

(Non) Planning the city: the Urban Bio-Geopolitics in East Jerusalem

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the MSc Health in Urban Development

10,963 words

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15th September 2021

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*“Non esiste la Città,
esistono diverse e distinte forme di vita urbana”*
- Massimo Cacciari, *La Città*, 2004

1. Introduction

In his essay *Projecting Jerusalem*, Edward Said wrote “only by first projecting an idea of Jerusalem could Israel then proceed to the changes on the ground” (1995 p.6), illustrating the place of narration and conception in the making of the city. The sovereign acts on both the geography and lives. Later, Edward Said explained the importance of the narrative also for the ruled, the colonised, saying “one has to keep telling the (Palestinian) story in as many ways as possible, as insistently as possible, and in as compelling way as possible, to keep attention to it, because there is always a fear that it might just disappear” (2003, p.187). Coming under this approach, this paper tries to tell a story of Jerusalem, of the intermingling between the idea of the city and the physical making of it, rather than the city itself. In the case of Jerusalem, as this dissertation tries to explain, planning is determined by anterior, preconceived ideas, projected on the ground, in order to create a top-down, linear path in the making of the city. But this vision of planning and built environment is overlooking the very lives of its residents, negating their multiple aspirations and hopes. This dissertation decenters the urban making, uncovering the projected future, or vision of the sovereign, but also the multiple forms of present urban life experienced by its residents. In this sense, as illustrated by Cacciari’s opening quote of this dissertation, and following Boano’s interpretation (2016), I argue urbanism is inherently contested, that cities such as Jerusalem are in constant mutation, characterised by the lived, perceived and experienced urban features rather than by these urban features themselves. Thus, as Massimo Cacciari

stated, "the city does not exist, what exists are different and distinct forms of urban life" (2004 p.7).

The first purpose of this dissertation is to study these forms of urban life, dictated by the sovereign and experienced by the residents. Therefore, the current paper contributes to uncovering the interconnections between the theoretical concepts of urban geopolitics, and biopolitics, extensively discussed by Foucault (1976; 1979), and Agamben (1995; 2005), and applying them to Jerusalem. As discussed in the literature review, urban geopolitics covers the ethno-national urban conflict, particularly related to planning processes, resulting in low intensity violence. Biopolitics is understood as the political form of control, enacting power over life, seeing human life as a political body. The sovereign is given the full control of biopower to promote, enhance, or regulate and restrict the life of the population, as part of a political rationale. To this end, biopower is exercised by the sovereign through the ability "to make live and let die" (Foucault, 1976). Going beyond the Foucauldian biopolitical analysis, Mbembe (2003) and Agamben (1995) have respectively developed the concepts of *necropolitics*, and *bare life* analysing the sovereignty over life, discussed in the literature review. In a city like Jerusalem, where daily life and policy are different faces of the same coin, these concepts are reflecting and finding a suitable ground to produce an analysis of the urban bio-geopolitics.

This dissertation also argues that more than just infrastructure, water in Jerusalem should be seen as both a political tool (entering in the narrative of the space production) at the basis of the urban bio-geopolitics in East Jerusalem, and as a physical outcome of these bio-geopolitical processes, shaping lives for populations. Thus, water in Jerusalem is both visible and invisible, physical and imaginary, nowhere and everywhere. Exploring these multidimensional aspects of water in Jerusalem give us the opportunity to understand the city from a new perspective, as a product and outcome of narratives, urban geopolitics, biopolitics, and low intensity conflict (Chiodelli, 2012). In this analysis, the urban planning and the urban policies in Jerusalem are the determinants of all things in the urban bio-geopolitics at stake in the city, as well as water.

Jerusalem, "a city with historic, spiritual and cultural magnetism" (Boano, 2016), has an important symbolic dimension, and yet some very specific focuses that prevent a holistic

approach. Encapsulating Jerusalem is a difficult exercise, and there are numerous gaps in its study. This dissertation tries to draw an analysis of Jerusalem where urban planning is seen as a tool under the perspective of urban bio-geopolitics, impacting forms of urban life through the (non) provision of urban services. Located in a semi arid climate, water supply in Jerusalem has been one of the most important drivers in the production of the urban fabric (Lemire, 2020). Including water, from this historical perspective and narrative importance is therefore complementary for the analysis of Jerusalem. Indeed, studying the urban fabric of Jerusalem is also an analysis of the underground city, to study and observe the stationary — and yet changing — urban fabric, and the many flows below and above the street level.

