

# INVISIBLE WALLS

Identity boundary processes among Arab and Jewish students  
in Jerusalem



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# INVISIBLE WALLS

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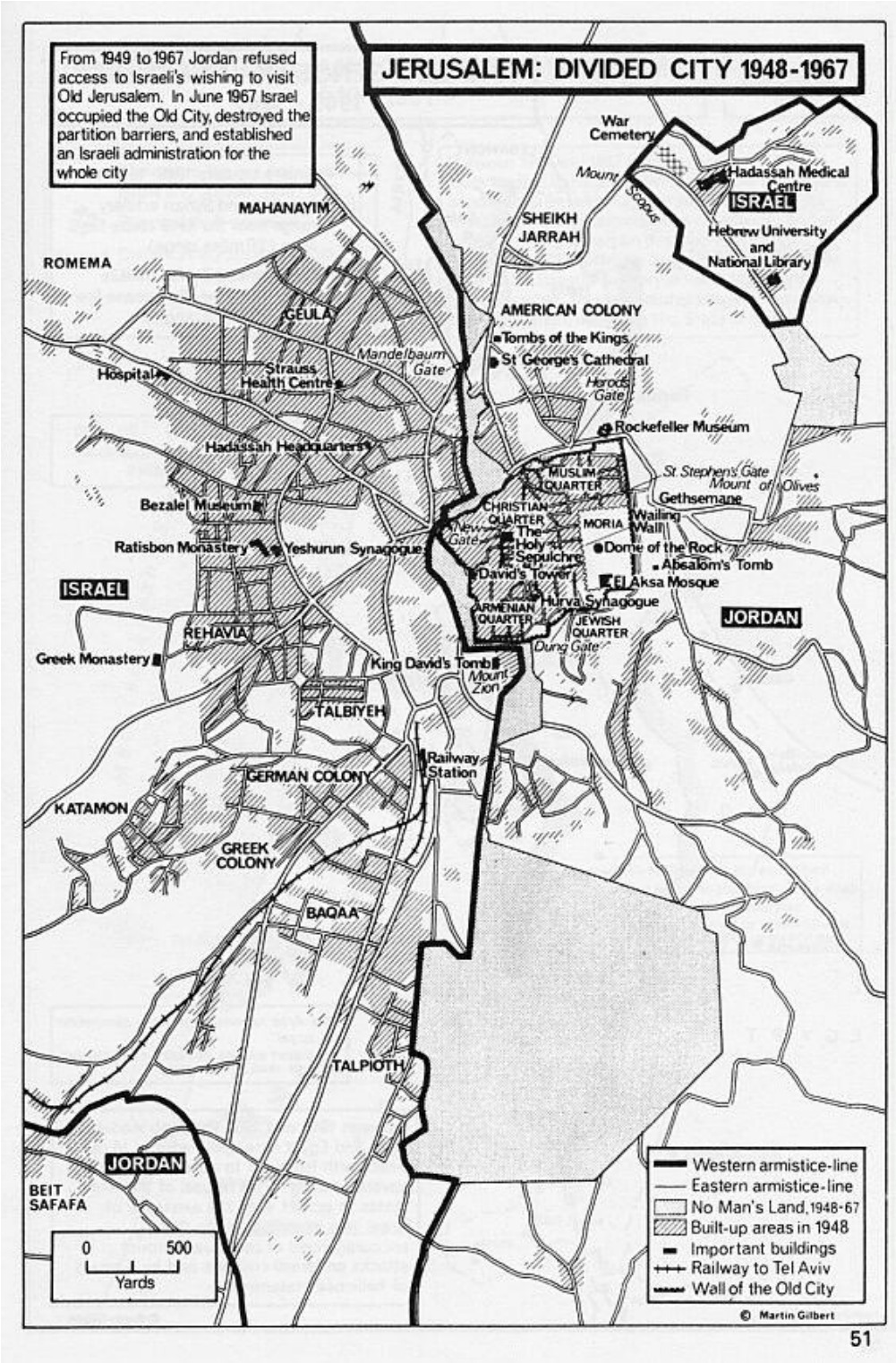
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# Map of Jerusalem (1948 – 1967)



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# Introduction

Marrit Woudwijk & Tessa de Jonge

*Johnny and Brill, two Arab students, sit with me on a wall somewhere in the Artist Colony close to the Old City. We listen to music and enjoy the sun, while overlooking the Old City, with all its sounds, scents and colours. We also overlook Arab neighbourhoods in the east of the city and the wall that separates Israel and the Palestinian Territories. In a city that breathes conflict, contestation and sensitivity surrounding space, this wall might seem the most interesting thing to talk about in a situation like this. Instead, Johnny and Brill are much more interested in discussing music. Who is the best Arabic singer? What is the best song about Jerusalem? They put on one song after the other, hum along, while I try to find a word of Arabic I understand. However, when the music changes again, so does the mood. Brill and Johnny stand up, turn up the volume and put their right hand on their chests. During the first verse, I realize they are singing the Palestinian national anthem. Unsure whether they are ignoring the Jewish environment they are in, or consciously trying to contest it, I listen and admire their courage. As the song ends, I point out my surprise, and I ask them why they choose to do this. Why the national anthem, why in this Jewish neighbourhood? They grin at each other and Brill calmly tells me: "It is our land. All of it."*

This situation was experienced by one of the authors of this thesis during a walk around the city. Although it describes a specific moment, it reflects the widely-felt experience of living in Jerusalem, where it matters who you are in what place. Different national, ethnic and religious groups claim parts of the city, reflecting and reinforcing these different identities. The power to define these places is not left uncontested. To the contrary, Jerusalem might be considered one of the most contested cities world-wide, being defined and redefined again according to national, ethnic and religious rules. Throughout history, the city has been the stage of wars, it has been shared by two countries simultaneously and fights over the city have cost many lives.

Nowadays, despite of recurrent waves of violence, Jerusalem is a relatively quiet place. Since 1967, Jerusalem is 'reunified' as one city under the state of Israel, meaning that all its inhabitants are theoretically able to reach the different parts of the city. However, history is reflected in contemporary life and tensions are felt throughout the city. People screen each other on their appearances and categorize others in 'good' and 'bad'. Furthermore, Jerusalem is a 'divided city' with high levels of spatial segregation. Most apparent is the social-spatial division of Jews living in West Jerusalem and Arabs living in East. Besides, ultra-orthodox Jews live in their own neighbourhoods. Mingling and mixing barely takes place.

The context of Jerusalem therefore reveals complex identity processes that are of interest to cultural anthropology. As a field of study that takes identity as one of its main concepts, cultural anthropology is among others interested in how different identity groups relate to themselves and others. In Jerusalem, this comes into play in the given that different groups share the same city. How do these groups define themselves and the other? When do they express differences, and when do they emphasize similarities? And how are different groups and spaces told apart?

These divisions between identities is what we call boundaries. Boundaries, as we argue, can be social or spatial and separate people and practices to categorize them in collective identity groups (Lamont and Molnár 2002,168). Such identities are called social identities, in which people categorize themselves through both similarities and differences (Jenkins 2014). Social categories are not static groups, but are developed in a process of group making (Erikson 1968). Therefore, people can relate to different social identities, that can overlap or create voids between them (McCall 2005). This stance towards social identity is called the categorical approach (McCall 2005) and is helpful to understand relations *between* different social groups. We would therefore like to follow Barth (1969) and shift to the concept of identity boundaries. Identity boundaries differ according to the context and their construction and deconstruction tell us something about the interaction between different social categories. In this thesis, we lay out two sorts of boundaries as part of the boundary drawing processes that influence each other in their making and unmaking. On the one hand, social boundaries serve to tell people apart socially through speech (Bhatia 2005) and narratives (Autessere 2012). On the other hand, spatial boundaries divide people physically by attaching meaning to space (Gieryn 2000) or ordering people through borders (Trudeau 2006). These boundaries become explicit when identities are performed. In the performance, people are included or excluded, making boundaries socially relevant (Fuist 2013). This is related to the positions different social groups take in society, as whether minorities or majority, who experience different forms of in- and exclusion (Appadurai 2006).

In this thesis, we aim to further explain the dynamics of identity boundaries. In the first place, we aim to bring two different boundaries together, namely social and spatial boundaries. In the extended research on boundaries, academics tend to focus on one specific boundary (may this be class boundaries, ethnic boundaries or borders) without relating different boundary drawing processes to each other (Lamont and Molnár 2002, 168). Furthermore, within the current debate on boundary drawing processes there is a strong theoretical focus on boundary making, largely leaving out boundary unmaking (Lamont and Molnár 2002, 168). This is reflected in theory on Israel, focusing on a well-known dichotomy, namely the division between Arabs and Jews (Chiodelli 2012; Sa'ar 1998; Hammack and Pilecki 2014). We aim to go beyond this dichotomy by describing the dynamic of both making and unmaking identity boundaries. Furthermore, to overcome the dualistic approach, it is fundamental to



describe how the two groups experience their interaction and discuss their actions against their background as a minority and majority. By incorporating these aspects of boundaries, we believe we contribute to the academic debate on identity boundaries. Moreover, the deconstruction of such a dichotomy in academia could lead to a deconstruction of boundaries in daily life. Policymakers can draw on academics as an objective support in developing policy concerning conflict resolution, sharing space or co-existence.

In this research, we choose to focus on students at university, since here, interaction naturally takes place. Entering university is generally the first time Jews and Arabs meet, due to separated Arab and Jewish schools in Israel. Therefore, to understand what occurs in terms of creating, reproducing and deconstructing boundaries is to understand a microcosm of Jews and Arabs living in the same city. It is essential to understand this group, since university students are for a large part the ones who will fill influential positions in policy making and politics. Therefore, they are crucial in understanding the future of Israeli society.

Following from this, we are interested in specific sorts of identity boundaries. The historic and physical meaning of Jerusalem creates a highly suitable situation to investigate boundary processes between and within the Arab and Jewish communities. What, then, is the nature of these boundaries? The boundaries between Arabs and Jews cannot solely be described as ethnic, whereas national and religious would be too limited either. When we speak about identity boundaries of Jewish and Arab students, we thus refer to the intersection of different national, ethnic and religious identities present among and between these communities. This, in the context of Jerusalem, results in the following research question:

*How do Arab and Jewish students of the Hebrew University make and unmake social and spatial identity boundaries in Jerusalem?*

Identity boundary making and unmaking is a shared process between Arabs and Jews. In other words, they represent two sides of the same coin, together they take part in boundary drawing processes. Therefore, incorporating both sides facilitates the researcher with a more complete and holistic view on the making and unmaking of identity boundaries. In this complementary research, we incorporated both sides by dividing the research in two parts. Consequently, Tessa de Jonge conducted research among Arab students, whereas Marrit Woudwijk conducted research among Jewish students.

All research participants are holders of an Israeli identity card and were, during the course of the research, inhabitants of the state of Israel and the city of Jerusalem. All research participants are students of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HUJI), with the rare exception of some participants who recently graduated. The students study at the Givat Ram campus, situated in southwestern Jerusalem, or at the Mount Scopus campus, situated in East Jerusalem on the edge of the city. Through

snowball sampling and social media, we reached out to students to find research participants.

The research took place from February 6<sup>th</sup> till April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017 in Jerusalem. To thoroughly examine our research topic and question, we made use of various research methods. First, we adopted the method of participant observation, by being and living in Jerusalem. We spent many hours at the university, hanging out, following lectures and meeting students. Additionally, we both shared an apartment with Jewish students<sup>1</sup>. This gave us the opportunity to blend in student life and gather data at home, a possibly confusing situation for roommates. Therefore we always explicitly asked approval when we wished to make use of such data, making clear our research role. Furthermore, as informants pointed out, hanging around university and living in Jerusalem did not make us 'one of them', since we did not grow up in Israel. However, it did enable us to understand their daily lives and made us not only being seen as researchers, but also as friends.

Through informal talks combined with in-depth interviews, we gathered data in conversation with our research participants. Informal conversation was particularly useful to explore our research topics, which we got to discuss more in-depth in semi-structured interviews. Additionally, meeting informants by informal conversation first, allowed us to make them feel comfortable enough during in-depth interviews, hence improving their quality. During interviews, we made use of topic lists to guide conversations and to develop consistency between different interviews. Furthermore, we made use of transect walks and mapping sessions with some participants. By means of maps (mapping) and walks throughout the city (transect walks), we asked informants questions in order to gather insights in their understanding of their physical environment and physical boundaries. Because some places were inaccessible for us or our informants, we used photo elicitation to discuss such places. We mainly showed participants pictures of symbolically important places in Jerusalem to gain insights in physical boundaries or sensitive social situations. Mappings, transect walks and photo elicitations, enabled us to complete interview responses to the reality of being in certain places. It made the topics real and concrete for both us and participants. The combination of methods thus enabled us to develop a holistic view on the making and unmaking of identity boundaries.

Three things should be kept in mind when reading this thesis. First, conversations with informants were held in English, which was (in most cases) neither the informant's, nor our native language. The research participants, who all enjoyed an academic background, acquired the language well enough to be able to express themselves properly. However, we are aware of the (minor) misinterpretations and incompleteness the use of a non-native language might have caused. Second, our research involves politically and emotionally charged topics. Doing anthropological research entails

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<sup>1</sup> It should be mentioned that this was specifically valuable for understanding Jewish student life, since none of us got the opportunity to live with Arab students, who mainly live at the enclosed university campus. However, it made us part of student life in Jerusalem more generally.

close contact with informants, which complicated our objective stances. Sometimes we did not agree with strongly opinionated informants, but we made sure not to deny their opinions. To protect the validity of our research, we were in constant conversation with each other in order to see both sides of the story. Finally, we used pseudonyms to protect our participant's privacy. This is vital when doing anthropological research in general, but even more so when researches such as ours revolve around (politically) sensitive topics. Hence, we could not describe extensively personal backgrounds of participants.

