**Formal Boycott or Informal Frustration?**

**Non-voting in East Jerusalem for the Jerusalem Municipal Elections**


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Boycotting is often defined as non-voting due to distrust of the legitimacy or fairness of a particular election or state. In contrast, theories of non-boycotting non-voting point to a common cause of general mistrust or interest in the democratic process of elections. The low voter turnout in East Jerusalem for municipal elections has often been assumed to be a boycott against the legitimacy of the state of Israel and/or Israel's occupation of East Jerusalem. Eight in-depth interviews with residents of East Jerusalem suggest that there is a possibility that general mistrust of democracy may be one factor for not voting, as opposed to a formal boycott.  If it is a boycott, the boycott may not be merely a method of showing they are not cooperating with the occupation; rather, the boycott's central cause may be opposition to a lack of political rights and freedom of speech for Palestinians to campaign in the election.  This subtle difference is often ignored in current discussions surrounding the low voter turnout in East Jerusalem. These differences, if checked for the entire population, may shed light on the cause of the low voter-turnout in East Jerusalem.


Ch. 1: The Empirical Puzzle: (Non-)Voting in East Jerusalem

Since the East Jerusalem came under Israeli rule, the Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem have had the option of voting in municipal Jerusalem elections, even though the vast majority of residents are not Israeli citizens and cannot vote in the national elections. The last

three decades have seen a very low, close to zero, voter turnout[1] in East Jerusalem which has almost exclusively been understood by both Israeli and Palestinian media within the contents of a boycott of the municipal elections, specifically against the occupation.  The Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs[2] and the Badil Resource center, for example, use the phrase "Palestinian Boycott" of Jerusalem municipal elections, specifically, in the worlds of the Badil center, to indicate the "total rejection of Israel's occupation and annexation of East Jerusalem." [3] However, Palestinians with Israeli citizenship do vote in national elections, despite their opposition to the occupation.  Non-voting can be the result of apathy, lack of education[4] , and lack of trust in the democratic process, in candidates, and in the belief that one's vote will affect one's future. *The completely separate socio-economic conditions, culture, and history of Palestinians in East Jerusalem suggests that the major differences in voter turnout may be the result of factors other than the active will to boycott the elections on grounds of the Occupation*. While the independent variables may indeed be the same as those which lead to boycott, and while the end the result is clearly intentional choices to not vote, there are major differences between a lack of will to vote in general and a lack of will to vote specifically in the Jerusalem elections. Furthermore, *even if there is a boycott, it may be that the boycott is against what they perceive as the unfairness of the election itself, and not specifically against the occupation alone.*  This paper will attempt to understand the potential perceptions that Palestinians have

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[1] "Palestinians Boycott Israeli Municipal Elections in Jerusalem." (http://www.badil.org/en/article74/item/538-palestinians-boycott-israeli-municipal-elections-in-jerusalem.): cites 3.3% voter turnout in East Jerusalem compared to overall participation of 40%.

[2] "The Palestinians Boycott of Jerusalem's Municipal Political Process: Consequences for the level of Public Services and Infrastructure." (http://www.jcpa.org/brief/brief2-21.htm)

[3] "Palestinians Boycott Israeli Municipal Elections in Jerusalem." (http://www.badil.org/en/article74/item/538-palestinians-boycott-israeli-municipal-elections-in-jerusalem.)

[4] including knowledge of where and how to vote in addition to knowledge of candidate policies

with regards to voting, in order to better understand the complexities of non-voting in East Jerusalem.

