

Manoeuvring Restrictions and Social Status in the Old City Market of Al Khalil (Hebron)

How does movement and social status influence the economy of
local business owners in the Old City?



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Explanation of Terms

Al Khalil:

Although the city is more commonly known as Hebron, I have decided to use the Arabic name of this City, which is Al Khalil. I have done so as this is what local Palestinian calls the city.

Israeli settlement and settlers:

Today there are more than 249 illegal settlements inhabiting more than 640 000 settlers in the West Bank. Settlers are Jewish Israeli citizens who have chosen to live within one of the settlement in the West Bank (Poissonnier & David, 2020).

Checkpoints:

Today there are more than 600 Israeli controlled obstacles and checkpoint throughout the West Bank (International Labour Office, 2016).

Shuhada street:

A street located inside the settlement area of the Old City in Al Khalil. Shuhada street was the city centre main street before the creation of the settlement. Today most of Shuhada street is off limits to Palestinians.

Ein Sarah:

Ein Sarah became the city centre street after the creation of the Settlement, and it is the main city center street in the New City of Al Khalil.

SUMMARY

This thesis investigates how it is to manoeuvre social and economic life in the tourism market in the Old City of Al Khalil, Palestine. The theme will be discussed in light of anthropology of security, Bourdieu's theory on capital and the concept of indebtedness. It begins with exploring difficulties Palestinian business owners in this area face, because of movement restrictions. Movement restrictions as a result of the Israeli settlement are put in place for Palestinians in this area which have created limitations in business opportunities and influenced the social life in the Old City. In the next chapter, I have discuss kinship and social life as capital that influence the local economy of Palestinian shop keepers. In this part I have discussed the kinship structure locally and uses Bourdieu theory on capital to explain how social and economic life is intertwined. From this discussion I argue that education, kinship obligation, nasab, honor and old wealth as capital, influence economic opportunities. After looking at how movement and social life influence the economy, I will in the last chapter present local shop keepers and discuss limitation and opportunities local shop keepers face in light of debt exchange. The main argument is that movement, Israeli occupation and social life need to be included when discussing the economy in Al Khalil, as they create limitations and opportunities for local business owners that a focus on economic capital alone cannot fully explain. While movement restrictions create limitations, social life can function as either a limitation or an advantage for local shop keepers in the Old City of Al Khalil.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Writing a master thesis is a massive challenge and accomplishment. When a war began in the country where I conducted my fieldwork it made it even more difficult than it initially was. Looking through news, watching death on Instagram, have been tough, especially since the children, and places in Gaza reminds me of my host family, Palestinian friends, and the city Al Khalil. Although this have been tough, it has motivated me to finish a master thesis which during the fall of 2023 seemed unattainable. There are several people I would like to appreciate for the completion of this thesis.

I want to show appreciation of the language center in Al Khalil that offered me a home and guided me in my research. I want to offer a thank you to a local organisation in the Old City that during my last month helped with translation of interviews. I want to thank my Arabic teacher in Palestine, for her help in teaching me Arabic and support during my stay. I want to appreciate my host family for their generosity and opening their home for me for several months. I want to appreciate my fiancé and family who have supported me throughout this degree. Lastly, I want to appreciate Ståle Knudsen, my supervisor, for all his support and guidance throughout my master thesis.

This thesis would not have been possible without the support of all those mentioned above.

PREFACE

During my stay between January until June 2023 in Al Khalil, there was a lot of turmoil happening in Jenin and Nablus, which often resulted in bombs in Gaza. All these occurrences probably never arrived on news in Europe, however, for me and everyone else in Palestine, we were affected by the turmoil. More than once, I woke up during the night, hearing the sound of a helicopter over my host family's house, and worried if a random raid would occur. I also worried several times that the next intifada would begin, and I had to hurry out of the country. Whenever I met a tourist in the city, I was sceptical of mentioning the purpose of my visit, as I was influenced by other who told me that Israeli intelligence sometimes disguise as tourists.

Whenever there was a shooting in Jenin, a suicide bombing in Jerusalem or bombs dropped on Gaza (example of actual event during my stay), the city changed. All the shops closed, the public transport was unavailable, and riots occurred in the Old City. When incidents such as mentioned occurred, Al Khalil went together in a massive solidarity representing a collective Palestinian identity.

While for many, the escalation in the war that occurred in October came as a surprise, thinking back at these experiences, it was bound to happened at one point. While I can leave Palestine, whenever the conflict escalates, my Palestinian friends in Al Khalil are not as fortunate, and as the situation is now, I worry every day for their safety and the future of Palestine and Palestinians.

I. INTRODUCTION

It is midday in the busy tourism market in Bethlehem. I am on my way to visit the church built on top of Jesus' birthplace. The call for prayer from the mosque is heard on a loudspeaker throughout the Old City. Every Muslim shopkeeper walks out in the street, cars stop driving, in preparation of prayer. They line up in the street, facing the direction of the city of Mecca, and commence the prayer. After a few minutes the prayer is finished, the shopkeeper starts working again, and the car starts honking.

This experience of a break from haggling and noises from a busy market, is something I was vastly fascinated by and even six years later, I can still picture it. This occurrence is from my first visit to Palestine in 2018, and since then I have been drawn towards this country. When I worked on the research proposal for this thesis, I first decided on the country, and this story inspired me to focus on small business. Initially the plan was to go to this specific market in Bethlehem, however, after advice and learning about the lack of research in Al Khalil (Hebron), it became the area of interest. I had been to Al Khalil twice prior to the fieldwork, and as an anthropologist I was intrigued by the more traditional and less touristy transformed city of Al Khalil.

The thesis is based on a five months stay in Al Khalil between January and June 2023. Six weeks into my stay, I decided to focus on the Old City market in Al Khalil. I was intrigued by the architecture and traditional trades in the Old City as well as the road blocks, settlers and Israeli soldiers. The contrast between the New and Old City was significant and worth examining further. Important aspects from my fieldwork were movement restriction, family influence and business opportunities, which will be discussed further in the next three chapters. Based on these observations in Al Khalil, I decided to focus on how local Palestinian business owners handles movement restrictions and social status in the Old City market of Al Khalil. This thesis will give an understanding on that topic.

In the Old City Market military raids are a periodically occurrence and military present is a constant matter those living and working in this area. The Old City of Al Khalil, is often described as a contested area, an enclave or one of the most visible places of apartheid in the West Bank (Cesari, 2010; Moghadam, 2004). Early on in my fieldwork, these descriptions became noticeable. I observed that there were rules of movement for Palestinians within this area, which did not apply to the Israeli settlers who also lives here. These unwritten rules of movement strictly for Palestinians, is rules I would not be aware without talking to those living there. When a Palestinian want to move from A to B in the Old City, he has to manoeuvre checkpoint, military outpost, settler interactions and blocked roads. And whenever a violent event have occurred nationally or locally, these disturbances and movement patterns changes. This led me to wonder to what extent business life was affected by the security situation in the Old City. Which is the theme of the second chapter, movement restriction and the place.

The area I looked at in the Old City is a tourism market on the Palestinian side which stretches all the way up to the checkpoint before the entrance to Al Ibrahim Mosque. In the New City of Al Khalil, there was many family members, especially young boys helping out in individual shops, this was not the case in the tourism market. I was given two reasons for this; some told me it was about their children safety (fear of arrest or beating from Israeli soldiers and settlers), for others it was financial reasoning, as the business could not support more than one nuclear family. During the fieldwork I was interest in knowing where shop owners received fundings, how they where able to keep the shop open and their future plans. When beginning to investigate these questions in the fieldwork, I came across the importance of family ties. Asking about funding, business owners either received a great offer of rent from the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee¹ or they had received a loan from a clan. What decided on the possibility of receiving business or house loan from a certain family? To what extend does kinship ties influence business opportunities? Which leads me into the third chapter with the

¹ Hebron Rehabilitation Committee is a local organisation that works on rehabilitation in the Old City.

discussion of the correlation between family ties and economic opportunities in the Old City Market.

The Old City Market in Al Khalil depends on tourism, but from my own experience Al Khalil is not a popular tourism destination. Although Muslim tourism comes to visit the Al Ibrahim Mosque, and others come on political arrangement tours, that is how far it goes. Considering the influence of movement patterns and kinship ties as well as lack of tourism, I wonder how the shopkeepers survive in this area. Why do Palestinians choose to have shops here? Why is the tourism market placed in this area? And to what extent does the occupation as well as kinship relations create limitations and opportunities for local shopkeepers? In the fourth chapter, I will present the shopkeepers and shed light on factors that influence the local shopkeepers. I will explain the connections between occupational constraints and kinship relations and how they influence the economy for local shopkeepers. This will be done in the chapter called business opportunities and debt exchange.

As I have presented in the prior paragraph this thesis will have three main themes, movement, social life and the business opportunities. I will explore these themes in the next three chapters and bring it all together in the discussion to give an understanding of how it is to manoeuvre restrictions and social status for Palestinian business owners in the Old City Market of Al Khalil. Before exploring these themes, I will present a short historical background needed to understand the context, theoretical framework I will use to analyse, and methods used as well as limitations I faced during my fieldwork.

Palestine & Israel

When talking about the countries of Israel and Palestine I have already come across an intricate dispute, which puts me in a position whereby a political stance is inevitable. This relates to how both globally and locally there is not an agreement of what the area should be called or who has the right to live here. Some people will consider the

disputed area to be Israel, simultaneously others will consider the area to be Palestine, many will also consider a third option, whereby the area is shared between two nations, Israel and Palestine. This brings me to the root of the conflict, two groups of people who have the desire for the same area. When talking about these areas, I have decided to use the UN definition of this area, which states that the West Bank and Gaza are Palestine, Jerusalem is an international zone, and the remaining area is considered Israel (Waage, 2013). I have taken this political stance, as I believe this is a realistic (not just) and rational way of sharing this land area.

Before the 19th century, there was a small minority of Jews in what was called Palestine, however, at the end of the 19th century Jewish immigration to Palestine accelerated. After World War II the need for a Jewish state was needed and the population of Jews in Palestine increased. The immigration of Jews to a place that was already populated by Arabs created a conflict that escalated with the two-state solution and the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. When the state was created the initial plan was to have an Israeli state and a Palestinian, however, because of several wars and flare-ups in this area, the Palestinian territories have and are still to this day under Israeli occupation. Gaza has been under a blockade and the West Bank is regularly being populated by Israelis in secluded settlement areas (Waage, 2013). Several attempts of a peace process from other nations have occurred, however, even the Oslo peace process in the early 1990s brought neither security nor sovereignty to the Palestinians (Furani & Rabinowitz, 2011).

On figure 1 below, I have added a map that shows how Gaza and the West Bank are two different areas, with different geographical settings. In the West Bank, there is Israeli settlements (white squares), areas under Israeli control (light green), a Israeli border wall (red line) and areas under Palestinians control. Although I could write several pages of the monstrosity that are happening to the people in Gaza right now, I will not do so for the purpose of this research. I conducted research in a city in the West Bank, a very different area than Gaza. A Palestinian in the West Bank for example experience the

Israeli occupation through checkpoint and restriction of movement, in contrast to a Palestinian in Gaza who experience it through bombing. Although different what it's important to mention is that they are connected through memory and identity. Which was visible during my stay as collective solidarity, protest and stricter Israeli security whenever a violent event occurred in Gaza or elsewhere in Palestine and Israel. Since I conducted fieldwork in a city in the West Bank I will not explore the history or the situation in Gaza further in this section.

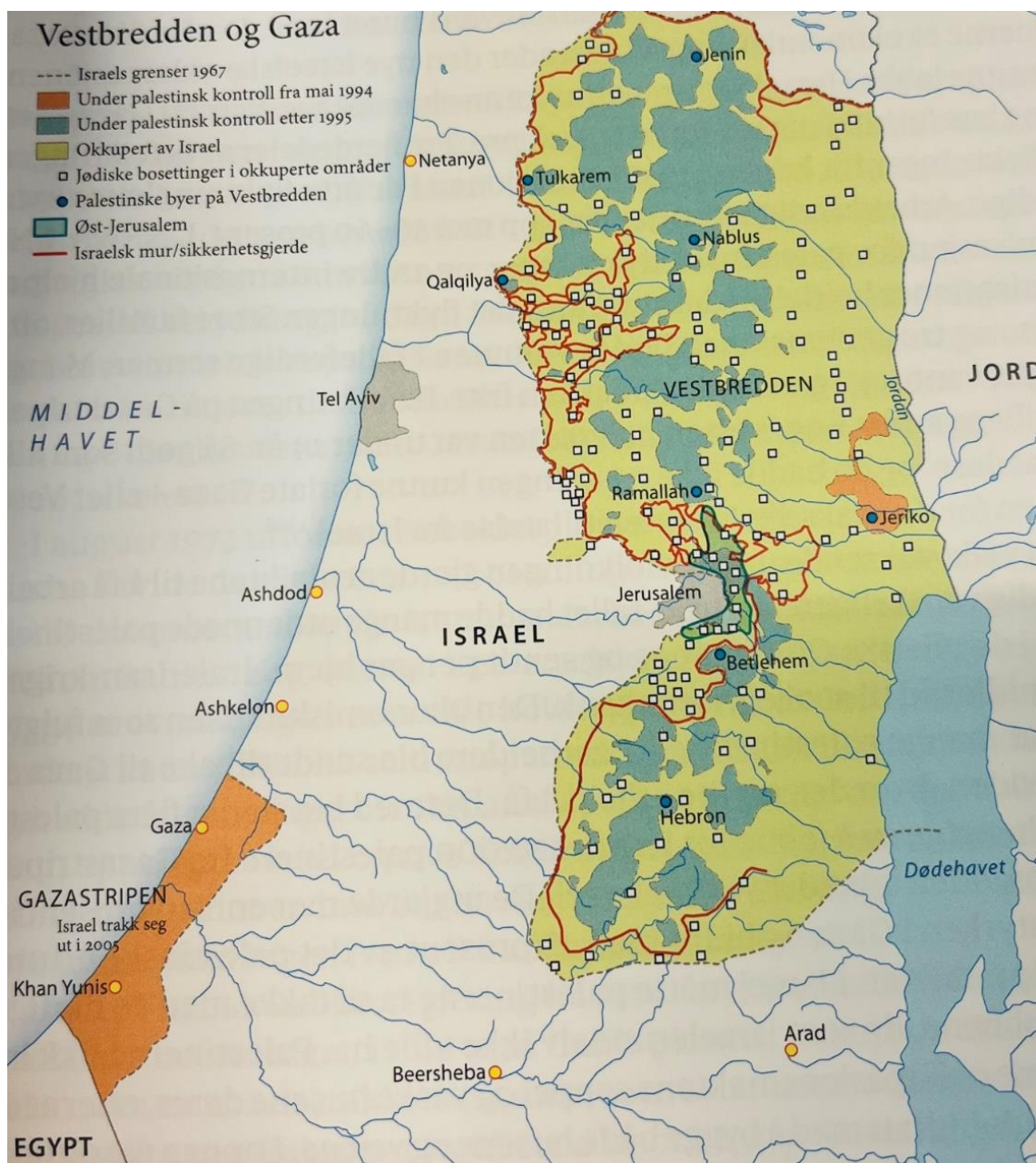


Figure 1: Map of West Bank, Gaza and Israel. Hebron (Al Khalil) is positioned on the map (Waage, 2013, pp. 423).

In Israel and Palestine national identity and faith are factors that determine which rights one has and what laws one needs to follow. In Israel there are Israeli Jews, but also Palestinians with Israeli identity cards (Christian and Muslims). In Palestine there are Palestinians (Christian and Muslim) but also Israeli Settlers. In Palestine, Israeli settlers live in secluded communities, inaccessible for Palestinians. On the figure above, you can see some of the complexity of the area Israel and Palestine. Israel is marked in white, Gaza in orange (under Palestinian control since May 1994), West Bank in blue (under Palestinian control since 1995), green (occupied by Israel) and white squares that mark the settlement areas (Waage, 2013, pp 423).

West Bank

Since the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories in 1967 the West Bank has been divided into three Areas: Area A under Palestinian authority, Area B is shared and Area C under Israeli authority. Within Area C, which is around 80 % of the West Bank, one finds 17 out of 19 refugee camps as well as most of the Palestinians' agricultural land. In 2013, there were around 230 000 people living in these 19 camps and the unemployment rate in most camps is around 40 % (Darychuk & Jackson, 2015; Sultan & Tsoukatos, 2019).

As mentioned, the West Bank today is separated into different areas, whereby there are different rules of what one is allowed to do, and who is allowed to move around in the different areas. The Palestinian cities constitute areas that Israelis are not allowed to enter, however, I have on more than one occasion met Israeli Palestinians within these cities. Some parts of the West Bank are built up by Israeli settlements, these are gated and military controlled neighbourhoods whereby entrance for Palestinians is strictly forbidden. In the refugee camp in the West Bank, there are Palestinian residents, these people fled from what is today called Israel, and ended up in refugee camps in their own country. When driving around in the West Bank one also needs to be aware where to drive, as some roads are forbidden to drive on with a Palestinian license plate. Breaking any of these laws for Palestinians intentionally or unintentionally could lead to

incarceration for a short time or imprisonment for a longer period. Throughout the West Bank there are several Israeli controlled military checkpoints, most of these checkpoints only stops randomly a few cars, however, it can be closed at any given moment from 5 minutes to several hours.

Throughout my stay in Palestine I have experienced crossing multiple checkpoints throughout the West Bank. When driving I have noticed several large settlement areas and observed military outpost and surveillance along the Israeli controlled roads in the West Bank. I quickly learned that carrying an identity card at all times is essential for everyone who travels in this area, however, the consequence of forgetting the identity card is far worse for Palestinians than others. For Palestinians they also need to purchase travel and work permits when entering or working in Israel, including Jerusalem. This also applies for individuals born in Palestine, who has a national identity card from another country. Since 1967 house demolition and incarceration have occurred regularly (Hatz, 2020). Manoeuvring all off these aspects can be difficult and is something I will explore further in the next chapter.

Al Khalil

Al Khalil, internationally called Hebron is considered one of the most ancient cities in the world with a more than 5000 years old history, and the architecture dates back to the Mamluk and Ottoman periods. Originally Al Khalil was a cultural and economic center for nearby villages and until the 20th century, there were a few leading families that dominated the city (Kimmerling & Migdal, 2003; Shaheen, 2019). The most important historical site in Al Khalil for Jews, Muslim and Christians is the Al Ibrahim Mosque also called the Cave of the Patriarchs, and it is the burial place of Abraham and his family. In 2007 the Palestinian population in Al Khalil was a bit more than 150 000 residents. And According to The Applied Research institute the population is predominantly from 8 clans (The Applied Research Institute, 2009). Figure 2 shows the complex geography surrounding Al Khalil, while figure 3 below shows yet another complex geography of the Old City inside Al Khalil.

The 1997 Hebron protocol divided the city of Al Khalil into two separately administered areas. The urban center of around 20 % of the city was kept under direct Israeli military control called H2 (the majority of the Old City). At that time there were around forty thousand Palestinian residents in that area and less than five hundred settlers. The remaining 80 %, H1 was to be under Palestinian control. Shuhada street², the main city center street was closed completely for Palestinians. The Al Ibrahimi Mosque and the market was cordoned off by checkpoints and the vibrant cultural heritage area diminished (Vitullo, 2003).

After the Old City became an Israeli military controlled zone and a settlement area, most Palestinians moved or were forced to move out of the Old City. At that point the Old City, became a place of the poor, while a New City center came to be (Vitullo, 2003). When the settlement was created the current city center street, Shuhada street were closed for access for Palestinians, and a New City center was created around Ein Sarah³ as a result.

In Al Khalil, one often differentiated between the New and Old City, and as many of my informants have highlighted; Palestinian life story in the Old City differs vastly from the New City. In contemporary Al Khalil these areas are separated into two different areas as Shaheen explains;

“Before the beginning of 1997, Israel controlled all of the Hebron area. On January 17th, The Hebron Protocol was signed, concerning partial redeployment of Israeli military forces from the city. Under this agreement, Hebron was divided into two areas: H1 and H2. Control of H1 (80%) shifted to the Palestinian Authority and H2 (20%) remained under Israeli military control. The H2 area is inhabited by Palestinians and 500 settlers living in four downtown settlements

² Shudada Street was the city center for Palestinians prior the creation of the settlement. Today the Shudada street is mostly inaccessible for Palestinians.

³ Ein Sarah is the main city center street in Al Khalil for Palestinians today.