In this thesis, we build up to a general conclusion in four chapters. The first chapter, a theoretical framework, discusses the literature useful to understand the research topic. The second chapter, or context, shows how these theoretical concepts come into play in the context of Israel, Jerusalem and the university. In chapter three and four, we discuss the results of the data we collected and analyse them within the theoretical framework provided. Chapter three discusses boundary (un-)making of Jewish students as a majority. Chapter four discusses boundary (un-)making processes of Arab students as a minority. In chapter five, we present the intertwinement of chapter three and four in our general conclusions and the discussion of our research question.

# 1. Theoretical Framework

## At the Crossroads of Social Identities

Tessa de Jonge

“Identity, broadly defined, is the answer to the question ‘who or what are you?’” (Demmers 2012, 19). However, as its reality is more complex, identity as a central concept in our research requires an explanation that fits this complexity. Therefore, we will firstly address the origin of the concept of identity and its meaning. Psychologist Erik Erikson (1968) provides the foundation for what we now know as ‘identity’, specifically through explaining two elements.

One of these is identity as a changing process. E. Erikson argues that “identity is never ‘established’ as an ‘achievement’ in the form of a personality armor, or of anything static and unchangeable” (1968, 24), but is an always changing and developing process. Over forty years later, Jenkins (2014, 18) writes: “identity can only be understood as a process of ‘being’ or ‘becoming’. One’s identity (...) is never a final or settled matter.” Identity is not something one has, but something one does; it is produced (Jenkins 2014)<sup>2</sup>. The fact that identity is constructed in social interaction in relations between individuals and groups, is widely accepted among scholars (Demmers 2012, 25-27). Because of this social interaction, identities are constructed with different outcomes in different social settings and over time. This leads to the multiplicity of identities. No one has only one identity, due to the difference between identity ascribed by the other and identity achieved by oneself, and due to the change of identity over time and the variation in identity in different social settings (Erikson 1966, in Demmers 2012).

Furthermore, E. Erikson’s work distinguishes between personal and social identity. Our research in Jerusalem revolves around social identity, so we will focus on only this dimension of identity. Social identities are determined by processes of categorization, which are based on both similarities and differences, as Jenkins (2014, 24) argues. Similarities create a sense of belonging with other people and function as a foundation of a social identity, because they share characteristics together. Difference indicates what a social identity is not, and thus says something about that identity, as “we are what we are not” (Demmers 2012, 21). Both these mechanisms define a social identity and are equally important: “taken (...) together, similarity and difference are the dynamic principles of identification” (Jenkins 2014,

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<sup>2</sup> While we focus on the construction of social identity, we stress that this does not undermine the realness of social identities. (Anderson 1983, 7, Jenkins 2014, 12-13).

19). We will explain the process of social construction of identity in closer detail in the section on identity boundary drawing.

In the multiplicity of social identities, several larger categories can be distinguished. We will use and elaborate on three of these overarching social identities, namely ethnic, religious and national identities, because these are the focus of our research in Jerusalem.

In line with what we have argued for social identities in general, ethnic identities are socially constructed in relation to and in interaction with the other, based on the perception of being culturally different (Eriksen 2010). This understanding of ethnic identities cannot be separated from the work of Frederic Barth, who can be considered the founding father of the ethnic boundary, to which we will return later. He explains that ethnic identities “provide an organizational vessel that may be given varying amounts and forms of content in different socio-cultural systems” (1969, 14). Here, Barth implicitly argues that ethnic identities vary in their outcomes, due to different interactions leading to different constructions. This is done by words, actions and interactions, which turn natural possibilities, such as descent, into ethnicity. However, in everyday discourse, ethnicity is often reduced to solely these natural elements and hereby reified. It is essential to differentiate between this everyday essentialising and the academic perspective of the construction of ethnic identities. As Ignatieff metaphorically stresses, ethnicity is “not a skin, but a mask, constantly repainted” (1999, 56). Furthermore, ethnicity is often discussed in close relation to nationalism, but what is their relation?

Like ethnic identities, national identities are socially constructed, based on being different from members of other nations, or simply from non-members (Eriksen 2010, 134). Anderson’s (1983, 6) foundational definition helps us conceptualise a nation as “an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign”. These characteristics define our contemporary understanding of a nation and national identities. This political community is imagined in the sense that its members feel connected to one another without individual contact. However, a nation is limited, or in other words, has territorial boundaries. Within those borders the national identity has, or aims to have, sovereign authority. The essential difference between ethnic and national identities is therefore the relation to the state, and (the desire) to have one. Furthermore, national identities are always related to the nation-state as a power project, in terms of who gets power and sovereignty within a state. Ethnonationalism demands ethnic boundaries to coincide with the territorial boundaries of the nation-state, in which a certain ethnic group dominates (Eriksen 2010). We thus see that while ethnic and national identities are not the same, they do often overlap.

Ethnic and national identities are also often related to religious identities. Guadeloupe (2009) argues that, because religions are based on moral principles, they can function as a way to find common humanity and therefore bring together communities (2009, 223). However, as with ethnic identities,

religious identities are often treated as unchangeable and are thus essentialized. As Baumann argues: “just as ethnicity is easily essentialized as if it were a matter of blood (...) so religion, too is widely essentialized as if it were about immutable sacred texts, rather than the convictions of living and changeable people” (1999, 67). In the case of religion this is because of its foundational influence in terms of worldviews, traditions and behavioural norms (Ebstyne King 2003, 198). Furthermore, some ethnic or national identities are defined through religion, as is the case with the Jewish-Israeli identity. Thus, religion is not only influential by itself, but especially in combination with other social identities.

We have explained how ethnic, religious and national identities show both similar and relational dynamics. Therefore they “must increasingly be studied in the compass of a large-scale, unbounded, dynamic system” (Eriksen 2010, 199). We will address the concept of intersectionality to illustrate the interrelatedness of ethnic, national and religious identity.

The intersectionality approach argues that different elements of one’s identity often overlap and interact with each other. Its foundation is in feminist theory, where it is used to address the multiple inequalities that women face. The aim of intersectionality is to get a more complete understanding of identity by specifically analysing the intersection of different social identities, instead of treating them as isolated elements (Walby et al. 2012, 2). In feminist theory, intersectionality is used to address gender and racial identities and inequalities. In line with Yuval-Davis (2016, 4), we argue that intersectionality can be taken beyond this, to accurately analyse the interaction of ethnic, religious and national identities, as these are most relevant in the context of our research.

In focussing on the intersections and interrelatedness of ethnic, religious and national identities it is important to stress “that multiple identities are not the same as segmentary identities” (Eriksen 2010, 211). We have, before, argued that social identities are not fixed and absolute, but rather fluid and ever-changing (Brubaker 2004, 38). Following the intersectionality approach, we argue that these identities do not exist orderly alongside each other, but instead overlap, challenge and change each other. However, the intersectionality approach has its limits as well. What happens when identities do not intersect, but instead leave a void in between them, where there is no inclusion but mutual exclusion? In our research, this is the case for the Arab/Palestinian and the Israeli identity, which we will discuss in chapter 4. Therefore, it is important to understand this mutual exclusivity. McCall (2005) argues for the use of the categorical approach within intersectionality. The categorical approach’s goal is to show the relations between different identities. It argues that these relations change in different environments or contexts, and therefore, inequalities also change (McCall 2005, 1785). One identity can be inferior to another in one situation, but it can be the other way around in a different situation. By examining the complexity of relations among multiple groups instead of the complexities within groups (McCall 2005, 1786), we argue that the categorical approach creates the possibility to examine mutual

exclusive identities. If the relation between two identities is of such a level of complexity that they exclude each other, the categorical approach allows us to observe this and conclude that there is instead a void in between identities. Therefore, the categorical approach fills the gaps of relational complexity that intersectionality leaves open, and enables us to analyse a void of identity, instead of an overlap. Lastly, in conceptualising this void of identity, we must keep in mind the feelings this might evoke in individuals. As Ghorashi (2005) explains, experiencing a dissonance due to seemingly mutually exclusive identities, can result in feelings of emptiness and confusion. The fact that relations between different identities can change, as McCall (2005, 1785) has explained, results in the fact that sometimes one can feel excluded by one identity, and at other times by another identity. Because these relations change, the consequence can be that both identities feel unfitting, which leaves the individual, like Ghorashi, feeling confused at the least.

However, before we can understand the consequences of this relation complexity, we must first explain the different ways identities relate to each other and for this, we turn to processes of boundary drawing.

## Constructing Identity Boundaries: the social and the spatial

Marrit Woudwijk

As we have seen, social identity is constructed in interaction through which categories or groups come into existence. Here, we introduce the concept of boundaries, that separate such social identities. It is the boundary and the process in which boundaries are actively constructed and deconstructed, that requires our attention. Before we turn to this process of boundary negotiating, it is meaningful to first understand the construction of boundaries.

As Lamont and Molnár (2002) show, boundaries are generally understood as to discern people and practices in different groups (2002, 168). In this study, we focus on the boundaries between different identities. By identity boundaries, we mean the abstract lines that separate social categories (Jenkins 2014, 102). Let us take a closer look at what defines identity boundaries according to Frederic Barth. As we have seen, Barth has been highly influential in constructing the fundamentals of thought about (ethnic) identity, but he might be even more known for his discussion of boundaries. His understanding of ethnic boundaries provides a framework to understand social identity boundaries in general (Jenkins 2014, 130). Barth was the first to stress the importance of the study of identity boundaries: “The critical focus of investigation... becomes the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses” (Barth 1969, 15). As he argues, it is in contact with other social

groups that differences are recognized or expressed (Barth 1969, 15-16). Here, at the boundary, lies the core of what the limits of the social group are and thus, too, what the group is.

Identity boundaries are, just like identities, not for everyone and at all times the same. They are not hard lines between certain social categories (Fearon and Laitin 2000). The understanding of boundaries as rooted in human genes is what Fearon and Laitin call ‘everyday primordialism’ in their discussion of the perception of ethnic boundaries. Such as Barth’s framework, we can use their explanation of ethnic boundaries in studying social boundaries at large<sup>3</sup>. Everyday primordialism is a stance that can still be found in journalistic reports or in everyday speech, but which is highly rejected within the academic world (Demmers 2012). Rather, we should take the constructivist stance and think about ethnic boundaries as being constructed in social action (Fearon and Laitin 2000).

What follows from this understanding of identity boundaries, is the question *how* and *by who* these identity boundaries are negotiated. We discern between two different boundaries, namely social boundaries and spatial boundaries<sup>4</sup>. We call social boundaries those boundaries between social identities, that are drawn on a rather abstract level and decide the perception of the self and the other. They are constructed in speech and narratives and serve to tell people apart. Spatial boundaries are those boundaries that separate identity groups spatially and connect identity boundaries to physical space. They are constructed in the spatial segregation of identities, or materialized in vast borders that in- and exclude people spatially. Such borders make abstract identity boundaries visible and turn flexible identities in a fixed object. Social differentiations between “us” and “them” are thus reinforced by and reflected in landscapes in “the construction, reconstruction and contestation of space” (Gallaher 1997 in Trudeau 2006, 434).

Let us first turn to the construction of social boundaries. In the use of words, the in-group and the out-group become separated and boundaries between groups are formed (Bhatia 2005). Bhatia explains the function of names in drawing boundaries by stating that “the naming of peoples, territories and phenomena are all part of this attempt to recruit and indicate allies and opponents, as well as to demarcate similarity from difference” (2005, 12). Thus in telling each other apart, the use of words can be powerful in demarcating, sometimes even to the extent of dehumanizing the other, making actions

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<sup>3</sup> Fearon and Laitin based their ideas on ethnic boundaries, on Barth’s conceptual framework. Such as Barth’s understanding of ethnic boundaries can be used for identity boundaries at large, so can Fearon and Laitin’s.

<sup>4</sup> Lamont and Molnár (2002) developed a framework to understand boundaries as symbolic (conceptual categorization) or social (“objectified forms of social difference” that in- and exclude people). However, to them, spatial boundaries are submissive to the definition of social boundaries. According to us, they are equally important. Therefore we suggest to demarcate between social and spatial boundaries when discussing identity boundaries.



such as violence justified<sup>5</sup>. The naming of people can result in the use of stereotypes, which are “extremely condensed symbols of collective identification” (Jenkins 2014, 152). Stereotypes do not exclusively draw a negative image of the other. Rather, they serve to clarify the limits of identity boundaries, positively as well as negatively (Jenkins 2014, 152).

This demarcating does not exclusively unfold itself in the use of words, but also in narratives. As Autesserre (2012, 5) explains, narratives are stories “that people create to make sense of their lives and environments”. Narratives are constructed by a central frame or several frames combined. They are not particularly true or false, but reflect a certain lens to see the world, thereby authorizing and justifying actions. Due to the simple character of narratives, they serve as a tool to deal with complexities (Autesserre 2012,7). In sum, narratives serve to “shape the way we perceive the social and material worlds, and thus orient how we act upon our environment” (Autessere 2012, 5). They thus influence social relations and moreover, the consequence of such relations in actions. Therefore, narratives are useful in constructing categories and demarcating boundaries (Hammack and Pilecki 2014, 824)

Spatial boundaries reflect these difference between social categories through the distribution of space. This can be best understood by what Gieryn points out as the ‘sense of place’: “the attribution of meaning to a built-form or natural spot”(2000, 470). People ascribe qualities to certain places and distribute space among “ours” and “theirs”, thereby mentally mapping space. Regularly, these spaces represent who belongs to that place and who does not. In other words, they are a “reification of cultural unity” (Trudeau 2006, 437), meaning that they are the spatial component of abstract identity boundaries and therefore fix identities in coherent places. This claiming of space is a reaction on the uncertainty and instability of our social worlds and attempts to stabilize these by categorizing places according to identity groups (Trudeau 2006).

