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Making a home in Palestine

Revealing the true colours of the Israeli ID card system

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This thesis is dedicated to my dear friend Nabil,
who introduced me to Palestine and continues to inspire me.

Abstract

This thesis explores the impact of the Israeli coloured ID card system on Palestinian senses of belonging. This research examines the continuing significance of identity documents in Palestinian lives, shaped by their occupying powers with Israel as the longest ongoing Occupation today. Generally, research on the Israeli ID card system employs a pure governance approach and analyses the impact on population management and the (im)mobility of Palestinians. This research addresses the gap in academic literature by operationalising the framework of *feelings of home* by Duyvendak (2011). By conducting narrative semi-structured interviews with Palestinians living in East Jerusalem, Ramallah and Bethlehem area, this thesis wants to gain a deeper understanding of Palestinian feelings of home in the light of this coloured ID card system. This research will demonstrate how the opportunities to feel at home in Palestine are highly determined by the ID card system. However, the respondents devised various home-making strategies to find a way through this system. This thesis argues that the State of Israel has installed a discriminatory system that is in fact a biopolitical practice that aims to make all aspects of Palestinian life dependent on the existence and colour of one card.

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1. Introduction

It is a Sunday evening in the Summer of 2018 when my friend Mohamad asks me if I want to step in the passenger seat of the car. Together with Mohamad's wife and their child we drive back to East Jerusalem. When approaching Qalandia, the checkpoint between Jerusalem and Ramallah, his wife Dina puts her head down and clutches her handbag closely to her upper body. They explain to me it is frightful and complicated to pass the checkpoint, because Dina was born in Bethlehem and she does not have the blue Jerusalem ID card. Thus, she is not allowed to pass through a checkpoint by car and instead she can only enter on foot. Moreover, neither does she have a permit to spend the night in Jerusalem with her family. Dina continues by explaining that she wants to avoid having to show her green West Bank ID card to the checkpoint soldier by pretending she is a child. If the soldiers would think of her as a child, the risk is smaller that they will ask for her ID card, I am told. So, she always sits in the back of the car hunched over and since she is pregnant at the time, she also needs to cover up her belly. We arrive at Qalandia and the soldier demands us to stop. Mohamed and I are asked to show our ID cards. The soldier has a confused look on his face when examining my foreign passport. After a few seconds the soldier returns Mohamad's blue ID card and my Dutch passport. He looks at me and says smiling: "I hope you have a great evening!" We all know that this 'joyful' goodbye was only meant for me.

(Personal diary August 2018)

On 14 May 1948 the State of Israel was proclaimed. The subsequent 1948 war is referred to as the *War of Independence* for Israelis and the *Nakba* (the catastrophe) for Palestinians (Shafir 2017). During this war more than half of the population of historic Palestine, approximately 800 000 people, were forced to flee their homes and around 600 Palestinian villages and towns were destroyed (Pappé 2006). Until today these refugees and their descendants are waiting for their right to return to their homes. After the establishment of the State of Israel periods of violent clashes followed. In the meantime, the Israeli government continued to expand its power at the cost of the Palestinians. The end of the Six Day War in 1967, or the *Naksa* (the set back) marked the beginning of the Israeli Occupation of the remaining parts of historic Palestine (Shafir 2017). The State of Israel annexed East Jerusalem and occupied the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Jerusalem, a capital claimed by both the Israeli government as well as the Palestinian Authority, is at the heart of the conflict. It is the holy city of three religions, and it has a history of thousand years of sieges, captures and destruction. The status of Jerusalem is an

important and also controversial issue. To illustrate, EU's official stance towards the possible resolution of the conflict is a two-state solution with Jerusalem as a shared capital (European Union External Action 2016). Yet, with recent developments such as president Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and the following move of the US embassy to Jerusalem, the status of the city becomes more contested by the day (Al Jazeera Centre for Studies 2017). Besides the role of international actors, research has shown that the Israeli government itself is striving to de-Arabize the city (Zureik 2001: 215; Tawil-Souri 2012: 158).

Today, the Palestinian population has been suffering over 70 years of dispossession and Occupation. The Israeli Occupation resulted in a military regime characterized by violations of even the most basic human rights. Forced house demolitions, administrative detention, illegal settlements, permits and ID cards have become intrinsic parts of Palestinian daily life (Shafir 2017: 87). The State of Israel has installed physical barriers such as checkpoints and it has cut off the West Bank from Jerusalem by building the Wall (ibid.). Moreover, the State of Israel has adopted numerous tools and practices to control and monitor every aspect of Palestinian life (Shafir 2017; Pappé 2006; Weizman 2007; Tawil-Souri 2011; 2012). The aim of this research is to analyse the impact of one particular Israeli tool: the coloured identity (ID) card system. When Israel occupied the remaining parts of Palestine in 1967, the State also installed an unequal and discriminatory ID card system (Tawil-Souri 2011; 2012). More than fifty years later, this system is still operating at its fullest capacity.

In short, the Israeli government has the power to issue ID cards to its Israeli population and the occupied Palestinians. There are 4 different ID cards: Israeli ID cards, Jerusalem ID cards, West Bank ID cards and Gaza Strip ID cards (Tawil-Souri 2011; 2012). This is referred to as the 'colour coded ID system', since the ID cards are placed in different coloured covers (ibid.). A substantial amount of research on the coloured ID card system employs a governance approach and analyses the impact of this system on, amongst others, population management and the social and economic (im)mobility of Palestinians. However, this ID card system raises many more questions. There is a significant lack of attention in the existing literature on the impact of the coloured ID card system on emotions. Thus, this paper wants to shed new light on this Israeli tool.

This research will address this gap and add value to the academic knowledge on this topic by offering an alternative framework. Scholars such as Tawil-Souri have demonstrated how the ID card system is used as a means of control over the mobility of Palestinians and as a strategy to de-Arabize Jerusalem. This evidence, together with the Palestinian claim to

Jerusalem, raises questions on the *sense of belonging* of Palestinians. To what extent is it possible to feel like you belong to Jerusalem when you can only (legally) enter the city with a permit granted by the occupying regime? How can Palestinian Jerusalemites feel at home in Jerusalem when the Israeli state is actively pushing them out of the city? How do West Bank Palestinians feel at home in an occupied territory when their freedom of movement is limited by tools such as the ID card system? Inspired by existing literature and my own experiences in the field, the research question can be defined as following:

How do Palestinians narrate their sense of belonging in the context of the coloured ID card system?

This research question raises the following sub-questions: what is the historical context in which this ID card system was developed? What are the characteristics of the ID card system that is currently in place? What is the theory of sense of belonging and how can this be operationalised in this context? And how does this coloured ID card system impact Palestinian senses of belonging?

It is of academic as well of societal relevance to investigate the sense of belonging of Palestinians and to discover the interaction with the coloured ID card system. The societal relevance of this research can be found in the fact that home, even in its most abstract sense, matters to everyone and the feeling that you belong in a certain way is an important value in life (Duyvendak 2011). This research angle is of great importance, since this system can determine the course of your life. To illustrate, this coloured ID card has the power to decide where you can or cannot build your home, go to school, start a career and who you can fall in love with and start a family with. Furthermore, this research was conducted after president Trump's announcement of the 'deal of the century', which states that "Jerusalem will remain the sovereign capital of the State of Israel" (White House 2020). In other words, the status of Jerusalem becomes more contested by the day.

This thesis is organised as follows: the first chapter will present a literature review in which the precedent research on the historical and present-day significance of identity documents for Palestinians will be described. The literature review will demonstrate the gap in the existing literature on this topic. The second chapter will outline the theoretical framework of this research. The relevant theoretical concepts of sense of belonging will be operationalised for this specific case. The third chapter will outline the methodology of this research. This chapter will reflect on the initial on-the-ground methods followed by an ethics

statement and a consideration of the alternative research methods. This chapter will end with a reflection on the limitations that might have influenced this research. The fourth chapter will present the empirical analysis of the findings of the study. Lastly, the concluding chapter will provide a discussion of the theory and findings. Finally, an answer to the research question will be formulated and suggestions for further research will be proposed.

2. Literature review

This chapter will discuss the existing literature on the ID card system and will demonstrate the gap within it. The first section will introduce one of the central concepts of this research, namely the biopolitical framework. The following section will outline the significance of identity documents for Palestinians, commencing with its history and materiality. This is followed by a characterization of the system that is in place today and its impact on the daily lives of the different ID card holders. The next section will focus on the scarce literature of the biopolitical control of the ID card system over family life. Finally, the last section will present the key points and questions related to the gap in the literature.

2.1 Israeli biopolitics: the ID card system

A vast amount of literature on the Occupation of the Palestinian territories follows the argument that research on this topic must include a study on Israeli biopolitical practices (Parsons and Salter 2013; Zureik 2001). Without denying the relevance of the studies on the sovereign and disciplinary nature of Israel's power over the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) and its population, Parsons and Salter (2013) argue for a turn to the study on the biopolitical nature of Israel. The theory of biopolitics or biopolitical power is mostly known for its conceptualization by Foucault. Foucault identified three types of power: sovereign, disciplinary and biopolitical. In short, biopolitics can be characterized as an instrument to manage populations. Parsons and Salter (idem: 702) argue that closure is at the centre of the Israeli Occupation, by pointing out the practices of the Israeli state that aim to control every step of the Palestinian population, such as the Wall, checkpoints, the ID card system and the permit system. Moreover, they classify this element of closure as a biopolitical practice. They illustrate this by outlining the biopolitical aspects of Israeli controlled checkpoints and the construction of the Wall. Parsons and Salter (idem: 703) demonstrate how these practices are not only about closing off the OPT, yet the nature of these tools is to control every aspect of a human or good that wants to pass through.

Another key element in Israel's biopolitical nature is the power it has over the issuance of identity documents. The identity card, or the *hawiya* as it is referred to by Palestinians, determines every basic right a Palestinian is supposed to have, according to its occupier. In reality, this ID card system is a tool to monitor, control and discriminate Palestinians and to deny them the most basic rights. Zureik (2001: 224) also describes the ID card system as "the symbol of surveillance *par excellence*." Before analysing the current circumstances of the ID

card system, the next section will summarize a historical background in which the importance and impact of identity documents in the lives of Palestinians will be discussed.

2.2 The power of numbers: a history of identity documents in Palestine

During the reign of the Ottoman Empire, the Palestinians were seen as subjects of the Empire and therefore relied on the Ottomans for travel permits. After the fall of the Empire, the Mandate for Palestine provided Britain with the mandate to rule over Palestine and Transjordan. The status of Palestinians changed from "Ottoman subjects" to "Turkish subjects and habitual residents of the territory of Palestine" (Tawil-Souri 2012: 156). Consequently, they were given Mandate identity cards and travel permits by the British administration. This marked the first time the Palestinians were given a form of legal status, yet no official Palestinian identity card was created (Kelly 2006: 93). During this Mandate period, the British government announced its support for a "Jewish national home" in Mandate Palestine with the Balfour Declaration in 1917 (Pappé 2006). During the British reign Jewish immigration to Palestine increased and violence eroded between Palestinian, Jewish and British forces. This escalated into the 1948 Arab-Israeli war in which thousands of Palestinians were forced to flee their homes and hundreds of Palestinian villages were destroyed (ibid.). On 14 May 1948, David Ben-Gurion proclaimed the establishment of the State of Israel.[1]

After the establishment of the State of Israel, the newly established state conducted a census count of the Jewish and Arab populations in November 1948 (Zureik 2012: 213-214). This census count has had devasting consequences for Palestinian families and homes until this day. This census was conducted in an equal manner, namely: those 'Arab' people who were absent from their homes at the time of the census were also marked as absent in the census taking (ibid.). However, this census count was conducted during the 1948 War in which around 800 000 Palestinians were expelled from their houses (Pappé 2006). Since this way of counting was only applied to the Arab population, it endangered their right to return to their cities and also to their historic homes (Zureik 2012: 213-214). Until today, their right to return home has not been granted to them or their second and third generation. After this census was 'completed', Palestinians residing in the Israeli state were granted ID cards. These approximately 160 000 Arab-Israeli, or 'Palestinians from the inside' as they call themselves, were given mandate ID cards (idem: 157).

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[1] For in-depth research on the history of Israel and Palestine, see for example the work by Edward Said and Ilan Pappé.

Yet, what about the Palestinians residing 'outside' of the newly established State of Israel? After the 1948 War many Palestinians living in what became the State of Israel had to flee to the West Bank. Palestinians living in East Jerusalem and the West Bank were given temporary Jordanian passports and were therefore regarded as Jordanian citizens (Kelly 2009: 94). Palestinians residing in the Gaza Strip were given documents by the Egyptian administration (Tawil-Souri 2012: 156). On the contrary, the Law of Return of 1950 gives all Jewish people in the world the 'right to return' to Israel and the right to obtain Israeli citizenship (Kelly 2006: 93). The Six Day War that ended in 1967 marked the beginning of the Israeli Occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the beginning of an unequal and discriminatory ID system by colour (Tawil-Souri 2011; 2012). Israel now occupied the whole of historic Palestine, together with the Syrian Golan Heights and the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula (Shafir 2017: 16-17). During this war, Israel expelled again thousands of Palestinians from their homes and installed a military Occupation in East Jerusalem and the West Bank (ibid.). Since 1967, all adults in Israel and the OPT need to possess a state-issued ID card (Tawil-Souri 2011; 2012). More than fifty years later, this system is still in place.

How are ID cards distributed amongst the population of Israel and the OPT? On the whole, the Israeli government has the power to issue ID cards to its Israeli population and the occupied Palestinians, who are formally under the rule of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). There are 4 different ID cards: Israeli ID cards, Jerusalem ID cards, West Bank ID cards and Gaza Strip ID cards (Tawil-Souri 2012: 157). This is labelled as the 'colour coded ID system', because of the different coloured covers of the ID cards. During the first years of this newly established system, West Bank Palestinians were given orange identity cards and Palestinians in the Gaza Strip red ID cards, which only granted them the right to reside in the Gaza Strip or West Bank (Kelly 2009: 94). In order to pass through or visit Jerusalem or Israel, permits were required. In other words, this ID card held no civil or political rights and could not be used to travel abroad. In 1988, a new element was added to this system: the OPT Palestinians who were seen as a security threat by the State of Israel were issued a green card, which also meant they were not allowed to enter Israel (Kelly 2009; Tawil-Souri 2011; 2012). Yet, what this 'security risk' entailed was open to interpretation by the Israeli authorities. It could vary from an arrest record to someone with political affiliations (ibid.). Besides, during that same year the Kingdom of Jordan gave up its claim to the West Bank which made the West Bank Palestinians officially stateless (Tawil-Souri 2011: 71-72). The Jordanian passports were now only valid as a travel document.

