What Might Happen if Palestinians Start Voting in Jerusalem Municipal Elections?

Gaming the End of the Electoral Boycott and the Future of City Politics

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Preface

Since Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem after the 1967 war, the vast majority of Palestinian residents of the city have boycotted participation in municipal elections to avoid legitimating Israeli rule. Nevertheless, recent polls suggest that some Palestinians living in East Jerusalem might be warming to the idea of voting in the city's elections. To examine possible consequences of Jerusalem's Palestinians ending their electoral boycott, a team from the RAND Corporation conducted a seminar-style game in Jerusalem in partnership with the Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research. The game, held in July 2018, involved Israeli and Palestinian policy experts from Jerusalem representing various stakeholders in the city's politics and governance simulating multiple scenarios that diverge from the status quo.

This report reviews the history of Palestinian engagement and non-engagement in Jerusalem's political process and presents the game and its findings. It should be of interest to policymakers; analysts; parties in the region; and academic researchers studying Israel, Palestinian affairs, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Middle East more broadly, and electoral behavior and protests in divided societies.

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Summary

Jerusalem is the largest city in Israel and claimed as its capital. Yet almost 40 percent of the city's population are Palestinians, nearly all of whom are not Israeli citizens and claim Jerusalem as the capital of their future state. Jerusalem's Palestinian residents mostly live in neighborhoods in the eastern part of the city that were added to the Jerusalem municipality in the aftermath of the 1967 war—an annexation that most experts consider inconsistent with international law. Palestinian neighborhoods are characterized today by living conditions quite different from the city's Israeli neighborhoods. The poverty rate among the Palestinian population is substantially higher than among the Israeli population—75 percent of Palestinians and 81 percent of Palestinian children live below the poverty line, compared with 29 percent of the Israeli population and 38 percent of Israeli children. The Palestinian neighborhoods do not receive the same public services as the Israeli ones, leading to substantial gaps in infrastructure, education levels, welfare services, and economic development. In addition to receiving a disproportionately small share of the city's budget, the Palestinian population of East Jerusalem faces an acute housing shortage and is at constant risk of housing demolitions and residency permit revocations. The construction of the Separation Barrier in 2004–2005 has worsened the social, economic, and political situation of East Jerusalem's Palestinians, disconnecting them from the West Bank and leaving an estimated 120,000 Palestinians outside the barrier, meaning they are cut off from the rest of the city and receive even fewer municipal services.

Boycotting Elections in Arab East Jerusalem

The vast majority of Jerusalem's Palestinians are not citizens of Israel or any other state but are "permanent residents" of Israel, the same status granted to foreign citizens who voluntarily move to Israel and seek to live in the country. Inequalities notwithstanding, permanent residency status grants Palestinian East Jerusalemites certain formal socio-economic benefits, such as health insurance and social security benefits, the ability to travel throughout Israel and to live and work anywhere in Jerusalem, and eligibility to vote in municipal elections. However, for a variety of reasons—especially the refusal

to confer legitimacy on the Israeli annexation of East Jerusalem, the place they claim for the future capital of a Palestinian state—most Jerusalem Palestinians have avoided participation in the municipal electoral process for five decades. As seen in Table S.1, Palestinian participation has continued to decline over the years. Several Palestinians have campaigned for municipal office in the past, but all campaigns ended in failure, meaning there has not been a Palestinian representative in Jerusalem city government since 1967.

In principle, Palestinians elected to the city council could help improve living conditions in East Jerusalem, but Palestinian voters first would have to decide that it is worth the high political cost of appearing to normalize what is seen by most of the world as the illegal occupation of East Jerusalem. Previous election results demonstrate the very real possibility of Palestinians electing representatives to the city council. The council's 31 seats are held by 11 parties, which received between 6,120 votes (2.8 percent of the vote), gaining one seat, and 53,708 votes (24.3 percent), gaining eight seats. Depending on the total vote, a turnout of approximately 4 percent among Palestinians, assuming all votes went to the same party, could elect a city councilor. If Palestinians voted at the same rate as Israelis, they could gain substantial representation in city hall.

Although most analysts agree that the boycott will continue in the municipal elections on October 30, 2018, there are East Jerusalem Palestinians advocating its end. There has been an unusually high amount of Palestinian political activism related to the elections. A January 2018 poll found that 58 percent of Palestinians living in East Jerusalem support the idea of voting in the city's elections and 14 percent oppose it. To examine what Palestinian electoral participation in Jerusalem could look like and what the consequences could be, a team from the RAND Corporation conducted a seminar-style game in Jerusalem in July 2018 in partnership with the Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research (JIPR). Drawing on a long tradition at RAND of using games to better understand potential future dynamics, we approached this implausible but not impossible scenario methodically, convening subject-matter experts and community members, both Israeli and Palestinian, to role-play key actors across multiple scenarios, which allowed us to compare the decisions they made under different conditions. The aim of the game was to explore how the participation of Palestinian East Jerusalemites would affect electoral dynamics, provision of municipal services, and conflict dynamics in the city. We did not seek to study the ramifications of Palestinian electoral participation for the overall strategic objectives of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel regarding Jerusalem (a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital and a unified capital with a firm Jewish majority, respectively), nor for the prospects of peacemaking.

In designing the game, we developed hypotheses about the contextual factors that might influence decisionmaking around a future municipal election in Jerusalem, focusing on two clusters of issues: (1) the source and level of Palestinian mobilization

Table S.1
Palestinian Voter Turnout in Municipal Elections in East Jerusalem, 1969–2013

Election	Voter Turnout (Percentage of Eligible Palestinian Voters)	Number of Palestinian Voters	Mayor Elected
1969	21–22[a]	7,500–8,000	Teddy Kollek
1973	7	3,150	Teddy Kollek
1978	14	7,000–8,000	Teddy Kollek
1983	18	10,000–11,600[b]	Teddy Kollek
1989	3	3,000–4,000	Teddy Kollek
1993	5–8[c]	8,000	Ehud Olmert
1998	3–7[d]	2,000–6,500	Ehud Olmert
2003	5	6,400	Uri Lupolianski
2008	2	2,600	Nir Barkat
2013	0.7–1.6	1,100	Nir Barkat

SOURCES: **1969–1989 elections:** Menachem Klein, *Jerusalem: The Contested City*, New York: New York University Press, 2001, p. 186; and Ira Sharkansky, *Governing Jerusalem: Again on the World's Agenda*, Detroit, Mich.: Wayne State University Press, 1996, p. 135. **1993 election:** Klein, 2001, p. 186; Meron Benvenisti, *Intimate Enemies: Jews and Arabs in a Shared Land*, Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1995, p. 44; and Jerusalem expert, document shared during discussion with author, July 25, 2018. **1998 election:** Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, "Palestinians Boycott Israeli Municipal Elections in Jerusalem," press release, December 1998; Klein, 2001, p. 186; and Jerusalem expert, 2018. **2003 election:** Omer Yaniv of JIPR, email with author, August 28, 2018. **2008 election:** International Crisis Group, *Extreme Makeover? (II): The Withering of Arab Jerusalem*, Brussels, 2012, p. 23. **2013 election:** Daniel Seidemann, "The Myth of an Undivided Jerusalem Is Collapsing Under Its Own Weight," *The Guardian*, January 8, 2014; and JIPR, "Municipal Election—The Interactive Version," *Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research—The Blog*, August 8, 2018.

NOTES: The elevated rate of voting in 1969 is thought to be explained by high turnout among Palestinian municipal employees worried about losing their jobs. See Michael Dumper, *Jerusalem Unbound: Geography, History, and the Future of the Holy City*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2014, p. 67. Many of the voters in subsequent elections also are believed to be municipal employees or Palestinians from the neighborhood of Beit Safafa—which, because of historical geography, was partly inside the Green Line, meaning that the residents are Israeli citizens. See International Crisis Group, 2012, p. 23.

[a] Dumper, 2014, p. 67, cites 7,150 voters and 28-percent turnout.

[b] Roger Friedland and Richard Hecht, *To Rule Jerusalem*, Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2000, p. 188, cites 13,000 voters.

[c] Friedland and Hecht, 2000, p. 449, cites 3-percent turnout.

[d] Salem writes that after the 1993 election, "the percentage dropped to 1–3 percent, according to Israeli data published in *Ha'aretz*." Walid Salem, "The East Jerusalem Municipality: Policy Options and Proposed Alternatives," *Jerusalem Quarterly*, No. 74, Summer 2018, p. 121 (citing Usama Halabi, *Baladiyat al-Quds al-'Arabiya* [*Arab Jerusalem Municipality*], Jerusalem: Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs, 2000, p. 51).

and (2) Israeli policy toward Arab East Jerusalem. First, we posited that there are two potential paths to substantial Palestinian turnout: local mobilization around candidates focused on socioeconomic issues and running without the Palestinian Authority's (PA's) or PLO's support (a "fractured" call to vote), and candidates running on an explicitly nationalist platform, backed at least implicitly by the PA and PLO (a "unified" call to vote). Second, we identified two alternatives for Israeli policy toward Arab East Jerusalem that would shape the conditions of the municipal election: Israel could seek to improve living conditions for the city's Palestinians by providing additional services and investing in infrastructure, or it could go the other way by significantly increasing the presence of security forces in Arab East Jerusalem. The intersections of these four trends created four potential scenarios (Table S.2), which we set in the municipal elections of 2023—i.e., not the upcoming election but one further into the future. The game focused on Scenarios A and D.

Key Takeaways from the Jerusalem Election Game in July 2018

Although games are not a reliable tool for predictions of specific outcomes, they provide an indicative sense of what factors could drive decisionmaking in the absence of observations of the real world. The RAND-JIPR Jerusalem election game shed light on key interactions and trends, which we summarize as key takeaways. Our takeaways from the game are limited to how electoral participation of Palestinian Jerusalemites could affect the provision of municipal services and, to a lesser extent, conflict dynamics in the city. The possible impacts of the end of the electoral boycott also should be assessed in light of overall strategic objectives and the boycott's impact on the prospects of future peacemaking, but these go beyond the scope of this report.

The Israeli Government Would Be Pleased with East Jerusalem Palestinian Electoral Participation . . . as Long as Turnout Remained Limited

From the perspective of the Israeli government, East Jerusalem Palestinians running and voting for municipal councilors is a positive development. In both scenarios, the Israeli government team emphasized that electing a small number of Palestinian council members would be a public relations coup more than anything else. As long as

Table S.2
Scenario Space

	Israeli Policies Worsen Living Conditions in Arab East Jerusalem	Israeli Policies Improve Living Conditions in Arab East Jerusalem
Fractured Palestinian call to vote	Scenario A	Scenario B
United Palestinian call to vote	Scenario C	Scenario D

the Palestinian bloc stayed fairly small (fewer than three or four councilors) and did not make a viable run for the mayor's seat, it would not be seen as threatening to the municipality's or national government's interests or objectives. In fact, it would provide useful evidence to support the government's claim of equal treatment of minority communities and bolster Israeli claims to sovereignty over a unified Jerusalem. That said, if projected turnout was at or above about 40 percent, the Israeli government team acknowledged that it would have considered different policies to depress turnout.

East Jerusalem Palestinians Focused on Bread-and-Butter Issues

The East Jerusalem Palestinian team in both scenarios opted to run a party focused on economic and social issues rather than political or nationalist ones, despite pressure in the second scenario to adopt a more nationalist platform. Feeling abandoned by the Palestinian leadership and the broader Arab world, East Jerusalem Palestinian players felt little reason to incorporate the nationalist platform demanded by Ramallah and other Arab and Muslim capitals. Instead, Palestinian East Jerusalemites decided to take action in the way that seemed most likely to improve the day-to-day conditions of their lives.

Palestinian City Councilors Could Affect Policy at Some Levels

Players usefully divided the challenges faced by East Jerusalem Palestinians into three levels. The first focused on daily municipal service provision issues. The second level was concerned with the more politically controversial aspects of municipal governance in Jerusalem, such as zoning and planning, land deeds, residency permits, and home demolitions that are guided by policies of the Israeli central government. Finally, the third level addressed the big-picture issues having to do with the status of the city in any future Israeli-Palestinian agreement, which are decided by the national governments. Palestinian councilors would be able to affect policy at the everyday municipal level, but it is unlikely they would be able to affect policy at the other two levels, despite the impacts of these policies on the lives of Palestinian East Jerusalemites.

Lack of Credible Local Leadership Limited Palestinian East Jerusalemite Mobilization

Palestinian teams noted that a major barrier to substantial voter turnout, regardless of political platform, was the lack of credible Palestinian leaders who could mobilize Jerusalemites. After years of neglect, the PA might be able to intimidate voters enough to enforce a boycott but is not able to mobilize meaningful support for a candidate. It was difficult for players to envision an effective mobilization strategy without a credible leader who would reach beyond the family and neighborhood.

The Election of Palestinian Councilors Could Create a Contentious Council

The election of several Palestinian councilors also could affect the dynamics within the city council itself. Players thought that the Palestinian campaign would prompt Israelis to elect more-hardline councilors, resulting in an acrimonious city council.

The Two Variables That Manipulated the Conditions Under Which Elections Took Place Had Little Impact

Both scenarios ended up converging on very similar behaviors by the Israeli government, municipal government, international community, Islamic religious leadership, and East Jerusalem Palestinian teams. The PA and Muslim countries did pursue different courses of action in the two scenarios but lacked the ability to significantly influence what happened "on the ground" in Jerusalem.

Acknowledgments

Abbreviations

ACRI   Association for Civil Rights in Israel

JIPR   Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research

PA   Palestinian Authority

PASSIA   Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs

PLO   Palestine Liberation Organization

UN   United Nations

Introduction

Jerusalem is a place apart. On the one hand, it is a city like any other: The streets must be swept, children must go to school, security must be maintained. On the other hand, it is a city like no other: It is claimed by two nations and three religions, and in the eyes of many believers it is the center of the world, the place where heaven and earth meet. As a result of the latter condition, issues relating to the former are often unusually complex and political. The choices that residents make on a daily basis are caught up in long-running, heated, often violent debates over nationality and religion, sovereignty and statehood. The day-to-day functions of the municipality thus carry a weight seen in few other places. "The city is not just a profane backdrop to the daily round, a public instrument for the pursuit of private happiness," Roger Friedland and Richard Hecht write in *To Rule Jerusalem*. "It is a symbol of each community's collective identity."[1]

One arena where the mundane and local meet the dramatic and global is municipal elections. Candidates, after all, are vying for the power to shape the future of a city "that is both material metropolis and transcendent symbol."[2] Parties and politicians from across the political spectrum make their pitches to voters, some appealing to voters' pocketbooks, others to their prayer books, still others to both. But there is a notable absence in the electorate. Nearly all of Jerusalem's Palestinian residents—37 percent of the city's population—do not vote. As a result of the Arab-Israeli war in June 1967, Palestinians were incorporated into the city against their will and in violation of international law, in the view of most countries. Since then, nearly the entire Palestinian community has refused to engage in municipal politics—a refusal rooted in a rejection of the legitimacy of Israeli rule in East Jerusalem and a vital strategic interest in having East Jerusalem be the capital of a future Palestinian state.

