Belonging to Palestine

-A study of the means and measures of Palestinian women's belonging to their state and nation

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Abstract

The Israeli occupation of Palestine affects every aspect of the lives of the Palestinian people. Further, Palestinian women are largely excluded from decision-making processes and formal political positions inside Palestine, which is why this thesis deals with this intersection of oppressions. Instead of asking why Palestinian women are oppressed, this research aims at investigating how they assert their political belonging to Palestine.

In this regard this research identifies three different areas in which Palestinian women express their belonging through different political acts. These arenas are: Formal Political Participation; Protesting and Demonstrating; and Mothering. Included in these three examples are very different spheres of society which helps to emphasize the fact that the political participation of Palestinian women go beyond that pertaining to formal political actions.

The thesis analyzes women's political belonging to Palestine from three different angles. First, it deals with the level of the institution as it is argued that it is not possible to analyze someone's belonging to Palestine without asking what Palestine is. Here, the Palestinian people's affiliation to the national community rather than the state is emphasized. Then Palestinian women's political roles are analyzed and it is argued that the patriarchal structures and male norms have made it difficult for Palestinian women to practice their citizenships and memberships of the different political communities. There does not seem to be a lack of participation from the Palestinian women, but rather a lack of recognition and visibility of this participation. Thirdly the acts of citizenship of the Palestinian women are analyzed and it is concluded that the character of these acts vary according to the position of the individual woman.

Analysing citizenship in light of feminism proves especially interesting in the case of Palestine, as the right to belong and to participate equally in political communities has been an important demand of many feminist movements as it is in the Palestinian national struggle. Thus, this thesis advocates and practices wide encompassing definitions when dealing with the notions of the political, citizenship and belonging.

Palestinian women affirm and reaffirm their political belonging to Palestine through acts in relation to the Israeli occupation and to the Palestinian state-institutions and formal politics. These acts take the form of everything from throwing stones at Israeli soldiers, to participating in formal politics to parenting and thus re-conceptualize notions of public and private.

Preface

This thesis is about political action and about the force that lies in belonging to someone and to somewhere. Before I went to Palestine I did not fully comprehend this force and the power of a simple word; to belong. The strength and perseverance that the claim to belong has given the Palestinian people in their political action is unlike anything I have ever seen or experienced. During the nine months I spent in Palestine two things stood out to me: the extremely strong national sense of community in spite of a scattered people, dispersed land and political unrest; and the stamina of the Palestinian women who just keep on going and never seem to give up.

During one of my last weeks in Palestine I went to a national demonstration in remembrance of the forced exodus of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians after the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948. This day is commemorated every year as Nakba (catastrophe)-Day and this year I went to the demonstration in Ramallah with some colleagues and friends. One of these was highly pregnant and past her due date, but she defied the hot weather and crowds of people to take part in the commemoration. This made me think of how her unborn daughter is part of the Palestinian national community and participates in celebrations and demonstrations even before she is born.

I dedicate this thesis to Salma, who was born on May 26 2012, only days before I left Palestine. She represents a new generation of Palestinian women who will grow up surrounded by walls and checkpoints. However, she will also grow up surrounded by strong, tireless women for whom quitting is not an option. Salma, I hope you will have what generations of women before you have been fighting for: Freedom.

It is the women I have met during my stay in Palestine that have inspired and motivated me to write this thesis. The women at MIFTAH have been a true and never-ending source of inspiration and encouragement, and their vast knowledge and strong determination never seizes to amaze me. This thesis would never have become what it is today without the support and encouragement of my loved ones, my friends, family and neighbors in Palestine, Norway and Denmark.

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Abbreviations

FATAH: حركة التحرير الوطني الفلسطيني, Palestinian National Liberation Movement

HAMAS: حركة المقاومة الاسلامية, Islamic Resistance Movement

IMF: International Monetary Fund

MIFTAH: المبادرة الفلسطينية لتعميق الحوار العالمي و الديمقراطية The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

PA: Palestinian Authority

PLC: Palestinian Legislative Council

PLO: Palestine Liberation Organization

PNC: Palestinian National Council

UN: United Nations

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

WATC: The Women Affairs Technical Committee

1 Introduction

The Israeli occupation of Palestine creates a situation where everything is a question of belonging. Every day Palestinians have to deal with a system that claims that they do not belong. They are not able to move freely in their own country and need special permissions if the are to travel outside the West Bank or to Jerusalem. Even if they have a permit, traveling the 16 kilometres from Ramallah to Jerusalem can take more than two hours because of the Israeli checkpoints and the wall surrounding the West Bank. Traveling in Palestine you are constantly reminded of the segregation system that attempts to force the Palestinians out of their homes and away from their land. Roadblocks, checkpoints and the wall confine and control the Palestinian population while there are special roads for the Israelis.

Belonging somewhere situates a person in relations to the rest of the world; it is a sense of attachment to a place and often to the people in it. It is a reciprocal process between the person who belong and what she belongs to, a process of inclusion and exclusion. In Palestine everything is a question of belonging, and a question of what to belong to. Palestinians do not, for one second in their lives doubt that they belong to Palestine. But the complex political situation, where most Palestinians have little faith in the ability of their leadership as well as the international community to better their circumstances, they do question what is this Palestine that they belong to.

Palestinian women are caught in an intersection of oppressions. As Palestinians they live in a state of occupation, constantly restricted in their mobility, opportunities and thoughts. As women they are subject to limited rights and opportunities inside Palestine, where society's view on gender roles are often very conservative. They are second-class citizens as Palestinians occupied by Israel and as women in a patriarchal society.

Therefore I find it interesting to explore the ways in which Palestinian women assert and sustain their political belonging to Palestine. The motivation behind this interest is the strong national community and the perseverance of the Palestinian women as I experienced it during my stay. I wondered why the loud voices of all the political aware women I met were not being heard in the setting of the formal political system, and what these women did to make up for this exclusion.

2 Research Problem Formulation

This chapter presents the problem area for this research as well as the research question and sub-questions, which are used to structure the analysis of this thesis. The sub-questions are made in order to narrow in on answering the research question.

2.1 Problem Area

As emphasized above, Palestinian women face exclusion from both within their own society and from outside when it comes to claiming their political belonging to Palestine. As Palestinians they are forced from their land by the Israeli government and military that claim they do not belong there. As women, they live in a state that is not really a state, and where they do not have equal access with men in decision-making processes shaping the resistance to the occupation as well as to the political system they need to rely on once their state is independent and sovereign. In a situation where belonging is key, they lack anything tangible to tie their political belonging to.

2.2 Research Question

How do Palestinian women assert their political belonging to Palestine when there is no functioning state to claim citizenship of?

2.3 Sub-questions

- What is Palestine? A state? A nation?

- What are the political roles of Palestinian women?

- What are the acts of citizenship performed by Palestinian women?

3 Methodology

In order to clarify the research strategy and scope, this chapter outlines the methodological approach of this research paper, incorporating the reasoning and justification for the research perspective, applied method and design, and acknowledges the relevance and limitations of this study. The aim of this chapter is to clarify the choices made in this thesis regarding the procedure of collecting information, how this information is structured and analysed as well as the consequences of these choices on the overall conclusions of this thesis. Thus in this chapter I account for the major choices made during the research to explain and clarify why and how I came to the conclusions and answers of the research question.

The research is based on a nine month long stay in Ramallah, Palestine, from the end of August 2011 to the end of May 2012. As the entire stay was inspirational and valuable for this research, the last four months was spent actively collecting information for this thesis. For the entire duration of my stay in Palestine, I worked for the organization MIFTAH that works towards enhancing democracy and building a solid political foundation in Palestine. This environment has been extremely beneficial for my research as I everyday have been in the presence of men and women with a vast knowledge of the Palestinian political system, women's participation here and how notions such as democracy, citizenship and equal political representation is understood in the Palestinian context. Further, this provided me with the opportunity to participate in workshops, debates, meetings and not least everyday-conversations and discussions on the topics of this thesis.   As such, the research conducted for this thesis is empirically based on the knowledge I have gained, observations I have made and interviews I have conducted during this time.

The aim of this research is to explore the different ways in which Palestinian women confirm that they belong to Palestine through political acts and political participation. There are two important aspects in political participation in Palestine: First, building a state, state institutions, a solid democratic foundation and part-taking in decision-

making processes regarding formal political issues on a government level or in political parties. Secondly there is the resistance to the Israeli occupation, which is done in many ways, everything from applying for statehood-recognition at the UN to throwing rocks at Israeli army vehicles. As the research will show, Palestinian women have limited access to formal political arenas which is why this research also aims at exploring the more informal acts performed to assert belonging to Palestine. As citizenship proves to be much more than formal membership of a state, and since Palestinians do not have any real state to claim citizenship of, this research explores Palestinians' alternative ways of asserting their belonging to Palestine.

3.1 Philosophy of Science

This subchapter is primarily concerned with the epistemological and ontological considerations at the foundation of this thesis and the methodological consequences of these choices. This thesis takes an epistemological position based on interpretivism "predicated upon the view that a strategy is required that respects the differences between people and the objects of the natural sciences and therefore requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action." (Bryman 2008: 16). Bryman (2008: 15) notes that the epistemological stance of interpretivism (contrary to positivism) is suitable when attempting to understand, instead of simply explain human behaviour. In this case, using the epistemological approach of interpretivism helps understand the subjective meaning of political belonging to Palestinian women as well as the social actions and interactions to assert and sustain this belonging.

As epistemology fundamentally refers to what can be regarded as valid knowledge in a discipline and as this thesis is primarily concerned with Palestinian women's subjective interpretation of belonging to Palestine, the epistemological stance taken here, is a feminist position. As Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter (1993: 1) points out, feminist epistemologies calls into question if a general account of knowledge is even possible and emphasizes the limits of knowledge that ignores the social context and status of knowers. Thus feminist epistemologies, they argue, is not only concerned with gender issues but recognizes that other political hierarchies and power relations influence the

production of knowledge (Alcoff and Potter 1993: 3). Feminist epistemologies emphasize the plurality and subjectivity of knowledge. On feminist methods in research, Shulamit Reinhartz (1992: 4) notes that "[r]ather than there being a "woman's way of knowing," or a "feminist way of doing research," there are women's *ways* of knowing." Thus following this feminist way of understanding knowledge this study too recognize the effect of personal values and interests that varies depending on for example class, age and gender when analysing the information and methods of this research.

The ontological stance taken in this thesis is one of constructivism or constructionism as this position, as Bryman (2008: 19) notes, asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors. Thus, social phenomena and categories are not only produced through social interaction but are in a constant state of revision as social entities are social constructions, which are accomplished and constantly reproduced by social actors. In other words, knowledge is constructed by social actors and new knowledge is founded on previous knowledge. For example gender, which is a dominant issue in this thesis, is viewed as a social construction constantly reaffirmed and revised through social actions and interactions. Bryman (2008: 19) notes that the ontological position of constructionism includes the understanding that researchers' own accounts of the social world are constructions. This means that knowledge is regarded as indeterminate and the researcher always presents a specific version of social reality.

3.2 Overall Methodological Approach

The empirical, qualitative foundation of this thesis is based on the knowledge I have gained, and observations and interviews I have made during my stay in Palestine. I take a primarily inductive, knowledge-based approach to the research question, moving from specific observations to broader generalizations. The aim of this study is to examine women's position and role in different political communities in Palestine by analysing the acts they perform to assert their belonging in these communities.

The research method of this paper is based on a multiple method design, using several methods of collection to ensure that the collected information has depth and detail, which is essential in order to achieve validity. As all research methods has its weaknesses, using several methods means that weaknesses in one can be compensated for by the strengths of another. In addition this allows for an analysis of the research question from different angles. Reinhartz (1992: 201) argues that a multi-method approach enhances understanding both by adding layers of information and by using one type of data to validate or refine another. The triangular design of this research consists of three types of methods; qualitative interviews, ethnography (or participant observation) and document analyses as presented below. I find the use of a multi-method approach to be highly useful in this thesis considering that the topic of my research is based on subjective opinions and acts, and thus need to be viewed from different angles. This method further provides me with the opportunity to crosscheck information I receive, which is particularly helpful to prevent cultural and linguistic misunderstandings.

The method of ethnography has been key to this research as I was working and living in Palestine even before the research for this thesis began. Bryman (2008: 402) notes that using an ethnographic method, researchers typically gather further data through interviews and collections of documents, which is also the case here. According to Bryman (2008: 402) ethnography is simultaneously an active and a passive method where the researcher both participates in and observes events and behaviour. Thus, the researcher immerses herself in a social setting for an extended period of time, makes regular observations of the behaviour of the members of said setting, but also listens to and engages in conversations. Reinhartz (1992: 52-53) sees feminist ethnography as significant because it understands the experience of women from their own point of view and in context.

3.3 Delimitation and Scope

Here I account for the delimitations I have chosen for this research and their methodological consequences. The choices made to analyse and explore the research

question are essential, as many other factors could have been counted in as well. Thus, the selection and deselection of these factors provides the scope for this research.

Geographically this research is mainly concerned with Palestinian women from the West Bank and Jerusalem, as this has been the area accessible to me in the research period. Several of the interviewees have grown up in the diaspora and one still lives in the United States, but my main focus has however been on the political acts of women in Palestine. As the Gaza Strip is not easily accessible this area has mainly but not completely been omitted from this research. Including politically active women from Gaza would most likely have given the research a perspective on religion and political disagreement between the large political fractions of Fatah and Hamas.

Further, I have chosen to focus the research mainly on women who are politically active in one way or another and who has knowledge about and an opinion on women's positions and participation in politics. This leaves out a large group of people, mainly from rural areas that might be less educated and lacking of resources. The research of this thesis suggests that most Palestinians are politically active in one way or another, but I found it useful to mainly interview people who had previous considerations regarding the subject. I have tried to minimize this gap by interviewing project coordinators from the organization MIFTAH, who works on enhancing the political participation of Palestinian women and thus have a general knowledge of how Palestinian women relate to the subject.

Another delimitation made in this thesis is the choice of three acts that express and asserts Palestinian women's political belonging. These acts are: Formal Political Participation; Protesting and Demonstrating; and Mothering. These three acts form the empirical chapter and is chosen on the basis of the observations and interviews conducted in this research. These acts have proven to be particularly useful in analysing the width of Palestinian women's political participation as I argue that it goes far beyond the public sphere and formal participation. The three acts chosen for this research represent three very different arenas in which Palestinian women's political

belonging is expressed. The subchapter on participation in Palestinian politics and formal decision-making processes is concerned with women's role and position in this area and discourse. Women's participation in protests and demonstrations against the Israeli occupation presents a completely different arena with different power relations and different ways of interaction between the genders. The common factor between these two acts is that they take place in very male dominated spaces and even though women's participation in either area is not uncommon, their presence is considered extraordinary rather than ordinary. Contrary to these acts, mothering is considered a very womanly act in a very female sphere and thus proves the wide range of political acts of Palestinian women.

I could have chosen to focus on other political acts performed by Palestinian women. I considered including the participation and actions of the Palestinian women's movement but I found it more useful in relation to the research question to include this aspect in a different way throughout the research. As Palestinian women historically have been included in the national struggle they have also been engaged in claims for women's rights. However, the struggle for a free and independent Palestine has most often overshadowed other struggles. Many of the interviewees in this research were reluctant to identify as feminists but did state that fighting for women's rights were a priority to them. These considerations have been included in the research especially in regards to feminist claims of equal citizenship and inclusion in the state.