Furthermore, Palestinians who were living in East Jerusalem at the time of the annexation in 1967, became 'permanent residents' and were denied Israeli citizenship (Kelly 2009: 94). Moreover, they have been stateless longer than 20 years compared to West Bank Palestinians, since the Kingdom of Jordan already renounced its claims to East Jerusalem in 1967 (Tawil-Souri 2012). As will be demonstrated later in this paper, the blue ID card granted them a certain extent of freedom but is in its essence discriminating on its own. Moreover, providing the State of Israel with proof you are a 'true' resident of Jerusalem is a complicated and never-ending process.

To continue, during the 1990s, with the Oslo Peace Accords, the administrative tasks of the ID card system were handed over to the newly established PNA in 1994 (Kelly 2009: 94). Yet, similar to many other administrative responsibilities of the PNA, this is a facade. First of all, in order to claim a West Bank ID card, you need to be registered in the West Bank population registry and the Israeli authority has the power to deny any new entry (idem: 95). Moreover, Tawil-Souri (2011) and Weizman (2007) have demonstrated how the PNA institutions that are 'responsible' for ID requests and permits, have to hand over every application to the Israeli authorities, including the Israeli secret service. Secondly, the Oslo Accords divided the West Bank into three administrative zones which are still known today as area A, B and C (Kelly 2009: 95). In Area A, which makes up 18% of the West Bank, the PNA has 'exclusive' responsibility for security and civil matters. In Area B, around 22% of the West Bank, the PNA and Israeli military 'share' the security responsibilities. Lastly, the Israeli military was given the full control over area C: the remaining 60% of the West Bank. The brackets demonstrate how these accords in fact have normalized the Occupation: the reality behind this division of the occupied West Bank is an expansion of Israel's military control over the Palestinian population. To illustrate, during the years after the Oslo Accords, Israel increased the number of checkpoints within the OPT and the checkpoint soldiers are now armed with a central database in which they can check the identity documents of Palestinians who try to pass through (ibid.). Furthermore, the Israeli authorities remain in charge over the issuing of ID cards for Palestinians living in East Jerusalem (ibid.). Even though this division of the West Bank was supposed to be a temporary 'solution' and the PNA would gain full control over these areas, this division is still in place today.

Altogether, identity documents have always played an ambiguous role in the lives of Palestinians and the decisions of their identities (on paper) have always been determined by the occupier. Nowadays, the following categorization of ID cards is in place: true-blue for Jewish-Israeli citizens, Arab-blue for Arab-Israeli citizens, green blue for Arab residents of

East Jerusalem, green for Palestinians residing in the West Bank and dark green for Palestinians residing in the Gaza Strip (Visualizing Palestine 2014). Still, it is important to bear in mind that this system is complicated and is constantly subject to change. In the words of Tawil-Souri (2012: 8): ''if it's sounding confusing, it's supposed to be.'' The following section will explore in more detail what is written in these coloured documents.

2.3 The power of paper: coloured distinctions

At first, what these ID cards have in common is the information of one's name, date of birth, place of residence, religion and marital status (Tawil-Souri 2012: 159). However, when taking a closer look, crucial differences in information can be discovered. First of all, the above-mentioned information is written in both Hebrew and Arabic on the green ID cards with the emblem of the PNA. Yet the information on the blue cards is only in Hebrew with the stamp of the State of Israel (ibid.). Moreover, as for the blue ID cards, the State of Israel created another means to distinguish between its Arab residents and Israeli residents: under nationality is listed whether you are Jewish, Arab, Druze or Bedouin (ibid.). However, in the case of the Jerusalem, West Bank and Gaza Strip ID card holders, their nationality is automatically denoted as Arab. Secondly, Jewish-Israeli and Arab-Israeli citizens automatically obtain Israeli citizenship, and this is noted on their ID card. Arab residents of East Jerusalem, on the contrary, have a blank space under citizenship and the citizenship section is completely absent on the ID cards of West Bank Palestinians and Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip (ibid.). These practices of defining or omitting citizenship statuses on ID cards can be interpreted in various ways, but what is clear: it is in itself a powerful and influential act. Zureik (2001: 215) argues that the self-pronounced State of Israel not only tried to cleanse its population of Palestinians, but also its vocabulary. This can be witnessed until today as the State of Israeli speaks of its Arab citizens and the Arab residents of East Jerusalem (Tawil-Souri 2012: 159). The Palestinian residents, or in the words of the State of Israel: the Arab residents of East Jerusalem, are nothing when it comes to citizens. Furthermore, what about the citizenship status of the Palestinian population of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip? Not even worth mentioning and probably even non-existing according to the State of Israel.

In sum, the rights of the population of Israel and the OPT are based on an interpretation of citizenship as classified by the State of Israel. Since Israel is built from a Zionist conception of a state, this means every Jew around the world has the right to return as a citizen (Zureik 2001: 225). In contrast, Palestinians are not even recognised as citizens of

their historic homeland. With in mind the power of language and words on these ID cards, what are the consequences of the existence of this physical card in daily life?

2.4 Palestinian (im)mobility: identity cards and permits

To begin with, a Palestinian needs his ID card to get access to all kinds of aspects of civil life: to withdraw money but also to open a bank account, to register birth and death, to access healthcare, to enrol in high schools and higher education, and so on (Tawil-Souri 2011: 77). Along with this control over civil life, the ID cards determine all the steps, in its most literal sense, a Palestinian can take within the OPT and Israel.

West Bank Palestinians are not allowed to enter Jerusalem or Israel without a permit, or in Arabic a *tassrih'* (idem: 78). Similar to the ID card system, the confusing and discriminating nature of the permit regime is part of how the system works to govern people. In 1991, Israel installed a permit regime in which OPT Palestinians had to request an individual permit to enter Jerusalem, Israel or an Israeli (illegal) settlement (Patrizot 2018: 26). To distinguish between those who are and who are no 'security threat' in the eyes of the Israeli authorities, any Palestinian who wants to qualify for a permit also needs to obtain a magnetic card (Tawil-Souri 2011: 78). According to the latest numbers there are around 100 different types of permits (BADIL Research Center 2015). There are separate permits for travelling to Jerusalem, Israel or Jewish settlements. To continue, there are work permits, permits that allow you to pray at Al-Aqsa Mosque or the Holy Sepulchre, a permit to attend a funeral or wedding, a permit to undergo a medical treatment in Israel and so on (idid.). The application process for a permit is expensive, complicated and time consuming. Similar to the ID card, a permit is subject to interpretation by any Israeli official. A green ID card holder could be denied a permit for 'security reasons', yet this is also a reason used by Israeli soldier to refuse you at the checkpoint even though you have a permit in your possession (ibid.).

Despite the fact that no permit is needed to travel within the West Bank, this cannot be labelled as 'free movement'. Even though it is not the focus of this research, one needs to be aware that checkpoints are intrinsically linked to the daily lives of most Palestinians living in East Jerusalem and the West Bank (Rijke 2019). To be able to travel within the OPT, any Palestinian adult needs to be able to show its ID card to any soldier who demands for it at the checkpoint.

Finally, Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip are an exceptional case, since no travel to and from the Gaza Strip is allowed. In 2005, Israel imposed a (by international law illegal) land, air and sea blockade on the Gaza Strip. Human rights organisations refer to the Gaza

Strip as the largest open-air prison in the world (Shafir 2017: 122-123). Therefore, different rules apply for any Palestinian from the Gaza Strip who wants to apply for an ID card, a magnetic card and a permit. Due to the enormous differences in Israeli rule over the Gaza Strip compared to the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and also the subsequent living conditions of those having to live under Israeli Occupation, this thesis will focus on West Bank and East Jerusalem Palestinians.

2.5 The blue ID card: a (mis)fortune?

The pinnacle of this biopolitical control over the identity and mobility of the Palestinian population can be found in East Jerusalem (Parson and Salter 2008: 71). After Israel annexed East Jerusalem in 1967, the Palestinian Jerusalemites were given the blue Jerusalem ID cards. Research has shown that the Israeli government is striving to de-Arabize the city (Tawil-Souri 2012: 158). Zureik (2001: 215) explains the different strategies by which the State of Israel is striving to maintain the so-called 70/30 ratio in Jerusalem, in which the Jewish have to maintain the 70% majority of the population. Consequently, Zureik (2001) demonstrates how the Israeli government tries to attract Jewish residents by providing them with enough houses they can choose from. Contrary to this, the Palestinian population faces a housing shortage and staggering housing prices (ibid.). Compared to the West Bank and Gaza Strip ID cards, some argue this blue Jerusalem ID card provides the holder with certain privileges, since their freedom of movement is less restricted and they have access to Israeli social benefits (Tawil-Souri 2011; 2012). However, holding a blue ID card is no blessing in disguise.

Initially, Palestinians with a Jerusalem ID card can enter the West Bank and Israel without needing a permit. Additionally, if a blue ID card holder buys a registered car in East Jerusalem, it will have a yellow Israeli license plate which gives them the privilege to drive on Israeli roads (Parsons and Salter 2008: 714). However, being able to travel without a permit does not minimise the risks of being humiliated at checkpoints. Besides, blue ID card holders regularly have to wait in almost never-ending queues when the Israeli soldiers decide at random to close down the checkpoint or when they want to slow down the process of letting cars through on purpose. Moreover, driving with a yellow Israeli licence plate whilst carrying non-blue ID card holders is a crime (ibid.). As has been illustrated in the introduction of this research, this means that family members with a blue ID card are allowed to drive through a checkpoint by car and the ones with a green ID card need to step out of the vehicle and continue on foot.

That being the case, there are many restrictions to obtaining and holding on to a blue ID card. If you are in the possession of a blue ID card, you still have to follow the irregular procedure of the Israeli government. To illustrate, it is not clear what the expiry date of the ID card is. When you need to renew it and how many times a year, that is in the hands of the Israeli government (idem: 713). Furthermore, if you are in the possession of a blue ID card, proving you are an actual resident of East Jerusalem is a complicated process. Since the end of the 1990s, the State of Israel has adopted a new policy in which Palestinian Jerusalemites need to prove that their 'centre of life' is within the boundaries of the city (Kelly 2006: 94). Consequently, Palestinian Jerusalemites live in the constant threat of confiscation of their blue ID card when they decide to reside outside of the city. Yet, the housing prices that have increased tremendously over the years make it extremely difficult to find a house in East Jerusalem. Furthermore, a huge neglect is visible in physical and social infrastructure in East Jerusalem, especially in the neighbourhoods located beyond the Wall (Ir Amim 2015). Altogether, it is questionable whether the blue ID card is a blessing.

2.6 Displaced but together: biopolitical control over family life

The previous sections have demonstrated that the existing literature on the ID card system has been limited to the control over population and mobility management. Although this approach is relevant, there are more questions with regard to the impact of the ID card system. One of the main issues in our knowledge of the coloured ID card is a lack of insight in the biopolitical control over family life of the different ID card holders. The few researchers who have addressed this issue will be discussed in the following section.

In their research project in 2016, Hammoudeh et al. analysed the impact of the ID card system on family life in one specific area: Kufr 'Aqab. Hammoudeh et al. (2016) conducted their research in the light of the recent developments within the ID card system. Namely, since 2003, Palestinians with a Jerusalem ID who are married to a West Bank or Gaza Strip Palestinian were deprived of the possibility to apply for family reunification in order to give their partner the Jerusalem residency (B'Tselem and HaMoked 2004). Consequently, children of one parent with a blue ID card and one parent with a green ID card are not allowed to live in Jerusalem. Besides, since Jerusalem is physically cut off from the West Bank by barriers such as checkpoints and the Wall, family and friends with different coloured ID cards are separated from each other.

Moreover, it is important to keep in mind that already before 2003, applying for family reunification was a difficult process. According to research by B'Tselem and HaMoked

(2004: 8), the process of applying for and receiving a permanent Jerusalem status under family unification took on average up to 10 years. The application had to be requested at the Ministry of Interior and the process consisted of ambiguous paperwork. During the years of waiting for approval, the families were under strict control by the Israeli authorities. Yet, the demands of the Ministry of Interior could change over day without awareness of the concerned families (idem: 9). Moreover, once a temporary-resident status was granted, this had to be renewed every year (ibid.). For these reasons, many families cannot legally live in either Jerusalem or cities in the West Bank.

However, there are a few areas where couples can live without the blue ID card holder losing its permanent residency status in Jerusalem or the West Bank Palestinian being 'illegal'. This is possible, because the neighbourhoods are located behind the Wall in the West Bank but still in the borders of Jerusalem. Another reason families move here is the lower housing prices compared to East Jerusalem (Ir Amim 2015: 28). However, the residents of those neighbourhoods are obligated to pay their taxes to Israel, yet they are physically separated from Jerusalem by the Wall and checkpoints (Hammoudeh et al. 2016: 37). Besides, paying the Israeli bills does not mean you will receive the necessary services, because the areas located outside the wall are known for its neglect: "roads, traffic lights, schools, parks and electric, water, and sewage infrastructures are either in extremely dilapidated conditions or simply non-existent" (Ir Amim 2015: 32). One of the neighbourhoods that has been the subject of a few research projects is Kufr 'Aqab. Yet research has shown that fleeing to neighbourhoods as Kufr 'Aqab does not solve all the problems that the families face.

