palestinian families in Jerusalem tends to deteriorate further when a member of the family is born outside of Jerusalem or marries someone from the West Bank or Gaza Strip. In such cases some family members hold Jerusalem IDs while others do not. As the interviews revealed, the lack of a Jerusalem ID is attended by its own economic burdens. Some stated that they had been forced to rent a house in the West Bank in order to reach their workplace or educational institution unhindered. Some respondents also spoke of the expenses incurred by traveling to participate in a funeral, for example, without being detained or harassed by Israelis soldiers, or to go to hospital or visit relatives to celebrate a birth or wedding. One interview subject shared a narrative about his sister’s wedding. He does not have a Jerusalem ID while his sister and the rest of the family do, and as a result he was arrested on his way to the event. In order to secure his release on that night, the family had to pay 2,000 Shekels (approximately $700) immediately to a lawyer.

According to another respondent, whose mother carries a Jerusalem ID while he and his sister do not:
The problem that me and my sister are currently facing is that when we go to renew our residency permits each year it takes them about four months to issue a new one. And throughout that whole period we’re totally banned from being in Jerusalem. We’re both studying at Abu Dis, and so you can imagine what happens during that period. I rent a place with friends in Abu Dis and my sister stays with her friends in another house. And my mother stays by herself at home. So instead of one house we’re living in three different houses. And my poor mother is sick and needs someone there all the time to help her. If we were abroad we would be able to come back to see her, but this is like complete isolation.

His story demonstrates that this family not only incurred the expenses of running three different houses, but also had to spend large amounts of money on phone calls, to say nothing of the obvious psychological strains. Another interview subject explained that as a Palestinian it is more expensive and less comfortable for him to live in the Old City in Jerusalem than it is for Jewish settlers, who enjoy more space, superior municipal services, and generally benefit from the support of the government and municipality. In his words:

The trap is that we are living inside the Old City, and we compare our own situation with the Jews who live there and see that at least in terms of cleanliness the Arab area isn’t like the Jewish areas. And there’s hardly five meters in front of the house for our children to play in, whereas they have amazing facilities. In Jerusalem it works the wrong way round, because usually people pay more to live better, but in Jerusalem, and as Palestinians, we pay much more and live with all this pressure in order to live in worse conditions.

In all the interviews it was found that the feeling of being economically trapped was always associated with anxiety, fear and a sense of injustice, which were exacerbated in cases where there was also the threat of a home demolition. As one interviewee from Sheikh Jarrah area, a particular target for home demolitions and forced evictions, stated, “The greatest fear is ending up on the street and having your house taken off you. We see the people here, how they sit on the pavement with no shelter or place to sleep.”
The economic burden involved in holding on to one’s home and land in Jerusalem was also evident in the following narrative:

A year ago we built three rooms, and the Jews came and made us pay a fine so they wouldn’t demolish them. It was a temporary solution, so instead of them demolishing the rooms we paid 10,000 Shekels. We also paid for a license application but it never came. And we’re still trying to renew it so they won’t demolish the rooms, and we’re still paying.

His wife added:

And they also made us pay 77,000 [Shekels], if not more, and asked us to bring a land improvement certificate to change it from green land to land fit for building. They want half a million for that, as well as asking us to bring documents from the aviation company stating that it won’t affect the passage of airplanes, and to get another permit from them.

c. Spatial Politics: Trapped spaces and places

A clear finding of the research was that Israeli spatial politics have heightened the sense of being trapped and suffocated among Palestinians in Jerusalem. Particularly harmful policies were the “ghettoization” of Palestinians in small, crowded enclaves following the invasion of Jewish settlers, and the various impediments to their free movement within the city and between it and the surrounding villages. The interview subjects shared several narratives that revealed their sense of being trapped in confined spaces. One interview subject spoke of having witnessed an old man standing for hours in line at a checkpoint. The man had suddenly fallen to the ground, unable to breath, and in response an Israeli police officer had threatened that if he did not stand up he would not be permitted to cross the checkpoint. Another respondent described the experience of witnessing a woman who was crying and shivering from fear while crossing a checkpoint:

I remember once at the checkpoint there was a woman and each time she walked through the security gate the machine would beep. There was something wrong with it. But they kept making her go through it, and she ended up getting very upset and scared and
started to cry. She was in a real state. In the end they let her through but we realized that it was the soldier himself who had been making the machine beep.

Another interview subject spoke of an experience at a checkpoint where Palestinians were standing in line, unsheltered and exposed to the heat and sun of the day, while the Israeli soldiers sat inside listening to music and singing:

Another time the checkpoint was full, and all the people were standing, waiting in line. They had closed the gate and weren’t letting anyone through. They had the microphone on and the soldiers were inside signing loudly and messing around making a noise, ignoring the sheep that were stuck out in the sun waiting for them to open the gate.