At the moment, the future seems likely to resemble the past, and few Palestinians are expected to vote in the municipal elections on October 30, 2018. But there is no rule that the past and future must align. Ramadan Dabash, a Palestinian from East Jerusalem, is running for city council, and although he might not persuade enough of

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[1]   Roger Friedland and Richard Hecht, *To Rule Jerusalem*, Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2000, p. 3.

[2]   Friedland and Hecht, 2000, p. 14.

his compatriots to break their decades-long boycott and elect him to the seat he seeks, that does not mean a future candidate will not be more successful. As we describe in Chapter Three, Palestinian turnout would not have to be terribly high to gain a seat, and if Palestinians turned out in large numbers, they could even gain a significant share of the city council. But given the length and strength of the boycott, it is difficult to envision a future campaign with robust Palestinian participation—not to mention a city council with elected Palestinian representatives. Although this scenario seems fanciful today, the significant implications for the Palestinians of East Jerusalem, municipal governance and politics, and Israeli-Palestinian relations make serious consideration of such a future worthwhile.

In July 2018, a team from the RAND Corporation conducted a seminar-style game in Jerusalem in partnership with the Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research (JIPR) to examine possible consequences of Jerusalem's Palestinians ending their boycott of voting in municipal elections.[3] Drawing on a long tradition at RAND of using games to better understand potential future dynamics, we approached this implausible but not impossible scenario methodically. We convened subject-matter experts and community members, both Israeli and Palestinian, to collectively examine what Palestinian electoral participation in Jerusalem could look like and what the consequences could be for the election dynamics, municipal service provision, and conflict dynamics in the city. We did not explore the possible impacts of Palestinian electoral participation on other important issues, such as Israeli and Palestinian official strategic objectives regarding Jerusalem or Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking.

The remainder of this report is organized as follows. Chapter Two provides background information about Arab East Jerusalem and the Palestinians who live there. Chapter Three details the history and dynamics of the electoral boycott by Jerusalem's Palestinians. Chapter Four examines current social and political trends in Arab East Jerusalem that might raise the possibility of increased electoral participation, including Dabash's aforementioned candidacy for city council. Chapter Five explains the game's design and our approach, and Chapter Six presents how the game's scenarios transpired. Finally, Chapter Seven analyzes our key takeaways from the game and broader conclusions.

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[3]   JIPR is a leading research institute focused on the study of Jerusalem and committed to "accurate, thorough and data-based information, conduct[ing] interdisciplinary policy-oriented research and provid[ing] innovative policy recommendations and planning proposals for the benefit of decision makers, the non-profit sector and, ultimately, the public." JIPR, "Our Mission," website, undated.

East Jerusalem: A Part and Apart

The complexity of governing Jerusalem becomes all the more so in the eastern portion of the city. Home to 542,400 people, the territory captured by Israel in 1967 is some of the most contested real estate on earth. Claimed by Israel as a seamless part of its capital city and by Palestinians as the future capital of their independent state, every square inch of East Jerusalem is tied to larger national battles. Even citing statistics about the territory is fraught. To say that East Jerusalem's 542,400 residents account for 61 percent of Jerusalem's total population of 882,600 relies on the assertion that East Jerusalem sits within the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem, something much of the world disputes.[1] Setting aside this dispute for a moment, it is important to note that in the parts of the city (as it is defined by Israel) that are east of the Green Line,[2] the majority of residents are Palestinian. There are 327,700 East Jerusalem Palestinians, which is 37 percent of the total population of the entire municipality (Figure 2.1). All told, Jerusalem is Israel's largest city, its largest Jewish city, and its largest Palestinian city.[3]

Unlike the other territory captured by Israel in June 1967, Israel annexed 70 square kilometers of land to the north, east, and south of pre-1967 Israeli Jerusa-

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[1] Michal Korach and Maya Choshen, *Jerusalem: Facts and Trends 2018: The State of the City and Changing Trends*, Jerusalem: Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research, 2018, pp. 14, 16. Korach and Choshen state that the total population of Jerusalem is 882,700. However, the map in Figure 2.1 (also from Korach and Choshen, 2018, p. 14), shows the sum of the population figures presented for West and East Jerusalem as 882,600. To be consistent with the map, we use the slightly smaller population figure.

[2] The Green Line, or the 1949 Armistice Agreement Line, refers to the border separating pre-1967 Israel from its neighbors.

[3] Korach and Choshen, 2018, pp. 14–18. Note that an additional 4,700 Palestinians live in West Jerusalem, bringing the total Palestinian population of Jerusalem to 332,400, or 38 percent. Some portion of this population are Palestinian citizens of Israel (known in Israel as Israeli Arabs) who have moved to Jerusalem from elsewhere in Israel. Some recent sources cite Palestinian population figures as high as 360,000, or 40 percent of the population. (See Nir Hasson, "Palestinian Voters in Jerusalem Elections Have Six Polling Stations. Jews Have 187," *Haaretz*, August 23, 2018c.) Historian Nazmi al-Jubeh refers to "350,000 or more Palestinian Jerusalemites" but cautions, "Exact data is not available, only estimates, and all data in circulation is politicized" (Nazmi al-Jubeh, "Jerusalem: Fifty Years of Occupation," *Jerusalem Quarterly*, No. 72, Winter 2017, p. 16).

Figure 2.1
Population Map of Jerusalem

Geographical Distribution of the Jerusalem Population, 2016

335,500 Jews

214,600 Jews

East Jerusalem 542,400

4,700 Arabs

327,700 Arabs

West Jerusalem 340,200
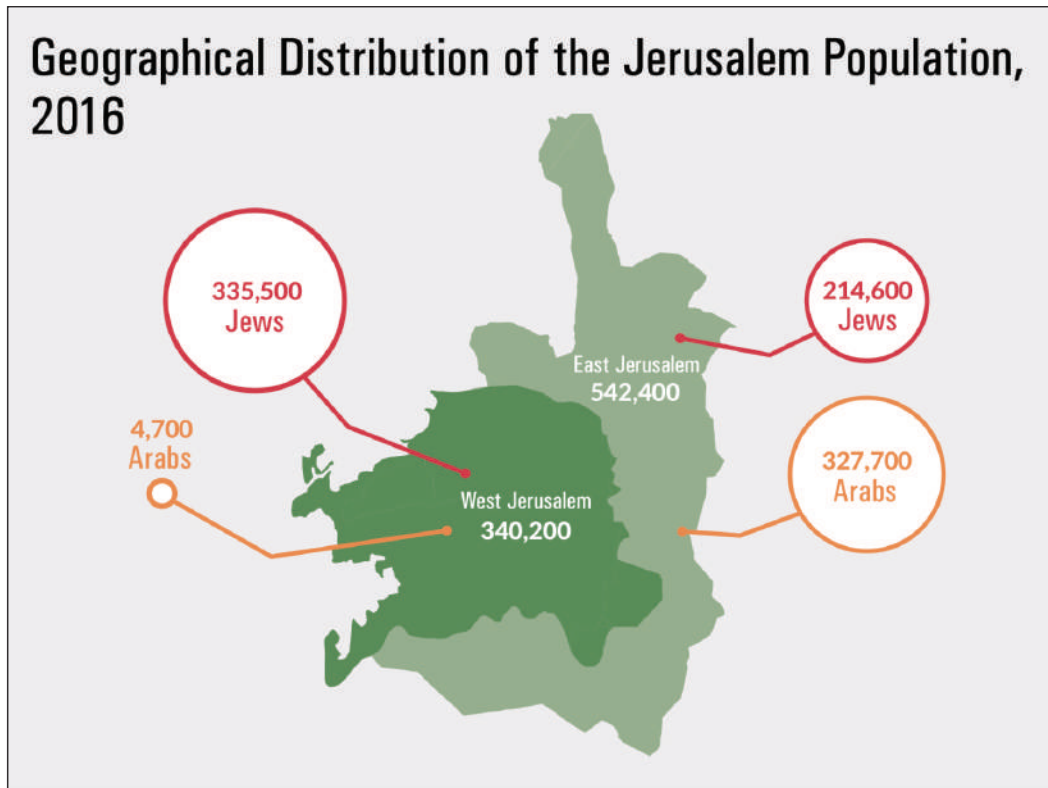
SOURCE: Korach and Choshen, 2018, p. 14. Courtesy of JIPR. The inconsistency within this figure—the sum of the two East Jerusalem subpopulations is 542,300, not 542,400—is because of rounding.

lem.[4] Israel unilaterally redrew the boundaries of the city to include not only Jordanian Jerusalem—a municipality of only 6.4 square kilometers—but also the land of some 20 Palestinian villages in the outskirts of the city, making them urban neighborhoods.[5] Overnight, the Israeli city of Jerusalem expanded from 197,000 people

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[4]   There is disagreement among experts over whether the annexation of East Jerusalem was made official on June 27–28, 1967, just weeks after the war, or on July 30, 1980, with the passage of an update to Israel's Basic Law. (For 1967, see Menachem Klein, "Jerusalem as an Israeli Problem—A Review of Forty Years of Israeli Rule over Arab Jerusalem," *Israel Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 2, Summer 2008, p. 55; Daniel Seidemann, *A Geopolitical Atlas of Contemporary Jerusalem*, Jerusalem: Terrestrial Jerusalem, 2015, p. 28; and Ir Amim, *Destructive Unilateral Measures to Redraw the Borders of Jerusalem*, policy paper, Jerusalem, January 2018, p. 3. For 1980, see Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs [PASSIA], *Jerusalem and Its Changing Boundaries*, Jerusalem, January 2018, p. 9.) One political scientist maintains that formal annexation never took place at all. (See Ian S. Lustick, "Has Israel Annexed East Jerusalem?" *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 5, No. 1, January 1997.)

[5]   A review of historic maps by a member of our team suggests that the widely cited numbers of 27 or 28 villages is an overcounting. For the higher count of villages, see Meron Benvenisti, *City of Stone: The Hidden His-*

and 38 square kilometers to 266,000 people and 108 square kilometers, reaching out to Ramallah in the north and Bethlehem in the south.[6] To Israel, these new urban borders define "Jerusalem, complete and united, . . . the capital of Israel."[7] But to most of the world, the annexation of East Jerusalem remains illegitimate and illegal, and the territory is considered occupied.[8]

Although the government made the land Israeli, they did not do the same to the people who lived there.[9] Israel decided that the Palestinians living in the newly annexed territory would not automatically receive Israeli citizenship; instead, they would remain Jordanian citizens and receive the status of "permanent resident" of Israel.[10] But in the late 1980s, during the first Palestinian uprising or *Intifada*, most East Jerusalemites lost their Jordanian citizenship. Today, as a result, most of the 327,700 Palestinians in East Jerusalem are stateless and hold citizenship in no country.[11]

Permanent residency status came with certain limited benefits. By holding Israeli identification cards, Palestinian East Jerusalemites are part of the Israeli health insur-

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tory of Jerusalem, Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1996, p. 66; Nadav Shragai, *Jerusalem: Correcting the International Discourse—How the West Gets Jerusalem Wrong*, Jerusalem: Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, 2012; Seidemann, 2015, p. 28; and Adnan Abdelrazek, "Occupied East Jerusalem: A Continuous Colonial Scheme," *Palestine-Israel Journal*, Vol. 22, Nos. 2/3, 2017, p. 126.

[6] Klein, 2008, p. 55; Seidemann, 2015, pp. 26–28, 32; Miriam Fendius Elman, "Jerusalem Studies: The State of the Field," *Israel Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 3, Fall 2016, p. 225; and PASSIA, 2018, p. 9. More territory was added to the municipality in 1985 and 1993, and today it encompasses 126 square kilometers.

[7] Knesset of Israel, Basic Law: Jerusalem, Capital of Israel, 1980.

[8] See, for example, United Nations (UN) Security Council, Resolution 478, August 20, 1980; International Court of Justice, "Advisory Opinion on the Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory," July 9, 2004, para. 78; and UN Security Council, Resolution 2334, December 23, 2016. Even the recognition of the city as the capital of Israel by the United States in December 2017 and the relocation of the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in May 2018 do not necessarily mean the United States officially recognizes the 1967 annexation. As President Donald Trump said in December 2017: "We are not taking a position of any final status issues, including the specific boundaries of the Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem, or the resolution of contested borders. Those questions are up to the parties involved" (White House, "Statement by President Trump on Jerusalem," Washington, D.C., December 6, 2017). For analyses, see Ofer Zalzberg and Nathan Thrall, *Counting the Costs of U.S. Recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's Capital*, Brussels: International Crisis Group, December 7, 2017; Yitzhak Reiter, *The Dedication of the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem and Its Ramifications*, Jerusalem: Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research, 2018; and Rashid Khalidi, "And Now What? The Trump Administration and the Question of Jerusalem," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 47, No. 3, Spring 2018.

[9] al-Jubeh, 2017, p. 8; and Amnon Ramon, "Residents, Not Citizens: Israeli Policy Toward the Arabs in East Jerusalem, 1967–2017," English summary, Jerusalem: Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research, 2017, p. 9.

[10] Ramon, 2017. "'Permanent residency' is the same status granted to foreign citizens who have freely chosen to come to Israel and want to live in the country. Because Israel treats Palestinians like immigrants, they, too, live in their homes at the beneficence of the authorities, and not by right. The authorities maintain this policy although these Palestinians were born in Jerusalem, lived in the city, and have no other home" (Yael Stein, *The Quiet Deportation: Revocation of Residency of East Jerusalem Palestinians*, Jerusalem: HaMoked and B'Tselem joint report, 1997, p. 3). For the legal basis for permanent residency, see Stein, 1997, pp. 4–7.