Yet another consideration in regards to delimitation is the fact that 'belonging' could have a lot of connotations and belonging to Palestine is not only in regards to political issues, but could also include for example cultural and ethnical ways of belonging (which could also be considered political). According to Nira Yuval-Davis (2011: 10) "[b]elonging is about an emotional (or even ontological) attachment, about feeling 'at home'." Even though this home is an on-going project it entails a feeling of hope for the future and relates to a safe space. Yuval-Davis (2011: 10) further argues that belonging is a naturalized part of everyday-practices and it is only when it is

threatened in some way that it becomes articulated, formally structured and politicized. When I in this thesis refer to the political belonging of Palestinian women, it is in regards to their political membership of Palestine as a political community.

3.4 Empirical Data

3.4.1 Observations

Using the method of participatory observation and ethnography throughout my stay in Palestine I gathered large amounts of relevant knowledge and experiences for this study. Working for MIFTAH provided me with the opportunity to participate in workshops and conferences on relevant subjects. Further, I got to engage in conversations and discussions with co-workers who not only have knowledge on the political participation of Palestinian women, but many of who are politically active themselves. Living in Ramallah, Palestine, I was able to take part in and observe national events, such as those around the bid for statehood recognition at the UN in September 2011 and the hunger strikes among Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails, as well as observing the reactions to these events among the Palestinians. The interaction with Palestinian friends and colleagues and conversations about political events and debates has been of great value to this research. This gave me a distinctive insider-perspective to the issues analysed in this thesis. In situations where I did not find it appropriate to record or take notes of the conversations, I always attempted to note the most important points when I came out of such encounters, to keep the information reliable. Further, such experiences as participating in demonstrations and national celebrations have been difficult to record. The information gathered in these scenarios have however been followed up using other methods.

3.4.2 Interviews

According to Bryman (2008: 463) semi-structured interviewing has become a prominent method of data gathering within a feminist research framework. This has also been the main method in this research in collecting information on women's opinions on and experiences in political participation and acts of belonging to Palestine. For this research I conducted nine interviews over a period of a little more

than a month. I decided to do all interviews in a relative short period of time to be able to relate one interview to another and to the political events taking place in that period. I had met most of the interviewees beforehand and some were co-workers from different departments at MIFTAH. This gave the interviews a more informal setting, and most of the interviewees were comfortable and relaxed during the interviews. Before each interview I prepared an interview guide (see appendix II) in which I had some general questions for all the interviewees but also some that were more specific to each individual. For example if I knew that the interviewee was not a mother, I would not ask her about her experiences as such, or if I knew of a specific political activity that the interviewee often engaged in, I would go further into detail about that. All interviews raised issues regarding both the personal and the professional life of the interviewee, whether the latter was in an organization or as a student and activist.

While only one interviewee is male, eight are women as the main focus of the research is Palestinian women and their acts and experiences. I did however find it interesting to investigate a man's point of view on the issues, even though it is far from representative for all Palestinian men. Within the group of interviewees I have made an effort to interview women across age, educational background and occupation. Additional information on the interviews and interviewees are to be found in subchapter 11.2.

3.4.3 Secondary Data

The third method in the triangular method design is the qualitative content analysis of documents. The documents used in this thesis mainly concerns the information I was not able to attain using the other methods. Further it is used to crosscheck information gathered through interviews and observations and validate this information. In addition this will strengthen the external validity of the research, and make it easier to assess whether the primary data collected are general tendencies or individual behaviour. Thus the main documents used in this research are on historical events, the

political system in Palestine and women's participation here. These are mainly used in chapter 5 regarding the general contextualization of the thesis.

3.5 Theoretical Considerations and Choices

Chapter 4, on the theoretical and conceptual framework for this thesis, introduces various theories relevant for the topic of this thesis and useful for the later analysis. This chapter reflects the theoretical aspects to be drawn from the research question, with a focus on citizenship, the relations between the notions of gender, nation and state as well as intersectionality.

In order to analyse the political belonging of Palestinian women to Palestine, theories of citizenship are used. With a specific focus on the fact that citizenship can be viewed as something more that a formal membership of a state subchapter 4.1 is especially concerned with feminist views on citizenship and with shifting the focus from institutions to actors and acts. This subchapter begins by pointing out the gendered nature of dominant theories on citizenship and then present feminist theories on citizenship in order to take a more holistic approach to the notion. Here I choose to take on a wider definition of citizenship as membership of a community, as this is a more inclusive approach and more interesting in the context of Palestine as this research questions whether the Palestinians actually have a state to claim citizenship of. In this regard I find it useful to include theories on the relations between the nation and the state as done in subchapter 4.3, where Benedict Anderson's (2006) definition of nations as 'imagined communities' proves especially fitting for the case of Palestine. Seeing as the collective identity, national feeling and common goal of an independent Palestine are the factors holding the Palestinian people together, as they are spread across the world and unable to form a united state, the concept of nations as imagined communities are very fitting for analysing the institutional features of Palestine.

Another aspect of citizenship-theory I find useful in this thesis is the theory of 'Acts of Citizenship' by Engin Isin and Greg Nielsen (2008), which is helpful to not only be concerned with formal citizenship status but instead focus on the acts that assert

political belonging to a community. As 'acts of citizenship' are events through which a subject constitutes herself as a citizen, this is a useful theory when locating and analysing the different acts performed by Palestinian women to assert their political belonging to the community.

The theory of 'Intersectionality', subchapter 4.2, is not directly useful in answering the research question. However, it is an important aspect in a feminist research project like this one to keep in mind the differences within and between social groups as has also been essential to the methodology of this research. As such, 'Intersectionality' is used as a framework throughout the thesis to account for such differences as well as how different forms of oppression intersect. This is especially valid for this thesis as the subjects for this research, Palestinian women, face several forms of oppression and exclusion: mainly because of their gender and as Palestinians but also in regards to geographical location, and which kind of legal citizenship they hold.

The subchapter 4.3.2 further presents aspects on the relation between gender and nationalism and in this regard especially on how gender is used to define a nation and the gendered roles of men and women in the workings of the nation. This is based on a stereotypical portrayal of these relations and is not considered something static or even the full truth. It is however interesting to note as these conceptions are used to analyse the gendered nature of the different aspects of the Palestinian national struggle. The subchapter 4.3.3 presents aspects on the relationship between feminist and nationalist movements, as this complex relationship is helpful in shedding lights on women's role in the Palestinian nationalist movement and the lack of focus on women's rights here.

Finally the subchapter 4.1.4 takes on definitions of what is meant by 'political' as this is an important term in the research and because it is given a wide definition to encompass the everyday actions and experiences of Palestinians. In this regard the chapter also attempt to reconceptualise the boundaries of the 'public' and the

'private' as it is argued that these are not static spheres but rather political constructions that constantly interact and overlap.

3.6 Structure of the Thesis

This subchapter aims at presenting an overview of the thesis. Even though the issues analysed and discussed in this thesis constantly overlap and relate to each other as they are all aimed at answering the research question, I attempt to keep a clear structure throughout.

As the preceding chapters have been aimed at narrowing in on and presenting the research question and sub-questions, this chapter presents the methodological approaches and choices of this research and thesis. The subsequent chapter, 4, synthesizes relevant theories and working concepts to create a framework for the analysis. It starts out by presenting different aspects of citizenship-theory, moves on to the concept of intersectionality and concludes in presenting the relevant connections between the notions of gender, nation and state.

In chapter 5, Palestinian women are positioned in their current political situation, locally, internationally and in relations to Israel. A short history of the Palestinian women's movement is presented together with the political development of Palestine as this provides a helpful contextualization of the dominant intersection of oppressions experienced by Palestinian women. This chapter further presents an overview of the Palestinian efforts to create an independent state with a focus on the current political situation. The Palestinian bid for statehood recognition at the UN in September 2011 and the Palestinians' reactions to this plays a prominent role in analysing the state-like characteristics of Palestine. Lastly, this chapter is concerned with presenting the legal aspects of Palestinian citizenship. This thesis deals mostly with the informal ways to claim political belonging to Palestine. However I find it relevant to shortly contextualize this discussion with an overview of the complexity of legal citizenship to Palestine as this to a large degree explains the need for other methods to claim ones belonging.

Chapter 6 presents three different ways in which Palestinian women act to maintain their relationship to the Palestinian state and nation and to assert their belonging to Palestine. As elaborated elsewhere in this methodology, these acts of belonging are: Formal Political Participation; Protesting and Demonstrating; and Mothering. This chapter draws on the empirical material gathered in the research.

Subsequently, chapter 7, the analysis, explores the relationship between Palestinian women's political acts and their belonging to the Palestinian state and nation, guided by the sub-questions, in order to answer the research question. This chapter is divided into three subchapters, each responding to one of the three sub-questions presented above. The first subchapter, 7.1, aims to answer the first sub-question: What is Palestine? A nation? A state? Thus, this subchapter deals with the institutional level of the research question as it focuses on what Palestine is in the minds of Palestinian women who claim to belong to it. The following subchapter, 7.2, takes the analysis to the level of the actors when answering the sub-question: What are the political roles of Palestinian women? Here the position and role of Palestinian women in different political settings are analysed using the acts identified in the empirics as a guide and thus analysing the formal political participation, the gendered relations at demonstrations and the political roles of Palestinian mothers. The final subchapter in this analysis, 7.3, relates to the last sub-question regarding the acts of citizenship performed by Palestinian women, as it takes the analysis to the level of theses acts. Thus the analysis encompasses the acts (from the third subchapter) with which the actors (from the second subchapter) assert their membership of a community (from the first subchapter).

The following chapter, 8, draw on the conclusions from the analysis, and discuss this in relation to the research question and the current position of Palestinian women in regards to the occupation and to the Palestinian political situation.

The thesis is completed by chapter 9, which conclude and summarize the answer to the research question and chapter 10, which recommends perspectives for future research.

3.7 Reliability and Validity

As there is no such thing as an objective truth in social sciences and because the methodological choices of this thesis have a considerable impact on the outcome and conclusions of this study I find it important to account for the reliability and validity of this research. Throughout the research period I have been highly aware of maintaining a certain level of intersubjective reliability in relations to interpreting quotations and statements. In order to avoid misunderstandings and misinterpretations the multi-method approach of this research has proven highly valuable, as I have been able to cross-reference and crosscheck any information. Not only have I looked up information gathered through interviews and observations in relevant documents, it has also proven useful to be able to elaborate and discuss any findings with the interviewees. As I stayed in Palestine for large parts of the duration of this research I have been able to contact relevant persons and ask if any potential misunderstandings occurred.

In relations to the reliability and possibility of replication of this study I am highly aware of my own subjective position as a researcher as well as the bias and subjectivity of the interviewees. The accuracy and reliability of this research is further affected by the environment in which I have participated in political events and discussions, which have potentially affected the interpretations of these debates. However, in line with the feminist epistemological stance taken in this thesis I do not believe it is possible to remain neutral and carry out value-free research (Alcoff and Potter 1993, Reinhartz 1992). Thus, I am aware that my own positioning has affected the outcome and perspective of this research, but I do not consider it invalid for that reason. I have tried to deal with this issue in several ways; for example by letting the interviewees have a relatively large degree of freedom to expand and develop their thoughts and change the topics of the interviews within the range of the research. In addition I have been open to new perspectives and positions on the issues raised in

this thesis throughout the research period. Further, as this research is concerned with presenting the subjective experiences and opinions of a group of Palestinian women, I have made an effort to let this be the main perspective of the analytical approach of this thesis. Any radical perspectives raised by a document, an interviewee or in another setting relevant for the research was brought up in other relations as well to get other peoples perspectives and opinions on this. Another attempt to make up for the subjectivity in the research is to be open and clear of my own position in relation to the issues raised in this thesis as is done later in the next subchapter.

When it comes to the possibility of replicating and repeating this study it is further important to note that it is difficult to obtain full reliability in qualitative research because it is impossible to 'freeze' the social setting and the specific circumstances. The accuracy I have put into recording, noting and organizing the gathered information do however play an important role in the reliability as it ensures that the information in that timeframe is reproduced as correctly as possible.

In regards to the internal validity or credibility of this study, the research methods assure a causal relationship between the variables of the study. The aim of this research has been to investigate the position of women in different political communities in Palestine and even though there have been some limitations to the research I do believe that this research is valid. As this thesis deals with very wide definitions of notions such as 'citizenship' and 'the political' other factors could be counted in but these are all choices and deselections that have been handled and justified throughout the methodology.

When it comes to the external validity of this thesis, or whether it is possible to generalize the conclusions across social settings I argue that here, as in most qualitative research, this proves difficult. The position of women in the West Bank and Jerusalem at this moment in time is rather unique and the acts they perform in order to assert their political belonging is based on many years of struggle as well as each

individual's personal position. However, I would argue that it is possible to draw parallels to other situations with several, simultaneous struggles for freedom.

3.8 Personal Location

As I recognise the effect my personal experience and situated knowledge has on this research I find it useful to shortly account for relevant aspects of that here. Having lived in Palestine for nine months there is no means with which I can disregard the restrains and hardship put on the Palestinians by the Israeli occupation. It is important for me to emphasize, however that I place the blame for this with the Israeli government, state and political system, not the Israeli people as such. My close relations to Palestine and the Palestinian people has without doubt shaped not only the outcome of this thesis but also the motivation and aim behind it. I do not however find this an obstruction to the validity of the study as it mainly deals with the acts of Palestinian women in relations to their affiliation to Palestine and not the political disputes between Palestine and Israel.

Further, I identify as a feminist, which affects the way I regard and study gender relations as well as other social divisions. In this regard I am of the belief that each individual is shaped by the intersections of identities and position in society. As I believe notions such as gender relations to be social constructions I am aware that studying these means taking into account that they might have different connotations in other parts of the world.

4 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

In this chapter I present the theories to be used later in this thesis when analysing the citizenship of Palestinian women and discussing their belonging to the Palestinian nation and (future) state. First, I present relevant elements of citizenship theory, with a point of departure in a feminist standpoint and especially focusing on the

participatory aspects of the notion and the acts in themselves; how someone acts as a citizen and thereby asserts their belonging to the community. Then, I move on to the concept of 'intersectionality' as I find it important to consider all forms of oppression Palestinian women meet and to keep in mind their diverse backgrounds and experiences as it also helps to locate these experiences and identities. Finally, I present the relevant connections and relations between the notions of gender, state and nation, as this is especially interesting when analysing how Palestinian women assert their belonging to the future Palestinian state, the nation and the community.

4.1 Citizenship

In this subchapter I aim to present aspects of citizenship theory that will help analyse the relations between Palestinian women and their nation and possible state. I begin by pointing out the gendered nature of citizenship theory, and move on to presenting feminists viewpoints on the concept. Then I explain how citizenship can be understood in a more holistic way, more than a status, which leads me to present Engin Isin and Greg Nielsen's (2008) theory of 'Acts of Citizenship' that analyses the actions through which people constitute their citizenship to a community.

In the past two decades, debates on the meaning and significance of citizenship have emerged at the forefront of political and social theory, including within feminism. 'Citizenship' often refers to the relationship between the citizen and the state, distinguishing who holds a legal membership to the specific political community and who does not. Further it often relates to the rights and responsibilities that come with being a member of such a community. Citizenship is often made out to be universal and natural but it is actually characterized by a history of exclusion and struggle (Lister 1997). Moreover, as has been argued many times before (Jones 1990; Lister 1997, 2003; Yuval-Davis 1997, 2011) and as this chapter and the examples in this thesis will show, the notion of citizenship is to a large degree gendered. Most often, citizenship is considered a gender-neutral concept (Lister 2003). Not only are the practices of citizenship, legal citizenship status and citizenship rights and obligations gendered, many theories on citizenship are gender-blind. Therefore this study takes on a more

holistic, more encompassing approach to citizenship, as the following will show. In doing this, 'citizenship' and 'belonging' are closely related but not identical.