Describing the constant surveillance and the oppressive use of closed circuit television cameras and hidden security devices in the Old City, a subject that was repeatedly raised in the interviews, one interview subject gave the following narrative:

Here, just below the house, is an old derelict room that the Jews took over. At first everything remained normal... But then the Jews wanted to put a door in on the other side, which of course threatened to destabilize the house above it. They renovated the room, created a living room and held parties in it. They made a racket and played music, and caused friction and problems with the people. And when anything happens there they close the two entrances to it, from above and below, and have inserted cameras all around it. And even when we walk past the door the Jews start singing and provoke us, and they've also hung up Israeli flags. Anyone who sees those flags must see the terrible contradiction between the appearance of the Old City and its history, and the Israeli flags hung all around the room. And to note, if anyone wants to renovate anything here they have to get permission, and they might well not approve it. Here the discrimination and racism are plain to see.

The attack on the Palestinian space and ensuing feeling of being trapped appeared strongly in a description provided by a young man of his sense of being in exile in his homeland. He affirmed that the only way he could avoid being abused at military checkpoints was to live far from his parents, an imposition
that heightened his feeling of alienation and also caused him to forgo the social support they offered. Similarly, the attack on the Palestinian home was found to have a profound effect on victims’ behavior and lives. As one young man stated:

Our house is number 19 of 88 houses with a demolition order in Al-Bustan. You can’t imagine how the situation affects our lives. The last time they sent the demolition orders I had just started high school, and instead of studying all night I would lie awake thinking about what was going to happen to us when they carried out the demolition, where we were going to go, and what would happen to my father. It really shatters your nerves and destroys you psychologically, more than anything physical. Something once happened that, whenever I think of it, it reminds me of the real meaning of our tragedy. My younger brother was going to school. Since the demolition orders there had been problems and our house was full of tension, screaming, worry and sleepless nights. He had to go to school in the morning, and when he woke up he put his toys in his school bag. My mother asked him why he had done it, and he told her, “Because if I come home and the Jews have demolished our house my toys will be under the ground.” He said, “Tomorrow I want to take my new clothes with me as well, but today there isn’t room in my bag.” I mean, if a young boy fears for himself and his things and he still doesn’t understand what’s going on properly, what can we say?

A 25-year-old father gave the following narrative about the demolition of his neighbor’s home:

Recently here inside Al-Bustan they demolished my neighbor’s house. He’s an old man and he doesn’t work. His wife is sick and they have seven children. It’s been a week since the house was demolished and they’re in a tent next to their demolished house. They broke all our hearts when they demolished it, because we’re like them. Of course there were a lot of them and they were armed, so they drove us away and demolished the house. If you could see their things strewn outside; it gets you right in the heart.

The attack on the Palestinian home and space was also apparent in places where large numbers of home demolitions orders had been distributed. As one 18-year-old man explained:

My house is number 39 in the list of houses issued with demolition orders. In May 2005 a group demolition order was sent to Al-
Bustan, so we went to court and submitted an objection. And because of the pressure on Israel they came to a decision to cancel the demolition order as long as we didn’t add anything new to the building. Our mistake was that we didn’t get the decision in writing. Then in February 2008 they sent us demolition orders again to 88 houses, home to about 1,500 people. We set up a big protest tent on the street and many people came, journalists, diplomats, ambassadors, leaders and senior people. And again, because of the pressure they offered to give us houses in Wadi al-Dam in Beit Hanina, which was aimed at expelling us without any loss to them because it’s in the West Bank. So of course we rejected it outright. And this whole situation has a huge impact on us. You can hardly bear to speak one word in your own home; you’re always tense, anxious and scared. But, honestly speaking, when you think about it seriously you see that there’s nothing left to be scared of, because that’s it: it’s either us or them. We are enduring everything they do and keeping quiet about it. It’s impossible for them to force us to leave.

He added that the simple act of sitting on a chair in the neighborhood was no longer safe:

An accident happened here in Silwan, but a bit further up, that makes you think a million times about the situation we’re living in. The owner of a grocery was sitting on a chair by his shop door at about 9 o’clock at night when the ground caved in about four meters under him. He spent a week in hospital. Of course it was because of the excavations that are going on day and night in this area. I mean, you’re no longer safe to even sit down.

