The Question of Public Space:

From Ideology to Real-Urbanism

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Abstract

Joel Migdal argues that the concept of public space has been idealized by various socio-political philosophers who claim that public space is a space of meeting points that form the basic condition for the creation of 'the public'. Contrarily, Migdal suggests a perception of public space as a space of conflict between forces of inclusion and exclusion in unequal societies. Following Migdal, this article portrays ethnography of struggle in public space in Musrara, a Jerusalem seam line neighborhood. The research is based within the contexts of the neighborhood's history and the concentration of crime events and urban violence along that seam line. The research conducted analyzed the negotiations between the architects who were invited by the Jerusalem Municipality to plan and design the seam line between East and West Jerusalem and Musrara neighborhood residents regarding public space. Two oppositional views were apparent: the architects' perception that public space is a meeting point and therefore encouraged density as a tool of personal security versus the residents' wish to block the neighborhood's wall gates for the creation of defined urban territory. This study offers an understanding of the real-urbanism of Jerusalem's public space as a battlefield between connectivity and separation, exclusion and inclusion.

Introduction:

'I remember the conversation in which I was asked to come and plan the border seam line. ...we wanted to turn it into a connecting area, connecting both parts of the city– our intention was that the institutions will serve the Arab population in the area. But the institutions were only for the Jewish population, places that do not create meeting and sharing.'

(Interview with the architect who planned Jerusalem's seam line)

'You see an Arab near your house. You ask him what he's doing here and he says that he's looking for a job. He is lying. He came here to steal. On Elisha St. they steal women's purses. You can't contain these Arabs – they come to you.'

(Musrara neighborhood resident)

The above two quotes mark and symbolize in a nutshell the two forces at work in Jerusalem's seam line public space. The first is the professional stand of the architect who wishes to enhance strangers encounter in public space thereby enabling Jerusalem's Arab population's access to institutional services, which, in turn, deepens their involvement and participation and strengthens their perception as citizens. The second stand is that of the residents who experience the presence of Arabs in their neighborhood as a tangible threat and wish to create a distinct border that will enable them to impose their game rules in a given territory. This article claims that Jerusalem's public space is not the space that the architect envisioned nor a district of total separation as wished for by the residents. By use of the theoretical concept of real-urbanism, this study portrays public space as an arena determined by the struggle between these two forces. This concept affords focusing research perception on representational space, as termed by Lefebvre[1] or space in use.

The theoretical basis of this study was inspired by Joel Migdal's claims regarding public space and public sphere presented in his article 'The creation of public space: between separation and merge'.[2] Migdal argues that public space dynamics spring from the tension between being simultaneously an inclusive and exclusive space. This tension is not permanent but rather comes as a result of constant struggle. This claim offers an effective toolbox for the analysis of Jerusalem's seam line public space, where the conflict between trends of inclusion and exclusion are both present in differing forms and intensity.

This study documents the conflict between the architects who wished to plan public space as an inclusive space versus the Jewish seam line neighborhood who wished to exclude Arabs from public space in contexts of crime and personal security. Article Structure; Inspired by Migdal's work, the first section of this article presents a critical stand regarding the theory of public sphere and public space followed by a suggestion of an alternative approach to research and analysis of public space. The second section presents a historical-urban review of Musrara seam line neighborhood with significant emphasis on data related to personal security in the seam line area as a whole and Musrara in particular. The central section of the article portrays the ethnography that explains the residents' persistent wish to fence the neighborhood and focuses on the manners by which this perception affected the dialogue with the architects who were summoned to plan Jerusalem's seam line. The summary discussion offers a synthesis of Migdal's suggestion and the central ethnographical insights of this study leading to a new analysis from a real-urbanism perspective.

Public space as an arena of tension between forces of exclusion and inclusion

Migdal's basic assumption is that the public space is the place in which public *sphere* manifests itself.[3,4,5,6] Migdal argues that the notion of public sphere has been idealized by socio-political philosophers such as Habermas[7] who suggested this concept in 1962. Public sphere is best imagined as the suite of institutions and activities that mediate the relations between society and the state.[8] What stands at the core of public sphere is interaction and communication between strangers. Public place is perceived as a place where 'public opinion' originates. Charles Taylor sees face-to-face encounter as highly significant[9] an encounter where people are able to create a 'common opinion of themselves'.

Was there any point in history or in space, that this ideal was actualized? In his Constitutive work, Mitchell[10] argues that the presented perceptions of public sphere and public space are norms and ideologies:

'The ideal of a public sphere is normative, Habermas[11] theorizes, because it is in this sphere that all manner of social formations *should* find access to the structures of power within a society'.[12]

Habermas' main critics argue that his theory of public sphere ignores the importance of class differences[13] and his study of public space was solely focused on the bourgeois, without referring to comparative public spaces. [14]

Mitchell too argues that public spaces, from the Greek Agora to the American park, are places of exclusion,[15] yet in his belief 'Public space occupies an important *ideological* position in democratic societies'.[16]

Mitchell illuminates one of the most influential social theories of the 20th century that serves as a Language of ideology: 'This is a normative ideal for public space, more than an empirical description of the ways that public spaces have functioned in 'actuality existing democracies'.[17, 18]

Mitchell adopts this ideology as a theoretical frame for his work. He argues that this ideological construction 'implies a notion of inclusiveness that becomes a rallying point for successive waves of political activities'[19] hence his aspiration for an inclusion-based theory enables him to formulate his famous notion of 'Right to the city'. He suggests an understanding of the ideal as a point of political struggle:

'By calling on the rhetoric of inclusion and interaction that the public sphere and public space are meant to represent, excluded groups have been able to argue for their rights as part of the active public'.[20] Mitchel concludes his work saying that public space is increasingly privatized or otherwise brought under greater control.