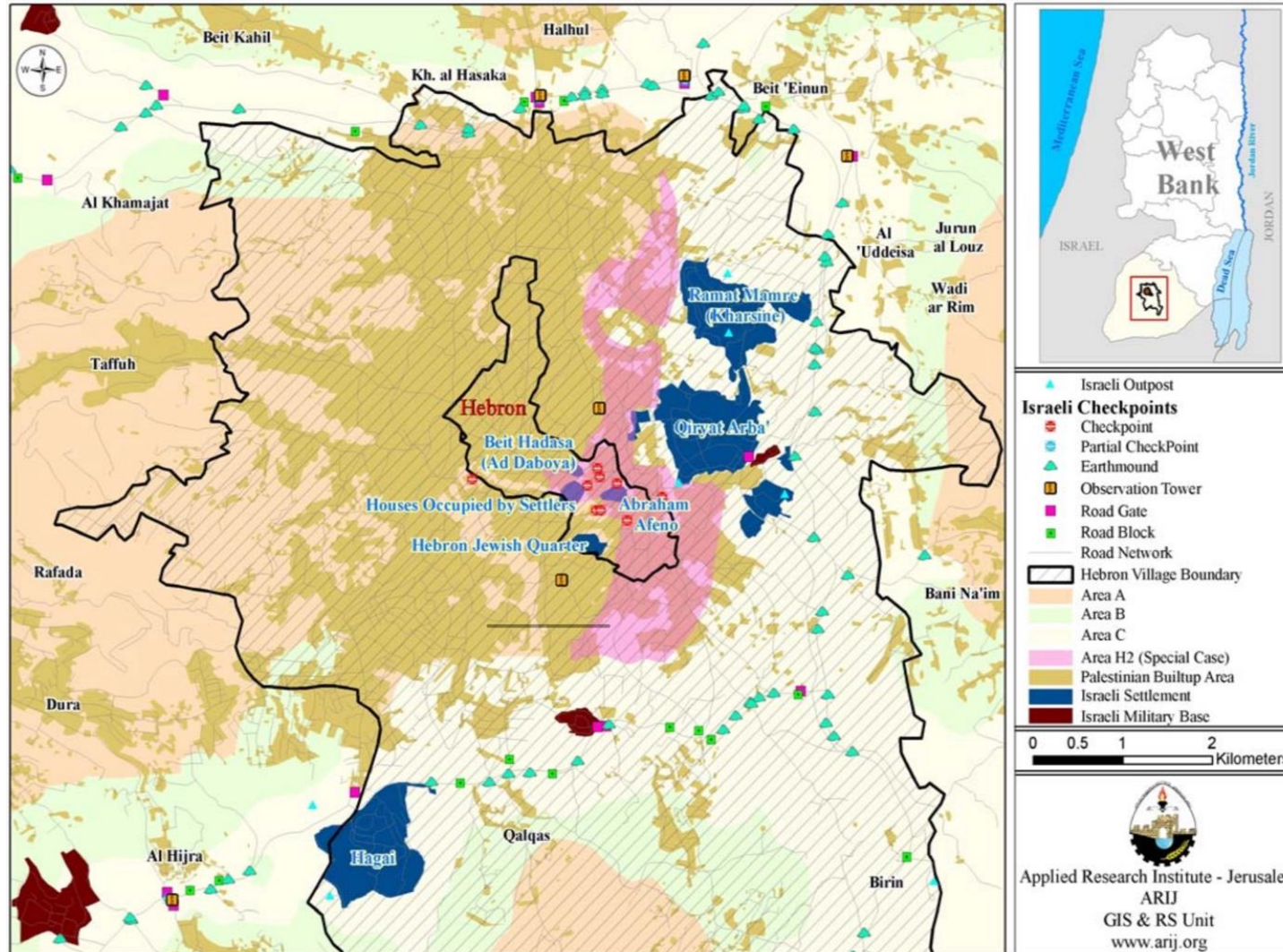


Figure 2: Hebron city location and surrounding areas (The Applied Research Institute, 2009, pp. 3).

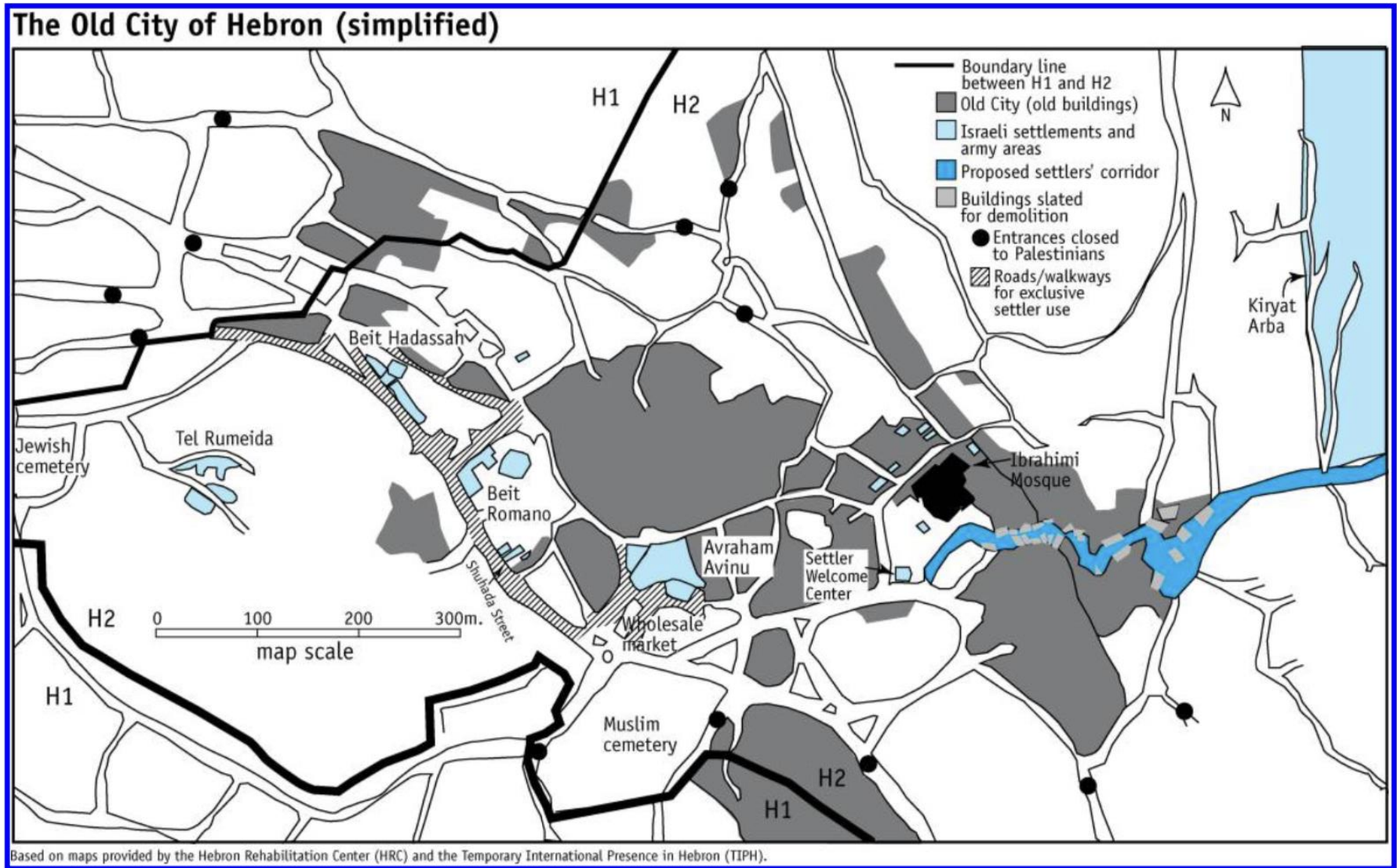


Figure 3: Map of the Old City (Vitulo, 2003, pp.

inside the Old City. This area is under Israeli security control, with the exception of civil power of the Palestinian National Authority” (Shaheen, 2021, pp. 56).

The Old City of Al Khalil

“Soldiers and settlers slowly strangle Hebron. Since 1948, intensified after 1967, and again from 1997, the city has become strictly divided within intimate materialities: unlike anywhere else on the West Bank, Zionists have taken root inside urban Palestinian communities. Where Zionists go, the military follows and 4000 soldiers are now stationed in Hebron to protect its 600 settlers. Physical and psychological violence consequently shapes the contours of movement: curfews, checks, dispossession, displacements, humiliations cumulatively sterilise Palestinian life here” (Griffiths, 2017).

The Old City of Al Khalil has several unique features, it is a place with beautiful historical architecture and a rich religious history, and it is also a place of political tension and a high poverty rate. When international tourists visit Al Khalil, it is rare to wander outside the Old City. The Old City used to be the City Center, but after the creation of the Israeli settlement there, most Palestinians living in the New City Center rarely visit this area, and usually, they do so only to visit the Al Ibrahim Mosque. Palestinians living in the Old City are considered impoverished or brave. Impoverished as they can't afford to move or brave for showing resistance by living there voluntarily. Cesari states that “H1 and H2, the New and the Old City are increasingly two different towns, divided along class lines... transformed the Old City into the space of the poor.... Stigmatized in Palestinian middle-class imaginary as a space of danger, criminality and ultimately backwardness” (Cesari, 2010, pp 15). In this contested area under Israeli control, Palestinians live and work. One could argue that Palestinians in this area experience double oppression. From Israel they need to follow rules of movement through checkpoints and restrictions of certain streets. From Palestinians elsewhere in Al Khalil, because of their low social status they struggle with marriage and loan. Within this area, I have conducted my fieldwork talking to and familiarising myself with Palestinian shop keepers. In the Old City, despite that most Palestinians have moved out of the Old City, ownership of these

historical buildings have remained stable (Vitulo, 2003). As such, some owners in the tourism market rent out their shop through HRC to shop keepers. In the next chapter I will explore further the movement restriction and its implications.

Economy & Small Businesses in Palestine

The Palestinian economy in the West Bank and Gaza is considered a weak economy, and this can be seen in relation to the occupation, Palestinian employment in Israel and in the settlements, Israel's strong economy and Palestinians dependence on international aid. International Labour Office states that “Unemployment, poverty, lack of control over natural resources and the economy, and precarious finances have meant that the Palestinian economy remains in danger of paralysis” (International Labour Office, 2016, pp. 3). There is a high unemployment rate in Palestine, and Gaza has the highest unemployment level in the world. There is a lack of control over natural resources, limitation of movement, use of land and expansion. And more than 110 000 Palestinians work in Israel or settlements within the West Bank. The level of Palestinian employment in Israel is approaching the labor flow it was prior to the second intifada (International Labour Office, 2016). Or at least it was approaching the labor flow before the recent invasion of Gaza. The Palestinian economy as well as the Palestinian workers in Israel have during and a while after each violent period of the conflict, suffered greatly (Farsakh, 2016). For example, I heard through several news pages that aid to the West Bank was withheld by Israel in fear of that it would go towards Hamas, and a majority of this aid goes towards wages to public employees in the Palestinian Authority. Today there is a high unemployment rate, among young Palestinians, but there is also a high literacy rate (of 95 %) and more than half of youth (male and female) are enrolled in higher education (Sarsour, Naser & Atallah, 2011).

The average daily wage in Israel and the settlements is 2.3 times higher than in the West Bank, which makes it highly attractive. However, one needs to obtain (buy) a work permit and fulfil some requirements, for a man for example, he needs to be married. When Palestinians work in Israel, it strengthens the Israeli economy, but weakens the

Palestinian (International Labour Office, 2016). Sayigh (1986) states that a large portion of personal disposable income of Palestinians comes from working in Israel and also Jordan or as financial transfers from family members working abroad. Sarsour, Naser & Atallah argue that the small Palestinian economy has “been forced to grow dependent on: Israeli demand for goods and labor, international aid and remittances of Palestinian workers abroad” (Sarsour, Naser & Atallah, 2011, pp. 10). They describe the Palestinian economy as malnourished as Palestine has “no specified borders, no control over crossings, no army or even a national currency” (Sarsour, Naser & Atallah, 2011, pp.10). In the West Bank there is a circulation of three currencies, Israeli Shekel, Jordanian Dinar and Dollar (Sarsour, Naser & Atallah, 2011). From my experience the Israeli Shekel is the most used in day to day exchanges. Not having a local currency has a negative effect on the Palestinian economy as they are not able to control the monetary policy in Palestine.

The Palestinian economy originally was an agricultural economy. However, as a result of Israeli control over agricultural land and the imposed restriction of movement it has proven difficult for Palestinians to take advantage of the agricultural sector. As the agricultural as well as manufacturing sector are in sharp decline, the service sector continues to grow and in 2010, the service sector constituted almost 64 % of total GDP. The public sector as well has grown and employed 24 % of the Palestinian population in 2010 (Sarsour, Naser & Atallah, 2011). Most of the agricultural land in the West Bank is in Area C. Area C consists of around 60 % of the West Bank, and is an Israeli controlled area. Movement restrictions imposed on Palestinian in the West Bank influence the agricultural industry, but also export. In 2014, there were 490 obstacles to movement and 60 checkpoints across the West Bank, this is excluding Al Khalil (where there are 111 obstacles to movement) (International Labour Office, 2016). Since October 2023, with the Hamas attack on Israel and Israels bombing of Gaza, changes in security have occurred throughout the West Bank. For instance, I was told by friends that in October, Israel closed all roads around major cities in the Wes Bank. This made it impossible to get to work for those working in other cities. I was also told by a local organisation than those living in the Old City, was not allowed to move around, and the two Palestinian

primary school within the settlement area was not allowed to have class room lecture. Only recently the schools opened again.

Sarsour, Naser & Atallah (2011) argues that the current political situation and Palestinians' dependence on foreign aid makes it difficult for Palestinians to achieve a self sufficient economy. Aid makes up half of the PNA budget, almost half of expenditure and revenues on average and over 80 % of deficit financing (the filled gap between expenditure and income). A stop in aid flow which occurred in 2006 for example resulted in a lack of income for almost 160,000 government employees who provided for almost one third of the Palestinian society. Sarsour, Naser and Atallah state, “that donors face a rather difficult challenge, which is to eradicate, with money, the economic and social problems created by politics... To achieve sustainable development in Palestine, donors need to first spot the deformities and abnormalities in the economy and to determine their causes, effects and context” (Sarsour, Naser & Atallah, 2011, pp 17).

Yusuf Sayigh (1986) highlighted how the Palestinian economy is suffering as a result of the Israeli occupation. He argues that a range of actions taken by the occupation such as control over water and electricity has created a dependent of the Israeli economy, as well as limited economy growth in Palestine. Ten major dispossession highlighted is denial of rights of sovereignty, destruction of homes, deportation of leaders or activists, closure of educational institutions and newspapers, land confiscation, depopulation because of pressure, denial of respect of Palestinian lives, confiscation of Arab land, establishment of settlements on Arab land and control over water supplies (Sayigh, 1986). He argues that “The occupation has been an obstacle which has directly retarded the progress of the occupied territories, warped their structure, forced them into subservience to the Israeli economy, and dispossessed them to a serious degree. This is all said within a purely economic context” (Sayigh, 1986, pp. 63). Although this was published in the 80s, recent research show similarities in description of the occupational constrain on the Palestinian economy. In 2008, Freeman published a paper discussing the economy in Palestine. Exploring article on this subject, he argues

that “a number of common veins run through these articles: perhaps the strongest is the almost complete lack of control by Palestinians over their own economic destiny. This is due to Israeli control of borders, of movement, of land and water resources, of trade, of currency and taxation, and to a lesser extent of dependence on the international community” (Freeman, 2008, pp 6).

In 1976 Israel gained control over the Palestinian economy, politics, and institutional affairs. Since then the Palestinian government has partially regained some control. However, Israel still imposes economic and political restrictions on people living in Palestinian territory. Some of these restrictions are that Palestinian have no jurisdiction over the sea, air, or borderlines, they are 100 % dependent on Israel for electricity, and there is a lack of freedom of movement for people and goods (Abuznaid, 2014). Abuznaid (2014) argues the control Israel imposes together with the Jewish settlements is a hindrance to a sustainable economy for Palestinians. Similarly, the International Labour Office states that “Unemployment, poverty, lack of control over natural resources and the economy, and precarious finances have meant that the Palestinian economy remains in danger of paralysis” (International Labour Office, 2016, pp. 3).

In Palestine, the service sector constitutes 67 % of the Palestinian GDP and some family businesses receive funding loans from microfinance institutions. The private sector in Palestine is predominantly small companies and employs around 65 % of employees in Palestine (Abuznaid, 2014). The majority of these small companies are also family businesses, which constitutes 70 % of all business in the West Bank (Abuznaid, 2014; Znaid & Anastas, 2016; Sultan, Waal & Goedegebuure, 2017).

“The Palestinian economy is not growing enough to raise living standards and reduce the high rate of unemployment” (Baidoun, Lussier, Burbar & Awashra , 2018, pp. 62). As a result of Palestinian being forced off the land between 1975-85, the Palestinian territory transformed from a largely rural and agricultural society into an urban one. In 2019, Palestinian unemployment ranked as the second highest in the world (Al’Sanah,

Hanieh & Ziadah, 2022). Baidoun, Lussier, Burbar & Awashra state that there is a “Structural imbalance between a low cost Palestinian economy and a high value Israeli economy” (Baidoun, Lussier, Burbar & Awashra, 2018, pp 63).

It is argued to be easy to start a business and gain finance in Palestine, however, the problem is to grow and survive long term (Sabri, 2008). Most entrepreneurship in Palestine is based upon savings and family support. Almost all the small businesses in Palestine are family driven and one-quarter of those have conflict over management between family members (Sabri, 2008). Microfinance is a possibility for small business owners in Palestine and it is argued that it is the best resource for economic stability. Due to the occupation, lack of a national currency, aid dependency, and a significant gap between demand and supply, the Palestinian economy has. Exports are minimal and imports are substantial. However, microfinance institutions are trying to improve the Palestinian economy and reduce poverty and unemployment suffered (Sabri, 2008; Sharif, Karsh & Deek, 2019).

Small companies in Palestine with less than 20 employees are essential for the Palestinian economy as they employ the majority of the Palestinian workforce. However, as a result of political instability, developing as a business is often difficult. Business survival and short-term problems become the main focus (Baidoun, Lussier, Burbar & Awashra, 2018). Investing and exporting internationally for Palestinians has proven difficult because of the political situation. As Israel has control over the borders, exporting products requires permits that are time-consuming, expensive, and limited. Palestinian seeking to export or import through Israeli ports faced transaction costs that are on average 35 % higher than that for an Israeli firm in the same industry (Sabri, 2008). In Al Khalil, limitation of movement and use of certain areas complicates trade and business opportunities (Cesari, 2010).

Kinship and Economy in Palestine

Anthropological research conducted in Palestine, have a tendency to focus on identity, faith, history or politics, and more recently the checkpoint economy has been investigated. In 2011, Furani & Rabinowitz (2011) published the paper *The Ethnographic Arriving of Palestine*, and ten years later Atshan (2021) published a paper discussing anthropology in Palestine from 2011 until now. The first paper argues that anthropology of Palestine has since the nineteenth century been in chronological order: biblical, oriental, then absent and lastly poststructural. In the early twentieth century European anthropologists tended to focus on the biblical past of the holy land. A consequent that arouse from this focus was validation of a Zionist claim of a historical return to the promised land. Until WW2 the focus was a oriental Palestine, with a interest in Palestinians archaeological and historical past. After WW2 marks the beginning of the absent Palestine. After WW2 began an ethnographic period driven by empathy and solidarity for the Jewish refugees from Europe. “The Narrative of Israel as a place offering physical haven, identity, and solidarity to endangered refugees from Europe and beyond completely overshadowed the moral and material injuries of Palestinians in the Aftermath of 1948” (Furani & Rabinowitz, 2011, pp. 480). The empathy of the Jewish refugees led to an ethnographic silence of Palestinian life’s and resulted in a rise of Israeli anthropologist using Zionism as inspiration. The ethnographic writing in this period presented Palestinians as others, backward and traditional in contrast to the modern Israel. After a long period of silence, in the post structural period in late twentieth century, there was a rise of ethnographic work on Palestinians life stories and identity. Said, in 1978 published the widely known book “*Orientalism*” following the consecutive year with “*The Question of Palestine*. During that time memory was widely studies, and since 1980s ethnographic studies on Palestine have increased drastically (Furani & Rabinowitz, 2011). Atshan (2021) highlights how since Furani & Rabinowitz article in 2011, the focus has shifted towards a stronger interest on Palestinian lives through themes such as resistance, gender and identity. He also highlights how half of the anthropologists in the field in recent time have a Palestinian heritage (Atshan, 2021).

Anthropologists have looked at economy in a middle eastern context, but Palestine have not been of much interest concerning economy. The work life in Al Khalil have been studied locally, however, not by anthropologists in general. When looking at relevant literature during my planning of the fieldwork, I came across a range of master and PhD thesis on work life at Palestinians Universities. Asfour (2009) looked at the impact on the urban development in the Old City by the Israeli settlement. He highlights among other things how the present of the settlement and the Israeli policies creates limitations of movement and on the economy for local Palestinians. Al Sharabti (2020) explores how family power influence family business performance in Al Khalil and Bethlehem. He highlights how family businesses outperforms non-family businesses.

Some social scientists have looked at economy as more than money, however, not in the context of Al Khalil. For instance Harker, Sayyad & Shebeitan (2019) based on research in Ramallah argued that debt is more than economic, it is entangled in everyday politics and settler-colonialism and patriarchy. While Sabella & El-Far (2019) from their research on entrepreneurship in Jerusalem, highlights the importance of including social life in a study of economy in Palestine. According to Sultan & Tsoukatos, “There is a lack of studies in the Palestinian Territories on dealing with how violent conflict impacts firms working formally or informally at the micro level” (Sultan & Tsoukatos, 2019, pp. 55).