A young woman described her constant sense of fear, uncertainty and being trapped after the demolition and eviction of neighboring houses as follows:

You can no longer count on anything in this situation. Here we’re very close to the houses that were evacuated, and often, on an almost daily basis, the settlers attack the houses at night and there are skirmishes and all kinds of strife. And that makes the young children scared that they’ll come to our house...
d. The breakdown of the social support network

The interviews revealed how the constant and acute sense of uncertainty and helplessness that envelops the lives of Palestinians in East Jerusalem has generated a prevailing feeling of despondency; that “nothing works.” The spatial violence and sense of living in exile at home even led almost half (twenty) of the interview subjects to state that Palestinians can no longer rely on their own social and community support networks, and cannot always trust even close friends and relatives. It has further fueled tensions between those considered to be protectors or sources of support, such as parents, teachers, judges and doctors, and those whom they are supposed to protect. A number of interview subjects referred to the inability of their own parents to help them in times of crises, or to their own powerlessness as parents to support their children during Israeli raids, settler attacks and home demolitions. Others stated their distrust of judges and the court system; as one interviewee told us, “They all work for the benefit of Israel, not for justice”. Five of the university student interviewees discussed their realization of the vulnerability of their professors after witnessing them being humiliated by soldiers, as a result of which they had become hesitant in asking for their advice, support and help.

A 28-year-old woman interview subject described her loss of trust in the informal social system and in her immediate social circle as follows:

The fact that I have a West Bank ID has a huge impact on me in all aspects of my life. First of all I can’t come and go with my husband easily because I am forced to go to the West Bank through the military checkpoints, and not through the ordinary crossings. This restricts my movement and means that I have to stay in Jerusalem. I have also come to feel that because you have a West Bank ID you’re suspicious, and that the neighbors don’t want to talk to you or even give you a ride in their car. It really damages your social relations.

She further described herself as “unwanted and illegal,” and felt that her neighbors feared being accused of collaborating with her. The narrative of this
woman, a West Banker living with her husband in Jerusalem, also revealed how her status had affected her relationship with her husband, as she felt that she had become a burden on him and his family. As she explained, the loss of trust and support from her society, including her own family, had increased her sense of exclusion and depression, and in turn limited her movement and social relations. It “paralyzed me totally”, to the degree that, “I didn’t want to get out of bed in the morning, wake up to get the children ready for school, or even sit with my husband to watch television or to socialize.”

Another young mother described how militarization negatively affected family networks and relationships:

I remember once that me, my husband and the children were going one Eid to Nablus to visit relatives. The children were excited and wearing their best clothes. At the checkpoint [the soldier] refused to let us through. We tried to talk to him but it was pointless, and they sent us back. In the end we made it there, but it ruined it for the children and they got upset. My youngest son even asked me why we couldn’t go through but the Jews could. Their aim is to make you not leave your house at all and to distance you from your family and relatives.

Some interview subjects explained how severe uncertainly and fear had heightened their sense of social exclusion. For example, one man discussed the sense of extreme hopelessness created by the collaboration of local Palestinians informants. He stated that when Palestinians, mainly the young and unemployed, are solicited by Israel, accept payments to inform on other Palestinians, sell their houses to Jewish settlers, and assist the occupation, one loses trust in everything and everyone. It has made Palestinians “turn against each other”. He gave the following account of the arrest of a fellow university student who had been accused of planning a suicide attack:

Even people from your home town are against you. Once, if you remember, the Jews said that they had killed a Palestinian in [the Jewish settlement] Ma’ale Adumim, claiming that he had come to commit a suicide attack. Afterwards the [Palestinian] Authority put a young man from our university in prison, saying that he had sent
the man who’d been killed to carry out the attack. He only got out of prison after being paralyzed. Now he’s bedridden and unable to move or do anything. I mean, if we’re helping the Jews to kill us and destroy our lives, then what’s left? We don’t expect anything from people or the world anymore.

Another 23-year-old man described the loss of trust in his own community that followed the loss of most of the houses in his neighborhood to Jewish settlers, and the resulting sense of helplessness, disgust and frustration as follows:

Whoever says that the Jews take a house that isn’t for sale is wrong, because it’s all just talk. Even if the people in the house aren’t selling then someone else will sell it for them; it’s our failing, not theirs.

A 24-year-old woman voiced the following criticism of the local leadership, community and family and her sense of being trapped by internal as well as external forces in sharing a narrative about a deadly local fight between two families that broke out in her neighborhood:

We’ve recently been living in extremely difficult circumstances, in this area in particular. It’s not just that the Jews have no mercy us, but that we have no mercy on ourselves and we’re not standing together. The biggest sign is an incident that took place here in Silwan about a month ago when two families got into a fight. We’re creating a contradiction when one day people read in the newspaper that the Jews attacked us, and the next that we’re killing each other.

In uncontrolled situations such as these, of external political violence, global injustice, the denial of rights and internal conflict, individual interview subjects communicated a severe sense of crisis. This is a crisis created in large part by the difficulties entailed in determining who is trustworthy and who is not, what steps one should take to protect oneself and one’s family, who to talk to, where to look for work, and what to do if one’s house is to be demolished or evacuated.