This ideology and the understanding derived from its logic became a *professional truth* for planners and architects. In various blogs, websites and conferences many professionals share their common belief that a 'good' public space is one that encourages connectivity between strangers.[21]

This research adheres to an empirical description of the ways in which public spaces function in 'actuality existing democracies' and investigates a study-case where this ideology represented by architects manifested itself in the complex reality of Jerusalem.

Migdal (2008) claims that tension in public spaces results from the continuous conflict between inclusion and exclusion of unequal groups in society and not, as Habermas claims, from tension between the state and society,[22] nor tension between corporations and society, as Mithcell (1993) and others argue. In the case of Jerusalem, the aspiration for order or control not only forms the interest of corporations and the state but also serves as the basis of different groups' claim for their 'right to the city'.

Based on Elias' (1994) work, Migdal argues that what enables the existence of public space are shared codes of daily behavior: where and how does one blow his nose, go to the toilet, enter or exit a cinema – a long list of do/not do rules that endow physical spaces with a sense of security and a means for social identification for groups of middle-high social class, notifying them that they have reached a civilized, cultured, familiar hence secure space. Yet many times in these spaces, claims Migdal, there are imposing regimes of separation, suppression and deference.

Migdal further argues that by means of daily activity in what consequently becomes an established public space people come to appreciate the joint *manner* by which things are being conducted: emphasis is placed on joint activity which stabilizes the principles of public spirit. Migdal states that there are institutional barriers that prevent containment and sharing yet they can become flexible. It is important for him to suggest a dynamic theory. Thus, claims Migdal, public space in the U.S.A and Israel results from 'the laws of encounters between people' that not only lead to encounters and the creation of a 'public' but also simultaneously unify and **separate**.

Migdal's theoretical suggestion greatly contributes to the discussion within contexts of crime for it enables theoretical space for the concept of class. Although in the case of Jerusalem the cardinality of ethno-national categories and the dramatic manner in which they constitute space is highly apparent,[23] Migdal places great significance on the category of class and the ways in which it affects the formulation of common social codes in public space.

Musrara –Jerusalem's seam line neighborhood

Musrara was established in 1889 by wealthy Arab Christians of Jerusalem's Palestinian community.[24,25] During the 1948 War, the Palestinian residents were forced to flee and Musrara was subsequently divided between Israel and Jordan. The neighborhood's area that remained in Israel encompassed 163 acres and included 80 abandoned houses. Following the war, approximately 60 families moved into the Israeli part of the neighborhood, most of them Mizrahi Jews who emigrated from Middle Eastern and North African countries.[26]

The living conditions in the Arab houses were dire.[27] Already in a state of decay, the accommodation was divided into 340 housing units[28] and four to eight families shared each house. Only 63% of the apartments had direct access to a shower or bathroom, 28% had neither, and 8% lacked a basic toilet facility. The structure's high ceiling made the heating during the cold Jerusalem winter a considerably difficult task. Another problem was constant dampness that existed in approximately 200 apartments, causing serious health problems for the young and elderly.[29]

In addition to problematic living conditions, Musrara residents also suffered from the fact that a significant part of the neighborhood was in close proximity to the Jordanian border and was a no-man's-land exposed to Jordanian soldiers' sniper fire, resulting in numerous casualties. This situation changed following the 1967 War when Jerusalem was unified under Israeli rule and Musrara ceased to function as a frontier settlement.

Musrara residents' feelings of anger intensified as they witnessed how Israeli society enjoyed improved quality of life while they remained in their moribund condition. In the early 1970's, the neighborhood's unemployment rate was considerably high: approximately 180 men aged over 20 (which made up more than 30% of the families) did not work, and 75% of those that did work were employed in low wage labor.[30]

Only 56% of the children aged 14-17 were in educational frameworks, of which 16% were still in elementary school. Out of 838 adults, 431 lacked a minimal 8 years education and not one person from the neighborhood was registered in any higher education institution.[31]

Numerous scholars and policy makers blamed the residents' ethnic origin as one of the reasons for the neighborhood's harsh socio-economic condition, arguing that they were unaccustomed to modern and Western way of life.[32] However, recent studies depict that because they were Mizrahi Jews the population of Musrara was marginalized and disenfranchised by the misallocation of resources.[33,34]

Nevertheless, the shared ethnic identity of the inhabitants became a solid basis for socialization among the residents themselves,[35] and a fertile ground for political activism. In January 1971, a small group of Musrara's youth who regularly met at one of the neighborhood's youth clubs established a social movement called 'The Black Panthers', directly inspired by the American Black Panther Party.[36]

Musrara's Panthers focused most of their efforts on organizing public demonstrations and publishing a series of pamphlets where they presented their arguments regarding inherent inequalities embedded in Israeli society, linking between their ethnic identity as Mizrahi Jews and their socio-economic status.[37,38] They encountered fierce resistance from the authorities yet attracted wide scope attention from the Israeli public.[39,40]

In 1978, the continuous crisis let to the inclusion of Musrara into the official governmental scheme entitled Project Renewal.[41] This project was designed to provide a multifaceted answer to different problems the neighborhood faced.[42] Beyond the expansion of physical space, the project ostensibly aimed to address the social and educational issues that required serious amendment for the improvement of Musrara's residents' wellbeing.[43]

However, several local residents objected to Project Renewal and were concerned that Musrara will be gentrified and its population will be removed in favor of wealthier occupants.[44,45] Resistance acts included violent demonstrations as well as squatting into renovated apartments.[46] This confrontation and the fact that Musrara's residents were already politically organized prevented the area from undergoing considerable demographic change, and the number of wealthy outsiders who purchased property in the neighborhood was thus limited.[47,48]