By interviewing over 60 residents of Kufr 'Aqab, Hammoudeh et al. (2016) demonstrate how the living conditions take shape in this neighbourhood. They demonstrate how the residents of Kufr 'Aqab live in constant anxiety with regard to the ID card system. To illustrate, since the Jerusalem permanent residency is not automatically passed on from parents to children, couples living in Kufr 'Aqab want their children to get a head start by giving birth in a Jerusalem hospital (idem: 41). This would mean that the new-born child possesses the valuable proof of being born in Jerusalem and this can help its case in proving that its centre of life is Jerusalem. Yet many women fear that they will not make it in time inside Jerusalem to give birth, especially those who do not have a blue ID card (idem: 41-43). Furthermore, childbirth marks the start of yet another lengthy procedure to become considered for the granting of the permanent Jerusalem residency (idem: 44-45). This inquiry again entails a countless number of documents and investigators who will visit to check on the applicants. Consequently, an unknown number of children born from couples 'escaping'

to Kufr 'Aqab in turn also have different coloured ID cards. Moreover, they can even be without any card at all, because of this complicated and confusing application process (ibid.). Altogether, some couples are tenacious yet there are also signs of regrets. These feelings of fear and mistrusts take a toll in on the next generation, who are willing to choose their partner over the colour of the ID card in order to escape the pain their parents had to suffer (idem: 38-39).

In sum, the case study of Kufr 'Aqab shows how the biopolitical practices of the State of Israel penetrate into the most personal aspects of family life. Moreover, this case raises questions on the impact on families with different ID cards who do not try to settle in an area such as Kufr 'Aqab. On the one hand, how do they build a life in a city as Jerusalem, where either one or more family member is 'illegal' for years when waiting for 'approval' by the Israeli State. Or on the other hand, is it the Jerusalem ID card holder who tries to make a home out of the West Bank whilst trying to find ways to stay out of the radar of the Israeli authorities in order to keep his blue ID? In short, it is relevant to focus on the impact of the ID card system on the micro-level.

2.7 Concluding remarks

All in all, the inhabitants of historic Palestine have always been under the control of an occupying foreign power, beginning with the Ottoman Empire and continuing with the longest Occupation today by Israel. Consequently, Palestinians are denied the existence of a Palestinian nationhood or even the recognition as citizens of their homeland (De Jong 2018: 372). Much research has been conducted on the impact of the ID card system on the freedom of movement and population management of Palestinians. There is however a significant lack of research that moves beyond a pure governance approach. In the existing literature on the ID card system, authors do touch upon other aspects of daily Palestinian life besides mobility restrictions that are influenced by the ID card, yet these remain unaddressed. For instance, Parsons and Salter underline how "the Palestinian population is defined, constructed, and policed through Israeli authorities of identification" (Parsons and Salter 2013: 719). Tawil-Souri argues in her extensive study on the coloured ID system that "ID cards are much more pervasive in their fragmentation and segregation of Palestinians, for they determine how a Palestinian can live in every corner of Palestine/Israel" (Tawil-Souri 2012: 172). This raises questions on the impact of the ID card system on everyday life of Palestinians and the possibilities to generate a feeling of home and a sense of belonging.

As previously described, the ID card system determines where you can and cannot

live. Green ID card holders are only allowed to live within the West Bank and blue ID card holders will lose their residency status when they decide to move outside East Jerusalem. At first sight, a neighbourhood like Kufr 'Aqab seems like a safe haven for West Bank and Jerusalem residents to live together, but nothing could be further from the truth. The Israeli Occupation is visible and sensible within the walls of Palestinian homes. Moreover, home has always been an important and delicate issue in Palestinian history and those stories are passed on to next generations. Whilst ethnography is a growing trend in studies on Palestine, the Palestinian homes as a target of this coloured ID card system have rarely been analysed. Yet do these restrictions of this ID card system influence feelings of belonging and home? Besides, the question arises to what extent Palestinians adhere to the rules of the ID card system in reality. Therefore, the next section will outline the theoretical framework relating to senses of belonging and will operationalise the relevant concepts for this particular study. Important to note is that the following chapters will refer to the Palestinian territories as 'Palestine', instead of the 'OPT'. The qualitative nature of this research is one of the reasons for this, since in my experience Palestinians mostly speak of Palestine when talking about their homes. Moreover, I believe that Palestine should not only be defined in relation to the Israeli Occupation.

3. Theoretical framework

As has been established in the literature review, the ID card system aims to link the space of home directly to the colour of the ID card. Yet the gap in academic literature on this topic derives from the absence of the concepts of home and belonging. However, these concepts are relevant in this field since in this specific case building a home for one meant the destruction of the home of the other. Moreover, especially in the case of families with mixed ID cards, it becomes clear how the colour of the ID card plays a role in the most personal aspects of life. This section will develop a framework through which we can analyse personal experiences of Palestinians relating to home and belonging under the influence of the ID card system.

What does it mean to belong somewhere? What is it that people feel they belong to? Different academics working in fields ranging from sociology to anthropology and political science have explored this concept. This chapter will analyse the notion of belonging by Duyvendak. Duyvendak (2011) has analysed the development of 'home feelings' in Western Europe and the United States in light of the gender revolution and mobility as a result of the globalization process. Yet, Duyvendak's framework proves to be relevant in the context of Israel and Palestine. Namely, he addresses the politicization of 'home' and discusses case studies in which home-making strategies of one group meant dismissing or even excluding the possibility of another group to feel at home.

3.1 Belonging and feeling at home

Duyvendak (2011: 9-11) relates the concept of belonging to the notion of feeling at home. Yet what is home? In the academic debate over this concept, home is linked to various places ranging from a material, geographical, virtual to a symbolic place. This research follows the line of arguments of Duyvendak, who states that the concept of home should not be defined in the strict sense of a material and physical place (idem: 36). However, this does not imply that home is a solely imagined place. Moreover, home is not a static concept: the physical place or even the feeling of home can change over time (idem: 112). Therefore, when approaching home as both a material and a symbolic place: how can we define the concept of feeling at home?

Whilst acknowledging that there are different and diverging definitions of what feeling at home entails for various people, Duyvendak (idem: 38-39) identifies three key elements of home: familiarity, home-as-haven and home-as-heaven. First of all, becoming familiar to a certain place is a necessity for the other two elements to come into existence (ibid.). It is

however not a straightforward process to get to know a certain place and to become familiar, this will take time. Secondly, home-as-haven is a home in which you feel safe, secure and at the same time a private place where you can resort to (ibid.). Finally, the home-as-heaven relates to a symbolic feeling of interconnectedness in a public space, where everyone can develop oneself and a place in which you, as a collective, feel free (ibid.). Consequently, home-as-heaven is often created in the sphere of a community. Furthermore, in this sphere there is little to no structural violence. Important to note is that, regardless the above described aspects, feeling at home is selective: ''we don't feel at home everywhere, or with everybody'' (Duyvendak 2011: 39).

Moreover, Duyvendak (idem: 112) describes four spheres in which belonging can be cultivated namely: the private, the economic, the associational and the politico-cultural sphere. According to Duyvendak (idem: 5) this is where home-making practices and strategies come into play. People can undertake various strategies to give a certain place the characteristics of a home.

Duyvendak continues by illustrating the first two spheres with the following examples: households and workplaces fit into the private and more individual sphere (idem: 115). Yet, these two can be distinguished by the homogenic and heterogenic element: you can choose with who you want to live together, but to a lesser extent who you want to work with. Consequently, because of the heterogenic nature of the economic sphere it is more complicated to create a feeling of home at work than in one's private home. Furthermore, Duyvendak (idem: 116) links the home-as-haven and its feeling of familiarity to the private sphere. This can be witnessed in one's private home: this is a place where people return for safety and want to settle back. However, important to note is that when home is experienced as primarily a private safe haven this can create a society of inward looking and isolated households (idem: 119-120).

Given these points, how can these private spheres be operationalised in the context of this study? Important to stress are the crucial contextual differences this research deals with compared to Duyvendak's study. First of all, the difference in language needs to be taken into account, since house and home both have the same Arabic word: *beit* (Harker 2009: 324). To continue, in Palestine one's home is directly linked to one's family identity (Piquard and Swenarton 2011; Harker 2009). To illustrate, joint Palestinian families often live together under the same roof. Such a family house is passed on generations and the floors are divided by immediate as well as extended family members. Yet how can we define 'family' in this context? Zureik (2001: 219) stresses that this remains a disputed issue in Israel and Palestine.

According to the State of Israel, a family consists of two parents and their children. This can also be defined as the nuclear family. Conversely, Palestinian representatives argue that this definition is too narrow in order to be applied in the Arab culture (ibid.). They state that in the Arab culture a family includes immediate as well as extended relatives.

Besides family, the following finding by Harker demonstrates how Palestinian notions of home are also closely related to social networks:

> "Home is the space where one is with their family, where they can receive friends and relatives and visit them in turn, and if they want to start a family, they'll need to make a home first" (Harker 2009: 325).

Consequently, being part of (and surrounded by) a family and a community is what can generate a feeling of safety (idem: 325). In sum, this approach to Palestinian homes needs to be taken into consideration when analysing the feeling of home at the private level.

3.2 My home is not your home

To continue, the associational and politico-cultural spheres are characterized by the collective or public nature. The associational sphere is embodied by the presence of a community (Duyvendak 2011: 119). Duyvendak relates this notion of a community to the earlier described home-as-heaven: a place where people can connect with each other and where you can feel accepted and safe as a collective (ibid.). However, as previously stated, Duyvendak stresses that feeling at home is an exclusive and selective emotion. Consequently, what if community members actively strive for a home-as-heaven? Discriminating strategies that will exclude 'others' can be adopted and this will create a homogenous community. This can result into inclusive and isolated communities: extreme versions of a home-as-heaven (ibid: 119-120).

Moreover, Duyvendak (2011: 119) states that the historical experiences are the foundations of a community, yet "not all communities, however, feel the same regarding their rights to the ground". Moreover, Piquard (2011: 8) demonstrates how in wartime, or in this context during an Occupation, populations are deprived of narratives relating to their historical and communal experiences. This problematic scenario can be linked to the case of Israel and Palestine where different communities claim to 'morally' own the place. This raises the question to what extent the members of a community are open for others. Furthermore, how does this presence of 'others' affect their senses of belonging and possibilities of

facilitating a feeling of home? What happens, as in the case of historic Palestine and especially the city of Jerusalem, when different communities feel they have the right to the ground?

3.3 The national homeland: but for who?

This brings us to the final sphere, which Duyvendak (2011: 119) categorizes as a hybrid form: it cannot be regarded as haven or heaven. This politico-cultural sphere is embodied by the nation state: a public sphere and therefore ought to be shared with others. However, to achieve a nation-as-home, it should be an open and inclusive politico-cultural sphere (ibid.). To continue, ''the basis of a harmonious society is therefore not forced assimilation into one notion of 'home' but recognition that everybody wishes to belong'' (Duyvendak 2011: 121). Yet, to what extent is it possible to publicly express this feeling of home in nation states?

As previously described, the ID card system as implemented by the State of Israel, determines where you can and cannot live. Green ID card holders are only allowed to live within the West Bank and blue ID card holders risk losing their residency status when they decide to move outside East Jerusalem. Thus, in this case the nation state plays a huge role in deciding who is allowed to build a home and where. Moreover, this makes the nation state in charge of who can try to make oneself feel at home in a specific place. Yet what happens when a self-pronounced nation state as Israel claims the rights to a city or a complete territory and therefore creates a home only for one particular group? Duyvendak (idem: 119) argues that it is exactly the marginalized group that becomes more in need of public places to generate a feeling of home. Additionally, Piquard (2009) also describes how in areas of conflict, links between spaces and identities are strengthened.

To further demonstrate the importance of the nation state in individuals' senses of belonging, elements of the analytical framework by Yuval-Davis prove to be relevant. Similar to Duyvendak, Yuval-Davis (2006: 199) argues that belonging, in its sense of emotional attachment and feeling of home, is not a fixed process and not directed at one specific place or object. Yuval-Davis describes three interconnected levels in which notions of belonging are developed, namely: social locations; individuals' identities and attachment to different groups and lastly ethical and political value systems (ibid.). Whereas Yuval-Davis makes a different categorization of levels in which belonging is developed, her conceptualization of politics of belonging is a valuable addition to Duyvendak's politico-cultural sphere. She explains politics of belonging in the following manner: "(..) specific political projects aimed at constructing belonging in particular ways to particular collectivities that are, at the same time, themselves

being constructed by these projects in very particular ways" (Yuval Davis 2006: 197). According to Yuval-Davis, it is important to distinguish between belonging and the politics of belonging, because the political projects are not only formed by but also determine in itself the levels of belonging.

What becomes clear is that Yuval-Davis (idem: 207) emphasizes the importance of power relations in determining the (imaginary) boundaries of nations and communities and therefore who belongs and who does not belong. Yet it is also in this arena where people can question and challenge the boundaries that exclude individuals or particular groupings from belonging (idem: 205). In other words, the nation state and political projects aiming at including and excluding particular groupings are crucial in the development of individuals' senses of belonging.

All in all, this section raises important questions on the possibility to feel at home under Israeli Occupation. When a certain community or even a nation state claims to have the 'moral right to the ground' this can have disastrous consequences for the opportunities of other communities to feel at home. Before applying this theoretical framework in a qualitative research on Palestinian belonging, there is another political project that needs to be reviewed, namely the Israeli project of limiting the freedom of movement of Palestinians.

3.4 Immobile Palestinians: place and space attachment

Related to the notion of feeling at home in Palestine is the issue of mobility or in this case immobility. Duyvendak touches upon the debate on the relevance of place and space attachment in light of the increasing mobility of people, technology, information, goods and services in our globalized world. According to Duyvendak (2011: 15) "changes in mobility have evidently had an enormous impact on place attachment, on what places mean and on perceptions of who 'belongs' where''. Moreover, in our globalizing world, "(not) feeling at home is increasingly the result of interactions with others (..)" (Duyvendak 2011: 30). Other people can enter in what is known as your familiar place, and marginalized groups tend to define their own place in contrast with other groups (ibid.). An important question in our globalized world today is, will our ability to feel at home also become mobile or will we no longer feel attached to places at all? Is a specific place a condition to feel at home, or can we feel at home in generic places such as restaurant chains? (ibid.) When being confronted with new places, does this mean people will try to 'familiarize' this place by using home-making-strategies?