In ordering people culturally, we often use spatial bordering (Van Houtum and van Naerssen 2002). The materializing of a social boundary into a physical object can have strong implications for social boundaries between groups of people. Wendy Brown explains how walls are “crucial elements in the making of (...) ‘imaginative geography’, the mental organization of space producing identities through boundaries” (2010, 73-74). Walls therefore are, apart from functional organizers, also the shapers of identities and they fix boundaries between these identities. Less symbolically, but as effective, are borders in the form of airports. Airports are places in which “appearance and identity is always in question” (Amoore and Hall 2010, 303). Some people may pass, others might not. In that sense, social boundaries are drawn between groups of people. Also, borders exclude and divide people in their landscape, telling who belongs to what territory (Trudeau 2006, 435).

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<sup>5</sup> Violence often becomes a strong tool in making ethnic boundaries. Here, we will not elaborate further on the role of violence in constructing identities. For more literature about violence and ethnic boundaries see Fearon and Laitin (2000).

Boundaries, as we showed, are subject to a process in which they are negotiated and thus not solely constructed, but also deconstructed. Academics have referred to this as boundary bridging (Lamont and Bail 2007), boundary blurring (Wimmer 2008) or boundary shifting (Wimmer 2008). The different terms are used to indicate the same process of 'overcoming categorization or social organisation' and instead put emphasis on 'civilizational commonalities' (Wimmer 2008, 989). These are the common characteristics that different social categories possess, such as a common religion or nationality, or the shared membership of 'the human race' (Lamont and Bail 2007). In other words, not the differences, but the similarities are expressed when categorization is tried to overcome. We see the boundary as an obstacle in interaction between social groups. Such an obstacle can be build up, or broken down and thus respectively made, or unmade. Boundary blurring, bridging or shifting, all refer to same process of overcoming categorization, sometimes indicating subtleties in the process at stake. In the following, we will refer to the deconstruction of boundaries as 'boundary unmaking', since this fits our perception of boundaries as obstacles the most.

Not all boundaries are equally easy to be unmade. High degrees of social closure complicate boundary crossing. When social categories claim territories, for example, the social closure of the group increases and boundaries are crossed less easily (Wimmer 2008:980). However, the stronger the boundary, the more strategies are used to actively unmake the boundary (Lamont and Bail 2008, 18). Thus, even though it might be more difficult to unmake strong identity boundaries, more efforts are made to do so.

Who, then, are the shapers of these identities? It is often argued that elites have the power to maintain social boundaries by their discourses and actions of who belongs and who does not (Demmers 2012, 29). However, it not just political elites who reinforce identity boundaries. It is in everyday actions of 'ordinary folk' that identity boundaries are confirmed and propagated (Fearon and Laitin 2000, 855-856). They categorize social groups and act upon the assumptions of who belongs to what group.

We have seen that boundaries between identities are important, because they are not a matter of fact, but the outcome of actions and interactions. Boundaries can be made and maintained socially, through speech and narrative, and spatially, by materializing boundaries in landscapes. In the same way, these boundaries can be unmade by sharing characteristics or space. In the following section, we will show how boundaries become expressed.

## Dramatizing Identity

Marrit Woudwijk & Tessa de Jonge

As concluded<sup>6</sup>, identity is constructed in social action and its meaning changes according to the context. The construction of social identities implies them being expressed and therefore they need a stage as well as an audience. In other words, in order to be created, identity needs to be performed. Then, the boundaries of a social identity become salient, which makes the performance an integral part of studying boundary processes.

In the broadest sense of the word, performance means any kind of action in which the behaviour of the action can be studied (Schechner 2002). Performance can be the exhibition of a painting, a building or a protest group and can be studied in the interaction with a public or in its occurrence (Schechner 2002). Here, we will focus on the function of performance in constructing identities (Schechner 2002, 46), understood as identity performances. Identity performances are the “purposeful expression (or suppression) of behaviours relevant to those norms conventionally associated with a salient social identity” (Klein, Spears and Reicher 2007, 30). They thus reflect a collective identity and make this apparent to the outside world. The audience is a crucial part of identity performance, reading and interpreting the performance and therefore giving meaning to the very act (Fuist 2013, 429). It is in interaction with the audience that identities are constructed and its boundaries maintained.

Identity performances generally have two functions. First, they reinforce and consolidate identity boundaries (Fuist 2013, 433; Klein, Reicher and Spears 2007, 30). They create and strengthen collective identities by expressing group identity content. Thereby group actors express who will be regarded as an in-group member, which implicitly also expresses who does not fit the rules of membership. Second, identity performances convince people to act (Klein, Reicher and Spears 2007, 30). Through strategically performing a collective identity in public space, others are mobilized to support political projects (Fuist 2013). Performances consolidate the collective identity of the group when expressing values, ideas, and norms and therefore construct its boundaries.

But how do these performances become expressed? Consciously using a specific language, symbolically using certain props or taking part in protests (Fuist 2013; Klein, Reicher and Spears 2007) are all manifestations of identity performances. It is important to understand that such manifestations of identity only become performances when they are not the habitual in-group behaviour (Klein, Reicher and Spears 2007, 30). For example, a Jew wearing a kippah would only become a performance when worn in a non-Jewish or public area, whereas it would be normal behaviour inside a synagogue. In sum,

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<sup>6</sup> From here, written by Marrit Woudwijk

we can understand performances as how identity is “displayed for an audience via her behaviour, language, use of props and aesthetics” (Fuist 2013, 428).

<sup>7</sup>This performance of boundaries of course has consequences, namely inclusion and exclusion of people. Based on the boundaries drawn, a group can include certain people based on rules of membership (Fearon and Laitin 2000), and exclude others. Boundaries are reified by performances of identity, as these illustrate these rules of membership. This inclusion and exclusion through performances of identity is reflected in social and spatial boundaries. Being excluded by social boundaries could be not understanding the language a certain group speaks, or not understanding its traditions and customs.

The most obvious example of exclusion by spatial boundaries are walls, as they physically exclude people from a certain place (Fields 2010). As this exclusion is based on a certain identity, the spatial boundary of the wall reifies this. However, spatial boundaries such as walls paradoxically include people at the same time, namely the people who do fit within the social identity that lies at the foundation of the spatial boundary. The wall is thus both an including and excluding reification of a performed identity. However, spatial performances such as the presence of military, or protests, also demarcate boundaries, and thus are both including and excluding reifications of a performed identity. The same can be done by social boundaries through inclusive discourses and narratives (Fuist 2013, 434). Furthermore, exclusion is characterized by outside hostility, toward non-members or members of another group. Consequently, inclusion is accompanied by a certain inward loyalty. This means that to belong to a certain group and to be fully included within its boundaries comes with allegiance and devotion (Fuist 2013).

These two dynamics, outside hostility and inward loyalty, maintain and strengthen boundaries and therefore reify social identities. Inclusion and exclusion, create social division, or restore social cohesion, and therefore they are essential to understand the consequences of identity boundary drawing processes. However, we have also explained that identities can also be perceived as mutually exclusive as a result of relational complexity (McCall 2005). In this case, the outward-hostility characterizing exclusion comes from two sides, and as a result, the person in-between feels a void of identity, as he or she belongs to neither.

Lastly, we go into the dynamic between majorities and minorities. These two different positions in society have different ways of drawing boundaries and performing their identity. Besides simply being quantitative characteristics, the labels of majorities and minorities carry implications of difference and inequality, and thus a qualitative component. The categorical approach within intersectionality that McCall (2005) explains, illustrates how the relational complexities between different identities reflect

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<sup>7</sup> From here, written by Tessa de Jonge

hierarchical modelling (2005, 1788). By analysing relations between different identities, we can observe how some of these are hierarchical relations, as for example, the relation between majorities and minorities. Consequently, differences and inequalities between these groups influence their boundary drawing processes and how they perform these. In the case of majority groups, Appadurai (2006) argues they have an ever-present fear of the minority, rooted in an “anxiety of incompleteness” (2006, 52), meaning that as long as minorities exist, the majority is not “a whole and uncontested ethnos” (2006, 53) and feels threatened. As Appadurai argues, this fear of the minority has the possibility of a predatory attitude towards it, in performing their power as a majority. Minorities, in turn, are in a marginalized position, with issues concerning rights and citizenship (Appadurai 2006, 42). To go against these negatives consequences of their marginalized position, minorities try to secure their position through strongly performing the boundaries around them. In doing so, they contest their marginalized position as a minority. This also means a performance of the ‘minor differences’ that Appadurai (2006, 10) points out. It is these differences that enforce the fear majorities experience, as this jeopardizes their position. This majority-minority dynamic is a relation of complexity (McCall 2005), as it changes along with performances of identity and the making and unmaking of boundaries, which results in inclusion and exclusion. We now turn to Jerusalem, to see how this plays out in reality.

## 2. Context

### A Patchwork of Identities

Marrit Woudwijk & Tessa de Jonge

<sup>8</sup>Israel is a highly suitable context to illustrate the complex intersectionality of social identities. Without professing to cover all possible identities and intersections, this chapter will provide a contextual overview that includes the relevant social identities in Israeli society.

Israel as a nation-state is relatively young, but the land carries ages of contestation and conflict. In 1948, Ben-Gurion declared the nation-state of Israel, to be the first independent Jewish state in nineteen centuries. However, this nation-state project was immediately highly contested in the entire region. It is an example of ethnonationalism (Eriksen 2010), as the dominant Jewish group “claims ownership of a certain territory that it considers its exclusive homeland” (Smooha 2002, 477), based on an ethnic group having common descent. In Israel, the majority group is dominant in terms of power, and minorities are considered outside threats and not acknowledged as true members of the nation-state and its identity (Smooha 2002). Due to this, tensions and conflicts surrounding sovereignty and identity have been ever-present<sup>9</sup>.

While the Israeli state “promotes only one (Zionist) national group” (Sa’ar 1998, 216) and a considerable part of Israeli society romanticizes the idea of an Israeli national identity linked to the Jewish identity, a considerable part of the Israeli population performs identities that conflict with the Israeli intersection of religious, ethnic and national identity. In relation to the ethnic and religious Jewish majority, there are many minority identities in the state of Israel. These exist in the religious dimension (Muslim, Christians, Druse, minorities within the Jewish community), in the ethnic dimension (Arab, Druse, Ethiopian, Bedouin) and in the national dimension (Palestinian). These minorities partially overlap, and thus differ in the extent to which they are marginalized. Muslim Arabs who have an Israeli passport can be marginalized based on their ethnic or religious identity, despite having an Israeli national identity, and experience increased marginalisation due to the intersecting identities ‘Arab’ and ‘Muslim’. The categorical approach allows us to see how these identities are mutually exclusive with the Israeli identity, which also increases marginalisation. This exclusivity results in marginalisation of

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<sup>8</sup> From here, written by Tessa de Jonge.

<sup>9</sup> The Israel-Palestine conflict, simply put, concerns the question whether the contested territory belongs to Arab Palestinians or Jewish Israelis. The conflict has been characterized by assaults and attacks from both parties that have occurred since the constitution of the Israeli state in 1948. (Yiftachel 2006)

identities, but it also means the Jewish national identity is contested. Identifying more with being Arab or Palestinian, one of Schiff's informants states "Israeli is only on the ID and the passport" (2002, 273).

In Israel, a history drenched with conflict over belonging and right to sacred territory has created a complex arena of social identities. Because some identities are more dominant than others in Israel, the intersectionality approach is essential to understand their interaction (Guckenheimer 2010). Furthermore, we have seen that Israel also illustrates how social identities can be excluding or challenging. To explain how other social identities are excluded in Israel, we turn to the processes of boundary drawing.

<sup>10</sup>We have seen that Israeli citizens can have different overlapping identities and that these identities can be mutually exclusive (Sa'ar 1998, 216; McCall 2005) as a result of "the essentialist construction of both national and ethnic or religious boundaries in Israel" (Sa'ar 1998, 216). Individuals can thus have several boundaries to maintain, complicating the process of boundary drawing in Israel (Sa'ar 1998, 216). One of the most dominant identity boundaries in Israel is the one between Jews and Arabs (Bekerman et al. 2009). Hammack and Pilecki (2014) show how social boundaries are drawn through narratives about victimization and justification that support the division of the self from the other: "category constructions become fixed within the dialogue" between Jews and Arabs (2014, 824). These dialogues contain narratives about who is the 'real victim' in the conflict. In their study, Arab Israeli's thereby regard themselves as victims of the 'Jewish-as-aggressor', marking a boundary between themselves and the violent other. Jewish-Israeli's respond to this narrative in marking themselves as righteous victims and Arabs as justified victims – still victims, but not as righteous victims as Jews. Furthermore, they respond to their stigmatization as 'Jewish-as-aggressor' by justifying it as their defence of Arab violence (Hammack and Pilecki 2014, 821).

Spatial boundaries in Israel are most obvious when entering and exiting the country. At the airport, identity is heavily screened, drawing boundaries between who can be seen as trustworthy and who as suspicious (Hammack 2011, 99). Here, any connection with an Arab identity is regarded with suspicion. Again, the Arab-Jewish identity boundaries are most obvious, resulting in exclusion of the Arab minority. Additionally, identity boundaries are materialized in the wall separating Jerusalem from the West Bank. The wall symbolizes the control of Israel over land, including and excluding people on either side of the wall. Furthermore, Israel is spatially divided between Jewish and Arab citizens, many villages or cities are marked as either Jewish or Arab.