A final example of the effect of militarization in Jerusalem on the Palestinian social support networks was raised by a 29-year-old woman who spoke of the invasion of her neighborhood by Jewish settlers. Beyond the
resulting physical exclusion, what she described was her sense of social exclusion. As she explained, her own family had begun to fear visiting her, and she had begun to stop her children from playing outside even in their own yard:

I'm married and have been living here comfortably for eleven years. There were Jews living in two houses close to us here, but we weren't particularly worried about them being beside us. But now you see we are in the middle of a circle of Jewish houses, and it definitely has a strong effect on us psychologically, and even socially. Psychologically for sure, because we feel that we're in constant danger and that it's unsafe to sit with the door open, and even for the children to go outside or to leave them in the house by themselves. And socially because people who come to visit us have started to fear for their own children because of the situation we're in, and they've stopped coming round like they did before.

e. Agency and resistance

In one interview a 12-year-old child was sitting with his mother as she was sharing her narratives. While listening to her stories persecution and traps, and in particular of the encirclement of their house in the Old City by Jewish settlers, he interrupted to tell us that he wasn't afraid of the settlers, regardless of their violence against himself and his family. As he explained:

It's them who are afraid of us. When they walk beside us they're on edge. Really, we're stronger than them, and if it wasn't for their weapons they wouldn't be able to do anything to us. On the day the trouble started we took everything out on them. But now they don't dare do anything to us, because my dad bought some cameras and put them around the house so we would have pictures and videos if anything happened, so now we don't have to wait for them to take pity on us.

Here the boy expresses agency and power, and his own and his family’s refusal to accept exclusion as a mode of survival. The rejection by Palestinians of their own helplessness and their willingness to resist it was also evident in the narrative of one young man who shared his family history with us. The man’s family is originally from the village of Calonia, from which they were internally displaced. In response to the suffering and adversity experienced by himself and
his family he interviewed all members of his family, and recorded their voices on a CD:

We’re originally from an area called Calonia, next to Abu Ghosh. In 1968 armed Jewish militias came and expelled our family barefoot and with nothing to live off. They kicked them out like sheep and moved into their place. So they came and lived here in rented accommodation... When we grew up we started going there to see where our family used to live. I made a CD about Calonia and about our displacement. I’ll give you a copy of it.

Indeed, the interview subjects shared many stories of frontline activism. The incidents they describe included someone helping to sneak a sick and pregnant woman from the West Bank to a doctor in Jerusalem, an act that almost cost those involved their lives, and people hiding dead bodies in cars and burying them at Bab al-Sbat, a Palestinian cemetery in Jerusalem, in respect of the wishes of the dead. Just as they spoke of their daily struggles to reach their schools, universities and workplaces, so they also voiced their refusal to accept humiliation as part of their everyday lives as Palestinians. All the people interviewed related their own experiences of challenging the injustice of the Israeli occupation. One woman discussed her own resistance to the domination and violence, describing it as a daily act of survival:

Once my husband went to pray at Al-Aqsa and didn’t come back when he was supposed to. The neighbors told me that the settlers had attacked Al-Aqsa and the police had closed all the gates and weren’t letting anyone in or out. And the settlers were on edge. The policeman told the people that anyone who wanted could leave Al-Aqsa, but that he wouldn’t get involved in anything that happened to them outside. I couldn’t just sit there and said I wanted to go to bring my husband back. I grabbed a small hoe that I use for gardening and went to get him. But, thanks be to God, it ended up being alright. What it means is that at any moment when you’re inside the [Old] City you can get hurt, and you have no idea what will happen to you.

In response to the threat to her husband from Jewish settlers in the Old City this woman took a garden hoe and went to confront the police herself. She explained
in detail the ordeal of getting her husband back, and stated that she was always ready to do whatever is necessary if and when settlers attacked her family. She concluded, "They have their big guns, all the Israeli police and the military, with all its might... And I have my hoe, and I'll use it if they get near my husband or children."

A 20-year-old woman shared what she described as "the most painful ordeal":

One incident truly shook me, and I feel it really reflects our fear of the Jews. At the start of the Intifada my younger brothers were about ten years old or so. My mother, afraid that the army would bother them or take them away had them grow their hair long, so that when the army came to look for kids who had thrown stones they would think that they were girls, because they looked like girls.

In this case the family’s daily fear of attack in the Old City had inspired the mother to come up with the novel idea of growing her brothers’ hair long, and thus feminizing them in an attempt to protect them from attack by Jewish settlers and Israeli soldiers.

