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# NARRATIVES AS AN ANALYTICAL TOOL IN PEACE AND CONFLICT RESEARCH

THE CASE OF JERUSALEM IN ISRAELI IDENTITY  
POLITICS

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ÖREBRO UNIVERSITY

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

[Jerusalem is] an axis of our history, identity, faith and legacy. Three times a day, for over 3,000 years, every believing Jew stands in prayer, and faces Jerusalem. The song of endless yearning and longing was written about it in every exile, and a sea of tears was spilled over it. Therefore, it will eternally be ours, our one and only. (Prime Minister Ehud Olmert Speech at the Jerusalem Day Ceremony at Ammunition Hill, May 25, 2006)

Jerusalem is a central component in the identity of the Jewish people and Israel. The city has throughout history been an important territorial symbol for Jews, in the Diaspora, for those who remained in the territories, and for the Jewish immigrants in modern time. The city has been described as a beacon of hope in times of pogroms and persecution. The mental map and image of the city is illustrated in poems and prayers.

The city is not just an Israeli national interest. Jerusalem is one of the most discussed and disputed cities in the world, primarily because of its symbolic and physical importance for three monotheistic religions, but also due to the ongoing Israel–Palestine conflict, which has implications for international relations and political interactions in the Middle East. Political discussions regarding Jerusalem are often conducted in a trial-like way, with accusations, defence, argumentation, and counter-argumentation (see for instance *The case of Israel*, Dershowitz, 2004 and *The case for Palestine*, Quigley, 2005). Legal terms are often used as metaphors in order to state a claim to the city. Jerusalem is also “just another city”, where the residents are living their everyday lives – paying taxes, going to work, and shopping for groceries. The two images: Jerusalem as the spiritual and symbolic center, and Jerusalem as an everyday life environment, are often referred to as the “heavenly” and the “earthly” Jerusalem respectively (see for instance Wasserstein, 2002:4; Mayer & Mourad, 2008:1). These two perspectives are not as dichotomous as they sound, as they are intertwined and imbedded in most political issues.

This article<sup>1</sup> show that the history of Jerusalem is the main ingredient in the commemorative narratives constituting the foundation of the Israeli identity politics of Jerusalem and for legitimizing Israeli claims on the city. These narratives are used as common references in the daily vocabulary of Israeli society and politics. They furthermore connect to a number of city policies and strategies of territoriality regarding what Jerusalem should be in the future. For every Israeli narrative there is a Palestinian counter-narrative. There is thus no common and accepted truth about the history, the everyday life, the development, or the future of the city. This article focuses mainly on the Israeli Jerusalem narratives as the city is controlled and de-facto annexed by the state of Israel.

The purpose of this article is threefold;

1. to identify commemorative narratives related to the city,
2. to analyze the relation between these narratives and the construction of city policy and strategies of territoriality,
3. to discuss commemorative narratives as an analytical tool to understand claims in a conflict situation.

## **2. NARRATIVE ANALYSIS AS A TOOL TO UNDERSTAND CLAIMS IN CONFLICT**

Narrative analysis was mainly developed by historians who used the method to connect certain historical events and thereby construct a coherent story. Such “historical” roots are beneficial when studying the role of narratives in the construction of national identity. This cross-disciplinary method is often connected with postmodernism and/or structuralism, as it developed from a way to describe society to a perception of society as made of narratives, or as Alistair MacIntyre describes it, “social life is a narrative” (MacIntyre, 1981, Somers, 1994:614). These narratives guide our actions and constitute the basis of our identity, but these identities are constantly renegotiated. This approach is often referred to as *the narrative turn* (Charniawska, 2004:1pp) and could be regarded as a response to the rational approach in social science method. This

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<sup>1</sup> This article is based on the research performed within a Ph.D. project resulting in a dissertation Andersson (2011).

particular narrative perspective is based on the assumption that an actor bases his or her decisions about all kinds of issues in life on narrative frameworks, rather than making strictly rational decisions (Somers, 1994).

Narrative analysis has shifted from a representational to an ontological form of interpretation during the last decades (Somers, 1994:619). In earlier research, narratives were mainly stories about how things were or are, that can be accepted or rejected as epistemological truths. Today, they are interpreted as more connected to the creation of social life itself. These *ontological narratives* guide our behavior and actions and can also be related to individual identity such as planners' self-image. The documents and interviews analyzed in this article contain what Margaret Somers call *public narratives* (Somers, 1994:619). These can be located both within macro- and micro-level discourses and are connected to cultural or institutional perspectives beyond the individual. More specifically, the analysis and identification of narratives will be performed by; (1) sorting the empirical material in detail in order to (2) identify patterns in a broad range of material. The narrative method requires (3) interpretation and (4) a convincing presentation, for instance by using illustrative quotes. The result depends on a meticulous overall research design. A narrative analysis can provide a more grounded result and we can thus learn more about the complexities of a protracted conflict.

#### **COMMEMORATIVE NARRATIVES**

More and more attention is given to the role of memories, and particularly collective memories, in the social construction of identities, whether in a study about planning politics in Jerusalem (Fenster, 2004), cultural psychology (Hammack, 2011) or about narratives related to the overall Israel-Palestine conflict (see for instance Partner, 2008). The Israeli identity politics of Jerusalem contains a number of narratives and one main feature is that they are based on memories and so called commemorations (Gillis et. al. 1993). The commemorations play a large role in the construction of a collective Jewish memory for Jerusalem – a collective memory that has a central position in the Jewish-Israeli national identity discourses. Maarten Hajer (who uses story-lines instead of narratives) argues that narratives are firmly rooted in more abstract political discourses and connected to power relations and hegemony (Hajer,

1995:62pp). Narratives thus contain both a story (what is being told) and a discourse (how it is communicated) (Chatman, 1980:19; Czarniawska, 2004:10). The commemorative narratives are communicated within the complicated game of identity politics. These collective memories are created in schools, in the army, by politicians, by authors, etc., through acts of commemoration. These commemorations lead to the construction of what Yael Zerubavel (1995) calls *commemorative narratives*. The process of selecting historical events is very specific and many events are deliberately left out in the political debate. The process of producing narratives is ongoing and “Collective memory continuously negotiates between available historical records and current social and political agendas” (Zerubavel, 1995:5).

There are a number of commemorative narratives covering specific events, periods in history and political visions for the future, and each of these narratives covers a small portion of what happens in a society. Commemorative narratives could be connected to a larger issue – a so-called *master commemorative narrative*. This master narrative is the sum of a collection of narratives that gives a wider picture of the collective memory (Zerubavel, 1995). A master narrative plays a particular role in conflict or as stated by Phillip Hammack “...the internalization of a master narrative fulfills vital *cognitive* and *emotional* needs in contexts of conflict” (Hammack, 2011:337). This collective point of departure is important as memories and narratives are rarely undisputed. Where we find memories we also find counter-memories and counter-narratives (Zerubavel, 1995:10; Newman, 2008:68). This is very much the case of Jerusalem as the communication of one commemorative narrative is met by a counter-narrative. It is even possible to talk about a narrative battle (Steinberg, 2009).

## **MATERIAL**

This article is based on a narrative analysis of public documents, mainly speeches, declarations and presentations. The selection of the documents has been made in order to encircle the official Israeli view of Jerusalem. The texts are both political statements as well as more general descriptions in order to get a wide variety of sources. This selection enables an analysis of the wider importance of commemorative narratives. The main period studied in the

article is 2000-2013, but documents prior to that period has also been incorporated to illustrate the historical development.

### **3. JERUSALEM IN ISRAELI IDENTITY POLITICS**

In 2007, Israel celebrated the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem; in 2000, Ariel Sharon made his famous walk on the Temple Mount/Haram Ash-Sharif; in 1998, Israel commemorated the 50<sup>th</sup> birthday of the state; and in 1995, Israeli authorities arranged a celebration of Jerusalem as 3000 years old. These are all examples of Israeli manifestations of identity politics in Jerusalem. In Israeli politics today, Jerusalem plays an increasingly important role, and interpretations of historical events and processes determine, to a large extent, political discussions regarding the city. These interpretations constitute the basis for individual identity, local and national policy-making, territorial claims, and accusations of wrongdoing, and serve as corroborations of a certain “truth”. This section focuses on how Israeli territoriality, i.e. Israeli territorial claims and attempts to control the development of Jerusalem, are manifested and legitimized in political speeches and statements.