With the inclusion of the health and well-being determinants, the analysis tend also to focus on the life aspects, not only to describe general urban processes, but observe the daily elements of living, and the human rights to housing, to water, to development and to health, that are threatened in the Palestinian areas of East Jerusalem. As part of the general urban trend in East Jerusalem, this paper discusses the ‘slumisation’ of Palestinian areas, the neglecting policies for urban services, and how these processes derive from the policy and geopolitical objectives.

Finally, through the lens of the concepts discussed, this dissertation proposes an analysis of the politics of erasure in East Jerusalem, and particularly in Silwan, where water is used as a justification for the erasure of the theoretical, historical, and physical existence of Palestinians, through urban and archeological processes. On many aspects, and despite the unification rhetoric, illustrated by the Knesset Jerusalem Law, stating “Jerusalem united in its entirety is the capital of Israel” (Basic Law, 1980), I would argue that Jerusalem is a dual city. This dualistic nature is visible in the physical aspect of the city as well as other less perceptible dimensions. Beyond the politically divided or contested essence of Jerusalem, this highlights the power (im)balance in the making of the city, and on its lived experience. Hence, beyond the frequent description of Jerusalem as a unified city, or as a strictly geopolitically divided city between two sides, this dissertation encourages to see Jerusalem as a dual, complex, evolving city dominated by the same sovereign power, controlling the different dimensions of the territory and lives, through a set of bio-geopolitical processes.

1.1. Research question

The purpose of this research is to contribute to the investigation of the overlapping urban geopolitics and biopolitics in Jerusalem. This dissertation explores how urban planning is influenced by the urban geopolitics and biopolitics in East Jerusalem, and how the interactions with this bio-geopolitical matrix are impacting the lives of East Jerusalem Palestinians, particularly through the provision of urban infrastructure and services like water.

Exploring the influence of urban geopolitics on daily life and the interconnected links between urban policy and infrastructure implies a need to understand the role of urban planning in the connections between the control over territory — East Jerusalem— and over life — the Palestinian residents. Furthermore, considering the singular place of water in East Jerusalem and specifically in Silwan, both from the physical and narrative point of view, exploring how water is materialised in the conflict over the city is a relevant point this dissertation tries to uncover.

The first chapter is exploring the diverse literature on urban geopolitics and biopolitics applied in Jerusalem. This section has the objective of conceptualising Jerusalem under both urban geopolitics and biopolitics approaches, using urban planning as a lens. The selection of literature used in this section led to the hypothesis of the use of urban planning as a tool for the sovereign power to ensure control over both the territory (geopolitics) and life itself (biopolitics). From this literature review, an analytical framework of the urban bio-geopolitical matrix in Jerusalem is presented, including Penny's different dimensions of space (2010). This section introduces the main theoretical concepts used in the paper, to ground the analysis and provide a relevant framework to contribute to the study of the urban conflict over East Jerusalem.

Furthermore, the next chapter presents the empirical analysis and data collection gathered through interviews of urban planners and experts. This section draws the main conclusions and reflections, related to the urban planning politics in Jerusalem, and its impact on the population's daily life.

Then, the following section presents the findings resulting from the empirical part, and provides a discussion around the role of water as a physical and political body. Urban planning is extensively discussed in regards first, to the importance of the narratives and

discourses in East Jerusalem to take control over space, and then to the physical impact on residents' life. Furthermore, this section comprises an analytical section, responding to the research question on urban bio-geopolitics in Jerusalem. This section intends to provide a new conceptualisation of Jerusalem analysis, using theoretical concepts of urban bio-geopolitics, to analyse the connection between the control over territory and over life. Using Silwan as a case study, this paper tries to provide a holistic approach of the multiple dimensions of urban bio-geopolitical processes in Jerusalem.