4.1.1 Gendering Citizenship

Historically women were long excluded from citizenship through the particular and masculinist construction of citizenship, politics and the public sphere. Women have not always been entitled to the rights that come with citizenship status. Neither have they participated as citizens in the public sphere equally to men. The social construction of women as dependents and in need of protection excluded them from enjoying full citizenship rights as well as responsibilities. Consequently the women's movement has to a large degree been about inclusion and entitlement. In the West, the right to vote was the focus of the first wave of the movement. Women's right to vote was won in most of the world throughout the twentieth century, followed by the right to be elected, yet the ratios of women as elected representatives of governments and parliaments remain low (Yuval-Davis 2011: 77).

As argued above "[t]he politics of citizenship is a politics of exclusion" (Pettman 1996: 16). Many groups are effectively inside the state but outside the nation (Pettman 1996: 17). As citizenship is conventionally understood as an association of equals in a political community, the notion does not always accommodate those who claim membership on the basis of difference rather than equality with other citizens. Pettman (1996) points out that when 'the people' of a state is made up by individual citizens, minorities and those with different interests or beliefs can be marginalized or silenced. This is especially true, she argues, when the state itself is engaged in the definition of 'the community' and speaks for 'the people' in international relations. This allows the state to construct the national interest narrative and thereby exclude certain groups and interests from the national community and state power (Pettman 1996: 17).

According to Kathleen Jones (1990), women have been deemed second-class citizens, even in most Western democracies. Not only are they not entitled to all rights and

obliged to all responsibilities as 'regular' citizens of their states, but the entire conceptualization of citizenship "is derived from a set of values, experiences, modes of discourse, rituals, and practices that both explicitly and implicitly privileges men and the "masculine" and excludes women and the "female" " (Jones 1990: 781). Jones (1990) argues that the discourse of citizenship is gendered in itself. Even if women achieve equal citizenship to men in juridical terms, gain more adequate political representation and possess the economic means and personal motivation to practice their rights and fulfil their duties to the state, women's membership in the political community will still be less full than that of men (Jones 1990: 782). As Mary Dietz argued already in 1987: "equal access is not enough" (Dietz 1987: 2).

4.1.2 Feminist Citizenship

Throughout this thesis, citizenship is comprehended in a holistic way. Feminist theories on citizenship attempts to de-homogenize the notion and emphasize 'the citizen' as an embodied category, involving concrete people who are differentially situated in terms of gender, class, sexuality, ethnicity and age (Yuval-Davis 2011, Lister 1997).

In theorizing about citizenship many feminist writers (e.g. Yuval-Davis 1997, 2011; Lister 2003) take a point of departure in the definition posed by T.H Marshall (1950), one of the most influential theorists of citizenship in Britain. According to Marshall, citizenship is "…a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community. All who posses the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed" (1950: 14). Despite feminists' scepticism towards using traditional formulations, Marshall's definition of citizenship as 'full membership of a community' creates a starting point for a wide and encompassing understanding of the notion. Here, he extends the liberal formulation of civil and political rights and responsibilities to also contain social rights and responsibilities. Important in this definition is that it does not construct the citizen as an individual member of a state, but as a member of a community (Yuval-Davis 1997). This takes the citizen out of the nation-state and gives it a wider social definition. As emphasized by Yuval-Davis (1997), using the notion of 'community' as part of the definition, gives the possibility to reflect on citizenship in

multiple dimensions, from the local to the global. It is not just about citizenship to a state, but to communities both in- and outside the state. Yuval-Davis terms this 'multi-layered citizenship' (2011: 69). Defining citizenship as a membership of a community rather than of a state provides the opportunity to look at people's sense of belonging to local, national and international groups. Citizenship as full membership of a community is multi-layered, composed of different political communities and one or more national communities. It raises the question of the relationship between 'the community' and the state and how this affects people's citizenship. Yuval-Davis elaborates on the interactions between different levels of citizenship:

> Citizenship needs to be examined, not just in terms of the state, but often in relation to multiple formal and informal citizenships in more than one country. Most importantly, these citizenships need to be viewed from a perspective which would include the different positioning of the different states as well as the different positionings of individuals and groupings within states. (Yuval-Davis 1997: 75)

A person's citizenship in one layer is affected by its citizenship in another. It is affected by state and non-state polities. Membership of one community can have crucial effects on citizenship in others, especially those with many migrants or a big diaspora. Different layers have different political power and different hegemonic political projects (Yuval-Davis 2011: 70). Further, each community is constructed by other intersecting social divisions such as gender, ethnicity, age or class. That means that a persons citizenship in each community is affected by how they are located according to these divisions. When it comes to the case of political actors, they too are often involved in more than one political community, inside, across, or beyond state lines (Werbner and Yuval-Davis 2005: 5). "'Citizenship' highlights the complexity of the relationships between individuals and the 'nation-state'; the construction of collectivities within, between and across states and nations; and categories of belonging and the forces of globalization." (Crowley et al. 1997: 1) In relation to feminism, citizenship is interesting to analyse, as a focus of many feminist movements has been the right to belong and also, more importantly to participate equally in political communities. According to Lister (2003: 145) "[t]he invisibility of much of

women's political activism is, in part, a reflection of the tendency to define politics within the narrow terms of the masculine sphere of formal politics. Once such a restrictive definition is abandoned, it has become almost an alternative conventional wisdom that informal politics represents a more feminised political sphere." The fact that women do overcome the restraints put on their political activities is a testimony to their commitment to the ideals of political citizenship, especially in informal politics, she argues further.

4.1.3 Acts of Citizenship

In this thesis I find it useful to distinguish between citizenship as a status and citizenship as a practice. This distinction highlights the difference between the legal aspects of membership to a state and the active participation of the members in relation to the state or community. Lister (1997) draws a distinction between being a citizen and acting as a citizen:

> To be a citizen, in the sociological sense, means to enjoy the rights necessary for agency and social and political participation. To act as a citizen involves fulfilling the full potential of the status. Moreover, in practice, political participation tends to be more of a continuum than an all or nothing affair; it can fluctuate during the individual's life-course, reflecting, in part, the demands of caring obligations which can also be interpreted as the exercise of citizenship obligations. (Lister 1997: 36)

Citizenship status, or the legal aspects of the notion, contains conceptions of who is born a citizen, who has the right to become one, who is allowed to enter the state, reside and claim rights. Citizenship status and rights mark a person's admission to the state, but not necessarily to its resources, nor to the national community. Pettman (1996: 16) argues that citizenship as practice or participation is one way of asking whether formally enjoyed rights are actually available to different people. The political space may belong to all citizens but it is however monopolized by men. Therefore it is important to distinguish between the level of women's political representation (which is often very low) and their political activity. The constraints on women's political activity and the barriers within the political system itself, marginalize much of

women's participation in politics, formal and informal. Thus, status and visibility is increasingly more important to women's political citizenship than quantitative measures (Lister 2003: 145).

Taking the notion of citizenship as a practice one step further, Engin Isin and Greg Nielsen (2008) coins the term 'acts of citizenship', which is the event though which subjects constitute themselves as citizens. They emphasize the importance of not only the legal aspects of citizenship but also the practices, being social, political, cultural and symbolic, that constitute citizenship as a legal status. With this concept the focus of citizenship studies are shifted from "the institution of citizenship and the citizen as individual agent to acts of citizenship" (Isin and Nielsen 2008: 2). In other words the authors shift the focus from the actor, the citizen, to the act. Through acts of citizenship individuals get the possibility to constitute themselves as true democratic citizens who demand to be heard in public, and who may provoke pubic dialogue on a wide range of issues. Acts of citizenship are concrete practices of individual and collective engagement rupturing the normality of everyday life, challenging the existing social and political order and cross the boundaries of states and nations.

Acts of citizenship are events where individuals claim their rights, assert their responsibilities and impose their obligations. In this process, these individuals enact themselves as citizens and differentiate others as those who are not. Acts of citizenship are political insofar as those who act constitute their claims, but according to Isin and Nielsen (2008:2) they are also ethical, cultural, sexual and social acts that instantiate ways of being that are political.

> Acts of citizenship are understood as deeds that contain several overlapping and interdependent components. They disrupt habitus, create new possibilities, claim rights and impose obligations in emotionally charged tones; pose their claims in enduring and creative expressions; and, most of all, are the actual moments that shift established practises, status and order. (Isin and Nielsen 2008: 10)

According to the authors acts of citizenship are politically effective insofar as they help organize public presentations or appearances of often-contradictory statements from actors who claim rights or impose social responsibilities (Isin and Nielsen 2008: 10). Using the theory of acts of citizenship helps distinguish between the status of citizenship and the acts constituting this status. Further it is useful in identifying and locating these acts.

4.1.4 The Public, Private and the Political

As I, in this thesis, argue that in Palestine 'everything is political', I find it necessary and useful to clarify what I mean by 'political'. Chantal Mouffe (2005) distinguishes between what she terms 'the political' and 'politics'. While she defines 'politics' as "the set of practices and institutions through which an order is created, organizing human coexistence in the context of conflictuality provided by the political", the 'political' is defined as "the dimension of antagonism which I take to be constitutive of human societies" (Mouffe 2005: 9). Mouffe argues further that political questions are not mere technical issues to be solved by experts; they always involve decisions, which require a choice between two conflicting alternatives.

Lister (2003: 26) points out that numerous feminist scholars have underlined the significance of the definition of 'the political' as conventional definitions have been steeped in male experience. As the definition of citizenship in this thesis is very broad, so is the definition of 'the political' and it is closely related to participatory political acts of citizenship. The political goes beyond that pertaining to the general government of a society and challenges the sharp distinction between the 'public' and the 'private'. Further, Carole Pateman rejects the idea of a political sphere separated from the rest of society and social life instead she argues that it exists "whenever citizens gather to make political decisions" (1989: 110).

Another important aspect of feminist studies of citizenship is the reconceptualization of the boundaries between the public and the private. The conceptual boundaries separating issues of nation and state from those of family, community and identity are

deconstructed and refigured, leaving the notion of citizenship to be reformulated. The first step in a feminist reconceptualization of these boundaries is the legitimization of women's needs as genuine political issues and not private, domestic matters, further recognizing that needs and priorities vary for different groups. As Lister (1997: 42) argues, the struggle to control the meaning and positioning of the public-private divide is central to the project of engendering citizenship. She understands the divide as a shifting political construction, under constant renegotiation, reflecting both cultural and historical contexts and the relative power of different social groups. "The public and private define each other and take meaning from each other. We cannot, for instance, understand the gendered patterns of entry to citizenship in the public sphere without taking into account the sexual division of labour within the private" (Lister 1997: 42).

In relations to the above, Pettman (1996) argues that while many feminists are vary of using the notion of women's difference from men to stake a claim, others urge forms of participation that take account of many women's more relational and care-giving experiences. This debate highlights the dilemma of women claiming both that their gender should not be held against them, and that they have certain kinds of experiences and rights claims as women. Further, when asking how women experience citizenship, and what strategies and struggles are effective in renegotiating women's relations with citizenship it is important to attend to differences between women too.

4.2 Intersectionality

In the following I shortly present the relevant aspects of the notion of intersectionality as it proves to be an important view in this thesis not to leave out differences and to analyse differences in accessibility to power and the power of defining the Palestinian identity and community.

Despite confusion around the actual meaning of the concept and how it should be applied, the concept of intersectionality has been declared as one of the most important contributions to feminist scholarship. Kathy Davis (2008: 67) defines

intersectionality as "the interaction of multiple identities and experiences of exclusion and subordination." Thus, intersectionality refers to the interaction of gender, ethnicity, class and other categories of difference among individuals, social practices, institutional arrangements and cultural ideologies and the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power (Davis 2008: 67-68). Within feminist studies, intersectionality highlights the difference and diversity that one cannot afford to neglect when analysing from a feminist standpoint.

Kimberlé Crenshaw first coined the term in 1989 and later explained intersectionality using imagery of crossroads and traffic:

> Intersectionality is what occurs when a woman from a minority group… tries to navigate the main crossing in the city… The main highway is 'racism road'. One cross street can be Colonialism, then Patriarchy Street… She has to deal not only with one form of oppression but with all forms, those named as road signs, which link together to make a double, a triple, multiple, a many layered blanket of oppression. (Qouted in Yuval-Davis 2006)

The concept of intersectionality points to how people are simultaneously positioned as for example women, black, working-class and lesbian. As such it highlights the need for a rich and complex ontology that does not reduce people to one category at a time as well as the need for multiplex epistemologies. Thus, intersectionality is useful to make visible the multiple positioning that constitutes everyday life and the power relations that are central to it (Phoenix 2006).

Yuval-Davis (2006) argues that social divisions have organizational, intersubjective, experiential and representational forms, and that this affects how they are connected and the way they are theorized. They are further expressed in institutions and organizations such as state laws and agencies, unions, political organizations and in the family. Intersectional social divisions involve power and relationships between actual people, acting informally as well as in their roles as agents of specific social institutions and organizations. Yuval-Davis (2006) further points out, that social divisions exist in the ways people experience their daily lives subjectively. This could be in terms of

inclusion and exclusion, discrimination, aspirations and specific identities. "Importantly, this includes not only what they think about themselves and their communities but also their attitudes and prejudices towards others. Finally, they also exist at the level of representation, being expressed in images and symbols, texts and ideologies, including those to do with legislation." (Yuval-Davis 2006: 198).

An important argument in intersectionality theories is that while all social divisions share features and are constructed by and connected to each other, they are not reducible to each other. This makes it essential to analyse how specific positionings, identities and political values are constructed and interrelate and affect each other in particular locations and contexts. The point of intersectional analysis is not to gather several identities or oppressions in one, but rather analyse the different ways in which different social divisions are concretely intertwined and constructed by each other and how they relate to political and subjective constructions of identities (Yuval-Davis 2006: 205).

4.3 Gender, Nation and State

The interconnectedness between the notions of gender, nation and state have been proven, theorized and analysed in many different contexts. How gender affects and is affected by theories on and practices of states and nations, has especially been pointed out by feminists when discussing the gender-blindness of such theories and practices. In relations to the issues discussed in this thesis it is useful to take up different connections of state, gender and nations to later analyse how such processes are at work in the Palestinian context. I will start by presenting relevant theoretical relations between the nation and state, move on to those of gender and the nation; how the nation is gendered in different ways, in terminology and language, and secondly the somewhat complicated relationship between feminism and nationalism. I do not attempt here to give and exhaustive presentation of the different connections and processes but rather draw out important points that will be helpful when analysing the sub-and research questions.

4.3.1 The Nation and the State

In 'Gender and Nation' (1997) Nira Yuval-Davis points to the difference between nations, states and nation-states, as memberships of nations can be sub-, super- and cross-states and the boundaries of nations virtually never coincide with those of 'nation-states':

> The concept of the 'nation-state' assumes a complete correspondence between the boundaries of the nation and the boundaries of those who live in a specific state. This of course, is virtually everywhere a fiction. There are always people living in particular societies and states who are not considered to be (and often do not consider themselves to be) members of the hegemonic nation, there are members of national collectivities who live in other countries, and there are nations which never had a state (like the Palestinians) or which are divided across several states (like the Kurds). (Yuval-Davis 1997: 11)

Yuval-Davis further argues that the state often plays an important role in the relationship between gender and national projects and to do an adequate analysis of such connections it is vital to theorize the state as a sphere separate from both the nation and the civil society (1997: 12). Important in this regard is the struggles in civil society to gain further access to the state and to state power and how different positions of men and women, kinship and ethnic collectivities are determined by their differential access to the state. This is the reason civil society should be differentiated from the state, politically as well as analytically (Yuval-Davis 1997: 14). Further, it is important to keep in mind that

> …the nation never just is, anymore than the state just is. Nationality and citizenship, like race and ethnicity, are unstable categories and contested identities. They are all gendered identities, and the constructions of 'women', inside and outside their borders are part of the process of identity formation. (Pettman 1996: 62)

An example of the separation of nation and state is in regards to immigrant communities, which are culturally and politically committed to continue to belong to their 'mother country' or, to the same national collectively as their parents and grandparents. This is the case for many Palestinians in the diaspora, including those in

refugee camps in the surrounding countries, Lebanon and Syria and to some degree Jordan.