One of the interview subjects, a young woman who is a member of a family that struggled with the Israeli authorities to save their house for thirty-seven years, only for it to be finally evacuated during the summer of 2009, gave the following narrative:

We’re stuck with the issue of the house and the courts. A year ago we were just getting out of a financial crisis after adding an extension to the house. It was nearly Ramadan when they came and put our father in prison for three months. Imagine, and it was Eid. It had a serious psychological effect on me; I even fell behind at school. After he got out of prison they came after us with an evacuation order. On the day of the eviction we were sitting up late outside, me and my brother, and we felt in our hearts that they were going to come. It was about 3:30 in the morning when we heard a movement. We went inside the house and locked the doors. Within a few seconds they had broken the glass of the door and the kitchen window. They came in shouting, “Come on, outside!” and wouldn’t even give us time to get dressed. They kicked us out
barefoot in our nightclothes. They beat us because we didn’t want to go out, and didn’t let us take anything with us. They hit my brother, tore his shirt and threw him outside. And my little sister – even now no one knows how they got her out of the house, and she still doesn’t want to talk about it... From that day until now we’ve been sitting on the pavement next to the house. We still hope we can go back, but it’s a painful thing to see the Jews living in your house, going in and out, while we’re sleeping out on the street. But I feel that our relationships with the neighbors and the people here have got stronger, especially between us and the families that were evicted in the same area. What has happened might have affected the course of my whole life. I’ve started to think about studying law so I can understand our case and defend our rights. But my dad and I are very hopeful that we will go back to the house, and if we don’t go back, then at least if we stick to our position and remain steadfast that will create pressure and prevent the evacuation of other houses that are threatened. And I forgot to tell you that my sister is boycotting all Israeli products. Even if she was on the verge of death she wouldn’t eat or drink anything from Israel. We saw a young settler on the roof of our house with the Torah in one hand and a gun in the other. We took a photo of him and put it on the internet. We’ve also approached many international bodies and told them how we’ve suffered and about our problems, and, God willing, it will do some good.

The previous quotation highlights the various means employed by the interview subject to challenge the violation of her right to remain in her house. She shared how her trauma and loss had empowered her and other members of her family, led her to make life-altering decisions, and strengthened her network of social support. It also provides an example of the use of e-resistance as a mode of frontline activism and a new weapon of resistance in the Palestinian arsenal.

f. The gendered nature of traps and resistance

One of the major research findings that came to light through the analysis of the interviews was that new spaces for gendered political, social and economic transactions have been opened up by the ongoing political violence, the displacement and dislocation, the daily trials and arguments with Israeli soldiers at the checkpoints, the need to meet and interact with new men and women, deal
with taxi drivers, etc. In certain situations necessity has dictated the entry of Palestinian women into new spaces, and in turn enabled them to negotiate their rights, seek help and search for service-providers, thereby expanding their knowledge and providing them with additional survival tactics. As a 23-year-old female university students explained:

Their main aim was to put more pressure on men, to increase their control of women and men, but what they got is the opposite. I could tell you about how more girls are enrolling in universities, more women are working in public services, and more women are opening businesses. In my family alone, I could tell you about how my aunt, in her struggle to help her family after her husband lost his job, started up a new business selling pastries. And that encouraged my mother start up her own business making jewelry and selling it to Jewish shops. And all my sisters have either graduated, are in university or are on their way. The more Israel pushes and hits us, the more we resist. It is still hard, but we’re all proud of our ability to keep our spirits high.

However, as some female interview subjects revealed, the political violence, displacement, and life as a refugee has also made them more vulnerable to violence and abuse, including at the hands of members of their own families. Some women discussed the additional marginalization of women within the Palestinian community in Jerusalem and their peripheral status, which they said was supported by the local Palestinian leadership, and shared stories of gendered traps in their daily lives. One young woman from the Old City explained how Israel’s discriminatory spatial policies and other geo-political and bio-political factors had compounded the economic hardships of her family, and in turn influenced internal gender relations, leading to a curtailment of women’s privacy and liberty:

Frankly, when we first came to live here I was distraught because the house is so small and there’s no privacy whatsoever. All the houses are close to one another and you can’t speak a word without the neighbors hearing you. And there’s no place for the children to play. I have a boy and a girl. [Lowering her voice] My mother-in-law is insisting that I have more children, but there’s hardly enough space for us in the house now. We’ve thought a lot
about renting a house outside Jerusalem but we’re scared we’ll lose our residency. And no one leaves a house they own and rent, especially when they’re barely scraping by on the money they have.

The same woman shared several stories of her loss of privacy, including an incident that occurred when she was sleeping in her bed with her husband and her mother-in-law had flung open the door calling for help after soldiers invaded their home. She also told us that she suffers from severe menstrual pain, but that she is no longer able to stay in bed now that lives with her husband’s extended family and must remain constantly on her guard. She added, “When I need to deal with women’s issues, such as pregnancy, the period, visiting a doctor, or even waxing my legs, I need to do it in secret, like a thief, without breathing. And that really, really bothers me.”