While Al Khalil with its religious importance in Islam, might be studied thoroughly in the Arabic written World, in English written academia at least it is limited. Al Khalil, is an understudied city in the West Bank, while research tends to look at identity and Christians in Ramallah and Bethlehem, Al Khalil is often forgotten. While other anthropologists in the area have focused on identity and resistance, or economy and kinship separately, I will with this thesis contribute to the anthropology of Palestine with a paper that discusses the interrelation of economy and kinship in the urban city of Al Khalil.

Theoretical Framework

In this thesis I will use three theoretical frameworks, which will be discussed in correlation with each other in the discussion. I will start by discussing anthropology of security in correlation to movement restrictions for local business owners in the Old City. After discussing limitation related to the political situation I will in the next chapter discuss social and economic life in Al Khalil, in light of Bourdieu. In the fourth chapter I will discuss debt relation in the Old City Market by building on Bourdieu theory on capital as well as including how the political situation influences debt relations.

Anthropology of Security

In the anthropology of security, security can be defined as both produced and productive. Security is then on one hand a product of the particular place and population. Simultaneously security is viewed as a productive process that transforms the state, institutions, the city, and social life (Gluck & Low, 2017). Similarly, Feldman argues that “security practices are cultural practices. They shape social relations, define kin networks, generate exchange and produce all sorts of things anthropologist have long been interested in” (Feldman, 2009, pp. 490). Similarly to the anthropology of security, is Wick (2011) research on waiting under closure in Palestine. She discussed the lived experience of closure for Palestinians and argues that the geography of Palestine as a result of occupation have shaped the experience of mobility, work and social life for Palestinians. She further states that:

“Many people living under closure in Palestine feel like they are under constant siege, and like in Mahmoud Darwish’s popular poem, they feel that “the siege is waiting, waiting on a tilted ladder in the middle of the storm.” Waiting at a checkpoint, waiting for the curfew to be lifted, waiting for her permit to be issued, waiting for her brother to get out of jail, waiting for her boss to pay her, waiting her turn to show her papers, waiting for her mother to be able to visit her and waiting for a meaningful political movement or political solution. Over the course of my fieldwork between 2002 and 2004, waiting was a constant preoccupation in stories I heard, the newspapers I collected, and literature I read. It was a concern

in my own work. Waiting, that condition of being in between places, of trying to reach someone or somewhere, and just being fed up, is a condition that characterizes contemporary Palestine, chopped up by the closure” (Wick, 2011, pp. 24-25).

Her description of waiting above represent one aspect of how security transform the city and social life. By looking at the Old City in the anthropological lens of security, it reveals several layers of geography and social life. As will be discussed in chapter 2 through ethnography on movement and checkpoints.

Bourdieu on Capital

One of my main arguments in this thesis is that social life is intertwined with economy and that economy need to be understood as more than its material form. To understand the complexity of economy and social life in Al Khalil I have chosen to use Bourdieu theory on capital. In his theory he talks about four different types of capital which is convertible into each other in certain conditions. Bourdieu argues;

“ as economic capital, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights; as cultural capital, which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications; and as social capital, made up of social obligations (“connections”), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility” (Bourdieu, 1986, pp. 16).

Barth (1965) during his fieldwork among the Swat Pathans in Pakistan argues similarly that honor, reputation, leadership and ownership are interrelated terms. An example he uses is that a man that do not possess a good honor, will struggle to be accepted as a leader, or gaining wealth through networks of relationships. Barth further argues that “The man who manages to extract a proper revenge when shamed has defended his honor, proved his worth and demonstrated his ability to defend his own interest. Such a man is chosen as a leader by many” (Barth, 1965, pp 83).

Economic capital is about the money you possess and land ownership. And economic capital can be used to achieve cultural, social or symbolic capital. Although conversion from economic to any of the other capital is not always a straightforward process. For instance, gaining cultural capital through economic capital requires money, but also time, and gaining some goods and services requires virtue through social capital, which is not instantly given.

Cultural capital is a notion Bourdieu came across in the course of research. He proposed cultural capital as a way of understanding the correlation between class and scholastic achievement. In his theory he talks about how the cultural capital can be embodied, objectified or in an institutionalised state. Cultural capital as embodied can be defined as learned or inherited knowledge. As Bourdieu defines accordingly “To possess the machine, he only needs economic capital; to appropriate them and use them in accordance with their specific purpose, he must have access to embodied cultural capital” (Bourdieu, 1986, pp 20). Cultural capital as objectified is about inherited ownership of material object such as painting. Lastly is cultural capital in its institutionalised state, which is something gained through education in the form of academic qualifications (Bourdieu, 1986). Cultural capital in its institutionalised state is what I will use in this thesis.

While cultural capital relates to inherited or invested knowledge, social capital is about networks of relationships. The volume of one’s social capital relates to the size of your network, membership of groups and kinship relations. Gaining network (increasing the volume of the social capital) can be defined as a way of securing material or symbolic profit. As Bourdieu puts it, “the network of relationships is the product of investment strategies, individual or collective, consciously or unconsciously aimed at establishing or reproducing social relationships that are directly usable in the short or long term” (Bourdieu, 1986, pp 22).

The last type of capital Bourdieu mentions, is the symbolic capital, which is about reputation, status and prestige, and it is generated by cultural, economic and social capital. In contrast to the other types of capital, symbolic requires a lot of effort and is time consuming type of capital to gain. Bourdieu defines symbolic capital as a “difference that is recognized, accepted as legitimate” (Bourdieu, 2013, pp. 297). Symbolic capital as prestige or honor for example can further transform into financial benefits or increase in social capital through networks of relationship (Pret, Shaw & Dodd, 2016). Bourdieu argues that symbolic capital is nothing other than economic or cultural capital, however, economic and cultural power gained in previous struggles can be over time reproduced into symbolic capital such as prestige. Bourdieu further argues that “Symbolic capital is credit: it is the power granted to those who have obtained sufficient recognition to be in a position to impose recognition” (Bourdieu, 1989, pp.23).

Capital in all its form is interchangeable. Economic capital can transform into social and cultural capital which can further transform into symbolic capital. In addition, social, cultural and symbolic capital can transform into economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Pret, Shaw & Dodd, 2016; White, 1994). Using Bourdieu theory, I will in chapter three explain how these types of capital relate and transform into each other in the context of Al Khalil, using my host family and shop keepers in the Old City as examples.

Debt Exchange and Economy

While Bourdieu present a theoretical framework of how social and economic life interrelate, White (1994), with her implementation of debt exchange in a urban Muslim society in Turkey, show how the different types of capitals interact and transforms in a society similar to the one in Al Khalil. The connection between Bourdieu’s theory on Capital and White presentation of debt exchange in Turkey I would define as such: Social, economic or symbolic capital is used to create debt exchange, which can transfer into a different capital, but simultaneously lead to indebtedness. In a debt exchange there is a individual who have called in a debt by creating a new one, and there is also an individual who has given a gift, and created a indebtedness that needs

to be repaid. Debt exchange between two families can go back several generations, in an endless loop of debt that only ends if there is no effort (or money) to maintain it. From her fieldwork in Turkey, she argues that debt relations transform into a chain of power and authority within a family and within the society. Debt exchanges are usually created through kinship ties or friendships, and looking back at Bourdieu it can be viewed as a way of transforming capital. Debt exchanges are similar to gift exchange, however there are some differences. While gift exchange is between two individuals, debt exchange can be between several individuals, and can occur between individuals that have never met each other. While gift is followed with a counter gift, a debt can be passed on. White argues that “Debt exchange creates a web of relations in which every individual has access to different strands of debt-based relations. The strands are constantly being added to and sometimes being blocked as new relations are formed and old ones cut” (White, 1994, pp. 99). According to Jenny White, all individuals in the Turkish society constantly work on maintaining, exchanging and creating new debt relations. Through creating indebtedness towards each other, power is created, which can translate into symbolic power in a society. When two individuals in Turkey meet for the first time, they look for reciprocal connections to base their personal relationship, and if a reciprocal link is present an individual can call in a debt, thereby creating a new debt. However, outsiders in the Turkish society struggle with access to these goods and services, as they do not have access to the debt exchange, or chain of people (White, 1994). Debt exchange can be created through exchange of goods or borrowing money. However, it can also be about the exchange of women through marriage. In Tajikistan for instance, borrowing and receiving gifts within the clan creates indebtedness and marriage is perceived as a way of balancing the indebtedness (Cleuziou & Dufy, 2022).

In chapter four I will discuss debt exchange in relation to social life and economy in the Old City market, by drawing similarities between the practice of debt exchange in Turkish society and the local social life in Al Khalil. By implementing White's (1994) theory in the discussion of the local economy in chapter four, I have shown how Capital as defined by Bourdieu is conceptualised in social and business relations for shopkeepers in the Old City.

Methods, Limitations & Advantages

In the summer of 2018, I booked a spontaneous two week trip to Al Khalil through a local organization that offered intensive Arabic courses. A few weeks later, I was at the airport on my way to a city and country I had very little knowledge about. After being questioned for one and a half hour in Israeli security at the airport a private driver was waiting outside, to take me all the way to Al Khalil. In Al Khalil I was dropped off at some friends of the language center waiting for my host family to pick me up. It was around 1 am. After two cups of tea and some sweets, my host father arrived to pick me up. أهلا وسهلا في فلسطين - welcome to Palestine he greeted me in Arabic. I followed him to his car, and met his wife, three daughters and his youngest son. No one in the family spoke any English (except for a few words), so after a short introduction we drove off to visit an aunt and uncle. I had arrived during the last week of Ramadan, and visiting family and driving around late at night was a normality. I was exhausted after a long flight, however, vastly fascinated by all that I had experienced within a few hours in Palestine. The year after I decided to conduct a one-month fieldwork in Al Khalil with the approval of my university. On the 1 of January 2023, I once again arrived in Al Khalil, this time to conduct research for my master thesis. This time however, I stayed for a much longer duration. Because of the political situation I travelled with a three-month tourist visa from January until March and again in May until June.

In Al Khalil I was placed in a host family through a local organization, and I stayed with the same family for both my stays in 2023. The location of my family was in one of the nicer areas in the New City, and it was around one hour walking distance from the Old City market. Living in a Palestinian host family made it easier for me to adapt into a society where family is important, and it also made it more natural for me to familiarize myself with language, food and customs. In my research I found it beneficial having ties to a family in Al Khalil. I believe it made it easier for me to create trust and gain information as it was less likely that I was perceived as an Israeli spy.

This thesis is based on observation by walking through the market, conversations with business owners, and interviews. Most days I walked through the market and talked to informants over a cup of tea in their shops. I had a few organised interviews but found it more useful with the daily conversations. I also conducted a few questionnaires to gain a basic understanding of ownership, entrepreneurship and family ties. The questionnaire was translated into Arabic. I conducted two audio recorded interviews with help from a translator, and one interview whereby I got the audio recording translated after the interview. During my stay, I helped out with English lessons in a refugee camp and at the language center, and I volunteered briefly in a local organisation in the Old City. In October 2023 I was planning to go back and work for this organisation. Half of my informant I got in contact with through the local organisation. Among my informant, everyone except one spoke English reasonably well, most lived outside the Old City, and from what I have gathered the majority had a permit for their shop to stay open. These factors might have limited my understanding of business life. During my research, I noticed that some shop keepers avoided questions about their business, and had no interest in participating in my research. I do not know for sure why some did not want to participate, however, I believe the result would be different if I had access to those as well as those who only spoke Arabic.

As a young woman with blond hair and blue eyes it influenced my role in the field in several ways. First of all, I did not look visibly as a stereotypical Palestinian or Israeli. Because of this both Palestinians and Israelis perceived me as a tourist and treated me as such. For instance, almost every time I crossed a checkpoint, I did not receive questions and I rarely needed to show my passport. This made it much easier for me traveling around, however, it might have limited my understanding of how it is to move around for a Palestinian. Secondly, as I was easily classified as a tourist, I think many Palestinians I talked to were not worried that I would misuse the information they gave me. However, if the research would be in Nablus or Jenin during this time, it would have been much more difficult gaining trust, considering the multitude of events which occurred in those areas during my fieldwork. During my last weekend in Palestine, I visited Nablus and Jenin, and when doing so I experienced the scepticism and fear of

that I was an Israeli spy. When entering Nablus for example, the car me and my European friends was driving was stopped by locals who demanded to see our passport, and when walking around Jenin refugee camp, local Palestinians texted each other that foreigners was walking around.

As all of my informant mentioned occupational constraints as an influence on their daily life (to different degrees). It is not surprising that most of the research conducted in Palestine, have a political agenda. In this thesis I do not wish to have an explicit political agenda. However, to quote Sara Roy (a researcher on the conflict), “Any claim to neutrality, or for the matter objectivity, is in my experience nothing more than calculated indifference” (Roy, 2007, pp. 58). Although I do not wish to focus on politics, the conscience choice of the Old City as area of interest, comes with a political stance, and as every Palestinian in the Old City highlights limitations in everyday life as a result of the Israeli occupation, it is natural to include limitation in economic life as a result of occupation.

As any other thesis there are limitations and advantages worth mentioning. The first limitation as well as advantage I would like to mention is knowing the local language, which is Arabic in Palestine. Before arriving in Al Khalil, I had some Arabic knowledge, and the one month intensive course I took in the beginning of my fieldwork improved my understanding of Arabic. This knowledge helped me better communicate with shop owners, however, it was also a limitation as I was not able to understand all the social interactions that occurred at the market. As I have already mentioned this was not my first time in Al Khalil, which was a major advantage, as I already had some connections and knew that I could live in a host family for the duration of my stay. My initial plan was to complete one month of research in October 2023 as well, however, because of the escalation in the conflict, this was not possible. This created a limitation in my research material. Whereby I was planning to look into working women in the Old City. The last limitation I would like to mention is the situation after a day with a violent event. The day after a violent event, which occurred regularly throughout my stay, had occurred

somewhere in Palestine or Israel, I did not perceive the Old City as a safe area, as during these occasions there was protest which often resulted in smoke or sound bombs, and on some occasions shootings. These factors can occur at any given time in this area, however, the possibility of it happening increases a lot whenever a violent event has occurred somewhere else in Palestine and Israel. When it comes to access to informants, I almost exclusively focused on the tourism market, I made that choice because of easy access and because they face different challenges than for example farmers on the fruit and vegetable market.

The West Bank is a political landscape whereby, A Palestinian can be arrested by Israeli security for as little as their opinions, and this is something I have been aware of when anonymising my informants. I anonymised all my informants by changing their names into typical Palestinian names, and I use some extra consideration when anonymising friends or other Palestinians that could be easily identified. In The Old City, there was some shop keepers that did not wish to answer questions, so those I did talk to, were not afraid of expressing their opinions or the possible consequences of this statement. As a researcher I have the responsibility of anonymising my informants, because of that I have made some small non-essential changes to their personal information and shop placement. Concerning my informants, I received an oral consent and shared contact detail if anyone of them would change their minds. When leaving Palestine through Israel, I made sure names of informants were kept separately from the notes in my notebook and I uploaded notes on my computer to a digital platform and deleted it on my computer.

Thesis Structure

The purpose of this thesis is to present how it is to manoeuvre restriction and social status in the Old City Market of Al Khalil. I will do so by looking into three main themes, movement, family and business opportunities. In the second chapter I will give an in-depth understanding of how it is to manoeuvre around the Old City as a Palestinian as well as how movement restrictions influence business life. In the third chapter I will

explore family life in Al Khalil, and by doing so, discuss how family life and economy are interrelated. I will discuss this in light of Bourdieu theory on capital as discussed above. In the fourth chapter, I will discuss the local economy and debt exchange. Two things will be done, I will discuss how the economy is limited by the political situation, and I will also discuss capital in relation to debt exchange as a second limitation on the economy for local business owners. In this chapter I will present several shop keepers and discuss them in light of business limitations and opportunities. I will present how movement and security as well as family life are factors that influence the local business owners in the Old City market. After doing all of this I will bring it all together in a discussion.

II. MOVEMENT RESTRICTION & THE PLACE



Figure 4: New City architecture, Al Khalil, 24. May 2023



Figure 5: Old City architecture, Al Khalil, 14. June 2023

Do you like Israel? It is beautiful in Israel right? Say you like Israel.” The Israeli soldier points his machine gun towards me, waiting for a reply. Feeling intimidated, I nod and answer short yes. He continues, still pointing the gun towards me and says “What are you doing here? You know this is a dangerous area right?” After explaining I was on my way to teach English, I was eventually allowed to pass. This incident happened on my way into Al Aroub refugee camp in the West Bank. A few days prior an attack in Jerusalem had occurred and my experience have been that whenever an incident has occurred somewhere in Palestine and Israel, the security is tighter and the Israeli military are more aggressive. And as a result riot, protest and shooting often occurs in places surrounded by Israeli military such as Al Aroub camp and also in the Old City.

In this chapter, I will explore movement in the Old City, and give an understand of how changes in security, influence movement and business opportunities for local shop keepers in the tourism market. I will start differentiating between the New and Old City in Al Khalil, and than explore the Old City with all its layers. After doing so, I will through ethnography, show how it is to move around in the Old City for local Palestinians and present changes in security. Using anthropology of security as a theoretical framework, the purpose of this chapter is to present how the security situation constantly shape and reshape the economy and social life in the Old City.

Understanding the Area

The New and Old City have a distinct difference in architecture, types of wares and modernity. The Old City has a beautiful historical Mamluk architecture with stone walls and narrow streets whereby the New City consists of new buildings surrounding large roads packed with cars. In the Old City you can buy traditional and tourism wares in contrast to the Turkish and Italian fashion one gets in shops along Ein Sarah and larger malls in the New City. As well as fashion, the New City also offers restaurants and cafes and Argilja (water pipe) shops that are open until late at night. With the exception of KFC and Uncle Osaka, most cafes and restaurants are local small businesses. Among the restaurants and cafes, some have English names such as “Pizza One” and “Burger Time” but the majority of shops, cafes and restaurants use the family name. By using the family name on shops, Palestinians in Al Khalil can always know what family they are supporting when trading. I believe that the most prominent difference between those living in the New and Old City is the interaction with Israeli settlers and soldiers. In the New City there are no settlers and soldiers are only visible close to the Old City and on the outskirts of the city. In the Old City, soldier and settler interaction is a daily occurrence.

In Al Khalil roughly all Palestinians are considered to be Muslim. This differentiates them from cities such as Bethlehem and Ramallah, where there are also Palestinian Christians. In Al Khalil every 100 meters or so, there is a mosque, on Fridays everything

is closed until after the midday prayer, and it is rare to see an adult woman without a hijab. Sales of alcohol are non-existent and the use of religious phrases among all ages are a common place. Even the youngest children know that when they are asked “how are you” the reply is “alhamdulillah”, praise be to God. During Ramadan, restaurants and cafes are closed during the day, and other shops do not open until later in the day. My host family for example lives right around the corner of a mosque, and the men in my host family go to the mosque for every prayer. The importance of Islam in this city is prevalent in all aspects of life in Al Khalil, both the New and the Old City.

Ein Sarah, the New City center Main Street is never completely empty, and I got the impression that it is relatively safe to move around during the evening and nights. The Old City on the other hand I have been told that it is unsafe to move around in the evening. In addition to being a historical and religious site, the Old City has a reputation of being a place of danger, crime and use of illegal substances (Lecoquierre, 2019). According to Vitullo, after most Palestinians moved to the New City “Drug addicts and socially marginalised people had moved into vacant houses in the more derelict areas” (Vitullo, 2003, pp. 74). In addition to the reputation of the area, there are restrictions based on Israeli security of movement for Palestinians living in this area during the evening and nights, and during violent event movement restrictions often increases. The reputation as well as the Israeli security can be viewed as two reasons why many Palestinians in the New City rarely wander around in the Old City.

“The division of Hebron and the occupation of H2 has modified the relation of Hebronites to the old city: emptied of its Palestinian population, it is now often thought of as a dangerous place to be avoided, because of the settlers and military controls, but also because it is seen as a den of thieves and drug dealers that use the division of authority to their advantage. The young generation of Hebronites have always known the city as divided, with these negative representations attached. As a result, some occasionally go to the Cave of the Patriarchs to pray, but many have never entered the Old City” (Lecoquierre, 2019, pp.140-141).

The Old City of Al Khalil is an important cultural, religious and historic site, and it is the home of Israeli settlers and Palestinians with a low socioeconomic status. In the middle of the Old City, you can find the Al Ibrahim Mosque. The Old City which was built in the Ottoman time was constructed around the mosque, as the mosque represents the burial place of the Prophet Ibrahim or Abraham as he is called in Judaism and Christianity. In Islam, the Al Ibrahim Mosque is considered one of the four holiest places in Islam, and for a Jew it is equally important. Before the creation of the Settlement, this was the city center, and most big families in Al Khalil still have a key to a house in the Old City, a symbol of hope of returning. Today the Old City is on the UNESCO heritage list and a governmental organization, Hebron Rehabilitation Committee, supported internationally is working with restoring and renovating the Old City, in the hope that Palestinian one's again will live and use this space (Vitulo, 2003).