By the end of the 1990's, three distinct social groups were evident in the neighborhood. The first were families of Mizrahi Jews who moved into the neighborhood in the 1950's and 1960's. The second were the 'new comers' who managed to buy property in the neighborhood during or prior to Project Renewal. The third group was ultraorthodox Jewish families who relocated into Musrara in considerable numbers from adjacent overcrowded neighborhoods. This recent development was resented by the two aforementioned groups and created a new political reality in the neighborhood.[49]

In order to comprehend the events that occurred in the neighborhood within the context of crime events, the following presents cardinal data related to spatialized crime along the border seam line in general and Musrara in particular. The receipt of this data necessitated the establishment of official relations with Jerusalem Municipality, the Israeli Police and the Emergency & Rescue Services. Following the receipt of necessary permits (which took approx. 2 years), the Police Research & Statistics Dept. provided the necessary data related to reported crime events in Jerusalem.

Figure 1: A spatialization of crime events in Jerusalem in relation to city boundaries

The research point of departure was the centralization of crime and terror events in Jerusalem along the historical border seam line on a neighborhood scale, using Musrara as a case study. The formulation of the neighborhood's crime map was conducted by use of data files dealing with major and minor violence offenses that provided information regarding the sociological profiles of the offenders. A total of 447 reported violence events occurred in Musrara neighborhood during the years 2003, 2005 and 2010. Interviews with the residents revealed that their central concern regarding the issue of crime was the question of the criminals' ethno-religious origin. The police data files depicted whether the offender was: (1) Jewish (senior Jew or Russian immigrant), (2) Muslim (a resident of the Occupied Territories or an Israeli citizen), (3) 'foreigners' (offenders not included in the first two categories).

Figure 2: Violence events in Musrara according to religion/origin

The analysis results were normalized and represent the percentage of population responsible for the events that occurred in the neighborhood: the dominant group was Palestinian Israeli citizens (39%), followed by Jews (31% all senior) and Territories residents (25%), i.e., approximately two-thirds of the events were operated by Muslims and a third by Jews.[50]

The data files contained original and primary information as to where architecturally and urbanely the offense took place: in the street/store/elevator/car? Categories were coded as follows: open public space (streets, squares), closed public space (public institutions, stadium), liminal space (parking lots, stairways, elevators), private space (residencies, workshops), private space open to the public (restaurants/shops, motels, hotels).

Most of the offenses occurred in open public space and only 23% occurred in private residencies, an insight that will play a crucial role in the analysis of the findings of the field investigation conducted in the neighborhood.

A correlation between religious-origin and the location of the violence events was found: 39% of the crimes that Jews committed took place in public space vs. 70% of the events committed by Palestinian Israeli citizens and 80% of the events committed by West Bank Palestinian residents. These findings mark the marginality of the two Palestinian groups in the neighborhood: they do not reside there and their actions had no other space to be performed other than the street. These findings also shed light on their exhibitionist activity in space. While Jews committed crimes mostly in the victim's or offender's house and far away from public eye and opinion, Palestinian Israeli citizens as well as West Bank residents committed violence crimes publically.

Ethnography of struggle on public space:

Violence at Jerusalem's seam line

The research question that guided the fieldwork conducted in the neighborhood was how do the residents interpret and act, within their complex reality of conflict between different neighborhood groups, with regards to the possibility of closing the neighborhood and their perceptions of the ‘other’. Henceforth, the research documented the conflict from the viewpoint of different agents operating in the neighborhood arena, placing special emphasis on the spatial implications of the actions each group performed. Additional information was received from the architects who planned the border seam line and provided the original plans within the context of two extensive interviews where they relayed their professional truth.

The first interview conducted in the neighborhood was held with S., a 50 yr. old man who works at an antiques store. He told us that the historical border line exists not only in the minds of the offenders but also in that of the neighborhood residents. Upon seeing the map which centralized the findings in Jerusalem he nodded his head in approval, came out of the store and pointed with his finger:

‘Here is where the border ran and for me it is still a border, to this day. Up to here it is ‘us’, from there it is ‘them’… here was a defense wall 8 meters high…the war ended, they dismantled the wall and now it's open. When I look at it I see it as it was…as a child I was here a lot. Now it's the 21st century but it's still a border.’

S. describes how the most effective spatial borders are group borders; the border is where ‘they’ end and ‘we’ begin. Even though the international border was dismantled in 1967, the urban border still exists as a sociological apparatus. Moreover, it clearly affects the residents' conduct:

‘I am 58 and unashamed to say that I am afraid to go to the Old City like I used to as a kid with my father… Since the Intifada you don't feel safe that you can go freely and, in fact, you are in

danger…that all kinds of extreme people will see someone like me, who wears a skullcap, and want to stab me. So I – the God Almighty says to stay away from any place which is dangerous.'

Further conversations and interviews confirmed that the international border still exists in the collective consciousness and that in contexts of crime it is forms a nostalgic reminiscence:

'When there was a border there were no thefts. I used to live with Arabs in the past. There was friendship. They were different people. Now it's all over. Everything is hatred. But you can't blame them. They grew up in nearly 40 years of hatred. In the past we used to live poorly but peacefully. They don't need a bomb. The bomb is walking around here outside, along the seam line. An [international] border is better. To give them everything under the condition that we won't see even one Arab. This whole country is lawless.' (Community Center employee)

Other interviews with residents were surprising in their attitude towards the separation that existed up to 1967. Even though it was a 'hot' border line lined with mines and subjected to sniper gun shots and thrown stones, still many of the residents expressed a sense of security living next to a border – *'we lived in poverty and serenity'*, said one of the residents. Such sayings reconfirm a phenomenon well-known to Anthropology – a territory identified as 'home' is experienced as more safe for its residents even if it is subjected to violence such as Jordanian snipers' gun shots. One of the senior residents who left the neighborhood following the entry of Orthodox Jews yet remained active there, said*:*

'After 1967 the border was opened and there was a plague of drugs. I remember. It was very difficult. Even those who weren't into it were forced to. Children.'