To continue, Duyvendak (idem: 12) states that those people who are not 'chronically

mobile' believe that a particular place is needed in order to generate feelings of belonging. This is where it becomes interesting in the case of the coloured ID card system for Palestinians. As has been argued in the previous chapter, with tools such as the coloured ID card system the State of Israel not only determines where Palestinians can build (and maintain) their homes, but also imposes restrictions on the mobility of Palestinians. Whereas people tend to relate the globalization process with increased mobility, this was not a path set out for Palestinians. In fact, these opportunities of freedom of movement were taken away by the State of Israel with tools such as the checkpoints, the Wall and the ID card and permit system. These restrictions on mobility can impact their senses of belonging and more specific: place attachments. What makes this case particularly interesting, is that Palestinians see it as their rightful homeland, yet the Zionist project claims it is the Jewish right to return to what they claim is their homeland. Duyvendak (idem: 123) refers in his research to studies on the arrival of immigrants that show how the mobility of others can strengthen the historical claims among non-mobile populations: the native population. Yet there is even no consensus on who the 'newcomers' or 'strangers' are in this case. This question of who owns the 'homeland' and who is welcome to stay, is an important issue to analyse not only at the political level but also at the micro-level. Moreover, what is the impact of (the lack of) freedom of movement on senses of belonging?

3.5 Concluding remarks

Altogether, a sense of belonging is developed in multiple spheres: the private sphere of one's own household or at work and in the associational spheres of a community and within political projects of the nation state. The concepts of familiarity, home-as-haven and home-as-heaven are relevant concepts to analyse to what extent Palestinians can develop a sense of belonging whilst being occupied by a foreign power. How can one feel at home under military control that has expelled thousands of Palestinians out of their homes and until today still uses punishments such as forced house demolitions and the revocation of ID cards? How can one belong to a city when your opportunity to visit is determined by the colour of your ID card, whether the occupying power has granted you a permit and when the soldier at the checkpoint allows you to pass through? As has been noted, Israeli biopolitical practices such as the ID card system are visible and tangible within the most intimate aspects of family life. Before moving to the empirical analysis of this study, the following chapter will present the methods that were used for this qualitative research.

4. Research methodology

4.1 Reflection on-the-grounds methods

Initially, my research design involved on the ground fieldwork and close-to-data methods. This initial approach is preferable, but it was not feasible and responsible due to the Corona pandemic. However, it is important to reflect on these on-the-ground methods to gain insight on which types of information I have missed in the empirical analysis. This section will provide a discussion of why this on-the-ground approach would have been preferable. Following from this reflection, the alternative research methods that were employed for this research will be introduced.

My initial research question was formulated as following: *what is the impact of the colour coded ID card system on senses of belonging of Palestinians living in East Jerusalem?* As was mentioned in the literature review, scholars such as Zureik and Tawil-Souri have demonstrated how the ID card system is used as a tool to de-Arabize Jerusalem in order to maintain the Jewish majority. Furthermore, the status of Jerusalem remains a disputed issue in peace talks. Therefore, I wanted to focus on the experiences of Palestinian Jerusalemites. The original plan was to gather around 10 respondents who are Palestinian and who live in East Jerusalem. I aimed to find participants who differ in gender, age and profession. They would have in common that they all reside in East Jerusalem. Since the aim was to analyse the role of the ID card, it would have been relevant to interview people with different ID cards. Moreover, I wanted to interview people who have been a victim of forced house demolition. This would have been of great relevance, since the ID card has to power over where you can or cannot build your house, but how does not having your physical home affect your sense of belonging?

Consequently, I was planning to use my personal network in East Jerusalem to set up the first interviews. During the beginning of the research project, I had found two gatekeepers who agreed to bring me in touch with other respondents who might have been relevant for my research. Consequently, I would use snowball sampling to find more respondents. Important to note is that I decided to conduct the sampling mostly on the ground, this because of various reasons. First of all, I was convinced that it would be more productive to contact people on the ground: no e-mailing back and forth and I could easily schedule interviews when I was settled in a hostel or host family. Secondly, since this is such a personal story I am asking for, I believed it would have been more suitable to introduce my research topic face-to-face.

Moreover, how was I planning on conducting these interviews? Originally, I was not aiming for 'pure' interviews in the sense of the interviewer and interviewee seated opposite each other with a recorder in the middle. What I learned from previous experiences in this field, is that people tend to tell personal stories during a specific moment to which they link this feeling. To illustrate, when crossing a checkpoint or when having dinner with family. Therefore, the place and timing of the 'interview' is of great importance, for example at home at the dinner table celebrating a (religious) holiday. This approach can be linked to a valuable research method, namely go-along interviewing. This method entails that besides interviewing, the researcher will go-along with the interviewee on "an outing" (Kusenbach 2003: 463). This is of great relevance for this research, since the meaning of the ID card is produced in interaction, for example when a soldier demands your ID when you are on your way to meet family. Therefore, I hoped to join my interviewees on their ride to work or on a stroll through their neighbourhood. This would have allowed me to observe the interaction of their ID card with their senses of belonging.

Furthermore, participant or object observation would have been a relevant research method for this thesis. Besides learning more (through interviewing) about *what* the impact of the coloured ID card system is on my respondents and *how* this impact takes shape, I could also have observed this in their daily life. For example, in order to discover how this ID system works in practice, I wanted to find out what the role is of this physical (and observable) ID card in the daily lives of my respondents. Moreover, it might have been essential to my research to observe my participants in what they describe as 'home': this is perhaps a physical place such as a house or a neighbourhood, or in the case of forced house demolition: a place that used to be a home. In contrast to the interviewing method, the main purpose here is to observe. Obviously, conversations can take place during these observations, but the goal would be to show and tell.

All in all, my initial research methods revolved around go-along interviewing and participant and object observations[2]. These methods would have been valuable and innovative alternatives to the methods used in existing literature. As was stated above, the research design had to be adjusted and more details on this will be given in the next section.

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[2] For more details on the impact of the Corona pandemic on my research in general see appendix 8.1.

4.2 Alternative research methods

As outlined in the introduction of this thesis, the research question is defined as the following: *how do Palestinians narrate their sense of belonging in the context of the coloured ID card system?* The overall aim of this research is to obtain more knowledge on the coloured ID system and its connection with emotions, and more specifically: feelings of home. The goal is to discover how the respondents define home, when and where they feel at home and how this is impacted or perhaps even shaped by the ID card system. It must be noted that the goal is not to generalize the data, instead this research wants to contribute to the knowledge on the ID card system by presenting a qualitative research of the unique stories and experiences of 13 Palestinians.

4.2.1   Ethics statement

Before discussing the research methodology, the ethical considerations of this research need to be reviewed. Most importantly, the do no harm principle was taken into account with every decision that was made. Consequently, nothing was done that could have endangered the lives of my respondents. Throughout this process I remained honest, open and reflexive with all my respondents.

To begin with, the respondents were informed about this research in two different ways. First of all, before conducting the interview, the respondents received 'a call for respondents' which included brief information about the researcher and a short summary of the research topic[3]. Secondly, at the start of each interview the respondents were again informed about the overall goal of this research. To continue, I allowed my respondents to use the form of communication they felt most comfortable with. Consequently, the interviews were conducted over WhatsApp call, Facebook call and Instagram call. During the interviews it was emphasized that the respondents did not have to answer questions if they did not feel comfortable with this, and this occurred during one of the interviews. The interviews were only recorded after the respondents gave permission and all respondents were offered anonymity. The recordings, interview transcripts and personal details of my respondents were treated with complete confidentiality. Even though not all respondents wished to remain anonymous, I decided that because of the sensitivity of this subject it would be safer to use pseudonyms for all respondents. The respondents who did allow me to use their names were informed about this decision and they all agreed on this consideration. Besides the use of

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[3] See appendix 8.2 for the complete 'call for respondents'.

pseudonyms, all the information that could be traced back specifically to one of my respondents was not included in the analysis or in this research in general. Lastly, the respondents received updates on the development of the research, and it was emphasized that they could share their thoughts and suggestions.

4.2.2   Study sample

The sample consisted of 13 Palestinians living in the East Jerusalem, Ramallah and Bethlehem area. In total, 10 interviews were conducted with 5 women and 8 men. The ages of the respondents ranged between 20 and 47, yet with 11 of the respondents in the age group between 20 and 30.

The data collection process started with friendship networks and was followed by snowball sampling. The criteria were as follows: the respondents were Palestinian; they would live in either Jerusalem or in the West Bank at the moment of the research and they were able to speak English on such a level that would allow them to express themselves in English during the interview. The goal was to get an equal representation of women and men and equal numbers of green and blue ID card holders. For this reason, gender and/or the colour of the ID card were included in the criteria during the fieldwork period. Important to note is that one of the respondents did not possess any ID card at all, yet since the aim of this research is to gain knowledge about the ID card *system* her story proved to be extremely relevant. In chronological order of the interviews the respondents are summarized in table 1.

Table 1: The respondents

Name	Interview	Date	ID card	Current place of residency
Ahmad	Over WhatsApp call	23-03-2020	Green	Al Khader
Yasser	Over WhatsApp call	26-03-2020	Green	Beit Jala, Bethlehem
Nadine	Over WhatsApp call	26-03-2020	Green	Beit Jala, Bethlehem
Khaled	Over WhatsApp call	27-03-2020	Blue	Beit Hanina, East Jerusalem
Lina	Over WhatsApp call	27-03-2020	Green	Beit Hanina, East Jerusalem
Anwar	Over WhatsApp call	30-03-2020	Green	Beit Sahour, Bethlehem
Ibrahim	Over WhatsApp call	01-04-2020	Blue	Ramallah
Rawan	Over WhatsApp call	01-04-2020	Blue	Ramallah
Asma	Over Facebook call	03-04-2020	None	Beir Ouna, Jerusalem
Kareem	Over Instagram call	07-04-2020	Blue	Old City, Jerusalem
Tania	Over WhatsApp call	09-04-2020	Green	Ramallah
Omar	Over WhatsApp call	16-04-2020	Blue	Beit Hanina, East Jerusalem
Bassam	Over WhatsApp call	23-04-2020	Blue	Beit Jala, Bethlehem

4.2.3 Narrative semi-structured phone interviews

Since the central concepts of this research are defined as sensitizing concepts, they can only be characterized from the perspective of the respondents (Blumer 1954). Therefore, narrative focused semi-structured interviews were conducted. The advantage of narrative interviews is that I got insight in what my respondents related to the sensitizing concepts of home and belonging. Since the aim was to gather personal stories and experiences, the method of narrative interviews would allow the interviewees to decide on what would be discussed. Furthermore, a few general questions were prepared beforehand, yet the sequence and the follow-up questions varied amongst the different respondents (Bryman 2012: 212). By asking open questions, the respondents were given the opportunity to share their stories. However, the themes and sensitizing concepts operationalised for this research were used to guide and semi-structure the interviews.

Since this research was conducted under exceptional circumstances, telephone interviews were the only feasible method. Even though social scientists are not convinced telephone interviews could last beyond half an hour (Bryman 2015: 215), all the interviews lasted at least forty-five minutes. Face-to-face interviews were preferred in this research, however there are some benefits to conducting interviews over the phone. To illustrate, I

decided to broaden the scope of my study sample, but I did not have to spend money or time to travel between participants to conduct the interviews. Furthermore, since the interviews did not take place face-to-face, the interviewees were not influenced by my presence. Moreover, telephone interviewees can generate a feeling of anonymity for the interviewee and thereby create an environment in which someone can feel more comfortable speaking. However, I had already met most of the respondents in person two years ago and all my respondents received my 'call for participants' which included information about me and a recent picture. In other words, all the respondents were aware of my personal characteristics and the fact that I had visited Palestine. With regards to potential respondents I did not personally know, I decided that it would be important to inform them that I had been to Palestine. I believed that this could create a certain feeling of familiarity and trust between the interviewee and researcher. As a final point, it is important to note is that I did not present myself as an expert on the topic.

4.2.4 Data analysis

The findings of this research are based on a qualitative research method, namely by an analysis of the narrative semi-structured interviews. The interviews were transcribed and the transcripts were read extensively. By using manual open coding, the transcripts were analysed and themes and sub-themes were discovered (Halperin and Heath 2017: 305-306). Consequently, a list of themes was produced and the parts of the transcripts that fit were put together in a category. By re-reading the transcripts a final list of themes was created, and this served as the basis of the empirical analysis. Finally, the themes were connected and brought together with the theory in the empirical analysis of this research.

4.2.5 Reflections

It is important to reflect upon the limitations of the research methods used during this process. First of all, since the interviews had to be conducted over the phone, the scope and therefore representativity of my study sample was affected. To illustrate, I was only able to get in touch with respondents who owned a telephone or laptop, who had access to a WiFi connection and who spoke English. Even though my respondents were selected on their ability to speak English, I still had to deal with a language barrier. I always emphasized that the respondents could take their time before answering a question, yet many of them struggled finding the right words to express themselves during the interviews. Some respondents tried to resolve this by using Google Translate. Furthermore, because of practical reasons, some of my

respondents were interviewed together. Consequently, there is a possibility that the respondents were influenced by the presence of the other when answering the questions.

To continue, there are other limitations to phone interviews that might have influenced the data. In this research, conducting telephone interviews created practical and technical issues. Whereas I guaranteed that I was placed in a quiet setting, I was distracted by the background noises from my interviewee's side during a few interviews. Furthermore, multiple interviews were interrupted by failing internet connection which affected the continuance of the conservations. In order to minimise this risk, I decided to exclude videocalls from the interviews. In turn, this created its own disadvantages. Telephone interviews, especially without video, create more distance between the interviewee and interviewer. Moreover, observation is impossible during telephone interviews, which means I could not read the body language of my respondents and it was more difficult to know if someone was being sarcastic or joking (Bryman 2015: 215).

Finally, in every interview I tried to create a safe place over the phone, yet I found it more difficult since there was no eye contact. Additionally, it was challenging to finish a conservation over the phone in which people opened up about personal and sensitive experiences. Therefore, I tried my best not to end the interviews shortly or abruptly after reminiscing on painful experiences. All in all, I experienced personal difficulties with regard to the distance that was created through the telephone interviews.