H2: The Palestinian Tourism Market & Israeli Settlement

Omar, Tourism shop owner, Old City:

“This (Old City) is a place where history have passed from one generation to the next. But the Israelis are working day and night to close this place. Like many other shops, this shop is facing threats of closing especially because of its location. This shop is surrounded by many settlements and outposts. This place is the safety vault for the Old City as it is located at the head of the Main Street that leads to Al Ibrahim Mosque. This is why its location is so significant”
(translated interview from Arabic).

Al Khalil is the only city in the West Bank where the Israeli settlement is within the city center, and it is also the only area where Palestinians also live within the settlement area. In the Jewish settlement in the Old City there are around 500 inhabitants and in the nearby settlement of Kiryat-Arba there are around 5000. The beginning of an Israeli population in the Old City of Al Khalil started in 1967 after a group of religious Zionist who stayed in the area for a holiday refused to leave and demanded a Jewish area in this holy city. Eventually Israel decided to build a settlement in Kiryat-Arba (on the outskirts of Al Khalil). In 1980 six Jewish students were murdered outside the Hadassah house (in

the Old City), as a result of that event the creation of a settlement within the city center of Al Khalil was in progress (Feige, 2001). In 1994 Baruch Goldstein a Jewish settler, entered the Muslim side of the mosque and killed 29 Palestinian Muslims at prayer (Serry, 2017). With all this turmoil, the creation of a space for Jewish worship, and strict security of entering both the Jewish and Palestinian side of the mosque was put in place. Today there is a mosque built on top of the burial place of Abraham, a portion of this mosque is turned into a Synagogue for Jews to use. In the synagogue one can find the cenotaphs of Abraham, Sarah, Jacob and Leah, while in the mosque the cenotaphs of Isaac and Rebecca are found. On ten specific days Jewish worshipers are allowed to enter the mosque to pray (Serry, 2017). Even though the Mosque is separated to make it possible for Muslim and Jews to pray on this equally important religious site, there is disagreement over the space that is given among Muslim and Jews in Israel and Palestine. To enter the mosque, one needs to go through a checkpoint and also Israeli military control. One day, when I went through one of the checkpoints with a Palestinian friend, he expressed: “She is one of the good one’s” about the soldier, when we crossed without any problem. He explained that sometimes they might check everything and use a lot of time, even though they know who I am.

The settlement and the surrounding area in Al Khalil, Old City is known for inhabiting strong ideological Israeli, and it is also a space of the social poor and political Palestinians. Local Palestinians base their right over the Old City on memory, history and religious importance, similarly Israeli Jews do the same based on ancient history. As they both desire the same space, the burial place of Abraham, is a constantly contested area. “In the past thousands of years, the burial place of Abraham had been in turn a Hebrew shrine, a synagogue, a Byzantine basilica, a mosque, a crusader church, and then a mosque again. In most recent times a part of the mosque was partitioned back into a synagogue” (Serry, 2017, pp. 53). Prior to the creation of the settlement, this area surrounding the Al Ibrahim Mosque was a bustling Palestinian bazaar. One of my informants, Samii, works in a 120 years old bakery in the Old City market, and he is the fourth generation working there. Originally his family had two

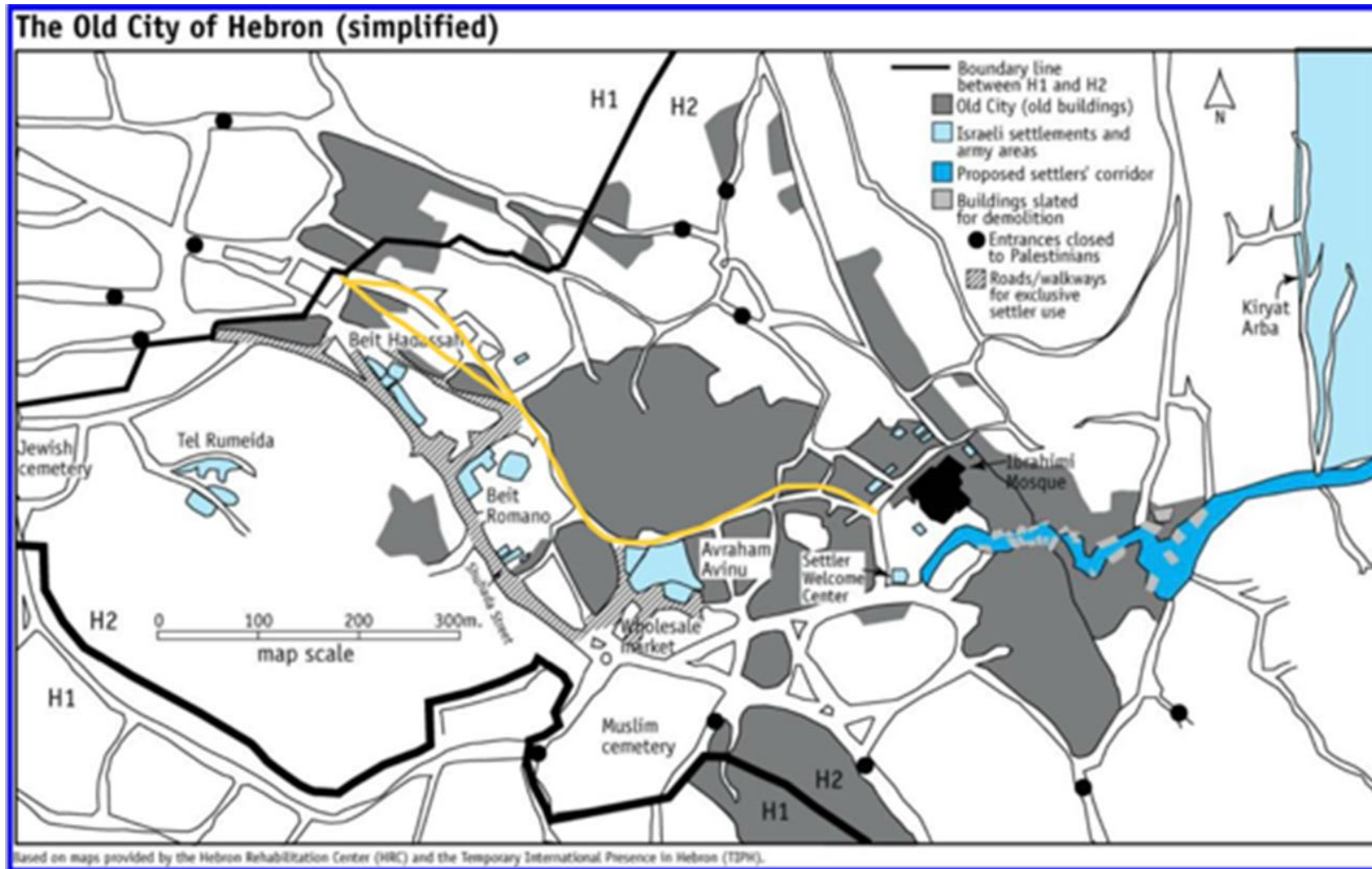


Figure 6: Map of the Old City, yellow line drawn on the map shows the position of the tourism market (Vitullo, 2003, pp. 73).

bakeries, however, because of the settlement he do not longer have access to the larger bakery located in Shuhada street. For many Palestinians in Al Khalil, the loss of access Shuhada street influenced their economy.

Inside the Old City, in H2 area (presented on figure 6 above), and on the border of the settlement, there is a Palestinian tourism market. In this narrow street, surrounded by checkpoints, settlers and Israeli military, one can buy traditional wares and typical tourism wares. Those shop owners, who do not live in the same building as their shop, are renting the shop through Hebron Rehabilitation Committee (HRC). HRC is runned by locals and supported through donations from among others Arab Fund, Saudi Fund, Spanish government and UNs Temporary International Presence in Hebron (Vitulo, 2003). HRC was created prior to the Hebron protocol, but after the Old City became an Israeli military controlled zone and most Palestinians moved, the HRC mission of repopulation and renovation of the Old City grew. Since the Oslo agreement HRC, have worked actively in refurbishing the historical building in the Old City, and are working on bringing life back to this area (Vitulo, 2003). The tourism market is my area of studies, and for those who works or live within this area, there are strict rules of movement, surveillance and constantly a military presence. Below you can see some pictures from the market, as well as a checkpoint and blocked roads inside the market street.

Within the H2 area, there are rules Palestinians have to follow when it comes to movement. The yellow lines drawn on figure 9 further down shows which streets Palestinian are allowed to walk in, however, there are several arbitrary factors each day which influence a Palestinians possibility to walk these streets. For example when a violent incident has occurred somewhere in Palestine or Israel, the checkpoint might be completely shut down, and there can be stricter rules for movement in this area. There are four checkpoints leading into the settlement area, usually leaving the settlement area often does not pose any difficulties as you simply walk through an iron turnstile. When entering the settlement area though, Palestinian are required to show their identification paper as a minimum. Foreigners are sometimes asked to show their

passport, often depending on if you look Muslim or Arab. Sometimes, showing the identification papers are enough, other times, Palestinians will get questions such as the purpose of your visit, and tourists might get questions such as if you are Muslim. I have been told by Palestinian friends that depending on the guard's mood and impression of Palestinians one can have difficulties or be refused to enter. And if something has happened in Palestine or Israel recently the checkpoint might close completely for a short period of time. Palestinian friends have expressed that your family history might also be a factor if you are allowed to pass. In the evening and during the nights, some of the checkpoints are closed. These checkpoints function as a one way security control, they control who enters the settlement area, but not who leaves the area. Similarly the checkpoint between Israel and the West Bank functions the same way. During my six month stay as a blond European, I rarely had to show my passport at any checkpoints and only a handful of times I was asked questions when passing through the checkpoint.

A Walk Through the Old City Market

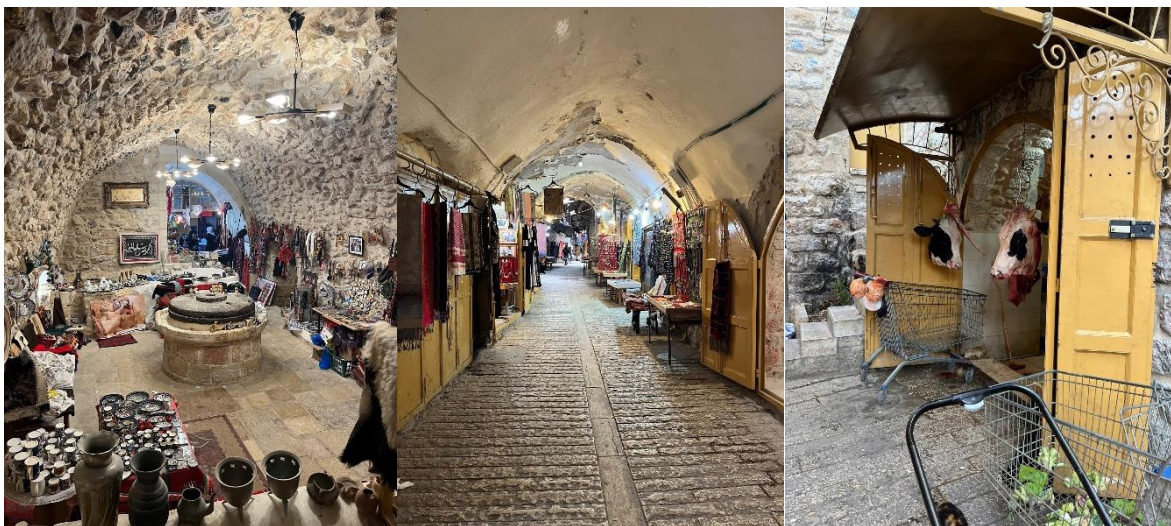


Figure 7: The tourism market, picture taken between January and June 2023.



Figure 8: Blocked roads and a checkpoint in the Old City, pictures taken between January and June 2023.

“Strawberries 10 Shekel, strawberries 10 Shekel” is loudly played on a speaker in a repeated loop. A few meters further down the fruit market a young boy shouts “strawberries, 10 Shekel, banana 5 Shekel” similar to the speaker's sound. It's Saturday at noon, weekend in Al Khalil, the fruit market on “the border” between the New and Old City is busier than usual. It is packed with Palestinians, both locals and Palestinians from other cities in the West Bank and Israel. A few cars are honking and pushing themselves forward in this crowded street. I am manoeuvring through the crowd, cars driving and young boys pushing carts in the market. Walking towards the Old City in Al Khalil, the fruit market marks the beginning of H2 area, every Palestinian in Al Khalil knows that this is the beginning of H2, an area officially under Israeli control, however, there are no checkpoint or any signs that you are moving from H1 to H2. The checkpoints are located further in.

After walking through the fruit market, there is the first visible sign of an enclaved area. In this area, which is the beginning of the tourism market, there is a control tower and an inaccessible street with a thick metal door on the right side. On the other side of the metal door there is a large building with a Israeli flag on top, behind this door, is an area I have never walked in, as it is strictly for Israeli settlers, or tourists with a purpose of visit. On Saturdays when Israeli settlers and soldiers do their religious walk tour through the market, this is the metal gate they walk through to end their tour. Almost every Saturday

a handful of local Israeli settlers with just as many soldiers protecting them, walk through the Palestinian tourism market. I have been told that Israelis claim that there is a religious importance in this narrow street, in contrast, Palestinians I have talked to perceive it as a way for Israelis to show authority and power. When this event is happening, one can feel the tension; soldiers, Israeli settlers and local Palestinians are on guard, prepared for an possible escalation. Every Saturday I observed the excursion, I wondered what would happen, if someone would accidentally break a glassware, could this incident lead to a violent event? I have been told by Palestinians in the Old City that guards have a dual responsibility on these walks, first of all they have the responsibility to protect Israeli settlers, but they also need to prevent Israeli settlers from provoking Palestinian with words, action, or by breaking a ware.

It is Saturday around 2 a clock, and I am sitting inside Mahmood's shop in the tourism market. He seems anxious and is periodically looking out in the street, waiting for something to happen. A few minutes later two soldiers walk past the shop in a hurry, he excuses himself to go and talk to nearby shop owners. Soon after he comes back confirming that the weekly settlers excursion is happening. Mahmood turns the light off in the shop and moves all the way to the front of the store. I am told that he wants to watch when they walk past. It seems that he, as well as many other shop owners, wants to show that they are not intimidated by the Israeli settlers. He further expresses that we need to be here and look them in their eyes so that they know we will not leave our city, as this City belong to Palestine. The music on the juice stand close by is turned off, and several shop owners move to the front to watch. Six more soldiers walk past, then another three and another three, and six more. A Palestinian mom and her daughter are told to move inside Mahmood's shop by some soldiers that place themself outside the shop. All Palestinians bystanders need to clear the street for the settler excursion. The guards are armed with machine guns, bulletproof vests and tear and sound bombs in their pockets. The soldiers outside the shop are facing us and pointing the gun towards us, inside the shop. I've gotten used to having a gun pointing towards me at this point, and I don't feel the fear as much as I did in the beginning of my time in Palestine. When all the soldiers have "secured the area" the Israeli settlers with just as many soldiers stop outside the shop, the guide gives them some information in Hebrew, and after

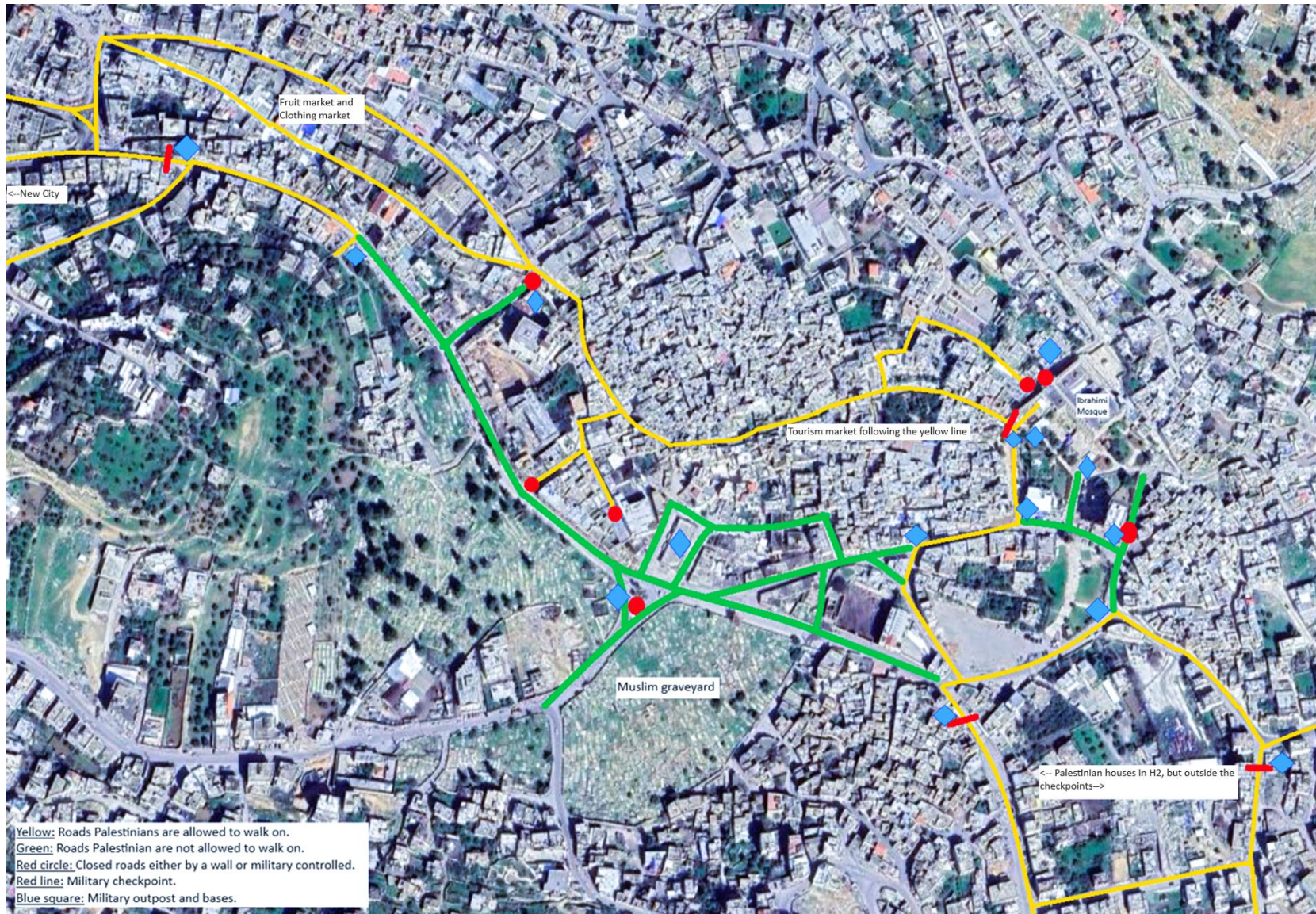


Figure 9: Movement patterns for Palestinians drawn on a google earth map (Goggle Maps, 2024)

a few minutes, the excursion continues. As the group walk past the shop, the soldiers continue to follow the group, and the Palestinian mom and her daughter can continue their journey. I keep my distance but decide to walk the same way as the Israeli settlers are going. They have several stops on their way, and when they arrive at the metal gate, the gate is open, and all the Israeli settlers and soldiers walk through. The weekly settler's excursion is finished, and everyone goes back to their daily life. On Saturdays when this weekly event occurs, local organisations observe, and are prepared to report if there is an escalation or if the checkpoint close longer that what is expected.

From the metal gate there is a 10 minute walk to the checkpoint before the entrance to Al Ibrahim Mosque. This is a narrow street packed with tourism shops, a few grocery shops, men's hairdressers and cafes. This area is like a typical marketplace where every shopkeeper promises you the best price and best quality in town. In the tourism market, Palestinians work on the first floor, while the second and third are used by Israeli settlers. Shopkeepers have put up tarps to prevent destruction of wares from the trash that settlers throw out of the window. In this market street there is a distinct difference between those shops that have been rehabilitated and not by the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee. At the end of the tourism market, one arrives at one of four checkpoints that lead into a stricter H2 area, the Israeli settlement area (as presented on the figure 9). There are four entry checkpoints for Palestinian to this restricted area. Two of them you can walk from the city center, and the two others lead to an impoverished Palestinian H2 area. Palestinians are not allowed to drive within the settlement area, so they depend on walking. Israelis on the other hand arrives in this area by car or bus, on separate roads inaccessible for Palestinians.