The development of Jerusalem is interconnected with Zionist identity discourses, and the Israeli politics of Jerusalem are an illustration of continuity and change in the discursive struggles between these different identities. The challenges to the hegemonic traditional Zionism are apparent in the case of Jerusalem and the city is often the catalyst for inter-discursive antagonism. With the changes in Israeli identity discourses come changes related to territorial identity. “Thus territories and identities are experiencing parallel and related processes of reconfiguration as part of the contemporary dynamics of Israeli society and space.” (Newman, 2001:237). Commemorative narratives are a central aspect in the construction of Israeli identity politics (Strömbom, 2010) and the importance of territory has been integrated into every aspect of society over an extended period of time. Music, poetry, language, and art were also main features in the territorial identity construction (Zerubavel, 1995:22). Planning practice and agents of planning played a central part in this process (Newman, 2001:238). The Israeli territorial reconstruction process has been performed by using maps, cartography, naming processes, narratives of historic events, establishment of museums, and rehabilitation of historical sites

(Zerubavel, 1995:114pp, 129). One of the most important institutions for strengthening the link between the Jewish people and the territory is the education system. Socialization is consequently an important component in the identity construction (Newman, 2001:239p; Newman, 2008:64).

In the early Zionist constructions of the homeland we find specific slogans, regarding the territory itself under which Zionists could unite. The first significant slogan was that the land in question was empty; second, that there had never been a Palestinian state; third, many of the Arabs who left during the 1948 and 1967 wars did so voluntarily; fourth, that Israel has always been defensive, not aggressive; fifth, that the Yishuv built and modernized the land; and sixth, that Israel was established on a foundation of humanist and democratic values that were rejected by minority groups (Strömbom, 2010:122pp; Pappé, 2003:46p). These slogans or strategic narratives became “truths” in the political rhetoric.

The 1967 war between Israel and its Arab neighbors led to the inclusion of the Eastern parts of Jerusalem into the realm of the Zionist project. This led to a situation which in one interpretation is an occupation of Palestinian territories and in another a liberation of Judea and Samaria. After the war, Jerusalem was enlarged and de facto annexed to the state of Israel. The events in 1967 are described in a vast number of books as groundbreaking concerning both the Zionist project and Israeli territorial identity (Yiftachel, 2006:64; Jones & Murphy, 2002:46p).

Labor Zionism was the dominant identity discourse until 1977, represented by the Labor Party (Silberstein, 2008:3p), but in conjunction with the 1977 elections, the revisionists, represented by the Likud party won a historic victory. The basic premise of the revisionists was to lay claim to the entire area of Eretz Israel on both banks of the river Jordan. In the spirit of the revisionists, new Zionism or neo-Zionism has during the last decades evolved as a critique towards traditional Zionism and the political “establishment” in Israel for its policies regarding Jerusalem. There is also a post-Zionist critique of current Israeli policies regarding the city, mainly based on the opinion that Jerusalem can be shared by all its inhabitants and possibly even divided.

## JERUSALEM IN CONTEMPORARY ISRAELI POLITICS – STATING THE CLAIM

The generation that fought in the Independence War gave us a country with Jerusalem as the reborn capital of the Jewish state that arose from the ashes. Our generation united Jerusalem and is developing it with strength and vigor, and the next generation – your generation, children – will ensure its future as the one united, undivided and prosperous capital. (Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu, speech Jerusalem Day ceremony, June 1, 2011)

Any account of the identity politics of Jerusalem shows that the city is connected with many emotions, visions and beliefs. It is an *empty signifier* (Torfing, 1999) filled with meaning from various perspectives. Nonetheless, contemporary Israeli identity politics is dominated by a commonly accepted vision or a master commemorative narrative which is identifiable in political speeches, interviews, and official statements regarding Jerusalem.

New- and post-Zionist challenges towards traditional Zionism have dominated Israeli identity politics the last 20 years, and the growing influence of new Zionism became particularly apparent in the 2009 national elections, where the government took a turn to the right. Right-wing parties, such as A Jewish Home (former National Religious Party), have closed the door on practically any compromise regarding Israeli sovereignty over Jerusalem. Despite the discursive antagonism, parties as different as National Union and Kadima, share a basic view of Jerusalem as the indivisible eternal capital of Israel, at least on paper. National Union states in the platform for the 2006 elections that “Jerusalem, the eternal capital, will be preserved in its entirety under Israeli sovereignty” (National Union/NRP, Joint Platform for the 2006 elections) and almost the same words are used by Kadima and shares the goal to; “...maintain the unity of Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty” (Kadima, Yes to Kadima, election platform 2006). In its platform for the elections in 2009, the Likud party stated that it will

... keep Jerusalem the unified capital under Israeli sovereignty. [...] The worst action that can be taken for peace is dividing Jerusalem. Such a step would create a permanent site of friction that is likely to ignite the entire region. (Likud Party Platform, Elections 2009)

The vision of the eternal, indivisible capital is supported by many local politicians, such as Mayor Nir Barkat. In his biography on the municipality

website, Jerusalem is referred to as “the eternal capital of the Jewish people” (Biography of Nir Barkat, [www.jerusalem.muni.il](http://www.jerusalem.muni.il)), and he sees a division of the city as the worst solution.

Show me a working model of a split city that ever works. [...] They either stay dysfunctional or get reunited. There is no way, when you learn and understand the city, you understand that we can never be divided, not practically and not ideologically. [...] The world is looking for such a simple solution for such an important city that was never divided. (Nir Barkat on *BBC*, July 15, 2011)

These declarations appear at first glance to reveal a consensus. Looking more closely at political statements from individual politicians or parties such as Kadima, Labor, and Meretz, they express a less negative attitude towards territorial concessions. The left-wing party Meretz agrees that the city should not be divided physically, but supports a division into two capitals side by side (Meretz Party Platform, 2006). Former Meretz leader Yossi Beilin stated in 2007 that

Continued declarations of a "united Jerusalem" are just empty slogans in a de facto divided Jerusalem. It's time to remove the mask and to act according to real Israeli interests: Namely, to reach a final status agreement that would allow the Palestinians to found a state alongside Israel with its capital in East Jerusalem. (Beilin, *Ynet News*, October 15, 2007)

On the other hand, Meretz have been criticized for rejoining the Barkat municipal coalition in 2011, accepting the East Jerusalem portfolio, and thus potentially giving legitimacy to discriminate Palestinians (Warschawski, *Alternative Information Center website*, June 30, 2011).

In any case, within the realm of Israeli national politics, it is very sensitive and controversial to talk about a division of Jerusalem. Even though Jewish residents of Jerusalem in general are not attached to, or may not even know of Palestinian neighborhoods such as Anata or Shuafat, the very thought of giving up any part of Jerusalem seems impossible, despite the fact that these areas were not historically part of Jerusalem. The mental map in this perspective is more powerful than the actual “facts on the ground”. Proponents of compromise on Jerusalem regard territorial or at least administrative concessions as a prerequisite for security and peace, so-called “land for peace”.

The peace negotiations show that this notion is rather complicated to fulfil (Mayer & Mourad, 2008:12; Klein, 2003). There are currently few incentives in Israeli politics for discussing a two-state solution with two capitals. The Likud platform implies, relinquishing Israeli sovereignty over East Jerusalem, would cause security problems. One argument is that it would strengthen the position of Hamas or other militant groups in Jerusalem. Former Mayor Uri Lupolianski combined the fear of a Hamas takeover with the demographic threat of the Palestinian birth rate in the following statement during the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Jerusalem reunification.

Jerusalem could, God forbid, end up not under Jewish sovereignty, but rather that of Hamas. [...] Hamas knows that it is possible to capture Jerusalem through demography within 12 years. (Uri Lupolianski speech during the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Jerusalem reunification cited in Jerusalem Post, May 13, 2007)

Dore Gold warns that a division of Jerusalem could lead further away from peace. Gold, who was also an advisor to Prime Minister Netanyahu during his first term, claims that Jerusalem is used by radical Islamists as "... a trigger for global Jihad." (Gold, 2007:22). This holy Muslim struggle is not only directed against Israel but against the entire western world. "The struggle for Jerusalem today is being waged against a background of a larger clash between radical Islam and the West." (Gold, 2007:30). This view is rather common among more right-wing debaters, and Gold summarizes this ideological stance when he concentrates on two questions: who will be the best guardian of the holy sites, and will a division of Jerusalem really create peace? The message is that it is very telling that Israel's control over Jerusalem is acceptable to Christians all over the world, but not to Muslims. According to Gold, Jews have shown throughout history that they are better equipped to ensure religious freedom. The problem with allowing for Muslim sovereignty over the holy sites and allowing for some kind of self-determination in East Jerusalem is that there is not enough separation between Islam and the state/ruling authority (Gold, 2007). On the other hand, there are periods in history when Muslim leaders have also granted religious freedom in Jerusalem (Little, 2000:195) and Israel has also been criticized for not separating religion and state (Yiftachel, 2006:16p).