## Ch. 2: Why we vote and why we don't: literature on boycotting and other forms of non-voting:

Two major theoretical areas in current literature can shed light on the case study of municipal voting in East Jerusalem: election boycotting and "general non-voting." Much the literature and this paper uses Riker and Ordeshook's equation of R=PB-C+D,[5] which is useful because D ("fulfilling one's duty") is broad enough to take into account both theories of boycotting and other forms of non-voting, yet P and B assure that self-interests are taken into account as well. (Riker and Ordeshook, 1968)

The reasons for boycotts are broad. Lindberg found that opposition party participation correlated with how free and fair elections were viewed. (Linberg, 2004) Bratton cites boycotts resulting from situations where a party knows it will lose, and wants to save face. (Bratton, 1998) Fearon argues that elections are indicators for clear "points of coordination" to create a credible threat against a leader who is going against their interests. (Fearon). Schelling presented a minimum number needed in a given boycott lead to success in their mission to increase fairness. (Shelling, 1978) Beauliea points out that boycotts require a campaign, implying, like Mainwaring and Skully, that boycotts require some sort of effort. Maiwaring and Skully, in their analyses of the building of democratic institutions in Latin America, describe boycotting as choosing to direct efforts towards questioning the legitimacy of a given electoral process, rather than putting efforts into gaining representation. (Mainwaring and Skully) Beauliea defined boycotts as generally having three characteristics: they tend to be done by

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[5] Their equation of **R=PB − C +D** claims that voter turnout is likely is the reward (R) for voting is high enough, which is defined as the probability (P) of one's vote affecting the outcome, times the benefit (B) one will gain from the success of one's preferred candidate, minus the costs (C) incurred from voting plus the benefits from fulfilling one's "citizen duty" (D)..)

the weaker of society, to involve "the broadest possible (non) participation" and that they are

typically peaceful. (Beauliea, ibid)

Literature on non-voting (which is not boycotting) covers a number of variables.

Education can be seen as affecting all variables in R=PB-C+D in a different way. Tam Cho argues

that education can lower the costs of voting (C) because one has the skills to more easily learn

about politics and the ability overcome bureaucratic obstacles.  Also, there may be more

gratification from voting as a result of education, which can increase the sense of fulfilling one's

duty (D).  Her main argument is that education and age will not increase voter participation if

these variables do not create "strong beliefs about the efficacy of voting" and beliefs in

democratic ideals. (Tam Cho, 1999). Others stress that education itself does not lead to voter

turnout without the mediating variable of increased political interest and information. (Verba,

Schozman and Brady).

A classic problem that is addressed from a rational choice perspective is that voting is

irrational because one's ability to influence an election is significantly smaller than the cost of

going to vote.  Taking into account the influences of social pressure can often provide a solution

for this paradox. Uhlaner's theory is that "voters who identify with others can receive sufficient

incentives from leaders to participate." (Uhlaner, 1986). A more recent paper suggests that the

rational choice paradigm converges with the sociological paradigm when voting is seen as a

"signal, aimed at maintaining a trustworthy reputation among one's interactive partners."

(Overbye, 2009).  Similar explanations in evolutionary psychology have been made for resource-

costly public ceremonies in general, [6]  such as Norenzayan explanation for "religious

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[6] Those humans who evolved a natural willingness to give resources for a goal that benefits something other than themselves also had the advantages of showing trustworthiness to invest in resources in others.  In this perspective, one need not vote with the intention of signaling trustworthiness; rather, those who happened to be born with this tendency, or groups which happened to pass this custom down,  had the evolutionary advantage of showing trustworthiness to others, thereby

prosociality." (Norenzayan and Shariff)[7] As with reasons for religious ceremonies surviving, voting may be a public ceremony which is costly but which has a bi-product of showing cooperative tendencies or trustworthiness.

Literature on education within the East Jerusalem emphasizes that curriculum in state schools are controlled by the Palestinian authority but paid for by the Jerusalem municipality. This split has lead to what Yair and Ayalan argue call "bifurcated citizenship." Palestinians live in a "state of exception" with "ambivalent, contradictory…institutional arrangements." Within the context of schools, this leads to overcrowding and sub-par education. (Yair and Alayan).[8] In addition to sub-par education leading to lack of knowledge of the political process and perhaps non-voting, "bifurcated citizenship" may be seen in the act of voting itself, as non-citizen residents of East Jerusalem can officially vote in the Palestinian elections and not in the Israeli national elections, yet can vote in the Jerusalem municipal elections. What is perhaps a similar unique phenomenon is addressed in academic literature on immigrants who are given the right to vote in local elections but can only vote in the national elections of their country of origin, if at all. Raskin argues that citizens have the right to vote because they are subject to taxation and laws. (Raskin, 1395) The legitimacy of municipal voting rights to non-citizens in Canada, it is argued, arises from changing understandings of citizenship as a phenomenon to address "residence, affected interests, democratic interests and solidarity" rather than "sharing national or ethnic identity." (Munro, 69) However, other studies suggest that shared citizenship can greatly affect the likelyhood of an individual wanting to vote, at least locally. A study done in