As a tourist I can walk freely within the settlement area in the Old City, however, this is not the case for Palestinians. On Figure 9 I have marked checkpoint, military outpost and where Palestinians are allowed to move. I decided to draw on a google map, as map already available did not present sufficient information on movement. From the New City there are two access points into the settlement area. There is one checkpoint that leads into Shuhada street, Palestinians who enter here usually do so as they live up the

hill within the settlement area. Entering through this checkpoint Palestinians are only allowed to walk some part of the Shuhada street and are not able to reach any of the other checkpoints or reach the Al Ibrahim Mosque. The second checkpoint you reach from the New City, takes you immediately to the entrance of Al Ibrahim Mosque, the burial place of Abraham and his family. From this checkpoint you can access the two other checkpoints, but only walking on specific roads are allowed for a Palestinian. As movement within this area is controlled by Israeli military and is constantly changing, for example after four weeks of bombardment on Gaza in October-November 2023, I was told by friends that Palestinians living in this area was only allowed to move around for four hours each week, and only for essential food supplies. I was also informed by a local organisation that the two primary school placed inside the settlement have had online lesson since October, and only recently they were allowed to continue with classroom lessons. This is one example of how rules of movement for Palestinians are malleable and completely under Israeli control.

There are three steps when passing a checkpoint into the settlement area. First step is walking through an iron turnstile. The iron turnstile is controlled by Israeli soldiers sitting behind a thick glass wall. In the iron turnstile three or even four Palestinians try to fit within one space in the iron turnstile, this is done so that moving through the checkpoint happens faster. The iron turnstiles are constantly closed and opened when they press together in one space though, three or four people can enter at the same time. When successfully passing the first step, one finds itself in space surrounded by metal, and one thick glass wall with three Israeli fully armed soldiers waiting to see their Palestinian identification document. After showing your identification paper and explaining your purpose, a second metal gate is open, and you are allowed to pass. Walking from the checkpoint with the mosque to one of the other checkpoints, you walk past four military outposts. To enter the mosque from the tourism market, one must go through one checkpoint and one military control. Whenever I crossed a checkpoint however, I was usually told to go past the line and they had no interest in seeing my passport.

It is the first Saturday of Ramadan and the tourism market in Al Khalil is crowded, it is difficult to manoeuvre in the narrow tourism market street. Usually this street is almost

empty, but since it is Ramadan and the weekend, the market is bustling, just how it was 100 years ago. People are busy buying fresh meat, sweets, dessert and gifts to family members. Mahmood, my informant, told me that Ramadan is the time of the year shop owners earn the most. It is crowded, noisy and it is a sweet aroma smell of desserts and sweets. In the middle of the market, you walk past chickens running around, and cow heads hanging outside the butcher shop. It is enjoyable seeing the market flourish. After almost an hour walking, we arrive at the end of the tourism market with the Al Ibrahim Mosque checkpoint. My Norwegian family who was visiting me that day, was relieved to move around without bumping into other people. From the Al Ibrahim Mosque we walked to Al Shuhada street, and for this 5 minute walk, we walked past five military outposts and a Muslim graveyard which is inaccessible to Palestinians (shown on figure 9). Al Shuhada street was quiet and almost empty, as it always is. It was like a ghost town, compared to the parallel market street. Within the settlement area, you can find the local well known Shuhada street. Shuhada street used to be the City Center of Al Khalil, and many Palestinians in Al Khalil still own a shop here, however, it is all closed, and access to this area is very strict for Palestinians. For Israelites there are from the settlement area in Al Khalil corridors through several settlements and Israeli roads, all the way into the City Center of Jerusalem.

Noor

Next to one of the checkpoints into the settlement area in the Old City, there is a small grocery store. Noor, a father in his fifties, is the owner and the only one who works in this store. The shop looks like any other building in the area and is placed in a historical building, with thick metal doors. One needs to know that there is a shop here, to find it, as the shop have no visible names, and have the same yellow front doors as most of the buildings in this area. Whenever Noor goes somewhere else, the shop is closed. Around 100 meters in distance on the opposite side of the barbed wire and metal gate, there is a quiet open area where settlers can take the bus to Jerusalem or to one of the many other settlements nearby. Only school children and tourists are allowed to walk past this bus stop. If Noor could walk that path, it would take him 5 minutes to reach the city center of Al Khalil, but because of the closed roads he has to walk for 30 minutes. Most, however,

who travel from this area to the city center take an illegal shared taxi for 15 minutes, to avoid the difficulties one can face walking through the settlement. As with every other shop in the Old City, you only pay with cash, and you can always bargain. Noor often worries how long his shop will be open. He tells me that Palestinians living in this area get kicked out of their house or shop regularly, so he is just waiting for the day when they will lock up his shop and make him move from his house.

One of Noor's sons used to help out in the store, however, a few months ago, he was arrested and accused of throwing a stone towards the checkpoint. Today as any other day since that incident Noor calls his son's lawyer to find out if there is any progress in the case and to find out when he will be able to see his son again. His son is still incarcerated, and his trial has already been postponed three times. His son, like many others who get arrested, is placed in a detention center in Israel, out of reach for the father, and anyone else with an Palestinian identity card (Shehadeh, Loots, Vanderfaeillie & Derluyn, 2016). When the Israeli settlement was created and the Israeli military security increased, it changed the feeling of safety and social life in the Old City. For Noor, the security put in place changes his economic opportunities and creates uncertainty for his family members as well as his current housing situation inside the Old City. Noor's story of his son who got arrested is not unique, and according to Shehadeh, Loots, Vanderfaeillie & Derluyn (2016) Imprisonment of Palestinian citizens by Israeli soldiers have been a daily occurrence since the beginning of the conflict, and more than 20 % of the Palestinian population have experienced detention.

Security & Mobility

In April last year I was asked by the language center to show three new volunteers the Old City and Al Ibrahim Mosque. Usually Mohammed, a Palestinian working at the Center does the guided tour of this area, but today I was asked because of a recent violent incident. Last night two Palestinians, north in the West Bank was killed by Israeli military, and because of that Mohammed did not feel it was safe for him to walk around the Old City. I did not think too much about it, and agreed on showing the new volunteers

the Old City. After a twenty minute walk we arrived at the fruit market, in the beginning of the tourism market in the Old City. When arriving here, we heard sound bombs in the distance, and saw teenage boys, wearing balaclava and making Molotov cocktails. I was told by local Palestinians that since we look European it should be safe walking further, however, for me coming from Norway, this was a warning sign. This event which I briefly observed, is just one example of how the security situation changes after a violent event have occurred somewhere in Palestine. And during the five months in Al Khalil, similar incidents occurred several times. This shows how violent events influence security and creates difficulties and insecurity in movement for Palestinians in areas surrounded by Israeli military.

Sudden changes in security is a normality, and occurs regularly based on the security situation nationally. For example, after Hamas attacked Israel last October, it influenced the security situation locally in the Old City. The Palestinian schools inside the Old City, was not allowed to operate as normal, shop keepers was not allowed to enter their shops, and those living in this area was not allowed to move around. This is what happens when violent event occurs, however, security is still changeable on other occasion. For instance when moving between cities or moving inside the Old City, it is difficult to know how much time it will take, because checkpoints close regularly without warning from 5 minutes to several hours. And this type of occurrence is arbitrary. For example, during my stay I visited the Dead Sea by renting a private driver, several times. When driving this distance with a car with Palestinian license plate, it took one and a half hour if the checkpoint was open, and three or four hours if the checkpoints was partially closed.

When incident such as I have mentioned occurs, the New City also changes. While the security in the Old City, Al Aroub camp and other places with Israeli military present changes in security, places such as the New City center (without Israeli military present) participate in a mandatory solidarity. For example one morning, on my daily walk down Ein Sarah (Main Street in the New City) to the language center in Al Khalil, I noticed how

all the shops were closed, and the traffic was not busy as it usually is. I found it strange, but throughout my stay, this was only one of many sporadic days where everything closed. I heard through the media that during the night, Israeli soldiers, dressed in Niqab and with guns hidden in prayer mats, entered Jenin city, and Palestinians were killed. As a result of this event major cities in the West Bank (probably Gaza as well) go on strike in solidarity, they keep the shop closed the day after occurrence like this. This is only one of several days I experienced this type of solidarity.

In this chapter, I have talked about differences in security and movement between the New and Old City and presented movement limitation for Palestinians in the Old City. I have done so, as I believe the security situation in the Old City, is unique and difficult in comparison with any other areas. The creation of the settlement, and present of Israeli security have transformed the Old City. Palestinians moved out of the city, a New City center outside the Old City was created, and the H2 area outside the settlement checkpoint, on the opposite side of the New City, became a place of the poor. Noor, who I mentioned lives in this area, have a desire for his children to work and live elsewhere, away from the reputation and insecurity of the Old City. Looking at the Old City in this way, one could argue that security can be viewed as a productive process that transforms the state, institutions, the city, and social life (Gluck & Low, 2017).

As the area was already populated by Palestinians, and violent event occurred, security became a product of the place to protect the Israeli settlers. In Feldman research about Gaza, she states that “everyone who lived in Gaza was deemed a legitimate object of surveillance” (Feldman, 2019, pp. 491). One could argue similarly for the population of areas such as the Old City, and looking at it in that way security became a product of the population. Even though this could be discussed further, the more important aspect of security for this thesis is how it can transform the geography and social life, which will be discussed below.

As I have shown in the ethnography, there are rules of movement for Palestinians. The Old City is a precarious area to have a business as the current security rules (which is changeable) influence when and if they are allowed to keep their shop open. Secondly, the Palestinian area of the Old City opposite of the New City center, have become an area whereby stolen wares can be stored. What I have heard is that Palestinian police are not allowed to enter this area, as it is officially under Israeli control, however, Israeli security do not deal with Palestinian theft on Palestinian area. Illegal taxi drivers, who drives from this area to the New City center, around the settlement area, was created because of the security situation. They exist as many Palestinians prefer the longer taxi drive than walking past several checkpoints. In these examples, because of the position of the settlement area, movement restrictions and access have been transformed and are still under transformation in the Old City.

After the settlement was created and the Old City became a Israeli security area, many Palestinian moved. The area became cheap to live, and today those living in this area are considered impoverished. As a result of the low social economic class, the family reputation has worsen for some, which influence opportunities for marriage exchange. Palestinians in the Old City with low social economic class might struggle with marriage, as families living in the New City do not perceive the Old City as safe for their daughter to live (Sellick, 1994). Because of the security in the Old City, many Palestinians do not wander inside the Old City and as I have presented earlier in this chapter, the security is changeable, which means that on some days the shop keepers as well as those who live in the Old City, are not able to move around or go to work. Many business owners as well, struggle with the feeling of safety for their family, Noor for example who's son got arrested, have a hope that his children will find work elsewhere.

Bringing it all together one can see how the Israeli security creates limitation in movement, which is constantly changeable, and it also brings with it uncertainty and fear of closure for those working in the Old City. The main argument I would like to take from this chapter is that movement restriction, instability, uncertainty and fear of

closure, creates limitations for business owners, and forces them to explore other option of employment for their children. As mentioned in the introduction, the Middle East in general is a family oriented geographical area, so the next chapter will dwell further into how kinship also influences Palestinian business owners in the Old City.

III. FAMILY & ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

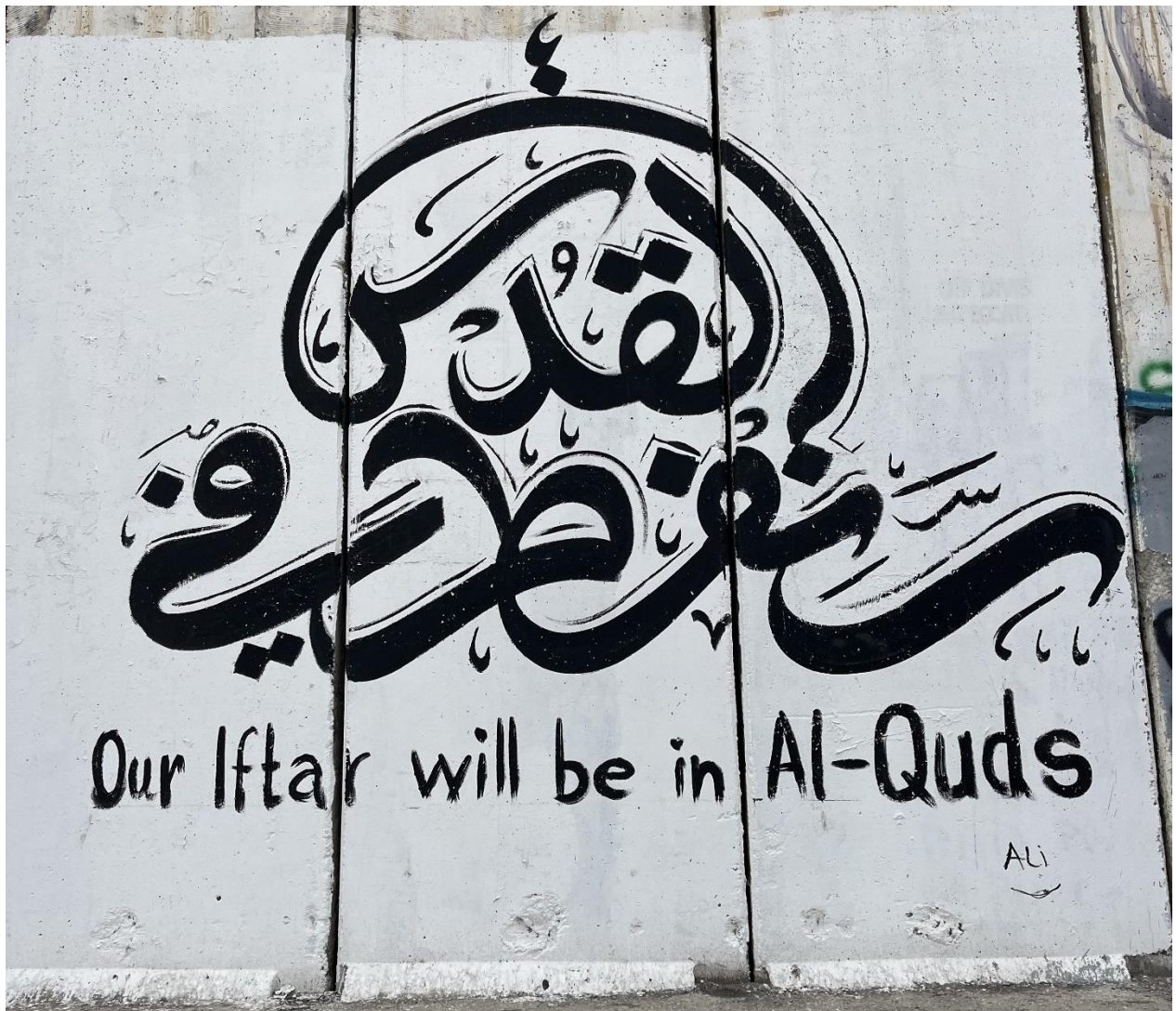


Figure 10: Graffiti on the separation wall in Bethlehem, 9. June 2023.

It's a sunny afternoon in April 2023, I am enjoying a cappuccino in the sun in one of very few cafes with an outside seating area in the New City. Me as well as other European volunteers at the language center, often come to this specific cafe to socialize and enjoy the sun. We often stay from early afternoon until late at night. Other than us, there were rarely any other customers there. The staff consisted of a father, sons, and male cousins. After a few visits a Palestinian friend of mine wished to go to this unknown cafe, however, after learning the clan's name of the family runned cafe, she knew why the cafe was empty. She herself expressed that it is silly how people behave sometimes, and explained that it is unfortunate, but people in this city often boycott a family

business if there has been an immoral action, fight or disagreement with the family. She was not aware of what had occurred, but she had been told that the family had a bad reputation. As a result of a rumour about the clan, no matter if it was false or true, this family runned cafe suffered economically as a consequence. This story leads the way into this chapter, where I will explore how social status such as family, influence business opportunities in Al Khalil. To be able to do so, I will start off by exploring the family structure in Al Khalil, present my host family as a typical Palestinian family structure, and after that I will use Bourdieu theory on capital to explain the complexity of capital(power) in Al Khalil. The purpose of this chapter is to show how social life and economic capital interrelate, and in the context of Al Khalil, both are essential in consideration of business opportunities for local shop keepers in the Old City.

Kinship Structure in Palestine

The family structure in the Middle East is shaped by faith as well as culture. Although one often talks about a muslim family structure, in reality, for people with other faiths in this area, the same structure might also apply (Eickelman, 1989a). This complexity of faith versus culture in consideration of family structure is something one could delve further into, however, for the purpose of this thesis, it is not of importance. The family structure in the Middle East has for a long time been described as a patriarchal unit (Moghadam, 2004). In a classical patriarchal society, property, residence and descent goes through the male line and the oldest man in each family has authority and a responsibility over everyone else in the family. In classic patriarchal society, women have been described as property to be exchanged. And they have the role of child rearing and upholding the family's honor through proper conduct. While men have an economic responsibility and the role of protecting the family's honor (Moghadam, 2004). Society with patrilineal kinship structures is often perceived as a place of women oppression, however in the context of Al Khalil this was not the impression I got from my female informants. Iranian women, Fereshteh Hashemi wrote in 1981, "Women have the heavy responsibility of procreation and rearing a generation: this is a divine art, because it creates, it gives birth; and it is a prophetic and divine act with peace in mind. Therefore, He makes it the duty of the man to provide all economic means for this woman, so as

there shall not be an economic vacuum in her life” (Moghadam, 2004, pp. 139). Although Iran is culturally different than Palestine, I believe my Palestinian friends would describe the women responsibility similarly. I will explore this further later in the chapter.

Society and urban cities in the Middle East are changing, and recent research have explored how modernity and globalisation is changing the importance of kinship in the Middle East. Most however, have found that kinship bonds have not weakened but rather shaped and adapted to a different society. In urban settings Treymayne (2017) argues that there is a new trend whereby young unmarried couples live together. However, the practice is still by large frowned upon, and often short lived, because of family obligations as well as the consequence of not conforming is a life of isolation. Marriage is perceived as an essential factor of upholding and strengthening ties between families (Treymayne, 2017). He further argues that “Kinship continues to define social relations by permeating a broad range of institutions, from interpersonal relationships, to economic enterprises, to political alliances, and to judicial systems” (Treymayne, 2017, pp. 2). Similarly, Eickelman (1989b) argues that kinship needs to be studied in relation to economy and politics.

To take an example, in a typical Pakistani family, grandparents, sons with wife’s, their children and unmarried siblings live under one roof. Cousins call each other sisters and brothers, and marriage is a union of two families rather than two individuals. Mothers have the responsibility of child rearing while men have an economic responsibility (Zaman, Stewart & Zaman, 2006). This representation of family structure is similar to the structure in my own host family.

Honor

“A man is considered a man of honor if he keeps his promises and sticks to his word, if he revolts against injustices and declines to comply with any form of oppression, and if he shows sufficient eagerness and readiness in defending his

own interests as well as those of his kin-group and his neighbors. By contrast, female honor is determined by something totally different, namely, by women's sexual behavior, their chastity or purity" (Hasan, 2002, pp. 5).

In Mediterranean culture, honor and shame are explained as important values that shape every aspect of life. Honor is often perceived through women's virtue, arguably honor is more complex than that. Masculinity, economy, ownership, success, lineage are all aspects which relate to the concept of honor in a Middle Eastern context. Honor and shame are often not perceived as an individual value, but rather it is perceived as a collective value in each extended family, whereby each individual family member has a role of upholding the family's honor (Dumitrescu, 2005; Pitt-Rivers, 1997). Pitt-Rivers (1997) explains the gender roles as such; women have the role of showing modesty and chastity, while men have the role of strength through the protection of women's modesty. So, if a woman receives shame for an action, the shame also comes upon the men in the family who have failed to protect the women. According to Dumitrescu (2005) at birth, one receives a certain amount of honor deriving from the family name and lineage, and with this honor one also receives the responsibility of upholding the family honor. Honor is then perceived as the greatest form of wealth, and one's honor is influenced by economic success, ownership and social constructs. Honor can be threatened by rumor, gossip, economic failure and each individual's behavior, and because of that, honor constantly needs to be defended. Dumitrescu says that "honor is continuously being won, lost and regained, in an ongoing process" (Dumitrescu, 2005, pp 9). A single shame experience may damage the entire family's reputation and disowning is understood as a way of upholding honor. The honor that needs to be upheld is the honor of the oldest man in the nuclear family. Land brings honor, the oldest man in a family is the one in charge, and those younger than him are considered dependent. Owning land is important as it differentiates the older man from those who don't own land. This hierarchical relationship is visible in how the younger generation shows respect in action and words towards the older generation (Dumitrescu, 2005). Among the Peasant in Algeria, Bourdieu argues that actions are motivated by "the logic of social honour or symbolic capital rather than the accumulation of money" (Karadag, 2009, pp. 5). From my own understanding and prior research on the kinship structure in

the Middle East, I would argue for similarities in this sense among peasants in Algeria and urban citizens in Al Khalil.