Likewise, boundaries are unmade in Israel. As we have seen, boundaries are unmade when de-categorization takes place. The academic literature, however, mainly focusses on the divisions between communities. When boundary unmaking is discussed, it mostly revolves around intergroup dialogue

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<sup>10</sup> From here, written by Marrit Woudwijk

programs and the sharing of space. The former discusses the unmaking of social boundaries in programs wherein Arabs and Jews meet (Hammack and Pilecki 2014). The opportunity to meet the other is provided in an attempt to understand the perspective of the other. The latter, the unmaking of spatial boundaries, takes place in 'shared cities' (or villages) where Arabs and Jews live together, such as Haifa (Falah 1996). However, even in shared cities, spatial segregation within the city is a matter of fact and Jewish and Arab neighbours seem to move in their own spaces (Falah 1996, 855).

## Sharing Jerusalem

Marrit Woudwijk

Sharing land and space between Israel's multiple identities might be most strongly materialized in Jerusalem. Officially a 'reunited city'<sup>11</sup>, East Jerusalem is mostly inhabited by Arab citizens whereas West Jerusalem, is 'Judaized' (Chiodelli 2012, 417) and mostly inhabited by Jews. Until the Six-Day War (1967), Jerusalem was shared by Israel and Jordan. A fence running through the centre divided the city in two halves, obstructing people to move freely from one place to another. Nowadays, movement from the West to the East of Jerusalem is possible, however contested. Most Jews entering East Jerusalem experience high feelings of discomfort by entering 'the space of the other' (Hammack 2011, 65; Chiodelli 2012, 421). Moreover, Arabs too feel uncomfortable in the space of the other, however, their movement inside West Jerusalem is more regularly than movement of Jews to East Jerusalem (Greenberg Raanan and Shoval 2013). Additionally, different religious and ethnic identities claim parts of Jerusalem by locating its churches, mosques and synagogues or in clustering together in different quarters (Greenberg Raanan and Shoval 2013; Pullan 2009).

Although divided, Jerusalem is also the place where identities share space. The identity-based spatial division is in fact an illusion of complete separate life-styles. Both Jewish and Arab students study together at the university (Schiff 2002) and movement in each other's spaces is possible. Moreover, East Jerusalem becomes increasingly Judaized and the Old City is teeming with different identity groups creating a mix of cultures, religions and ethnicities (Chiodelli 2012). In sum, although Jerusalem is geographically separated, different ethnicities, nationalities and religions share space and at the same time try to give meaning to this space in different ways (Erdreich and Rapoport 2006, 123). In Jerusalem, the making and unmaking of identity boundaries becomes materialized and ever present.

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<sup>11</sup>Reunited means that Jerusalem is, since 1967, as a whole, part of Israel and no longer divided between Jordan and Israel. Most Arab and Palestinian citizens would refer to this as the 'occupation' of Jerusalem.



## Jerusalem's Students

Tessa de Jonge

Universities are home to important dynamics of identity formation. It is at universities that young students become adults and are educated, and where they determine their futures. In Jerusalem, it is also the place where young Jews and Arabs come together for the first time (Schiff 2002), and therefore it is where they negotiate their shared futures. In almost all cases, from kindergarten to high school, Arabs and Jews are segregated. At universities, they study together and interact on a daily basis. As the intellectual future of Israel, this interaction between Arabs and Jews at university and their perception of each other, is crucial to understand, as it is a preview of their future interaction.

The Hebrew University (HUJI) is the university of Jerusalem. Its main campus is on Mount Scopus, one of the most contested places in Jerusalem. As Erdreich et al. (2006, 124) explain, the campus on Mount Scopus overlooks parts of the city that are of great value to Arabs and parts that are of great value to Jews. This location alone makes the university interesting and relevant in researching identity boundary drawing in Jerusalem. Additionally, the university provides housing facilities that are mostly used by the Arab students, while most Jewish students live in apartments in the west of the city. Nevertheless, at HUJI students of different ethnic, religious and national backgrounds study together in an environment influencing processes of identity formation. It is thus at HUJI that the intersection of social identities, boundary making and unmaking processes, and inclusion and exclusion become observable practices. To get a first glimpse at what this looks like, we now turn to the chapter on HUJI's Jewish Israeli students.

### 3. Fear of the Other

Marrit Woudwijk

*“I’m not afraid to exclude people from my identity. I need another person to define myself”. Slowly Efrat stubs the cigarette in her hand in the ashtray on the table. She takes a small sip of her coffee, which must be cold by now – we have been sitting at the deserted terrace for more than two hours. Efrat, a student Political Science and active in the university branch of the right-wing Likud party, would not miss a chance to share her opinions with me. The fierce look in her eyes underlines everything she says. Then she turns her bright eyes towards me. “You see, when I sit with an Arab, I want him to exclude himself from my culture. We can converse and we can learn from each other, but we are not the same”.*

In the above, Efrat shows how we need another person to define ourselves, how identity is constructed in relation to the people we are surrounded with. In other words, we are, what we are not. In this process of identification, language, speech, stereotypes, and narratives are tools with which groups and individuals alike categorize society. At the same time, physical spaces reflect and underline these identities, shaping the movements of people and separating them physically. In the context of Jerusalem, this chapter will show how Jewish students make use of above mentioned tools to draw boundaries, but also to break down these identity boundaries. Additionally, this chapter will discuss how these dynamics take place from a majority position Jewish students have in Israeli society. The social boundaries in combination with spatially separated lives and different live-styles, result in an “invisible wall”, making real connections between them and Arab students almost impossible.

#### Being Jewish: more than a religion

To understand how Jewish students make and unmake identity boundaries, it is essential to first understand how Jewish students relate to their identity and what it means in itself to be Jewish. Many Jewish students express the complexity of Jewishness, which is naturally defined by religion, but which is much more than just religion. Eventually, most of them describe Judaism as a tradition, a culture and a folk. “I really don’t see Judaism as a religion. Of course it is – it has rituals and stuff like this, whatever. But for the most part for me it’s a culture and it’s a tradition”. I watch Eli preparing a bowl of baba ganoush, an Israeli side dish. Carefully he separates the skin of the aubergine from its soft inside and mixes it with lemon juice. Eli identifies as neither secular nor religious and regards his Jewish identity as more than just religious. The sense of belonging to a greater folk with its own language, culture and

history is for many students a significant part of their identification. Although a Jewish identity is in the first place rooted in religion, nowadays it does not require a religious background or interest. Rather, we should understand Judaism as an ethnicity, or as a nationality, since Judaism strives to connect its ethnic identity to the borders of a nation state, therefore wishing to dominate the nation state (Kimmerling 2001, 190), in what Eriksen (2010) called ethno nationalism. Judaism thus balances on the intersection between religion, ethnicity and nationality.

However, not all Jewish students regard their Jewish background as a highly significant part of their identity. Some students would emphasize that they feel more Israeli than Jewish, and that being Jewish is not their main identity marker. Nevertheless, also these students were aware of their Jewish background and attached feelings of belonging to past Jewish generations. As Noa, a Jewish student with a Lithuanian background expressed, “being Jewish is thinking about the past, where my family came from, and being Israeli is like my life now. My identity is Israeli. I do Israeli stuff. I don’t do Jewish stuff”.

Whether the students would regard their Jewishness as a significant part of their identity or as something they are born into without any actual relation to their contemporary lives, they all were aware of being part of a greater folk. It is what we can understand as the ‘imagined community’ (Anderson 1983). The students do not know their ancestors or the entire Jewish community, but they do feel tied to it through cultural similarities and shared ancestors. It is imagined in that they will never meet all the individual members and a community because of the ‘horizontal comradeship’ within the group (Anderson 1983, 7). This is important to understand, since students regard their membership of the Jewish community as an inescapable part of who they are. As one student put it: “I cannot take it out of me”. They thereby take a primordialist or essentialist stance towards their Jewish identity (Demmers 2012), which in turn influences boundary drawing processes. Seeing themselves as essentially different from Arab students results in a clear understanding of ‘us’ and ‘them’. Naturally, lines between identities are drawn, complicating identity boundary unmaking.

Sometimes, Jewish students would have difficulties discerning their Jewish identity from their Israeli identity. They would, unintentionally, refer to Jewish culture or the Jewish folk as ‘Israeli’, thereby temporarily forgetting the multivocality of Israeli identity and inherently excluding Arabs from it. This stems from the position Jewish students take up in Israeli society as a majority. Amy, a secular student in social work, said to me:

*“if I think about being Israeli, I think about being Jewish. I don’t really know how people who are Arab Israeli define themselves and how it connects, because Israel is a Jewish state by definition. And our flag is the star David and our anthem is about Judaism. For me it’s easier in that way. Like, it comes together”*

Amy describe how her Jewish identity fits well with her Israeli identity, contrary to Israeli minorities such as Druses, Bedouins, Ethiopians and Arabs. Although all of them are seen as minorities, it is mostly the Arabs that are regarded as not fitting within the Israeli state.

The dichotomy between Jews and Arabs regarding their societal position is embedded in the social institutions of Israel, such as the military service – an obligation for Jewish Israeli's, a choice for Arab Israeli's and orthodox Jews. Almost all Jewish students fulfilled their military duty and if they did not because of religious or health reasons, they did a replacing national service. Jewish students see the military service as an important part of Israeli identity and socialization into this identity. As Lucy explained, to not do the service means that “your Israeli identity comes into question. You don't have that entry card into the community”. This process of socialization strengthens the majoritarian Jewish-Israeli norm while excluding Arabs (Kimmerling 2001,215). The next paragraph will show how the military service influences identity boundary processes between Jewish and Arab students.

It needs to be understood that the Jewish identity is not internally homogeneous. Jewish students categorize themselves according to, roughly, two scales: a religious scale and a political scale. Both scales are identity markers and are often taken to explain someone's stance towards minority groups. Left-wing oriented Jews are seen as highly empathic towards Arabs, whereas right-wing oriented Jews are seen as more distant and hostile towards Arabs. At the same time, secular people are seen as more open towards others, whereas religious people are seen as more closed and within their own groups. These categorizations are used to quickly screen someone's identity, however, it needs to be clear that opinions naturally depends the individual.

## Glass Plain

“To Jerusalem your city, in mercy you shall return”, Rachmiel solemnly recites the Talmud, a religious book, while we overlook the Old City of Jerusalem from the rooftop of a university building. His Tzitzit, knotted fringes that symbolize his Jewish religious identity, sway softly around his legs. Three times a day he has to speak out the words as part of a daily prayer. For him, the words signify the Aliya<sup>12</sup> he made as a child from the United States to Israel and which brought him to Jerusalem. As a religious Jew, it is symbolically important to him to live in Israel. However, Rachmiel is aware of the fact that he is not the only one who worships the land of Israel. Competing narratives revolve around who the land belongs

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<sup>12</sup> Aliya is ‘returning to the homeland’, namely Israel, of Jewish people. The ‘Law of return’ facilitates migration for Jews from all over the world to Israel.

to. Is the land of Israel part of an Arab community that lived there until the state of Israel was constituted in 1948? Or do Jews have the right to return here after being in exile for thousands of years? These questions reflect competing narratives of belonging and relate to different identities. Narratives can therefore be used to make and unmake identity boundaries. This paragraph discusses how such narratives, but also labels, stereotypes and language, are used to negotiate identity boundaries. As we will show, the unmaking of social boundaries is largely obstructed by a strong fear of the other.

Narratives, in the first place, consolidate boundaries between Jews and Arabs. They are effective in defining the Jewish identity. The sense of what it means to be Jewish is partly constructed by narratives underlining Jewish history, such as being the offspring of Holocaust survivors and a folk that has been persecuted for thousands of years (Hammack and Pilecki 2014). It is this what unites Jews: “The essence of us is being a victim”, one of the students said to me. This narrative is reflected in contemporary life. Several students expressed how Israel is the only place they can be truly safe as a Jew and do not experience anti-Semitism or discrimination towards their Jewish identity. This results in a hardening of Jewish identity, of which their history of persecution is used as a strong identity marker (Newman 2008, 75).

Ironically, while most of the students feel safe in Israel because of their position as a majority, many of them expressed a fear of not being able to live as a majority or becoming a victim again. “In Israel, there is kind of a fear, that the second we will do that situation, all the Arabs will come and swallow us, and there will be no Jews anymore”, Efrat explained to me, when we discussed the possibility of opening the Israeli borders for Arabs, as proposed in a one-state solution to the conflict. The consequence of such a scenario would be that there would not be an exclusively Jewish state, something that many students fear. “I do not want to be a minority again”, one of the students said to me. Explicitly or implicitly, most students wish to hold this majoritarian position. Appadurai (2006, 51) refers to this as a ‘predatory identity’, an identity that understands itself as a threatened majority by other, proximate social categories, evolving out of the idea that their very identity should be linked exclusively with the identity of the nation. This victim-narrative is important to understand, since it presupposes the idea that others, minorities, can be a threat to the majoritarian position (Appadurai 2006). It is in this case mainly the Arab population that is seen as a threat, since they are seen as the other that also wants to lay claim to the country. The proximate social category is thus the Arab population, who is inherently seen as a threat to the self, therefore drawing boundaries between the self and the other. Whereas Appadurai points out how predatory identities can propagate ethnic cleansing, it should be very clear this is not the case in Israel. Identities can thus be predatory in the sense that they feel threatened in their majoritarian position, without turning to mass-murdering.