Other female interview subjects spoke of how Israel’s family unification policy, as manifested primarily in the refusal of Jerusalem IDs to spouses from the West Bank or children born to parents from the West Bank, had further exacerbated hardships and negatively affected gender relations. Both men and women interviewees discussed the economic hardships associated with the struggle to hold onto their Jerusalem IDs, and the consequent loss of financial independence and reliance on assistance from the family. While the family was found to constitute a source of support for young families, some of the female interviewees stated that their support had also increased the control exercised over women’s bodies and lives. Women shared many accounts of being controlled by local patriarchal power-holders, including brothers, uncles and male cousins. One young woman shared with us the fact that her uncle had once taken her entire salary from her for nine months, with her father’s consent. She told her story in tears, explaining that she had had no choice but to accept her father’s request in order not to relinquish her own and her family’s right to ask for his help in the future. She stated:

I love my father so much, and I’d hate to see him looked down on by the rest of his family. If he had not helped his brother to pay for
his medical expenses we would have been shamed before the extended family. My two brothers refused to help out. One of them has his own reasons as his house might be demolished and he’s paying the lawyers to save it. And although I’m about to get married and I need my salary myself, I’m a woman, not a man like my brothers. They can count on everyone’s support when they need it, without having to give up their salaries, even though my salary is very low compared to theirs.

The gender-based suffering of some of the female interview subjects also appeared in their discussions of the need to see a gynecologist, find a safe place in which to give birth, and help female relatives treat their health problems. One young woman shared her experience of being exposed to racism at the hands of medical professionals during the birth to her first child:

I gave birth in Shaare Zedek [Hospital]. At first I wasn’t afraid or worried, but then I began to experience the extreme racism. For example, when I asked them for something they shouted at me and wouldn’t bring it to me. But when someone else asked them for something they were nice and calm with them. Before we left the hospital I even saw them giving the Jews gifts for the birth, but they gave the Arabs nothing. I had my second birth in the Red Crescent Hospital. At least they were nice to me, from the same place and the same religion. I think that if we had the facilities that are available in the Jewish hospitals our situation would be much better and we wouldn’t need to turn to them.

This quotation reveals, once again, women’s sense of being trapped on all sides. On the one hand this woman felt deeply humiliated by the treatment she had received at an Israeli hospital, but on the other hand the substandard medical equipment and expertise in Palestinian hospitals leaves many Palestinian women dependent on Israeli medical institutions.

Another woman described her sense of being trapped and living under constant surveillance:

[I am caught] between the inability to move about, visit my parents, the checkpoints, the constant worries about my children’s safety, the cameras and security guards of the Jewish settlers living around us and suffocating us here in the Old City, and our men losing their jobs, their hope of providing for their families, and even
losing control of our children's behavior. I, the simple woman, end up getting beaten, abused, and totally humiliated...

A further source of gendered traps that appeared in some of the interviews was the sexual and psychological abuse and harassment of women at checkpoints. Harassment by Israeli soldiers, including being made to undress to be allowed to cross a checkpoint, was found to have increased women's sense of loss of their bodily integrity and added to their humiliation and oppression. As one woman explained:

During the Second Intifada the Jews set up tents for carrying out searches at the Gilo checkpoint. They used to hold and search us for two or three hours. The girls would go into the rooms and female soldiers would search them, and if they weren't self-confident enough they wouldn't escape from them. A lot of sexual harassment of the girls by the female soldiers went on. They would make them strip their clothes to search them, but there are girls who won't let anyone search them, so they would be left standing for hours rather than be humiliated, and in the end they'd send them back home.

In another interview a young mother shared her fears for her daughter at the checkpoints:

When my daughter is older and wants to enroll at university I won’t send her to a university where she has to go through a checkpoint, whatever it costs us, because of something that once happened before my eyes at the Bethlehem checkpoint. I was going home after a funeral in Bethlehem by bus. There were university students on the bus, including a girl who was carrying a rope, because there had been some activity at the university. She was a very pretty girl. It was raining, and I noticed the soldier giving her a vulgar look. He got onto the bus and asked who the rope belonged to. She answered that it was hers. He took her off the bus and I got down with her. She started to shake with fear. It was such a shame. The soldier told the driver to go and said that she was going to stay there. He didn’t agree to let me stay with her and started shouting. And she was scared stiff. I got back onto the bus, but the whole way I kept thinking about her and telling the driver to tell the buses behind him to pick her. And in the end one of the bus drivers managed to take her home with him. But since then I’ve said even if
my daughter gets 100% in her exams I’m not going to send her to any university where there’s a checkpoint.