S. reconfirmed the above:

'Before the war there were no 'Jews' and 'Arabs': there were only [Jewish] residents of the neighborhood that didn't harm one another because everyone was in a difficult state.'

The above clearly relays that even when 'home' is poor and subject to gun-fire it is perceived as safe because it is separated from neighboring East Jerusalem Arabs. Paradoxically, the dismantlement of the urban line, which was perceived as victory on the national level, turned into a point of insecurity for Musrara neighborhood residents. This issue is fascinating in light of the fact that Musrara was one of the most complex slums in Israel. The fact that in the 60s-70s, some of its Jewish residents participated in criminal activity makes their position towards others –Arab and criminal – quite intriguing.

Unwilling criminal: the cousins, the criminals and I

Crime is no stranger to the neighborhood: it was forced upon them. Many of the interviewees did not express a distanced attitude towards the criminal as a social type but rather one of understanding and affinity:

'There was severe hardship here and I'm lucky I didn't go in the ways of crime. But my friends were big criminals, some are still doing time in prison. And you can understand them. They had no choice, it was like a survival movie' (S. antiques shop salesman).

'At the time', said another resident, *'there were Black Panthers and there was poverty, it was necessary to steal and commit crime'.*

The above quotes suggest that the public attitude of neighborhood residents regarding their past is that of being 'unwilling criminals'. Furthermore, Musrara's struggle against the establishment built mental barricades that caused senior residents to claim *'the establishment abandoned everyone, Arabs and Jews and criminals.'*

The analysis of violence events that occurred in the neighborhood depicts that one third of the criminals was Jewish, coming mostly from the neighborhood or bordering neighborhoods. The public opinion in Musrara relates crime to Arabs alone, and in the event that Jews are also taken into consideration there is little awareness of the fact that they come from within the neighborhood. A careful study of the crimes committed in the neighborhood during the above mention years depicted that Jews who committed crimes in the neighborhood performed them in private houses, restaurants, motels and the street vs. Palestinians who committed most of their crimes in the street. Since Palestinian crimes were more publically visible, it is highly possible that this data explains their perception as a criminal group and the public belief that they form the major crime group that hazards their streets.

The dominant perception in the neighborhood was that the residents significantly improved their status since the 80's due to two processes: their entry into the primary organized labor market which endows social rights (e.g Jerusalem Municipality), and the purchase of the abandoned houses that were owned by governmental housing companies – real estate which doubled and even tripled its value in a short time period. In light of this data, the neighborhood residents concluded that Jews have no reason to commit crimes. To support their claim, the residents described the types of offenses:

'Today, most of the crime is committed by our 'cousins' [i.e. Muslims]. Be it a car that disappears from the parking lot, anything, pipes, air conditioner dismantled from a house. No Jew would do that. In order to receive 100 Shekels he will go and dismantle an air conditioner and cause a damage of 7-8 thousand? But the 'cousins' are willing to do anything. Even for less.'

The above quote suggests that residents perceive East Jerusalem Arabs as 'unwilling criminals' also.

The most talked about offense in residents interviews was laundry theft. It was very common in the neighborhood and perceived as a poor man's offense, serving as proof of the offender's identity and the reason for his actions. *'They get up in the morning and steal everything. For instance laundry. For instance a wheelchair. So they came and caught him and the policeman told me that they will release him because he won't come to court.'* (Community Center employee)

According to neighborhood residents, the Separation Wall that separates East Jerusalem from the West Bank is to blame for the social and economic problems in East Jerusalem:

'Since the Separation Wall, the situation got worse because everything originates from the residents of East Jerusalem. They left them in a state of unemployment, no employment no money… I grew up in such a neighborhood. When the parents of all of the residents here did not have jobs and income, so what choice did their children have, that they can't bring home bread and milk, they stole because they had no choice. Families with 12 children.'

It is important to note that like in other mixed cities in Israel[51] everyday law obligates conducting discussions without involving politics. Any discussion on positions regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is forbidden in the neighborhood's area, markets or any place where there is a mixture of Jews and Arabs or Jews from diverse social and political groups. One of the central expressions of 'no politics' was the abstention from using the word Arab, an intimidating adjective when used in their space. Most of the interlocutors used the term cousins, smiled or sighed and said, 'You know who I'm talking about.' The choice of such a familial term – cousins – is fascinating and deserves separate cultural-linguistic research.

The neighborhood scale discussion revolved around power relations. From their perspective, they are the victims:

'The problem moved there but it reaches us because we are their nearest neighbors.'

This suggests that even though the residents understand and empathize with Muslim offenders, knowing that their conduct springs from a state of poverty and lack, they nonetheless distance and protect themselves from them. The neighborhood residents believe that they have no influence on wider circles such as the Municipality's policy regarding East Jerusalem, arrests and permit policies and certainly not future agreements and arrangements. Hence, their solution is to hide behind walls and separate themselves from them.

The struggle for the reconstruction of the Wall: open public space is dangerous

It is clear that under the above mentioned conditions, open public space forms a threat.

'You see an Arab near your house. You ask him what he's doing here and he says that he's looking for a job. He is lying. He came here to steal. On Elisha St. they steal women's purses. You can't contain these Arabs – they come to you' (Community Center employee).