5. Analysis: feeling at home in Palestine

This chapter will discuss how 13 Palestinians narrated their feelings of home in different environments. Each of the stories of the respondents was unique in itself, yet there were significant overlapping themes. Therefore, this analysis is divided into 5 thematic sections with each its own subsections. Section 1 will provide the background of the analysis by outlining what kind of emotional feelings the respondents ascribed to the ID card. Section 2 will analyse how the respondents described the notion of home in the context of this ID card system. As will become clear, family and friendship networks play an important role. This finding will be linked to the feelings of home in the private spheres of the respondents. The following section will explore the role of Israeli bureaucratic and surveillances practices, since this is a crucial element when discussing whether the respondents view home as a safe haven in Palestine. This brings us to section 4 of the analysis, namely the senses of belonging in the particular cities where the respondents live. This section will analyse how the respondents feel at home in Jerusalem and in the cities in the West Bank. Lastly, a discussion of how the respondents look at the future will be represented, followed by a summary of the main findings of this analysis.

5.1 Background: an identification tool, but for who?

Generally, people interpret an ID card as a means to determine the identity of an individual. Every respondent was asked about the meaning of the physical ID card and the role it plays in their daily lives. The aim was to discover how the respondents relate to the information on their ID card and how this coloured card manifests itself in their lives.

First of all, in no way, shape or form do the respondents interpret this card as a means to represent themselves. Most respondents stated that this card reminds them of the fact that they are under Occupation and that they are the marginalized group with little to no human rights at all. To illustrate, Tania pointed out how she feels about the use of Hebrew language on the card:

> "It is not really, I feel like it is, it is not really an identification for us, more so for the Israeli side. Because it has Hebrew language. So it is not really an identity, like a Palestinian identity" (Tania 2020).

With regard to the use of colours, Ahmad also interpreted this as a means of distinguishing between the Israelis and non-Israelis:

> "The colour, the colour it means you are from another side. They give us the green, we are the dangerous people, that is the meaning of this ID card for us" (Ahmad 2020).

The general feeling towards this ID card is frustration. As Khaled stated: "whatever the colour of the ID is, we refer to ourselves as Palestinians" (Khaled 2020).

Consequently, the respondents explained the impact of the card mostly in relation with the interaction with the Israeli soldiers at a checkpoint or within the city of Jerusalem. What these findings confirm is that Israeli authorities have, and take, the right to demand a Palestinian's ID card at any time. As Ahmad told: "and it is for the soldier, he can decide what he wants to do with me" (Ahmad 2020). These findings are in line with the research by Tawil-Souri (2011; 2012) and Kelly (2009), who have shown that Israeli authorities have the power to interpret the identity documents of Palestinians. Moreover, it also confirms the findings by Kelly (2009) on the uncertain and unstable nature of the ID cards:

> "(..) identity documents penetrate into the lives of West Bank Palestinians, not as reifying abstractions, but as an unpredictable and unstable technique of governance, producing considerable anxiety for all those subject to their use" (Kelly 2006: 90).

To continue, based on the narratives of the respondents, this card controls the movement of the respondents. The green ID card holders cannot visit Jerusalem or Israel without a permit and many of them explain this lack of freedom by illustrating that they cannot even go to the sea when they want. Yasser told:

> "The green ID just reminds me always that I am a Palestinian, in the Palestinian territories, occupied by Israel. And it always reminds me of my between brackets now: "freedom of movement." Because I do not have this freedom" (Yasser 2020).

These findings build on the research of Tawil-Souri (2011; 2012), who has demonstrated that the ID card limits the mobility of Palestinians. Yet the findings of this research go beyond her study, since the respondents continued to explain how the ID card confronts them with their (lack of) opportunities in life under Occupation. The ID card determines not only the mobility of a Palestinian, but also which civil services he or she can access, as Khaled stated:

"So what does it mean for us having an ID? Does it only identify ourselves, or is it a system or a document that identifies what our opportunities are in this life and in this country? That is a big difference, between identifying yourself and identifying what options and what opportunities and how can you make life easier" (Khaled 2020).

It is notable that especially the respondents with a green ID card explained how confronting it is to realise that this card is a necessity in life whilst it also restricts them in different ways. Yasser explained: "(..) it is frustrating to know that always you have to have this card, because without it you are nothing here" (Yasser 2020). A similar conclusion was reached by Tawil-Souri (2012: 166), who stated: "identity is fixed to a person but also fixed on a piece of paper (or plastic) without which one cannot exist, neither literally nor metaphorically." The indispensability of this ID card becomes even more apparent in its absence. Asma, daughter of parents with a different colour of ID card, has already been fighting for over 10 years to obtain the blue ID card. She explained:

"Like imagine everything you use the ID for it, I cannot do it. Because I do not have. Like I told you, I cannot be in the bar, I do not have driver's licence, in the education I have a lot of difficulties. What else. Like to treatment, to go to the hospital or something, if I want to have like operation or something, I cannot have because I do not have any ID. I do not know else, yes I cannot travel, I cannot like go in the West Bank like it is not easy, because there is a lot of checkpoints. I do not have bank account, everything, I do not have visa to buy anything online, or something like this" (Asma 2020).

Yet what about the blue ID card holders? Are they then the privileged ones in these stories? The findings of this research dispel this myth. Indeed, the respondents with a blue ID card recognize the chances they have had in life because of the colour of their card, as Bassam said:

"For me it is a must, this card does not represent anything about me, but this card helps me get by, I need it, it is very important, I keep it and I am going to protect it with everything I have" (Bassam 2020).

Yet together with this feeling of relief about the opportunities they were granted because of this colour, it also caused conflicting feelings amongst the respondents with a blue ID card. Kareem described this sentiment in the following manner:

"The only meaning it has for me is I can go mostly everywhere in Palestine or Israel, wherever, I am not sure I can go to illegal settlement but why would I? So yeah it only means that it kind of makes me free sometimes, like free in prison, I do not know how to explain it, it is a weird feeling" (Kareem 2020).

Moreover, these respondents are struggling with the dilemma of building a life in a city where they feel threatened or risking the chance of losing this card when moving somewhere else, as will be depicted in a subsequent section. Bassam described his fear of losing his blue ID card with this statement:

"I am telling you right now, if I do not have access, if I cannot drive where I want, and I cannot go up and down, and just like feel free for my choices of movement and this situation, I am leaving. Because it is harder not to be able to do it after you were able to do it" (Bassam 2020).

All in all, the respondents experience this card as an Israeli power manifestation. This card has the power to not only determine their level of freedom of movement but also the opportunities they have in their lives. As Asma explained, this can range from going to university to visit a bar with friends. Moreover, the case of Asma demonstrates that this card can even decide whether you 'legally' exist or not. Consequently, the respondents explained how this pocket-sized card follows them in every step in the course of their lives. An important common thread running through this is the fact that this ID card permits them to live in and travel to specific listed areas. Blue ID card holders are only permitted to live in East Jerusalem and green ID card holders only in specific parts of the West Bank (Tawil-Souri 2011: 75). Moreover, green (and no) ID card holders can only visit Jerusalem or Israel with an Israeli-issued permit, yet again the power of interpretation of this paper is in the hands of the Israeli checkpoint soldier who can decide to let you through or not. In the light of this coloured ID card system, the next section will outline how the respondents made sense of the concept of home.

5.2 Understanding Palestinian homes

5.2.1   What home is missing

When I asked the question how the respondents would define home, many of them could not find the words and instead they said to me: ''you visited Palestine, you know how we are!'' They tried to evoke my memories of Palestinian hospitality and gatherings with family and friends. What became clear was that most of the respondents struggled with defining home, yet they could answer when they feel most at home. The answer was self-evident to them: it is about family and friends. When discussing family relationships, the respondents referred to the importance of both immediate and extended family members. Therefore, most respondents emphasized the importance of living close to their family members. This relationship between home, family and a certain community feeling can be linked to the research by Harker (2009) on homes in Birzeit. However, when approaching home in the sense of family and friendship ties, these networks are affected by the ID card system: besides regulating where they are allowed to live, this system also determines with which ID card holder you can and cannot live.

Consequently, many respondents described how home is *missing* someone or something. In the case of the respondents, home seems to revolve around particular people: family and friends with who the respondents feel familiar. These findings resonate well with the argument that home should not be approached only in its material definition as a physical place (Duyvendak 2011: 36). All the respondents recalled either from direct experience or from stories of others, the difficulties of having family members with different coloured ID cards. Khaled, Asma, Kareem and Bassam narrated moments of insecurity in their childhood related to their parents with different ID cards, as Kareem recalled:

> "I remember myself as a kid, like spending the night without my dad in the house and that was a bit weird, I used to sleep in his place, probably to fill this void, I do not know. But yeah when it is like, when it has been like days, weeks or months, it was like there is something missing in the house" (Kareem 2020).

Khaled, whose father had to fight for over 20 years to get the temporary blue ID card, explained:

"This is our fighting, what we are saying it is not only a system that appears to be backed up by rule, it is backed up also by tearing out families because I remember when my father once did not have the permission to come here, and he was just trying to find a way, a street that was not supervised by any soldiers, and unfortunately he was caught. And he was sent back" (Khaled 2020).

Furthermore, this sentiment that home is incomplete is also highly impacted by other Israeli practices that target families with different ID cards. Besides literally separating family members, the respondents also described how the Israeli authorities define Palestinian families according to the colour of their ID cards. To illustrate, they told how difficult it is when their family members with a green ID card have to step out of the car and continue on foot when passing a checkpoint, even though they all belong to the same family. This Israeli notion of Palestinian households is also enforced in the private sphere. Many recall multiple occasions on which they had to confront the Israeli authorities that they are in fact one family, despite the different colours, as Kareem stated:

"Something that used to bother me and still does, it is when we used to pay the bills, especially the water bills, I remember they asked us: how many members in the house? And we tell them 5. And they are like, are all of them blue IDs? And we are like no only 4, one of them is green. And they answer back: so you guys are only 4 in the house? We tell them, but he lives with us, he is our dad. And they were like no, we do not count him" (Kareem 2020).

What becomes clear from these examples is the performativity of language, not only of what is printed on the ID cards but also the way it is interpreted and enforced by Israeli authorities. The respondents explained they struggled to feel at home in their private spheres, since it is the State of Israel that approaches Palestinian households according to the colours of their ID cards. This Israeli framework is used to determine with who you can live together.

Furthermore, the respondents defined home as a place where you can welcome friends. Yet with the restrictions on movement for the green ID card holders, most of them can rarely visit their friends in East Jerusalem. Likewise, the Palestinians living in East Jerusalem have to overcome physical barriers in order to visit friends and family in the West Bank:

"It is very difficult, because they cannot come here, they do not have the right to movement and the right to come to Jerusalem, and in a good situation and I have to go every time I want to see them to Ramallah and to move from the military checkpoint like Qalandia when I go and when I go back to Jerusalem. It is a very difficult situation" (Omar 2020).

Many respondents emphasized that their lack of mobility gives them the feeling that their home is not 'open'. These findings revealed that the Israeli restriction of movement of Palestinians by granting them a certain ID card highly impacts their notion of home. It can be speculated that this is in line with the contributions of Duyvendak (2011) on the debate on mobility and place attachment. Duyvendak (2011: 11) stated that less or completely immobile groups are in need of particular places to feel at home and a similar pattern was identified in the stories of these respondents. Nadine explained how not being able to move around freely to visit Jerusalem to see her sister's family or to go by her husband's work is making her home incomplete:

"I can say I feel at home, but there is something missing. Like, I always wish that our home is more open, we have more right to movement, we have the chance whenever we want to go the sea, to visit our relatives in Jerusalem, to go sometimes to my husband's work and visit him" (Nadine 2020).

Altogether, the respondents explained their meaning of home in their own unique terms. Yet the overlapping theme in all the stories is that the respondents feel at home with the people they feel familiar with, namely their family and friends. However, this ID card system tries to separate these intimate networks, and this highly influences the respondents' ability to feel at home. An important factor in this are the restrictions on movement, which make it almost impossible to visit or live together with those people they feel at home with. However, these restrictions also strengthen their need to actually visit these particular people and places. This brings us to the next section: what is the importance of home as a physical place in this context?

5.2.2 The physicality of home

When asked about their homes, the respondents started to describe their house, their neighbourhood and the city they live in. In other words, many respondents also referred to home as a physical place. Yet, as has been demonstrated in the literature review of this study, Palestinians are not allowed to live wherever they want. What became clear in this research is

that even though not all respondents expressed a certain wish of wanting to move to a different place, not being able to choose your own physical place of residence can be experienced as an obstacle to feel at home.

The issue that was raised in these stories was that many respondents felt agonized about being tied to a particular place or area because of the colour of their cards, as the following statement shows: "like they make you feel like you are doing a crime, just by living where you want to live" (Rawan 2020). Another revealing case is that of Asma's family. Since Asma's parents have different ID cards, they were only allowed to live in Beir Ouna, a neighbourhood located next to the Wall but still in the boundaries of Jerusalem. Asma explained how she experiences this:

> "I do not feel home, I feel home when I choose to live where I feel, I want to live free. I choose to where to live, not someone to come and to force me to live here because I must live here" (Asma 2020).

This ties well with previous studies on the Palestinian neighbourhoods beyond the Wall. These areas have mostly been the subject of newspaper articles, referring to this as "a refuge" for couples with different ID cards (Holmes and Taha 2019). Similar to Asma's story, many of the residents of these neighbourhoods explain that they feel forced to live there. Yet there is more to these neighbourhoods than just their ambiguous physical location. To illustrate, Asma explained how they have to pay all their bills and taxes to the Israeli government whilst they actually reside in a neighbourhood beyond the Wall that is physically located in Bethlehem. As demonstrated by research of the non-profit organisation Ir Amim (2015), despite paying the Israeli taxes, the inhabitants do not receive any services. In short, for many families seeking 'refuge' in these neighbourhoods, life is uncertain. This is in line with Asma's current situation: she does not possess an ID card, which has devastating consequences for her life.