Additionally, strong narratives concerning the Arab or Palestinian other, contradict this feeling of being safe in Israel. “That is what they teach us from a very young age, to be afraid”, Yael told me when we were having a stroll at the Shuk, the indoor market. It seemed to bother her, since it influences her the perception of the other, but at the same time she realized she could not let go of this fear. Dominant within this fear is the narrative of being in danger, specifically in the presence of Arabs, among which there might always be a potential terrorist. Amy, who works with Arabs and Palestinians, struggles with the dissonance between her personal relations with them and the narrative of danger she grew up with. As she would tell, there would always be a 5% of her that would be that “they might be a terrorist someday”. The narrative resulting in fear, creates a strong boundary in Jewish-Arab interaction. Following Autesserre (2012, 5), narratives “orient how we act upon our environment” and thus shape how Jewish students react upon the presence of Arabs. It complicates interaction, since there will always be a fragment of distrust. The distrust is fuelled by the recurring waves of violence or stabbings in Israel and especially Jerusalem, in which inter-personal tensions would rise. Such waves confirm this narrative and justify the fear for the Arab or Palestinian other. Additionally, the obligation of the military service strengthens the idea that Israel should be protected from these terrorists. Several students expressed how their time in the army made their view on reality blurry, because of their search for terrorists and enemies. Although they expressed they now have a more realistic view on the situation, their time in the army reinforced the fear, creating boundaries between them and Arabs students. Since Arabs are excluded from taking part in the service<sup>13</sup>, the national and ethnic boundaries of the Jewish identity are reinforced (Kimmerling 2011, 2015).

Jewish students are thus aware of a certain kind of danger, which is translated in a fear of Arabs, who are seen as a threat to their majoritarian position and personal safety. Nevertheless, Israel is perceived as the safest place to live as a Jew, stemming from the fact that here, they are in control as the majority. Their societal position is thus perceived as a protection to their personal safety.

To unmake boundaries in interaction with Arab friends, colleagues or classmates, Jewish students are cautious concerning the topics brought up. “And of course we’re not speaking about the conflict. Because speaking about the conflict will mean that he justifies the fact that people are killing each other, and I justify the fact that we are here and etcetera”, Efrat explained to me the interaction with her Arab colleagues in the restaurant she works in. To create an ambiance of trust, they avoid sensitive topics such as the Palestinian-Israeli conflict or their military service and instead look for common grounds between them. Efrat sees how her narrative would be in conflict with her Arab friend’s narrative. Several informants tried to shift away from these conflicting narratives by emphasizing the

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<sup>13</sup> Arabs may voluntarily participate in the army. However, since this would entail they would be asked to fight against or patrol and arrest ‘their own people’, barely any Arab takes part in the service.

fact that in the end, they are all human beings. By referring to their common foundation, they unmade the boundaries between them and Arab students (Lamont and Bail 2007; Wimmer 2008), since the label serves to de-categorize. Emphasizing similarities simplifies interaction and therefore unmakes identity boundaries. However, at the same time this labelling of the other as a human being seems to be obstructed by stereotypes of the other. What exactly are these stereotypes, and how are they experienced?

“Every Arab is a terrorist, that’s maybe the main stereotype” Lucy said to me in an interview. Besides the terrorist-stereotype, students would stereotype Arabs as proud, fundamentally religious, poor, very loyal to their family, fuelled with hatred and violent. Both these negative and positive stereotypes serve to identify groups and make differences between them explicit, thereby drawing boundaries (Jenkins 2014, 152). However, many students emphasized that stereotypes do not reflect their own opinion, expressing a certain discomfort by describing them. My roommate and student in Judaism, Ayala, felt so uncomfortable towards stereotypes that she did not want to talk about it during an interview, “because it took me a lot of time to disconnect myself from the stereotypes, so I don’t want to talk about it”. By disconnecting herself from stereotypes and refusing to think in stereotypical categories, she unmade a boundary between her and the Arab other. She did not want to be part of the system of categorizing and therefore indirectly moved away from emphasising differences, thus unmaking boundaries.

Besides narratives and stereotypes, language is an important tool to construct and deconstruct identity boundaries between Jewish and Arab students. Yael, a critical student in education, volunteers in a project in which both Arabs and Jewish students participate. She manages a team of students that teach children in an after-school centre. She described the barrier she feels between her and Arab students: “I do not know completely who they are, because I do not speak their language. I miss a big part of who they are”. The language is not only an essential part of someone’s identity – therefore marking an obvious difference between groups of people - it also carries a meaning. Tomer described how he as a young boy considered Arabic to be a gross language, because he would connect it to the stereotype of the Arab terrorist. Moreover, language constructs a social barrier in the sense that Arab and Hebrew students do not share the same mother tongue. Therefore communicating in another language is obligated, always naturally constructing a barrier for one the two, or for both. Jewish students are not obligated to learn Arabic, and only some have learned it during their army service.

Jewish students react on the language barrier in three different ways. First, several students would make clear how the language barrier influences the formation of groups in university. It is most comfortable speaking your mother tongue with those who also do, resulting in Jewish students grouping together with other Hebrew-speaking Jewish students. Here, the language barrier is reacted upon in

constructing and hardening boundaries between Jewish and Arab students by forming groups. Second, a reaction could be to use a neutral language in order to overcome the gap and to unmake identity boundaries. Eli explained how he would talk English with his Arab friends to overcome tensions:

*“Even if they talk Hebrew fluently, sometimes talking Hebrew for them will be something very insulting. ‘Why do we have to talk in Hebrew and not in Arabic?’ So some of them – I just going to meet somebody who lives next to me – we will talk English”*

By using a neutral language, Eli and his friends consciously unmake boundaries between them. A third reaction can be to make use of both languages in a Jewish-Arab setting, during which there would be a translation in both languages. This reaction, however, is not used in day-to-day interactions, but rather in set-up meetings or conversation classes between Arab and Jewish students.

Narratives, stereotypes and language thus serve to both make and unmake identity boundaries between Jewish and Arab students. Are the efforts enough to absolutely unmake boundaries between Jewish and Arab students? Is the exchange of cultural values and the labelling of the other as a human being enough for an interaction where a shared identity is more important than the differences dividing nationally or culturally opposed students?

According to Lucy, who grew up abroad and always had friends from very different backgrounds, it is not. She explained to me how she wished to be friends with her Arab colleague in the hospital, with whom she shares the same interests and humour, but from whom she feels too distant to actually be friends. “I don’t know how to explain it beside this kind of invisible boundary. I kind of look at it as a glass plain, that you just want to break through and you just can’t”. Lucy told me how she met her Arab colleague during a bus ride once and started talking about other things than the hospital, which felt somewhat uncomfortable for both and moreover, as not accepted by their surroundings. It is exactly how Layla, a student who coordinates conversation meetings between Arab and Jewish students described the purpose of their meetings: as attempting to break “the invisible wall”. Accordingly, Reem, who finished her first degree in politics a year ago, would describe the difficulties of the conversation gatherings she took part in. The narratives of Jewish and Arab women were too different to absolutely unmake the boundaries between them. They could achieve understanding among participants that their narrative was not the only one, but a true understanding of or approach to the other was obstructed by these converting narratives.

Jewish students thus realize the existence of a boundary between them, and sometimes even the need to break it down. However, even in organized meetings or personal contact the boundary is felt. Rather, such efforts seem to thin the identity boundary, facilitating interaction by ‘meeting the



other half-way'. In using neutral language or avoiding sensitive topics, the wall crumbles off, piece by piece, but never completely disappears. The "us and them" seem too well defined to completely unmake boundaries on a social level (Lamont and Bail 2007, 19). Although denied or temporarily forgotten, the language differences stay, the opposite narratives still exist, stereotypes do not disappear and there will always be this tiny bit of fear. In other words, the "invisible wall" between the students seems to be impossible to break. To thoroughly understand what this invisible wall means to interaction between Jewish and Arab students, we now turn to the spatial component of the processes of making and unmaking boundaries.

## **"We cannot see the other. We physically cannot see him"**

Lucy points towards the cluster of houses beneath us, at least twenty meters lower than the place we are sitting at, a green oasis known as the university's botanical garden. The poor-looking flats contrast with the yellow hills of the West Bank in the background. I ask her if she has ever been to this neighbourhood, which is known as an Arab neighbourhood. With a frown that seems to say 'stupid question' she looks at me. "I can't. I just can't, because I'm Israeli". Carefully she opens a bottle of soda. Without result – she spills some on her hands. "I think I would never enter any Arab place", Lucy continues, undisturbed. "Some of them you can't, physically. Like there's borders or whatever. But mostly you just – what do you have to do there? Why would you? I just wouldn't go there. You feel like less comfortable when you enter the Arab signs and you're just like be more careful, let's be more attentive to where I'm going".

Lucy described accurately how most Jewish students feel about the Arab neighbourhoods of Jerusalem, which are mainly situated in East Jerusalem. The feeling of discomfort combined with the fact that they do not see the need to go to Arab places, makes them normally avoid East Jerusalem. The division of space in Jerusalem materializes the identity boundaries between Jews and Arabs in physical spaces, simultaneously reinforcing these boundaries by strongly attaching identities to these places. This paragraph discusses how Jewish Israeli students spatially make and unmake identity boundaries by dividing space, within Jerusalem as well as at the university, and mainly make use of 'their space'. Many do not contest the spatial boundaries, and if so, a real unmaking seems to be impossible.

As we showed, the road where the former border used to be seems to be still very effective for splitting the city in two. Most students express that they would rather not cross this line into East Jerusalem. "But walking in East Jerusalem might not feel so safe to me. I used to do it, and I never felt like it is a good idea. I didn't like the looks that I'm getting" Eli said in an interview. It is mostly the idea

of intruding the 'space of the other' and a strong fear that impedes students from entering East Jerusalem. When asked for the reasons behind the fear, Yael exclaimed: "To be hurt! Physically. That's it. I'm afraid to die, I'm afraid to be stabbed"

Besides the fact that most Jewish students fear this part of the city, they also simply do not see a reason to go there, since their social and professional life is not situated here. This is also the case for the ultra-orthodox areas, because they have nothing to go for. This way, different people move in different spaces, living separate lives in different areas. As Yael said, "we cannot see the other. We physically cannot see him". The spatial segregation is the result of the meaning given to these spaces, as well as it "forms the collective and territorial identity of the residents" (Greenberg Raanan and Shoval 2013, 28). By mentally mapping the different spaces, the students strengthen segregation by attaching a spatial component to these feelings of social distance (Greenberg Raanan and Shoval 2013, 39). The mental boundary students act upon therefore reifies the differences between Jews and Arabs (Trudeau 2006, 437).

A marking point for where the space of the other begins is the Damascus Gate, shown on the picture. It is a place nearly all Jewish students avoid out of fear to be attacked. The Damascus Gate is the northern gate of the Old City and is situated on the old border between East and West Jerusalem. It is known as a place where stabbings take place and as the place that marks the transition from the Jewish area in the Arab area. When



*Picture 1: Damascus Gate*

David, a student in Biology, and I sat on his balcony, I showed him this picture of the gate. I wanted to ask him how he felt about this place and how he would describe being there. Ironically, David did not recognize the gate on the picture and thought it was a castle in Bethlehem. He had never been there out of fear to be attacked.

Some students made clear how they cross these boundaries, therefore contesting the existence of the boundaries. Eli made clear how he occasionally goes into East Jerusalem to eat hummus and Efrat tried to get an apartment in an Arab neighbourhood. They did not want to accept the boundaries and instead wanted to share the spaces of Jerusalem. However, the feeling of discomfort in East Jerusalem would always get back to them, they would never feel completely at ease in these places – whether it is for eating hummus or renting an apartment.

This was much felt when Tomer took me on a walk into the Arab neighbourhoods close to the city center. As a law student, Tomer sometimes needs to go this area, because of the district court and the department of justice situated here. He made clear he felt at ease walking in the streets, which gave

me the opportunity to ask him questions about the place and his experiences. His mood changed when we stumbled upon a wall full of graffiti where Arabic words and small images formed a colourful whole. Due to his intelligence job during his military service, Tomer knows some basic Arabic. The words on the wall, promoting the extinguishing of Jews and the state of Israel, made him feel very uncomfortable. The words on the wall made him want to leave the place, since he did not feel like his presence was accepted there. It shows how he tried to unmake spatial boundaries to go into the Arab neighbourhood, but feelings of discomfort came back to him, therefore confirming the experienced spatial boundaries.

When spatial boundaries were unmade, Jewish students often made clear how they would hide their obvious Jewish identity, by taking off their kippah or talking English instead of Hebrew. They diminish their identity performance out of fear of being recognized by the other as Jewish. As we have seen, performance of identity is in constant interaction with a public. Performances can convince people to act and moreover, they reinforce identity boundaries (Klein, Reicher, Spears 2007). By diminishing identity performances, Jewish students do not make the boundary between them and their Arab environment salient, therefore the audience is less able to react upon their presence.

The university, on the other hand, is generally recognized as a shared and public space, since both Arab and Jewish students study here. Movement through that space, however, is done in quite distinct groups. Walking around university, one can see Arab as well as Jewish students moving in groups. All of the students would express how interaction between Jewish and Arab students is rare, and how Arab students are enclosed in groups. Jack said about Arab students: "they sit together, they're in their own groups. They're very closed". Most Jewish students would recognize how they themselves also gather together in groups of Jewish Israeli's. They also made clear that secular and religious Jews tend to form groups, but mixing between such groups is frequent and happens naturally. Jewish students express different reasons of the grouping together of Arab and Jewish students. They express how they would not understand Arabic and how the age difference, as a consequence of Jewish military duty, creates gaps. Moreover, they express cultural differences based on religion and cultural heritage, that would obstruct contact.