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encouraging resource-profiting cooperation. Alternatively, voting, like religion and other ceremonial and belief-centured costly systems, can serve as a focal point for cooperation, which, in group selection theories, can be beneficial from an evolutionary perspective.

[8] An estimated 50% of Palestinians drop out of school before completing high school, and only around 65% complete the Palestinian matriculation exams.

Sweden provides the best evidence that citizenship, or perhaps simply not having the right to vote in the national elections, can itself decrease the voter turnout for non-citizens voting in municipal elections. [9] What is of relevance is that these results were controlled for demographic, socio-economic and contextual characteristics, showing the non-citizenship itself was a key factor in non-voting. (Bevelander and Pendakur, Working Paper, last updated 2008).[10]

Based on the above literature, as a general rule, non-voting can be the result of distrust in democracy as a whole, while boycotting can express a lack of trust in the democracy, governance and/or state of a particular election or country. [11] Equally important is understanding the type of boycott—is the lack of voting a type of protest against the inability of East Jerusalem Arabs to campaign, or is it a type of protest against the occupation as a whole? Is it a combination of a number of factors?

Ch. 3: Methodology and results:

We conducted eight in-depth interviews with residents from East Jerusalem neighborhoods in quite public settings with few people in the vicinity.  The goal of the interviews were to hear

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[9] Bevelander and Pendakur used the 2006 Electoral Participation Survey, which includes information on individual electoral participation in local, county and national elections, and compared these with socio-demographic information on these same individuals found in Statistics Sweden. Of the 70,000 analyzed, 13,000 were not citizens. They found that non-citizens in Sweden were significantly less likely to vote in municipal and country elections than immigrants who had obtained citizenship, and could also consequently vote in national elections.

[10] In the case of Sweden, this was presumably not to do with reasons connected to an active boycott or ideological opposition to the Swedish government.

[11] This differentiation can even be seen if one sees voting as a type of ceremony, or evolutionary bi-product of a human need invest in something other then themselves, regardless of the actual concrete benefits: if the investment is viewed as an investment in another group, then such voting may not take place, yet the individual would potentially vote in other instances in which the election is in-group. However, if an individual simply does not feel this need for this particular "ceremony" which lacks any direct concrete group or individual benefit, this individual would not necessarily be boycotting, as such a reaction would exist regardless of the election. These types of people would need to feel that there was a more concrete  benefit, and not just an election in a different state.

their expressed reasoning[12] for not voting in municipal elections and, if they voted in other

elections, their reasoning for voting in these elections, and reasons for the discrepancy.  In

addition to their opinions, we learned of their personal circumstances, and asked them if they

believed participation could influence their own lives, and how.  In-depth face-to-face

interviews allowed for complicated logic and explanations and also to assure respondents that

answers would be completely anonymous. Afterwards, we attempted to see what types of

answers fell into four categories: explanations which dealt with distrust or their opinion

regarding *democracy as a whole*; explanations which suggested distrust or general opinion of

the *democracy in Jerusalem* (and in some cases the Palestinian authority); explanations which

surrounded the issue of not formally recognizing *Israel's presence in East Jerusalem*; and

explanations pertaining to *influences from family and friends*. These categories are flexible and

serve only as a mechanism for comparison. Each respondent will be analyzed separately, with

emphasis on these four categories of explanations.