This story is a striking example of the effect of the gendered nature of militarization on Palestinian women. Experiencing firsthand the harassment of a young woman by the Israeli military and her sense of guilt at not being able to protect her may ultimately cost the education of the interview subject’s own daughter. Another woman, a young mother, shared her sense of being psychologically trapped by her fear of Israelis and how it marred the pregnancy of her friend. As she recounted:

Who are we supposed to complain to? The slaughterer or the hangman? They want to expel us by any means necessary. They want to cut our numbers and not have to deal with us. My friend was pregnant, in the sixth month, and the Jewish doctors told her that her baby had Down’s syndrome. He said she had to abort it and that she shouldn’t let him come into the world sick. She was petrified and in the months before the birth lived her life in fear. And the baby was born totally fine; there was nothing wrong with him. And if that says anything it’s how much we’re a burden for them that they want to get rid of.

Her explanation of the doctor’s diagnosis that her friend was pregnant with a Down’s syndrome fetus was shaped by her own belief that Israel wanted to “get rid” of Palestinians, even by aborting them before birth. She then took the fact that the child had been born healthy as confirmation of her analysis. The effect of militarization was also apparent in the following narrative provided by a woman:

As I told you before, I hate the Old City. Girls’ lives there are totally uncomfortable. Take me, for example: my family trusts me a lot, and I can usually come and go as I please, but I can’t be late. It’s a disaster in the Old City if you go home late, because there isn’t much light and because of fear of people and drug addicts, and even the army there. It’s impossible to be safe. These days you don’t feel that you’re going home to relax. You feel that you’re in prison or an airport where you have to show your ID, and they search you and check that your address is inside the Old City before they’ll allow you to enter. On Fridays it’s even deader in the Old City because the
shops close earlier than on other days. The situation is getting more and more miserable.

In short, it was clear from the interviews with both female and male respondents that women suffered from Israel’s military politics in specific ways, and often paid a high price for resisting Israeli oppression. However, despite their strong sense of being under attack, trapped and in some cases persecuted by all sides, women nevertheless asserted a strong sense of belonging to the Palestinian community and national loyalty, and described their unending search for justice. Just as they were critical of their families and communities, women also stressed their commitment to Palestinian social mores, which they viewed not only as a source of oppression, but equally as a tool for challenging Israeli oppression. Indeed, both women and men tended to perceive the gendered nature of power within the community as a buffer against the trauma of uncertainty. As one young man stated:

We in Jerusalem know very well that the attack is not only against our homes or land, but against our families, our development and our mere existence. My way of challenging Israel’s racism is first by taking care of my family and my girlfriend. I believe that we must help all women to study, work, and be healthy. I look at my mother, and see how much the political situation, the imprisonment of my brother, and the fact that she doesn't even know where her mother was buried, has affected her health. I helped her to make a small place in Bab el Sbat [the cemetery], just so she can feel she has a space for her mother that she can visit and pray at. Our neighbors here are so supportive. We all help each other when we can, but never get upset if someone can't help. The situation in the Old City is really difficult, and we all help each other out. We always have our eyes open to look out for how to protect the children and the young women on their way back from school if they are harassed and abused, and we’re proud of ourselves.
Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

The present study has cast light on the local and global spiral effects of the politics of exclusion, and shown how they create trapped realities in militarized spaces in Jerusalem, realities that are replete with trapped bodies, lives, families and communities. Analyzing the effects of spiral traps and their transgressions on Palestinians in Jerusalem creates a sense of urgency; it demands that we address a number of theoretical and methodological questions currently facing critical and feminist epistemology that engages with the Palestinian case-study, questions that relate to the impact of the everydayness of colonial militarism on Palestinians in Jerusalem.

A general finding of the research was that, living in the fragmented, walled-in ghettos in the shadow of Israel’s discriminatory spatial politics, most Palestinians in East Jerusalem have developed a strong sense of living in a prison, traumatized, isolated and cantonized. The interviewees, inhabitants of refugee camps, urban neighborhoods and villages, were found to live with an acute sense of exclusion. In addition to its debilitating economic impact, exclusion, isolation and separation has a specific impact on Palestinian Jerusalemites’ sense of identity, self-definition and national, cultural and community belonging. The Wall in particular was found to seep deeply into the very structure of the family, splitting parents from children, daughters from mothers, and sisters from brothers.

Respondents repeatedly voiced their sense of what I refer to as “trappedness”, which is, I argue, central to theorizing the complex web of harassments, abuses, traumas, and the power relations that dominate the daily lives of Palestinians in Jerusalem. This notion is also the key to understanding the boundaries of racism as exclusion and inclusion, belonging and Otherization, power and powerlessness. The concept of “trappedness” can aid our
understanding of the ways in which the multiple forces and orders of power that produce violence intersect, and in turn re-produce exclusion and violence. I use the concept of “trappedness” to understand the forces that are shaping an emerging order of power, but also an emerging resilience and resistance that empowers the colonized and the trapped. The basis of the theorization is the voices of the majority of Palestinian respondents in the study, who expressed their sense of what Maha described as “living in a trap”.