The consequence of grouping together is that different groups 'occupy' different spaces within university, in what Trudeau (2006) explained as the stabilization of our instable social worlds. By fixing identities to certain places, identities become more consistent and coherent (Trudeau 2006, 437). Students at the HUJI engage in this by dividing university space among each other. Several informants made clear how the benches in front of the main kiosk and the stones in front of the entrance of the forum are regarded and recognized as 'Arab spaces'. Additionally, certain corners of the class room would be recognized as Arab places, where Jewish students would normally not sit. Noa, Amy and Lucy all made clear how they tried to break this status quo by sitting next to the Arab students in class or use

the 'Arab benches'. However, these were exceptional cases as they made clear themselves. It was the reaction of their surroundings, or the difficulty of making contact, that impeded them to constructively unmake this boundary. The unwritten rule of spatial division therefore strengthens identity boundaries and diminishes contact between Arab and Jewish students. Jewish students did not discern Jewish places, which might be explained by their majoritarian position. They do not have to claim spaces to feel comfortable, contrary to minorities, which will be made clear in the next chapter.

The processes of boundary making and unmaking that Jewish students engage in, are thus part of a complex dynamic. The existence of spatial boundaries complicates the unmaking of social boundaries between Jewish and Arab students. Because they move in their own spaces, both within the city and at the university, interaction becomes less frequent and less obvious. The university seems to create the ideal environment for meeting the other, since students are obliged to study in the same classes and make use of the same space. Although students are occupied with the will and need to unmake identity boundaries with the Arab students they study, work or volunteer with, even here invisible boundaries seem to obstruct this interaction. The existing social boundaries between students make them reify these boundaries in space, which in turn consolidates the social boundaries even more. Unmaking, then, is not a necessary tool for Jewish students to feel comfortable in a city and a country where they are part of the majority. Their societal position provides them the luxury to move in their own group and country, without needing to unmake boundaries with the minority. Accepting the boundaries might then be preferred over vainly attempting to unmake them. Moreover, their fear of losing their majoritarian position to the minority, obstructs the effort of boundary unmaking even more. The invisible walls they seem to face, turns them back to their own communities. But it is not just the Jewish students that take part in the process of boundary making and unmaking. Let us now turn to the perspective of the university's largest minority group: Arab students.

## 4. Normalising the salt in your coffee

Tessa de Jonge

**“We’re all Palestinian, that’s for sure.”<sup>14</sup>**

*“That’s an Arab. Jew. Also, Jew. Arab. Arab. Hm, Jew. Definitely Jew! He’s an Arab”. It is our first week in Jerusalem and I am on the bus with Arnold. We are on our way to university and in an effort to show me he can tell whether people are Arab or Jewish, Arnold is whispering these labels to me. The bus is crowded on this rainy day. I am scared people can hear us and might get upset. But Arnold does not seem to have this fear. The grin on his face says ‘see, I told you I could tell!’ Still unable to feel comfortable in situations like these, I think ‘welcome to Jerusalem’.*

While Brill might proudly argue in the title quote that ‘they’ are all Palestinians, this identification is up for debate. Some, like Brill, feel that anyone who is from the land that was Palestine before the creation of the state of Israel, is a Palestinian, regardless of their passport. Others, like Mario, feel that Palestinians live in the Palestinian territories and people with an Israeli passport are nothing other than Israelis. Being a Palestinian is thus up for debate and not self-evident. This is because identities are constructed by both oneself and others. The differences in who is constructing the identity result in the same identity being seen in opposite ways. To the contrary, ‘Arab’, as an ethnic identity, is much more essentialized in everyday discourse in Israel, including people from many countries in the region, who have different nationalities. Being Arab is regarded as undeniable and obvious, in the primordialist way that ethnicity is often perceived, and because of this, people ascribe certain characteristics to Arabs. These characteristics are of course based on stereotypes that Arab themselves might not always agree with. Both Amal and Sarah have expressed multiple times they wonder ‘what an Arab is supposed to look like?’. Nevertheless, ‘Arab’ is most prominently used in everyday conversation by both Arab and Jewish students and fits the context of our research best. Therefore, we use ‘Arab’ when referring to this subpopulation of students.

What then do we know about this ‘Arab student’? For the Arab minority in Israel in general Stendel (1996, 5) argues: “The Arabs of Israel are a minority that had once been a majority”. Due to living in an Israeli state, they are no longer fully part of the Arab majority in the Middle Eastern region, and neither are they a part of the Jewish majority in Israel. Living in an ethnic nation-state, without belonging to the ethnicity that defines it, results in “a state that places them outside its definition of

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<sup>14</sup> Interview with Brill

whom it collectively represents” (Rouhana 1997, 107). Rouhana (1997, 8) explains that Arabs in Israel are aware of the negative consequences this has for their rights and enforcement of citizenship. However, this is a controversial position, because even though they are aware they are being treated unequally, they are simultaneously aware of being in a better position than the Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza. Therefore, most Arabs in Israel only see their Israeli identity as something pragmatic, rather than as an identity of belonging. For this they turn to their identity as Arabs or Palestinians (Rouhana 1997, 126). As a consequence, Arabs in Israel are in a position of in-between-ness: “The Arabs in Israel find themselves on the margin of the [Palestinian] movement much as they are on the margin of the Israeli state” (Rouhana 1997, 78).

Arabs in Israel are thus aware of the consequences of being a minority. This goes for Arabs at university too. Maysa, a second-year student, argues that Arab students have “hurdles” they need to overcome as a result of them being a minority, which puts them in a different position than their Jewish peers. It frustrates her that they encounter more or different issues at university due to being a minority.

Besides this, it is important to keep in mind that almost all Arab students at HUJI are either from Jerusalem or from the north of Israel. When growing up, the Arab students from the north have generally interacted more with Jewish Israelis than the ones growing up in Jerusalem. This is because villages and small towns in the North are, more often than not, mixed, resulting in occasional interaction, while the Arab and Jewish communities in Jerusalem live much more separated. This difference in amount of interaction can influence their boundary practices, as we will see in the next section on social boundaries.

## “There’s always some [invisible] wall between us”<sup>15</sup>

“Greetings from occupied Jerusalem!”, Brill exclaims. How is that for a postcard? Brill and I are standing on the roof of the Mount Scopus campus, overlooking the city. Though Brill appears to be joking by his dramatic arm gesture aimed at the city, I know he is in fact quite serious. Brill has only referred to the city as one “occupied Jerusalem”, while in every day conversation the city is almost always divided in ‘West’ and ‘East’. This illustrates how important the use of words is in a place like Jerusalem. Words indicate belonging of space and of identity, and because of this, they can be used to make and unmake identity boundaries. By using labels such as “the occupation” instead of Israel, and “pigs of the state” instead of IDF<sup>16</sup> soldiers, Arab students draw the boundary between themselves and the other.

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<sup>15</sup> Interview with Jasmine

<sup>16</sup> Israeli Defense Forces

Furthermore, Arab students use narratives to indicate a boundary between them and the Jewish-Israeli other. There is the narrative of belonging, which states that the Israeli state is illegitimate, that Palestine has a right to exist and that 'we belong here'. During my first meeting with an Arab student, Arnold, he immediately told me "it's my land" explaining that he felt he belonged there and that this is his historical right. Furthermore, as he told me that he feels the Arab community has more potential than they are showing, he kept repeating "we need to show them". In other words, he kept using 'us versus them' rhetoric. These labels and narratives construct the borders of an Arab or Palestinian identity, and these borders are in turn performed. Social media expressions are examples of these performances. On Facebook or Instagram, Arnold, Johnny and Ahmed can be found posting stories, links or images about Arab culture and history, or expressing their emotions about events that concern the Palestinian people. There is also Brill, who even poses with a Palestinian flag on his profile picture. By doing this, they perform their social identity and therefore draw the borders around it (Schechner 2002).

Perhaps the clearest performance of identity is the language spoken. Through speaking Arabic in Jerusalem or at the university, one immediately expresses their Arabic identity. As most Jewish Israelis do not understand Arabic, it automatically excludes them, as we have mentioned in chapter 3. As a minority that often feels excluded, Arab students use speaking Arabic in a place where not all people might appreciate that, to avoid feeling excluded themselves by excluding other.

Furthermore, language marks a certain pride, and 'inward loyalty'. At the rooftop of the Mount Scopus campus, while I calmly enjoy the sun, Brill is the opposite of relaxed when he declares that he strongly dislikes Arabs who speak a mix of Hebrew, Arabic and English, as he feels they disown their identity. Instead, he argues, "we should all speak Arabic", which indicates he wants to reify the boundaries surrounding 'his' group through its language.

However, we can also find language being used to unmake boundaries. Because the official language of the Hebrew University is Hebrew, courses in English are quite rare, and courses in Arabic are non-existent. As a minority, my informants all study in a second or even third language, which potentially significantly influences their grades. Sarah's English is much better than her Hebrew because her family lives all over the globe. Imagine her response when she took a class in English for the first time: "I didn't realize how much it affects me until that class. I could have gotten (...) better grades than what I'm getting. I'm studying so extra hard and I'm not getting good grades, because of this". This is one of the "hurdles" that Arab students as a minority have to overcome, as Maysa told me. Because Hebrew often does not feel comfortable for Arab students and Jewish students do not know Arabic, English serves as a language with less subtexts and with an equal starting point for everybody. Therefore, Arab students at times prefer to use English, as a neutral language, to partly break down the barrier

between them and others. In creating inclusion, English is also a way to contest the feeling of being excluded and one of the most common ways for Arab students to contest their position as a minority.

Another hurdle Arab students have to overcome as a minority, is the age gap between them and Jewish students. Where Arab students mostly start university right after high school, Jewish students go to the army first and usually travel after that. This age difference leads to Arab students thinking they will get less results or will not perform as well as Jewish students. This is a stereotype that grew to Arab students actually believing it, according to Maysa: “I thought I’m less because of that”. Furthermore, they feel their position as a minority leads to them having less opportunities after university than Jewish students. Brill responds to this with frustration, as he gets a bit angry when saying “you also get more chances, because you’re Jewish. And they get more high-ranking jobs”. However, others actively contest this, like Maysa, who aims at starting an initiative to make Arabs feel more included at university. Where she usually is quite timid, she sits up and gets excited when explaining it: “we have to ask for our rights. (...) I think that we should have our own forum in Arabic, that represents the Arab students, because most of the Arabs don’t know what they lack”. This is an example of attempting to empower the position of Arab student at university, which does however also reify the boundaries around them as it focusses only on the Arab students.

Despite this, it is also important to mention that not everyone feels excluded at university. Arnold, for example, responds quite indifferent when we discuss this, shrugs and simply says that all students came here to study, and therefore, are no different. By stressing they are “just a person”, or a human, or a student, Arab students unmake other boundaries and include both Jewish and Arab students. In this context, language highlights a shared identity, namely that of students, who all sometimes speak English at university. These shared identities allow for boundaries to be broken down in interaction. In addition to this, rhetoric also plays an important role in unmaking boundaries by, for instance, distinguishing between Jewish people and Zionism, and by explicitly stating that religion is not relevant in this, or by distinguishing between Israeli people and the actions of their government. Arab students often stress their desire to contribute to the establishment of shared identities, also by dismantling stereotypes.

In response to the stereotype that ‘all Arabs are dangerous or terrorists’, some Arab students try to break it down, one interaction at a time. When I ask Sarah if this frustrates her, she shakes her head and says that she wants to “let people know ‘wait, you don’t have to be afraid of me’, one person at a time (...) show him that he doesn’t have to be mean to you, because you’re just a person, like him”. Diana refers to this process, taking place at university, as “unlearning” the barriers that they, as children, learned separated them from Jewish Israelis. This is unmaking social identity boundaries through mostly one-on-one interaction, where it appears to be easier to unmake boundaries. Trying to unmake the



boundaries between them is the micro-level effort of a minority to contest the image of a threat that the majority has of them (Appadurai 2006). When students move in groups for example, it appears harder to unmake the boundary, to which we will also come back in the next section on spatial boundaries.

So, while shared identities allow for boundaries to be broken down in interaction, this breaking down is only partial, as it is also evident that there is a limit to this interaction. When asked about this, most informants find it hard to explain this limit. They agree it is something that cannot be seen, but “you can feel it”, as Waad said. Arab students for example explain they are friends with Jewish students, but never truly best friends. Regardless of their interaction, the division is always there. Johnny used a hand gesture to draw a border when explaining it, and Jasmine referred to it as an “invisible wall”, but we also know it as the ‘glass plain’ from chapter 3. It simply is always there, amidst the processes of making and unmaking social identity boundaries, apparently impossible to be taken down. In interaction, it can be deconstructed, but this is always partially, temporarily, or on individual basis.

Arab students also illustrate how unmaking one boundary, can result in making another. This is the boundary drawing process Arab students experience within their ‘own’ community. When Arab students are in the process of trying to break down the wall in front of their faces, which is the wall between them and the Jewish other, at the same time the wall behind them, between them and the rest of the Arab community, is being reified and raised. Diana explained that when she asked a friend why they, the Arab students, did not just try to learn more about Jewish history, this friend referred to her as “a good Arab”. This concept is meant as an insult, referring to Arabs who “betray” the Arab or Palestinian community by reaching out to the Jewish one, a process that is referred to as “normalisation”. This leads to a feeling of in-between-ness. At the beginning of this chapter, we explained how Rouhana (1997, 78) argues that this feeling of in-between-ness is experienced by the Arab community in Israel in general. In our research, this feeling found its way into almost all interviews with Arab students, who sometimes almost got emotional in their frustration with it. Therefore, it deserves closer examination.