In regards to Palestine, with a people scattered across most of the world and the homeland dispersed into pieces Benedict Anderson's renowned understanding of nations as 'imagined communities' is an interesting approach when analysing their sense of belonging. He argues that a nation

> is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. (Anderson 2006: 6)

With this definition Anderson examine the political construction of the nation and its relation to the state. The emphasis of Anderson's theory is on the perseverance and strength of the national identity. Anderson stresses language and information sharing in the creation of a national identity; even though a member will never actually meet everyone in her nation, she will still know that they exist, mainly due to communication and the media (Anderson 2006).

In defining why nations are imagined as communities, Anderson stresses the comradeship conceived in the nation, regardless of inequality and exploitation:

> Finally, it is imagined as a *community*, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imagines (Anderson 2006: 7).

Anderson's point of departure when talking about nationalism and nationality is that it is cultural artefacts with deep emotional legitimacy (Anderson 2006: 4). He argues that nationalism derives its force from its combination of political legitimacy and emotional power. Furthermore he proposes not to consider nationalism as an ideology, but rather categorize it along with for example religion and kinship.

According to Yuval-Davis "[w]hat is specific to the nationalist project and discourse is the claim for a separate political representation for the collective. This often – but not always – takes the form of a claim for a separate state and/or territory"(1997: 16). In relations to nationalist projects, Yuval Davis (1997: 21) points out that these are often multiplex, although one version is often much more hegemonic than others at different historical moments. Contesting constructions are promoted by different members of the collectivity.

4.3.2 Gendering Nationalism

Pettman (1996) explores how both nation and nationalism are constructed on and through gender. Here I am especially interested in elaborating how women are constructed as mothers of the nation and how they and their bodies are used in creating a national identity, as this seems to be a main issue in Palestine where women were often portrayed as reproducing or even 'birthing' the nation. Pettman points to the extraordinary similarities in the ways that very different nationalisms construct 'women' as well as how the nation is often constructed as female (1996: 48). Here I will however only draw on the points that are relevant to the case of Palestine.

As the state is often gendered male, the nation is often thought of as female - the motherland, where the citizens (who are often thought of as men) become her children (sons). This makes women the symbol of the nation and men it's agents (Whitehead et al.1993: 1). This implies that when the nation is under threat of violation, her sons must protect her and her honour. Taking this metaphor even further one could see colonization or occupation of a nations territory (the woman's body) as rape (Pettman 1996: 49).

In situations where the nation is under threat, men are granted the role of protectors, of the nation, of women and children. Their citizen identity is closely related to that of a warrior and soldier. Women's national identity is created from the roles of wives,

mothers and daughters of soldiers, through generalizing their domestic identity. The representation of women as mothers of the nation locates and constrains women in particular ways. Pettman (1996: 51) argues that the relationship between the protector and the protected can easily slide from protected to possession to controlled. Violence against women from "the other side" in a conflict or war becomes an assault on men's and national honour. Herein lies a move "from actual women's bodies and the dangers they face, to nationalist discourse using images of women's bodies to mark national and communal boundaries. Here policing the boundaries too easily becomes the policing of women's bodies and movements" (Pettman 1996: 51). In maintaining and reproducing the national identity the control of women thus become strategic, as they are used as boundary markers of the nation. This makes women the most valuable possessions of the nation. They are bearers of the future generations and responsible for transmitting the values of the nation. This shows how women's bodies and national honour are closely related: "Contests and conflicts continue over the borders and boundaries of belonging, over the body politic and over women's bodies as the makers, reproducers ad transmitters of the nation" (Pettman 1996: 62).

4.3.3 Feminists and Nationalist Movements

Nationalism and feminism has a complex relationship, not least in the Palestinian context. Even though it has been negotiated differently over time and place, the relationship between nationalism, women's rights and feminist struggles is often difficult. In this regard nationalism can be contradictory; mobilizing women's support and labour while simultaneously seeking to reinforce women's gendered space and role within the nation. As the above subchapter suggests many women support nationalist movements as women, particularly as mothers. Further, their involvement may create new spaces for women in the public arena as well as politicise and radicalize their role. In wars, nationalist and other liberation movements, women are mobilized and used symbolically. They may also be used in ways that exploit their femininity and other men's comprehension of them as less political and as less violent. Women's participation in nationalist movements can be as individuals and patriots

while others claim a more particular role as women and as mothers. In addition there are those women who make feminist claims for restructuring gender relations within nationalist politics (Pettman 1996: 61). Often, however, women are asked to set aside 'sectional interests' until the national cause is secured.

The ideology of nationalism as the glue holding a disparate people together can be extremely powerful, and a positive influence for change. However it can also be used to promote a particularistic conception of what issues are considered significant for the nation to address, which items are defined as subordinate and thus lower on the agenda, and who gets to make these judgments. Further, Pettman (1996: 61) argues that considerable evidence shows that the causes that are marginalized in the struggle are likely to be marginalized in it's victories, especially in the consolidation and institutionalization of victory in the state. At the conclusion of the struggle women have sometimes been excluded from formal power and pushed back into the home.

5 General Context - Locating the Palestinian Women

Palestinian women constantly move in an intersection of oppressions, the main ones being the Israeli occupation and the conservative Palestinian society. As I in this thesis, seek to identify the acts performed by Palestinian women that assert their political belonging to the Palestinian nation and to the future Palestinian state, the following will present a short attempt to position Palestinian women in the intersection of oppressions.

5.1 The Palestinian Women's Movement and the Political Development of Palestine

Palestinian women have a long history of participation in the struggle for national liberation, both in 'traditional women arenas' and at the front lines. The Palestinian women's movement has been, and still is closely related to the national liberation movement and thereby also to the current process of state building. Further, women have always played an important role in the struggle for national liberation but the

inherent meaning of their role in political struggles have not always been recognized (Jamal 2001: 256).

> On the one hand, nationalism provided the initial impetus for the politicization of women's activism, plus the development of consciousness around gender-related issues. On the other hand, perceived exigencies and survival of traditional ideologies – particularly in times of conflict and reinforced with the rise of fundamentalism – have subjugated women to restrictions on further institutionalization of their empowerment and mobility in Palestinian statehood. (Jacoby 1996: 5)

Since the beginning of the 20th century Palestinian women have been socially active, not only in the national struggle but also in forming charitable associations and working for the welfare of the community. The General Union of Palestinian Women was established in Jerusalem in 1921 and has since then organized Palestinian women living under occupation and in the diaspora to sustain communities and hold families together. In the late 1970s the character of women's involvement shifted as young, politically oriented women became politically active in the fight against the Israeli occupation. They formed activist women's committees that attracted members from different spheres of life and created alliances with international feminist organizations (Azzouni 2010).

In the first intifada, or popular uprising, against the Israeli occupation in 1987 women played an active role and further elevated their status within the society. With the first intifada came a shift of the struggle from abroad to within Palestine. Since this was a popular, unarmed resistance, women participated in all activities including organization of demonstrations, throwing stones, painting graffiti, distributing statements and leaflets and educating the youth. A sign of the extend of Palestinian women's national activities at this time is the fact that a new prison was opened by the Israelis for female Palestinian political prisoners.

The peace negotiations that began in 1991 resulted in the 1993 Oslo Accord, and soon after Palestinian women's organizations formed a coalition called the Women's Affairs Technical Committee (WATC) to advocate for equal rights. Palestinian women began

advocating for a future Palestinian entity with a culture of human rights and mainstreaming of gender concerns into Palestinian politics, which lead to the creation of specialized women's organizations and research centres that focus on gender-equality issues (Azzouni 2010).

In 1994 the Palestinian Authority (PA) was established to exercise limited governmental authority over the Palestinian population living in the Israeli-occupied territories including the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem. Palestinian women's groups and coalitions applied heavy lobbying on the PA's legislative body the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), where they demanded equal rights and publicly protested discriminatory legislation and regulations. Political unrest, however, hindered the establishment of a Palestinian state as agreed in the Oslo Accords, which in turn distracted the women's rights movement from issues related to gender equality (Azzouni 2010).

As of now, Palestinian women face two major types of obstacles to their rights: those arising from within their own culture and society and those imposed as a result of the occupation (Azzouni 2010: 2). Domestically women are subjected to restrictive personal status laws retaining discriminatory provisions related to marriage, divorce and child custody. Violence against women and domestic abuse has increased in resent years (Azzouni 2010: 2). Further, discriminatory laws and traditions affect women's inheritance, alimony and employment opportunities, thereby reducing their economic autonomy and making them more vulnerable to poverty than men. When discussing the Palestinian juridical system and it's impact on women, it is however important to remember that the PA is very limited in the exercise of their rule and control as they have no sovereignty. The Israeli occupation heavily influences how the PA conducts its affairs as well as the daily lives and personal security of the Palestinians. The Palestinian areas under PA rule are not contiguous but separated by physical and administrative barriers erected by the Israeli authorities. This has significantly curtailed Palestinians' freedom of movement and has a devastating effect on the local economy. The Palestinian people experience continuously increased

separation from their families, farmlands, water resources, schools and hospitals (Azzouni 2010).

Since the elections in 2006 the two largest Palestinian parties, Fatah and Hamas have been fighting a power struggle while at the same time attempting to conclude a reconciliation deal and create a joint government in the West Bank (where Fatah is currently in charge) and the Gaza Strip (where Hamas has the majority of the votes). The on-going political tensions between Fatah and Hamas coupled with Israeli restrictions and incursions have seriously affected women's political and civil liberties throughout Palestine. These factors present challenges to women's everyday lives but also draws the attention away from calls for gender equality at societal and political levels. Nonetheless, Palestinian women, feminists, activists and organizations are determined to persevere in their efforts to reform discriminatory laws and practices (Azzouni 2010).

In recent years Palestinian women have been deeply involved in the vibrant Palestinian civil society, and NGOs, promoting democracy and involving themselves in the state building process. Yet, women have not been included in formal power structures to any significant extend. Neither the 'inner circle' of the PA, nor the core of the various opposition movements has included women, as will be elaborated in the following chapter (6.1).

5.2 The State of Palestine

As the struggle for an independent Palestine has been going on for more than sixty years, the Palestinians are not only fighting the battle against Israeli soldiers at the borders and checkpoints. Just as important is the process of building the Palestinian state, complete with a strong leadership, democratic institutions, a solid economy and international recognition. Making sure that a functioning state is in place is essential when Palestine is free and the struggle comes to an end.

At the opening of the UN General Assembly in September 2011 Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas handed over a formal application for UN recognition of the Palestinian state to Ban Ki-moon and the UN Security Council. As expected the US promised to use its veto power if it ever came to a vote in the council, keeping the bid at a standstill. Yet the bid for statehood recognition has led to membership in UNESCO and to bilateral recognition from more than 130 states around the world.

On a national level, the Palestinians spent years preparing for this move. Two years ago, Prime Minister Salam Fayyad announced a Palestinian state-building plan. The deadline for the plan coincided with the application for statehood recognition at the UN. The past two years of state building have led to institutions and economic policies as required by the World Bank and the IMF. The latest reports on the economic situation in the Palestinian territory, however, show a lower economic growth and a drop in financial aid compared to previous years (Holm, MIFTAH special study 2011).

The Palestinian Authority (PA) was formed after the Oslo Agreement in 1994; a deal between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the government of Israel, as a five-year interim body, during which final status negotiations between the two parties were to take place. As of 2012, such negotiations have yet to happen, which has given the PA the position of a pseudo-state. The PA's administrative powers are limited to civil matters and internal security and do not include external security or foreign affairs. The body has developed most of the characteristics of a state, however with an evident limited authority and a lack of sovereignty (Khalil 2007).

The PA is not to be confused with the PLO, which is a liberation movement, not a state or government. As almost half of all Palestinians live outside of the Palestinian territories, the PLO enjoy international recognition as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, representing them at the United Nations and in other international contexts. Palestinians in the diaspora or inside Israel do not vote in elections for the offices of the PA.

5.3 Palestinian Legal Citizenship

Defining the legal aspects of who is to be considered as a Palestinian citizen is not easy as it has never been a constant since the British Mandate first introduced the notion in the area in 1925. The on-going conflict and constantly changing circumstances has resulted in different definitions at different times from different actors; Palestine, Israel and the international community. Prior to the uprooting of the Palestinian people in 1948, the British Mandate tied citizenship to the land, and Palestinians were 'those who lived in Palestine' (Massad 1995: 468-9). With the Oslo Agreement and the establishment of the PA, Palestinian citizenship became a dilemma. The Oslo Agreement only granted the PA the right to issue a Basic Law and rather than formalizing a separation between Palestinian nationality and Palestinian citizenship, the first drafts of the law postponed the definition of citizenship to some future period of legislation (Hammami and Johnson, 1999; Jad, 2010). With more than ten million Palestinians worldwide, their legal statuses differentiates whether they are from the West Bank, or Gaza, or they are Palestinians living in Israel, refugees inside Palestine, in the neighbouring countries, or living in the diaspora. Consequently, most Palestinians have a foreign passport or multiple nationalities, and most Palestinians in the West Bank have what is know as "West Bank IDs", often combined with a Jordanian passport.

As Palestine has effectively been under occupation since 1967, all Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza are considered resident aliens or foreigners under Israeli civil and military law. Residency status in the occupied Palestinian territories is administered by the PA but Israel has retained the authority to make the final decision on requests for permanent residency and family reunification (Khalil 2007). The Oslo Agreement consolidated the Israeli occupation and through it the Palestinian leadership accepted to maintain (at least temporary) the legal changes made by the occupation-power. Thus a difference in treatment of Palestinians and Israelis created a political situation based on differences and exclusion (Khalil 2007, Hammami and Johnson, 1999).

Citizenship law cannot be adopted without a state. Legislation in citizenship issues is not within the PA's limited administrative power, nor that of the PLO. There are however, several official documents, some adopted and others still in draft version that are used to define who qualifies as a Palestinian national and who does not (Khalil 2007).

With the establishment of the PA, the distinction between West Bank and Gaza Strip - Palestinians (including Jerusalemites) and other Palestinians has been completely institutionalized. Palestinians falling outside of the category of West Bank and Gaza Strip residents have no right to participate in the electoral process and are thus banned from any involvement in the political life within the PA (unless through PLO representative delegations in other countries, although they have no right to access the occupied Palestinian territories). With the establishment of a state this scenario will not persist, however the PA institutions would exert huge weight on determining the nature of the Palestinian state institutions and who would be entitled to enjoy political rights (Khalil 2007: 40).

6 Empirical Data

In this chapter, I seek to locate and identify certain events and actions through which Palestinian women constitute their political belonging to Palestine. I am especially interested in such actions where women consciously or unconsciously use their gender in resisting the occupation as this turns out to be an important way of certifying ones Palestinian identity. I have chosen to focus on three such acts where women, in different ways, assert their political belonging to Palestine: Formal Political Participation; Protesting and Demonstrating; and Mothering. As the following will show, women go into these acts in many different roles, sometimes keeping with the expectations of their gendered identity, sometimes transcending it. It is this matrix of different political acts – building the Palestinian state, resisting the occupation, being a

woman, and being Palestinian – where I seek to find Palestinian women's political belonging to the Palestinian nation and future state.