Tribes, Clan & Notables

When talking about kinship structure in Palestine, there are some terms used to classify and explaining kinship relation. Tribes are used for those who are descendants of the nomadic Bedouin populations and constitute around 15 % of the Palestinian population. Clan, in Arabic called *hamula* is used to define several extended families (called *aiila*, حيلة) who claim a shared ancestry through the father's male line. And the largest clan in Palestine can consist of up to 1000 male members (Robinson, 2008). Each hamula, consist of those who belong to the family through blood, and those who belong through *nasab* (نسب). Male members belong to the hamula, while female members will be part of the hamula until marriage. When female members marry, they will through nasab, relationship in law, belong to the husbands hamula (Robinson, 2008). In Palestine Nasab is a word used to describe prior marriage bonds as well as describing who is not blood related but have married into the family. In Palestine, hamula and nasab is perceived as more than simply a classification. Belonging to a hamula is often accompanied with security and economic safety, which I will discuss further in the ethnography below. And Nasab is used to create or uphold relationships (social capital) (Robinson, 2008; Cohen, 1962). A last category I would like to mention is the notable families. A notable family is a hamula that have dominated Palestinian politics through history. These families depend on social relationship through kinship and have through history enjoyed legal privileges. Many of the notables claim a descendent from a historic significant person and maintain their superior status through marriage alliances. They usually create marriage alliances and economic partnership with other elite families, or other families than can offer the same level of social, economic, cultural and symbolic capital. They also tend to offer protection for families with lower symbolic capital in exchange of economic capital. These families are still today influential and poses some power in the local community (Marom, 2024; Robinson, 2008).

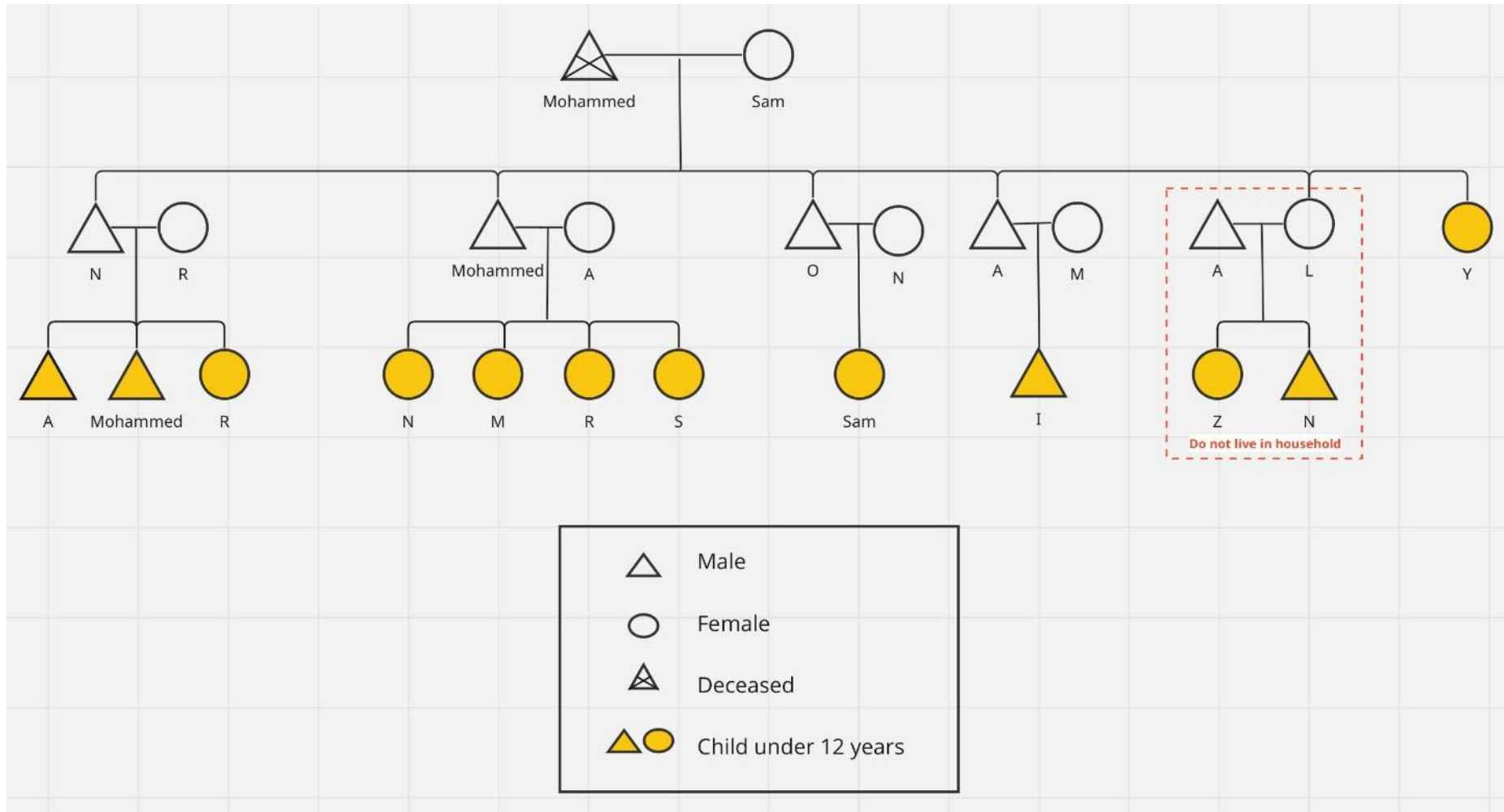


Figure 11: Kinship tree of my host family. From left to right is the oldest to youngest child of each couple (Miro, 2024).

Kinship structure of the Khalili

Above I have added a kinship tree of my host family as an example of one Aiila (extended family) of a clan. My hostfamily represent a typical family structure in Palestine. I have also included the married daughter in my host family (marked in red) that through Nasab (relationship in law) is part of her husband's clan. My impression of my host family is that they do not belong to a elite family, but have and still is increasing their social, economic and symbolic capital through a family runned successful business.

Most clans in Al Khalil seem to follow a patrilineal family structure, and normally the adult sons and their parents live in the same house or as neighbours. The adult daughter, when they marry, they belong and live with the husbands family. Looking at the kinship tree, my host family is no exception for this type of family structure.

In my host family the adult sons live in the same apartment building as the grandmother, but the adult daughter lives with her husband's family, and the closest neighbor is the grandfather's brother. My host family is one of the extended families in the clan I have chosen to call Khalili. The Khalili are a big clan with around 300 male members. As a male member you will bring the family name further and as female you will marry into a different clan (or far out in the same clan) and through nasab belong to the other clan. Below I have drawn up the surrounding area of where my hostfamily live.

In the family Khalili there is the grandmother who I have chosen to call Sam, she has four sons, two daughters and eleven grandchildren. Her sons have all married, and their wives have through nasab become part of the clan Khalili. Her daughter has through nasab become part of her husband's clan. The grandfather, the second oldest son, and the second oldest son of the oldest son is named Mohammed. In the apartment building everyone on the kinship chart lives except those I marked out with red lines.

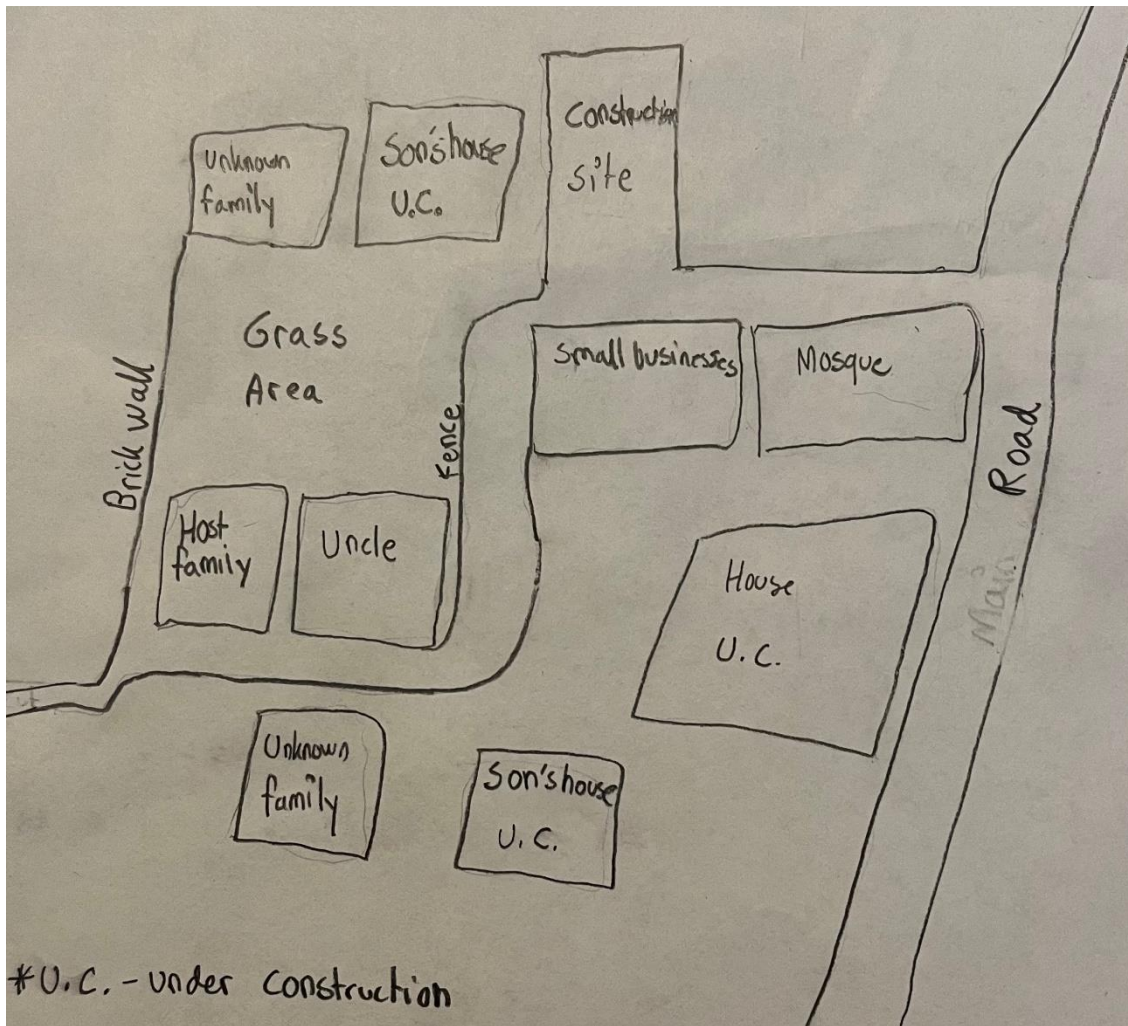


Figure 12: Drawing of the surrounding area of my host family. U.C. meaning under construction, 19. April 2024.

There are three floors and a basement in the apartment complex. The apartment I stayed in was in the basement with a separate entrance. The grandmother lives on the first floor with a separate entrance on the side of the building. The four sons with their family live in separate apartments, two of them on the second floor and the two others on the third floor. On the left side of the apartment complex there is a wall separating them and the unknown neighbour's house. On the right side the uncle (grandfather's brother) lives with his family in a separate three floor apartment. Behind the house there is a large open grass area which is shared by four houses, the family, the uncle's, the oldest son house (under construction) and an unknown family living in the last house. In front of the apartment there is an area to park the car and a wall separating them from a non-kin

family. On the right side of the non-kin family's house, the second oldest son is building his own house.

In the apartment the son's with wife's and children live in each individual apartment, however, they often eat or make dinner together in the grandmother's apartment. In my host family the women have the responsibility of cooking, cleaning and child care, while the men work in their own family runned construction company. Child rearing seems to be a shared responsibility between all the adult women in the household. The oldest son inherited the leader role in the business after their father's death.

During the daytime, the wife's often meet up for tea and snacks in one of the apartments, and they regularly visit their parents or siblings. The adult sons work in the construction company. Some days they also work on building two new family houses close to the apartment complex. When it comes to dinner, nobody ever eats alone, either one or more of her son's (with family) eat dinner in the grandmother's apartment or she will be invited to one of the son's apartments. Throughout the day, the children usually run around and play outside or inside the grandmother's apartment. Around 6 pm dinner is served, while the adult sits around the table, the children will usually run around and take a few bites now and then.

My host family is Sunni Muslim and pray five times a day. I was told by several friends that the majority in Al Khalil belong to sunni. They pray five times a week, the men usually go to the mosque and the women pray at home. The first prayer of the day is in the early morning before sunrise. Prayer mat is easily available around the house. At the language center there is a prayer mat in every classroom. Whenever I visit the host family's apartment during the evening prayer, the sons will go to the mosque around the corner and the host mom will pray in the living room, while I sit in the kitchen. After the prayer the visit will continue. Faith comes above all, even hospitality when having a guest over or sales at a tourism market.

Understanding Capital

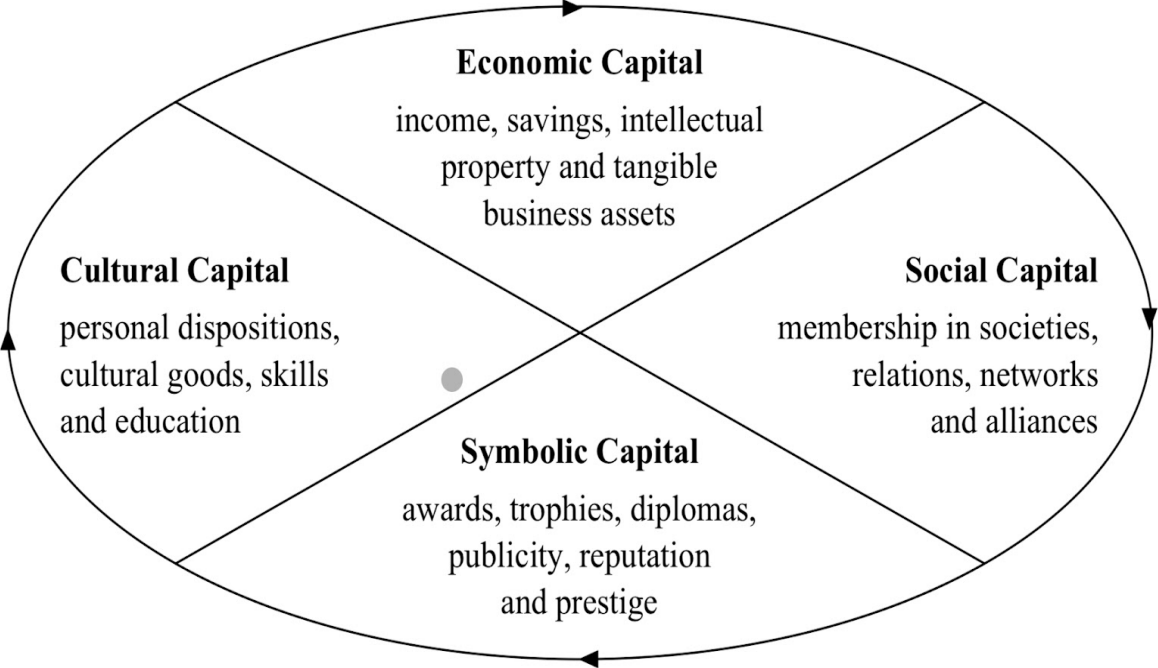


Figure 13: Forms of capital (Pret, Shaw & Dodd, 2016, pp. 1007)

Above I have presented a typical family structure in Palestine, and in this section, I will discuss social life in relation to capital. The purpose of this chapter is to present how family and economy relate and shape each other. To be able to do so I have chosen to use Bourdieu theory on capital, to conceptualise themes such as honor, clan, class, and education in the context of Al Khalil. On figure 13 above, Pret, Shaw & Dodd (2016) present Bourdieu theory of capital and state that actors compete for all four types of capital to achieve dominant position in a society. This figure presents a understanding of the differences in capital which I discussed in the introduction. Bourdieu identified four different types of capital, or power, visible in many societies (Bourdieu, 1986). He argues that these types of capital influence and shape each other, and possessing only one of the capitals limits a person's ability of power in a society (Bourdieu, 1986; Pret, Shaw & Dodd, 2016). Below I will use Bourdieu description of economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital. I will explain how these capitals interrelate in the context of Al Khalil, using example from my host family as well as my informants in the Old City.

Economic capital

As I mentioned my host family have their private construction company. All the adult sons work in this company, and they have learned the trade from their father and older brother. This is a collectively owned business with a shared economic capital. What I mean by that is that the money earned goes to the entire family (Aiila), not each individual nuclear family. They often go grocery shopping or cook together, and the sons support their mother financially. I believe that the Khalili have a high economic capital, however, my impression is that this has not been the case for generation back. My impression is that they have increased their economic capital through a successful business. Using Bourdieu, I would argue that the increase in economic capital through a successful business, have and still is gradually improving their social and symbolic capital in the social life in Al Khalil.

Gaining a house loan in Al Khalil often goes through kinship relationship rather than bank. For example, Noor who I mention in the last chapter wishes for his children to live and work outside the Old City for stability and security reasons. To be able to do so, he asked for a house loan. Noor told me that he is from a large family with a good reputation, and when he wished to build a house for his children outside of the Old City, he contacted a family who he knew would give him the financial support needed to achieve this dream. In this example Noor increases his economic capital through ownership, and he was able to do so because of his network of relationship, or as Bourdieu calls it, social capital (Bourdieu, 1986).

Cultural capital

For Mahmood, a shop keeper in the Old City, the transformation from social to economic capital that Noor did, would be much harder. Mahmood lives in a rented house in the New City Center, and originally his family was Kurdi immigrants from Iran. In contrast to Noor, Mahmood do not have the same level of social capital, so gaining a house loan is a lot more difficult. However, Mahmood, who has six daughters, use a large portion of his earning to pay for his daughters higher education. Using Bourdieu

theory on capital, I would argue that when Mahmood invest money in his children education, he transforms economic capital into cultural capital. And by doing so, he hopes that his daughters cultural capital can turn into social, economic or symbolic capital, for example through marriage. By drawing comparisons with peasant in Algeria which I mentioned earlier, I would argue that Mahmood in this example is more motivated by the logic of social honor than the accumulation of money (Karadag, 2009).

In my host family, none of the adult sons have pursued a higher education. I do not know for sure, why this is the case, but Bourdieu argues that cultural capital requires economic capital, but also time. Which means that when a person wants to take a higher education, it requires time that could be used to earn economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Using his argument my assumption would be that none of the adult male member pursued higher education because they were needed in the construction company. Even though they had the economic capital needed for pursuing a higher education, it was not sufficient.

Social Capital

Noor, as I mentioned earlier is from a large family, and he received a loan for a house when he needed it. Thirty years ago, when he opened his grocery store, this was also done through economic support through kinship ties. Bourdieu would define this as using his social capital to gain economic capital through ownership (Bourdieu, 1986). I would assume my host family went through the same process when starting the construction company.

Belonging to clan, comes with certain responsibilities, as I have discussed above. For instance, in my host family, whenever someone in the clan is getting married, there is an expectation to give a small economic contribution of 20 Shekel by all adult men. As my host family run a construction company, they often build houses for other family members. I do not know about the specific requirement, but helping kin is an important

part of daily life in Al Khalil. During Ramadan, in the host family I stayed with in 2018, my host father was the oldest son, and it was required by him to give a financial gift to all his sisters at the last day of Ramadan. The financial gifts can be considered a way of using economic capital to uphold the families social and symbolic capital.

The examples mentioned above of receiving a house or business loan can be seen in connection with the term Nasab. Looking at Nasab as a type of capital, it can be viewed as more than what the word means. Nasab can be used to achieve higher economic status or maintain the current status. For instance, if a Palestinian wishes to build a house, but lacks financial capital such as Noor, one often seeks the help of one's own family or someone else's. Requiring loans from a family rather than a bank is more of a normality in Al Khalil, and the reason for this can be because they do not need to pay interest, lack of trust in the bank or because interest is considered haram in Islam (Hossain, 2009). The chances of receiving an interest free loan from a family can be seen in relation to nasab. If the families do not have a nasab bond (or is kin), there is a high possibility that they will not receive a loan, the reason for this can be seen in relation to expectation, familiarity and debt. For instance, if the families have a prior nasab bond, they most likely will receive the loan, because of familiarity (relationship in law), indebtedness (having debt to a family through marriage) and the expectation of helping out. In this example nasab, as a social capital, is used as a way of increasing (or upholding) the economic capital. Similarly, nasab can also be used to decide who to do business with.

I first came across the term nasab when asking a Palestinian friend of mine about marriage in Al Khalil. She expressed that she can choose for herself who she wants to marry, however, it still needs to be approved by her father. When she studied at Hebron university, several boys asked her father for her hand in marriage. Her father had to decline those offer because as she said it “we don’t have nasab with those families”. She told me that in Al Khalil it is important with a nasab relation, because if they don’t have a nasab relation, “we don’t know if it is a good family”. The way she explained it, nasab seems to consist of more than just relationship in law, it seems to be a way for a

father to make sure his daughters have a good life, and it is also a term used in decision making of who to trust and not to trust. My friend belongs to one of the notable families in Al Khalil, which I will discuss further in the section below. Since she belongs to a notable family and is unmarried, she often receives marriage proposals. For example, one time when I was at a café with her, a mother asked for her hand in marriage for her adult son. However, this is where *nasab* as well as symbolic capital becomes relevant. For someone with a lower social class, creating a *nasab* relation with her family through marriage, would give the family a higher status. However, for the father to accept such an agreement could weaken his clan's social and symbolic capital. In this way, *nasab*, as a type of social capital is used in deciding who to create networks of relationships with. And these decisions are made with the purpose of maintaining the current economic and symbolic capital.