[11] Ramon, 2017; and Korach and Choshen, 2018, p. 14.

ance and social security systems, have the ability to live and work throughout Jerusalem, and can travel freely throughout Israel.[12] What is more, although they cannot vote in national elections, noncitizen Palestinian Jerusalem residents are eligible to vote in municipal elections. However, as will be detailed in the next chapter, they have boycotted Jerusalem municipal elections for nearly fifty years.

In the decades since 1967, there has been a large amount of construction in Israeli neighborhoods in the land beyond the Green Line.[13] As a result, 40 percent of the population in the territory captured in 1967 are Jews (214,600 people, or 39 percent of the Jewish population of the city), and 60 percent are Palestinians.[14] In this report, "Arab East Jerusalem" refers only to the Palestinian neighborhoods of East Jerusalem, to distinguish them from areas of East Jerusalem populated by Israelis.[15] "Jewish Jerusalem" refers to the city's Jewish-Israeli neighborhoods, both those in West Jerusalem and those situated outside the pre-1967 municipal boundaries.

Living Poorly in Arab East Jerusalem

Living conditions in Arab Jerusalem and Jewish Jerusalem are very different.[16] Although the city's population as a whole is poor—Jerusalem has the highest poverty rate of any

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[12] Maaike Kooijman, "East Jerusalem: A Primer," in PAX, ed., *Fragmented Jerusalem: Municipal Borders, Demographic Politics and Daily Realities in East Jerusalem*, Utrecht, 2018, p. 15. From a Palestinian perspective, inclusion in the Israeli insurance systems can be seen as a negative: "The crowning achievement of [the] policy" is seeking "to dismantle Palestinian institutions in the city by . . . transferring various services to Israeli organizations" (Nazmi Jubeh, "Jerusalem: Five Decades of Subjugation and Marginalization," *Jerusalem Quarterly*, No. 62, Spring 2015, p. 10).

[13] This annexation has not been recognized by other countries, so these communities are considered settlements by many non-Israelis. However, Israelis treat them as integral parts of the city.

[14] Korach and Choshen, 2018, pp. 14, 19–21. The authors also say that statistics for the Jewish population "indicate the population group 'Jews and Others'—that is, the entire non-Arab population including Jews, non-Arab Christians, and persons not classified by religion" (p. 16).

[15] Note that some Palestinians have moved into these Israeli areas of East Jerusalem. al-Jubeh (2017, p. 18) reports that "there is no statistical data about this phenomenon but it has become tangible in the settlements of Neve Ya'acov, Pisgat Ze'ev, and French Hill. A few hundred Palestinian families already live in these settlements and this could increase within the coming years." See also Menachem Klein, "Our Jerusalem—A Reality Check," *Palestine-Israel Journal*, Vol. 22/23, No. 4/1, 2017/2018, p. 13.

[16] In this section, we make comparisons between Palestinians and Israelis in Jerusalem, despite the view of international law that Israel, "as the occupying power . . . is responsible for administering the occupied territory for the benefit of the protected Palestinian population" (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *East Jerusalem: Key Humanitarian Concerns*, August 2014, p. 1), and not for providing equity. But because of the Separation Barrier and other developments, Palestinian Jerusalemites increasingly compare their conditions with those of Israeli Jerusalemites (as we discuss later in this chapter and in more detail in Chapter Four). For this reason, the comparison is appropriate.

major city in the country, with 46 percent of residents living below the poverty line[17]—the Palestinian community is much less well-off. Among Jewish Jerusalemites, 29 percent of people and 38 percent of children live below the poverty line.[18] But in Arab East Jerusalem, 75 percent of people and 81 percent of children live below the poverty line.[19]

Despite—and in part contributing to—this economic inequality, the municipality does not provide proportionate or often even adequate public services to Arab East Jerusalem. The education system in Arab East Jerusalem is under severe strain: It is lacking more than 2,000 classrooms.[20] This shortage contributes to Arab East Jerusalem's high dropout rates. About one-third of Palestinian students in East Jerusalem do not complete 12 years of school, which is the highest dropout rate recorded in Israeli data.[21] The roads are in poor condition and insufficient for the transportation needs of residents.[22] There are only four government welfare offices in Arab East Jerusalem, with about 9,000 clients per office, compared with the 19 in Jewish Jerusalem, each of which serves about 3,000 clients.[23] And only five of the 22 neighborhoods in Arab East Jerusalem have home mail delivery. In the others, mail is brought only as far as central distribution centers.[24] Overall, the municipality spends only 10–15 percent of its budget in Arab East Jerusalem, an area home to 37 percent of its taxpaying residents.[25] Recently, however, the municipal and national governments announced

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[17] Korach and Choshen, 2018, p. 58. According to the authors, the national poverty rate is 22 percent, with 14 percent of Jews and 52 percent of Arabs living below the poverty line (p. 56).

[18] A significant portion of the Israelis living below the poverty line are ultra-Orthodox Jews. The poverty rate among Jerusalem's ultra-Orthodox, who are 34 percent of the city's Jewish population, is 49 percent (Korach and Choshen, 2018, pp. 18, 59).

[19] Korach and Choshen, 2018, p. 58. The Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) cites slightly higher poverty rates in East Jerusalem: 76 percent of residents and 83 percent of children (ACRI, "East Jerusalem: Facts and Figures 2017," Tel Aviv, May 21, 2017, p. 2).

[20] This is the number acknowledged by the municipality in court documents. See Aviv Tatarsky, "Ha'Haznacha Ha'Kasha shel Yerushalyim Ha'Mizrachit Lo Kshura Le'Taktsivim Ele Le'Politica [The Severe Neglect of East Jerusalem Is Not Related to Budgets but Rather Politics]," *Sicha Makomit* [*Local Call*], September 5, 2017. Ir Amim estimates the shortage is as many as 2,500 classrooms (Aviv Tatarsky and Oshrat Maimon, *Fifty Years of Neglect: East Jerusalem Education Report*, Jerusalem: Ir Amim, 2017, p. 6).

[21] al-Jubeh, 2017, p. 19; and Tatarsky and Maimon, 2017, p. 9.

[22] ACRI, 2017, p. 5.

[23] ACRI, 2017, p. 2.

[24] ACRI, 2017, p. 6.

[25] Ten percent is the figure given in Ir Amim, "Jerusalem Municipality Budget Analysis for 2013: Share of Investment in East Jerusalem," Jerusalem, December 2014; and in Kooijman, 2018, p. 19. Abu Ghoush says the figure is 12 percent (Amaal Abu Ghoush, "Surviving Jerusalem: Fifty Years of Neglect and Daily Suffering Just to Remain," *Palestine-Israel Journal*, Vol. 21, No. 4, 2016, p. 8). In recent roundtable events, several Meretz city councilors suggested that the share of the budget is closer to 12–15 percent.

spending increases slated for Arab East Jerusalem.[26] These feature a municipal plan to address the classroom shortage and a national plan to spend US$560 million to improve conditions in Arab East Jerusalem, focusing on education, infrastructure, and workforce participation among Palestinian women.[27]

Yet many of the problems facing Palestinian East Jerusalemites are not issues that will be solved by augmented budgets. In fact, they are problems that people in the Israeli parts of the city do not deal with at all. First, as Israeli permanent residents, rather than citizens, East Jerusalem Palestinians can have their residency permits revoked by the Ministry of Interior. Among the reasons for revocation are that an individual lacks sufficient documentation to prove he or she lives in the city or that an individual or an individual's relative committed a terrorist attack.[28] As Palestinian lawyer Aseil Abu Baker describes it, "This system places Palestinians under constant threat of losing their Jerusalem residency."[29] Since 1967, the government has revoked the residency of 14,595 Palestinian Jerusalemites, including 95 in 2016, the latest year with available data.[30]

Second, 20,000 housing units in Arab East Jerusalem were built without permits. Because of various legal and bureaucratic reasons, including a planning freeze in Arab East Jerusalem, gaining a permit for legal construction by Palestinians is "almost impossible."[31] As a result, the vast majority of construction for residential and nonresidential buildings is done outside the law. Not only does the lack of permitting mean that buildings are often structurally unsound and not connected to proper water and sewage systems, it also opens the buildings up to demolition by the government on the grounds that they are illegal. In 2016–2017, 174 Palestinian homes were razed in East Jerusalem.[32] Demolitions add to Arab East Jerusalem's

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[26] Laura Wharton, "The Politics of Negligence: Municipal Policies on East Jerusalem," in PAX, ed., *Fragmented Jerusalem: Municipal Borders, Demographic Politics and Daily Realities in East Jerusalem*, Utrecht, 2018, p. 26.

[27] "Israel to Invest in Neglected Palestinian Areas in Jerusalem," Associated Press via YNet.com, May 31, 2018.

[28] International Crisis Group, *Extreme Makeover? (II): The Withering of Arab Jerusalem*, Brussels, 2012, p. 21; Marya Farah and Aseil Abu Bakr, *East Jerusalem: Exploiting Instability to Deepen the Occupation*, Ramallah: Al-Haq, 2015, pp. 39–41; ACRI, 2017, p. 1; and Tamara Tawfiq Tamimi, "Revocation of Residency of Palestinians in Jerusalem: Prospects for Accountability," *Jerusalem Quarterly*, No. 72, Winter 2017.

[29] Aseil Abu Baker, "Laws Targeting East Jerusalem: Discriminatory Intent and Application," *Palestine-Israel Journal*, Vol. 21, No. 3, 2016, p. 55. Or, as Jubeh (2015, p. 16) puts it, "Israeli regulations . . . act as a sword hanging over the heads of Jerusalem's Palestinian inhabitants."

[30] ACRI, 2017, p. 1.

[31] Abu Ghoush, 2016, p. 9. See also Ir Amim, *Displaced in Their Own City: The Impact of Israeli Policy in East Jerusalem on the Palestinian Neighborhoods of the City Beyond the Separation Barrier*, Jerusalem, June 2015, pp. 10–14.

[32] ACRI, 2017, p. 4; and Ir Amim, "2017 Year-End Summary: From Deepening Control of the Heart of the City to Advancing Plans to Redraw its Boundaries," Jerusalem, 2017, p. 10.

Figure 2.2
The Green Line, Municipal Boundary, and Separation Barrier in the
Jerusalem Area

SOURCE: JIPR.
NOTE: What the report refers to as the Separation Barrier, this map
calls the security fence.

acute housing shortage and overcrowding.[33] Finally, since 2004–2005, the Separation Barrier (Figure 2.2) has isolated an estimated 120,000 Palestinians, or about one-third of Jerusalem's Palestinian population, from the rest of the city.[34] The barrier's route in Jerusalem primarily follows the municipal boundary or cuts into the West Bank to encompass the large settlement blocs surrounding the city, but it also cuts inside the municipal boundaries at two points, leaving large communities of Palestinian Jerusalemites outside.[35] Most people living in these areas are Jerusalem residents and hold Israeli identification cards, yet municipal services have all but disappeared and these Jerusalemites must pass through checkpoints to enter the rest of the city, where many people work, shop, and socialize on a daily basis.[36] By dividing Arab East Jerusalem in two and cutting off access to the West Bank for most East Jerusalemites, the Separation Barrier has caused massive social, economic, and political changes for Jerusalem's Palestinians.[37] As one Palestinian academic puts it, "The wall has torn to shreds the urban fabric of Jerusalem society."[38]

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[33] Jubeh, 2015, pp. 15–16; and Amnon Ramon and Lior Lehrs, "East Jerusalem: Explosive Reality and Proposals for De-Escalation," English summary, Jerusalem: Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, 2015, p. 3. See also Khalil Tufakji, *Third Generation Law: Altering Jerusalem's Palestinian Demographics*, Jerusalem: Palestinian Vision Organization, 2015.

[34] Many Israelis prefer the term *Security Fence* or *Barrier*, while many Palestinians prefer *Wall*. We adopt the term *Separation Barrier* used by other international research organizations, such as the International Crisis Group.

[35] Ir Amim, 2018, p. 4. Ir Amim (2015, pp. 29–31) also discusses the varying population estimates as of 2015. A number of East Jerusalemites actually have moved to these neighborhoods beyond the barrier because of the lower cost of housing and to ease access to family or employment in the West Bank. See Natalie Tabar, *The Jerusalem Trap: The Looming Threat Posed by Israel's Annexationist Policies in Occupied East Jerusalem*, Ramallah: Al-Haq, 2010, pp. 23–31; and Abu Ghoush, 2016, p. 7.

[36] Ir Amim, 2015, pp. 32–42, 51 (on government neglect, including security provision by the police), and 48–50 (on checkpoints).

[37] Tabar, 2010; and International Crisis Group, 2012.

[38] Jubeh, 2015, p. 14.

Boycotting Municipal Elections in Arab East Jerusalem

As previously mentioned, the vast majority of Palestinians in Jerusalem, as permanent residents of Israel rather than citizens, cannot vote in national elections but are eligible to vote in municipal elections. Yet since the annexation of East Jerusalem in 1967, most Palestinians have not exercised that right, choosing instead to boycott city elections.[1] As Table 3.1 displays, Palestinian participation in Jerusalem municipal elections has not exceeded 20 percent since 1969. It dropped dramatically with the first Intifada, and approached a near-total abstention rate in recent years.[2]

The boycott contains multiple facets. But at its core, it is about not legitimizing or even seeming to accept the Israeli rule of East Jerusalem since 1967. Staying away from the polls is a form of protest against Israeli control and a refusal to accept the legitimacy of Israeli sovereignty over the territory east of the Green Line, where many Palestinians, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), seek to locate

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[1] The election boycott is the most prominent part of a larger boycott of city government that also extends to some municipal services, applications for housing permits, lobbying, and even protesting the municipality. East Jerusalemites, however, do not boycott their tax payments. Failure to pay taxes could result in residency permit revocations and additional fines. International Crisis Group, 2012, pp. 23–24; and Abu Ghoush, 2016, p. 6.