6.1 Formal Political Participation

In the following I will give an overview of the level of participation among Palestinian women in international, national and local politics. This is to give an indication of the level of women's participation in Palestinian politics but also of how this level is perceived among the interviewees of this research as well as whom the women participating in the political processes are. Most of the material presented in this chapter is from a workshop organized by MIFTAH and UNDP titled "Supporting Young Palestinian Women Political Leaders" taking place in Ramallah from May 2nd to May 5th. The participants were around 30 female representatives from different Palestinian political parties (Fatah, Hamas, Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and several smaller parties). They were between the ages of 25 and 35 and came from different parts of the West Bank. During the workshop they discussed the different legislative systems in work in Palestine and how to get women elected in these systems as well as how to implement women's issues into the juridical system and laws of Palestine.

As they have participated in the national movement, Palestinian women have always been actively involved in domestic politics as well as playing important roles in peace negotiations and in Palestine's involvement in international politics. Especially in the 1990s women who were engaged in the national cause began using their political skills to advocate for women's rights, which did receive some criticism in some of the more conservative sectors of Palestinian society. There has, however, been little objection to women voting and running for political office. On the other hand, women are not represented to the same extend as men in any Palestinian decision-making bodies. The economic, social and cultural restraints placed on the lives of Palestinian women affects their access to civil liberties and political rights. In resent years a limited gender-based quota system for legislative and municipal council elections has been established causing a significant increase in women's political participation, especially

at the local level. Further, it is at the local level women are most active and have the most influence on decision-making processes.

With the elections of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) in 2006 a new electoral law was adopted to expand the legislature from 88 to 132 seats. Article 4 of the law required each party list for elections to include at least one woman among the first three names, at least one woman among the next four names and at least one woman in every five names thereafter. The quota system was a result of lobbying efforts by women's rights organizations and the Ministry of Women's affairs. Eight women from Fatah, six from Hamas, and one each from three smaller parties were elected. The Women Affairs Technical Committee (WATC) and MIFTAH were very active in training candidates and drafting election guides for women, as well as in helping female candidates to meet potential voters. Local elections were held between 2004 and 2005, also in this regard, women's organizations lobbied and achieved the implementation by the PLC of a quota law that reserved two seats for women in every municipal or village council (02.05.2012: workshop, MIFTAH and UNDP).

The Ministry of Women's affairs was established in 2003 after extensive lobbying from women's rights organizations for nearly a decade. The purpose of the ministry is to address the gender gap found at all levels of society, amend existing laws, and introduce new legislation that would improve the status of women. The unstable condition of the Palestinian political environment has however made it impossible for the ministry to live up to its mandate (02.05.2012: workshop, MIFTAH and UNDP).

It is noteworthy that with a few exceptions, the most prominent political leaders in Palestine are, and have been men. Within the PA executive branch, women's presence is minimal and they hold few decision-making positions. As Project Coordinator at MIFTAH Lamis Hantouli points out, it is always men leading the processes, making the decisions and women take the roles as their supporters (Interview 1: 2.25). Women are active in all Palestinian political parties, but rarely make it all the way to the heavy, top posts. Women are members but not in the same numbers as men. According to Dr

Lily Feidy, CEO of MIFTAH, political parties are not attractive to women, not sufficiently active in recruiting women and also the parties are "headed by very old men" (Interview 2: 23.54). On the participation of women in political institutions she further notes that:

> If you look at the whole picture, we are still very far from getting our equal rights… because, all the time Salam Fayyad, and the President and everybody in the public sector says "equal rights, equal rights, equal rights" you'll think there are more women in decision-making positions… So basically, the women who are in the workforce, the women who are in the public sector, basically most of them are mid-management and lower, they are not in decision-making positions, and this is really bad, because, in every agenda, that is presented in any ministry, okay, for discussion, it is an agenda that is put by men, directed by men, drafted by men. Now, in the ministries where you have women ministers, okay, still, the deputies and the decision-makers are men, most of them are men. And then when you talk about the higher, I mean, up in the hierarchy, in the peace team, in the negotiations, it's a man's agenda, okay. It is very important to have a women's perspective, because, when we have martyrs, who most of them are men, we have prisoners where most are men, it's the women who are suffering and the children, but nobody talks about this, nobody takes it into account, alright… the issue is not whether I have five cabinet ministers or not, okay, the issue is how the whole team is working together and who's agenda is put on the table. Whether in the daily life in the cabinet it self or whether at the negotiation table. (Interview 2: 16.12)

In other words, the lack of women in decision-making positions means a minimal focus on women's issues and a lack of recognition of women's rights as legitimate needs.

6.1.1 Examples of Women in Palestinian Politics

Women participate in every level of Palestinian politics and even if the following is far from an extensive list, it provides examples of different women who take part in the decision-making processes at different levels.

Dr Hanan Ashrawi was the first woman elected to the Palestinian National Council (PNC); the legislative body of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). As an activist, scholar and outspoken proponent of democracy and human rights, she funded the organization MIFTAH: The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global

Dialogue and Democracy, in 1998. Holding several important positions in national and local organizations, Hanan Ashrawi for example serves on the advisory board of the World Bank Middle East and North Africa and the international Human Rights Council. Currently a senior PLO official, member of the PLO Executive Committee and head of the PLO's Department of Culture and Information Hanan Ashrawi is one of the most influential Palestinian leaders today.

After President Mahmoud Abbas' reshuffle of the Palestinian government on May 16 2012, six out of twenty-five ministers are women. They are: Majidah al Masri, Minister of Social Affairs; Siham al Barguthi, Minister of Culture; Safa Nasser Eldin, Minister of Telecommunication and It; Rabiha Ziab, Minister of Women's Affairs; Rula Ma'aia, Minister of Turism; Lamis al Alami, Minister of Education. Further, the Mayor of Ramallah, Janet Mikhael and the Governor of the Ramallah district, Dr Laila Ghanam, are women.

On a community level, women are even more active in political affairs. According to Lamis Hantouli (Interview 1: 23.10), Palestinian women find it easier to be active in their local communities, as they find it more difficult to participate in for example workshops and conferences outside their city or village. The reason for this, she continues, is especially the responsibility they have towards their family, which hinders them in traveling far for any political activity. Further, there is a certain danger related to traveling in the West Bank or abroad, as you never know what can happen at a checkpoint or in a meeting with Israeli soldiers (Interview 1: 25.00). This subchapter has shown that even though Palestinian women are very active in formal politics, their participation is rarely recognized and they further have difficulties reaching decision-making positions and top-posts.

6.2 Protesting and Demonstrating

Protests and demonstrations are a big part of the Palestinian resistance against the Israeli occupation. In the following I seek to clarify the different forms of demonstrations and women's roles here. The information this chapter is based on, is

gathered using qualitative interviews and observations among Palestinians who frequent these kinds of events. I do not as such differentiate between the terms 'protest' and 'demonstration' but the interviews and observations made in this research gave me an impression that 'demonstration' are commonly used in regards to larger, more popular events where 'protests' are the ones more directly confronting the Israeli occupation forces.

6.2.1 Popular Demonstrations

To mark different historical dates, Palestinians often gather in the streets in popular demonstrations where everyone participates. For example, on May 15 2012 Palestinians all over the world commemorated the day hundreds of thousands of their kin were forced from their homes with the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948. Known as al-Nakba (the catastrophe)- Day Palestinians take to the streets to remind the world and each other that they still hope and believe in the day they can return to the land their families were forced from. The day offered speeches by top-political leaders, including the president, Mahmoud Abbas, who spoke from his residence in Ramallah. Children had half a day off from school and employees were given time off from work to participate in the gatherings. Stages were set up for speeches and cultural features like Palestinian singing and dancing. Everyone carried flags and banners; Palestinian flags, flags from different political parties and banners with the names of the villages from where their families were forced out, in what is now Israel. Further, many carried big metal keys, the symbol of return in Palestine. These keys are supposedly to their family homes they wish one day to return to.

Another example of this kind of popular demonstrations is when President Mahmoud Abbas went to the opening of the UN General Assembly in New York in September 2011. Here, he handed over a formal application for recognition of statehood for Palestine to Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and the UN Security Council. On that day the residents of all the major cities in Palestine gathered to watch Abbas' speech at the UN on big screens. In Ramallah the city was decorated with flags and huge banners were hung from the rooftops claiming Palestine to become state number 194 in the

UN. The streets were filled with people and even though far from everyone agreed on the move from the political leaders the day was a mass-celebration. These huge demonstrations often take the form of national celebrations more than direct confrontations with Israel. They take place inside the major cities and everyone participates. Children get the Palestinian flag painted on their faces and wrap themselves in scarfs and flags clearly stating their Palestinian identity. Women, men, old and young participate equally in these events.

6.2.2 Friday Protests

Every Friday, protests take place in villages across the West Bank. These are organized to protest against Israeli measures threatening the existence of the villages. In Bil'in and Nil'in, the wall, constructed by the Israeli state, allegedly for security measures, has separated the farmers from their land. It is the same story in all the villages: Israeli roads, settlements and the wall cutting the village off from their resources and from accessing their land and other parts of the West Bank.

The number of people at the protests spans from 20 to 300, depending on the situation and what other events are taking place that day. Attending the protests are predominantly residents of the villages, but they are also frequented by international solidarity activists, Israeli left-wing activists and Palestinian activists from other cities. The aim of the protests is to confront the Israeli soldiers at the borders and checkpoints near the village, however the intention from the Palestinian side is always for the protests to be peaceful and non-violent. They chant and yell at the soldiers, while they make their way towards the land that has been taken from them. The Israeli army, well aware of the situation, are always prepared and meet the protesters with tear gas, rubber bullets, sound bombs and skunk-water. Most often the clashes result in injuries among the Palestinian protesters, who sometimes answer the violence they meet from the Israeli army by throwing stones, an act they themselves deem non-violent however.

Even though the majority of the protesters are often men, women are not a rare sight. Linah Alsaafin, a Palestinian activist has been going to Friday protests in the village of Nabi Saleh regularly since June 2011. In her interview she reflected on the experience and the involvement of women:

> You know, for a first time experience it is exhilarating and, and challenging and daring and whatever all these mixed together. Because you are confronting the soldiers like head on you know, and basically you just shout and chant at them while they have their tear gas canisters and their bullets and the weapons and everything that they use against the protesters. It is not like they restrain themselves. … In Nabi Saleh, it's just like one big family. Everyone knows everyone, so there are no cultural constraints, like "oh my god the girls shouldn't be out" because they all know each other. The women, who are active in the village, are mostly the relatives, the wives, the mothers and sisters of the men who are the leaders of the popular committee there. But also like, away from the wives, also the girls, the teenagers, the female teenagers, they also have a pretty big role to play, and it's not just you know, on the front lines chanting, but they do sometimes participate in throwing rocks, which I think is so awesome. (Interview 5: 05.03)

The fact that the protests are formed as community actions provides girls and women who might not have been able to participate otherwise, with the opportunity to exercise their acts of resistance. With this opportunity they participate all the way up in the front lines of the protests and confront the soldiers head on.

6.2.3 Other Protests

In addition to the abovementioned protests and demonstrations, there are the more occasional ones, sometimes organized, sometimes more spontaneous, when there is an event that the Palestinians feel demands their attention. For example do the commemorations of days like Nakba-Day and Land-Day[1] tend to result in clashes between Palestinian protesters and the Israeli army at major checkpoints, like Qalandia, outside Ramallah. When such protests occur, they are often very large and end up with many injured people on the Palestinian side. Most recently a large amount of protests arose in solidarity with about 2,000 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails who

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[1] 'Land-Day' is the annual commemoration on March 30, of six Palestinians who were killed by Israeli forces in 1976 in demonstrations against Israel's land confiscations in the Galilee.

went on a mass hunger strike to protests the worsening conditions in the prisons, the use of administrative detention[2] and the refusal of family visits. Families, friends and fellow Palestinians took measures to let the PA, the Israeli authorities and the international community know what was going on. They gathered in public spaces, carrying pictures of loved ones starving for their freedom in prison. Some parents of the hunger strikers also went on hunger strikes to show their support. As they agreed to a deal with the Israeli prison authorities most of the prisoners stopped refusing food by May 14, at that point, some of them had been starving themselves for more than 70 days.

6.2.4 Examples of Women's Participation in Protests

In the following I will present three very different examples of women participating in protests against the occupation. Here, women confront the Israeli soldiers head on, however the intentions, the acts in themselves and the outcomes are very different.

On May 1st, during a demonstration in front of Israel's Ofer Prison near Ramallah, the female activist Rana Hamadeh climbed onto an Israeli 'skunk tank' and raised a Palestinian flag. Israeli soldiers quickly moved to arrest her in what appeared to be a very violent act. Rana Hamadeh became the hero of the week, her picture everywhere in the media and the video clips of her brave act and the following arrest everywhere on the internet.

In a very different act, with the same goal; to show resistance but with a different means, a group of women from the village of Nabi Saleh decided to picnic by the Nabi Saleh spring which was taken over by Israeli settlers in 2009. In the weekly protests in Nabi Saleh, the protesters march towards the spring but are always held back by soldiers using tear gas, skunk water and rubber bullets. On Sunday the 26th of April, however, a group of about 30 Palestinian women were able to make it to the spring for

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[2] Administrative detention is the practice of imprisonment without trial or the continuation of imprisonment after the completion of a sentence. According to Israeli law, administrative detention is legal in the Occupied Territories, empowering military commanders to hold an individual in custody for up to six months if there is what they deem reasonable grounds to presume that the security of the area or public security require the detention.

the first time in years. The protest was arranged as a picnic and the women were not stopped by the Israeli soldiers or the settlers present at the scene. The act was considered a victory (Interview 5: 09.04), and a good example of creative ways of defying the occupation.

On the 8th of March 2012, as the international women's day was commemorated throughout the world, the Palestinian woman, Hana Shalabi, went into her 20th day of hunger strike. Protesting the conditions in Israeli prisons and the treatment of Palestinians held in administrative detention, without charge or trial, like her self, Hana Shalabi refused to ingest anything except water. To mark the women's day, she sent a message to women and to Palestinians everywhere. Here, she stated that she would continue her strike for the dignity of the Palestinian people and for all struggling women in the world. For her own dignity, as well as that of all women she would not compromise her freedom and rights at any price. She saluted Palestinian women and said that they "… will always be the spearhead of resistance against the occupiers." (Holm 2012)

This subchapter has shown that Palestinian women participate in all the different protests and demonstrations against the Israeli occupation. Different women participate in different ways with different means as will be elaborated and explained further in the analysis.

6.3 Mothering

In this subchapter I wish to show how Palestinian women also act politically as mothers raising their children. The information for this subchapter is based on interviews and observations, especially among Palestinian mothers.

Palestinian children grow up in a very politicized reality and have to deal with checkpoints and soldiers from a very early age. They learn what it means to live under occupation and experience early that there is a lack of freedom of movement in Palestine (Interview 6: 6.24). A couple of decades ago, previous Palestinian President Yasser Arafat encouraged Palestinians to have as many children as possible to

outnumber the Israelis. "They can beat us at the borders but not in the bedrooms" was a saying. According to Bisan Abu Ruqti (Interview 3: 20.40), in the times of Arafat the Palestinian leadership encouraged women to have many children and it was seen as one of the most important roles of women in their minds. She adds, that now the whole context is different (Interview 3: 20.50): "I cannot have ten babies, but I make sure that I can have one or two or max three, and to make sure that the quality is the issue, not the quantity. So to make sure that they are good people, good citizens, educate them, to give the world a different image." Now, it is more about the way the children are raised and what they learn about their history and situation than about numbers. As the school curriculum is decided on by the Israeli authorities, it is the task of Palestinian parents to teach their history to their children. In a situation were everything is defined by history it is very important to Palestinians that their children is knowledgeable of their past. As Lamis Hantouli points out, it is important to her to teach her children about the situation and the history (Interview 1: 42.55):

> Telling them that Israel is an occupying power that has taken our Palestine - they have to know all this story - my kids ask a lot about it. Why the Israelis are here, why we can't go to Jerusalem for example, so I have to tell them the real story about Palestine and about the struggle with the Israelis. And because, my father also used to talk to us about it I feel the least I can do is to tell the real story to my children.