Under such conditions of ethno-national and social status inequality, border zones become points of contact and friction and not of separation.[52,53] The wider the gaps become, so too the attraction of the weaker side becomes more fierce and demanding (*'you can't contain these Arabs – they come to you'*). This friction occurs in public spaces:

'They [the Arabs] hang around more in our space than in theirs. ***A person gets accustomed to this.*** *It's been 40 years. You get them used to something so this is what they become. You [as a Jew] can't walk around there. The wheels have turned.'* (Resident)

'Today, an Arab is allowed to sit in the public garden. The Municipality built benches for the residents. So he comes and sits. You can't say anything to him. I didn't have a problem with this until the number of thefts and robberies became too much. They leave nothing, take everything, they even dismantle copper lines they can sell' (Antiques shop salesman).

The construction of the Wall is not perceived by Musrara residents as a move of a strong party but rather a solution they are dragged into for two reasons: the first is their incompetence in municipal or geopolitical regional issues – *'what can you do to them? Transfer – you can't. The Supreme Court protects them and you can't act against it. So what else can you do? Build a Wall.'*

'The Wall is located on the Separation Wall. It's something psychological. If there is a neighborhood they will ask him right away what he is doing in the neighborhood. ***You defend yourself so you don't have to be aggressive****. This affects people psychologically. They know that this is the framework, like in America where everything is in a framework.'*

The second reason is even more fascinating:

'I was here at the time of the Black Panthers. I was 17. I operated terror. We were together. We were family. We struggled because we were in distress. (But) when we had children we were fearful for them and brought them up to be good kids. In our time, an Arab didn't dare to pass here.'

These resident statements convey a fascinating reversed relation between the condition of the people and that of the neighborhood. The time period when the residents' condition improved and the next generation turned into 'good children' became the last days of the neighborhood, as one of the active residents said:

'I did a Program in university and wrote an essay about it. The neighborhood will be gone. I predicted it. The children have no power to deal with it.'

It appears that once the neighborhood rebelled and residents left the neighborhood, those who remained felt abandoned and were in need for a protective wall.

'I was the Chairman of the [Community] Administration at the time of Teddy Kollek [former mythological Mayor of Jerusalem]. He wanted to construct Road no. 1. The architects presented a 9-meter wall, with a porch facing Nablus Gate, a bridge and a waterfall. They presented it beautifully to Teddy Kollek. They talked about a train, and everything was very beautiful. They wanted to construct gates in every neighborhood to enable crossing. I requested to close the neighborhood and the porch. Teddy Kollek said to do what he [I] said, but to leave the waterfall. Two months later they closed it down because Arabs began to swim there. They wanted it to be beautiful and all they got was a mess. We still have a border because we built the Wall. That's the border. We requested the Wall. 25 years ago, before the 6-Day-War there was a fence. They constructed the Wall on the exact same spot.' (Former Chairman of the Community Administration)

Figure 3: The aqua duct in its glorious days

Figure 4: The aqua duct today

The current Chairman of the Community Administration:

'At the time of Road no. 1's construction, the Wall was two-times higher. They wanted to construct a promenade and a tunnel and there was a conflict regarding the route. They wanted to construct a tunnel to the other side but we were concerned that it would attract junkies and harm. We fought for lowering the Wall – we were sealed off. They wanted [by use of the Wall] to decrease noise pollution. They wanted to construct a passage in the middle of the Wall and we objected, we didn't want people to cross straight into the houses, robbing elders, burglaries etc., and stabbing. They finished the project in the early 90's. The City Engineer said that when they will build the gate they will call it the Gate of Peace. I told him that when there will be peace we will open the gate'.

Figure 5: Border seam line area – built environment

In his interview, the architect who planned the Wall and the entire seam line space relayed his version:

'I remember the conversation in which I was asked to come and plan the border seam line. I told them that I wanted to study the subject…we wanted to turn it into a connecting area, connecting both parts of the city (we added 3 latitude axes) – our intention was that the institutions will serve the Arab population in the area. But the institutions were only for the Jewish population, places that do not create meeting and sharing. The Triangle was supposed to be the end point of this event'.

The architect's purpose was to plan and design the border seam line in a new formation: Road no. 1 and both its sides. The architect office's investigation focused on the axis itself. In other words, the first gap between the neighborhood residents and the architect was the angle of perception: while the residents experience their neighborhood as a center from which they observe the seam line as a border which is imprinted in the collective consciousness, the architect's central view point is the axis and the neighborhood as a side-effect of this axis. From the architectural point of view, the neighborhood was the back yard of the road vs. the residents who perceived the road as the back yard of the neighborhood. Moreover, it's location along the historical border line emphasized its role as a tool of separation.

The planning team divided the road into five segments, each of them planned within different infrastructure and landscape contexts. They recommended the pavement of six latitude axes that will connect the Muslim East and the Jewish West, thus enabling a merge of both sides. The architectural agenda was a perception of urbanism that encourages urban intensity and wishes to connect parts of the city. However, the geopolitical consequences were many and diverse, bearing dramatic significance on the city's unification.

Figure 6: The plan outline emphasizing the latitude roads that connect the parts of the city, of which only two were constructed.

Being a main axis of transportation (two lanes on each side of the road) and a significant train route, the architects were certain of the need to construct acoustic walls that will protect the neighborhood from noise pollution. The wall was also supposed to function as a pedestrian promenade. It was designed as a double wall where one wall is high and the other – the one closer to the road – is lower thus enabling pedestrians a view of the Old City. Once again, the architects' point of view considered the road users and the tourists. They, in turn, requested that the wall will be lowered so they could enjoy the view of the Old City and they were acquiesced. The architects planned gates along the wall to enable pedestrian crossings and added a pedestrian bridge that linked the eastern and western parts of the city at the core of the neighborhood.