**Samira**[13], the first interviewee, was a recent graduate of English literature from Al

Quads University who was working on preliminary courses for an MA at Hebrew University

Distrust of democracy in general*:*  Samira expressed, perhaps more than the other

interviewees, a lack of trust in democratic systems in general. Samira compared the failure of

Palestinian Jerusalem politicians to Barak Obama. [14] She discussed candidates running for the Al

Quds Student Union who handed out printing cards and books for free, an act she felt was

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[12] Because a boycott is an active intentional act, and not a passive result, respondents intentional explanations, we believed, were good indicators to understanding possible alternatives to the theory that residents are boycotting against occupation alone when they do not vote.

[13] All names have been changed to protect identity

[14] "I know that candidates all the time break their promises. For example, what happens with Obama in the States….[he] had promised the black voter to give the opportunity to get a better life than they had, better healthcare, but he broke his promise. And, the same happens hear, in my village someone had asked for votes at elections, elections in the *Iryha* [municipality], he didn't do anything [in the end] for the streets, the traffic**…**"

simply buying votes. In addition, her cousin, she said, had been given a credit card by one candidate to vote for him. When it was pointed out by the interviewer that this was illegal, she said she was surprised did not know that this was illegal. Her only memory of learning about democracy was in a literature class in her university, and she said she had no idea how the municipal elections functioned. When asked if she thought non-voting helped any cause, she responded that it did not, but nor did voting.[15] Distrust of Jerusalem elections in particular: She told us that her uncle, who did vote in the municipal elections, felt like a "piece of paper to sign" in the eyes of the politicians. Influence from friends, families, and peers: She and her family had applied for Israeli citizenship, and she said that such a fact was usually kept secret, though she emphasized that she was not ashamed of telling people she had citizenship, and she thought objection to occupation and citizenship should not be connected. She spoke of her friends going to vote only for the experience, and to know what voting was about, something she felt was not enough of a reason to vote. Not recognizing Israel's presence in East Jerusalem: Asked if she thought others saw hiding citizenship may be connected to not voting, she said not voting, unlike hiding citizenship, was not connected to objection to Israel's control of Jerusalem. Distrust of democracy in general: **Muhammad**, our second interviewee, started the interview discussing the lack of political rights in East Jerusalem leading him to give up attempts at influence, but then discussed reasons he did not vote in Palestinian elections either, while admitting that he had voted for Hamas in 2006. He asked the rhetorical question of "if they do not take my stances then why should I vote for them?" His reasons for not voting in the Palestinian Authority elections—corruption—were different than his reasons for not voting in

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[15] She expressed her interest in finding out how one might influence policy and of her eagerness to visit the Knesset.

the Jerusalem municipality—the latter being due to a general lack of political rights. He said that he would never want to live under the Palestinian Authority as he would never want to live under a corrupt government, a description he did not give to the Israeli national or municipal government, who he believed just "spit in our faces" and did not accept that East Jerusalem was and should be separate from Israel.  Distrust of Jerusalem elections in particular: Muhammad spoke of the political party he tried to establish, hoping to gain six mandates in the Jerusalem municipality. However, a member of Israel's Internal Security Services (SHABAK) approached him after he had distributed fliers and asked him what he was doing. After this, he concluded that Palestinians "could not have an influence on a Jewish municipality." Influence from friends, families, and peers:  He did not mention any influences or opinion of friends or family, speaking only of the Palestinians as a collective group.  He did say that a boycott was affective specifically because it brought people together in a common cause. Not recognizing Israel's presence in East Jerusalem: Israel as a state with no legitimacy was mentioned in response to what he thought of the status of Jerusalem. When asked the next question – if he had ever voted in the municipal elections – his response pertained to his experience with a member of the SHABAK when attempting to start a political party. He said that this experience lead him to believe that Palestinians could not influence policies in a "Jewish municipality" even if they wanted to. He described Israel's occupation as only harming Jews, emphasizing that one day war would break out and Israel would pay the price for their oppression.