The current identity politics of Jerusalem can thus be summarized in the following vision or master commemorative narrative:

***Jerusalem is the indivisible, eternal capital of Israel***

This master narrative has been pronounced in speeches delivered by Israeli Prime Ministers and in other public statements since the beginning of the 1980s, as for example in a statement by Prime Minister Yitzak Rabin in connection with the peace negotiations in 1994. “Jerusalem must be united, under Israeli sovereignty and the capital of Israel. [...] and will remain so in the future as well.” (Statement Prime Minister Rabin, Channel 2, August 1, 1994). The master commemorative narrative is both a claim and a statement based on a number of stories regarding historical events. These narratives are firmly grounded in Zionist visions and are constantly being reproduced. This master narrative permeates all political issues and levels dealing with questions concerning Jerusalem. This is the foundation of laws and regulations as well as political action. Israel does not have a constitution but a number of Basic laws. The *Basic Law: Jerusalem, Capital of Israel* from 1980 states that

1. Jerusalem, complete and united, is the capital of Israel. 2. Jerusalem is the seat of the President of the State, the Knesset, the Government and the Supreme Court. (Basic Law: Jerusalem, Capital of Israel, 1980)

The text of the law itself does not argue for its case but simply states “the fact”, and provides the basic legal framework for the administration of the city. The narrative thus constitutes the main expression of legal-political territoriality. Another important law reflecting the master narrative is the Jerusalem Day Law, 5758, from 1998, declaring a special day dedicated to celebrate the reunification of the city. The master narrative can be interpreted as the point of departure in the ongoing internal narrative battle between traditional, post- and new Zionists, and in the Israel–Palestine conflict. It is used as an argument against counter-narratives and external counter-discourses, and it is crucial for leading politicians to relate to this narrative whenever possible, especially when celebrating such identity-related and symbolic events as Jerusalem Day.

By reciting a story that reaches back into the past, master narratives of this kind provide legitimation for present institutions and practices. In this particular case the narrative draws authority not only from its constant recitation as official history but also from its association with the Bible... (Gunn, 2003:258)

The master commemorative narrative is a hegemonic political argument as well as a master narrative, and going beyond this statement means a serious breach of Zionist identity. On the other hand, this also means that the Jewish identity of Jerusalem is in danger of being static and

...the more it becomes the narrative of the ‘eternal and undivided capital of Israel’ – that is, the eternal political possession – the more it risks emptying traditional Jewish ‘yearning’ of meaning. As it seeks to shore up Jewish identity it is at the same time subverting it. (Gunn, 2003:270)

The question that arises is what Jerusalem these politicians, parties, and legal frameworks relate to, is it the “heavenly” or the “earthly”? Is it the symbolic or the physical Jerusalem? In any case, Jerusalem has never been recognized internationally as the capital of Israel. The foreign embassies are still located in Tel Aviv. The new borders from 1967 have turned Jerusalem into a completely different city, which we will return to later on. They have enlarged the Israeli controlled territory (see figure 1), which is consistent with the Zionist vision, but in retrospective they have also created administrative and security problems

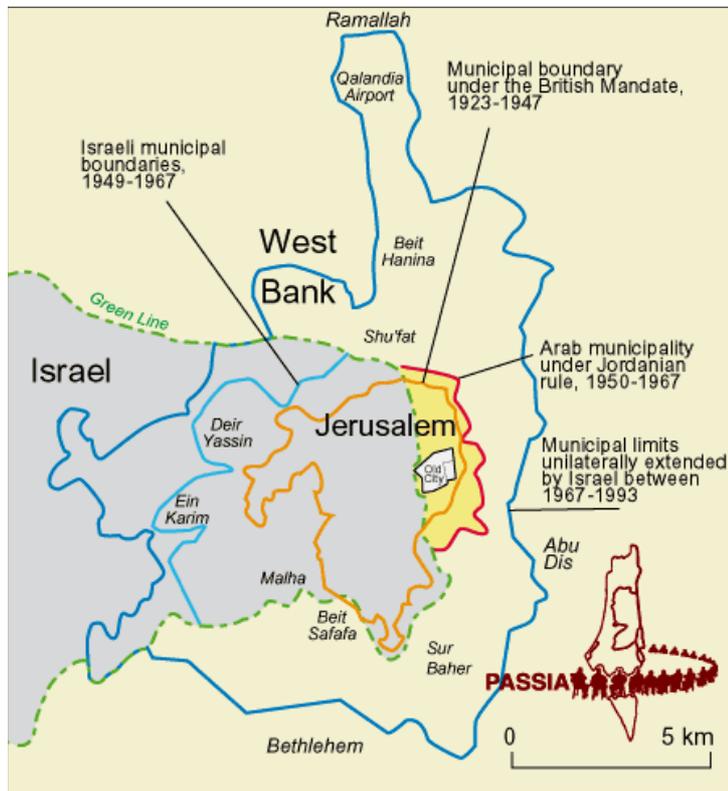


Figure 1. Territorial changes in Jerusalem during the 20th century

Source: Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs, Jerusalem. [www.passia.org](http://www.passia.org)

In the following section, this master narrative will be deconstructed into separate commemorative narratives in relation with their historical periods. The commemorative narratives have been identified in and drawn from literature, political speeches, policy documents, and political statements. To sum up, the commemorative narratives of Israel and the Jewish nation are commonly divided into three different historical periods: antiquity, the exile, and the return (Zerubavel, 1995:15p; Gunn, 2003:259) and they are loosely applied here

### JERUSALEM 3000 – THE WAR OF ARCHAEOLOGY

Three thousand years of history look down upon us today, in the city from whose stones the ancient Jewish nation sprang, from whose clear mountain air three religions absorbed their spiritual essence and their strength. [...] Three thousand years of Jerusalem are for us, now and forever, a message for tolerance between religions, of love between peoples, of understanding between the nations, of the penetrating awareness that there is no State of Israel without Jerusalem and no peace without Jerusalem united, the City of Peace. (Speech by Prime Minister Rabin at the Jerusalem 3000 celebrations, September 4, 1996)

In 1993, the State of Israel decided to make the year 1996 the Trimillennium of Jerusalem – The City of David, an event popularly called *Jerusalem 3000*. According to the decision, the purpose of the celebration was “To place Jerusalem at the focus of attention both in Israel and the world, and to strengthen its status and image as both the spiritual and national capital of Israel and the Jewish people.” (Decision of the Government of the State of Israel, 1993).

This celebration and the reactions to it put a finger on one of the narrative battles regarding the history of Jerusalem. Who can provide solid evidence of an ancestral bond going back to the very beginning of settling the area where we find Jerusalem today? History and archaeology are crucial components in the Zionist project regarding Jerusalem and current territorial politics in Israel. Historical backgrounds are common in many books, but in this case it is highly complicated to define any kind of objective history. Historians and archaeologists often relate their findings more or less closely to religious texts or use the texts as a way of structuring chapters or the entire research. There is a risk of the researcher being overly steered in a certain direction, especially when it comes to the early history of Jerusalem, concerning which there are few archaeological findings (Thompson, 2003:1p; Sawah, 2003:116). Therefore descriptions of actual historical events and dates are combined with an analysis of how history is used in political vocabulary.