Figure 7: Right: the neighborhood wall composed of a double wall and a promenade. Opposite: the bridge. Both were not constructed. From: Border Seam Line Plan: 2007.

Figure 8: Nablus Gate area: the Triangle, Road No. 1 and neighborhood outskirts. From: Border Seam Line Plan: 2007.

The Triangle, which used to be a no-man's-land, was planned as an urban square with an underground parking lot and was destined to function as a meeting point, enabling trade peddling in assembled structures. The eastern side of the Triangle was meant to function as an active commercial front that enlivens the square.

During his interview it was apparent that the architect was trying to anchor his plan and design approach so as not to appear like a naïve architect denying the tough reality of Jerusalem.

'It is a fact that Nablus Gate was a beautiful place – an open space with watermelon- stands and everything. An appropriate political and social climate is necessary. Personally, we used to go down there and drink Arak, eat watermelons. Those were good times. There were tourists. It ended with the First Intifada.'

As is frequently the case, there was a huge gap between plans and reality:

'In reality, the wall was built with a watchtower. This watchtower was meant to mark the start of the promenade – that wasn't built. The entrances in the wall were blocked and the wall runs sequentially. Thus Musrara turned into a closed neighborhood. The pedestrian bridge that was designed to connect to the southern wall of the Triangle was not constructed.'

Figure 9: The blocked entrances, a view from within the neighborhood. Photography: Author A

'The panoramic promenade along the wall was constructed, but the market that was designed for Hanevi'im St. was transferred to a promenade shaded by a long pergola, eventually becoming a drug station which the Police later decided to evacuate. The market was neglected. As for the Triangle: the train was transferred to the Western Wall and together with the tunnel caused complete separation between Musrara and East Jerusalem that were supposed to become connected at the Triangle. The Triangle became a large parking lot where its eastern side serves as a parking lot for trucks – the whole area became 'transportation biased' instead of one of meeting and activity. It's a sad story.'

Transportation can be a meeting or separating point. In this case, the transportation routes, double-lane separation walls and parking lots had indeed created a separating transportation biased zone. In a research on the spatial implications of Road no. 1, the authors[54] claim that it plays a major role in the division of Jerusalem and the recreation of the ethno-national order.

Considering the gap between the architect's intentions and reality, he was asked if he felt angry:

'Of course,' he replied, 'we invested 45 thousand office work hours. That is 10 years of hard work.'

At the end of the interview he was presented with the findings of this study related to crime events in the area and the residents' struggle to keep the neighborhood closed and clear of meeting points with their neighboring Muslims. His response was: *'It could have been different. It used to be different. When you don't allow encounters in public space, then begins desolation and negligence. It could have been a turning point. But I guess the conditions weren't ripe.'*

His remarks left an open question: does the existence of open space indeed create encounters between Jews and Muslims in Jerusalem? Can a bridge bring peace or only under peace can a bridge be constructed?

In succeeding interviews with two Neighborhood Committee members, the architect's vision and the fact that even during complex times in the past there were encounters and good neighboring relations were mentioned:

A.: *'There were encounters of Jews and Arabs but without constraints. It was open. There were watermelon stands on the road. We used to go down to the Triangle and have a good time – it was a no-man's land. And all along the avenue there were stands. We used to come – see movies together – it wasn't constrained. [The plan] forces us to go back to those days. Constraint doesn't work.'*

M.: *'When you do something of your own free will it's much better and more natural. Things have changed. In the times of the watermelon stands the political awareness of the Palestinians was low. They wanted to make a living. There was no violence. Today there is political awareness and all they do is to fight us.'*

The above quotes once again re-establish the neighborhood residents' position regarding the inter-generation gap among the Palestinian Israeli residents.[55] The neighborhood residents relate to political events (*'Everyone has a cousin or brother which we killed, so we live in hatered,'* said one of the interviewees) and to political-national awareness but, they believe, what's done is done.

Discussion

The controversy between the Residents Committee and the architect touches core issues: how is it possible to maintain urban intensity between different ethno-national groups under conditions of sharp political and economic inequality? This question sheds new light on the notion of 'public space'.

The architect represents the approach that perceives urban planning and design as a tool for turning the border seam line into a public space. Relying, in different levels of awareness, on the theory of public sphere the architect represents an approach that perceives public place as a place where 'public' formulates.

Migdal's (2008) criticism of such public space perception explicates the residents' position by bringing back the concept of *class* into academic discussion. Migdal claims that in order to study public space it is necessary to study separation regimes that enable participation of a very particular public. His suggestion provides an effective toolbox for understanding the position of people who mocked the decision to construct aqua ducts, a waterfall and a pool at the base of the Triangle near Damascus Gate.

Hence, when the residents said that *'the Arabs will go and swim there and create havoc,'* they implied that it is impossible to create common public space under extreme relations of inequality - a pool is not a landscape resource but rather a place of recreation for children to be offered to and regularly available for most of Jerusalem's Jewish population.

It appears that in different contexts, separation is what enables daily existence between conflicting groups in a dense space. This study suggests that from the perception of Real-Urbanism, separation means an organization of space that enables different groups to live in high density. The construction of walls is not a municipal conspiracy but rather the residents' defeated reaction to violence they experience. They are aware that crime is a reaction to state institutional violence and, to a certain degree, also identify with the hardships of living and have no patronizing stand because *'many of my friends are in prison and it's a wonder that I'm not there also,'* as one of the residents said. Nevertheless, they feel that they, as simple citizens, are unable to influence or design the state's attitude towards the Palestinian issue in general and East Jerusalem Arabs in particular. Hence, they wish to separate and define a frame for themselves and by doing so they anchor and protect their nativity and legitimate existence in this space. This explanation does not endow legitimacy to the residents' actions but rather serves as a report on the events occurring and offers a new-old principle for understanding the urban situation in these cities – separation. As a research community, our ability to discuss urban dynamics of separation outside the normative language of 'good' and 'bad' depends on our ability to shift from ideological **interpretation** of 'public space' to real-urbanism, thus studying cities and their public spaces without prejudice or judgment.