But it is not just about teaching Palestinian children about their past it is also about raising them for a future in peace. Joharah Baker (Interview 9: 9.30), a Palestinian mother argues that it is all about finding a balance of talking to the children and telling them why they have to go through checkpoints every day, but at the same time avoid teaching them to hate the Israelis. The children should be educated about the reality they live in and be taught the history that led to this situation but it should be done in a way that equips them for a peaceful future.

6.3.1 Examples of Political Acts of Palestinian Mothers

Besides the parenting tasks of raising their children to become good citizens and to teach them about their current situation and their history, Palestinian mothers

sometimes find themselves in extraordinary positions where they have to relate to their children in different ways because of the occupation. Here are two examples:

During the history of the occupation, Palestinian women have physically protected their children from different aspects of the occupation. The urge to protect your children is natural and Palestinian mothers go far every day to make sure their children are safe (Interview 2, 4). Legends from the first intifada tell the story of older women sheltering the youth and defying soldiers. There are still examples of this happening today, during demonstrations where mothers use their bodies to separate their children from the soldiers.

Another example is the reactions of Palestinian mothers to their children who are imprisoned by Israel. It is widely recognized but little talked about that when a family member is imprisoned it is not only that person that is the victim but the loved ones left behind as well. While the risk of being arrested is higher among men, it is often the women; the mothers, wives and daughters that are left behind to maintain the household. Mothers and wives of prisoners are often seen demonstrating against the arrests of their family members, holding up pictures and demanding the release of their loved ones. As the hunger strikes in the spring of 2012 went into more than 60 days, many feared for the lives of their family members and all of Palestine was following closely, doing what they could to show solidarity with the prisoners, some of who were on the verge of death. This resulted in the mothers of several of the hunger strikers starting a hunger strike of their own, in solidarity with their children in prison. In this regard, Ala'a Karajeh (Interview 4: 34.11) told me the story of one of the mothers who was in the hospital as a consequence of her hunger strike. Her condition was deteriorating and she had been in and out of consciousness for days, the people around her fearing for her life. As they saw that she wanted to say something, they lifted of her oxygen mask, and she asked about the condition of the prisoners, if anyone had died and if their demands had been met. "This is the Palestinian mother, she thinks of them" (Interview 4: 35.13).

This subchapter has shown that in addition to all the regular parenting issues Palestinian parents also have the important task of raising their children within a very politicized situation. This task is not to be disregarded, as the Palestinian children are the future of the nation and possible state of Palestine.

7 Analysis

This analysis is built around the sub-questions posed in subchapter 2.3. They are analysed in the following three subchapters, each corresponding to a sub-question. The analysis is based in the theories and empirical data presented above and aims as a whole to answer the research question on how Palestinian women assert their political belonging to Palestine in the lack of a functioning state to constitute their citizenship.

7.1 What is Palestine?

Before analysing what it means to be a Palestinian citizen and what it means to belong to Palestine it is necessary to ask what Palestine actually is. In this next subchapter I do just that by analysing aspects of how the Palestinian 'state' is perceived and how the national community relates to that. Thus this chapter draws mostly on theories that relate the state and nation, especially Benedict Anderson's concept of 'imagined communities'. Further, I use several interviews conducted among young, politically active Palestinians and observations made especially concerning the Palestinian reaction to the statehood bid in the UN in September 2011.

Palestinian statehood is a complex question; who decides when a state is a state? The Palestinian leadership has built a state-like establishment, with state-like institutions and has gone as far as to apply for statehood recognition at the UN. Most of the UN member states recognize Palestine bilaterally, but because of the US veto-power in the UN Security Council, full statehood recognition here is not likely. The international community is divided in the question and the close relationship between Israel and powerful countries like the US and Germany makes it difficult for Palestine to execute

its plans of creating a fully functional state. It has been argued that such solutions should come from negotiations with Israel, but the Palestinian leadership would like to make the negotiations more equal by becoming a state. That way it would be negotiations between two states, not between an occupier and the people it occupy.

One would think that most Palestinians applaud such efforts from their leadership, but the feelings and levels of support were mixed when President Mahmoud Abbas went to New York to hand in the application for statehood recognition. Officially, all Palestinians were behind him and the bid, but in private the tune was different. The lip service and promises that has been repeated over and over again from the Palestinian leadership and the international community have also stayed unfulfilled, an experience that has left most Palestinians with little belief in such solutions to their situation. As Rami Samandar said during an interview, when asked if it would make a difference if Palestine was recognized as a state in the UN (Interview 7: 19.55):

> No, because that is only going to be on paper, UN laws, international laws, that is something. But what goes on in real life here, on the ground, that is totally different. There has been laws in the UN and many international organizations that haven't been implemented here, and can't. (Do you think Palestinians are kind of sick of hearing all these promises?) Well, I don't think, I am sure of it. But many don't care anymore and they are not waiting for an international organization, NGO or official representative to give new promises, to give more funding to the government, to do more projects here. It is not going to change anything like on the ground. It is not going to return the ground to the farmers, it is not going to return people to live in their cities from which they were deported.

This is only one example of the lack of trust and belief in the Palestinian leadership, coming from a young man, but he is not alone in his opinion. It is a continuous trend through the interviews I conducted (e.g. Interview 2, 5 and 6) and among other politically active Palestinians when discussing their government. In a meeting with the leaders of the youth branch of Fatah, the government party, they expressed a deep-seeded disbelief in their governments attempt to use diplomatic measures to solve the prolonged situation (19.09.2011 roundtable discussion, MIFTAH). Palestinians do not

only lack confidence in their leaderships clout in negotiations and at the UN, many also doubt their ability to create a strong and functioning state. As Rami Samandar says about the political situation and the role of the Palestinian leadership (Interview 7: 0.45):

> I can't say it's pretty good, neither bad, but it's not good enough, it is not getting us to the point that we are seeking, or it is not giving us what we want. (And what is that?) What we want? Well, of course, as all Palestinians we want our freedom but also we want our rights inside the state itself.

In regards to the occupation, Palestinians demand freedom and justice, a demand they have maintained since 1948. But they also have demands towards their own government and the people who are supposed to lead them to freedom and provide justice as well as building a functioning state to create stability after freedom has been granted. Especially the young Palestinians are outspoken in their critique of their government. Another young Palestinian, this time a woman, Lina Ibrahim says about the Palestinian leadership (Interview 6: 26.55):

> The current state of Palestine is not good. The leaders are not doing anything right, if we are going to be honest. PA? No, they are just another form of occupiers, if we are going to be honest. So, I don't think Palestine right now is being led by anyone really capable.

The critique of the government is closely related to the occupation, most Palestinians do not know of a life without it. At the same time they realize that it is impossible to create a functioning state under such circumstances. Rami Samandar continues talking about living in a state that is not a state (Interview 7: 19.15):

> You don't like feel so attached to this government you have because they are also under control. Like, an 18 or 19-year-old [Israeli] soldier at the checkpoint can stop our prime minister or president to check his documents, like a 60-70 year old man. So it's not like a real state or a real country when a 17 year old solider with a big gun can control the movement of, how is it called, a president or some minister.

The occupation creates a situation where it is impossible for the Palestinian Authority, which was only supposed to be an interim government to begin with, to act beyond it's

mandate and be the leadership the Palestinians ask for. This again leaves the Palestinians with little faith in their leaderships ability to better their situation. Further, the promises they have heard over and over again from the international community rarely comes to any real changes on the ground. So while the walls are literally closing in on them, the Palestinians seek hope and prospects of change elsewhere.

In this regard, it is noteworthy how Palestinians everywhere took part in the celebrations and campaigning to make Palestine state number 194 at the UN in September 2011. In spite of the lack of confidence in their government and in the international community, Palestinians decorated their houses, cars and bodies with flags, posters and t-shirts supporting the bid for statehood recognition (Holm 2011b). Some of the people in the crowds who had the largest flags and the most passion in their chants were also the ones who, when asked, said that they did not believe in the move to go to the UN. This is evidence of a strong belief in the community, in Palestine as a nation and in the people. When it comes to the Palestinian leadership, Joharah Baker agrees with the other interviewees and argues that her sense of belonging is to the homeland, not the non-existing state (Interview 9: 14.50):

> You grew up with this idea of Palestine, and it is on the map and whatever, but the idea of a state, it's hard to feel any kind of belonging to it when it's not there… Even this whole political rhetoric of Palestine, you know, the West Bank and Gaza and east Jerusalem, it's very, it's abstract, you know. And I don't feel, I mean, I feel very connected to Palestine, as my homeland, and as part of a nation, but I don't feel that I am citizen of a state yet, because we are not a state. We say, you know, "the state of Palestine" but what does a state mean? … Sovereignty and independence is what is missing. And that is so apparent in every aspect in Palestinian life, but the good thing is that, like you said, the nation, the Palestinian nation, Palestine as a homeland is eternal, you know, it's not something that goes away. So that link is what will hopefully lead to something that is actually manifested in a state.

Even though they do not have any belief in formal political solutions Palestinians believe in the nation, in the community and in Palestine as their homeland. In this regard the Palestinian unity can be categorized more as an Andersonian 'imagined community' than a state. It is evident that the Palestinian nation, civil society and

state, if one can actually talk of a Palestinian state, far from correspond with each other. What is today called the 'Palestinian Territories' is 22 per cent of what most Palestinians consider to be Palestinian land, the government is not representative of the Palestinian people and half of the Palestinian population lives outside of Palestine. Yet, Palestine is real and it is such a strong affiliation that generations of Palestinians have lived and died while fighting for it for more than 60 years.

In spite of divisions across generations, borders, gender, and political affiliations Palestinians are first and foremost Palestinians, as the next subchapters will confirm. In this regard Benedict Anderson's (2006) understanding of nations as 'imagined communities' is especially fitting for Palestine. Using Anderson's definition of a nation as an imagined community helps to understand why Palestinians can be viewed as a nation, even though more than half the population is scattered around the world. Anderson argues that a nation is imagined because its members will never meet everybody in their nation, and yet they know that they are there. It is based on a union of people who stand together even though they do not know each other personally. In this case 'imagined' means that it is something created in the minds of a people with the sense of belonging to each other as a community. At the basis of the Palestinian community are the collective memory and the ancestral ties to Palestine, but the strongest issue that keeps this nation alive is the fact that it is imagined. It is the will of the people to keep the nation alive that makes the Palestinian kinship so strong. Anderson's emphasis in defining the nation is precisely on the perseverance and strength of the national identity, which in the Palestinian case is at the core of their nation.

Anderson describes the nation as a deep, horizontal comradeship and emphasizes that it is this sense of unity that makes people willing to die for their country (Anderson 2006: 7). A current example of this is the Palestinian prisoners on hunger strike in Israeli prisons. To them, freedom and justice is more important than their individual lives. Again and again, Palestinians perform acts to show their commitment to the community. They go to demonstrations, they confront Israeli soldiers, and they stay on

their land and in their houses even though they are surrounded by Israeli settlers. Several interviewees for this thesis (e.g. Interview 4, 5, 6, 9) emphasize the importance of just living in Palestine, that existing is a form of resistance in itself.

The above is applicable to all genders, even though the role of men and women vary. Few women have an actual say in the decision-making processes at the top political level, and it is also mostly, but not exclusively, men who are martyrs, prisoners and at the front lines of demonstrations. But in spite of the lack of access to the state-institutions or the government, women are as big a part of the community as men. The different political communities within Palestine overlap and relate to each other. Yuval-Davis (2011:69) points out that citizenship and belonging is not only in regards to the state but to political communities both in- and outside the state. Thus, even though Palestinian women are not treated as full members of the state, they have strong affiliations to the national community.

As proved in the above chapter, women are especially active in the local, informal activities and they are strong symbols of the Palestinian nation and collective identity. As confirmed in the theoretical chapter on the gendered nature of concepts of nationalism, 4.3.2, the state is often gendered male, and the nation female. This is interesting in the Palestinian case, as it is the nation that is the strong, uniting entity, not the state. The Palestine, the Palestinians fight to protect, is their homeland, their motherland, not their state. As such, women's roles as mothers of the nation and it's children get an added value, something that will be discussed further in the following chapter. Further, most Palestinians share a strong belief and hope in the informal resistance coming from the grass root, from bellow. The national struggle is personal as well as political.

7.2 Palestinian Women's Political Activity

Here I take the point made in the subchapter above, regarding women's position in the stately institutions and in the national community to analyse this position further. In other words, I take the analysis from the level of the institution and community, to the

level of the actors, the women. This subchapter is based on the second sub-question of this thesis: What are the political roles of Palestinian women? Taking a point of departure in formal politics I want to emphasize the importance of distinguishing between women's political representation and their political activity as well as the gendered relations in different political actions.

When it comes to the actual politics and the formal participation of women in Palestinian decision-making processes, subchapter 6.1 has shown that even though women are present in these institutions they are far from equally represented to men. Further it is interesting to note which political areas women are admitted into and where they do attain top-ministerial posts. In the newly restructured government six out of twenty-five ministers are women. These six women head the ministries of: social affairs, culture, telecommunication and IT, women's affairs, tourism and education. These are typical "soft", women's issues and as Rami Samandar points out women are not heading the offices of foreign or domestic affairs, nor those related to economy or defence (Interview 7: 2.15):

> So they have part, but it is a soft part, not a ruling part, not a decision making part. (But there are still women who have top political posts, right?) Well, yeah, there are, but you can never say that is because they are good for that or because the government puts them there because they are needed there to show that women do participate

The quota-systems introduced into different levels of Palestinian politics require a certain number of elected officials to be women. In addition, the long-term conflict with Israel causes international organizations and UN institutions to be heavily present in the area, often with a strong pressure to put more women in decision-making positions. These measures, along with the Palestinian women's movement lobbying for the same issues, have created some results in relations to representation, but women's issues are still far down on the agenda.

This shows that in the conservative Palestinian society women meet constrains when participating on high political levels. They have the most say when they stick to areas

that are closely related to their gender, but even here, according to Dr Lily Feidy, who herself has been active in Palestinian politics for many years; it is a man's agenda (Interview 2: 18.00). As long as all agendas in Palestinian politics are created by men, it does not make much of a difference who heads the offices.

The male-dominated space of politics together with the gender conservative society creates a system that lets very few women into decision-making positions, which have severe consequences as women's issues are not on the agenda. It is not enough for women to gain equal access if the entire system is based on a man's agenda. As pointed out in subchapter 4.1.1, 'Gendering Citizenship' women not only lack certain rights, and are not able to take on certain responsibilities. As the entire discourse of citizenship and the formal political system is gendered male, women's membership in the political communities will still be less full than men's.

Drawing on the previous subchapter it is interesting to analyse how women's lack of access to the state-like institutions are made up for in more informal, community-based ways. Palestinian women's activities and participation in formal Palestinian politics are not to be disregarded, these women are however only a small part of the entire population, often with a university education from abroad, from the right families, and often from the big cities in the West Bank or east Jerusalem. Thus, I want to emphasize the importance of recognizing the need to distinguish between women's political representation and their political activity. This is especially true in Palestine as the situation demands of everyone to constantly make deliberate, political decisions. Further it reminds them that they are being forced out of their homeland, by someone claiming that they do not belong there, causing them to hold on even tighter to their national identity.