For example, when looking at this the other way around, Arab students sometimes also feel they turn their backs on the Israeli society in which they live their daily lives, like Diana who says she does not want to ‘flaunt’ her Arab identity, or perform her ‘minor differences’, as Appadurai would call this, in order not to upset her Jewish peers. This again leaves them with a feeling of being in between. What is this void of identity, a feeling of being in between? Is this another intersection of different identities, but without its own label to define it? Or is this liminality of identity? When you are neither this, nor that, what are you? As Sarah metaphorically puts this: “it’s this dissonance, you know. This huge dissonance inside of you. ‘Okay, I’m this and I’m that, wait a minute, they don’t work together?’

(...) It's just like adding salt to your coffee. I like salt. I like coffee. But no!" This dissonance Sarah mentions is a great term to address the dynamic we attempt to explain. McCall's (2005) categorical approach within intersectionality helps to better understanding this. When using this approach to focus on the relation between the Arab/Palestinian and Israeli identities, we see this is a relation of mutual exclusivity as these identities directly oppose one another. Therefore, the dissonance some Arab students experience makes sense. They do not feel two overlapping identities, but instead feel trapped between the walls of two mutually exclusive identities. Like Ghorashi (2005), Arab students experience feelings of confusing with this, like Mario who almost desperately exclaimed: "I'm not this and I'm [also] not this. (...) I am neither!" We will return to the feeling of in-between-ness in this chapter's conclusion. The social aspect of identity boundaries is not the only way to approach this boundary drawing process. Therefore, we first turn to spatial identity boundaries.

## "It's all occupied. It's all ours." <sup>17</sup>

Damascus gate, a mark of the mental boundary between the western and eastern part<sup>18</sup>, is the entrance to the Old City with the most security and the most violent incidents between Israeli soldiers and Arabs. The two young soldiers posing in picture 2 are part of this daily scene, where young Arab men are thoroughly watched by IDF soldiers, as they hang out by the Damascus gate stairs. It is confrontations like these that frustrate and at times scare the Arab



*Picture 2: Two IDF soldiers by Damascus Gate*

students of Jerusalem. As Sarah says: "Why is it normal to see guns and people with guns in the streets? When I go into the Old City and then it's just some army guy who points their gun at me and is like 'get your hands up'." Practices like these illustrate how areas in the city differ in what rules apply, because these rules are based on identities. In doing so they illustrate the borders between one area and another, and serve as spatial boundaries. Walking through the eastern parts of the city results in seeing many soldiers and police officers, patrolling, but also questioning or searching people. Most Arab students have experienced confrontations like these, and all feel this is because they look Arab. During

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Brill

<sup>18</sup> See chapter 3

the transect walk with Brill and Johnny, we left the Old City through Damascus Gate and saw two Arab guys being held by IDF soldiers. They were asked to take off their shirts and shoes to show they had no weapons. The guys were a lot like Brill and Johnny, and when Johnny and Brill looked at me, their eyes needed no words for me to understand what they were saying. They feel they are targeted by practices and spatial boundaries like these, because they are an Arab minority, which Rouhana (1997, 107) argues is the case for Arabs in Israel in general. As Waad says: “the country has never succeeded to include us all”. It always becomes obvious Arab students somehow have encountered how spatial boundaries are performed in Jerusalem, or existing material boundaries, as Trudeau (2006, 422) refers to them. In the western parts, however, the image is



*Picture 3: Israeli flags in Al-Wad street*

different. Except for off-duty soldiers waiting for a bus home, or the soldiers patrolling around tourist attractions, guys that are, like the ones in the left picture above, on active duty cannot be found. However, these parts are almost exclusively Jewish. The Arab students are well aware of this difference and for some, this means they are less comfortable in these parts, as they feel like they are the odd one out and therefore experience spatial exclusion. Another example of what they experience are the many Israeli flags displayed throughout the entire city, even in the Arab neighbourhoods in the city, as picture 3 shows. These flags mark the presence of Jewish Israelis in these neighbourhoods. Arab students feel this is provocative act, in “their” area. Therefore, they feel these flags do not belong in these neighbourhoods. They feel their space is invaded by this performance (Fuist 2013; Klein, Reicher and Spears 2007), and a boundary has been crossed. By claiming it is “mine”, like Brill would do, they attempt to verbally reclaim space that has been “occupied”.

It is interesting to see how Arab students of HUJI have two different responses to these existing spatial boundaries in Jerusalem, namely the reification or contestation of these boundaries. First off, as a response to these spatial boundaries, some Arab students reify them by avoiding certain areas or by adapting their behaviour when in certain areas. This is sometimes done out of fear, for soldiers or police officers, sometimes out of discomfort, or simply to avoid unpleasant interaction. Diana told me how she is afraid of the responses



*Picture 4: Arab student protesting with a Palestinian Flag at HUJI*

of Israelis if she were to speak Arabic on the bus and therefore has told her parents not to call her unexpectedly. Sarah confirms this, saying “you would think twice if you talk on the phone in Arabic on the bus”. Others, like Mario, simply avoid going to the city all together, as he feels that he cannot walk around the city without being searched by a soldier because of his Arab looks: “I go on the street, I just can’t feel comfortable, I can’t feel like I’m home, I can’t feel like I’m free”. By accepting these spatial boundaries and adjusting their behaviour accordingly, this response reifies existing boundaries, and stems from an awareness of being a minority.

This response is mostly related to Arab students who are originally from the north. By Arab students themselves this is explained through arguing that Arabs from the north have less of an urge to go against the Israeli other, as they have less frustration, due to better conditions of living when growing up. However, other Arab students contest these spatial boundaries, by claiming space through performances. Most outstanding in this have been students who grew up in and around Jerusalem. Growing up they lived through attacks and family members being imprisoned, which led to the frustration they feel they need to express through performances like protests. Furthermore, though they have frequently been in unpleasant contact with police officers or soldiers, they feel no limits in moving around the city, and furthermore claim it as their own, as Brill says: “There’s one Jerusalem. It’s all occupied. It’s all ours”. They perform this by speaking Arabic everywhere they go, by listening to Arabic music in their cars at a high volume, and during our transect walk, Johnny and Brill even started singing the Palestinian anthem in the middle of a Jewish neighbourhood, as we have described in the introduction to this thesis. But also, participating in protests or wearing T-shirts that say “free Palestine” on them are examples of this contestation. As picture 4 shows, students also participate in protests at university. This picture was taken at a demonstration against the poor conditions of Palestinian political prisoners. Though these protests are not always university-related, this is a place where students feel the need to express their political thoughts in front of their peers, performing their identity through symbols like flags (Fuist 2013). Feeling excluded in the city leaves Arab students with negative feelings such as fear, anger, frustration, feeling less, and these feelings result in many different forms of contestation. Whether it is Ahmed, who mumbles “pigs of the state” when we see soldiers passing as we sit by Damascus Gate, Waad and Jasmine, who feel no shame in saying “I’m a Palestinian” loudly surrounded by all kinds of students, or a significant part of Arab students who do not care about where they speak Arabic; each and every one of the Arab students has their own way of dealing with these spatial boundaries and participate in the process of boundary drawing.

When it comes to where these students live, Arab students almost exclusively live either at the dorms, or in the student village, but in any case, on campus. Aside from sleeping here, this is also a popular place to simply hang out with each other. Because the majority of its residents is Arab, the student village is sometimes jokingly referred to as the Arab village. Through living here in large numbers, students claim the space as theirs and materialize their shared identity as a community. Informants explain that living here gives them a sense of safety that is very important to them, in a city where they do not always feel safe. This does create a physical boundary between them and the Jewish students, who mostly live in apartments in the city. Furthermore, in their spare time, Arab students either stay on campus, or go to places in the east of the city or the Old City, where most Jewish students would never go. Because of this, Arab students and Jewish students barely mix outside of classes at the university. The segregated living situation is part of the limit to interaction which we have discussed. The living situation illustrates how physical boundaries can further reify social boundaries (Trudeau 2006), as it takes away an opportunity to interact, reinforcing the invisible wall. To further demonstrate this, we will turn to the situation at university.



*Picture 5: Arab and Jewish students moving through university in small groups*

When walking through the university with an informant, on our way to a coffee or a place to do an interview, we cannot go ten meters without someone yelling “Marhaba!”, which means hello. Most Arab students at HUJI know each other. In fact, if I describe one informant to another through a few characteristics, they always know who it is. This is mostly because Arabs at the university stick together, or as

Maysa says: “We all like to go to sit together (...) We have our own places”, for example the coffee place at the Mount Scopus campus, where I often meet informants, and which is always packed with Arab students. She explains that this is because “this system is not build to reinforce the cultural diversity”. When I ask her what she means with this, she says “Can you think of something that forces us to know each other? There’s nothing like that”. Maysa seems to be right. In addition to social boundaries, the physical boundaries existing at university and in Jerusalem enforce the division between Arab and Jewish students.

The classroom might seem like a place where identity boundaries are being unmade, through sitting and working together. To the contrary, these boundaries are instead made through to choosing to study mostly separately and experiencing this feeling of the ‘invisible wall’ between them, but also as there is little top-down effort from the university to let them mix. We can see the invisible wall becoming

visible on picture 5. It is a screenshot from a piece of video footage. In it, we see a group of Arab girls on the left side, whereas two Jewish students are talking together on the right side. Though this is only one moment, it summarizes what can be seen the vast majority of the time, namely that Arab and Jewish move only in groups 'of their own'. Ahmed told me that when he first got to university, he felt as if he was almost officially initiated into an Arab community at HUJI, through Arab students immediately approaching him and making him a part of Facebook groups exclusively meant for Arab students, as if they wanted to say "now you're an Arab in the Hebrew Uni", as Ahmed put it. This illustrates the strong sense of community among Arab students. An explanation for the fact that Arab students 'stick to their own' at university is that they are aware of the fact that they are a minority and the consequences this has for them in terms of the boundaries they experience. Through sticking together, speaking their own language, living amongst each other and claiming their own spaces at university, Arab students create situations in which they are the majority through spatial boundaries to contest their position in society as a minority and the negative consequences this might have for them (Appadurai 2006). This ultimately reinforces identity boundaries.

### **"I have this conflict in me every day. What am I?"<sup>19</sup>**

Throughout this chapter we have used the minority position of Arab students at HUJI to understand how they participate in the identity boundary drawing process in Jerusalem. What is the role of the in-between-ness that was discussed before in this? While going to the Hebrew university, Arab students might feel excluded with regard to other students at times, but they simultaneously experience exclusion from other members of the Arab community, who might say they are "normalizing the occupation". This means they are criticized for being part of an Israeli institution. As Ahmed mentioned in our first conversation; how are you supposed to be a true Palestinian Arab, if you are part of an Israeli institute, placed on "occupied land"? This confusion is in line with the one Ghorashi (2005) experienced and refers to as being in between identities. We can explain this as a relation of mutual exclusivity between two identities (McCall 2005), which results in a feeling of void and exclusion. We argue that there is a strong connection between the social and spatial aspect in this. We can see that students such as Brill and Johnny, who feel certain about their identity as Arab Palestinian, also most explicitly claim space as their own because of this identity. Other students are not sure about their place in society and strongly experience a sense of mutual exclusion and feeling in between, also reflect this spatially as they often feel uncomfortable or out of place in parts of Jerusalem. Sarah was determined to make this clear

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<sup>19</sup> Interview with Mario

to me, as it was such an important part of how she felt. Laughing as she felt she was not describing it accurately enough due to her own confusion, she threw her hands up and said “everybody here has this identity issue, we don’t know what we are”. However, this in-between-ness is also reflected in a different way in the movements of more ‘straight-forward’ students like Brill and Johnny. Though they strongly identify with more traditional expressions of their identity in Arab neighbourhoods, such as food, language or music, they do not hesitate to go out in Jewish areas to enable themselves to drink alcohol, as Arab bars do not allow this. Thus, we can see there is not one typology of the Arab student, as they all have different ways of being in-between seemingly mutually exclusive identities. Does their agency in constructing identities allow them to create their own inclusive identity? On a walk through the east of the city, Ahmed described that from the moment Arab students start at university, they become part of this circle where everyone knows each other, they hardly ever get out of it and strongly express ‘inward loyalty’ (Fuist 2013). This was then illustrated by Ahmed always running into several friends he knew from HUJI on our walks. One could argue this ‘sticking together’ is done because they are in fact a double minority, as they are a minority in the Jewish society in which they move on an everyday basis, but also in the larger Arab community, due to the fact that they live in Israel and frequent an Israeli institution. This explains their strong urge to create a majority situation that allows them to feel secure. This security stems from a certainty of who ‘we’ are and a certainty that the ‘we’ category is a significant group in terms of numbers, or a majority (Appadurai 2006, 6). This makes it clear that their position as a minority influences their boundary drawing processes and differentiates them from their Jewish peers. It is also this position that prevents Arab students from breaking down the invisible wall. Creating an own majority situation to contest their position as a double minority further reifies boundaries and is thus a limit to a possibility of interaction with Jewish peers. We will explain this in our conclusion chapter, to which we now turn to look at the dynamics between the majority and minority group at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

## 5. Discussion & Conclusion

Marrit Woudwijk & Tessa de Jonge

In the two previous chapters, we have outlined how respectively Jewish and Arab students participate in the process of boundary making and unmaking in their city, Jerusalem. However, we have stressed in our introduction that these two groups are most interesting, when discussed in relation to each other. Therefore, in this concluding chapter, we will go into this connection between Jewish and Arab students. In explaining how Arab and Jewish students construct their identity boundaries, we have seen that narratives function to maintain these boundaries. Narratives are used in two ways: inwards, in constructing history about the self and outwards, in framing the other. First, in Israel, Arabs and Jews hold on to their own versions of history, that reinforce belonging to the in-group, and at the same time create boundaries towards the out-group (Hammack and Pilecki 2014). The divergent narrations of historic events Arabs and Jews hold on to are reflected in the different lenses with which contemporary events are regarded. This results in incompatible views on reality, making close contact between Arab and Jewish students more complicated. Instead of having a dialogue with one outcome, Arab and Jewish students tend to stick to their own narratives, which contradict each other.