[2] It is interesting to compare the turnout rates of East Jerusalemites in municipal elections with Palestinian Authority (PA) elections. According to the 1993 Oslo Accords, "Palestinians of Jerusalem who live there will have the right to participate in the election process" of the PA (Declaration of Principles, Annex 1, para. 1, quoted in Michael Dumper, *Jerusalem Unbound: Geography, History, and the Future of the Holy City*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2014, p. 69). As Dumper observes, "it is a quite remarkable and often overlooked fact that in the heart of the Israeli capital, one-third of the population vote for representatives in another national system" (Dumper, 2014, p. 67). Although voter turnout in PA elections is higher than in city elections, it is still low, though likely for different reasons. In the elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) in 1996, the PA president in 2005, and the PLC in 2006, turnout in the Jerusalem municipal boundaries (PA electoral district J1) was 10 percent, 6 percent, and 16 percent, respectively. Many Palestinians refrained from voting out of fear of losing their residency permits and Israel, through numerous methods, made voting difficult for East Jerusalemites. Turnout was considerably higher elsewhere in the West Bank (Menachem Klein, *Jerusalem: The Contested City*, New York: New York University Press, 2001, pp. 214–246; Hillel Cohen, *The Rise and Fall of Arab Jerusalem: Palestinian Politics and the City Since 1967*, London: Routledge, 2011, pp. 108–126; and Dumper, 2014, pp. 69–73).

Table 3.1
Palestinian Voter Turnout in Municipal Elections in East Jerusalem, 1969–2013

Election	Voter Turnout (Percentage of Eligible Palestinian Voters)	Number of Palestinian Voters	Mayor Elected
1969	21–22[a]	7,500–8,000	Teddy Kollek
1973	7	3,150	Teddy Kollek
1978	14	7,000–8,000	Teddy Kollek
1983	18	10,000–11,600[b]	Teddy Kollek
1989	3	3,000–4,000	Teddy Kollek
1993	5–8[c]	8,000	Ehud Olmert
1998	3–7[d]	2,000–6,500	Ehud Olmert
2003	5	6,400	Uri Lupolianski
2008	2	2,600	Nir Barkat
2013	0.7–1.6	1,100	Nir Barkat

SOURCES: **1969–1989 elections:** Klein, 2001, p. 186; and Ira Sharkansky, *Governing Jerusalem: Again on the World's Agenda*, Detroit, Mich.: Wayne State University Press, 1996, p. 135. **1993 election:** Klein, 2001, p. 186; Meron Benvenisti, *Intimate Enemies: Jews and Arabs in a Shared Land*, Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1995, p. 44; and Jerusalem expert, document shared during discussion with author, July 25, 2018. **1998 election:** Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, "Palestinians Boycott Israeli Municipal Elections in Jerusalem," press release, December 1998; Klein, 2001, p. 186; and Jerusalem expert, 2018. **2003 election:** Omer Yaniv of JIPR, email with author, August 28, 2018. **2008 election:** International Crisis Group, 2012, p. 23. **2013 election:** Daniel Seidemann, "The Myth of an Undivided Jerusalem Is Collapsing Under Its Own Weight," *The Guardian*, January 8, 2014; and JIPR, "Municipal Election—The Interactive Version," *Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research—The Blog*, August 8, 2018.

NOTES: The elevated rate of voting in 1969 is thought to be explained by high turnout among Palestinian municipal employees worried about losing their jobs. See Dumper, 2014, p. 67. Many of the voters in subsequent elections also are believed to be municipal employees or Palestinians from the neighborhood of Beit Safafa—which, because of historical geography, was partly inside the Green Line, meaning that the residents are Israeli citizens. See International Crisis Group, 2012, p. 23.

[a] Dumper, 2014, p. 67, cites 7,150 voters and 28-percent turnout.

[b] Friedland and Hecht, 2000, p. 188, cites 13,000 voters.

[c] Friedland and Hecht, 2000, p. 449, cites 3-percent turnout.

[d] Salem writes that after the 1993 election, "the percentage dropped to 1–3 percent, according to Israeli data published in *Ha'aretz*." Walid Salem, "The East Jerusalem Municipality: Policy Options and Proposed Alternatives," *Jerusalem Quarterly*, No. 74, Summer 2018, p. 121 (citing Usama Halabi, *Baladiyat al-Quds al-'Arabiya* [*Arab Jerusalem Municipality*], Jerusalem: Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs, 2000, p. 51).

the capital of a future Palestinian state.[3] The decision thus transcends local issues and reaches the plain of national politics and national identity. "I won't vote, even if voting means getting the sewage system fixed and operating the kindergartens," stated one East Jerusalem activist. "It's a matter of principle."[4]

In ethnographic research, anthropologist Oren Kroll-Zeldin finds that Palestinian East Jerusalemites articulate the following four reasons for their boycott:

1. It is an aspect of their resistance to Israel.
2. It demonstrates to the world that East Jerusalem is illegally occupied.
3. It is a way to express solidarity with Palestinians outside Jerusalem, who also have an interest in the city but no political means to voice it.
4. Boycotters believe voting is pointless because they see the municipality as "merely an instrument of oppression rather than an entity to provide much needed social services."[5]

The first three reasons point to an active, ideologically driven boycott; the last one points to more mundane nonparticipation.[6]

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[3] The East Jerusalem boycott is fairly unique among other electoral boycotts around the world, which tend to be initiated on an election-by-election basis when the opposition party fears that the incumbent will manipulate the outcomes. Beaulieu finds that 7 percent of elections in developing countries between 1975 and 2006 were boycotted by opposition parties. (See Emily Beaulieu, *Electoral Protest and Democracy in the Developing World*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014.) Moreover, the general literature on electoral boycotts does not cover East Jerusalem. For more, see Emily Beaulieu and Susan D. Hyde, "In the Shadow of Democracy Promotion: Strategic Manipulation, International Observers, and Election Boycotts," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 3, March 2009; Judith Kelley, "Do International Election Monitors Increase or Decrease Opposition Boycotts?" *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 11, 2011; Ian O. Smith, "Election Boycotts and Hybrid Regime Survival," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 47, No. 5, 2014; Beaulieu, 2014; Gail Buttorff and Douglas Dion, "Participation and Boycott in Authoritarian Elections," *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, Vol. 29, No. 1, 2017; and Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham, Marianne Dahl, and Anne Frugé, "Strategies of Resistance: Diversification and Diffusion," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 61, No. 3, July 2017.

[4] Nir Hasson, "'People Are Ready': Breaking Taboo, Palestinian Parties to Run in Israeli Election in Jerusalem," *Haaretz*, March 8, 2018b.

[5] Oren Kroll-Zeldin, "Finding Nonviolence in Jerusalem: The Palestinian Boycott of Jerusalem Municipal Elections Since 1967," *Tikkun Magazine*, Vol. 32, No. 2, Spring 2017. See also Oren Kroll-Zeldin, "Ethnography of Exclusion: Israeli Policies and Palestinian Resistance in Jerusalem," dissertation, California Institute of Integral Studies, 2014, pp. 150–153.

[6] Kroll-Zeldin, 2014, p. 149. See also Itai Bavli and Mollie Gerver, "Formal Boycott or Informal Frustration? Non-Voting in East Jerusalem for the Jerusalem Municipal Elections," unpublished paper, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, undated. According to rational choice models of voting, if a person does not expect his or her vote to make any difference, not voting is in fact the rational option. From this perspective, the salient question is not why people do not vote, but why so many people do vote. See, for example, Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, New York: Harper and Row, 1957; Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965; and William Riker and Peter Ordeshook, "A Theory of the Calculus of Voting," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 62, No. 1, 1968.

There are two other issues that dissuade Palestinians from running for office or voting. First, many Palestinians doubt that city councilors would have any impact on the most-contentious Israeli policies in Jerusalem, such as city planning, land use, residency permit revocation, and access to and the integrity of the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount, all of which are decided by the national government.[7] Second, the fragmented nature of Palestinian politics would make it very difficult for voters to coalesce around a single list of candidates. Multiple lists splintering the Palestinian electorate would dilute political power in city hall and prevent successful collective action.[8]

These political and practical reasons for the boycott notwithstanding, several Palestinians have tried to run for municipal office in the past. In all cases, however, they have suspended their campaigns before election day or not received enough votes to win a seat. The Palestinian businessman and journalist Hanna Siniora proposed running for the city council as head of a Palestinian list in the election of 1989, but dropped the idea after the PLO leadership rejected his effort and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine set his cars on fire.[9] Before the 1993 campaign, several Israelis reached out to PLO leaders to gain their assent in forming a joint Israeli-Palestinian list, but the plan collapsed when the PLO forbade Palestinian East Jerusalemites from joining.[10] The 1998 election saw the campaign of Moussa Alayan, a Palestinian with Israeli citizenship from Beit Safafa running on a primarily economic platform, fail to meet the minimum threshold for a seat in the council.[11] In 2008, Zohair Hamdan,

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[7]   Klein, 2001, p. 187; International Crisis Group, 2012, p. 25; and Dumper, 2014, p. 68. As one East Jerusalemite told *Haaretz*: "In Jerusalem you can't change anything from the inside, especially not the treatment of Palestinians. It's all about government policy" (Nir Hasson, "Boycotting Since 1967: East Jerusalem Palestinians to Abandon Local Elections," *Haaretz*, October 17, 2013). In addition to the fact that Jerusalem is of great interest to national policymakers, Israeli municipalities are weak compared with the "highly centralized national government that exercises considerable formal control over local authorities" (Ira Sharkansky, *Policy Making in Israel: Routines for Simple Problems and Coping with the Complex*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997, p. 53). See also Michael Dumper, *The Politics of Jerusalem Since 1967*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2005, pp. 46–47.

[8]   International Crisis Group, 2012, p. 25; and Dumper, 2014, p. 68.

[9]   Klein, 2001, p. 186; Cohen, 2011, p. 17; and Dumper, 2014, p. 67.

[10]   Cohen, 2011, p. 95; and Dumper, 2014, p. 67. Klein (2001, p. 187) notes that this attempt did not face as much hostility as Siniora's 1989 campaign and that the PLO actually deferred to local leadership who opposed the idea. Benvenisti elaborates that the Palestinian community gave the idea of voting "serious consideration" for the first time since 1967, and that the PLO only decided to maintain the boycott after "extensive deliberations." What is more, he notes, "prominent leaders made neither public declarations calling for a boycott nor threats against anyone who might dare to vote" (Benvenisti, 1996, p. 112). Friedland and Hecht (2000, p. 449) write that "the PLO provided a flickering green light" to vote, though very few did.

[11]   Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, 1998; Charmaine Seitz and Matthew Brubacher, "Interview (Translated from Arabic) with Moussa Alayan Arab List Candidate for the 1998 Jerusalem Elections," Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, 1998; and Justus Reid Weiner, "The Palestinian Boycott of Jerusalem's Municipal Political Process: Consequences for the Level of Public Services and Infrastructure," Jerusalem Issue Brief, Vol. 2, No. 21, March 23, 2003. Dumper (2014, pp. 67–68)

of the neighborhood of Sur Baher, announced his candidacy for mayor but withdrew before the vote for "technical reasons."[12] And in the 2013 elections, Fuad Suleiman, an Israeli citizen who has lived in both East and West Jerusalem, ran for the council unsuccessfully on a coalition of left-wing Israeli parties rather than as an independent or as part of a Palestinian list, the way his predecessors had.[13] Because of these failed campaigns and losses, there has not been a Palestinian representative in Jerusalem city government since 1967.[14]

Several of these cases demonstrate a final factor that might contribute to the boycott: intimidation and coercion by Palestinian political elites. The extent to which the PA, PLO, and Hamas impose the boycott on ordinary potential voters is debated, but heavy pressure clearly has derailed the ambitions of some candidates or potential candidates.[15] At the very least, as the International Crisis Group states, the boycott is "strongly urged on by [Palestinian] national leadership."[16]

By not electing their own representatives to the municipal government, Palestinians are losing out on a wide range of potential benefits: One scholar, summing up the pro-vote position, tallies the sacrifices as "better roads, paving, sanitation, planning, education, health provision, and cultural facilities without the future status of East Jerusalem being predetermined."[17] After all, Palestinian Jerusalemites pay city taxes

suggests that Alayan withdrew before the election. Klein adds that, in addition to Alayan's bid, during the leadup to the 1998 campaign, "there were exploratory talks between Uzi Baram of the Labor Party, who was then considering running for mayor that coming November, and the Palestinian leadership in Jerusalem about calling on the Palestinian public to participate in the elections for mayor to help oust Olmert. Despite Olmert's actions in Jerusalem, the response was adamantly negative" (Klein, 2001, p. 188).

[12] Joseph Nasr, "Palestinians Boycott 'Useless' Jerusalem Mayoral Vote," Reuters, November 6, 2008; and International Crisis Group, 2012, p. 23.

[13] Ilene Prusher, "The Only Palestinian Running for Jerusalem City Council," *Haaretz*, October 21, 2013; and Yermi Brenner, "Palestinians Debate Jerusalem Ballot Boycott," *Al Jazeera*, October 21, 2013. Hasson (2013) reported that two Palestinian groups considered contesting the election, but neither did after facing a backlash.

[14] However, the pre-1967 city council of Jordanian Jerusalem has existed as a "government in exile" since Israel dissolved it in June 1967. The council that was elected in 1963 "continued operating from Amman and until today two members of that council who are alive . . . still represent East Jerusalem in the Arab, Islamic, and international federations of capitals and cities" (Salem, 2018, p. 120).

[15] For arguments about the importance of intimidation, see Friedland and Hecht, 2000, p. 187; Weiner, 2003; and Nadav Shragai, "Jerusalem's Arabs Under Threat on the Eve of the City's Municipal Elections," Jerusalem Issue Briefs, Vol. 18, No. 24, August 22, 2018. For evidence that in recent years "[t]here is simply no Palestinian capacity in East Jerusalem to organize a campaign of intimidation, or anything else of consequence," see Seidemann, 2014. See also Cohen, 2011; International Crisis Group, 2012, pp. 2–9; and Jubeh, 2015, pp. 18–19.

[16] International Crisis Group, 2012, p. 28. Similarly, Dumper (2014, p. 67) calls it "a PLO-inspired boycott of the elections."

[17] Dumper, 2014, p. 68. In addition to the potential for increasing services, a Palestinian planner noted that Palestinian city councilors also could gain "access to data useful for making their case to the international media and in international courts. It would also make shady dealings between the settlers and the municipality more challenging to hide" (International Crisis Group, 2012, p. 23).

but receive a disproportionately small part of the municipal budget and substandard municipal services. Elected Palestinian voices in city council chambers could likely improve conditions in Arab East Jerusalem. These improvements, however, would come at a great cost from the perspective of many Palestinians, and they have opted to prioritize national strategic objectives—a capital in East Jerusalem—over quotidian practical gains. As the Jerusalem affairs adviser to the Palestinian Prime Minister put it before the 2008 election: "We cannot pay a long-term political price in return for short-term municipal services."[18]

The 2013 Municipal Elections

The most recent local elections for mayor and city council in Jerusalem (and across Israel) took place in October 2013. A close look at these election results reveals two points important for our discussion. First, the Palestinian boycott remains strong. Second, if even a small percentage of Palestinian Jerusalemites decided to end the boycott and go to the polls, they could easily elect their own representative or representatives.