The narrative battle of ancestry is not necessarily a question of *who* was the first person in Jerusalem, since it is impossible to ascribe ethnicity to the 35,000 year-old human remains that have been found in the area, but rather a question of who built and constructed the first permanent town-like settlement. Who can present the most legitimate territorial claim? Archaeologists have found remnants of a settlement in the Kidron valley in the Jerusalem area dating back 5,200 years. These findings cannot clearly tell us who these early settlers were or if there was anything resembling a town at that point. There are very few physical structures or documentation from this early period, except religious texts (Franken, 2000:25pp). In 1961, remains of a city wall were found in Ophel (near the Palestinian neighbourhood of Silwan and the city of David) dating back 3,800 years (1800 BCE), which has been interpreted as a sign of urban life. The first mentioning of the name Jerusalem has been found on

Egyptian vases dated to approximately 1900 BCE and contained the name *Rushalimum*, *Urusalim* or *Urushamem*. Archeologists and Historians believe that this is the first evidence of the existence of Jerusalem (Armstrong, 2005:6–7; Cline, 2004:17).

Immediately outside the current city walls we find “City of David”, run by the settler organization Elad, and which has become an increasingly important Israeli commemorative site, where the Jerusalem 3000 celebrations took place. This is the place where some of the first traces of the city have been found, and the area has been in focus the last decade due to the plans of making it into a national park and the pending demolition orders on a substantial amount of Palestinian houses in the vicinity. The efforts of the municipality to develop the area is connected to ancestry, tourism, territorial control, and thus a part of the identity politics of Jerusalem.

Claiming that Jerusalem is 3,000 years old is a strong commemorative narrative in Israeli political rhetoric and in Zionist identity discourse. According to Ariel Sharon, “Historic Jerusalem, the heart of the Jewish people for over 3,000 years, will always be one, united, the capital of the State of Israel forever and ever.” (Prime Minister Ariel Sharon speech Jerusalem Day, June 6, 2005). The figure 3000 is repeated in Israeli museums, tourist brochures, and political statements. The purpose of reproducing the narrative is to strengthen and legitimize the Israeli claims on Jerusalem. It is connected to the importance of settling in and developing the land, and to the political slogan of “a land without people”.

In the last 10–15 years, the origin of the city has created a narrative war in the Israel–Palestine conflict. It is clear that there was a settlement in Jerusalem about 5,000 years ago. The question is who the settlers really were, what the settlement looked like, and who their descendants are. It is more and more common among Palestinian researchers and politicians to relate to Jerusalem as a 5,000 year-old city, and they claim that at least some Palestinians could be the descendants of the Jebusites, which means that Palestinians can also present historical linkage with the very first traces of the city. There are also similarities between the current Palestinian and the ancient Canaanite culture (Khalidi, 2000:xi–xv; Nabil, 2003:1; Noufal, 2003:1). Since there are no clear historical

and archaeological facts, anyone could be the descendant of the early settlers of what is today Jerusalem.

Jerusalem has been the center of Jewish consciousness for over three thousand years, even before King David made it the capital of his kingdom in 1004 B.C.E. No other city has played such a predominant role in the history, culture and religion of a people as has Jerusalem for the Jews. (Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1999)

There are today two main stories on how Jerusalem became a capital 3,000 years ago. The traditional view has been that King David conquered Jerusalem militarily and declared Jerusalem the capital. This assumption has been challenged lately as it is speculated whether it is not more reasonable to assume that the Israelite, Judahite, Jebusite and the Canaanite societies merged at one point and that David ended up as the king (Franken, 2000:30pp; Armstrong, 2005:ch. 2). In any case, the origin of the Jewish claim over Jerusalem is not only connected to the narrative of who built the very first settlement but also who made Jerusalem into a capital and thus according to the commemorative narrative a proper city. From an archaeological perspective there are few doubts that Jewish ancestors were established in Jerusalem 3000 years ago and this date is the basis of the modern Israeli claims to Jerusalem (Mendenhall, 2000:42p; Armstrong, 2005:ch. 2–3). The 3,000 year-old connection with Jerusalem is considered in Israeli commemorative narrative to be a unique emotional attachment for the Jewish people, as Jerusalem has never been the capital of any other state except the Jewish states in the era of King David until 70 CE and the state of Israel after 1948.

...apart from the period when it was the capital of the Crusader Kingdom, only the Jews have made Jerusalem their political capital and most important holy city. (Meir Ben-Dov, 2002)

From a religious and cultural perspective this period in history has great effects on identity politics today, both secular and religious, because of the belief that King Salomon, David's son, built the First temple (Mendenhall, 2000:50pp). The capital created by King David is a significant component in the contemporary Jerusalem identity discourse and particularly in the Israel–Palestine conflict. The Israeli argument is that Jerusalem was never a capital during any of the Arab periods, on the contrary. The main message from this commemorative narrative is that the first real settlement in Jerusalem was built

by Jewish ancestors, and that no other people except Jews have made Jerusalem into their capital.

#### **NEXT YEAR IN JERUSALEM – EXILE, YEARNING AND STRUGGLE**

The greatest hardships, exiles and difficulties in history could never dissuade us from pursuing the realization of the Jewish people's dream of generations – the establishment of a state in the land of Israel, with Jerusalem as its capital. This was the wish of every Jew in exile, at every community and in every prayer: “next year in built-up Jerusalem.” (Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu speech, Jerusalem Day, May 21, 2009)

One of the main narratives of Zionism is the forced exile from and the yearning for a return to Jerusalem and the homeland. For some groups of Jews, the exile, or Diaspora, has been connected to a sense of geographic guilt, particularly after the establishment of the Zionist movement. A good Jew was supposed to long for the ancient homeland, and eventually settle there, and those who argued against the Zionist project were viewed as taking sides with *the Other* (Zerubavel, 1995). The Diaspora is in Zionism described as depressing, unfulfilling, and as blocking the potential of Jews. The view of the Diaspora and exile is one of the pillars of legitimizing Zionism. Jerusalem is a central part in this narrative, although as we shall see, not the first priority of the first wave of immigrants.

There are a number of events relating to both expulsions and resistance that have become fundamental in the Zionist identity discourse. Jerusalem is in political speeches and statements often referred to as a city in constant war and as having been conquered by many armies throughout the history. There have been periods of relative calm and tolerance towards the Jewish population but these are rarely mentioned in contemporary Israeli identity politics as they do not fit into the identity framework and commemorative narratives.

Throughout all the periods of foreign rule over Jerusalem – Roman (70 C.E. –324), Byzantine (324–614), Persian (614–640), Arab (640–1099), Crusader (1099–1291), Mamluk (1291–1516), and Ottoman Turk (1516–1918) – Jews were persecuted,

massacred and subject to exile. In spite of this, the Jewish presence in Jerusalem remained constant and enduring. (Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1999)

The period of exile and ongoing battles over the city, lasted from around 600 BCE to around 13<sup>th</sup> century CE. We will here consider a few examples used in political rhetoric. The Babylonians conquered Jerusalem in 587 BCE and destroyed the city, including the temple. The legend says that the exiles returned after approximately fifty years and started to build the second temple (Mendenhall, 2000:69pp). The Babylonian period is a major narrative in Israeli identity discourse and tradition, alongside the flight from Egypt. The narrative of yearning can also be exemplified through the words of former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.

Jerusalem – Jewish at its birth, Jewish also during the days we were exiled from it, and today more than ever – Jewish, whole and united. (Jerusalem Day speech Ehud Olmert, May 25, 2006)

A narrative related to the struggle over the city is the fate of the Maccabees, who rebelled against and ousted the Hellenistic regime in 164 BCE and reinstated Jewish religion and tradition in the Temple. This is celebrated in the Hanukkah tradition (Mendenhall, 2000:72) and has been remembered ever since in political speeches as well as in the Maccabiah games which is a Jewish version of the Olympics.

From the days of the Maccabees to our own times, the Jewish people has not been so strong in its homeland as it is now. (Address by Prime Minister Begin on Independence Day, Broadcast on Israel Television, 27 April 1982)

The Roman period, starting with the conquest in 63 BCE, where two-thirds of the Jerusalemites were Jews, is a period frequently referred to in modern identity politics, mainly related to Jewish revolts. To this context we can add the Bar Kokhba revolt in 132–136 BCE (see for instance Zerubavel, 1995), which briefly created a Jewish state but was later crushed by a superior Roman army. During a long period Jerusalem was also a predominantly Muslim city. These periods of conquests and power struggles are popular references in Israeli political speeches and are constantly reproducing these legends about Jerusalem. They feed directly into the commemorative narrative based on constant Jewish struggles for survival.