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[3] J.T. Mitchell, *Art and the Public Sphere*. (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 116.

[4] N. Fraser, *Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy. In The Phantom Public Sphere*, edited by B. Robbins. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1993)

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[12] J.T. Mitchell, *Art and the Public Sphere*. (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 116.

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[15] N. Fraser, *Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy. In The Phantom Public Sphere*, edited by B. Robbins. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), p. 28.

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[17] N. Fraser, *Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy. In The Phantom Public Sphere*, edited by B. Robbins. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1993),

[18] .T. Mitchell 1993 *Art and the Public Sphere*. (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 17.

[19] T. Mitchell 1993 *Art and the Public Sphere*. (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 17.

[20] T. Mitchell 1993 *Art and the Public Sphere*. (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 17.

[21] See for example Congress for New Urbanism http://www.cnu.org or Creating public spaces which encourage strangers to interact http://thisbigcity.net/. In the Israeli case, see the Movement for Israeli Urbanism http://miu.org.il/new/english

[22] J. Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, (Cambridge, Mass, MIT Press, 1991), pp. 141.

[23] O. Yiftachel and H. Yacobi, 'Urban ethnocracy: ethnicization and the production of space in an Israeli mixed city', *Environment and Planning D*, 21(6), (1991), 673-694.

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[25] In 1958, Jerusalem's Municipality officially changed the Arabic name of Musrara to Morasha. Nevertheless, the neighborhood is referred to as Musrara by its residents, the press and in official publications.

[26] The majority (65%) was from Morocco and the rest came from Iran and Iraq. Approximately 10% arrived from East European countries. By the 1970's, all of the latter left Musrara (YANIV and FARHI, 1982, pp. 28).

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[31] G. Yaniv, and J. Farhi, 'Morasha – Kavim Ve Ifyunim Shel Schunut Shikum BeYerushaláyim' (Morasha- patterns and characterization of a renewal neighborhood in Jerusalem), *Tichnun Sevivati,* 28, (1982), p. 27.

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[37] T. Lev and Y. Shenav, Israel Black Panthers and the politics of identity in Israel in the 1970s. *Theory and Criticism* (Hebrew), 35, (2009), pp. 141-164.

[38] Most activists were young unemployed men and many had police records.

[39] S. C. Chetrit, *The Mizrahi Struggle in Israel between Oppression and Liberation, Identification and Alternative, 1948-2003* (Tel Aviv, Am-Oved, 2004), pp. 119-160. (in Hebrew).

[40] T. Lev and Y. Shenhav, Israel Black Panthers and the politics of identity in Israel in the 1970s. *Theory and Criticism* (Hebrew), 35, (2009), pp. 141-164.

[41]Y. Azmon, 'Segregation versus integration of public service communities in Jerusalem. *Public Administration and Development*, 8(3),(1988), p. 366.

[42] G. Yaniv, and J. Farhi, 'Morasha – Kavim Ve Ifyunim Shel Schunut Shikum BeYerushaláyim' (Morasha- patterns and characterization of a renewal neighborhood in Jerusalem), *Tichnun Sevivati,* 28, (1982), p. 26.

[43] G. Yaniv, D. Guggenheim and A. Block, *Morasha – the Image of a Rehabilitated Border Quarter, Jerusalem as a United City.* (Jerusalem, Ariel Publishers, 1986), p. 159.

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[44] G. Yaniv, D. Guggenheim and A. Block, *Morasha – the Image of a Rehabilitated Border Quarter, Jerusalem as a United City.* (Jerusalem, Ariel Publishers, 1986), p. 53.

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[49] B. Kra, 'Kodem Bau Krishey HaNadlan VeAchreheym HaCharedim' (First came the real-estate and then the ultraorthodox Jews), *Haaretz*, September 30, 2001 (in Hebrew).

[50] The number of **Palestinians in the West Bank** is approximately 2,264,000 and approximately 250,000 more in East Jerusalem (according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, as of end of 2007). In Israel, there are approximately 8,107,000 residents, of which approximately 75% are Jewish (approximately 6,040,000 residents) and approximately 21% are Arabs (approximately 1,656,000 residents) (according to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, 2013). This means that Muslims in general, those from the West Bank and Israeli citizens, are excessively represented. There is a significant gap between the two populations: Palestinian Israeli citizens are in excessive representation also in relation to West Bank residents. This explanation relates to a fascinating discussion: currently, most of the West Bank is surrounded by a Wall and under severe permit regime, making entry to Israel extremely difficult.