Furthermore, some respondents also referred to their physical houses as important aspects of their lives. To illustrate, the respondents described how their houses have been in their families for generations or how they have built their houses with their own money and hands. Their feeling of home is directly connected with their physical home. As Ahmad, who shares his house with his brothers and their families, stated:

"Yes, it is like my kingdom, my home is my kingdom, all my life. I built my home and I put all my money all my work in my home. Everything, my home is my life" (Ahmad 2020).

On the whole, home in the sense of a physical location also influences the ability to feel at home. Asma's story shows how you cannot feel home somewhere because you are forced to live somewhere. To some respondents, such as Ahmad, you can become emotionally attached to a family house. Furthermore, the following section will discuss an interesting avenue where these two latter themes come together: the presence of family and the physical place that make a home.

5.2.3 The right to return

When discussing the meaning of home, some respondents pointed out the impact of the stories of their grandparents. They described how the trauma of the *Nakba* was passed on to the next generations. For some of the respondents their notion of home was strongly connected to the stories their grandparents told them about their forced expulsion during the *Nakba*. As Khaled described:

"I now have my own house in Jerusalem, my family lives here. But for me, I am not sure if I am just being so naive, but I always dream going back to where my grandparents were born. Because it is not there where the story ended, it was not by our choice that we forced to leave" (Khaled 2020).

He continued by explaining how these stories are passed on to the next generation:

"And believe it or not, my father was not born in al-Lud, I was not born in al-Lud, and my daughters were not born in al-Lud, but now if you ask my daughter where do you come from? And she will answer you definitely, with no hesitation, that she was born, that she is from al-Lud!" (Khader 2020).

The story of Khaled corresponds with the call for the Right to Return of Palestinian refugees and their descendants, who had to flee during the *Nakba*. According to the latest numbers, there are around 5 million Palestinian refugees today who are still waiting to return to those places they were forced to leave (UNRWA n.d.). However, whereas some of the other respondents did touch upon the expulsion of their grandparents and the housekeys that are still

in the family, Khaled was the only one that expressed the wish to return to that place. The other respondents explained that they made another place home now:

> "My grandma on my mom's side used to live in Jaffa, and she would tell us stories, she would be like oh my gosh you take me there, I would still know the neighbourhoods, I would still know the streets, but my whole family moved from there and lived in the same area here (..) they always think they belong where they were, and I also hear stories about people still having or keeping the keys of the old houses, which is very sad. But they had to deal with what was given to them, they had to make it a living place for them" (Tania 2020).

These statements substantiate the argument by Duyvendak (2011: 38-39) that familiarity takes time. Especially in the case of forced expulsion, it can take a long period of time to feel at home in a new place and it is questionable whether you will ever call it home. Moreover, this does not mean you will stop reminiscing about the place you used to call home. Yet what these respondents emphasized was that they feel at home now in the place where they live, because this is where their family is and this is where they have their memories.

To continue, the next section will integrate the notion of home as described by the respondents in their strategies to find a way through the ID card system. The respondents all have different strategies to try to find and make a place feel like home, yet this is not without interruption by the Israeli authorities. Followed by this, the subsequent section will examine how the respondents make a home out of a place that is not perceived as private by the Israeli authorities.

5.3 Finding a safe haven in Palestine

5.3.1 Surveillance and bureaucratic practices as weapons

Together with the distribution of ID cards an extensive bureaucratic and surveillance system has been installed by the State of Israel to keep close tabs on Palestinians. This system of cards does not only tell you where you can and cannot live, it also decides with who you are allowed to live. As research by human rights organisations such as B'Tselem and HaMoked (2004) has demonstrated, applications for family unification can take around 10 years. During the interviews, the respondents frequently referred to the lengthy and complicated Israeli bureaucratic procedures and far-reaching surveillance techniques. Yet all the respondents have their unique ways of challenging the ID card system, with their own motives.

First of all, how did the respondents unfold their experiences with procedures concerning ID cards and family unification? Most of the respondents explained how they or their family members started with the lengthy and costly procedure of applying for a temporary blue ID card. Whilst waiting for this card, the only way to be with their family was to apply for permits every year, yet those applications were not always granted. Many of the stories of the respondents show how families had to wait 10 to 20 years to get a temporary blue ID card or permit in order to live together in East Jerusalem. Kareem explained which freedoms his father had to sacrifice in order to live in Jerusalem only with an annual permit:

> "My dad could not work in Jerusalem, he cannot drive in Jerusalem, he cannot have health insurance in Jerusalem, so all the permit really does is for him to be physically with us" (Kareem 2020).

Additionally, multiple respondents referred to the use of Hebrew in Israeli governmental or civil services in general which makes the procedures even more complicated. Similar to the written Hebrew language in the ID card, they are frustrated with the way this ID card and permit system is organised:

> "I never know how can get to know about this or research more, because I do not know Hebrew, but it seems like they have many systems (..) it is very very confusing and I bet they made it confusing for that purpose" (Kareem 2020).

The respondents told how rules appeared to be changing over days, and two respondents pointed out that they also experienced the officials to be corrupt. They implied that those

people with enough money could buy their way in. Based on these experiences, the bureaucratic procedures are lengthy, confusing and complicated. This supports existing research on the ID card system by Tawil-Souri (2011; 2012) and Parsons and Salter (2013).

To continue, the bureaucratic powers of the State of Israel seem to follow the respondents until this day. Asma's family resided in a neighbourhood outside of East Jerusalem where the family could be together without her father risking the loss of his blue ID card and her mother to be illegal. Yet this turned out to create even more problems for their children. Asma told her story of how she ended up with neither a blue nor a green ID card. She explained that since her mother has a green ID card, it was crucial she had to be in Jerusalem during the times she had to give birth to her children. Unfortunately, Asma's mother was forced to give birth to her in Bethlehem. When Asma turned 13, they found out she did not exist in the system of the Ministry of Interior, and they refused to give her any ID card at all. Around 10 years ago they hired a lawyer to figure out why this is happening. Asma explained her battle with the Israeli system:

> "They do many things that is illegal, it is very expensive and even, every time they told us there is a paper missing, there is a paper missing. Just like to waste years with us" (Asma 2020).

This also shows that there can be signs of pride when 'beating' the system, she remains persistent by stating:

> "You know when sometimes I feel if I get the Jerusalem ID, I will be the winner, I fight the Israeli system to get this ID and I will get it" (Asma 2020).

In the meantime, the family of Asma is forced to remain in Beir Ouna:

> "I feel it is not safe. It is not safe anywhere because we are under Occupation, we do not know, maybe tomorrow they will shoot us, or I do not know. It is not safe to live anywhere in Palestine and it is not easy, but I mean it will be like more stress like less stress when you live where you want to live, not when someone forces you to live" (Asma 2020)

Besides, even today, whilst some of the respondents or their parents either got a family reunification permit or a temporary blue ID card, they still struggle with spending time with their family, as Yasser told:

"Family is home more than anything else. First comes the family, second does not matter, if the family is green or blue card, the family is family always, of course it is affecting her [my wife] and many and many other people when and I can feel it when she goes to Jerusalem to visit her sister, when we get the chance, how she is happy, talking to the girls, her sister's girls, yes she is a different person when she is there" (Yasser 2020).

Asma noted how hard it is for her family to gather:

"Here if we want to go on vacation we must, we must go to Jericho or to some places that all the family can go, without suffering and without to be someone to be illegal to be there. It is a vacation. So yes, it is a problem, we cannot travel together, we cannot do everything together" (Asma 2020).

Moreover, since every case is unique and the outcomes of bureaucratic procedures can change from one person to another, the ID card system can also create problems and even tension between family members and friends. Bassam described how it affected the relationship between him and his cousins, who despite having parents in the same situation did not end up with the blue ID card:

"You know, we grew up, it caused us differences, at how we look at each other and how we treat each other. Because we in the family, we come out as we are the privileged ones, you understand? Because it opened for us opportunities, to go to better schools, to get better education, to get movement, even if there is like, it is like as simple as a lunch at my grandma's, lunch at my grandma's on a Easter Sunday, it means we can do it, but they cannot do it" (Bassam 2020).

However, the findings of this research differ from earlier studies on the ID card system, since existing literature gives little attention to those living against the rules. In this case, some of the respondents had their own reasons to start a life that goes entirely against the Israeli rules of the ID card system. To illustrate, Ibrahim, Rawan and Bassam are blue ID card holders who decided to move to the West Bank, and they all described how they try to live their lives whilst living this secret. They outlined how their families are still affected by the pocket-sized cards and Israel's mass surveillance tools.

At first, it is important to note how Ibrahim justified his decision to move to Ramallah:

> "See this ID card means that I am Palestinian, this is what, this is how I see it, it means that I am Palestinian and that I am allowed to live wherever I want. Ramallah is also Palestine and Jerusalem is also Palestinian (...) this [ID card system] is what they want us to follow, but in our minds everywhere is Palestine" (Ibrahim, 2020).

Subsequently, Ibrahim and Rawan described how they try to stay under the Israeli radar Initially, this means that they have to maintain two houses: their family house in Jerusalem and the house they are currently living in, in Ramallah. As Ibrahim told:

> "Now to keep like, to keep our benefits and our health insurance still valid, what we did is we kept our home there and like if you go to our home now you feel will like someone is living there" (Ibrahim 2020).

He continued by outlining how creating this sense that someone is living in their house in East Jerusalem is not an easy task. To illustrate, they need to make sure that there is always food in the fridge, there needs to be enough clothing for the ones registered at the address and their water and electricity consumption need to be high enough. Lastly, they need to be on call whenever the Israeli authorities announce a random house inspection:

> "So sometimes when we are in West Bank, here living in Ramallah, the Israeli authorities might call us in surprise that hey we are coming now to your home, to check that you are living there" (Ibrahim 2020).

The story of the family of Asma and Ibrahim is quite interesting in the context of home-making strategies. Namely, they need to figure out how to convince the Israeli authorities that they are indeed living in their house in East Jerusalem when in fact they made a home somewhere else.

Conversely, there are also many green ID card holders who decide to live in East Jerusalem to be with their families. For example, Lina was living without the right documents with her husband's family in East Jerusalem for a few years. She explained how working against the system impacted her life:

> "Actually, I lived like the first two or three years with only a work permission that does not allow me to sleep in Jerusalem. So if they would have catched me before, during the night in Jerusalem, I would have been taken to prison. Usually we were cautious and we did not use to go out at night late" (Lina 2020).

What is important to point out is that moving in with her husband in East Jerusalem meant that she could not easily meet her friends and family in the West Bank anymore. Moreover, not being able to undertake certain activities and being forced to stay inside the house is also highly affecting your possibilities to try to feel at home in another city. In short, when you do not follow the rules, feeling at home coincides with making enormous sacrifices.

In sum, even though some of the respondents decided to try to follow the Israeli rules, the ID card system remains complicated, confusing and unstable. This section demonstrated that this is a particularly important finding when investigating the impact of the ID card system on family life. However, it must be noted that many of the respondents revealed that they do not reflect on this situation often; not personally nor with family or friends. Bassam, a blue ID card holder, whose family also decided to reside in the West Bank, described the impact of this ever-present threat of the possible revocation of the Jerusalem residency:

> "A lot of times I also wonder how, because there is also this fear that we do not like to talk about in my family really and pretend it does not exist, of when are we going to get caught? You know?" (Bassam 2020).

This statement is reflected in other stories: the respondents explained that the ID card system is not a topic that is discussed regularly at gatherings since they 'simply' have to deal with it. This finding itself is striking, since it raises many questions. Has this card become naturalized or normalized in the respondents' strategies to feel at home? Or has this card become a means of resisting the Occupation, in the literal sense of living against its rules or by rejecting it as a means of identification?

After discussing the impact of Israel's bureaucratic system, the question arose whether the respondents feel safe in their private spheres. Whereas Harker (2009) stated that his Birzeiti respondents also view home as a space of security, the following section will demonstrate how the findings of this research cast new light on the opportunities of home as a safe haven in Palestine.

5.3.2 The importance of private spaces

The examples given above demonstrate how deeply the Israeli surveillance techniques penetrate in the private spheres of one's own home. What can be argued is that all the respondents are being tied to a specific area by the colour of their ID card and therefore have their own experiences with regards to creating a safe space in their homes. Based on the stories, the respondents feel conflicted about their private space as safe and secure.

First of all, Ahmad, who lives in Area C that is controlled by the Israeli military argued: "when there is family and my friends here, you can feel at home. But also there is, every time there is a fear from something to happen" (Ahmad 2020). He described two occasions when armed Israeli soldiers entered his family house and arrested his brother. This fear of Israeli soldiers being able to enter your house at any time was reflected in more stories of the respondents. Anwar remembered Israeli soldiers entering his family house unannounced and claiming that the workplace they built for their family company on their land was actually built in area C. According to the soldiers they would have needed to request a permit to build on their land. Important to keep in mind is that the latest numbers show that only 3% of the building permits applications for Area C are in fact granted by the State of Israel (Middle East Monitor 2020). Consequently, the soldiers demolished the building and Anwar's family even had to pay for the labour hours of the Israeli soldiers.

Additionally, both Ahmad and Anwar stressed how the soldiers did not even give them any form of explanation when entering the sacred place of one's own house. As Ahmad remembered:

> "(..) anytime they can come in and do what they want. And if you ask them about if they have a permission to come and search, no one will answer you. They will say stay there, or go out and tie our hands and they go inside the house and search everything" (Ahmad 2020).

Consequently, Anwar and his family suffered financially and emotionally from this intrusion. Anwar actually dreams of extending his family house by adding another floor, yet he is afraid Israeli soldiers will again declare this as illegal and demolish the complete family house. Ahmad also stressed how these memories and fears still haunt his family.

Nonetheless, most of the respondents still strive to create a safe haven in their homes. Again, family and friends play an important role in this. Ahmad explained the message about home he gives to his children:

"Sometimes we are sitting together and discussing our land, this is from my grandmother and from my father to me. This is your home, you can do what you want in your home. Do not let anyone take this home from you. Because the children are saying: so what the Israeli soldiers are doing? Every time they ask me, why did they do this, why did they come to my home? What do they want?" (Ahmad 2020).