It will be ours forever, and will never again be in the hands of foreigners. (Ariel Sharon, Jerusalem Day speech, June 6, 2005)

The message of these commemorative narratives is that Jews have always fought for their survival in Jerusalem, and the city has been a uniting symbol in exile. Jews have thus always yearned for a return to the city.

### **JERUSALEM IN EARLY ZIONISM – THE TRIUMPHANT RETURN?**

For 2,000 years we have been saying: We are in exile. We have not been in exile for 2,000 years – even this is not true. We continued to live here. (Benjamin Netanyahu speech, Jerusalem Day, May 11, 2010)

One of the most fundamental commemorative narratives is that Jerusalem has always been the focus of Jewish yearning and for Jewish immigration. Leaving any chronological space empty of Jewish presence would mean opening up for other claims. It is furthermore supported by a claimed uninterrupted Jewish presence in the city, and the somewhat disputed fact that Jews have been a majority for 150 years.

Jews have always chosen to settle in Jerusalem. Since 1840, the Jews have constituted the largest ethnic group in the city, and they have held an uninterrupted majority in Jerusalem since the 1860's. (Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1999)

One fact that modern day politicians are reluctant to discuss is that Jerusalem has not always been the center of attention. The period of early Zionism and the first waves of immigration is an illustration of Jerusalem in and out of Zionist focus. The character of Jerusalem started to change around 1840, and according to Alexander Schölch, the city, until the First World War, "...reflected the rhythm of the interaction between Ottoman policies, European penetration and regional responses." (Schölch, 2000:230). It was a period when all groups tried to find physical evidence of their connection to the city. Archaeology became a new kind of soft crusade, but this time the Europeans, based on the Bible, supported the Jews rather than slaughtered them. Archaeological work was performed with a shovel in one hand and the Bible in the other. Several archaeologists and other hobby excavators played an important role in unearthing the secrets of Jerusalem. One even managed to

bring a pickaxe into the Dome of the Rock and started to hammer away in the hopes of finding a hidden treasure (Armstrong, 2005:362).

Jerusalem was not the first priority of the new Jewish immigrants in Ottoman Palestine as they chose to settle mainly in rural areas and along the coast. On the other hand, the very return to the ancient homeland was a triumph for many Jews. There were several reasons for not settling in Jerusalem: one was to create an economic foundation for the community based on agriculture, another to maximize territorial control (Katz, 1995:281), a third to distance the Yishuv from the urban life in the Diaspora and instead focus on developing the new rural Jew, a fourth explanation is that the secular nature of the hegemonic labor Zionism led to less focus on Jerusalem, a fifth is the reluctance of Zionist leaders to start an international conflict over Jerusalem, which would jeopardize the Zionist project (Mayer, 2008:24p), and finally that Jerusalem was geographically remote as the new communities settled mainly along the coast (Friedland & Hecht, 2000:49).

By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was a growing focus on Jerusalem and the tensions between the Jewish immigrants and the Palestinian Arabs increased. Jewish immigration to Jerusalem increased during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, mainly due to the increased persecutions in Europe. This increase was one of the reasons for clashes, such as in 1929 and 1936, between Jews, Arabs, and British soldiers. By the time of the Declaration of the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, the leaders of the Yishuv, including Ben-Gurion, had started to realize the political importance of the city although the document did not mention Jerusalem specifically (Mayer, 2008:230p).

The message of the commemorative narratives presented in speeches and statements is that this period constituted the glorious return to Jerusalem as a safe haven for all Jews and a refuge from centuries of persecution. Another commemorative narrative is the uninterrupted presence of Jews in Jerusalem. The events during this period show that the modern commemorative narratives, depicting a triumphant return or an eternal presence, are simplified and do not give room for the tensions between different forms of Zionism. The narratives are framed differently and do not take into account the fact that

Jerusalem was not the priority of the old Yishuv or mentioned in the Declaration of the establishment of Israel.

### **JERUSALEM DIVIDED**

Jerusalem is and has always been an undivided city, except for this 19 year period. There is no justification for this short period to be viewed as a factor in determining the future of the city, and to negate 3,000 years of unity. (Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1999)

One of the central parts of the master commemorative narrative is Jerusalem as undivided. The period between 1948 and 1967 is the main fuel for the arguments against division. This was also a period where the Zionist leaders started to show a genuine interest in the Old City (Mayer, 2008:233). Let us first recall the events leading up to the division. The British authorities passed on the mandate of Palestine to the newly created United Nations in 1947. The organization drafted a partition plan that was accepted by the General Assembly (United Nations General Assembly resolution 181:II) which proposed dividing the Palestinian mandate into two states. The Palestinian Jews accepted the plan and the internationalization of Jerusalem (*corpus separatum*). The Palestinian Arabs, on the other hand, refused to agree to the partition or to Jerusalem as a *corpus separatum*. There were Arab attacks on Jewish property in Jerusalem immediately after the partition plan was accepted, and Jewish military forces (later developed into the Israeli army), attacked Palestinian Arab villages near Jerusalem. The Jordanian Arab Legion captured the Old City and all Jewish residents of the Old City were driven out. Israel had enlarged its territory considerably but east Jerusalem came under Jordanian administration. Jerusalem was now physically divided. Jordan's subsequent annexation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem in 1948 was never recognized internationally.

The 19 years of Jordanian rule over the eastern part of Jerusalem has created a commemorative narrative about “the other” based on the inability of the Jordanian authorities to develop Jerusalem and to grant access to religious sites. If there is a narrative, there is always a counter-narrative. The 1948 war is called the *War of Independence* in Israel, but the Palestinians call it the *Nakbah* – the catastrophe. Israeli books about the 1948 war and its aftermath, such as

Raphael Israeli's *Jerusalem Divided. The Armistice Regime 1947–1967*, present one narrative, while *Jerusalem 1948, The Arab Neighborhoods and their Fate in the War*, edited by Salim Tamari, deals with the same historical period in a totally different manner. (Tamari, 2002; Israeli, 2002).

In Israeli political rhetoric, be it speeches on Jerusalem day or statements on various government websites, Jerusalem has never been physically divided apart from these 19 years, although the city is divided into different neighborhoods and quarters based on ethnic and/or religious affiliation. During the 19 years of division, the Jordanians were criticized for not granting religious freedom and accusations were directed towards the Israelis of desecrating Muslim cemeteries. The city during this period is described as; "...a divided city. Not one Jew could pray near the Western Wall [...] Jerusalem was a sleepy border town, a city on the edge. [...] separated, bleak..." (Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu speech, Jerusalem Day, May 12, 2010).

The Israeli narrative states that few investments were made in the Jordanian area of the old mandate in general and in Jerusalem in particular. According to Michael Hudson, "It was widely believed that the Jordanian authorities feared that sooner or later Israel would strike again and so had its security incentive to give priority to the East Bank." (Hudson, 2000:267). The counter-narrative of the Jordanians and the Palestinians is that a lot of effort was put into the tourism industry. They claim that the Haram ash-Sharif was renovated and a new city center was built to the east of the Old City. From only a handful of hotels in the late 1940s, around 70 hotels had sprung up in East Jerusalem by 1966 (Armstrong, 2005:391). The argument from the Israeli side that East Jerusalem was neglected during the Jordanian rule, can be discussed, even if it did not reach the scale of the development in West Jerusalem. The Israelis built several new neighborhoods and established the Knesset and other government buildings in West Jerusalem, West of the Old City center around Jaffa Street. Teddy Kollek, elected Mayor of West Jerusalem in 1965, resisted a move of the city hall, which is located near the armistice line, further to the west. One of the most important things to remember is that neither the unilateral projects of Israel nor the Jordanian/Arab ones were accepted by the international community.

## **JERUSALEM REUNITED**

For 19 years Jerusalem was divided, besieged, reclusive, and at the end of every path, and for double that time – 38 years – it has been united and open. (Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, Jerusalem Day Speech, 2005)

Today, we celebrate 40 years since the reunification of the two parts of the city. However, these 40 years appear as a passing moment in the rich history of this magnificent city. So many have yearned for it, so many have longed for it and so many have sacrificed their lives for it. (Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert speech, Jerusalem reunification celebration, 2007)

In May 2007, Israel marked the “40th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem”, with speeches and celebrations in Jerusalem attended by leading national and local politicians and people from all over the country. Separate ceremonies were also held all over the world. The celebration was one of many expressions of the role of the 1967 war and its aftermath in commemorative narratives. The Israeli conquest of the Western Wall (the Kotel) is today portrayed as one the most significant set of events in the modern history of Israel and the Jewish people. After the conquest, Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Dayan delivered a famous speech, standing next to the Western Wall, and expressed his emotions about “uniting” the city.