Ahmad: Distrust/opinion of democracy in general:  Ahmad, who came from a wealthy, well known Palestinian family, and who received a good education, including a degree from Hebrew University, did not quite specifically speak of distrust of democracy in general, but stated that the democracy was not possible because the Palestinians were the weak ones, did

not control the national ministries in Israel, and that the occupying "government can direct the elections in any way he sees fit." This in no way expressed a lack of trust in democracy in general, but it did emphasize the need for a scenario where there were not major power differences. What is of interest is that he strongly believed that democracy could not work in a multi-national state, stating that, for this reason, he believed in a two-state solution. [16]

Distrust/opinion of Jerusalem elections in particular:  He believed that the boycott was unquestionably affective in "keeping the status quo" until international politics changed. Voting, he believed, would lead to the SHABAK coming into East Jerusalem and preventing political participation. [17]  Influence from friends, families, and peers:  He felt it was his responsibility to boycott the election and to call for others to not vote, as he was head of what he called a "major non-profit" in the area of education. He did not mention any influence from others, rather, the need to influence others as a leader. He was the only one to mention that they would need to get permission from the Palestinian Authority before voting.  Not recognizing Israel's presence in East Jerusalem:  He connected the occupation to the power differences that prevented Palestinians from having true influence. He also distinguished between "practical" reasons that voting was not affective—the SHABAK—as well as "national" reasons—a method of leading to the freeing of Jerusalem to serve as a capital of the Palestinian state. He compared himself voting to "going to the Israeli military."

**Awaan** worked as custodian in the building of a major Jewish non-profit organization.

Distrust/opinion of democracy in general:  Awaan was neutral, and said he did not know if

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[16] In other words, while he believed in democracy, he was relatively distrustful of any democracy functioning in a multi-national state. It was not clear if he believed this to be the case in all instances, or only with regards to Israelis and Palestinians voting in the same elections.

[17] In general, his responses connected the occupation to the power differences, which themselves were connected to the lack Palestinian control over any of the Israeli ministries, which was all connected to the "neutralizing" of Palestinians in East Jerusalem, which lead to a lack of a strong identity.

voting helped, and that he did not want to vote, only that "people want to live, without any connection to voting, it is important to make sure that people live well." He said that he was not aware of who was running for the municipality or anything about the municipality.

Distrust/opinion of Jerusalem elections in particular: The only conditions he could think of where he would vote were if he was forced to do so. Influence from friends, families, and peers: He told us that he did not care if his friends voted—it did not bother him either way. Not recognizing Israel's presence in East Jerusalem: He referenced East Jerusalem only in that he wanted to live where he was living at the time, in a place that was good for him and good for his family. He said that he wanted only to live and that "the army will come there all of the time."

**Fahri** is a head of the "Struggle Against the Destruction of the Neighborhood of Silwaan." Distrust/opinion of democracy in general: He mentioned no arguments that suggested distrust of democracy, nor anything particularly supporting democracy.

Distrust/opinion of Jerusalem elections in particular: Fahri had voted once when Teddy Kolek was head of the municipality, but since then he had not voted, as he believed it did not help. He said, "What does it matter if not voting leads to no rights?...Look was is happening with the *Haredim* [ultra-orthodox] in *Mea She'arim*!" In other words, he saw the Jerusalem municipal elections as problematic as a whole, not only against Palestinians. He said that he would vote in the Jerusalem elections if he could run on a platform of "splitting Jerusalem into two."

Influence from friends, families, and peers: He stated that "pressure on people makes them realize that the occupation is bad." However, he also emphasized that he would respect other rights to vote if they wanted to, but would persuade them otherwise. Not recognizing Israel's presence in East Jerusalem He stated at the start that he did not recognize Israel's

presence in East Jerusalem, but in the next question said that the reason he did not vote was because he thought it would not influence policy.

**Hakim** is from Jabul Mukbar and works as a custodian in a major Jewish non-profit organization in West Jerusalem <u>Distrust/opinion of democracy in general:</u> He did not say he did not trust democracy, but that he did not vote in Palestinian elections because he did not know the candidates well enough. <u>Distrust/opinion of Jerusalem elections in particular:</u> His explanation for not voting in Jerusalem was that "the elections are not real and not fair." He said it was "difficult to know" if the boycott was affective.  When asked under what conditions he would vote in Jerusalem municipal elections, he said that it was a "Democracy for Jews" and that it would not help if he voted because the results are decided before the election. <u>Influence from friends, families, and peers</u> He mentioned that he would be very upset if his friends voted in the municipal elections and that he would pressure them not to vote. <u>Not recognizing Israel's presence in East Jerusalem</u> He said that voting was "good for the occupying Jews."