Not only do the respondents want their homes to be a safe place for their children, it is also the familiar people that can help develop a feeling of safety, as the following statement shows:

"It is like something that the Palestinians have, we are like so social, we like socializing, we like visiting people and keep up to date with everyone. This helps us to survive the Occupation, to survive the thing we are living in" (Nadine 2020).

Moreover, the respondents also highlighted that the people they feel at home with, are in itself strategies to create a safe haven, as Anwar stated:

" (..) I think I am going to live also in Beit Sahour, like I told you it is about the family, if my family go abroad I will go abroad, it is not about following them but I feel more safe, more happy, when I share things with people it is more safe, I feel more home. I am going stay here also because why should I leave the country for other people?" (Anwar 2020).

Important to bear in mind is that the stories of Ahmad and Anwar are just two examples of how the Israeli invasions in the private sphere of one's home highly affect the feeling of safety of the respondents. All the respondents suffer under the structural violence by the Israeli Occupation. What can be argued here is that the respondents see their homes as places where they can gather with family and friends. However, since Israeli soldiers do not regard the Palestinian homes as private spaces this highly impacts their possibility to feel at home in the private sphere. This confirms earlier research that demonstrated how the violence of the Occupation follows Palestinians within their homes (Weizman 2007). Nevertheless, the emotional bond with those people that make them feel at home is also used as a strategy and goal in itself to strive for a safe home in the private sphere. This brings us to the next question, namely to what extent do the respondents feel at home in the cities they reside in? The following section will outline the findings concerning feelings of home in the cities of Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Ramallah.

5.4 A sense of home in East Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Ramallah

5.4.1 A city full of dreams and fears

How does the city of Jerusalem enter the stories of the respondents? First of all, 4 of the respondents reside inside the city and one respondent stated that he grew up both in Bethlehem and in the Old City of Jerusalem. Secondly, the respondents with a green ID card are only allowed to visit Jerusalem with an Israeli-issued permit yet the city is of a great significance to them.

Initially, it is important to keep in mind is that the respondents who currently live inside Jerusalem all emphasized that they want to continue living in this city. They all have different reasons, yet it is mostly a combination of the religious, historic and present-day importance of the city of Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine. However, there are also the more 'practical' reasons such as Israeli insurances they are eligible to that contribute to their wish to remain in the city.

To continue, Jerusalem is described as a city of dreams: the capital of Palestine which beholds the true history and traditions of Palestine. Many respondents emphasized that they believe they have a certain claim or right to the city, which generates some feeling of comfort. Lina, who after three years of waiting got her permit to live with her husband and children in Jerusalem, explained: "we love to stay in Jerusalem, because actually it is ours" (Lina 2020). Furthermore, Yasser, who has a work permit for Jerusalem, proclaimed: "it is my right, for me, I believe that it is my right, to be there, whenever I want and whenever I can" (Yasser 2020). One respondent even described a feeling of responsibility to maintain the Palestinian population because of the historic and religious places of the city:

> "I am not so very religious, but I do feel like it is one of my duties: I am the Palestinian Christian here, so I am supposed to protect the churches. Especially in Jerusalem, I feel like the Holy Sepulchre, I feel like it is my home, walking into the churches into the Old City I feel like this pride in me, that I am Palestinian Christian and those places should belong to me, like not literally. You know that feeling, I feel like I am the living stones as they say, of those churches" (Kareem 2020).

Ahmad also explained how important Jerusalem is to him:

> "For me? It is my life, it is all my life, Jerusalem is our life, our soul (..)
> my children, every time they ask me take us to Jerusalem, take us to Al-Aqsa mosque"
> (Ahmad 2020).

There is also feeling of familiarity, which is most apparent in the Old City, as Nadine explained:

> "Sometimes when I go to Jerusalem, I just walk in the street in the Old City, I have like a different feeling, I feel like free, I feel happy, I feel the things that I cannot feel sometimes in Bethlehem, because this city is a great city, it reminds of the history, our culture, our tasty food, our smell, the smell in the streets is very nice" (Nadine 2020).

Moreover, the respondents explained that they particularly feel at home in the city during holidays. The reason for this is quite self-explanatory since the Israeli authorities tend to hand out more permissions to visit Jerusalem during religious feasts, such as Easter and Ramadan (BADIL Research Center 2015: 16-17). Kareem recalled:

> "Jerusalem is mostly home when there is holidays, like Easter for example, that is a big thing, when Easter come that is when I see a lot of Palestinians in the street, celebrating Easter. And that is when I am in the streets as well, celebrating with them and that is probably the most time I feel home in Jerusalem, because of that" (Kareem 2020).

On the other hand, Jerusalem is described as a city of fears. The respondents who live in East Jerusalem repeatedly highlighted the difficulties of building a life in Jerusalem. Based on the experiences of the respondents living in Jerusalem, it becomes clear that Israel's strategies to preserve a Jewish majority in the city have devastating consequences. Namely, it affects the possibility of Palestinians to maintain a physical house and it also impacts their opportunities to actually feel at home. The respondents raised the pressing issues of rising housing prices and the housing shortage. As a consequence, they explained how the neighbourhoods are densely populated and because of the lack of services this creates an unsafe environment. Important to bear in mind is that even though blue ID card holders are obligated to pay their taxes to the Israeli government, the residents of East Jerusalem do not

receive the services they are eligible to. The neglect of the municipality creates feelings of anger and unsafety, a similar pattern of results that was obtained in other research on the neighbourhoods in and outside East Jerusalem (Ir Amim 2015).

Moreover, when discussing their homes, the respondents expressed indignation when looking at the other communities living in the city. This confirms the findings by Duyvendak (2011: 30): the respondents characterized themselves as the marginalized group and they defined their own home in contrast with the homes of other communities living in the city. Moreover, they do also not feel accepted by the other communities. Khaled argued:

> "What is the fault that I was born as Palestinian Arab person? Why can we not have all the opportunities that they have? Because far as I know, I pay, I am as liable to the government as they are. If you look at our streets, and the type of services that we get, we get much less services than they get, but we pay the same things, we pay the same taxes, we pay the same amount each year. So, is that just by a chance that they are getting better chances than we are? No, it is that question that we ask, is this a system that is built on racism? Yes, it is. Because unless you are Jewish, you get much less than other people living here in Jerusalem. It is not only about what services or what the streets look like, it shows you clearly there is a racist system, how they provide services to the other part" (Khaled 2020).

In other words, despite being the home of the most sacred places of the world, Jerusalem is no safe haven let alone heaven on earth for Palestinians. Many respondents explain how they feel unsafe in the city because of the presence of Israeli soldiers and especially the constant visibility of weapons. Many respondents explained how the meaning of the ID card is produced in these moments of interaction and they describe that the outcomes of these interactions are determined by the interpretation of the soldiers. Anwar explained this constant fear in the following manner:

> "Every 5 minutes you walk you will find soldiers who ask you for your ID, they will maybe search you, they will ask what are you doing here, these things and there are also settlers they look at us, I feel afraid something will happen to me. I was in Jerusalem and there was a soldier and she asked me like where are you from and I told here I am from Bethlehem and she told me like welcome to the country (..) that was weird for me, like I feel like I am stranger in Jerusalem" (Anwar 2020).

Furthermore, with great sadness many respondents explained the loss of familiarity in parts of Jerusalem, which has made them feel like strangers, foreigners or tourists:

> "It is really horrible, I go and see people that are not similar to me at all, I see another city, it is no more an Arab city or a Palestinian city" (Anwar 2020).

Besides the threat of Israeli soldiers, many respondents described how they feel that the other communities give them 'strange looks', especially when entering their particular neighbourhood as an Arab person. This feeling is also reflected in trying to connect with the other communities, as Kareem described:

> "When I go buy stuff like books or groceries, sometimes we go to Israeli shops and we speak English because we do not know Hebrew. They do not like it, some of them do not like it, they answer us back either Hebrew either nothing. And others are like why are speaking English when you are from Jerusalem? And we are like we are Palestinian and they are like: there is no such thing, just learn Hebrew" (Kareem 2020).

In contrast to this, it is important to note that none of the respondents expressed any hostility towards the other communities within the city. Despite claiming Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine, they did not proclaim this as a city for only Palestinians. As Kareem continued:

> "I always feel like I am a threat. Or like I am the wanted guy in Jerusalem, and you know talking with Israelis, I do not know how to start it. But even I did, I am a little scared, because I do not know how they would react. I do not know, I do not feel safe at some point. Like I would love to have Israeli friends and talk with them, and to say whatever I think about, but I always feel I am censored" (Kareem 2020).

Still, the respondents seek not only a home-as-haven, but also a home-as-heaven in Jerusalem. Despite living under a military regime that tries to force them out of their city, most of the respondents claim connection to the city is strengthened. As Omar stated:

> "I present my national beliefs, my national things about Jerusalem and for that I want to live in Jerusalem, not only because if I go outside Jerusalem Israel will revoke my residency, but also I have to be here because it is my homeland and I do not want to leave it, I will live here and I will die here" (Omar 2020).

These findings resonate well with the research by Piquard (2009) who demonstrated how groups can become more attached to places during periods of conflict. Moreover, this is also in line with Duyvendak (2011: 119) who stated that it is especially those marginalized people who dream of particular public places where their group can feel at home: free and accepted. As Ahmad stated:

> "I am Muslim, I want to go to pray in Jerusalem. When somebody not let you pray in your mosque, this is our land! It is occupied land. What can I do" (Ahmad 2020).

In sum, the respondents cannot express and develop themselves freely in this particular city. In some of the stories of the respondents it even became clear that they are scared to reveal the fact that they are Palestinian within the city of Jerusalem. They are not only scared because of the Israeli soldiers, but they also feel unwelcomed by the other communities living within the city. What can be argued is the fact that the State of Israel, with support of international actors such as president Trump, claim the city as its capital. In the meantime, the State of Israel has installed discriminating systems, such as the ID card system, to strive to create an almost homogenous community: the 70% Jewish majority. In other words, the State of Israel decided that it is the Palestinians who do not belong in Jerusalem and claim the whole territory for the Jewish population. This is reflected in Khaled statement:

> "Do they have a vision for Jerusalem? Yes, they have a vision that Jerusalem will be 100% be cleared of any Arab, or let's say not 100%, but majority is it cleared of anything that is called Palestinian Arab. It is cleared by the number of areas and the opportunities of where they can build" (Khaled 2020).

5.4.2   The familiarity effect

When describing how the respondents feel at home in cities in the West Bank, many of them explained this in comparison with Jerusalem. A word repeatedly used to explain the differences in daily lives in the cities was: the comfortable versus the uncomfortable home. As Ibrahim argued: "I define home where I feel the most comfortable" (Ibrahim 2020). The question is then: what are the foundations for feeling at home in the cities of Bethlehem and Ramallah?

To illustrate the notion of the 'comfortable home', the family of the siblings Ibrahim and Rawan decided to move from Jerusalem to Ramallah. At first, they explained that

commuting between the cities for work and university was too difficult to undertake on a daily basis, yet there are more reasons for their family. Similar to the stories of the other respondents, Palestinians from Jerusalem do not only feel more comfortable in Bethlehem or Ramallah because of practical or financial reasons, but also because of the considerable similarity and familiarity found in the cities. Rawan explained why she feels more at home in Ramallah: "people here look more like us, and act more like us, but in Jerusalem you kind of feel like you are to foreigner" (Rawan 2020). This importance of having people around who you can relate to is similar to Bassam's story. He went to school in Jerusalem but he lived in Bethlehem, and said: "while growing up you know I was always like searching for people who look like me, that's part of human being, you search for people who look like you, your community (..)" (Bassam 2020).

Moreover, based on the narratives of the respondents, this notion of a comfortable home in the sense of familiarity plays a role in numerous aspects of the cities, as Bassam explained:

> "You go to a restaurant in Bethlehem, you understand the freaking menu, you understand the meals, they offering you something customized for me, from identity, when you are walking in the streets, you read the signs in your language or you listen to your music. I do not feel this in West Jerusalem, I do not feel this in Jerusalem, I feel there is very limited space for me, and less and less it represents my identity and what I belong to" (Bassam 2020).

Furthermore, the respondents who reside in Jerusalem emphasized how they enjoy visiting Bethlehem and Ramallah, since Jerusalem is a 'dead city' at night. At first, the nightlife of a city might seem quite trivial. However, when paying closer attention, many respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with the fact that Jerusalem barely has any public places where Palestinians can gather at night. Thus, the cities of Bethlehem and Ramallah are not only filled with people the Palestinian Jerusalemites can relate to, the cities also offer public places where they can gather with each other. As Ibrahim stated:

> "Now in Ramallah, all of the people are Arabs, you will feel so comfortable going outside your home anytime even 12 o'clock in the night. Now if you go, when you went to Jerusalem you might saw that if you go outside 7 o'clock to Old City, like you are in a ghost city. There is not so much nightlife" (Ibrahim 2020).

Moreover, the findings seem to suggest that these aspects of familiarity can contribute to a feeling of safety. Even though her family is living in the constant fear that the Israeli authorities might discover that they are living against the rules, Rawan stated: "I do feel safer here, even though it is ironic, because we do not have to interact with soldiers all the time" (Rawan 2020). The same goes for Bassam, who argued:

> "It is for me, it is very stressful to be in Jerusalem, I mean first of all, I do not feel safe, I do not feel safe in Jerusalem since I was a child. Now, sometimes even when I cross the checkpoint and enter Bethlehem, there is a like a block that gets of my heart" (Bassam 2020).

This is a crucial finding since this shows that even while the respondents are aware of the grave consequences when their secret is discovered, they still feel safer than if they would live according to the rules in East Jerusalem.

However, despite the familiarity and the feeling of safety, some of the respondents with a blue ID card noted how there is an obstacle in building connections. Kareem explained how his blue ID card feels like a burden when interacting with other Palestinians:

> "I feel myself there because I relate to the people, I have a lot of friends now from Hebron, and Bethlehem, Ramallah and all these places. It feels nice to have people that are like you in a way, although they are not like me, they have green IDs, whatever but like we feel like we are the same at some point and it hurts when it comes to reality that I can go back to Jerusalem and they cannot go with me, they cannot hang out unless they have a permit" (Kareem 2020).