This morning, the Israel Defense Forces liberated Jerusalem. We have united Jerusalem, the divided capital of Israel. We have returned to the holiest of our Holy Places, never to part from it again. (Speech Moshe Dayan, 6 June 1967)

The post-1948 period, when Jews were not allowed to approach the Western Wall and could only look at the holy site from a distance, created and strengthened the desire to “liberate” the Western Wall and other sites cherished in Jewish tradition, at least according to the commemorative narrative about the 1967 events. (Mayer, 2008:237). The Knesset also passed the Protection of the Holy Places Law in June 1967, stating that

The holy places should be protected from desecration and any other violation and from anything likely to violate the freedom of access of the members of the different religions to the places sacred to them or their feeling with regard to those places. (Protection of Holy Places Law, 1967)

The dominating Israeli commemorative narrative, from a religious perspective, is that Israel is the best protector of religious freedom in Jerusalem, as

evidenced by the experiences of the Jordanian governance of East Jerusalem. "...only a free and democratic Israel can truly safeguard the city for all the world's faiths." (Gold, 2007:30). The narrative of reunification and particularly the view of Israel as the liberator is constantly being reproduced in Israeli political rhetoric.

What happened on the day of the great victory after what had happened here is that Jerusalem began to breathe again. It began to flourish, it began to spread its wings, be built up and developed. Jews returned to pray at the Western Wall, new neighbourhoods and factories were built. Millions of tourists rushed to the renewed holy city... (Prime Minister Netanyahu speech, Jerusalem Day, June 1, 2011)

On June 28, 1967, the Israeli government issued an order to enlarge the municipality of Jerusalem to cover East Jerusalem and beyond and declared that Israeli law would be implemented in this area. The area grew considerably (see figure 1) (Israeli Proclamation of Enlargement of the Municipal Area of Jerusalem, June 28, 1967). The United Nations continued to regard Jerusalem as an occupied city, and in November 1967, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 242, written by the British UN ambassador and accepted by Egypt, Jordan, Israel, and later on Syria, but not by the Arab citizens of former Palestine – the Palestinians. The resolution urged Israel to withdraw from territories occupied during the 1967 war (Gelvin, 2005:176).

These historical events have created commemorative narratives that are ubiquitous in the Israeli and Palestinian societies. In Israel these narratives have positive attributes, but for the Palestinians the narratives tell of the immorality of occupation. The main message of the commemorative narratives connected to the immediate post-67 period is that Israel reunited Jerusalem and imposed religious freedom, implying that Israel is the best caretaker of Jerusalem and particularly the holy sites. The reunification is described as returning the city to its natural state and form.

## **CONSTRUCTING THE MODERN UNITED CAPITAL THROUGH PEACE AND CONFLICT**

The analysis of the political speeches and statements shows that fewer references are made to more modern history. One interpretation is that it is easier for a politician to relate to a common history before 1967, because of

the ongoing processes of consolidating Israeli control over Jerusalem. Another reason is that different opinions about what Jerusalem became more apparent after 1967. A third explanation is that the memories are too close in time and too personal. On the other hand, commemorative narratives based on contemporary or modern history are continuously being produced, and based mainly on the image of “the other”, both the internal, but also the external other. When internal differences start to divide the community, it may be easier to unite against a common enemy.

After the de facto annexation in 1967, Israeli authorities started massive building projects in East Jerusalem, and they also put a lot of effort into continuing to create a capital with government buildings, museums, and public places also reaching into East Jerusalem. Although constructing the basic foundation of the capital, the attitude of traditional Zionists towards Jerusalem, seemed to have remained quite indifferent (Mayer, 2008:238p). When the Likud party won the election in 1977, the settlement project in Jerusalem was enlarged, and it created disputes and violent clashes between Israelis and Palestinians. The occupation triggered a Palestinian *Intifada* and the continued violence led to groundbreaking peace negotiations in the 1990s. The negotiations in Oslo, leading to the Declaration of principles in 1993, resolved to leave the issues of Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees, and the settlements, to the final negotiations, which did not take place according to schedule (Aggestam, 1999:227). Meanwhile, in mid 1990s, there were a number of terrorist acts in central Jerusalem swaying the political winds from the left to the right. Peace negotiations resumed in 2000 and in 2001. Far-reaching compromises were made on the control over Jerusalem, and the Israeli offerings are often referred to as “painful concessions”. The rejection of the proposals by Yassir Arafat and the Palestinians is regarded in Israel as incomprehensible, as slapping an outstretched hand, and as missing an historic opportunity (Zittrain Eisenberg & Caplan, 2010:236pp). This rejection, together with other Palestinian refusals over the years, such as the unwillingness to accept the partition plan, and the boycott of the Israeli political and administrative systems in Jerusalem, laid ground for a commemorative narrative about the Palestinians as always missing the opportunity for peace, for ignoring Israeli peace efforts, and for always choosing violence. “Have we not tried every possible way, even the most

painful, to run that sword into a plowshare?" (President Moshe Katsav speech, Jerusalem Day May 19, 2004).

The second Intifada, which erupted in 2000, is in this commemorative narrative portrayed as Palestinian violence in response to the Israeli offers of territorial concessions. This is a powerful commemorative narrative, creating the image of the Palestinians as a people that cannot be trusted, thus giving another motive for arguing against division of the city. The narrative is still vibrant today as the peace negotiations have come to more or less a standstill, and related to the Arab spring of 2011, the Palestinian choices are referred to in the following remarks:

Will this mark yet another missed historical opportunity, one of many that the Palestinians made sure to miss through dozens of years of conflict? Yet in every similar junction in the past, the Peel Commission (1937,) the Partition Plan (1947) or the Oslo Accords (1993-1995,) it wasn't logic that guided the actions of the Palestinian leaderships and people who followed them, but rather, unrestrained national zeal. This outbreak of emotion gave rise to terms like Nakba (disaster) and Intifada (uprising.) The target has always been Israel, Zionism and the Jews. (Elad, *Ynet News*, April 5, 2011)

In conclusion, what role do these narratives play? Are they simply narrative cosmetics in a few non-important political speeches? Are they political slogans, coming and going, or do they matter in the long run? The answer is that there is a vivid interplay between political strategies and these narratives. They constantly enforce each other and as time goes by, new commemorative narratives are created and reproduced. We will now turn to a discussion on how these narratives are connected to city policy and specific strategies of territoriality.

#### **4. FROM NARRATIVES TO CITY POLICY AND STRATEGIES OF TERRITORIALITY**

One major criticism from local politicians and other actors from across the political spectrum, is that leading Israeli politicians talk about the importance of Jerusalem in speeches, but as soon as the cameras are switched off, their interest in practical issues, that cost a lot of money, has generally been slim

(See interviews in Andersson, 2011). These critical voices claim that Jerusalem has been neglected, and along with the growing neglect from Knesset politicians, the government's financial support in the municipality's budget has decreased from comprising 70% of the municipal budget in the 1970s to 26% in 1986. Teddy Kollek, who was elected mayor of West Jerusalem in 1965, immediately complained about the lack of interest in the city.

Furthermore, there has always been a minister for Jerusalem affairs, but recent governments have not appointed such as minister, which is a symbolic sign to the critics. The official rhetoric puts Jerusalem first, but in the budget and on the general political agenda, Jerusalem is not given priority, despite its indicated importance. There have been no clear, outspoken visions at the highest political level, and the setting of political goals is delegated to lower levels in the decision-making hierarchy. The problem emanating from the lack of political visions on the national level is that the city risks stagnating, culturally, economically, socially, and politically. Accusations have mainly been directed towards former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Kadima, and the entire Labor party era for neglecting Jerusalem in order to make territorial concessions in the peace negotiations with the Palestinians (See interview study in Andersson, 2011).

