

## **A CRISIS OF IDENTITY: PALESTINIAN WOMEN, MEMORY AND DISSENT**

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In the face of escalating hopelessness, in terms of living conditions and future prospects for peace and security, Palestinian women adopt various modes of survival to protect themselves and their children. They confront efforts to negate their identity through memory, solidarity and dissent.



In 2006-2007, I have been conducting research with Palestinian women in Lebanon and the West Bank and, in this paper, I will discuss how ways of articulating “identity” have changed over time. I will focus, firstly, on what Mahmoud Darwish calls the “blessings of memory” (the remarkable stories told by women about their life histories); secondly, on shared experiences of suffering, in exile and under occupation, and modes of resistance; and, thirdly, on the myriad ways in which women challenge adversity in order to create a more tolerable future.

By contrasting what Ted Swedenburg describes as “official Palestinian nationalism” with women’s subversion of nationalist discourse, I will argue that the shape of Palestinian identity is changing to accommodate more subtle and fluid elements of belonging.

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