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Figures

Figure 1: A specialization of crime events in Jerusalem in relation to city boundaries (Author A: manuscript under review)

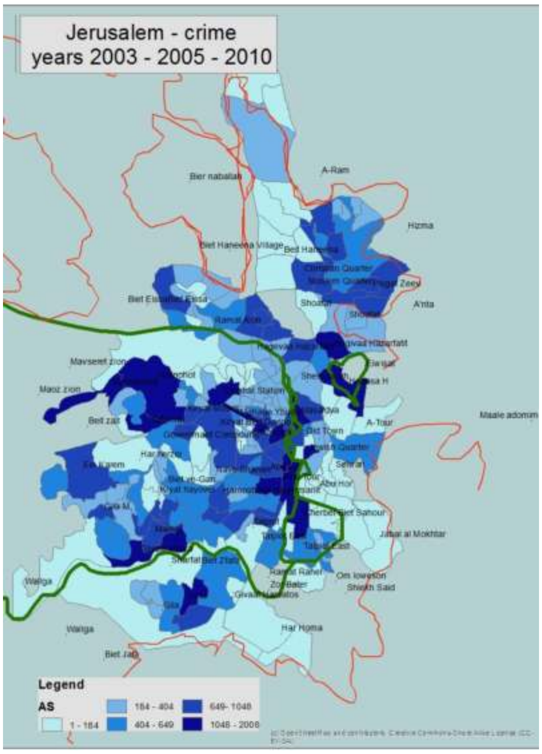

Figure 2: Violent events in Musrara according to religion/origin

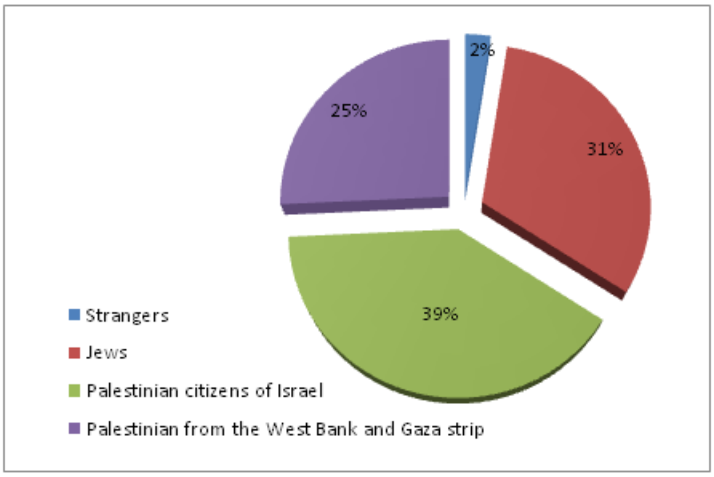

Figure 3: The aqua duct in its glorious days

Figure 4: The aqua duct today

Figure 5: Border seam line area– built environment

Figure 6: The plan outline emphasizing the latitude roads that connect the parts of the city, of which only two were constructed

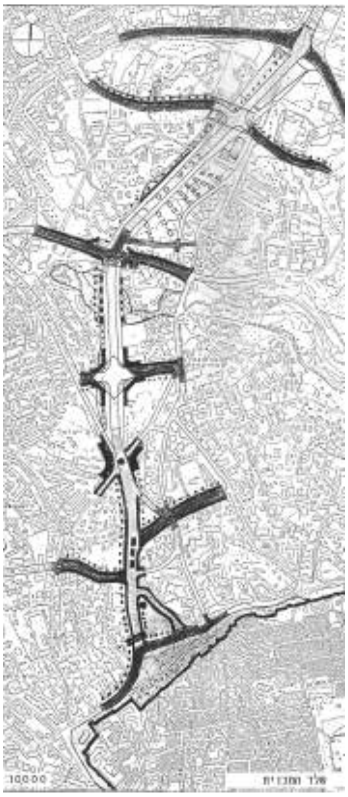

Figure 7: Right: the neighborhood Wall composed of a double wall and a promenade. Opposite: the bridge. Both were not constructed/executed. From Border Seam Line Plan: 2007.

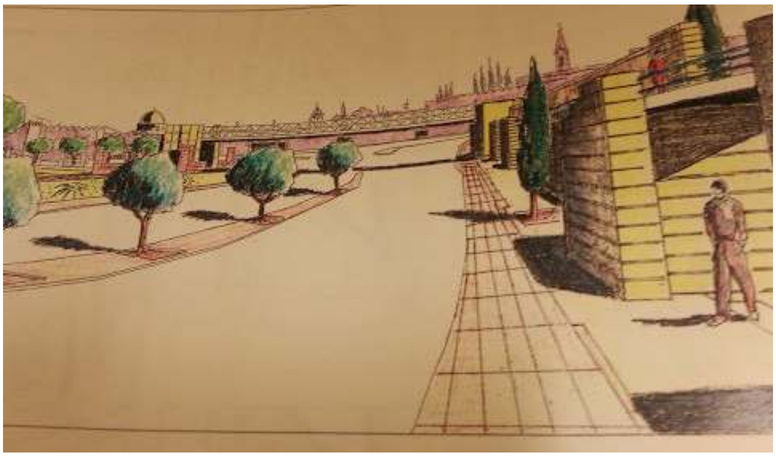

Figure 8: Nablus Gate area: the Triangle, Road No. 1 and neighborhood outskirts. From Border Seam Line Plan: 2007.

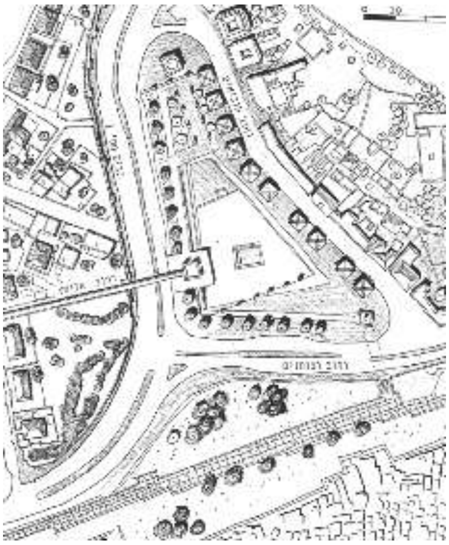

Figure 9: The blocked entrances, a view from within the neighborhood. Photography: anonymous