Symbolic Capital

Honor is a commonly used term in the Middle East and can be defined as a reputation for each individual clan and family that are influenced by each individual action (Dumitrescu, 2005). One's action can influence everyone in the clan. One can argue that honor influences decisions within a family of who they work with, interact with and most importantly who they marry. Below I will discuss how honor can influence business opportunities and social capital. The extent of honor you have depends on which family you are born into. This type of capital is fluid, and honor/shame incidents in your clan or large changes in the economic capital can influence the clan capital.

One day I was told a story of a girl who was caught having a sexual relationship with a man. Having such a relationship outside of marriage is, as most Al Khalil residents would say, "haram", illegal, and brings shame to your family. After she was caught, her family was shamed, and her entire family moved outside of Palestine. Those who told me this story, did not know which family it happened to or even when this occurred. It made me question the legitimacy of the story and wonder if this is simply a horror

story. This story draws the connection between honor and the consequences it can have on a specific family.

Earlier in this chapter I stated that honor which is perceived as the greatest form of wealth, constantly need to be defended and influence economic and social life (Dumitrescu, 2005). An example of how this play out in Al Khalil, is the story of the café people boycott I mentioned in the beginning of this chapter. The family runned café have gotten a bad reputation because of a action one clan member did, or was accused of doing (as it could be a rumour). No matter the legitimate of the action, this family business suffered economically because of damage of the reputation. In this example social capital, networks of relationships are broken, because of a change in symbolic power, which leads to a decrease in economic capital.

Mahmood who I mention earlier, invest his money in his daughters education. Bourdieu argues that symbolic capital is generated by cultural and symbolic capital, and during his research among the Peasant in Algeria he found that action is motivated by symbolic capital rather than the accumulation of money (Bourdieu, 1986; Karadag, 2009). By using these arguments, I would suggest that Mahmood who do not possess a lot of economic capital, invest in cultural capital through education, in the hope of increasing his and his daughters symbolic capital. For example, when his daughters gain a higher education, it could open new marriage opportunities. Through nasab her daughter can marry into a family with an overall higher level of capital, and through the nasab bond, her father have gained a larger network of relationships, which is equivalent to social capital. In this way economic capital is transformed into cultural capital, which further transformed into social capital, and which eventually can transform into a higher symbolic capital. As Bourdieu argues, symbolic capital was of more importance than money for Mahmood.

I asked a Palestinian friend about the powerful families in Al Khalil, and within a half an hour I was presented with a list of 11 family names. For many of the family he could also present their reputation, such as “this family is rich and known for being wild”, “this

family is known for being highly educated”, “this family owns several buildings in the Old City”. He explained that some of the family have power through historically belonging to the elite, and others have gained economic wealth as a result of owning land where the current city center is today. Comparing a list of 10 notable families in Al Khalil that is mentioned in Robinson (2008) article about Palestinian tribes, clans and notable families with the list I got, four families were mentioned on both.

In Al Khalil as in many other places in the Middle East, there are a few clans who throughout history have had economic and social power for generations in the city. As Robinson (2008) mentions in his article as well as what I have heard myself, this type of power is still prevalent in Al Khalil. These clans have through “old wealth” a good reputation or honor, and because of that clans with both high social class and reputation have a desire to create nasab with these clans.

Discussing Capital in Al Khalil

Above I have mentioned themes related to economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital. In this last section I will discuss how they interrelate and how they are dependent and can transform into economic capital in the context of Al Khalil. According to Bourdieu as mentioned in the introduction, symbolic capital is often generated by social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). If that is true, honor and old wealth is dependent on familiar relations and education.

As mentioned honor is often perceived as a collective value for each individual family. When a shame incident or rumour of an incident occur, each family need to use social capital (networks of relationships) to avoid damage on the family’s honor. As I mentioned giving money when someone in your clan is getting married is an expectation. This act can be seen as a way of transforming economic capital into social capital. To be able to do so, you need economic capital. By investing economic capital it

can transform into social capital that can eventually transform into symbolic capital. In this sense I would argue that honor is accumulated as a result of kinship relations.

I would argue that because the social life is embedded in economic life, it is difficult for those less fortunate to improve their economic wealth. I will use the example of receiving a house loan to improve the economic situation as an example of why this is the case. As I have discussed earlier, receiving a house loan often goes through networks of relationships. Which basically means that a high social capital is needed to receive a house loan. To improve one's social capital, through *nasab* for example, economic capital is needed. This leads back to the issue at hand, whereby someone wishes to improve their economic capital, but do not have the social capital needed as the requirements of an improved social capital is a economic capital which this individual do not possess.

Another example is a friend of mine who belong to an old wealth family (notable family). Her family has a high level of symbolic capital, and because of the high symbolic capital, families with high economic, cultural and social capital wished to create *nasab* bond with her family. Through *nasab*, because of their symbolic capital, they are able to uphold the social and economic capital. What I am arguing is that it is difficult to improve economic capital without possessing other types of capital vice versa. And those who possess high level of all four types of capital can easily maintain them through networks of relationship, through *nasab*.

In this section I have talked about how the different types of capital interrelate by using examples from shop keepers as well as friends and host family living in the New City. Although the New and Old City might differ in class, I would argue that kinship relations are essential in both areas, and is a aspect of social life that connects the impoverish Old City populations to the richer New City populations. In the next chapter, however, I will use debt exchange to discuss how the different types of capital influence the local shop keepers.

IV. BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES & DEBT EXCHANGE

From Jerusalem to Al Khalil it takes less than an hour, and from Bethlehem one can see the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. One hour by train from Jerusalem one finds itself in the party destination of Tel Aviv. In Palestine and Israel, all the major cities are in close proximity to each other. However, the cities differ vastly, in price, faith, values and religious importance. In general, cities in Israel are vastly more expensive than cities in the West Bank, which is understandable considering Israel's vibrant economy in contrast to the scarce Palestinian economy (International Labour Office, 2016). However, in between cities in the West Bank, the price for the same wares varies vastly, which can be seen in the light of tourism. The cheapest falafel sandwich costs 3 shekel in Al Khalil, 15 Shekels in Bethlehem and Ramallah, and 30-40 shekel in Jerusalem. Jerusalem is known for being a city of ethnic and religious diversity, while Al Khalil character is deeply Bedouin and Islamic, in contrast to Ramallah which is a cosmopolitan Christian (and Muslim) city (Kimmerling & Migdal, 2003). Tel Aviv and Jerusalem are the most expensive cities, Tel Aviv because of becoming a popular party destination and Jerusalem for its religious importance. Cities also differs in what is acceptable clothing. In Tel Aviv you can wear a bikini at the beach and shorts, while in Jerusalem and Al Khalil for example a bit more conservative clothing is recommended. Bethlehem is the most visited city in the West Bank by international Christian tourists as it is the birthplace of Jesus. Ramallah, a modernized city known for protest and activism has grown into a party destination for Palestinian as well as international tourist visiting. Al Khalil, however, seems to not have much to offer Christian tourists or as a party destination as alcohol is illegal in the city. In the tourism market in Al Khalil a majority of the tourism wares sold are marked with Bethlehem and Jerusalem, and not Al Khalil (Hebron). The burial place of Abraham is in Al Khalil but in an Israeli controlled area, which makes it challenging for Palestinian tourism. From my understanding Al Khalil has flourished as a result of local day trip tourism and the lack of international tourists. While the increase of international tourism has pushed the prices up in other cities, the prices in Al Khalil have stayed low, which have made it an attractive destination for Palestinians from other cities in Israel or Palestine.

For Palestinian living and working in the Old City, they have to manoeuvre rules of movement implemented by Israel. While the political situation creates limitations on the economy, the local cultural practice of debt exchange further complicates their daily life. In this chapter, I will discuss how shopkeepers in this area, have to manoeuvre both Israeli imposed rules and cultural and social practises. I will start by giving a overview of the tourism and present some of the shop keepers in this area. After doing so I will discuss debt exchange and movement as factors that influence business life.

Tourism in Al Khalil

The Old City economy is built up by support from Muslim international tourism, family relatives from abroad, political tourism, international volunteers, Palestinians from other cities in Palestine/Israel and local Palestinians. Foreigners supporting the economy usually arrive in Al Khalil through an organization or by bus tour. Below I will mention organizations that contribute to the economy in the Old City by attracting foreigners. Shaheen highlights three difficulties for Al Khalil as a tourism destination; the occupation, lack of tourist services such as roads, hotels and restaurants, and lastly lack of regulation and laws. He further argues that “The Israeli side intends to set a planned economic policy to impose restrictions and put obstacles in order to paralyze the Palestinian economy and annex it to the economy of the Israeli occupation” (Shaheen, 2019, pp. 9).

Beside the Jewish and Christian tourism, Israel arranges regularly bus tours to Al Khalil for international Muslims visiting the holy land. These buses drive on Israeli roads and stop inside the settlement area in the Old City. Based on what my informant has told me, these tourists only stay for a short period of time, and rarely wander past the checkpoint, into the tourism market in the Old City. The shop keepers have told me that these tourists have been warned that it is dangerous to go past the checkpoint. And from my own observation I have not seen any of these groups wander past the checkpoint. Other

than buying a few products from the four Palestinian tourism shops placed between the bus stop and the mosque (inside the settlement) this group seem to offers little contribution to the Palestinian economy locally.

A different type of tourism Israeli attracts is through an organization known as Breaking the Silence. Breaking the Silence is an organization runned by Israeli citizens that during their military service disagreed with how Palestinians were treated. In Al Khalil they monthly arrange tours within the settlement area with the goal of showing foreigners the struggles Palestinians face in this area. As the tour starts and finishes in Jerusalem, it is difficult to know if these tourists contribute to the Old City economy.

Local groups as well as some groups from other cities arrange political tours through the Old City. Some groups arrive on a one day tour while others stay at local hostels in the Old City. There are two hostels inside the Old City and my understanding is that those who stay at these hostels usually come for the purpose of a political tour, as a journalist or as a photographer. Often when I sat inside Aisha's store with a cup of tea, large groups of foreigners walked past her shop in a hurry. She as well as other shop owners expressed dissatisfaction with the political tours arranged for foreigners in the Old City, as they are often in a hurry, and the tour guides do not plan time for the participant to buy wares from the tourism market. However, Aisha often has foreign visitors arriving in smaller groups as she is the local shop owner of a Palestinian women business that exports globally (in small scale).

In Al Khalil I am aware of two language centers that attracts foreigners who are interested in volunteering or/and learning Arabic. Throughout the year there are usually up to ten international volunteers at a time and in the summer the number usually increases to thirty or more. Volunteers usually arrive in Al Khalil for the purpose of teaching English, volunteering in refugee camps or to learn Arabic. Volunteers at the language school stays in Al Khalil from one week up to three months, and usually

contribute to the local economy in the Old City by buying wares. These organizations also create workplaces for locals.

In the Old City there are two Christian international observation organizations present, one of them is runned by local Palestinians and attracts foreign volunteers and the other organizations is built up by foreign volunteers. Community Peacemaker Team (CPT) and Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) are global organizations that work in Al Khalil Old City with the purpose of observing and reporting the situation for Palestinians locally. The EAPPI constantly have stationed up to five foreign volunteers in the Old City who stay there for up to three months as that is the length of the tourism visa. The EAPPI is visible in the Old City with the jacket they wear when walking around. During covid, CPT international staff was replaced by local Palestinians, and have since then been runned locally by Palestinians. CPT also have uniforms, however, I was told that when the Palestinian employees in CPT was wearing the uniform they experienced difficulties in contact with Israeli soldiers and was detained occasionally. Because of that the CPT employees chose not to wear uniform when crossing the checkpoint. CPT occasionally host international volunteers. CPT volunteers as well as EAPPI volunteers usually contribute to the economy in the Old City by buying wares from the local shop owners. CPT has also contributed with creating workplaces for locals, and EAPPI probably have some local staff as well.

Other than the foreign tourism, I have been told that Palestinians who live in other countries and Palestinians from other cities in Palestine and Israel visit Al Khalil regularly. Differentiating them from the local Palestinians can be difficult, and as there is little research on tourism in Al Khalil it is also difficult to know to what extent this group or any other group influence the local economy. Shaheed (2019) states that since the prices in Al Khalil are low, they tend to attract local tourists on day trips.

From what I have heard and experienced, Al Khalil is a wealthy city. And my understanding of why this is the case, is related to international and local tourism.

Outside the Old City, international tourists rarely wander, and as a result, the prices haven't increased as much in Al Khalil as it has in Bethlehem. Al Khalil rarely has tourists stay the night (at hotels). In Al Khalil, I know of two hotels (New City), and three family runned hostels (Old City). The two hotels look abandoned, and the hostels are used by those tourists who stay more than one day. From locals, I have heard that many Palestinians from other cities in the West Bank and Israel often come on day trips to Al Khalil for shopping, as Al Khalil is cheaper than the other cities. The lack of international tourists and the presence of local tourism seem to be a reason for how the population of the New City of Al Khalil is economically well off.

As a tourist in Al Khalil, the fruit market, the tourism market and the mosque are probably the only place one will see, except those who go on an arranged tour. However, even those who go on an arranged tour, rarely wander outside the Old City. In the New City it is rare with international tourists, which is visible in the lack of tourism attraction, hotels and English menus. The New City is vibrant, with several shopping malls, restaurants and cafes. It is a city that never sleeps, men might sit at cafes until late at night, or simply enjoy some food and coffee with neighbours and friends in the street. Cars are driving constantly through Ein Sarah, even though it is quieter after midnight, the main street of the New City, Ein Sarah is never completely empty. In the Old City however, I have been told it is a place of danger and crime in the evening. Many international Muslims who come to Al Khalil to visit the Al Ibrahim Mosque, take part in Israeli arranged bus trips. From what locals have told me and from my own observations, these tourists are only visiting the mosque and walking past the three Palestinian tourism shops positioned within the Israel settlement area. They seem to be in a hurry and are told that it is dangerous to go past the checkpoint into the tourism market. Although the tourism is limited by checkpoint, story of dangers, some still end up walking through the tourism market, and for all of my informant in this area, the tourists are essential for the survival of their business.

As the New City develops independently it further distances itself from the population of the Old City. People in Al Khalil often describe the Old City as a place of danger and the poor and also a place where political activism is more prevalent. Surrounding the main street Ein Sarah in Al Khalil one finds nice neighbourhoods and apartment buildings. Growing up in this area compared to the Old City differs vastly. For those growing up in the New City, interaction with Israeli soldiers or settlers are rare, and occurs mostly if they leave the city, in my experience though most people rarely go far from the city without a specific reason. Those growing up in the Old City though, have interaction with Israeli soldiers and Israeli settlers regularly.

Business Owners in the Old City

Palestinian businesses in the Old City are positioned in the tourism market, clothing market and fruit market, as well as in H2 on the opposite side of the New City (as I presented on figure 9 in chapter 2). In the fruit market Palestinian farmers arrive to sell their wares during the day, while the clothing and tourism market have permanent shops. In the tourism market there are a few traditional stores, such as the glass business and the Turkish delight shop and there are multiple business selling tourism wares including glass wares locally from Al Khalil or from Gaza. There are also cafes, a restaurant, a barber shop, butcher, sweets and spices shops and a grocery store. All these businesses are crammed together in the short and narrow tourism market in the Old City.

Below I will present my informants, whereby one of the businesses is in H2 opposite of the New City (Noor), one is inside the settlement area (Ibrahim), and the remaining business are located in the tourism market street. After presenting my informant I will discuss how the economic situation, movement difficulties as well as kinship ties influence the shop keeper's daily life in the Old City.

Noor

Noor who I have mentioned in previous chapters, is the owner of a grocery shop in H2 area right next to one of the checkpoints entering the Israeli settlement. He told me he is from a large family with a good reputation in Al Khalil. And because of that he gives financial support whenever someone in his family need it and he also receive it if needed. 30 years ago, he decided to open this shop, he was able to do so as he had saved up money from selling shoes and he sold his sheep's as well as receiving a debt exchange. He had big dreams when he opened and hoped that his children could work with him in this shop. However, because of checkpoint and the settlement, the future of his business and safety of his children was put into question. In the interview I conducted he says that "I am sure that the Israeli will close the shop soon, as they always try kicking people out in this area". For the first six months after buying the store, he suffered economically, as he was not allowed to open the shop by Israeli soldiers. In the beginning his children helped him, but after his son recently got arrested when working in the store, it was even more clear that his children need to work elsewhere. He expresses that now, he works to earn money so that his children can live and work other places. Noor told me he is from a large family with a good reputation.

When he opened his shop as well as when he asked for a house loan for his son (which I talked about in an earlier chapter), he used kinship ties his family had in Al Khalil. I would argue that he used a debt exchange, whereby he talked to a family which already had a debt exchange with his family (could be exchange of wares or through nasab). When doing so, he called in a debt and created a new one by borrowing money. After his son got arrested, it became clearer that it is no future for his sons working in this shop.

Samii

Samii owns a bakery shop inside the tourism market. When he was ten, he learned the family trade of making traditional Palestinian sweets, and is still in an age of 45 working

this trade. Samii is the fourth generation of his family working in this 120 years old bakery. Every morning, he wakes up early to make the Kanafeh (a Palestinian traditional dessert with cheese), and the process of this is shown on the pictures below. Prior to the creation of the Israeli settlement, his family had another shop in Shuhada street. This was a larger bakery while the one we works in now was only was meant to be a kitchen. As I have mentioned in the last chapter, most of Shuhada street is illegal for Palestinian to walk in, so Samii, only have this smaller shop left. The current shop consists of a small kitchen area behind the counter, a glass counter with sweets. More sweets on top of the counter as well as outside the store. Inside the store it is a few tables to sit down and enjoy some sweets and Arabic coffee. When his father and grandfather worked in the bakery prior to the settlement, Samii talks about a time where the business was thriving, while now, he is the only one working there as the current business cannot support more than one nuclear family. When I asked him if his son will take over, he expressed hope as it has been a family business for generation, but his son had already found work elsewhere. For Samii, he inherited the business through kinship ties.

Mahmoud

Mahmoud is the third generation of his family working in this store. His family were Kurdi immigrants from Iran a few generations back. Previously his family worked in the front of the store, while there was a sesame seed press factory owned by a different family in the back. In the 1960s the sesame seed press factory closed, and the shop was used as a butcher shop until the 1990s. After this the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee (HRC) which was created after the Oslo accord started rehabilitating many buildings, including the one Mahmood works in now. In 2014 the sesame seed press factory was rehabilitated and HRC asked if anyone in Mahmood's family wanted to come work there, if not they would ask someone else. Mahmood, who worked as a dental technician during this time, saw this as an opportunity, especially considering that the decrease of customers had made it increasingly difficult living off the salary as a dental technician. However, taking on the responsibility of this shop came with certain conditions from HRC that needed to be agreed on through a contract, as the shop is considered a cultural heritage. In the contract he had to agree on keeping the shop open most days,

so Mahmood as most others in the Old City works every day except Friday's. If he doesn't keep it open most days, he risks needing to pay back the renovation costs. The shop, however, is owned by the Samar family, and because of that Mahmood has to pay a small amount each year of 1000 NIS (3000 kr) to the family for renting this store. As the shop is considered H2 area, Mahmood tells me that he doesn't need to pay taxes and he also gets good discounts on water and electricity. Mahmood has six daughters and no sons, so who will take over after him is uncertain. To be honest he said he hopes his daughter will get more stable and good paying jobs. Today Mahmood lives in Ein Sarah in a rented house with his family. Mahmood can according to White (1994) be considered an outsider when it comes to debt exchange. Mahmood family was Kurdi immigrant from Iran a few generations back, and because of that, he might not have the same chain of people of debt exchange that others have. He might struggle more than others. However, as I mentioned in the previous chapter, he uses the majority of his money on his daughters education with the purpose of increasing the cultural capital which can lead to social capital which can transform into debt exchange relations.

When I asked him why he choose to work in the Old City, He replied:

“The Old City is a beautiful area and having a shop open in this area is a way of resistance of the occupation, and also a way to avoid Israeli to take over. If I and others was to close the shop, the Israeli might see that as an excuse of taking over more of the city”.

Ibrahim

Ibrahim owns a tourism shop inside the settlement area, on the short walking path between the Ibrahim Mosque and the Israeli bus station. He is the owner of one of few tourism shops which is available for the Muslim tourist visiting on Israeli arranged bus tours. His shop is placed a few meters away from a military outpost, and throughout the week, tour groups of Israeli Jews (often school classes) walks past his shop to enter the Cave of the Patriarch. The shop he owns, have been open since before the British mandate of Palestine, however, he is the first in his family working with tourism ware.