Overall voter turnout in the city was 39 percent: Of 576,406 total eligible voters, 225,254 cast a vote for mayor and 225,357 cast a vote for city council.[19] However, this overall figure masks major disparities in electoral participation between the city's Israelis and Palestinians (see Table 3.2).[20] Israelis in West Jerusalem and the Israeli neighborhoods built beyond the Green Line turned out at 56.5 percent.[21] In East Jerusalem, only 0.7 percent of Palestinians went to the polls.[22]

In the census-designated statistical areas that cover Arab East Jerusalem,[23] voter turnout was 2 percent: Of 182,469 eligible voters, 2,575 valid votes were cast for mayor and 2,820 valid votes were cast for city council.[24] But even these low numbers are actually inflated by the Israelis who reside in these statistical areas.[25] One-quarter of all the votes in these areas came from the Jewish Quarter of the Old City, which is home to

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[18] Nasr, 2008.

[19] Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, *Statistical Yearbook of Jerusalem 2014*, Jerusalem, 2014, p. 542.

[20] For an interactive, detailed map of the 2013 municipal election results, see JIPR, 2018.

[21] Jewish Jerusalem voter turnout was calculated as follows:

$$\frac{(225,254 \text{ votes for mayor} - 2,575 \text{ valid votes for mayor in Areas 2111-2911})}{(576,406 \text{ eligible voters} - 182,469 \text{ eligible voters in Areas 2111-2911})}$$

JIPR (2018), however, notes that "55.3% of Jerusalem's non-Arab residents participated in the election."

[22] JIPR (2018) puts Palestinian turnout at 1.6 percent.

[23] These are Areas 2111–2911. See Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, 2014, pp. 42–43.

[24] Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, 2014, pp. 550–551, 554.

[25] The Jewish Quarter of the Old City was home to 3,350 people at the time and approximately 2,600 Israelis live in "settlement enclaves implanted within pre-existing, uniformly Palestinian neighborhoods" in East Jerusa-

Table 3.2
Voter Turnout by Quarter in the 2013 Jerusalem City Council Election

Quarter	Example Neighborhood	Actual Voter Turnout[a]	Total Valid Votes	Eligible Voters
Quarter 4	Ramot Alon	74	27,406	37,701
Quarter 9	Romema	70	22,512	32,544
Quarter 10	Beit Ha-Kerem	62	24,371	39,901
Quarter 5	Mount Scopus	56	16,858	30,655
Quarter 1	Pisgat Ze'ev	55	23,807	44,404
Quarter 16	Gilo	52	17,455	34,033
Quarter 11	Qiryat Ha-Yovel	52	17,494	34,654
Quarter 12	Katamon	51	15,450	30,854
Quarter 13	Talpiot	49	23,387	49,504
Quarter 8	Me'a She'arim	43	22,595	53,538
Areas 2111–2911	Arab East Jerusalem[b]	2	2,820	182,469

SOURCE: Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, 2014, pp. 548–551.

NOTE: This table displays results for the October 2013 city council election. The mayoral election had 103 fewer votes and 6,619 fewer valid votes, but the turnout numbers are nearly identical.

[a] Actual voter turnout includes both valid and invalid votes cast.

[b] This includes the Jewish Quarter of the Old City and Israeli settlers living in Palestinian neighborhoods.

only 1.2 percent of eligible voters. In stark contrast, Palestinian neighborhoods often had vote counts in the single digits. In Bet Hanina, the most populous community in Arab East Jerusalem, only 81 out of 22,951 eligible voters cast a valid ballot for mayor (0.35-percent turnout), and in Kafr 'Aqab, one of the neighborhoods on the West Bank side of the Separation Barrier and home to 9,723 eligible voters, the number of votes cast was two (0.02-percent turnout).

The results of the 2013 election demonstrate the very real possibility of Palestinians electing representatives to the city council (Table 3.3). Electing a Palestinian mayor would be more difficult (Table 3.4)—and, complicating the issue, the mayor must be an Israeli citizen—but the city council is well within reach for a community that is about 30 percent of the eligible electorate.[26] The city council's 31 seats are

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lem (Seidemann, 2015, p. 68), such as the Muslim Quarter of the Old City, Ras al 'Amud/Ma'aleh Zeitim, and Silwan/City of David. See Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, 2014, p. 95; and Seidemann, 2015, pp. 68–71.

[26] There are estimated to be between 175,000 and 200,000 eligible Palestinian voters. See Gershon Baskin and Aziz Abu Sarah, "Help Us To Create Shared Governance in Jerusalem-AlQuds," email to supporters, April 10, 2018; and Shragai, 2018. At the time of the last election, there were approximately 160,000 eligible Palestinian

Table 3.3
Results of the 2013 Jerusalem City Council Election

	Number of Seats	Percentage (%)	Total Numbers
Eligible voters		100	576,406
Total voters		39	225,357
Valid votes		98	220,668
Invalid votes		2	4,689
Party lists[a]			
United Torah Judaism	8	24	53,708
Shas	5	16	35,148
Yerushalayim Tazliach	4	14	31,159
Jerusalem Awakening	4	11	25,190
Yerushalmim	2	7	16,181
Meretz-Labor	2	6	12,325
United Jerusalem	2	4	9,753
Ha-Bayit Ha-Yehudi	1	4	9,097
B'nei Torah	1	3	7,316
Likud Beitenu	1	3	7,154
Pisgat Ze'ev on the Map	1	3	6,120
Neighborhoods and Businesses	—	1	3,088
Ometz Lev	—	1	2,111
Tov Liyerushalayim	—	1	1,883
Yesh Am Echad	—	0	349
Jerusalem Veterans	—	0	86

SOURCE: Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, 2014, p. 542.

[a] Percentages are calculated out of all valid votes.

currently held by 11 parties. The largest, United Torah Judaism (*Yahdut ha-Torah*), received 53,708 votes (24.3 percent of valid votes), which garnered it eight seats. The smallest, Pisgat Ze'ev on the Map (*Pisgat Ze'ev al ha-Mapah)*, received 6,120 votes (2.8 percent) and one seat. The party with the highest number of votes that did not

voters. See Seth J. Frantzman and Laura Kelly, "Jerusalem's Missing Voters," *Jerusalem Post*, October 3, 2013; and Seidemann, 2014.

Table 3.4
Results of the 2013 Jerusalem Mayoral Election

	Percentage (%)	Total Numbers
Eligible voters	100	576,406
Total voters	39	225,254
Valid votes	95	214,049
Invalid votes	5	11,205
Candidate name[a]		
Nir Barkat	51	111,108
Moshe Leon	45	95,411
Haim Epstein	4	7,530

SOURCE: Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, 2014, p. 542.

[a] Percentages are calculated out of all valid votes.

meet the threshold to qualify for a seat received 3,088 votes (1.4 percent). Only 4-percent turnout among Palestinians, assuming all votes went to the same party, could have elected a city councilor in the 2013 election. If Palestinians and Israelis in Jerusalem voted at the same rate, and if a Palestinian presence on the ballot did not stimulate higher Israeli turnout, Palestinians could have substantial representation in city hall.

CHAPTER FOUR
Will the Electoral Boycott End?

Although the boycott has held strong for five decades, there are East Jerusalem Palestinians advocating its end.[1] As an East Jerusalem Palestinian civil society leader told International Crisis Group in 2010, "Every day Jerusalem slips further away from us, and we cannot do anything to stop that. In order to confront the challenges on the ground, we need to consider a radical change in our strategy."[2] And although public supporters of political participation remain a minority, there has been an unusual flurry of political activity in the lead-up to the 2018 municipal election.

As of October 22, 2018, one Palestinian party was running for city council in Jerusalem: Al-Quds Baladi ("Jerusalem, My Town" in Arabic), led by Ramadan Dabash.[3] Dabash, a civil engineer and community activist from the southern neighborhood of Sur Baher, is running on a socioeconomic platform and advocating improved municipal services in Palestinian neighborhoods rather than emphasizing issues traditionally central to Palestinian nationalism.[4] "We are not telling anyone to become Israeli, change their religion, give up the Al-Aqsa Mosque or join the Israeli army," he told the *Times of Israel*. "We are saying that we need to make sure we receive better services. We

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[1] Pro-voting voices in Arab East Jerusalem also have received support from a range of political positions outside the Palestinian community. See, for example, Weiner, 2003; International Crisis Group, 2012; and Robert Wexler and Aaron Zucker, "Palestinians May Finally Join Jerusalem Elections. The US and Israel Should Help Them," *The Forward*, March 15, 2018.

[2] International Crisis Group, 2012, p. 23.

[3] The party also has been known as Jerusalem for Jerusalemites. Adam Ragson, "The Rise, Fall and Worsening Plight of a Palestinian Would-Be Mayor of Jerusalem," *Times of Israel*, October 5, 2018b.

[4] Dabash's campaign has gained a great deal of media attention, both locally and internationally. See, for example, Hasson, 2018b; Udi Shaham, "Breaking the Taboo, Jerusalem Activist Presents Arab Party for Municipal Election," *Jerusalem Post*, March 14, 2018; María Sevillano, "Un Palestino Reta a Sus Compatriotas y se Presenta a la Alcaldía de Jerusalén," *El Español*, July 26, 2018 (Spain); Mareike Enghusen, "Es geht um die Müllabfuhr, nicht um die Religion," *Die Zeit*, July 27, 2018 (Germany); Daniela Kresch, "Líder comunitário é 1º árabe a disputar prefeitura de Jerusalém em 50 anos," *Folha de São Paulo*, July 30, 2018 (Brazil); Adam Ragson, "Taboo-Breaking Palestinian Candidate Says East Jerusalem Deserves Better," *Times of Israel*, August 2, 2018a; Matti Friedman, "The First Palestinian in Jerusalem's City Hall?" *New York Times*, August 10, 2018; Rasha Abou Jalal, "Arab Bloc Could Get Out Palestinian Vote In Jerusalem Municipal Elections," *Al-Monitor*, August 15, 2018; and "An Election in Jerusalem," *The New Yorker Radio Hour* (podcast), August 31, 2018.

need to have a voice on the city council to fight for our rights. . . . We are paying taxes to the municipality, but we do not receive enough services. Our roads are not sufficiently paved, our garbage often is not collected, our homes are frequently demolished, and our school infrastructure is inadequate. . . . We need to change this reality, and the only way to accomplish that is through gaining influence in the municipality."[5] At one point, Dabash's party had other Palestinians running for city council alongside him, but the other members dropped out after receiving threats.[6] Although Dabash has also been threatened, including reports of a recent attempt to kidnap one of his children, he is still campaigning.[7]

In addition to Dabash's party, three other parties announced their intention to contest the 2018 elections but will not be on the ballot: Al-Quds Lana (meaning "Our Jerusalem" or "Jerusalem Is Ours" in Arabic) led by Aziz Abu Sarah; a joint Palestinian-Israeli party, Yerushalayim-Al Quds, led by Abu Sarah and Israeli activist Gershon Baskin; and the East Jerusalem Party, a Palestinian party led by Iyad Bibuah. Bibuah withdrew for personal reasons, Yerushalayim-Al Quds disbanded, and Abu Sarah instead founded the Palestinian-only Al-Quds Lana, the most notable of the three aborted campaigns.[8] Al-Quds Lana, in contrast to Dabash, ran on a Palestinian nationalist platform.[9] Abu Sarah, a journalist and entrepreneur, also promised to improve the living conditions of Palestinian Jerusalemites, but central to his party's message was opposition to Israeli rule and policies in East Jerusalem. "It's a patriotic thing to run as a Palestinian, to defend Jerusalem and defend its Arab identity," he said at a press conference. "City hall uses our taxes to establish settlements and to demolish our homes. We are not asking for our rights; we are taking them. It's not relinquishing our rights; it is part of the struggle to end the occupation as quickly as possible."[10] As he elaborated in an interview with *Newsweek*: "This is our strategy for struggle, for our

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[5] Ragson, 2018a.

[6] Nir Hasson, "Palestinian Candidates Unlikely to Win Jerusalem Mayoral Race, but Have Already Come a Long Way," *Haaretz*, September 17, 2018f. The most recent reporting suggests that Dabash does have other candidates on his slate, but he has not yet released their names. See Nir Hasson, "Palestinian Vying for Jerusalem City Council Perseveres Despite Violence Against His Campaign," *Haaretz*, October 19, 2018h.

[7] Hasson, 2018f.

[8] Ragson, 2018a; Meron Rapoport, "East Jerusalem Palestinians Are Ready To Take Back Their City," +972.com, June 14, 2018. Baskin remained an adviser and advocated for Al-Quds Lana. See Gershon Baskin, "Encountering Peace: Why I Support A Palestinian List in Jerusalem," *Jerusalem Post*, September 12, 2018.

[9] Also in contrast to Dabash, Abu Sarah sought to be elected mayor. Complicating that ambition was the fact that, by law, the mayor must be an Israeli citizen, which Abu Sarah is not. He sued the government in an attempt to overturn the law, though even he believed his chance of success was "very low" in the courts (Jaclynn Ashly, "Aziz Abu Sarah Wants to Be Mayor of Jerusalem and Is Suing Israel," *Al Jazeera*, September 15, 2018). "I was born here and my parents were born here," he said. "If this is democracy, allow me to run. If not, don't allow me to. That will explore the bluff of Israeli democracy"(Hasson, 2018f).