Second, narratives about the other influence the way Jewish and Arab students perceive the other, which they do in different ways. As we have seen, Jewish students adhere to the stereotype of Arabs as terrorists, which has a fear for the Arab other as a consequence. This attitude, in turn, makes Arab students fear the Jewish other, because they are afraid of being harassed or arrested, when they are mistaken for a terrorist. As Ahmed says: "you never know when you will be labelled as terrorists". Both fear the other, holding on to the underlying narratives, therefore together creating a boundary between each other, maintained through fear. However, we do see a difference here on what level this fear is manifested. Where Jewish students have a fear of non-state actors, namely Arab individuals that are perceived as potential terrorists, Arab students do not fear the Jewish individual other. Because they function as a minority in a Jewish state, their level of exposure to non-state actors is high enough not to fear them. However, instead they fear the state, with whom they have had negative experiences due to being a minority. Jewish students, as the majority, have had less exposure to the non-state other, simply because they are not forced to do this, being the majority. Here, we see the importance of studying the relation between different identities, as McCall (2005, 1788) has argued. This shows how the difference between the Jewish and Arab students we have described above finds its origin in a relation of power between the majority and minority. We have taken this another step further by connecting it to the concept of identity boundaries, as complex relations like these influence the boundary drawing process.



Therefore, students fear the other, as he or she is unknown due to their different positions in society, and this is reflected in the way Jewish and Arab students maintain the boundary between them.

Besides narratives and labels, the use of language is vital in making and unmaking boundaries. Both Jewish and Arab students expressed how they feel most comfortable speaking their mother tongue, and how this results in grouping together with students of the same linguistic background. Language therefore is a strong boundary maker, since it withholds Arab and Jewish students from being in close contact. Additionally, the different positions they hold in society affect their knowledge of the language of the other. Jewish students are generally only able to speak basic Arabic, if at all, since Hebrew is the main language in Israel and it is not necessary for them to become proficient in Arabic. Arab students, on the other hand, are forced to speak Hebrew well, since most of the classes at university are taught in Hebrew and it is the language of the state. The minority status of Arabs, results in a power asymmetry between Jewish and Arab students concerning language. Their position in society thus influences to what extent they speak the language of the other, which creates asymmetry in their personal relations, therefore marking a boundary between Arab and Jewish students. Here we again see the conceptual connection we have made between the categorical approach, which analyses relations between different identities (McCall 2005), and the conceptualisation of boundary drawing. In an effort to go against this language barrier, we have seen that both Arab and Jewish students may use English as a neutral language in interpersonal interactions to unmake this boundary.

Furthermore, both sides try to unmake these boundaries by referring to the other as 'just a human being', and by underlining the similarities between them instead of the differences. They try to neglect the narratives and labels that divide Arabs and Jews in an 'us and them', and try to seek the commonalities in one-on-one interaction. By emphasizing their common humanity, differences are being denied and trivialized, and therefore, macro-level boundaries are being unmade at micro-level. Both Arab and Jewish students do, however, express how the real unmaking of these boundaries is nearly impossible. They refer to an 'invisible wall' or 'glass plain' between them, which means the other can never be fully approached. Superficial contact is possible, but true friendship seems to be impossible. We will conclude with explaining why this invisible wall cannot be broken down and how their position in society as a majority or minority influences this. First, we go into the spatial reflection of these social dynamics.

The division of spaces in Jerusalem is maintained and enforced by both Arab and Jewish students. As we have seen, they both feel uncomfortable moving into – what they understand as – the space of the other. While these spatial boundaries are not so much actual physical borders, there is a general mental mapping considering which parts of the city belong to whom (Greenberg Raanan and Shoval 2013). By avoiding the places of the other out of discomfort, spatial boundaries are drawn, which

reinforce the social boundaries between Jewish and Arab students (Trudeau 2006). Striking is how the east of Jerusalem, which is almost exclusively made up of Arab neighbourhoods, is experienced in a negative way by Jewish students, but that in a different way Arab students too sometimes choose to avoid it. The fear that Jews experience towards Arabs, is institutionalized by the Israeli state, as it considers the east of Jerusalem as a 'dangerous' area and expresses this in its patrolling policy. This results in a large number of soldiers and police in the east of Jerusalem. As a result, some Arabs do not feel comfortable in the east of Jerusalem either, even though it is commonly regarded as 'their' space. We therefore see that Jerusalem cannot simply be divided into east and west, as if it were a black and white situation.

At university, Arab and Jewish students see the campuses as shared spaces, although they together divide these spaces. Following from the previous chapters, we can conclude that all students recognize how grouping together in Jewish and Arab groups takes place and how these groups occupy different spots at university. Their grouping together is a result of a language difference, age gap and their positions in society as either the majority or the minority. As we have seen, Arab students create situations in which they can be a majority. Forming groups and claiming specific places as their own are tools to create this feeling. Jewish students, as a majority, do not feel the same need. However, they do group together because of age and languages differences. Thus, because of perceived differences between them, Jewish and Arab students group together, claiming their own spaces at university, therefore together reinforcing the boundaries between them (Trudeau 2006, 437).

When Jewish and Arab students try to unmake these spatial boundaries, by transgressing the unofficial borders, they often face the invisible walls in their physical environment. In chapter 3 we discussed how Tomer showed some Israeli institutions in Arab neighbourhoods. However, when Brill was told about this happening, he got quite frustrated. He explained that to him, this was 'his to show'. Here we see how Wendy Brown's "imaginative geography"<sup>20</sup> results in the claiming of space and creation of boundaries. Arab students experience something similar when they are asked for their ID cards when moving in the western part of the city. When they try to cross these imagined spatial boundaries, they are perceived as out of place. It is thus not easy, if not impossible, for Jewish and Arab students to overcome this.

In short, both Arab and Jewish students move in their 'own' spaces and when attempting to deny the status quo, they seem to run into the invisible walls that divide the university as well as Jerusalem in demarcated spaces. But what, then, is the implication of these invisible walls? Why does it seem impossible to break them down? What is the role of interaction in this?

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<sup>20</sup> 'Imaginative geography': the mental organization of space producing identities through boundaries" (Brown 2010, 73-74).

We have seen that interaction between Arab and Jewish students takes place on different levels. It might be that they simply study in the same class, have a conversation, work on a project together, pass each other on campus or take part in a joint voluntary program. The perspectives on this interaction are not universal. In a situation where Jewish and Arab students are working together in the same classroom, perhaps even on the same assignment, this can be perceived in different ways. For example, where some students might see this as a situation where boundaries are being unmade, by saying they are “all students”, another student might find that it is here, in interaction, where their differences are confirmed and boundaries are made between themselves and the other. Still, both perspectives concern the same situation of interaction. Interaction between Arab and Jewish students might seem like an unmaking performance, but in fact it can also confirm (invisible) already existing boundaries. Therefore, interaction instead reflects the entire boundary drawing process.

So, we can conclude that the limit to interaction we have described above, is universally experienced and eventually best described as an invisible wall. It is the central aspect of the way Arab and Jewish students at HUJI make and unmake identity boundaries, and therefore our main conclusion in answering the central question of our research. In the midst of all practices that either construct or partially deconstruct boundaries, this invisible wall remains. Why is it impossible to deconstruct it? The answer to this lies in the majority-minority dynamic. Both the Arab students as a minority and the Jewish students as a majority contribute to the maintaining of this invisible wall. We have argued that Arab students as a double minority are stuck in between the boundaries of two groups and are (partially) excluded by both these groups. In other words, they are neither part of the Jewish-Israeli society they live in, nor are they fully part of the Arab community they come from. As a minority, being in between these two groups means both the loyalty to the Arab community and the feeling of not belonging to the Israeli society prevent them from overcoming the boundary between them and their Jewish peers. This confirms McCall's (2005) argument that relations between different identities change in different contexts, but also shows the impact of this on the identity boundary process. Because it is the relational complexity of the incompatibility of the Arab/Palestinian and Israeli identity that results in a void and in turn limits the Arab students in unmaking the invisible wall. On the other side of the invisible wall, the Jewish students experience the fear of small numbers (Appadurai 2006) that is so characteristic for majorities. As Amy has expressed concerning her Arab colleagues: “(...) I have like a 5% suspicion (...) they might be terrorist someday, 5% that I would not trust them completely. And the rest of the 95% is great, but you can't take the 5% out”. It is this always underlying fear of the minority that prevents the Jewish students from overcoming the invisible wall, regardless of what interaction they might have with their Arab peers. Therefore, in their interaction, both groups are pulled back in interaction because of their specific position in society and are thus unable to overcome the most essential boundary between

them, namely the ever-present invisible one. Essentially, this is the key to understanding the way Arab and Jewish students make and unmake identity boundaries in Jerusalem. Our research has shown both the social element of this and its spatial reflection.

We have now seen that identity boundary processes are a complex dynamic among students in Jerusalem. After illustrating the practices in these processes, through both the majority and minority perspective, we have concluded that despite all this, the invisible wall between them remains, because their different positions in society as respectively the majority and minority prevents both sides from overcoming it.

To conclude we will reconsider our research within a wider academic context. The complementary character of the research made it possible to clearly see both sides of the boundary dynamics, seen against their backgrounds as a minority or a majority. By discussing the social *and* spatial components of identity boundaries and by including the making *and* unmaking of identity boundaries, we took a holistic view on the concept of boundaries. We therefore contribute to a deeper understanding of what identity boundaries are and more importantly, how, why and in what context their construction and deconstruction takes place in Jerusalem. So, what are our new insights on boundary (un)making in general, based on our research? Firstly, as we have mentioned before, we argue that it is essential to understand the process of identity boundaries through the lens of constantly innovating conceptualisations of identity, such as the intersectionality and categorical approach to more adequately address how boundaries are made and unmade. Furthermore, through observing both social and spatial boundaries, we have found that these not just exist simultaneously, but moreover have a strong relation and influence each other. An example of this is the way in which social boundaries are often materialized or the way in which pre-existing spatial boundaries influence social interaction. Therefore, these two types of boundaries should not be studied separately, as is still frequently done, but instead combined and in relation to each other. Lastly, we have found in our empirical chapters that the making and unmaking we had previously theorised are not separate processes, but instead overlap. In other words, one practice can contribute to both the making and unmaking of boundaries, as it is a matter of perception. Furthermore, making and unmaking are not absolute practices, but rather relative processes. The concept of the invisible wall illustrates that for example unmaking can also be partially or relative, and is not simply something that either happens or not. Through these insights, we can argue that the making and unmaking of identities are more nuanced and relative than previously assumed. This way our insights have added to the understanding of these concepts.

Whereas the study contributes to an understanding of identity boundary processes, it is limited to two identity groups within Israel. It did not include the discussion of other important minority groups in Israeli society, such as orthodox-Jewish Israeli's, Bedouins, Druze, Russians and Ethiopians. Our

research did however discuss one of the most present and contested identity boundaries in Israel, which is, through its spatial component in Jerusalem, a highly suitable one for investigating boundary drawing processes.

Furthermore, this research took place in the specific context of Jerusalem. The historic background and symbolic importance of the city determine the processes of identity boundaries among students. For further research, it might be valuable to research identity boundary processes of Jews and Arabs in a city such as Yaffo-Tel Aviv or in Haifa, who do not live in a divided city as Jerusalem. Lastly, our research might be a starting point for asking questions about organized meetings between Jews and Arabs. By addressing the causes and consequences of the invisible boundary, as we have explained them, the meetings between Jewish and Arab students might be able to contribute to the deconstruction of this boundary. In better understanding the issues that need to be addressed, lies a possibility for progress. In the end, we strongly believe these processes are crucial in understanding complex societies like these and that identity boundaries still hold a central place in this and therefore encourage further research from a perspective like ours.

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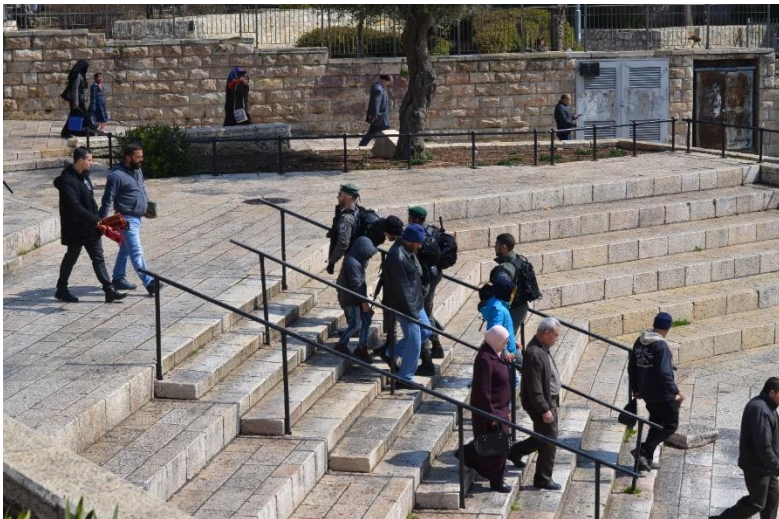
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## 8. Annexes

### Annex 1: Selection of Pictures



The Old City: Israeli flag and Palestinian poster next to each other



Jerusalemite citizens and IDF soldiers



Palestinian and Israeli flag at “anti-occupation” protest