When he was 12, he started working with his father and grandfather with leather in this store, and until 1994, they were four family members working there. During that time, it became more difficult working in this area. After his father past in 2007, he is the only one left working there. He tried several times including his son in the shop, but it was not enough money to support two families. He explains that he has a military permit for his business, but further explains that this is a difficult area to have a business, so one never knows if, and when, the permit will be revoked. Ibrahim told me he is from a family with a good reputation, but further express that since he only does trade with tourists, he do not need to worry too much about family contact.

Omar

Omar is the owner of a tourism shop in the beginning of the tourism market. During the interview I did he told me:

“The business and the income of this shop is not steady enough to be sustainable because of the Israeli checkpoint and their closure of large parts of the Main Street. But the situation here is comfortably not so bad. Myself an some families are still able to depend on the shops income. Despite the Israelis efforts and pressure to shut down our shop. We will not leave them. Our shops are close to our hearts and are historically significant. Our presence here is necessary and important. The more pressure and challenges we face. The more we will fight to stay here. These places have huge historic, economic and moral values for us. Our existence here is part of our identity as Arabs and as Palestinians” (translated from Arabic).

He further told me that he tried including his son in his business, but the business could not support two families.

Aisha

Aisha is a headstrong woman, a mother, grandmother and business owner. Many shop keepers as well as tourists and organisations visiting know who she is. She is one of few women in this area and she speaks English quite well. She is the business owner of a shop in the tourism market that sells wares made by Palestinian women, including herself. She is the front figure of several women working from home. In her shop she sells homemade jewellery, purse, wallet, clothes with embroidery as well as keffiyeh from the Al Khalil factory. Her shop consists of three small rooms, on opposite sides of each other in the market street. This shop is runned in collaboration with a women center in a village outside Al Khalil and wares are also sold in the USA through a web page. Aisha lives in a village half an hour away from Al Khalil, and commute by public transport six days a week to work in this shop. She is married, has 6 grown children and 22 grandchildren. She tells me she is not dependent on this income, however, she enjoys working. In 2006 when the shop opened, and Aisha started working here. Aisha's husband and brother were not fond of the idea of her as a woman working in the Old City, however, as Aisha said, "I did it anyway". Most days I walked through the tourism shop, I stopped for a cup of tea with Aisha. While all the other business owners, work in an individual family business, Aisha's business belong to an organisation focusing on working women in Palestine.

Ahmad

Next to Aisha's shop there is a street going into a settlement area which is closed by bricks and decorated with Handala⁴ holding a Palestinian flag. In this closed street there is a pop-up street shop owned by a young man, Ahmad. Ahmad, lives on the second floor looking down at the shop. He lives here with his wife and baby. He cannot read or write Arabic and decided to open this shop with the goal of slowly saving up money for the future. Ahmad grew up in the Old City and a big part of his family lives in close proximity to his house. He sells jewellery and soap his wife has made, some other tourism wares he has bought and has a fresh pressed juice stall. Every day he moves the

⁴ Handala is a famous symbol of Palestinian suffering.

wares out in the street in the morning, and back inside in the evening. Aisha who has known this young man since he was a little boy, seem to look after him, making sure that he has everything he needs.

Mariam and Fatima

Mariam and Fatima are two women who recently opened shops in the tourism market. Mariam who I met briefly in the end of my stay opened a shop selling homemade soap. Fatima, which I also met once recently opened a library in the tourism market. I was not able to interact with them further as time ran out as well as they in contrast to many other business owners, where not in their shop every day. Initially I had a plan of going back to Al Khalil in October 2023, learning more about these young women, which unfortunately was not possible.

Debt Exchange, Movement & Business Opportunities

Above I have presented some of the shop keepers in the Old City Tourism market. In this section I want to discuss similarities and differences among them as well as how debt exchange and movement influence the shop keeper's daily life. Although all of the shop keepers work alone in the shop, all except Aisha's shop would be considered a family business. In this section I will present four factors that influence the business opportunities for the local business owners mentioned.

Tourism

All off the shop keepers except Noor are dependent on tourism for survival. Ibrahim expressed that because of tourism, he does not have to deal with family trade to the same extent as non-tourism shops have to. Based on his statement, I would argue that tourism can increase economic capital without the necessary level of debt exchange or kinship relations. Since they mainly do trade with tourist, they do not deal with the question of kin in day to day business.

Based on Ibrahim comment on family trade, one could argue that tourism can open business opportunities for individuals with a low social and symbolic capital, as they deal with trade that are not dependent on kinship relations. For example, the café I mentioned in chapter three, is placed in the New City and are depend on support from locals. When their reputation weakened, their business success weakens as a result. If this café would mainly deal with tourism, the weakened reputation would not influence the economic success in the same matter. Using this café as an example I would argue that tourism can be viewed as a way for outsiders, or people with weak social, symbolic, cultural and economic capital to increase economic capital which can transfer into other typers of capital. Even though the day to day exchange can occur without influence of kinship relations, whenever buying wares for their shop, kinship relations might still be important. Although tourism can open opportunities, there seem to be more barriers than opportunities for local business owners, which I will discuss below.

Fear of Closure

Every one of my informants, expressed fear of closure, safety issues and movement limitation as factors that influence their business opportunities. Noor, whose son got arrested worries for his son safety, and expresses fear of closure for his business because of the location. Mahmood, Ibrahim and Omar expressed similar worries of closure. Only when asked specifically, they expressed this worry, I believe the reason for this is that there is a general acceptance of the risk of foreclosure in this area. The business owners in this area know that having a business comes with dangers because of the Israeli settlement.

I would argue that business owners who works in this area, despite of the dangers, do so because of unemployment and resistance of the occupation. Firstly, as I have mentioned there is high numbers of unemployment in Palestine, so despite the dangers, of having a business in this area, it can still be viewed as a better economic alternative than other employment options. Mahmood for example, viewed the business

opportunities in the Old City as a better alternative than his current employment. Resistance seems to be a second factor for decision of working in this area. Omar, for example, is highly motivated by resistance. Omar expressed this during the interview, and I have heard from others, that the days when Israeli military deny the business owners to come to their shop, Omar go their anyway. According to Omar, this have resulted in Israeli soldiers destroying his wares. Although some are more motivated by economic opportunities and others resistance, my impression is that it is usually a combination of both.

While men are motivated by economic capital and resistance, what motivated women to work in this area? Aisha for example, I would suggest that she is motivated by resistance. For Mariam and Fatima which I mentioned briefly, I do not know of the reason, however, working women in the Old City, would be a theme worthy exploring further.

Family Ties & Debt Exchange

Aisha and Mahmood opened their shop with the help of an organisation, while the remaining shop keepers was able to open only through kinship relations arguably debt exchange. When Noor for example opened his shop, he asked his family for economic support. When he received the economic debt, he did so by calling in a debt and created a new one, he then became indebted to another family member until he pays back the debt or a new debt is called on, through economic, material or marriage for example. The same could be said for Ibrahim and Omar. White (1994) argues that power as symbolic capital can be created through indebtedness. Looking back at Noor, I would argue that he used debt exchange to gain a house loan. Through debt exchange, he received an economic debt, which as I discussed in chapter three can further transform into social and symbolic capital. Building on White's argument, I would argue that when Noor gained economic debt through debt exchange, it could eventually transfer into symbolic capital. For Mahmood, an outsider, who do not have access to the chain of people through debt exchange, it is more difficult gaining the symbolic power. Similar could be said for many other shop keepers I did not talk to because of language barrier

or because they were not interested sharing their story. In chapter two I mentioned how many who lives in the Old City are impoverished with a low socioeconomic status. Taking this under consideration one could argue that many shop keepers in the Old City struggle with debt exchange as lack of money can makes debt exchange difficult which also makes it difficult gaining a better symbolic capital. As debt exchange can go back several generations it gives an understanding how families with power (notable families) can continue having power, as they always have a debt they can call on.

Debt exchange can also occur between friends, and among the shop keepers I encountered for example, I noticed friendship between some of them. Samii for example have coffee with three neighbouring shop keepers each morning, Aisha and Ahmad help each other in everyday life, and for Omar as well as Mahmood a neighbouring shop keeper will look after their store if they go somewhere during the day. Mahmood, also told me that whenever he buys wares for his shop, he often buys together with other shop keepers to get a better price. In these examples, one could argue that a favour such as looking after the shop or free coffee everyday could be related to debt exchange relations.

Uncertainty and No Future

In the West Bank over 70 % of all business are considered family business (Abuznaid, 2014; Znaid & Anastas, 2016; Sultan, Waal & Goedegebuure, 2017). Although there is only one individual working in most of the shops in the Old City, I would still consider them family business. For Ahmad, his wife makes a lot of the products, and for the remaining business (except the women business) they are the breadwinners of their family, and most of them have tried including their children in their business. In the New City there is young boys in almost all the shops, this however is not the case in the Old City. As I demonstrated earlier, Noor, Samii and Ibrahim all tried including their son in their shop, but they all came with the same conclusion that the income is not enough to support two families and they also worried for the safety of their children working in the Old City surrounded by Israeli military and settlers. Because of economic reasoning and

the security situation most shop keepers work alone in the store, and for all the shop keepers, they struggle seeing a long term future for their shop in the Old City because of the occupation. When I asked the shop keepers in this area, of who will continue your work, most of them expressed that they hope for a better and more secure employment for their children.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed factors that influence business opportunities for the local shop keepers in the Old City. I began with presenting the current tourism in the Old City, then I told the story of some of the shop keepers in this area, after doing so I presented factors that influence business opportunities. The first factor is tourism which I argue can create business opportunities for outsiders. Secondly, I argue that fear of closure and change on movement patters influence business opportunities. After that I discusses how debt exchange can create limitations as well as opportunities depending on kinship relations. The last argument is that the low income combined with security issues makes the future of a business in the Old City precarious. Bringing it all together, I argue that social life, movement and security complicates business life and discourage owners to keep the business open for generations to come.

V. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

This thesis investigates how it is to manoeuvre movement restrictions and social status for Palestinian business owners in the Old City Market in Al Khalil. And the research question I will answer below is how does movement restriction and social status affects the economy of local business owners? I decided on this theme and research question as during my fieldwork I noticed how the security, rules of movement, and kinship relationships influence the economic opportunities for local business owners in this area. To be able to answer this I have in three separate chapters discussed movement, kinship structure and debt exchange in relation to having a business in the Old City. These chapters which is summed up below shows the different layers of limitations and opportunities local shop keepers in the Old City face. In all the chapters I have presented different factors which influence business opportunities for Palestinian shop keepers in the Old City. In this final discussion I will bring them all together and discuss how they are factors that affects the economy of local shopkeepers in the Old City.

This thesis is built on participant observation, interview, questionnaire, and daily conversations. I have discussed my own observation by building on prior research and theoretical frameworks. I started in the introduction with a historical background of the area as well as background information of the Palestinians economy. I further moved on to discuss the theoretical framework as well as presenting methods and limitation during my stay. Below I have summed up the three main chapters whereby I discuss the ethnographic observation with prior research.

In chapter two I discussed how movement restrictions makes it difficult manoeuvring around in the Old City, and explained how the movement restriction is easily malleable depending on Israeli security. When discussion how security and movement restrictions influence the local shop keepers I used anthropology of security. Anthropology of security argues that security is a product of the place and can transform social and

economic life. By using this theoretical framework, I presented how the security situation influences business life as well as the shop keepers social life. This framework gives an understanding of the occupational constraints on the economy. As a result of changes in security, shopkeepers are not always able or allowed to get to their shop and are constantly worried about closure of their shop. I showed through ethnography and anthropology of security how it is to manoeuvre the complex geography of the Old City for Palestinians. In the Old City there is an Israeli settlement, checkpoints and military presence, and movement patterns for a Palestinian are constantly changeable. These factors complicated the economic life for shopkeepers in the Old City. In contrast, when moving around the New City none of these factors are applicable. The Israeli security put in place to protect Israeli settlers, and to separate Palestinians from Israeli Jews have transformed the Old City into a place of danger for Palestinians. The complex political situations and the strict rules imposed only on Palestinians, complicates and makes it challenging having a business in this area, and the future of the business is often considered uncertain because of these factors. The danger that comes with the Israeli military presence in this contested political area, influence business owner to encourage employment for their children elsewhere, outside the Old City.

In chapter three I discuss kinship and social life as cultural and social factors that influence business opportunities for shop keepers in the Old City. I begin with discussing the family structure and the concept of honor in a Middle Eastern Context. After that I present my host family as an example of a typical Palestinian patrilineal family structure. To understand how social and economic life interrelate in Al Khalil, I use Bourdieu theory on capital. Bourdieu argues for understanding wealth as more than just money. Bourdieu identifies four different types of capital, which interrelate and can transform into each other in certain conditions. Economic capital is about money, social capital is about networks of relationships, cultural capital relates to education and symbolic capital can be describe as reputation or honor. By implementing Bourdieu in the discussion of social life in Al Khalil, I was able to identify and discuss how different types of capitals interrelate and transform into each other locally.

In Al Khalil economic capital is achieved through for example ownership and loan. For some economic capital is used to increase cultural capital through education. Social capital as chain of relationships is predetermined based on kinship relation, and economic capital can be used to increase the level of social capital. Nasab, relationship in law is a term often used to determine who one wants their daughter to marry and is an important part of social capital for local Palestinians in Al Khalil. Lastly, I discuss the intricate term symbolic capital, which in the context of Al Khalil can be defined as honor, reputation and as notable families. By using Bourdieu theory, I am able to conceptualise how these different types of capital influence and are transferable into each other. And by doing so I give an understanding of how economic and social life relate in Al Khalil, which gives the argument that social life such as kinship relations influence the economy of local business owners.

In chapter four I present the local economy in the Old City and gives an in depth understand of how social life and movement creates limitations and opportunities for some of the local shop keepers in this area. In this chapter I have used debt exchange to build on and expand the understanding of capital and social life in the Old City. Debt exchange is built through social relations and can go back several generations. In contrast to the similar concept gift exchange, debt exchange can occur between individuals that have never met through prior kinship ties. By using debt exchange I could dwell further into the complexity of the interrelation of social life and economy in the Old City. It also helped me further understand challenges business owners face because of kinship relations.

By using the concept of debt exchange I further discuss how social life influence the local economy. I present some of the local shop keepers in the Old City, and by building on prior chapters I discuss the limitation and opportunities present for local shop keepers in the Old City. Some of the most essential factors are occupational constraints because of movement and fear of closure for their business, family ties and debt exchange that influence shopkeepers economic opportunities, lastly, there seem to be

no future for a family business. From this chapter, I argue that there is a range of limitations that complicates having a business long term for a shop keeper in this area.

To give an understanding of how it is manoeuvre movement restrictions and social status for local shop keepers in the Old City, I will in the next two sections discuss occupational and cultural factors.

Occupational influences

The Old City in Al Khalil differ from any other place in the West Bank, as it is the only Israeli settlement whereby Palestinian also reside and it is the only settlement area that is placed inside a Palestinian city core. As a result, there are limitation for those living and working in this area, that cannot be compared to any other place in Palestine.

Movement restrictions affect every Palestinian who moves around the Old City. For Palestinian who lives in this area, manoeuvring the changeable movement restrictions is a daily normality whenever leaving the house. For Palestinians living in the New City or nearby villages, the same experienced is limited to when they visit the Old City. Although many of the shop keepers live inside the Old City, most of my informants lived in the New City because of the reputation and the lack of safety that comes with the security situation. So, most of my informant only needed to deal with these restrictions when at work.

In general, there are specific rules of who is allowed to move, and where each individual is allowed to move and at what time an individual Palestinians are allowed to move around this area. However, as the security for movement for Palestinian are controlled by Israeli military, any of the checkpoints can close at any given moment and for as long as the Israeli military decide to do so. These changes in movement patters are more prevalent whenever a violent even have occurred. Whenever a checkpoint, a building or

a street become inaccessible for Palestinians, shop keepers will not be able to or allowed to open their shop that day, and until the movement patterns change back to “normal”, access to their shop is lost. Because of the current situation in Gaza, access is lost for many shop keepers in the Old City of Al Khalil, and since the access have been lost for such a long time, they do not know for sure if they are allowed to open again. For shop keepers in this area, not knowing for certainty when and for how long they are allowed to keep their business open, makes it difficult for them to depend on the income and it creates economic instability.

The instability that comes with the security situation complicates having a business in this area. For most of my shop owner they originally had a desire to include their children in their business, but the insecurity as well as economic instability made them reconsider. Some of the shop keepers included their adult sons but realised the business could not support two families, and others such as Noor, worried for his children safety after his teenage son got arrested when working in his shop. For those shop keepers I talked to, because of these factors, there will be no one in their family to take over the business when they retire. From what I have gathered, the shop keepers hope for an economic stable future for their children, which a business in the Old City cannot offer.

Cultural influences

Cultural influences on the economy of local shop keepers, will be discussed in light of economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital as well as debt exchange. While capital classifies different aspect of social and economic life, debt exchange gives and understanding of how these different types of capital is used to transform into each other in business life.

Something that I have mention several times throughout this thesis is how whenever someone wants a loan for a house or business, kinship relations as social capital and as

debt exchange are used. Noor, a shop keeper in the Old City for instance used his strand of relationship to gain a house loan without interest for his sons from another family. Although I do not know the circumstance of the family relations, one could assume they “had nasab” with that family or that another transaction has occurred. Mahmood, who lives in a rented house, do not have the same opportunity as he does not have the same level of kinship relation. What I want to draw from this is that each individual shop keeper chain of relationships or family ties, influence their economic opportunities. Noor has through kinship ties, the opportunity of offering his children a future outside the Old City and offer economic stability by owning a house. However, gaining a loan is not the only way of creating economic stability for one’s children. Mahmood for example uses most of his money for his daughter’s education, with the intention of increasing their cultural capital which will hopefully lead to creating nasab with new families with higher level of cultural, social, symbolic and economic capital. To sum it up, for the local shop keepers, by maintaining or improving their level of cultural, social, and symbolic capital it can transform into economic wealth for them or their children through for example loan or marriage. Vice versa, economic wealth can also be used for transformation into other types of capital that can increase the level of symbolic capital as honor, which is the highest most prestigious type of capital in the context of Al Khalil. These examples of creating economic opportunities elsewhere for their children, highlights how security and mobility influence their future.

In the host family I stayed with in Al Khalil, whenever someone in the clan was getting married, there was a kinship obligation for all adult men to give a small sum of money. This is one example of how there is economic obligation within social life in Al Khalil. It explains some of the complexity of capital and kinship and shows how one typical Palestinian family maintain their current level of capital. Although my host family lives in the New City, I would assume there is similarities in this behaviour for local shop keepers in the Old City.

Business success is as mentioned influenced by social life through loan, however, it can also be influenced by reputation. The café I mentioned in chapter three for example struggled economically because of a reputation the family had gotten. Based on this cafe, research on this area and my own understanding, I would argue that local shop keepers in the Old City, need to uphold their reputation the same as anyone else in Al Khalil, to succeed economically in their business. However, tourism as trade with foreigners can make trade possible for shop keepers, independently of their reputation.

Final remarks

In conclusion, there seem to be several factors that complicates and shape business life for local shop keepers in the Old City. They have limitations and worries that stem from the security situation, and they experience limitation and opportunities based on kinship relationships. The future of Palestinian shops in the Old City seems grim, since no one want their children to work their because of security and other Palestinian rarely visit because of the Israeli soldiers and settlers. Since most of the shop owners, was above 50, and had no desire for their children to take over, I am wondering what will happen in 10-20 years, will the tourism market die out or will they be replaced by others? Is there any future for Palestinian shop keepers in the Old City?

Bringing it all together, as many other places in the Middle East, kinship is deeply rooted in economic life. For local shop keepers in the Old City this is not an exception. However, in contrast to most places in the Middle East, the movement restrictions imposed on Palestinians in the Old City further complicates the economic life. Depending on the extent of the kinship relations for each individual, the kinship based social organisation can be perceived as a resource for some and a disadvantage for other shop keepers when facing Israeli imposed movement restrictions. For Noor, a shop keeper for example, his kinship relations allow him to continue having his shop in the Old City, as well as building a house elsewhere. For Mahmood, an outsider, on the other hand, the kinship based social organisation further complicates his economic, social and cultural opportunities. For local shop keepers in their daily life, they need to conform to

movement restrictions as well as maintaining social, cultural and most importantly symbolic capital with the purpose of gaining reputation from the local community and to secure an economic future of their children. As a final answer to the research question, based on my observation and prior research, I would argue that Israeli imposed movement restrictions create uncertainty and economic instability for local shop keepers, while social life functions as an advantage or disadvantage based on each individual shop keepers networks of relationships.

During my fieldwork there was two aspect of business life in the Old City I was not able to explore. For future studies, I would suggest looking into female shop keepers in the Old City. This was something I intended to do but was not able to. I believe it would be interesting understanding why women decide on opening a business in this area, with the geographic limitations put in place. A second proposal for future studies is business life within H2 area opposite of the New City. As I was limited by language as well as worries of safety walking in that area of H2, I was not able to explore this part of the city. As this is the area whereby most Palestinian Old City residents live, understanding informal business life and local shop keepers in this area, would be interesting and would most likely give a different result than what I found when focusing mainly on English speaking shop keepers who lives outside the Old City.

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