[10] Nir Hasson, "Jerusalem Mayoral Hopeful Egged by Fellow Palestinians," *Haaretz*, September 6, 2018d; and Ashly, 2018.

rights, for us to be here. Our existence here is the most important thing. If we're not here, we lose Jerusalem."[11] He said that his first priority as mayor would be to stop the demolition of Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem.[12]

Al-Quds Lana suspended its campaign after receiving pressure from both Israeli and Palestinian quarters. Abu Sarah claims that Israel was looking into revoking his residency permit, and that the party's candidates received threats from Palestinians, including getting egged and called "traitor" by Palestinian youth during a press conference in front of city hall.[13] "The pressure was serious," Abu Sarah remarked.[14] Such intimidation of Palestinian candidates follows a long pattern. As the history of past attempts to run for the council demonstrates (see Chapter Two), abandoned efforts have more precedent than successful bids for office. But, as one close observer of Jerusalem politics reflected before Al-Quds Lana withdrew, "Even if Abu Sarah and Dabbash don't get elected, they have gone further than any other Palestinian candidate since Jerusalem's unification and have sparked unprecedented debate among Jerusalem Palestinians about whether they should vote in municipal elections."[15]

In an interview, Dabash said he can imagine 70,000 East Jerusalem Palestinians voting in 2018—an outcome with over 15,000 more votes than the current largest party in the city council—but that he would be happy with 10,000 to 20,000 votes, a ten- to twentyfold increase from 2013. Most experts cited in the media and consulted by the RAND research team do not believe this will occur. Recent survey data, however, suggest that opinions in Arab East Jerusalem are shifting and more people are open to voting than in the past. A survey commissioned by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in January 2018 found that 58 percent of Palestinian East Jerusalemites—particularly younger, more educated, and wealthier residents—support or strongly support voting in the upcoming election; 14 percent oppose it.[16] A March 2018 survey by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research found that 42 percent of East Jerusalem Palestinians supported going to the polls in October 2018 and 30 percent opposed it. Notably, 28 percent did not give their opinion, "probably out of concern that it might be risky to state [their] views on the subject or that [their] answer might not be a popular one," as

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[11] David Brennan, "Palestinian Journalist Declares Jerusalem Mayoral Run: 'We Will Stand for Our Right to Be Here,'" *Newsweek*, September 5, 2018.

[12] Nir Hasson, "Not an Israeli Citizen, East Jerusalemite Sees His Mayoral Run as Part of 'Palestinian Struggle,'" *Haaretz*, September 6, 2018e.

[13] Hasson, 2018d; and Ashly, 2018.

[14] Nir Hasson, "Palestinian Resident of East Jerusalem Withdraws From Jerusalem Mayoral Race," *Haaretz*, September 25, 2018g. See also Gwen Ackerman and Fadwa Hodali, "Palestinian Leaves Jerusalem Mayoral Race, Claiming Coercion," *Bloomberg News*, September 26, 2018.

[15] Hasson, 2018f.

[16] Nir Hasson, "Despite Official Boycott, Over Half of East Jerusalem's Palestinians Want to Vote in City Elections," *Haaretz*, February 15, 2018a.

the survey report notes.[17] Yet a second survey that the center conducted in late June and early July 2018 (after the moving of the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem and the violence of the March of Return in Gaza) found that 22 percent of Palestinian East Jerusalemites said they actually "intend to participate or think about participation" in the municipal elections and 73 percent said they intended not to vote or would not consider it, with 5 percent not giving an answer.[18] Polling in Arab East Jerusalem, however, is "especially difficult"—according to one expert, residents commonly refuse to participate in surveys, evade questions, make up answers, or, in "an effort to placate the questioner and get rid of him or her as quickly as possible, . . . giv[e] the 'right' answer—that is, the answer that will satisfy the pollster and not get the interviewee in trouble."[19]

The 2018 municipal election might thus mark the end of the communitywide boycott and see Palestinians in Jerusalem city government for the first time since 1967. But the election also might (and seems more likely to) lead to a replay of earlier jettisoned or unsuccessful attempts. Vocal opposition to voting from important sectors in Palestinian society remains strong. In June 2018, the PLO General Secretary, Saeb Erekat, reiterated the PLO's opposition to East Jerusalem Palestinians voting. "[A]ny participation in the elections will assist the Israeli establishment in promoting the 'greater Jerusalem' project," Erekat said in a statement. "The [PLO] Executive Committee calls very strongly for not giving any legitimacy to the occupation and annexation of occupied Jerusalem as well as Israeli policies aimed at diminishing Palestinian presence in the city while multiplying the number of illegal settlers."[20] In July 2018, Jerusalem-based Islamic religious authorities ruled that Palestinians are forbidden to vote in the city's elections.[21]

Even without Palestinian political and religious leadership calling for a boycott, there is a widespread feeling among Palestinian East Jerusalemites that the municipality does not work for them and that there is simply no point in voting.[22] And even if this sentiment shifted, after five decades of boycott, "the public . . . is unused

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[17] Among all Palestinians surveyed, support for voting was even higher, with 61 percent supporting East Jerusalemites voting in municipal elections and 29 percent opposing it. Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, "Press Release: Public Opinion Poll No (67)," March 20, 2018a, p. 5.

[18] Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, "Public Opinion Poll No (68)," July 4, 2018b, pp. 7, 20.

[19] Daniel Seidemann, "The Perils of Polling in East Jerusalem," *Foreign Policy*, February 23, 2012.

[20] "PLO Opposed to East Jerusalem Palestinians Voting in Israeli Municipal Elections," Palestinian News and Info Agency, June 26, 2018.

[21] "Religious Fatwa Prohibits Participation in West Jerusalem Israeli Election," Palestinian News and Info Agency, July 30, 2018; and Khaled Abu Toameh, "Palestinian Fatwa Bans Participation in Jerusalem Election," *Jerusalem Post*, July 30, 2018.

[22] International Crisis Group, 2012, p. 25. As a Jerusalemite lawyer put it in an interview with International Crisis Group (2012, p. 27), "we have lost our sense of entitlement to the city, our sense of ownership over it." In another interview, an East Jerusalem civil society leader lamented, "We are like strangers in the city of our birth" (International Crisis Group, 2012, p. 27). See also Bavli and Gerver, undated.

to voting and thus hard to mobilize."[23] What is more, the Israeli government is not making it easy for Palestinians to vote. The Ministry of Interior is planning to open only 11 polling stations in Palestinian neighborhoods, compared with 187 stations in Jewish neighborhoods. That means that although each polling station in the Jewish neighborhoods could serve an average of 2,000 voters, this number could be 16,000 in Palestinian neighborhoods.[24] The limited number of polling places suggests that the Israeli government goes along with the electoral boycott. As JIPR researcher Yair Assaf-Shapira explained to *Haaretz*, "The fact that they don't vote apparently serves as a good pretext for preventing them from voting. What this means is that you're depriving the few who do want to vote of the right to do so."[25]

Although voter turnout among Palestinians in East Jerusalem in 2018 might not be as high as some people hope—and might not even increase at all—Palestinian society in East Jerusalem does seem to be undergoing changes. In particular, since the 2004–2005 construction of the Separation Barrier in response to the violence of the Second Intifada, Arab East Jerusalem was transformed from a city at the center of a Palestinian metropolis that stretched from Ramallah to Bethlehem to a peripheral appendage of West Jerusalem and Israel. With Arab East Jerusalem cut off from its "natural market and hinterland" in the West Bank where many Palestinian East Jerusalemites worked and socialized, the area's social and economic orientation moved westward.[26] This reorientation has manifested in numerous ways, including a pos-

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[23] International Crisis Group, 2012, p. 25. Political science research has gathered substantial evidence to suggest that voting is a habit. The obverse is that not voting is likewise self-perpetuating: Not voting in past elections decreases the likelihood of voting in future elections. See, for example, Alan S. Gerber, Donald P. Green, and Ron Shachar, "Voting May Be Habit Forming: Evidence from a Randomized Field Experiment," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 47, No. 3, 2003; and Alexander Coppock and Donald P. Green, "Is Voting Habit Forming? New Evidence from Experiments and Regression Discontinuities," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 60, No. 4, October 2016. For evidence from outside the United States, see Mikolaj Czesnik, Marta Zerkowska-Balas, and Michal Kotnarowski, "Voting as a Habit in New Democracies – Evidence from Poland," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 1, March 2013.

[24] Gil Hoffman, "East Jerusalem Polling Stations Doubled for Mayoral Race," *Jerusalem Post*, September 13, 2018. The electoral authorities originally announced only six polling stations in Palestinian neighborhoods but raised the number to 11 after public outcry. See Hasson, 2018c.

[25] Hasson, 2018c.

[26] Nir Hasson, "A Surprising Process of 'Israelization' Is Taking Place Among Palestinians in East Jerusalem," *Haaretz*, December 29, 2012. See also Rami Nasrallah, "Jerusalem and its Suburbs: The Decline of the Palestinian City," in International Peace and Cooperation Center, ed., *Jerusalem and Its Hinterland*, Jerusalem, 2008, pp. 50–52; International Crisis Group, 2012; UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2014; Nathan Thrall, "Rage in Jerusalem," *London Review of Books*, December 4, 2014; Ir Amim, 2015, p. 23; Ramon and Lehrs, 2015, p. 3; and Abu Ghoush, 2016, p. 6. In addition to the Separation Barrier, East Jerusalem is further isolated from other Palestinian populations by a ring of Israeli settlements in the West Bank. See Nazmi al-Ju'be, "The Ghettoization of Arab Jerusalem," *Jerusalem Quarterly*, No. 16, 2002.

sible increase in interest in participation in municipal politics.[27] In recent years, there has been an increase in Palestinian East Jerusalemites working, socializing, shopping, and seeking entertainment in West Jerusalem;[28] they are also increasingly studying Hebrew, taking the Israeli matriculation exam, and enrolling in Israeli universities.[29] Most notably, there has been an increase in applications for Israeli citizenship, something once taboo.[30] Although the absolute number of East Jerusalemites seeking naturalized citizenship remains low—14,629, or 4 percent, of Jerusalem's Palestinians applied for citizenship between 2003 and 2016—there has been an uptick since 2009, the year after a surge in residency revocations.[31] From 2003 to 2008, an average of 543 people applied for naturalized citizenship each year. But from 2009 to 2016, the annual average jumped to 1,377.[32] Still, the number of approved cases has actually decreased despite the increase in applications. Successful applications were already in the minority—5,597 applicants since 2003 received citizenship—but the approval process has nearly come to a halt since 2014.[33]

The consensus among observers and Palestinian East Jerusalemites alike is that all of these trends toward "'Israelization,' 'normalization,' or just plain adaptation" have not meant greater acceptance of the political legitimacy of Israeli rule. Rather, writes Nir Hasson, the Jerusalem correspondent for the Israeli daily *Haaretz*, "every-

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[27] As the prominent Palestinian political analyst and pollster Khalil Shikaki stated, "since the construction of the wall . . . [Palestinians in Jerusalem] have become gradually more interested in what's happening in terms of access to work and services that the municipality provides in their neighborhood" (Ragson, 2018a). Hasson (2012) cites two other possible explanations for this reorientation: "Some believe it sprang from below, propelled by the Palestinians' feelings of despair and their belief that an independent state is not likely to come into being. Others think it is due to a revised approach to the eastern part of the city by Israeli authorities, spearheaded by the municipality," including the construction of a light-rail line that runs through East and West Jerusalem.

[28] International Crisis Group, 2012, p. 26; and Marik Shtern, *Polarized Labor Integration: East Jerusalem Palestinians in the City's Employment Market*, Jerusalem: Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research, 2017. Shtern finds that "nearly half the East Jerusalem Palestinian workforce—about 40,000 persons—are employed by the Jewish economic sector in West Jerusalem, in Israel, or in West Bank settlements" (p. 26).

[29] Nir Hasson, "Hebrew U. to Offer Preparatory Course for East Jerusalem Palestinians," *Haaretz*, May 20, 2015; and Nir Hasson, "Hebrew University to Become First Israeli School to Recognize Palestinian Authority Test Scores," *Haaretz*, May 3, 2017.

[30] International Crisis Group, 2012, pp. 21–23.

[31] The increase in applications is generally believed to be caused by residents seeking assurance that they will not be expelled from the city.

[32] Israel Ministry of Interior, "East Jerusalem Citizenship Requests," spreadsheet, 2016.

[33] Dov Lieber, "Israel Almost Entirely Halts Citizenship Approvals for East Jerusalemites," *Times of Israel*, September 26, 2016; and Karin Laub and Mohammed Daraghmeh, "More East Jerusalem Palestinians Seek Israeli Citizenship," *Times of Israel*, March 22, 2017.

one agrees that the driving force behind these developments is not love of Israel, but a desire to survive."[34]

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[34] Hasson, 2012. Among many Palestinians, these trends are understood as an aspect of *sumud* ("steadfastness" in Arabic), "a survival strategy aimed at preserving Palestinian land, culture and identity" (Omar Yousef, "Ethnography of a Holy City," in International Peace and Cooperation Center, 2008, p. 32) As Yousef argues, "Palestinian inhabitants of East Jerusalem developed a special, survivalist type of resistance based on individual practices of existence" (p. 32). In parallel to these trends of increasing engagement with Israeli institutions, there is a notable increase in "anti-normalization" and "non-cooperation" with institutions, individuals, and events that validate or endorse Israeli rule in East Jerusalem. See International Crisis Group, 2012, p. 30; and Tom Teicholz, "The Real Jerusalem (Nir Hasson's Urshalim)," Forbes.com, November 2, 2017.

Studying a Possible Future Vote in Arab East Jerusalem

Given the possibility that the electoral boycott could end one day, it is important to consider what the possible ramifications might be. What are different conditions under which a vote is plausible? How would different actors respond to a meaningful mobilization to vote? How might different Israeli and Palestinian actions before the election shape the behavior of key actors? What changes in policy might be made possible by changing the composition of the municipal council? To explore potential trajectories after a decision to end the boycott, we designed a game in which a group of Israeli and Palestinian experts role-played key actors across multiple scenarios, allowing us to compare the decisions they made across different conditions. The goal of the game was limited to an examination of the consequences of an end to the Palestinian electoral boycott in Jerusalem, so we did not consider other issues in Israeli-Palestinian relations.

Games are a widely used tool for policy analysis, particularly when studying potential futures where real-world observation is not possible.[1] Games are a type of model where human players make decisions about what actions they would take with available resources in order to achieve their objectives. Players are then presented with the results of their decisions and consider how they would react to the outcome. The format of games can vary widely: Some use computer software or physical boards, cards, and tokens modeled on commercial games for entertainment; others more closely resemble a meeting or workshop. Our game was the latter type, often called a "seminar-style" game. Such games rely on the expertise of participants and facilitators to determine what actions are plausible and what their outcomes might be. In effect, this style of game produces a narrative drawn from experts' understanding of what behaviors are plausible.[2] Importantly, because of the many artificialities involved in role-playing future decisions, games are not generally seen as a reliable tool for predictions of specific outcomes. Instead, they provide an indicative sense of

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[1] There are a wide variety of terms used to refer to this method in different disciplines, including *serious games*, *tabletop exercises*, *human-in-the-loop simulations*, and (in a military context) *wargames*.