The decision-making hierarchy regarding Jerusalem is based on a top-bottom system. Municipal politicians have been more or less forced to take on a reactive role rather than proactive. The inability of the national level to issue open and straightforward policies, has led to a situation where it has been difficult to pursue an effective and systematic city policy. This is also due to differences in opinion, weak decision-making structures, ad hoc implementation of political projects, and the unresolved conflict over Jerusalem. This deficiency has, for instance, led to run-down neighborhoods in central Jerusalem that are in great need of revitalization, and a lack of systematic renovation of sewage systems and infrastructure. The major message from the respondents is that the master commemorative narrative, as expressed in speeches and laws, is the closest Israeli politicians have ever come to making decisions regarding actual day-to-day problems in Jerusalem. The Prime Minister's speech on Jerusalem Day normally turn back the clock, but on Jerusalem Day 2010, Prime Minister Netanyahu also spoke about the need

to strengthen contemporary Jerusalem economically as well as the Jewish heritage in Jerusalem (Jerusalem Day speech at Mercaz Harav Yeshiva, May 12, 2010), and the government has, together with the municipality, decided to give Jerusalem additional financial support.

The role of Jerusalem municipal politics is normally described as less influential and dependent upon the budget and initiatives of the national government (Dumper, 1997). On the other hand, local Jerusalem politics have often had a special character. Teddy Kollek, the Mayor of Jerusalem from 1965 to 1993, is often described as a legend, due to his long career. He continued to complain throughout his mandate about the lack of funds and interest in Jerusalem, showed by his fellow companions in the Labor party and in the following Likud-run governments. Due to complaints from the Palestinian population regarding discrimination, municipal civil servants took a closer look at the municipal budget and concluded in late 1980s that the Palestinians received from 2 to 12% out the municipal budget, depending on the issue. Based on these numbers, Kollek made a series of attempts to receive funds for developing East Jerusalem, but was frustrated at the unwillingness of national politicians to engage in Jerusalem (Cheshin, Hutman & Melamed, 1999:20pp). So far, it looks as if the commemorative narratives were and are pure cosmetics. The period of Ehud Olmert as Mayor of Jerusalem (1993–2003) is not seen as very transformative, and although being the first ultra-orthodox mayor, Uri Lupolianski (2003–2008) was criticized for prioritizing his constituency and not Jerusalem as a whole. Today, debaters and analysts see a new kind of initiative and creativity coming from the municipality when it comes to forging political alliances, presenting visions, and a concrete city policy. Regardless of whether these policies are new or not, they are presented in a much more open and transparent way.

### **NEW MAYOR, NEW CITY POLICY**

In another 15 years there will not be a secular mayor in any city in Israel, [except for] perhaps in some far-flung village. (Statement by Mayoral candidate Meir Porush November 1, 2009 in Shragai & Ettinger, *Ha'aretz*, November 3)

On the evening of November 12, 2008, it was clear that the new Mayor of Jerusalem was the secular businessman Nir Barkat from the party Jerusalem

Will Succeed. He gained 50% of the votes while his main competitor Meir Porush from United Torah Judaism gathered 42%. The results of the elections were surprising for some urban governance analysts who saw a growing religious influence over local politics as well as over the entire state of Israel (See interviews in Andersson, 2011). The political situation in Jerusalem displays the secular-religious divide and the victory of the secular forces in Jerusalem is an interesting break and is leading Jerusalem in a partly new direction. It is interesting to note that Likud, Kadima and Labor have a limited representation in the city council and that Meretz is the leading social democratic/left-wing alternative. Even if Barkat won the local election, he still has to deal with Jerusalem as a predominantly religious city. If we look at the results in the latest national election by city, (see appendix) it is noticeable that the biggest party is United Torah Judaism followed by the religious Sephardi party Shas. It is easy to be sceptical of Barkat's real ability to make a change since he is not Haredi (ultra-orthodox). It is easier for someone from within that community to make painful reforms. On the other hand, the strategy of the administration was from the beginning to invite every council member into the coalition governing the city. All but one member accepted the offer.

The change of administration in the municipality has led to a more open city policy. It is not necessarily disconnected from national goals for Jerusalem, but the coalition is portrayed in the interviews as acting more independently than previous administrations. Prime Minister Netanyahu's political agenda seems to fit well with businessman Barkat's visions.

Jerusalem is being renewed. Mr. Mayor, I must tell you that I am deeply impressed by the amount of development and construction around town and into town. We are building a rail line, drilling into the mountain side, [...] and the hi-tech center, and the biotech center, and the arts center and the new movie facility, courts, the new National Library that is being built near the Knesset. (Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speech, Jerusalem Day, June 1, 2011)

Jerusalem is facing a number of challenges. The overarching problem addressed in the empirical material is that Jerusalem is considered a weak capital in many respects. The image of the city is one of a poor, peripheral religious symbol detached from real life. This is one reason why young, well-educated people are rapidly leaving Jerusalem though this is also due to the

lack of employment. The negative migration trend is worrying many Israeli policy-makers for economic but also national reasons.

The new Mayor therefore launched a program, and one central issue was to deal with is the overall management of the municipality of Jerusalem. The ambition of the Barkat administration is to make Jerusalem into a proper capital, together with local and national actors. The goal is to make Jerusalem a political, economic, cultural, religious, demographic, educational, and picturesque capital. Planning and construction in general, and specific projects, will therefore be a prioritized political issue. Barkat works towards developing the local neighborhood councils and to open up the decision-making processes to the public. Transparency is a key word, and the municipal spending should be firmly controlled. Besides the focus on a certain target population, Barkat and his coalition highlight reforms within education. Environmental issues have priority, and a deputy mayor (Naomi Tsur) has been appointed to deal specifically with this issue. In the Barkat election platform special emphasis was put on the development of East Jerusalem (Barkat Plan 2008) and on the eve of his victory, Nir Barkat assured everyone that he will be the mayor “for all Jerusalemites”.

This means that the Jerusalem municipality today is more than just a local administration, as it has the ability or take responsibility for initiating new issues and plans. The local government in Jerusalem has a high level of autonomy, but state authorities have the final word in the case of planning. We will now turn to four central city policies brought forward by the Barkat administration and supported by the current national government.

#### **STRENGTHENING ANCESTRY AND HERITAGE**

One of the main policies during the last decade has been to promote and strengthen the Jewish heritage and ancestry in Jerusalem. One of the most important projects is the renewal of the Old City, which is also one of the most controversial and sensitive (Andersson, 2011). One way has been to focus on establishing the physical bond through archeology. Important sites are the City of David which is described in the following way on the Jerusalem municipality website “Here, while exploring the recently excavated fortresses and

passageways, visitors relive King David's conquest of the Jebusite city as described in the 2nd Book of Samuel.” (<http://www.jerusalem.muni.il>, Tourism). The policy of the municipality is to strengthen the Jewish character of this site and the neighbourhood Silwan in which it resides. Another example is the excavations near the Temple Mount (the Ophel). These sites are strategic in connecting city policy to the 3,000 year old legacy.

The ancestral bond is also developed by a city policy focusing on urban renewal. This work is mainly led by the Jerusalem Development Authority (JDA) and is closely connected with economic development, culture, and tourism. This project is focusing currently on the area around Jaffa Street. The municipal administration will also work for the creation and maintenance of open spaces and parks, strengthening the ancestral landscape. Promenades, such as those overlooking the Old City, are particularly prioritized. With the appointment of a “Green” deputy mayor, ancestry and heritage is firmly rooted in the nature and landscapes surrounding Jerusalem.

#### **BRINGING THE RIGHT PEOPLE IN**

One of the central goals set up by the Israeli government, the mayor of Jerusalem, and his broad coalition is to reverse the negative migration trend. According to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, Jerusalem, which is the largest city in Israel, had a negative migration trend rate of 9.3 (7,100 people left the city) the year 2009 (Statistical abstract of Israel 2010, [www.cbs.gov.il](http://www.cbs.gov.il)). In his election platform, Barkat presented a number of ideas for how to reverse this trend, such as attracting young, well-educated people by offering affordable housing, supporting local entrepreneurs, providing the best education, and beautifying the city (Barkat Plan 2008). The reluctance to live in Jerusalem is based on the image of the city as peripheral among many Israelis, and on its being too connected to religion and the political conflict with the Palestinians.