To live in a trap means to live in a space that is incoherent and lacking in any clear organizing principles. Indeed, in the context of East Jerusalem there was found to be a plurality of traps and trapped spheres that retain their own separate logics, but that remain dependent on and entangled within other logics when they operate in conditions of constant uncertainty in specific times, spaces and contexts. To detangle this plurality of traps one must first shed the light on the workings of power in militarized and colonial contexts, and take an in-depth look at the intimacy of the politics of everydayness. It is also necessary to examine the ways in which individuals challenge such traps, paying close attention to the gendered social and economic “trappedness” of women.

In order to trace the effects of Israeli militarization on the politics of the everyday for Palestinians in Jerusalem, to achieve a better understanding of their traumatization and exclusion, and in support of further advocacy in this regard, the current study makes the following recommendations:

1. To further study and document the ways in which the politics of the everyday sense of being trapped affect specific every day acts such as attending weddings, funerals and other family events, caring for the sick, giving birth, reaching school, accessing health care, surviving economic hardship, etc., and to raise awareness of these issues among local and international policy-makers.
2. To further study and document the psychological and social effects of the proliferation of security cameras and the constant surveillance of Palestinians living in the Old City; violence committed by settlers against Palestinians; the occupation of Palestinian neighborhoods by Jewish settlers who live in the midst of Palestinians, move around freely and receive preferential treatment and superior services from the Municipality of Jerusalem; and to raise awareness of these issues among local and international policy-makers.

3. To study the Israeli attack on Palestinian time. Time is an important variable in human development, and this study has revealed that Palestinians’ time has also been subject to Israeli militarization and control, and consequently had a detrimental effect on their psychological welfare and social relations, as well as their productivity and economic development.

4. To further study and document the effects of the Judaization and violation of the Palestinian space in Jerusalem, and to and share this information with public officials and human right organizations. Israel’s spatial and geopolitical policies were found to have taken a high toll on the psycho-social and economic lives of Palestinian Jerusalemites.

5. To study Jerusalem in the context of the ongoing occupation of Palestine and the continuing historical injustice, including the recent War on Gaza and the global denial thereof. The brutal killing of Palestinians living in Gaza, in full view of the world, was found to have created a sense of hopelessness among many of the interview subjects and to have heightened their sense of being trapped. Similarly, subsequent attempts by politicians at reviving the Palestinian-Israeli “peace process” were generally perceived as denial of Palestinian trauma, loss and devastation. The interviewees variously made references to feeling choked (makhnoq), being unable to breathe (ma’atoo’ nafasi), surrounded
(mhwat), imprisoned (mahboos), totally alone (ma’atoo’ min shajarah; literally cut off from a tree), and isolated (ma’zool). As these descriptions reveal, the interviewees’ sense of being trapped calls for the investment of more energy in developing community-based support strategies. Basing such strategies firmly in the knowledge of the community will make them more effective in confronting militarized traps.

6. To study previously un-researched aspects of Palestinian life unearthed by the study, including the crucial subjects of how best to protect individuals from constant uncertainty and instability, the everydayness of the never-ending traps, and birth and death in Jerusalem.

7. To build effective prevention strategies to operate on two levels, firstly by raising the awareness of young Palestinians about the results of the study, including the main findings that relate to the predominant sense among Palestinians in Jerusalem of living in a trap. Such awareness may help to reduce the sense of anxiety and apprehension, create a greater sense of solidarity through shared experience, and empower them to seek out more effective ways of confronting their trapped realities. Secondly, it is recommended that awareness of the findings of the study should be raised among national and international power-holders, for example, by producing a regular newsletter or journal that brings the voices and ordeals of young Palestinian men and women to the fore. Moreover, given the status of the YWCA in Jerusalem as a para-academic institution that teaches and awards degrees and diplomas to close to 200 Palestinian women a year, it is recommended that these women should be provided with the opportunity to engage in collecting data about themselves and their fellow Palestinians. In this way they would be able to analyze and learn more about their own ordeals, for instance by producing an annual publication on Palestinian life in Jerusalem, which would also make a valuable contribution to current debates and constitute an impressive
institutional and educational achievement. Conducting follow-up research on this basis has the benefits of: (i) empowering young Palestinian women; (ii) providing them with an important opportunity to think about, reflect on and share their experiences; (iii) giving them a sense that they are not alone in contending with their daily ordeals; (iv) creating a body of documented research on the daily experiences and trauma of Palestinians in Jerusalem, as well as rights violations and atrocities committed against them, from the perspective of young Palestinian women; and (v) developing new intervention strategies that are informed and proposed by Palestinian Jerusalemites.
Bibliography


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