Omar is from Silwaan and works for the Struggle Against the Destruction of Elbostan. <u>Distrust/opinion of democracy in general:</u> Omar did not mention democracy in the entire interview, focusing only on the Occupation <u>Distrust/opinion of Jerusalem elections in particular:</u> He said that he would not vote in the Jerusalem elections under any conditions. He asked "why should I vote for someone who does not want me to live?" In retrospect, it was not clear if he was personifying the entire municipality or arguing that no candidates were available to vote for who wanted him to live.  <u>Influence from friends, families, and peers</u> With regards to influence, he said that would be incredibly upset if any of his friends voted in the municipal elections and would try to persuade them not to. <u>Not recognizing Israel's presence in East</u>

<u>Jerusalem</u> He stated that the boycott was specifically necessary for the municipality to understand that there was an occupation.

**Rashid** is active in politics and, due to his imprisonment in 2006, was too suspicious to agree to be directly interviewed by us. He agreed to conduct the interview through a mutual friend. <u>Distrust/opinion of democracy in general:</u> He was a strong believer in democracy in general, and is an active member of the National Party. <u>Distrust/opinion of Jerusalem elections in particular:</u> He had no trust whatsoever in the Jerusalem municipal elections or in any of the state apparatus in Israel. He also took great precautions regarding who he is speaking to about his political activities. However, he continues to be a member of the National Party. In 2006 during the party's campaign in the PA elections, he was approached by the SHABAK and arrested. [18] In 1998 members of the National Party joined with Hadash to form a party list for the municipal elections, but did not gain any seats. Since then he and the party has no interest in taking part in the elections. Today, he is active in the party and is bothered less by the SHABAK. [19] <u>Influence from friends, families, and peers</u>No mention of this. <u>Not recognizing Israel's presence in East Jerusalem</u> When asked directly why he does not vote, he stated because he does not recognize Israel's right to be in East Jerusalem.

<u>Ch. 4: Discussion: Boycotting, just non-voting, or something else?</u>

The above responses, when applied to the current academic literature, can shed light on potential alternative thesis on the reasons for non-voting in East Jerusalem, and on the type of

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[18] Two members of the SHABAK came to the party headquarters while he was there. The SHAKAB member asked all who were present who the person in charge was, and when he received no answer, he called the number he was given of the head of the headquarters. When Rashid's phone rang, it was clear that it was him, and he was sent to prison for a number of months.
[19] Perhaps because there have not been PA elections since then, and because the party does not run in the municipal elections.

boycott that exists among. Each general category will be analyzed in light of the literature and the interview responses.

*Distrust/opinion of democracy in general:*

Samir, Hakim and Fahri, the lack of knowledge of candidates and the political process was clear, and their lack of connection between their non-voting and the occupation, while acknowledging both, suggests that a major influence for them not voting was perhaps a lack of education regarding elections, democracy, and candidates.  Tam Cho's analyses of the role of education in voter-turnout is not quite relevant for Samira who was well-educated in areas not connected to politics, but potentially could assist in explaining the non-voting of Hakim and Awaan.  Verba, Schlozman and Brady's qualification of Tam Cho—that education is only a variable if the mediating variable of increased political interest is present to encourage voting—perhaps explains why Samira did not vote. Her education did not lead her to be politically active and she was uninterested in the politics of her university's student council.  Ahmad's statement that secured rights require voting, but that "look at the Haredim" as an example of how voting does not necessarily protect rights, indicated a general feeling that voting just did not pay off for many in Jerusalem. This perhaps follows a more classic approach of non-voting, or boycotting the fairness of an election, rather than the boycotting because of the occupation alone.