[2] Peter Perla and E. D. McGrady, "Why Wargaming Works," *Naval War College Review*, Vol. 64, No. 3, Summer 2011.

what factors in the understanding of those assembled tend to drive decisionmaking. Games are powerful because they can provide an understanding of decisionmaking in the absence of real-world observations, but that understanding is tentative in nature.

What follows is a short description of the game and how it was run in July 2018 in collaboration with and hosted by JIPR.

Scenario Development

In designing the game, our chief concern was to develop hypotheses about which contextual factors might influence decisionmaking around a future municipal election in Jerusalem. After surveying the literature on Arab East Jerusalem politics, society, and policy, we identified two clusters of issues that could affect Palestinian participation: (1) the source and level of Palestinian mobilization and (2) the evolution of Israeli policy toward Arab East Jerusalem.[3]

We posited that there were two potential paths to substantial Palestinian turnout. In one case, local actors could opt to run without substantial PA or PLO support. These candidates would likely focus on local socioeconomic issues, such as service provision and economic investment, and not emphasize nationalist positions.[4] In this scenario, turnout would be mobilized through a network of local actors but face vocal opposition from Palestinian leadership in Ramallah. The other alternative was for candidates to run with a more explicitly nationalist platform, which would be able to garner a degree of at least tacit PA/PLO support.[5] Thus, the electoral mobilization would be supported by elites in Arab East Jerusalem and Ramallah. We characterized these positions as being, respectively, "unified" and "fractured" calls to vote (referring to the degree to which Palestinians are united around the call).

Similarly, we identified two alternatives for Israeli policy toward Arab East Jerusalem that would shape the conditions of the municipal election. In the first option, Israel would seek to improve living conditions for Palestinians in East Jerusalem by providing additional services and investing in infrastructure. The government's pri-

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[3] For other uses of scenarios to explore the future of Jerusalem politics, including some discussion of the future of Palestinian engagement with the municipality and its elections, see International Peace and Cooperation Center, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, and Futura Institute, *Successful Jerusalem: Vision, Scenarios and Strategies*, Jerusalem: Al Manar Modern Press, 2007; and PASSIA, *Building Strategies and Scenarios Towards Socioeconomic Development in East Jerusalem: Final Technical Report*, Jerusalem, 2016.

[4] This is what has occurred in the lead-up to past elections. The difference in our scenario is that we asserted that more Palestinians were likely to participate at the polls.

[5] One possible scenario that could prompt a green light from the PLO is if they determine that the two-state solution is dead. As a "veteran former PLO leader from Jerusalem" explained, "If the PLO declares the two-state solution impossible, East Jerusalemites will be free to organise and take care of themselves by participating in municipal elections. We are preparing for such an eventuality" (International Crisis Group, 2012, p. 25).

mary motivation would be to better integrate the two parts of Jerusalem and make the city feel more unified, but Palestinian East Jerusalemites would still sense improvements in their communities. In the second option, by contrast, escalation of violence related to the larger Israeli-Palestinian national conflict would lead the government to significantly increase the presence of Israeli security forces in Arab East Jerusalem. Residents would see their quality of life decline as a result of a heavy security footprint on the urban fabric.

We can consider the intersections of these trends as providing four potential scenarios (Table 5.1). Although it would have been ideal to explore all four scenarios, limitations on player availability limited us to selecting only two scenarios to explore in this game. Given this limitation, we selected scenarios that allowed us to explore all four factors and that we thought were likely to provoke the most-different responses from the players: Scenario A and Scenario D. The cost of exploring more-divergent scenarios is that it is more difficult to trace the impact of a particular trend—because we vary two factors at the same time, we cannot isolate which factor led players to make different decisions. However, this concern is somewhat mitigated by the fact that players offered detailed logic for their choices during the game. As a result, we can point to evidence about which trends the players declared important in order to discuss the role of each trend separately.

We then needed to develop a context in which these factors would appear. One key choice we made in designing the scenarios was that the decision to mobilize to vote was part of the scenario itself. In part, this is because of the very nature of the issue: We wanted players to "imagine the unimaginable," so it needed to be presented as a *fait accompli* to them. However, we wanted the scenarios to focus on the period leading up to the actual vote to allow players the freedom to shape the conditions that would encourage or discourage turnout. As a result, our scenarios were set four months before the elections of 2023. That year was selected because it is *not* the upcoming election but one further into the future. We also developed a common scenario to fill in the gaps between the present day and our 2023 period of focus that posited limited changes to the broader political, economic, and security context and no changes to Israel's and the PLO's overall objectives for Jerusalem. This was done to limit the

Table 5.1
Scenario Space

	Israeli Policies Worsen Living Conditions in Arab East Jerusalem	Israeli Policies Improve Living Conditions in Arab East Jerusalem
Fractured Palestinian call to vote	Scenario A	Scenario B
United Palestinian call to vote	Scenario C	Scenario D

extent to which players could develop divergent notions about background conditions that might distract from the key factors of interest.[6]

Players

To respond to these scenarios, we convened a group of Israeli and Palestinian players who were asked to take on the role of key stakeholders. JIPR, supported by RAND, recruited 20 players, most of whom were policy researchers with extensive experience studying Jerusalem, advising the municipal government and civil society, or working for the Israeli government or Palestinian organizations. Players were assigned to one of seven teams representing East Jerusalem Palestinians, the Jerusalem municipal government, the Government of Israel, the PA/PLO, Islamic religious leadership (including Hamas), Arab and Muslim countries, and the international community. Because each of these represented institutions or communities encompasses a wide range of perspectives, players were instructed to consider diverse views that exist within the entity they represented. Some teams opted to subdivide, with each member assuming a specific identity, while other teams opted not to role-play these divisions. For example, the Islamic religious leadership team accounted for both Hamas and the Islamic Movement in Israel; and the Arab and Muslim countries team represented a variety of countries that often have opposing agendas.

It is important to note that our players are different from the actual stakeholders in several key ways that could limit the transferability of the decisions in the game to the real world. First, the game was run at a familiar institution under the Chatham House Rule, making it a far lower risk than such decisions would be for the actual stakeholders.[7] The academic training and policy research experience common across our players give them a different disposition and perspective than many of the policymakers they represented. The event also was cohosted by an Israeli think tank in West Jerusalem, which might have shaped some invitees' willingness to participate. Many of the players also were colleagues, so they likely sought to be respectful of one another while discussing such a sensitive topic. Taken together, we anticipate that these characteristics might lead our players to represent views that are more moderate than those of the actual policymakers.

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[6]   We would also note that a situation that more or less extends the status quo five years into the future means that Palestinians are no closer to achieving independence and are likely less optimistic about a two-state solution than they are today. This broader diplomatic environment might make Palestinians in Jerusalem more likely to vote. As one Jerusalem expert wrote, "the decreasing belief of East Jerusalemites in the two state solution correlates to their stated willingness to vote and likely partly explains it" (expert on Arab East Jerusalem, email with authors, September 17, 2018).

[7]   The Chatham House Rule is that "participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed." Chatham House, "Chatham House Rule," webpage, undated.

Rules of the Game

During each of the two scenario rounds, play proceeded in four steps. First, the RAND moderators presented the scenario to the players. Second, the seven teams held internal meetings to discuss their reactions to the initial scenario, as well as their short-, medium-, and long-term objectives. Third, all seven teams reconvened as a group, and each team was given the opportunity to announce their first action. The RAND moderators then determined what the short-term outcome of these actions would be and crafted a short scenario set two months after the initial narrative. The RAND moderators also asked one team to state their next action, and prompted other teams to describe how they would support or oppose that action. This process was then repeated several times until the RAND moderators felt they had a reasonable idea about a plausible outcome of the campaign and election.

It is important to note that this process left players a great deal of latitude regarding issues they wanted to explore and actions they wanted to take. For example, although such issues as the character of Jerusalem and status of the holy sites were discussed in the scenarios, it was up to the players to decide to raise the issues in their statements and actions. This means that players had the ability to discuss these issues or even to raise final status issues during game play (though they largely opted not to). Similarly, teams were free to change the existing positions of the actors they were portraying in both major and minor ways.

By its nature, this game structure depended a great deal on the judgment of the RAND facilitators to shape the discussion and direction of debate. The moderators were not only responsible for directing the discussion, they also made decisions about how the scenario progressed, with limited input from players. Thus, the biases and perceptions of the RAND team had an important influence on the trajectory of the game.

The RAND-JIPR Jerusalem Election Game

The game took place on July 26, 2018, in the JIPR offices in West Jerusalem. The game consisted of three major segments: play of scenario A, play of scenario D, and play after each hypothetical election. The discussion in this chapter gives a short summary of the trajectory of game play and major issues that drove the discussion during each section of play.

Narrative of Game Play

Scenario A: Fractured Palestinian Call to Vote, Deteriorating Living Conditions

In the first scenario, an increased Israeli security presence in Arab East Jerusalem, particularly around the light rail, and historically high numbers of residency permit revocations have had a negative effect on Palestinian East Jerusalemites' quality of life. Israeli cabinet discussions about altering the status quo of the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount spark both a decision to mobilize and vote among East Jerusalem Palestinians and the formation of a broad Palestinian list representing many factions and interests to contest the upcoming elections.

After allowing the groups to discuss their initial positions, the first round of actions revealed a strong split among the Arab teams. The East Jerusalem Palestinian team opted to run candidates focused on socioeconomic issues despite the scenario description that called for a more nationalistic agenda. The campaign's identity frame was Jerusalemite rather than Palestinian or Islamic. This took the game in a direction not envisioned by the game design team—in effect, the local actors pivoted from the scenario's initial focus on deteriorating conditions and provocative discussions by the Israeli government about the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount, which were expected to produce electoral mobilization characterized by rage, to an effort to improve the quality of their lives.

The PA and some Muslim and Arab countries (such as Iran, Turkey, and Qatar) opposed the decision to vote and put resources into a counter-campaign to reinforce the boycott. Similarly, Islamic religious leadership opposed voting in the context of

unilateral Israeli discussions about the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount and used their network to reinforce the boycott.

The non-nationalist focus of the joint list, however, encouraged the municipal and national government of Israel to be supportive of Palestinian political participation, though both were careful to frame public statements using the rhetoric of a united Israeli city. As the Israeli government team put it, "The Government is pleased with this participation. We believe that this is proof that the only future for a viable democratic Jerusalem is unified under Israeli sovereignty."

The international community and Arab and Muslim states (such as Jordan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia) framed the issue primarily as a valid Palestinian choice that needed to be made at the local level. Although they were willing to offer support, such as election monitoring, and even some back-channel mobilization of residents (in the case of Jordan), their primary goal was not to disrupt what they saw as a potential positive step for Palestinian Jerusalemites to improve their communities. The Arab and Muslim states that took this position stressed that such efforts would be "quiet," but they did not explicitly address how such a break with the PA and PLO would be seen domestically or internationally.

In response to these actions, the RAND game designers decided that two opposing movements would mobilize in Arab East Jerusalem over the following two months— one group supporting the vote and polling at 45 percent of Jerusalem's Palestinian population, the other opposing it with support from external groups. The designers also posited that such tensions would lead to street altercations between supporters of each side, which would require Israeli security services to respond and lead to further escalation of violence on top of that described initially in the scenario.

The RAND team first asked the municipality team members to talk about how they would manage the logistics of the vote. The municipal team determined that it would remain outwardly supportive of the vote and look for moderate Palestinian East Jerusalemites to support what it considered "positive" movements. If, however, the city perceived the campaigns veering toward Palestinian nationalism, team members said they would find ways to obstruct voting, such as not preparing polling places in Arab East Jerusalem. The municipality also categorically rejected the idea of international election observers proposed by the international community. The Government of Israel team members responded that they would counter any attempts by the municipality to undermine the election and would restrain security services in an attempt to deescalate the rising tensions in East Jerusalem. Israeli teams also felt that existing Israeli parties would mobilize around the issue—with right-wing and Orthodox parties using the prospect of Palestinian councilors to rally their base and left-wing parties working to prevent defections by their traditional voters to Palestinian candidates that could weaken their own returns.

In response, the Arab East Jerusalem team felt that candidates would double down on their nonpolitical stance; the PA and many Muslim countries, however, would con-

tinue to call for a unified Palestinian boycott. The PA explained its dual strategy of appealing to the United Nations and international community to reaffirm that Israeli rule in East Jerusalem is illegitimate (which means that observers should not be sent to monitor an illegally held election) while using networks of supporters in Jerusalem to quietly undermine the pro-voting campaigns. The teams representing the international community and Arab and Muslim countries both felt that the PA's stance would constrain their actions to some degree because the Muslim world, in particular, would not want to be seen as contradicting the express wishes of the PA. However, the Arab East Jerusalem team expressed the feeling that the PA's intimidation tactics would not have much effect because of the residents' disenchantment with and lack of trust in the PA and because of the PA's limited ability to access polling locations in Jerusalem as a result of security and legal restrictions.

The consensus view was that this scenario was likely to end in more-depressed turnout than the initial polls suggested but would likely see the election of three Palestinian council members.

Scenario D: Unified Palestinian Call to Vote, Improving Living Conditions

In the second scenario, Israel has instead improved living conditions in the Palestinian neighborhoods of East Jerusalem: increasing funding for education, services, and infrastructure; clarifying the rights of residents; and reducing the number of residency revocations. However, the Israeli rhetoric and policies around a "unified capital" spurs Palestinians—concerned about the loss of national identity and "Israelization"—to mobilize behind nationalist candidates for the council and for mayor.