To sum up, the cities of Bethlehem and Ramallah are characterized by the respondents as familiar to them. Moreover, these cities offer more public places where they can gather, in contrast to Jerusalem. This familiarity can also result in a feeling of safety. However, even though you feel familiar with the people, language, customs and so on, the ID card can still come between you and your community. Finally, after discussing these senses of home in different settings, how do the respondents look at their future?

5.5 Discussion: a coloured future

When discussing the ID card and feelings of home, the respondents also discussed what the future holds for them and their family. This following section will offer a brief discussion of what the different respondents told about their expectations, dreams and worries.

In the first place, one of the most striking results of this research is the fact that this ID card system aims to prevent specific family and friendship networks from happening. Asma recalls many moments witnessing her mother crying of guilt. She explained that she is aware of her parents' and her own difficulties, and stated:

> "Even in the future, I must, if I want to get married, I must have my boyfriend to have the Jerusalem ID, like not the have the problem again" (Asma 2020).

These alarming messages seem to spread throughout Jerusalem and the West Bank, as Ibrahim told:

> "Yeah like you, you got to choose her girlfriend according to her ID. Maybe I cannot marry a green ID holder because I do not want to get this headache. To always stay aware of any authorities who will be visiting us" (Ibrahim 2020).

At the same time, he expressed his concern about what he described as growing racism that emerges amongst the Palestinian communities:

> "Some people from Jerusalem started to have some racism of the West Bank people to not marry them. I mean they say we the Jerusalem ID holders do not want to get any troubles, we do not want to get any issues, please do not marry people from the green ID holders" (Ibrahim 2020).

These findings go beyond existing research on the impact of the ID card system on everyday family life. The research by Hammoudeh et al. (2016: 40) on neighbourhoods outside of East Jerusalem demonstrated how people who have married someone with a different ID card, warn others for the problems that lie before them when taking those risks for love. Yet these findings show that this also takes place outside of these particular areas. This raises questions on whether this ID card system can contribute to a segregation between Palestinian communities.

Besides the fact that some respondents take this coloured ID card into account when 'choosing' their partner, this discussion about the future elicited more mixed feelings amongst the respondents. The status of Jerusalem proved to be very crucial in their sentiments. With the recent developments of, amongst others, president Trump's decision to move the US Embassy to Jerusalem and declare Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, some respondents admitted that they have become less optimistic:

> "It is not a good future I do not see it will be a good future, for us as Jerusalemites. Because the first time when Trump also declared Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and it is not true, it is the capital of Palestine, it will help Israel to remain all the policies against us in Jerusalem to demolish our houses and to expand its settlements project, to kick us out for Jerusalem and to attack against our holy places like Al-Aqsa Mosque. You know for that I do not see the picture is very good, or the future is very good" (Omar 2020).

This statement is also reflected in Yasser's thoughts:

> "I do not want to be pessimistic here, to be a pessimist, but now with the Deal of the Century that Trump offered, Jerusalem will be like a different place, not Palestinian" (Yasser 2020).

However, in all the stories there were glimmers of hope and signs of activism. As Ahmad stated: "life is tough and makes us strong and we stick more to the ground! This is the effect" (Ahmad 2020). Furthermore, Omar explained why he would not ever leave Jerusalem:

> "(..) I do not want to move, the message which I want to tell that if the price is very high in Jerusalem we will survive and we will remain in Jerusalem, not only because our residency but because we believe that this is our homeland and Jerusalem is our capital, our political capital and we will remain to live here otherwise all the difficulties which we face every day" (Omar 2020).

Moreover, many of the respondents put their faith in God, as Ibrahim told:

> "How I see the future? Personally, maybe sooner or later it will be for the Israelis, however in our Quran, in our holy book it says that Jerusalem at the end will be for the Muslims" (Ibrahim 2020).

Some respondents tried to explain to me that they feel emotionally attached to the land of Palestine. When asked to describe this feeling it was difficult to put in words, yet Lina described it as a 'something Palestinian':

> "I belong to because I feel that it is my country, my parents were born here and we as Palestinian people, our childhood, we have something special actually when we are raised up by our parents. We have this intimate feeling of connection between our hearts, our souls and the land that we are living on. It is something special. A Palestinian nationality" (Lina 2020).

In short, the ID card system does colour the future of the respondents. In the case of some respondents even in its most literal sense: they will select their future partner on the colour of their ID card. Overall, whereas a few respondents do not see the future as bright, most respondents remain steadfast and claim they will stand their ground at any cost. This raises important questions on the home-making strategies they will undertake in the future.

5.6 Concluding remarks

All in all, the results of this empirical analysis demonstrate how the respondents interpret the ID card not as an identification tool for themselves, but as an Israeli instrument to monitor and control their every movement. Most respondents related the meaning and impact of this coloured card to interactions with Israeli authorities, and especially with soldiers. It became clear that this card is a necessity to participate in most aspects of civil life and therefore its power became most clear in its absence.

In the light of this coloured ID card system, it was difficult for some respondents to describe their feelings of home. What can be argued here is that these respondents were surprised by this question because the answer seemed obvious: it is about family and friends. The findings show that the ID card system is one of the reasons why home is always missing someone or something. Moreover, most respondents described their struggle to find a safe and private haven under Israel's confusing bureaucratic and pervasive surveillances practices. Moreover, Jerusalem, a city that is special to all the respondents, has become an unfamiliar place marked by structural violence. This unfamiliarity is put in contrast with the many elements of familiarity in the cities of Bethlehem and Ramallah. Besides, it is particularly in those cities where Palestinians feel they can be themselves and gather in public. However, the coloured ID card can stand in the way with those people you feel familiar with.

Finally, one of the most remarkable findings of this analysis is that the ID card system does not only disrupt existing family and social ties, it even creates a situation in which some respondents see no other choice than to choose the colour of a card over love. In other words, this Israeli biopolitical practice highly impacts the most delicate issues of Palestinian personal life. However, even though many respondents admit that life under Occupation does not get any easier, they do remain steadfast.

6. Conclusion

This research commenced by outlining the continuing significance of identity documents in Palestinian lives. A significance that has always been determined and shaped by their occupying powers, who never seemed to take into account the interests and rights of the Palestinians. It became clear that it is relevant to focus on the role of the ID cards on population and mobility management as an Israeli biopolitical practice, however the coloured cards are much more than that. Not only does the colour of the ID card determine the level of freedom of movement, the State of Israel built a system that strives to make all the aspects of Palestinian life dependent on the existence and colour of one card. Therefore, this research focused on senses of belonging in this context and operationalised the framework of Duyvendak (2011) on feelings of home. The concepts of familiarity, home-as-haven and home-as-heaven served as guiding concepts of the semi-structured narrative interviews with 13 Palestinians. The goal was to discover how the respondents define home, when and where they feel home and how this is affected by the coloured ID card system.

In hindsight, this research has demonstrated that the theory of Duyvendak proved to be useful, yet it was not sufficient in itself. This is not particularly surprising given the fact that Duyvendak's research mostly focusses on Western Europe and the United States. Therefore, the set of concepts of Duyvendak do not only have to be operationalised differently, some even have to be called into question. To illustrate, Duyvendak touches upon feelings of home of 'marginalized groups' in his study, yet this particular research deals with a group of people who are even denied the right to exist. Furthermore, Duyvendak discusses feelings of home in a world in which people can freely move around, however Palestinians do not enjoy the right of movement. To continue, Duyvendak focusses on home as a safe and private space, a place where you can choose with who you want to live. However, according to the State of Israel a Palestinian household is nothing less than the colour of their ID cards. Moreover, this research provides further evidence that the Israeli authorities infringe the right to privacy in Palestinian homes, which results in a feeling of fear and unsafety even in one's own house. All in all, this research demonstrated the context sensitivity of feelings of home.

Returning to the question posed at the beginning of this study, it is now possible to state that each respondent had its own unique narrative of their feelings of home in the context of the coloured ID card system. It was difficult for some respondents to describe the details of feelings of home. This is a well-known phenomenon: feeling at home is a fundamental aspect of life, yet people have difficulties in describing the details of this feeling (Duyvendak 2011).

What can be argued here is that these respondents see the answer to this question as self-evident: it is about family and friends. Taken together, if it is the particular people and the particular place that contribute to feeling at home in Palestine, the ID card system is undermining both these fundamental aspects. Furthermore, the respondents described how the ID card system is supported by extensive bureaucratic and pervasive surveillances practices. The bureaucratic nature of the ID card system proves to be confusing, complicated and according to some respondents even corrupt. This research differs from the previous findings reported in the literature, since it has demonstrated that many respondents devised all kinds of strategies to challenge the rules of this system. The respondents undertake various home-making practices to try to fulfill their dream of a familiar, safe and private home where they can gather with their family and friends. However, the ID card system appears to have been installed to disentangle existing and future family and friendship ties. The experiences of the past and present will colour the future of these respondents. Yet based on the narratives, the respondents showed strength and willingness to hold on to what is their homeland.

Altogether, this research extended the knowledge of the ID card system by providing an alternative framework to study the impact of this biopolitical practice. This approach has the potential to discover the impact of Israel's biopolitical practices on the micro-level. However, it must be noted that this research was limited in several ways. Given the small sample size, the results should be treated with considerable caution. Even though the aim was not to generalize the data, the findings are promising and should be validated by a larger sample size. Most importantly, the current study was unable to conduct close to data methods. It is recommended that further research should include participant and object observations to learn more about Palestinian feelings of home.

Moreover, this research raised many questions in need of further investigation. Even though it was not the focus of this research, it is of importance to give greater attention to the materiality of identity documents. Since Palestinians are legally stateless, what is the impact of these biopolitical techniques of identification documents on the production of citizenship? Moreover, what role does citizenship play in senses of belonging? Another issue that was briefly touched upon by some of the respondents was the gender-sensitivity of the ID card system. To illustrate, according to some of the respondents the situation is completely different when the blue ID holder who marries a green ID card holder is a man or a woman. This is an extremely relevant topic for further research. Finally, the findings of the analysis demonstrate the great perseverance of the respondents, future studies should therefore address the concept of activism that might play a role in generating feelings of home.

At last, I want to emphasize that I was heartbroken and inspired at the same time when listening to the stories of my respondents. I strongly believe that it is worth gathering more knowledge about the impact of the Occupation by visiting Palestine and listening to the stories of the Palestinians. They are the ones experiencing this violent military Occupation on an everyday basis and their stories deserve to be put out there. In finalising this thesis, I want to illustrate the steadfastness of Palestinians in the words of the writer, performer and activist Dana Dajani:

> I choose to be Palestinian
> I can
> Because my identity is my own to create
> It is no one's business
> To affirm, prescribe, or bestow upon me
> No need to defend my identity
> Because it comes from within

> -Dana Dajani[4]

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[4] This abstract was retrieved from the Facebook page "Dana Dajani – Writer.Performer".

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8. Appendix

8.1 Doing research in times of Covid-19

This research was conducted under exceptional circumstances and this requires a discussion on how this impacted my thesis. In December 2019, the Covid-19 virus first emerged in China. During the start of the master thesis research project, I never imagined the whole world would turn upside down in just a few months. The virus outbreak, also known as the Corona virus, was labelled a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 11 March 2020. The Corona virus affected everyone's lives. In the following section I will discuss my personal experiences of how these circumstances affected my master research.

Initially, one of the reasons I applied for this master's programme was the opportunity to go abroad for fieldwork. Already in December 2019 I decided I wanted to visit Palestine to conduct my research. During the research project the process of developing a research design went quite smoothly and I had a draft proposal ready in the beginning of March. Since this master thesis was the last task I would complete as a student, I wanted to make the most out of it. I was enthusiastic, motivated but also nervous since I had barely any experience with qualitative research methods, let alone going on fieldwork abroad. In sum, I saw this as an exciting and challenging learning process. Therefore, these new circumstances created some critical learning moments for me.

First of all, it was quite a task to adjust my well-organized plans to the new circumstances. Secondly, I had been looking forward to going back to Palestine, meeting new people and discussing and learning about their experiences. Thus, it was not only difficult but also disappointing for me to cope with these developments. Moreover, this Corona virus created an unsecure and scary situation. On the whole, there was the constant worry about vulnerable people and the uncertainty of not knowing when this would end. With the lockdown, questions arose such as how do you stay motivated, structured and how do you deal with not seeing your friends and family members? All in all, it was not only disappointing but also complicated to cope with these developments.

However, I never thought of postponing my research, so I had to adjust to this new situation. Besides, I also came to the realisation how privileged I am. This meant I had to take a step back and reflect. Fortunately, with help from my parents, friends and especially my supervisor Dr. Polly Pallister-Wilkins, I was able not only to reframe my research design but also to become enthusiastic again about my thesis. I want to thank them all for their guidance

and encouragement during this challenging process. Furthermore, I am grateful for all my respondents who wanted to share their personal stories and experiences over the phone.

I need you!
Interviews master research on the Israeli ID system

My name is Marthe de Roos and I am currently enrolled in the Conflict Resolution and Governance master at the University of Amsterdam. Two years ago, I visited Palestine and became aware of the struggles of daily life under Occupation. With this master thesis I want to analyse the impact of one particular Israeli tool: the coloured ID card system.

What?
The mandated ID card has the power to determine where you can or cannot build your home, go to school, start a career and who you can fall in love with and start a family with. Little attention has been paid to the impact of this system on emotions and more specifically: **senses of belonging** and **home**. Yet, *home* matters to everyone and feeling that you *belong* is an important value in life.

How?
Do you live in the West Bank or East Jerusalem? This research can be of great importance, but is not possible without your story. I would like to listen to your experiences of how the ID card affects you and where and when you feel at home.
I can guarantee your **anonymity** when participating in this project.

It is in no way comparable to the restrictions and difficulties regarding free movement of Palestinians, but unfortunately I am not able to visit Palestine because of the coronavirus restrictions. Therefore, the interview will take place via Skype or telephone.

When?
The interviews will take place between 23rd of March and 7th of May. After the interview, I would like to stay in touch and listen to your suggestions and thoughts on my research.

Interested in participating or do you have any questions? Do not hesitate to contact me.

Contact information:
E-mail: ****
Telephone (WhatsApp and Signal): ****
Facebook: ****