*Distrust/opinion of Jerusalem elections in particular:*

It is not surprising, perhaps, that those who were most convinced that non-voting was a formal boycott, and who stated their own intentions as part of a formal boycott, were also the most politically active. Muhammad, Rashid and Omar and Farhi, all active in politics or policy, saw the boycott, in a way, as a "coordinated point of action" as described by Fearon. Beauliea's

description of election boycotting as replacing the lack of coordination that arises from election fraud is perhaps somewhat descriptive of what may be occurring among those who are politically active: they feel they cannot participate in the Jerusalem elections, and the best point of coordination is an organized statement of non-voting which, unlike simply not voting as an individual, can serve as a focal point.  Muhammad was cynical regarding the Palestinian elections as well, but for different reasons, suggesting it was not democracy itself that was the problem, therefore eager to still take a political stance of boycott.

Beaulue defined boycotts tending to be done by the weaker of society, to involve "the broadest possible (non) participation" and that they are typically peaceful.  However, it may be that the strongest of the weaker group are those who acknowledge the boycott. Even if there is "the broadest possible (non) participation", the "participation" may be due to entirely different reasons.  Nonetheless, Farhri's explanation that the *Haredim* also did not receive votes from voting suggests that some believed a general problem existed in Jerusalem as a whole, even if they did not associate with them on a national level—this is crucial, as is shows that the boycott may be strongly influenced by a sense of unfairness, and not only nationalism.

### *Influence from friends, families, and peers*

The explanation of boycotting by Muhammad, as "bring people together in a common cause", even if the cause was not particularly directly furthered by boycotting, but merely continued the status quo, can be perhaps better understand in light of evolutionary psychology's understanding of ceremonies which can encourage cooperation through interaction. Alternatively, voting, Overbye claims, is a method of maintaining a trustworthy reputation among one's interactive partners. Ahmad specifically saw his leadership role as requiring that he publically push for a boycott, and he emphasized that perhaps he would not do so were he

not in a position of importance as head of an NGO. Interaction with one's peers, and an element of peer pressure, perhaps maintains the non-voting, were one to believe voting was necessary. However, it is not entirely risky to suggest the peer groups of respondents influenced their choices—Samira needed to resist peer pressure from friends who were voting in the municipality and was never faced with friends or family members who told her not to vote. For her, non-voting may have been a way to continue following her own rational despite societal pressures. Non-voting for some may be a form of resistance to group pressure; non-voting for others may be a form of following group pressure. This at least seemed to be the case for the two respondents, and is worth further empirical inspection.

### *Not recognizing Israel's presence in East Jerusalem*

All respondents clearly objected to Israel's occupation of East Jerusalem, though there seems to have been interesting logic connecting occupation, fairness, and non-voting. Other than Omar, respondents all stated their objection to the Occupation then, when asked why they did not vote, answered that the system itself was unfair and/or that Palestinian rights to campaign did not let them truly participate. Other than Samira and Awaan, the other five then said that the reason the system was unfair was because of the Occupation. Other than Ahmad, the others four had attempted to be involved in municipal elections or, as was the case with Rashid, had party co-members who ran in the election. After seeing that involvement was not affective and that their rights were hampered, they then boycotted the election.

Perhaps the contradicting political thought on the logic behind voting rights explains the current failure of the voting in East Jerusalem. Munroe's sees voting for non-citizens (as in the case of non-citizens voting in municipal elections in Canada) as exemplifying a democracy that expressed "residence, affected interests, democratic interests and solidarity" as opposed to

only "sharing of ethnic identity." If the SHABAK does indeed hamper political activity around elections, then this is a type of enforcement of the logic of democracy based on "national or ethnic identity" – this is somewhat Ahmad's vision of democracy, which is that national groups should have their own state and their own elections, suggesting that Palestinians move to Palestine after a state is created. Even if the initial ideal behind giving votes to Palestinians in East Jerusalem was to encourage a different kind of democracy, the national and ethnic type seem to have won out, at least in the eyes of most of the respondents.