In the first round of player discussion, tensions between the positions taken by the PA and Palestinian East Jerusalemite teams and between the municipal government and national government of Israel once again stood out more than tensions between Israelis and Palestinians. The PA team members stated that they would not be openly antagonistic toward voting because of the nationalist bona fides of the candidates, but it would still be quite difficult to translate what they felt would be fairly reluctant support for breaking the boycott into strong support and mobilization. Likewise, the East Jerusalem Palestinian team said it would have a hard time supporting a nationalist list controlled by the PA after years of perceived abandonment. In effect, no faction was willing to strongly mobilize to support a list running on a platform of Palestinian nationalism. International Arab and Muslim opinion would also oppose the vote, which would be seen as legitimizing Israeli rule. Meanwhile, although the municipal and national government teams stated that the Palestinian candidates should keep their focus on social welfare issues, not nationalist politics, they were reluctant to take any steps to directly confront the nationalist list with the elections still four months away. The municipality expected there to be considerable internal tension over the increase of funds to Arab East Jerusalem as voters in poor Israeli neighborhoods mobilized to oppose the transfer of funds to Palestinian areas. Interestingly, this issue would

likely mobilize turnout in the municipal election even though the funds were appropriated by the national government.

In response to these actions, the RAND moderators determined that two months before the election there would be weakening support for the Palestinian candidates (perhaps on the order of 20 percent) because of anemic voter mobilizations efforts. In contrast, the race in Jewish Jerusalem would be quite competitive because the issue of funding for Arab East Jerusalem mobilizes poorer Jewish residents to act against it.

The teams for both the international community and the Arab and Muslim states would be in a difficult position of wanting to influence the election—with the international community supporting local candidates' right to self-empowerment as they saw fit and many Muslim states opposing participation outright—but wanting to do so relatively quietly, especially given the international legal implications of holding an election in an occupied territory. In general, players felt that the Muslim community had stronger ties with local organizations, which would allow more-effective influence over local behavior than the international community could wield. For example, Muslim states could fund local organizations tasked with preserving the Arab and Muslim nature of Jerusalem to distribute money to support the boycott. The Arab East Jerusalem team said that such a tactic would split the community, with some members preferring to reject foreign funding—and the foreign agenda and possibility for corruption that comes with it—while others preferred foreign resources to Israeli government funding. The PA team also said that it would be unwilling to make investments in a national candidate that could rival either the Israeli funds or external funds from those opposing the vote. At this stage, the PA team said it felt that the nationalist candidate was a lost cause, and it would likely withdraw material support.

The collapse of substantial support for the East Jerusalem Palestinian candidates shifted the focus of the problem for the Israeli teams. As one player representing the Israeli government stated, "The moment you drop the [projected] turnout from 40 to 20 percent, we move on to other issues," meaning smaller turnout would not substantially change the fabric of the city council and thus is of only marginal interest to the national government. For the municipal council, relations with Arab East Jerusalem would remain a more prominent concern and a point of mobilization for some parties. Foreign funds coming into the campaign also would be a concern. However, these concerns would be lower priorities at the national level.

The consensus perspective was that only one or two East Jerusalem Palestinians would end up being elected to city council and those candidates were more likely to be ones who leaned toward technocratic, socioeconomic issues rather than nationalist ones.

After the Elections

After each scenario, we discussed the ramifications of the election results on the day-to-day functioning of the municipal council. The results for both scenarios were fairly

similar, even though their trajectories differed, and there was a great deal of commonality in the outcomes, so we have combined the discussion here.

Israeli players noted that the new council members in and of themselves would not have enough influence to effect major policy changes but that their presence on the council would likely foster more hard-line ideological positions by councilors from Israeli right-wing and religious parties. However, from a broader perspective, the Israeli teams felt that the campaign process and election results would provide useful information about the strengths and weaknesses of local leaders and schisms in the East Jerusalem Palestinian community that could be helpful for developing future strategies. Still, the Government of Israel team also stressed that the makeup of the council was fairly independent of the decision to invest in Arab East Jerusalem, which had far more to do with national objectives to unify the city. The team stressed that the national government could largely ensure these funds were distributed even if the city government opposed it because of the highly centralized nature of the Israeli state.

The Palestinian teams expressed very mixed expectations for what representation on the council might achieve. The East Jerusalem Palestinian team stressed the lack of trust between the Palestinian community of Jerusalem and the Government of Israel. If the Palestinian council representatives were able to steer municipal investments and improve local service provision, they might be able to win support. However, it is not clear what the bar for success looks like. Specifically, many of the most-pressing issues for East Jerusalem Palestinians, such as building permits and zoning, would be difficult to affect with only a few city council members. Having several councilors would most likely help improve municipal services, such as street cleaning, but would make little difference for the more fundamental sources of grievances. At the same time, players on the Arab and Muslim states teams anticipated that some Arab states would put pressure on the new councilors to not vote with Jewish parties on major issues. Fundamentally, it was an open question to players whether a couple of council members would be able to deliver enough benefits to convince Palestinian Jerusalemites that voting in the future was a viable strategy to continue.

Conclusion

Takeaways from the Game

As noted already, games are not predictive, but they can shed useful light on key inter-actions and trends. In this chapter, we present our analysis of the conversations and decisions that took place during the game and address the wider implications for the future of potential participation by East Jerusalem Palestinians in municipal politics. Our takeaways from the game are limited to how electoral participation of Palestinian Jerusalemites could affect the provision of municipal services and, to a lesser extent, conflict dynamics in the city. The possible impacts of the end of the electoral boycott should also be assessed in light of the parties' overall strategic objectives and the prospects of future peacemaking, but these are beyond the scope of this report.

The Israeli Government Would Be Pleased with East Jerusalem Palestinian Electoral Participation . . . as Long as Turnout Remained Limited

From the perspective of the Israeli government, East Jerusalem Palestinians running and voting for municipal councilors is very positive. In both scenarios, the Israeli government team emphasized that electing a small number of Palestinian council members would be a public relations coup more than anything else. As long as the Palestinian bloc stayed fairly small (fewer than three or four councilors) and did not run a viable candidate for the mayor's seat, it would not be seen as threatening to the municipality's or national government's interests or objectives. In fact, it would provide useful evidence to support the government's claim of equal treatment of minority communities and bolster Israeli claims to sovereignty over a unified Jerusalem.[1]

That said, the government team adopted a "wait and see" strategy in both scenarios: They initially stated clear support for the vote but also were careful to not rule out future action aimed at reducing voter turnout in Arab East Jerusalem if the possible

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[1]   As the current Jerusalem Affairs Minister and mayoral candidate Zeev Elkin said, "There will never be an Arab mayor here, but if there is an Arab deputy or two, it will only do the city and them good" (Carolina Landsmann, "The Day Arabs Will Go to the Polls in Droves," *Haaretz*, June 19, 2018).

outcomes started to look threatening.[2] In after-action discussion, players stated that if projected turnout had stayed at or above 40 percent, they would have considered different policies to depress turnout.

East Jerusalem Palestinians Focused on Bread-and-Butter Issues

The East Jerusalem Palestinian team in both scenarios opted to run a technocratic party focused on economic and social issues rather than political or nationalist ones, despite pressure from the RAND moderators to adopt a more nationalist platform. In part, this might have been because of the perception among players that the network of the PA, PLO, and other Arab states was able to mobilize far better to block the vote than to support it. As a result, the East Jerusalem Palestinian team felt little reason to incorporate the nationalist platform demanded by Ramallah and other Arab and Muslim capitals. Furthermore, feeling abandoned by the Palestinian leadership and the broader Arab world, Palestinian Jerusalemites decided to take action in the way that seemed most likely to improve day-to-day conditions of their lives. All of this means that a Palestinian nationalist campaign for municipal office likely would not get off the ground.

Palestinian City Councilors Could Affect Policy at Some Levels

Players usefully divided the challenges faced by East Jerusalem Palestinians into three levels. The first focuses on basic quality-of-life and service-provision issues. These are the things that the municipality does on a daily basis (e.g., collect the trash, pave the roads, maintain the buses). The second level involves the more politically controversial aspects of municipal governance in Jerusalem, such as zoning and planning, land deeds, residency permits, and home demolitions—issues that are still related to local governance but touch on bigger questions of sovereignty and the viability of the two-state solution with East Jerusalem as the capital of the future Palestinian state, and so are guided by policies of the Israeli central government. At the third level are the big-picture issues having to do with the status of Jerusalem in any future Israeli-Palestinian agreement—issues that are decided by the national governments.

The ability of Palestinian councilors to affect policy depends on the level of the issue. Palestinian councilors, the players believe, would be able to improve everyday municipal activities and investments. Their presence on the council would draw attention to problems and direct funding to address them (though equitable funding or results are not to be expected overnight). However, councilors would not have the

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[2]   The only specific action mentioned by players was limiting the number of polling stations in Arab East Jerusalem. Another possibility is redrawing the municipal boundaries to exclude large Palestinian neighborhoods, particularly those outside the Separation Barrier. This was proposed in a law introduced to the Knesset in 2017, but the bill was narrowly defeated in early 2018. Jonathan Lis and Nir Hasson, "Bill Would Allow Parts of Jerusalem to Be Transferred to a New Israeli Local Authority," *Haaretz*, July 25, 2017; and David M. Halbfinger, "Hurdles to a Two-State Solution Advance in an Israeli Vote," *New York Times*, January 2, 2018.

power to change policy at the other two levels. Thus, although Palestinian Jerusalemites could expect some improvements in daily municipal services, some of the most urgent problems facing the community would not change.

Lack of Credible Local Leadership Limited East Jerusalemite Mobilization

Palestinian teams noted that a major barrier to substantial turnout for candidates, regardless of their platforms, was the lack of credible Palestinian leaders who could mobilize voters. After years of neglect, the PA might be able to intimidate voters into a boycott but is not able to mobilize meaningful support for a candidate. Concerns also were raised that outside resources drawn to support different positions in the election would deepen corruption instead of build more-functional electoral norms. It was difficult for players to envision an effective mobilization strategy without a credible leader that would reach beyond the family and neighborhood.

The Election of Palestinian Councilors Could Create a Contentious Council

The election of several Palestinian councilors also could affect the dynamics within the city council itself. Players expected that one result of Palestinians running would be for Israelis to elect more-hardline councilors. Players also said that they could foresee that the city council would be very acrimonious and that Israeli nationalist councilors would regularly antagonize their Palestinian colleagues.

The Two Variables That Manipulated the Conditions Under Which Elections Took Place Had Little Impact

Both scenarios ended up converging on very similar behaviors by the Israeli government, municipal government, the international community, Islamic religious leadership, and East Jerusalemite Palestinian teams. The PA and Muslim countries did pursue different courses of action in the two scenarios but lacked the ability to significantly influence what happened "on the ground" in Jerusalem. Our players indicated several structural reasons for the similar outcomes, including limited Palestinian leadership leading to anemic mobilization and Israeli preference for limited participation. However, it remains an open question whether these findings would hold across a wider range of scenarios and different players.

Recommendations for Future Research

In the course of running the pilot game, we identified several promising avenues for future research. We detail our recommendations for follow-on investigations in the hopes that they will inspire work to build on our findings.

Conduct More Iterations of the Game

Our pilot game produced a range of findings, some of which were expected and others that were quite surprising. Running additional iterations of the game with different players in different settings would allow us to better understand which of our findings are robust to different combinations of players and which are opportunities and risks of concern to particular communities.

For example, in the RAND-JIPR game, the majority of players were researchers with extensive experience viewing the city through an analytic lens. Having a majority of players with backgrounds in local politics, community activism, or past service in the municipal bureaucracy could reveal different preferences, capabilities, and red lines. Diversifying the players would allow for more potential variation. As a result, we could be more confident in results that persist across games and be able to speak to the preferences of a wider range of stakeholders by observing divergent results.

Similarly, running the game in different settings could elicit different information. As with any contentious policy matter, the forum of a game will shape who attends and the perspectives that participants are willing to articulate. Running additional iterations of the game with diverse partners, such as Palestinian research organizations and international nongovernmental organizations, in different locations might allow us to collect additional perspectives and consider new trajectories along with those explored in this game.

Run the Game Using Alternative Scenarios

To build a game that was tractable, we were able to explore only two potential scenarios. It would be advantageous to explore the other two scenarios that we developed but did not have time to simulate. Being able to compare runs of all four scenarios would allow us to better understand how each of the trends we identified might contribute to driving player preferences and potential scenario outcomes.

Concluding Thoughts

In this report, we explore the possible consequences of increased Palestinian participation in Jerusalem municipal elections. As we documented, the vast majority of Palestinians in Jerusalem have boycotted local elections for decades. In the 2013 election, 99 percent of Palestinians did not vote. However, several trends in Arab East Jerusalem suggest that the boycott might not last forever. Although it is unlikely to end any time soon, we sought to understand what might transpire if Palestinians went to the polls in significant numbers. Therefore, we worked with JIPR to conduct a seminar-style game in Jerusalem with Israeli and Palestinian players to analyze decisionmaking under hypothetical new political circumstances. The results of the game suggest that the Israeli and municipal governments would welcome increased Palestinian turnout

as long as it was not too high, and that Palestinian city councils would likely be able to make progress toward improving day-to-day municipal services in Palestinian neighborhoods but would not be able to reverse such policies as home demolitions or residency permit revocations.

The game was set in the somewhat distant future, but when it was played, in late July 2018, there was a municipal election just months away. As we wrapped up the game, therefore, we took a quick straw poll to see whether the assembled experts thought that there would be increased Palestinian voter turnout in the October 2018 elections. One person predicted a small increase, but the rest of the participants resoundingly believed that the boycott would hold strong. Although our analysis might gain real-world applicability in the near future, it seems more likely that the ramifications of high Palestinian voter turnout will remain theoretical for years to come. Nonetheless, such issues as changing demographics, socioeconomic inequalities, and the impacts of the Separation Barrier, as raised in the game and our research, are very real and relevant and will remain so in the future of governance in this city claimed by two nations.

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Since Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem after the 1967 war, the vast majority of Palestinian residents of the city have boycotted participation in municipal elections to avoid legitimating Israeli rule. Nevertheless, recent polls suggest that some Palestinians living in East Jerusalem might be warming to the idea of voting in the city's elections. To examine possible consequences of Jerusalem's Palestinians ending their electoral boycott, a team from the RAND Corporation conducted a seminar-style game in Jerusalem in partnership with the Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research. The game, held in July 2018, involved Israeli and Palestinian policy experts from Jerusalem representing various stakeholders in the city's politics and governance simulating multiple scenarios that diverge from the status quo. The results of the game suggest that the Israeli and municipal governments would welcome increased Palestinian turnout as long as it was not too high, and that Palestinian city councilors would likely be able to make progress toward improving day-to-day municipal services in Palestinian neighborhoods but would not be able to reverse such policies as home demolitions or residency permit revocations.

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