In this regard I find it necessary to point out the politicized nature of the daily life in Palestine. The restrictions and obstacles, caused by the occupation, that Palestinians meet every day creates a situation where everything is political somehow. Driving to work or school through checkpoints, going to shops and deliberately not buying Israeli

products and talking to their children about why their father is in prison or why they cannot visit their grandparents in Jerusalem are only examples of conscious political acts performed by Palestinians every day. The occupation reaches far beyond governmental politics and peace negotiations and follows the Palestinians into their houses, kitchens and bedrooms. Thus, as both Chantal Mouffe (2005) and Carole Pateman (1989) argues, the political goes beyond that pertaining to the general government of a society and challenges the distinctions between the public and the private. Being a mother, having and raising children becomes a political project.

It is of course possible to argue that more or less anything, or everything, is political. Here, I argue, however, that in Palestine, not only is everything political, being Palestinian means being politically aware, and that creates a tight knit network of political communities with politically engaged actors. Of the three political actions identified in this thesis; formal political participation, protests and demonstrations, and mothering, I argue that all Palestinian women perform at least two of these during their lives, as will be elaborated in the following subchapters.

7.2.1 The Political Considerations of a Palestinian Mother

The conventional structures of Palestinian society require women to get married and have children, practices that are rarely questioned. Thus, most Palestinian women become mothers and as all parents face the task of raising their children. As Joharah Baker points out (Interview 9: 8.55):

> Palestinian children have seen a lot more than most children should ever have to see. So raising them is not an easy task. You have all the regular parenting issues that you have to deal with with kids, plus you have the oppression of the, erhm, of the weaker side, so they know all about permits and they know all about being in the occupation.

As pointed out in the empirical subchapter on 'Mothering', 6.3, there lays a political responsibility in raising Palestinian children. Furthermore, it is a political decision in itself to choose to raise your children in Palestine as opposed to in the diaspora. Ala'a Karajeh was born in Saudi Arabia but when she was a young girl her parents decided to move back to Palestine. Now she is married, has a one-year old son and another son

on the way. Her decision to raise her children in Palestine was deliberate (Interview 4: 5.45):

> It has become harder when I became a mother. I never thought, erhm, I thought, okay this is our destiny, we have to face it, this is our country, we have to defend ourselves, defend our rights. Erhm, we should, yaani[3], work hard to show the world that, erhm that we have been under occupation for a long time, and we have taken, the Israelis have taken all our rights to live in peace, yaani, to live a normal life. Errh, and I thought, okay, I should stay here, I should fight in many ways, in writing and being here, just being here yaani, I don't want to leave… But after I had a child I always had these thoughts of what if another intifada went on and you know, it's normal because I had this feeling as a mother I want to protect my child and I don't want him to get hurt, anything, anything. When I am thinking of leaving or maybe I should went to someplace yaani which is safe for babies and children can play as any children in the world, I just feel like I want to do this, just because, just for my babies yaani, not for me. But yaani, I also say, you know, these things, this life, erh, it's, these circumstances, is the things yaani, is the things who create me. Who makes me feel yaani, it's part of my personality.

Ala'a Karajeh has an urge to protect her children and to create a normal, safe life for them. On the other hand her national belonging to Palestine is very strong and a big part of her identity. Even though she and her children will not stop being or feeling Palestinian if they were to leave the county, there is a certain sense of honour and pride tied to the perseverance of staying on the land in spite of everything.

Their national identity is essential to the Palestinians, and having children is not only about continuing the family, it is about continuing the nation. Just being and being Palestinian on Palestinian land is essential for the survival of their nation and in this regard having children and raising them to be Palestinian and fight for their nation is crucial. Thus having children is not only a personal act but also an act of resistance, exemplified by the old saying about the Israelis that "they can beat us at the borders but not in the bedrooms".

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[3] 'Yaani' is a commonly used word in colloquial Arabic as it expresses phrases such as: 'I mean', 'you know', 'like' and 'erhm' and 'uhm'.

7.2.2 Gender Relations at Protests and Demonstrations

Going to demonstrations is another political act performed by most women, it is almost an inherent part of being Palestinian. Very few Palestinians in the West Bank, Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip grow up not attending demonstrations of some kind. There is however an important difference in who goes to what kind of demonstrations and protests. The large, national demonstrations taking place in the main squares of the larger cities are for everyone, and everyone go. They often seem more like celebrations than protests and people get time off work and school to go and take part. As the empirical subchapter 6.2.2 pointed out, the Friday protests in the villages are mostly attended by the residents of the villages as well as activists from other places in the West Bank. Female residents of the villages find few limitations to their participation as they are more or less around family only, but this too differ and some women, especially in the villages, are kept from participating (Interview 5: 16.50). The female activists that go to these kinds of demonstrations are often from the larger cities and from families who give them more freedom. In these kinds of protests as in others where the protesters confront Israeli soldiers head on, at borders, check-points and prisons, the potential violence from the soldiers and dangerous situations do keep some from participating as for example Abeer Zaghari who is asked why she does not participate in the protests (Interview 8: 17.11):

> Why? … Because for me, it's very dangerous. I guess, first my family would be very kind of, would be very scared if I do that, first of all. Second of all I have other ways that I can show my participation, my political participation and my Palestinian identity, my love to Palestine.

Here, Abeer Zaghari points out two important aspects of Palestinian women's participation in the struggle against the Israeli occupation. First of all, it can be done in many different ways and not everyone has to throw rocks or yell in the faces of soldiers to show their belonging to Palestine or their opposition to the occupation. The third subchapter in this analysis, 7.3, will take up alternative acts than direct confrontation. Secondly, there is an aspect of security and protection to be addressed when it comes to attending the protests that directly confront the Israeli army. Standing at the front lines of these protests is just as dangerous for men as for women.

Perhaps men might even be more exposed, as they have a higher risk of being treated violently and being imprisoned (Interview 6: 16.20). There is however a general understanding that the women at the protests are more vulnerable than the men and that they might be in need of protection. Lina Ibrahim, who attended a protest at the Ofer prison outside Ramallah in solidarity with the prisoners on hunger-strike on the day before the interview, experienced that "some of the young men, I even heard yesterday, you know, them telling some of the young women like 'please just move back a little bit, it's dangerous here'" (Interview 6: 16.35). Rami Samandar says he sometimes feels the urge to protect women at the protests: "Well, this is something else, maybe it doesn't have anything to do with politics and demonstrations, but as being a man, I guess. I feel, not I feel the need, but maybe it makes me feel good to protect the women." (Interview 7: 11.25)

The stereotypical understandings of gender relations pertaining in the conservative Palestinian society are present during the demonstrations as well, and some men do feel the responsibility to protect women in these situations. This is closely related to the different stereotypical gendered roles in conflict situations: men are the protectors; women are in need of protection. As presented in subchapter 4.3.2, 'Gendering Nationalism' Pettman (1996) argues that in situations where the nation is under threat men's citizen identity is closely related to that of a warrior and soldier whilst women are the reproducers of the nation. This closely links women to the nation and it becomes the task of the men to protect and fight for the women and the nation. This is of course a very black and white, generalized portrayal of the gendered relations in the Palestinian resistance movement, and not all true. But the fact that this is the norm portrays women's participation as all the more extraordinary.

In Palestine women are traditionally 'supposed' to be mothers, and it is not a rebellious or revolutionary act in itself. But when they step out of the stereotypical gender role and throw rocks or plant a Palestinian flag on top of an Israeli skunk tank, it is considered extraordinary. In this regard it is interesting to note that throughout the history of the Palestinian national struggle for independence and freedom, women

have played an important role, and they have always been present at the front lines. The women from the first intifada, who used their bodies as shields for the young men, are still talked of today with admiration and pride. Throughout history, as now, women in top post, in politics and in resistance movements, has been more an exception than the rule. However, women have always been a part of the resistance movement, and even though their acts might sometimes have transcended the gendered expectations of them, they have stayed in the role of mothers and wives. The Palestinian national struggle has always been very personal, as this thesis has shown, which has made the personal political. Women have not necessarily needed to go beyond being mothers, as having many children and raising them to be good Palestinians has been viewed as an important contribution. In other words, women have always participated in the national struggle; it is when their acts go beyond what is expected of them in their traditionalized roles, that they are considered extraordinary. Rami Samandar is used to women attending the protests and regards their participation as a given (Interview 7: 9.40):

> You see some brave women going in front, stopping cars or trying to stop soldiers from shooting, with their bodies, standing in front of the guns, trying to shout at soldiers and so on. So, many people look at them differently, like I don't see something strange with that, they should be there, the way I am there or any other person is. Like, if guys go, men go, why not women? Maybe others will look at them like, I don't know, like they shouldn't be here, but there is different points of view.

Women are Palestinian too, and therefore they too participate in the demonstrations and protests. Their participation in itself is nothing unusual but their gender is highlighted in certain situations, especially when they do something unexpected. It becomes a case of claiming that women's gender should not be held against them, as they should be able to participate equally to men, but at the same time maintaining that what they do is extraordinary because of their gender, a dilemma presented shortly in subchapter 4.1.4. This dilemma, or double standard if you will, is well exemplified in the interview with Linah Alsaafin (Interview 5: 17.25) when she talks about the reactions from the men on her participation in the protests:

Especially the men, the guys around us, erhm. Because, you know, because we are so small in numbers so we, we all just end up being friends and stuff. So the guys always tell us that, you know, like the women are more important than men and blah blah blah and like what we do is so much more than what they do. Erhm, like I don't want to think if it this way because I think it should be like a partnership. I don't think like the men should be better or the women should be better, I think it should be like on the same level. But it's always nice hearing that from your piers, you know, especially your male piers around you, I mean. And it's not just all talk either, you see through their actions and what they do and what they write about that like you know, the Palestinian women is like a source of strength and steadfastness and all of that, so it's really good.

Women's participation is important and sometimes extraordinary, and at the same time, they are supposed to be there. Because of their gender they are supposed to be protected, but because they are Palestinian, they are supposed to participate. This is that is what makes the acts that goes beyond what is expected of them so praised. In the quote above, Linah Alsaafin maintains that men and women should participate equally, but at the same time she appreciates the praise from her male piers. Palestinian women are again and again described at strong and persistent, especially when they overcome the gendered traditionalized roles assigned to them. On the other hand, it is because these roles are the norm, that women who go beyond them, are considered extraordinary when all they really do is live up the expectations of them as Palestinians.

This subchapter has shown that it is important to distinguish between women's political representation and their political activity. Even though women are not sufficiently represented in formal politics their political activity and acts of resistance to the occupation are continuously sustained. Most Palestinian women become mothers, a role that legitimizes them as true Palestinians, as they are the bearers of the future. But this legitimization is build on the children they give birth to, not the women as active agents in them selves. At demonstrations and protests women are not a rare sight, but it is still the male protesters that are the norm, the women being the exception. There is no doubt about their belonging to Palestine, but Palestinian

women are not participating in the struggle equally to men as long as the political sphere is based on male norms. As presented in subchapter 4.1.1 on 'Gendering Citizenship' Jones (1990) and Dietz (1987) argues, that the discourse of citizenship is gendered in itself and therefor equal access to a political community is not enough for women's membership here to become as full as that of men.

7.3 Palestinian women's acts of citizenship

As the first subchapter of this analysis, 7.1, dealt with the institution of Palestine, whether it can be considered a state or a nation, and the second subchapter, 7.2, dealt with Palestinian women as political actors, this subchapter deals with the acts that are meant to prove belonging to Palestine. In other words, these acts are how the actors (located in the second subchapter) assert their membership of a community (located in the first subchapter). The first subchapter came to the conclusion that even though Palestine resembles a state in many ways the government lacks the support of the people. Instead, the political community is based on a tight knit unity and close national affiliations to the other members of the community. Thus, belonging to Palestine, means belonging to the community. The second subchapter deals with the gendered relations in the three political acts of belonging identified in this thesis and emphasizes the high level of political activity among Palestinian women in spite of the male norms of formal politics and at demonstrations. Here I argue, thusly, that two of the most important factors of Palestinian women's political belonging to Palestine are the informal actions and participation outside of the formal politics and the resistance against the occupation as that proves to be an essential part of Palestinian identity and political belonging.

This relates to the theory of 'acts of citizenship' presented in subchapter4.1.3. This subchapter points out the distinct difference between holding a citizenship and acting as a citizen. Even though Palestinian women are not able to fulfill all the potential obligations one could expect of a citizen (as for example formal political participation), and as they neither enjoy the full rights one could expect as a citizen (as for example political representation and protection from the state), they do practice certain

aspects of their citizenship, and through different acts they continuously reaffirm it. Acts of citizenship are events through which subjects constitute themselves as citizens and in this thesis I argue that these events in the case of Palestinian women are often informal and often related to resisting the Israeli occupation. Isin and Nielsen (2008: 10) argue that acts of citizenship claim rights and impose obligations in emotionally charged tones, which is precisely the case for the Palestinians who attend demonstrations and protests week after week. But the fact that these events take place this frequently means that they rarely disrupt the habitus and the practices they protest against. However intense and powerful these actions are, they seldom change the facts on the ground. The sad truth is that even though it is just as horrible every time, the violent acts from the Israeli army against the Palestinian protesters comes to be almost expected when it happens week after week. Further, even though Palestinian protesters run in large numbers every time there is an opportunity to express dissatisfaction with the current situation, and even though these acts show great courage, strength and persistence, they rarely create new possibilities and shift established practices, status and order. The same goes for many attempts of formal political action, whether to improve the political situation inside Palestine or in relations to Israel. Isin and Nielsen (2008) argue that acts of citizenship are concrete practices of individual and collective engagement that ruptures the normality of everyday life, but in Palestine the occupation and the acts resisting it has been everyday life for every women, man and child for the past decades. Yet, these acts are extraordinary, and one can argue that persistence and diligence of the resistance is an indication that the Palestinians are far from satisfied with the current situation, and they will go far to change it. These different acts performed by Palestinian women, being everything from raising their children to believing in an independent Palestine; to throwing rocks at Israeli army vehicles are aimed at challenging the existing social and political order. Isin and Nielsen (2008) argue further that acts of citizenship are politically effective insofar as they help organize public presentations or appearances of often-contradictory statements which is exemplified by the tight national community of Palestinian people who stand together in spite of differences in opinions regarding the means and goals of the resistance.

Finally Isin and Nielsen (2008) argue that acts of citizenship are the actual moments that shift established practices, status and order. The claims are posed in enduring and creative expressions, which are the exact characteristics of the acts performed by Palestinian women, that have the most effect on their situation. It is interesting to note that the acts, where Palestinian women draw on their gender rather than discount it, are more creative in their execution and often more effective in their outcomes. An example of such an event is the group of women arranging a picnic to the otherwise inaccessible spring during the weekly protests in the West Bank village of Nabi Saleh. One of the women participating was Linah Alsaafin (Interview 5: 6.40) who says that the background for the event was that the female activists found the organization of the other protests to be male-oriented and wanted to do a separate event:

> It wasn't just in Nabi Saleh, the idea, bigger idea, was to go to the villages engaged in the weekly protests who has springs … that was the idea, like every month to go down to a spring that is confiscated or forbidden for the villagers to go to … and just assert, you know, our right to the springs and to the land in general. Which was, and it was considered a victory, I mean like when we went the first time we passed by the spring and my mouth fell open because there was three jeeps and maybe like I don't know, like twenty-five soldiers, like fully armed soldiers just standing there. And we were thinking, okay, well are we going to get pass them? Are they going to try to stop us? What is going to happen? When we got out the taxi we just walked by and they didn't do anything … So, basically we just had a good time, because that was the goal. You know, it wasn't like a protest, or of course it was a protest, you know, it does have political connotations, this act of defining, you know, the Israeli military blah blah blah. But we went to like, to carry ourselves in a normal way, it was just a group of women having a picnic. And that was what we did and that was great.