The view of the municipality as "democracy for Jews" does not explain why Palestinians with Israeli citizenship do vote. Bevelander and Pendakur's study showed that citizenship in Swededn greatly increased the chances of immigrants voting in local elections, even though non-citizen immigrants could vote as well. It is not clear if the type of people who become citizens are also the type who want to vote, but their study suggests that citizenship itself may encourage voting—native Swedish citizens also were more likely to vote, and they did not actively chose to be citizens. East Jerusalem is surely an entirely different setting. However, the similarity of a minority of non-citizens choosing not to vote in municipal elections despite the option to do so suggest that further inspection into the affects of citizenship are worthwhile in East Jerusalem.

The method we used had a number of disadvantages which we would like to address. First, our choice of who to interview was limited to those we either personally knew or who agreed to be interviewed[20]. There was difficulty finding interviewees who trusted us. Samira's cousin warned her not to speak to us, and did not wish to be interviewed out of fear of arrest. Of those who did respond, potential fear may have influenced their responses, leading them to

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[20] However, those interviewees who we found it easier to interview – well educated and politically active – were also those who most felt the non-voting was a boycott against the occupation. If anything, a wider range of interviewees may result in even more who see voting as a whole as useless, without any connection, or direct connection, to the occupation.

emphasize practical reasons to not vote over objection to the occupation. However, we strived to include acquaintances specifically to assure that trust was higher, to get more honest answers. [21] Now that we have collected alternative reasoning for non-voting, we believe a quantitative survey may assist in gaining a broader picture of non-voting in East Jerusalem.

Conclusion:

If the benefits of voting seem to be lacking due to discrimination and violation of campaigning rights, and the reward of doing one's citizens duty are lacking as well due to the fact that residents are not citizens, then voting turnout should be very low, regardless of any ideological objection to the Israeli Occupation itself.

If the key reason for not voting is a perception of unfairness, then there is a possibility that voting could increase if the election was made more fair. It is perhaps convenient for some to assume that the boycott is based on a national objection to Israeli presence in East Jerusalem – such an explanation would suggest that the elections are perhaps fair, and that the boycott is not an indicator of any wrongdoings in the democratic process. Others may wish to express the boycott as only against the occupation to strengthen the image of Palestinian unity. However, ignoring other factors risks ignoring opportunities for greater political participation, whether in Jerusalem or a future Palestinian state. Muhammad and Samir both emphasized that corruption in the PA lead them to be just as opposed to voting for the Palestinian Authority as unfairness lead them to not vote in the Jerusalem elections.

If the problem is a lack of education regarding democracy and the political process, then the lack of autonomy on the part of the municipality with regards to East Jerusalem education would mean such changes would be difficult to implement. However, as many of the

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[21] Interviewing acquaintances also creates problems of its own, but we believed the need to receives honest answers outweighed the disadvantages.

respondents did not vote in the Palestinian Authority elections out of choice (as some claimed), this could suggest that education regarding democracy in general could, at the very least, decrease cynicism with regards to voting in general, and be in the interest of the PA.

In the ultimate paradox of voting – one vote hardly makes a difference to be worth voting, but all voting can secure everyone's rights – any perception that one's vote is worth even less than others can be detrimental. Any perception that one is not a part of the larger citizenry may inhibit participating in protection the rights of those who are seen outside of the group and, in some cases, conflicting with their own interests. Finally, a lack of any perception of who the candidates are, as a result of cynicism or general knowledge, mean weighing one's options to vote, or not to vote, may be difficult to begin with. Furthermore, municipal elections are unique – they only allow campaigning for local changes which, potentially, can conflict with national policy. Giving Palestinians the vote for municipal elections, without automatically giving them citizenship in 1967, lead to a scenario where national institutions were not perceived as accountable to East Jerusalem Palestinians.  In this logic, such institutions are seen to easily thwart any policy changes that resulted from voting in municipal elections, as stated by Muhammad in his interview. Even if this is not happening, the fear that it will is one more incentive to not vote.

Until now, boycotting in East Jerusalem has been seen as sacrificing personal interests for larger ideals. It is not clear that voting or being politically active in Jerusalem is seen as helpful for Palestinians to begin with. Concrete fears, apathy, lack of knowledge, and distrust for democracy as a whole, or in Jerusalem elections in particular, may be just as powerful factors worth addressing to better understand why only 3.3% of East Jerusalem residents vote Jerusalem elections.

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