The demographic balance in Jerusalem is one of the most discussed issues in contemporary local and national politics. For quite some time, public officials have worked according to the 70-30 ratio of Jews and Palestinians. Demographic policies are closely related to maintaining Israeli control and

sovereignty over Jerusalem. Numerous studies have been performed and since few sources give the same numbers of residents, they could easily be used as tools to promote a certain narrative. According to Israeli sources, Jerusalem has had a Jewish majority since at least the 1860s, but Palestinian sources provide other figures indicating that those claims are exaggerated (Hulme, 2006:37). As we have seen, it has been of great significance for Israeli political argumentation to establish an uninterrupted presence in Jerusalem and this has been used in connection with the Israeli narrative that many of the Arab inhabitants of Jerusalem settled in the city during the second Ottoman period and not before. This is an example of trying to find a positive self-presentation and a negative other-representation.

### **JERUSALEM – THE POTENTIAL FLAGSHIP OF ECONOMIC GROWTH**

In order to change the trends in Jerusalem and turn it into a thriving city, worthy of its title as the Capital of Israel and the Jewish People, the city needs accelerated economic growth and the reinforcement of business activity. (Barkat Plan 2008)

A capital city has a special place in the national consciousness, and the image of Jerusalem as poor and worn-down is not an ideal foundation for economic growth and attractiveness. The municipal leadership of Jerusalem focuses to a great extent on the economic development of the city and the underdeveloped tourism industry. The plan is to go from 2 million tourists a year to 10 million in 10 years. In order to accomplish this goal, there is a need for more hotels, a better transport system, a modern shopping district, etc. This ambition is shared with the Prime Minister, as one of his cherished areas of interest is economic development.

Building a new capital requires a large work force in the construction industry, both in the public and the private sector, and industrial areas. Jerusalem lacks these kinds of areas, although two major industrial zones were created after 1967, Atarot in the north and Talpiot in the south. One challenge in developing the industry is the negative migration trend, with well-educated people tending to leave the city. Even though there are far-reaching investments in Jerusalem today, it is still a poor city.

In addition the city has some disadvantages that affect the economic situation. First, the geographic location and topography are not ideal for building and construction, be it a question of residential, commercial, or industrial areas. Jerusalem's distance from harbors and its lack of natural resources have restricted the possibilities to develop a viable industry. On top of all that, there is very little space to develop (Dumper, 1997:217). Second, the ongoing conflict has had a serious effect on both West and East Jerusalem economies. Third, the intensive periods of Jewish immigration have contributed to an increasingly severe economic situation in Israel in general – a situation that has created social divides (Alterman, 2002; Naqib, 2003). Fourth, according to several studies, poverty is rising among the new immigrants, the Palestinian population, and the ultra-orthodox Jews. Since Jerusalem has a significant number of Palestinians and ultra-orthodox Jews with large families, this naturally has consequences for these citizens and for the municipal tax income and hence the budget (Lewin & Stier, 2002). The growing divides in Jerusalem is problematic from these points of view, but are also an obstacle to any attempts to create a common economic base or economic solidarity – an idea that was very much part of the vision of the creators of Israel. With increasing ties to the global economy this idea is problematic to strive towards.

### **CITY POLICY AND “THE OTHER”**

One of the prioritized policy areas for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is economic development and his vision is to achieve economic peace. Netanyahu has already set up a special office to deal with the economic situation of the territories, i.e. the West Bank. “We strive to assist with the accelerated development of the Palestinian economy and in developing its economic ties with Israel”. (Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speech at the Knesset swearing in ceremony, March 31, 2009). The mayor of the city also calls for an increased focus on investments in East Jerusalem, such as renovating the sewage system, enforcing laws and improving the standard of living of the inhabitants. No more “Wild East” (Barkat Plan 2008). The 2011 budget for Jerusalem is presented as allocating a record sum to the development of East Jerusalem.

The gaps in eastern Jerusalem are the result of decades of neglect of the residents of the city and its infrastructure by the Government of Israel and the Municipality of

Jerusalem. As someone who believes in the unity of Jerusalem, it is my duty to invest in eastern Jerusalem and in the last two years I have made it a priority to close many of the gaps. We will not accept a situation where residents of Jerusalem do not have classrooms, roads, or basic infrastructure. The 2011 Municipal budget addresses many of the challenges in eastern Jerusalem and will both raise the quality of life of the residents and will continue to reduce gaps. (Nir Barkat on 2011 budget, Jerusalem municipality website)

One way to interpret the focus on economic development is to connect economy with the narrative regarding the alleged wish of the Palestinian Jerusalemites to remain under Israeli jurisdiction. According to the narrative, the Palestinian Authority cannot provide for them as well as Israel can and when the Palestinians in Jerusalem are satisfied materially and economically, they will no longer demand their own state. The effort to make East Jerusalem a better place to live in economically and infrastructurally is strongly supported today by right-wing Israelis and particularly those who live in the smaller Jewish neighborhoods or settlements in East Jerusalem. The first priority has for a number of years been to “make them leave,” mainly by buying property, but if that cannot be done, why not improve their economic situation to such an extent that there are no economic reasons for them to strive for self-determination (See interviews in Andersson, 2011). Economic prosperity is certainly an important part of the everyday lives of Palestinians in Jerusalem, but to go so far as to see it as a reason for giving up self-determination rather overestimates the importance of economy and underestimates the question of identity.

This is an image of “the other” as an object or some kind of marionette that in a rational society should act in a certain way. It shows a lack of understanding for the dynamics of the Palestinian society and the internal Palestinian political relations. Today, it is vital for each side to maintain arguments and stories about the evilness of the other, whether or not these stories are actually true.

This article reveals that the master commemorative narrative can be separated into a number of commemorative narratives. These constitute the basis for city policies and strategies of territoriality. The figure below is an attempt to visualize the main content of this article. It is important to remember that this

is not a figure of causality. There are constant interactions between narratives, city policy, and strategies of territoriality.

**Master commemorative narrative**

Jerusalem as the eternal and indivisible capital of Israel and the Jewish people

**Commemorative narratives**

Jerusalem as the 3,000 year-old capital of Israel and the Jewish people	Jerusalem as the religious capital of the Jewish people. No other religion has the same bond to the city.	Jerusalem as a safe haven for Jews and a refuge from centuries of persecutions	Jerusalem as neglected by other “landlords” and requires Israel to build up the city	Jerusalem as a contested territory where “the other” chooses violence instead of peace
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**City policy**

Strengthening the political capital by government buildings, monuments, and places for public gatherings	Focusing on urban renewal, historic landscape, common heritage	Bringing Jews to Jerusalem, with the right socio-economic background	Strengthening economic growth through public and private initiatives	Controlling “the other” through housing projects and economic development
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**Strategies of territoriality**

Constructing the legal-political capital	Constructing the ancestral and spiritual capital	Constructing the demographically balanced capital	Constructing the economic capital	Constructing the exclusive capital
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*Figure 2. Interplay commemorations, city policy, and strategies of territoriality*

## 5. CONCLUSION

Many of the commemorative narratives presented in this text are used as points of reference in political speeches and statements. They are a part of everyday life stories and of socialization processes in the Israeli society. The commemorations are based on particular events in history and often relates to counter-narratives, both from within and without, about the same historical events. What role do they play in a conflict context? Do they really matter or are they just political cosmetics? The narratives do matter as they shape the argumentation in the struggle to control Jerusalem. The commemorative narratives are used to legitimize and establish the claim to Jerusalem based on historical “facts”. They are the foundation for constructing city policy and strategies of territoriality. At the same time they are constantly developing, depending on the political context. Despite the existence of political goals inspired by the narrative foundation, Israeli authorities on the national level and the government have been accused of not putting action behind the words. Jerusalem has in many aspects been on hold for the last 20 years. There are actors who believe that this is done because of the willingness of certain politicians (particularly the secular labor Zionist veterans) to give up on parts of Jerusalem.

Through a more outspoken city policy developed by the latest municipal leadership, the link between narrative, policy and practice is clearer today. Some politicians and social movements are also more candid in their communication about strategies to keep Jerusalem united under Israeli sovereignty. The city policy might not have changed considerably since 1967, but it comes today in another form. The current city policy focuses mainly on making the whole of Jerusalem the capital city of Israel; preserving heritage, particularly the historic landscape, and creating ancestry; developing the local economy; focusing on turning the negative out-migration; and at least rhetorically making Jerusalem a city for all its inhabitants. The somewhat clearer connection between commemorative narratives and city policy makes it easier to understand and explore the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with regards to Jerusalem. It gives information about the basic foundation of the tensions but also about possible solutions.

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