The women from the village of Nabi Saleh had not seen the spring for two years since it was taken over by Israeli settlers. The aim of the weekly protests in the village is to reach the spring, but it is always a more symbolic act as the Israeli soldiers always stop them. Changing tactics and doing something as harmless as a picnic, however, the women actually reached the spring and got to spend some time there and enjoy

themselves. Earlier I have argued that in Palestine everything is political because of the occupation. In this situation, the female activists turned it around and made a non-political act political, against the occupation. It is these creative acts that go beyond what is expected that really have an effect. In this regard Ala'a Karajeh (Inteview 4: 13.00) argue that the means and methods of the weekly protests are good, but:

> I agree with different kind of ways, different kinds of tools, to tell the message. You know, by dancing, by what ever. What ever you are good in, yaani … You know, these creative ideas, it is very effective, very effective. Because the Israeli cannot deal with it. They don't, they are confused when they see something like this. Yaani, they just wait for violence and for some people to come and throw some rocks and say 'okay, let's shoot them, or let's start the noise bombs or something yaani. But when some people yaani just came in peace, they are just confused and they don't know what to do. So this is why I think it is very important. It is very important, and it get's the worlds attention, you know. We should, we should go on, we should go on this type.

The acts that get the most attention are the unexpected ones, the ones that disrupts the norms, the usual ways of doing it. The mass hunger-strike among Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons in the spring of 2012 had everyone at the edge of their seat, holding their breath. These men and women were starving themselves; some of them came very close to dying, in order to get their demands through, for a fair trial and a worthy life. They were dying in order to live. However horrific, the prisoners used the only tools they had; their bodies in an effective strike.

These acts, performed outside of formal politics, that are 'homemade', proves the fact that the occupation affect every aspects of Palestinians' lives and that this is the arena where the real struggles are fought. As peace negotiations with Israel are stalled, political unity between Hamas and Fatah keeps disappearing as fast as it came, and the US hinders the recognition of a Palestinian state at the UN, the Palestinian people keep fighting on the ground.

8 Belonging to Palestine

In this chapter I draw on the major points and conclusions of the above analysis and discuss it in relation to the current position of Palestinian women in regards to the occupation and to the Palestinian political situation. Clearly, the challenges of state building, citizenship, democratization and nationalism in the Palestinian community are closely related to the ways women are understood within the society. The political roles of Palestinian women are influenced by the focus on resisting the occupation as well as the reluctance to address patriarchal structures within the Palestinian society and formal politics. The political tension within Palestine, as well as between Palestine and Israel have a great effect on women's political liberties and social rights. This tension present challenges to Palestinian women's everyday lives, but also draw the attention away from calls for equality in other areas. It is in this matrix of intersecting oppressions I have sought to find the means of the Palestinian women to assert their political belonging to the Palestinian nation and future state.

Under occupation Palestinians are considered resident aliens according to Israeli civil and military law. They need permits to live, build houses and move within their own country. The Palestinian Authority has very limited power when it comes to residency issues within the Palestinian territories and a citizenship law cannot be adopted without a state. The rule and control of the PA is constrained and restricted, and their lack of sovereignty is evident as this is heavily influenced by the Israeli government and military. In regards to the occupation, the Palestinians demand independence and justice but they also have demands towards their own government. As the analysis has shown, the Palestinians have little faith in their leadership's ability to better their situation. One thing is expressing opposition to the occupation but Palestinian women (and men) also face the challenge of expressing opposition to their own government. The lack of fully democratic institutions and the shallowness of democratic experience make it difficult to do this through conventional political participation only.

Palestinian women's participation in the civil society and NGOs is experiencing a fast increase in the resent years. Yet they are not included in formal power structures to any significant extend in neither the PA nor in the political parties. In spite hereof, women are a big part of the political communities and especially active in local, informal activities. However, the close relations between the Palestinian political leadership and other political communities, creates a situation where the dominant groups in the society have a large influence on these communities, how they are formed and who has a say. The claims of working for the good of the nation allows the leadership to construct the narrative on the national interest and thereby downplay the role of certain groups and interests from the national community and power relations. The theories presented in this thesis argued that the entire conceptualization of citizenship privileges men in a political sphere dominated by the masculinist constructions of formal politics. Women are excluded from this sphere in the process, which is why this thesis has dealt with a more holistic approach to citizenship that de-homogenize the notion and emphasize the different situated positions of the citizens.

Analysing citizenship in light of feminism proves especially interesting in this case, as the right to belong and to participate equally in political communities has been an important demand of many feminist movements. The exclusion of women from the national decision-making and power relations makes it interesting to look into the alternatives available to Palestinian women, where they draw on their recent history with unconventional political action in relation to the national struggle, and develop new strategies of expression. The marginalization of much of women's participation in formal politics as well as in the national struggle heightens the importance of visibility rather than quantitative measures to women's political citizenship (Lister 2003: 145). The women who go out and claim their space at demonstrations and at the negotiating table paves the way for other women to do the same. The fact that women do overcome the restraints put on their political activities is a testimony to their commitment to the ideals of political citizenship and even more so to their commitment to, and belief in, justice and freedom in a future Palestinian state.

The historic significance of the political participation of Palestinian women on resisting the Israeli occupation, has provided them with both opportunities and constraints. The national struggle opened up social spaces for women and provided them with opportunities to develop a political voice. Even though women's roles in the political struggles have not been sufficiently recognized they have always been an important part in the struggle for national liberation. Women's participation in the first intifada is renowned, still talked of, and given as an example of political unity across gender divides and political communities. The popular characteristics of this period of resistance have made it an event the Palestinian people look back on in pride. The elderly women who protected the youth with their bodies and defied the Israeli soldiers are almost considered national heroes. The involvement of women in national struggles may create new spaces for them as well as politicise and radicalize their role. Moreover, their femininity and gender roles may be used or even exploited as they may be viewed as less political, dangerous and violent by the other side in a conflict. The roles of Palestinian women in the national struggle are many as they both participate on the front lines next to men, but also take on the gendered roles of being a mother or using their gender in the resistance.

At the same time, Palestinian women clearly recognize that, despite their political activism the future achievement of the national liberation does not guarantee that women will gain social, economic, and political emancipation. Previous examples have proven that the causes that are marginalized in the struggle are marginalized in its victories (Pettman 1996: 61). The ideologies and actions of nationalism can be extremely powerful and positive influences for change. But it can also be used to promote particularistic conceptions of what issues are considered significant for the nation to address. Thus, some social divisions and inequalities are defined as subordinate to the national liberation, which has been the case of women's issues in Palestine.

An interviewee for this research, Bisan Abu Ruqti, described the ambivalent role of Palestinian women in the national struggle well when she said that "you can go throw stones but you cannot go live with your boyfriend" (Interview 3: 17.35). The patriarchal structures of the society are flexible if breaking them means more participants in the national struggle, but on other issues, the restrictions are harder to avoid. Thus, the intersection of oppression experienced by Palestinian women might be heavily influenced by the Israeli occupation but the patriarchal structures of both public and private life within Palestine is not to be disregarded. When asked about issues concerning women's rights and feminism, many Palestinian women state: "I am Palestinian first" (e.g. Interview 1). The reasons for this, is most likely that being Palestinian is more prominent under the occupation which is and a current and explicit reminder of the need to be Palestinian, but also the emphasis on this oppression by the Palestinian leadership. As argued in the theoretical subchapter on 'intersectionality', however, social divisions are not reducible to each other. As both demanding rights as a Palestinian, and as a woman, is to a large degree about inclusion and entitlement it is interesting to see if Palestinian women are able to draw on lessons learn in the national struggle.

There is a tendency of increasing participation of young Palestinian women at protests and demonstrations, both together with men and organized by the women themselves. Even since before the first intifada Palestinian women have described as strong and persistent and the level of their political activities in spite of the restrictions put on them is a testimony to this. Further it is interesting to note how they women who conduct brave acts in the name of Palestine are regarded as heroes rather than someone disobeying cultural norms. Rana Hamadeh who raised a Palestinian flag on an Israeli skunk-tank during a protest were praised and portrayed throughout the internet and in local newspapers. The same goes for Hana Shalabi who went on a hunger-strike while in Israeli detention. Her acts were regarded as a great deed for the Palestinian nation. When Hana Shalabi greeted the world from the Israeli prison on the international women's day she too drew parallels between the freedom of Palestine and the freedom of women. She stated that she was striking for the freedom of

Palestine and for the dignity of women everywhere, and that she would not compromise her freedom at any price.

Hana Shalabi and the other prisoners on hunger strikes are a clear portrait of the saying that has become essential to the Palestinian struggle for freedom: that to exist is to resist, or in other words, in order to exist they must resist. This thesis has argued that in asserting their belonging to Palestine it is important for Palestinian women to account for informal actions and especially in regards to resisting the occupation in different ways. Every act they perform to state their belonging is essential. Yet the one act that might have the greatest effect is that they exist and that they keep existing on the land they claim to be theirs. As Abeer Zaghari pointed out (Interview 8: 18.00):

> Activism and political participation and being involved in this struggle is further more than only going to demonstrations. I am. By being only a Palestinian, living in Palestine, I am participating in the struggle and adding more to the Palestinian cause.

9. Conclusions

The research conducted for this thesis has been aimed at answering how Palestinian women assert their political belonging to Palestine when there is no state to claim citizenship of.

The first sub-question posed in order to narrow in on the answer of the research question was if Palestine can be considered a state, and if not, then what is Palestine? Before analysing the political belonging of Palestinian women I found it necessary to ask what Palestine is. In this regard the analysis came to the conclusion that Palestine do resemble a state in many ways. However, the government lacks the support of the people, who have little faith in formal political solutions to their situation as they have seen the realization of very few of the promises they have been given. Instead, the political community is based on a tight knit unity and close national affiliations to the

other members of the community. In other words, the Palestine, the Palestinians fight to protect, is their homeland, their motherland, not their state. Belonging to Palestine, means belonging to the community.

The second sub-question asked in this research regards the political roles of Palestinian women. As this research has proved, these roles are many and diverse. The empirical chapter presented three different arenas in which Palestinian women assert their political belonging to Palestine through different acts. The male norms and patriarchal structures in a conservative society have made it difficult for Palestinian women to practice their citizenships and memberships of the different political communities. The political representation of women in formal arenas, is low and not recognized to the full extend. Women are participants but rarely reach important decision-making positions. In this case I argue, however that to find women's means to assert their political belonging to Palestine, one must look beyond the formal political representation to their high level of political activity in other areas.

Resisting the Israeli occupation is the most important arena to participate in to constitute ones belonging to the overall Palestinian political community. As it is the occupation that hinders the Palestinians to live out the membership to their community, women's participation here is key if they are to constitute themselves as political citizens of Palestine. They do this in many ways; by participating in protests, throwing stones and yelling at Israeli soldiers and by raising their children with an aim to secure a peaceful future. The means and measures are as many and as different as the Palestinian women themselves.

The third and last sub-question asked in this research regards the acts performed by Palestinian women. Here the analysis concludes that the acts that get the most attention and have the most effect are the ones that are unexpected and disrupts the norms of the Palestinian society and their resistance to the occupation. Further, it is the acts that are 'homemade', conducted informally outside the formal political structures that are acclaimed and praised.

Prior to the uprooting of the Palestinian people in 1948, citizenship was tied to the land and Palestinians were the people who lived in Palestine. In the past sixty years this has changed and changed again. In claiming their political belonging to Palestine Palestinian women are not only fighting the occupation but also the conservative practices within their own society. As such they are caught in an intersection of oppressions.

In this intersection Palestinian women act every day to assert their membership of the different political communities to which they claim to belong. They do this through informal acts, often located on the grass root, and in their villages, homes and private lives.

In Palestine everything is a question of belonging, and this research has shown that in order to belong it is not enough to gain equal access. This accounts for within the Palestinian society as well as in relations to the occupation. Belonging is not simply about access. It is about having somewhere to call home that is not controlled by outside forces and about being a full member of a community without anyone putting restrictions on this membership.

10. Future Perspectives

In relations to the exclusion of women from the national decision-making and power relations it is interesting to look into the alternatives that are available to Palestinian women. The resent history of unconventional political action in relation to the national struggle could prove to be an important experience for Palestinian women in developing new strategies for their expression and demands of their rights. As there are similarities between the Palestinian struggle for independence and women's rights movements it is interesting to investigate whether the Palestinian women's movement have been able to draw on their experiences from the national struggle.

In addition it is interesting to investigate further on the upsurge of young Palestinian activists like Rana Hamadeh and Linah Alsaafin who defy not only the patriarchal structures dominating their society but also the Israeli occupation forces. How these women both participate and claim their equal place next to men while they at the same time use their gender in their protests are interesting aspects yet to be fully elaborated.

Also in relation to resisting the occupation it is interesting to go further into the more creative, less confrontational ways some Palestinians have chosen to express their opposition; through art and dance or using the internet and social media.

Lastly the hunger strikes occurring among Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails have demanded a lot of attention this spring. As hunger strikes is by no means a new form of showing resistance it is however interesting to note how these people who use the only tool they have; their empty stomachs have an entire community protesting and showing solidarity with them. Their cause, their tools, their stakes and their sacrifice has been so strong and demanding of attention that it proves that this is a very effective means of resistance.

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11.2 Interviews

Interview no	Name	Occupation	Date and Place of Interview	Other
1	Lamis Hantouli	Project Coordinator, MIFTAH	19.04.2012, Ramallah	
2	Lily Fiedy	Chief Excecutive Officer, MIFTAH	21.04.2012, Ramallah	
3	Bisan Abu Ruqti	Director, Good Governance and Democracy Program, MIFTAH	25.04.2012, Ramallah	
4	Ala'a Karajeh	Arabic Media Coordinator, MIFTAH	15.05.2012, Ramallah	
5	Linah Alsaafin	Activist and writer for Palestine Monitor	16.05.2012, Ramallah	
6	Lina Ibrahim,	Student and Activist	17.05.2012, Ramallah	Palestinian living in Philadelphia, US. In Palestine to visit family and volunteer
7	Rami Samandar	Bio-engineer and internal auditor at Palestinian Medical Relief Society	25.05.2012, Ramallah	
8	Abeer Zaghari	Administrative Assistance, MIFTAH	26.05.2012, Ramallah	
9	Joharah Baker	Writer at Jerusalem Media and Communications Centre	26.05.2012, Ramallah	

11.3 Meetings and Workshops

19.09.2011: "Does America Really Want a Palestinian State? Yes" Roundtable discussion at MIFTAH, with Professor Walter Russell Mead, Professor of Foreign Affairs and Humanities at Bard College and Editor-at-Large of the American Interest. The meeting, which mainly targeted representatives from Palestinian civil society, focused on the question of whether the United States really wants a Palestinian state. http://miftah.org/CurrentIssues.cfm

02.05.2012 – 05.05.2012: "Supporting Young Palestinian Women Political Leaders." Workshop at City Inn Hotel in Al-Bireh, organized by MIFTAH and the UNDP. 30 female participants from different parts of the West Bank, between the ages of 25 and 35. The participants were all affiliated with Palestinian political parties: Fatah, Hamas, Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and several smaller parties.

12. Appendices

Appendix I: Map of Palestine

Appendix II: Interview Guide

How and when did your interest in the Palestinian cause begin?

How would you describe the political situation in Palestine?

To what degree do women participate?

What is the role of women in the state-building process?

What is the role of women in the national struggle?

What role will/should women play in a future state?

What roles do Palestinian women play in the Palestinian society (public, private)?

How do you assert your belonging to Palestine?

Have you/Do you still participate in demonstrations and protests?

Why/Why not?

To what degree do women participate in these acts?

What is the difference between being a Palestinian woman and a Palestinian man?

What does equality mean to you?

Appendix III: CD with Interviews