1.2. Methodology

To begin with, this dissertation is based on an academic literature review on biopolitics, urban geopolitics in Jerusalem, and on infrastructure. As a result, an approach using bio-geopolitics was developed as an analytical framework. A careful review of relevant academic literature, governmental and non-governmental organisations reports and news articles was done, to gather and analyse a wide range of secondary data. Most of the literature studied focuses on East Jerusalem specifically, some sources also include a wider analysis of the Palestinian region. In order to explore the urban bio-geopolitics of East Jerusalem, the role of urban planning in the ongoing conflict, and the unique symbolic nature of water in East Jerusalem, a case-study analysis was conducted, to gather and use qualitative data. In doing so, five semi-structured interviews were conducted in July and August. These interviews were targeting specifically urban planning experts, working for different organisations based, or working in East Jerusalem. Most of the interviewees were urban planners specialists. These interviews were an opportunity to get a better understanding of the deep interconnections among stakeholders influencing urban planning in East Jerusalem. Moreover, from their field of expertise, each interviewee provided key elements about the entangled situation of urban geopolitics in East Jerusalem, useful to build a new perspective on the analysis of the urban bio-geopolitics of the city.

Each interview was conducted with Zoom, and later transcribed manually. Following the transcription, an analysis was done, collecting data into 5 key themes: the policy and demographic objectives; the use of urban planning as tool in the conflict; the (non) planning practices; the infrastructural issues; and the role of stakeholders involved in the urban processes, followed by reflections on the policy of neglect and erasure of the Palestinians in Jerusalem.

2. Literature review

2.1. Understanding Jerusalem

The present literature review discusses and analyses the existing theories on Jerusalem as an arena of urban conflict, using both geopolitical and biopolitical lenses. It aims to uncover their implication in the production of space in Jerusalem, and the specific role of urban planning as a tool in the conflict over Jerusalem. Focusing on these concepts in the literature review gives the possibility to further develop an urban bio-geopolitical matrix.

Trying to capture Jerusalem as an ensemble is complex, regarding the deep-rooted—and conflictual—historical narratives saturating places and memories. Jerusalem has a global symbolic importance. Thus, studying its multifaceted social and local components is a complex process, as explained by Lemire (2020). From its biblical importance, and its exceptional position for monotheisms, Jerusalem is the epicentre of violent “nation-building project” (Rokem, 2016, p.407), encapsulating hopes and dreams, and embodies rival aspirations of identities (Bar, 2019). This might render perilous an analysis of the city. In his critical analysis of Jerusalem, Yiftachel metaphorically describes it as the Aleph, or “the place of all places” (Yiftachel, 2016, p.483). He underlines the many forces shaping the city itself, as well as the passionate debates among scholars to epitomise Jerusalem.

Notwithstanding, it seems necessary to take distances from the very symbolic, phantasmal and imaginary nature of Jerusalem (Lemire, 2020) to better understand it. As stated by Rokem it is therefore important to “de-exceptionalizing Jerusalem” (2016, p.408), or treat it as an extreme example rather than an exception (Braier and Yacobi, 2017). Following Rokem and Boano (2017), this section aims to widen the scope of research on the relationships between structural urban geopolitics, and the politics of everyday life, where identity, borders and narratives play the first roles.

2.2. Jerusalem: arena of urban geopolitics and planning

Many scholars (Bollens, 2000, 2001; Pullan, 2001; Calame and Charlesworth, 2009) have extensively described Jerusalem as a “contested” or “divided city”, a label Rokem

considers as highly western-centered (2016). Yiftachel (2016) links it with the notable absence of Jerusalem's colonial nature in the western-influenced literature. Rokem and al. synthesise urban geopolitics in two main lines respectively, the "militarisation of urban space" and the "urban conflicts" (2017). If the militarisation of urban space is a concrete ongoing process in Jerusalem with security infrastructure such as the Separation Wall (Amir, 2011 ; Shlomo and Fenster, 2011) or military check-points (Penny, 2010; Hammoudeh et al., 2016), this dissertation focuses mainly on the latter, namely the role of planning and ethno-nationalism in the urban conflict in Jerusalem. Planning becomes the way to achieve territorial policies' objectives, where territory is the precondition to establish social, economic, cultural and political control of one ethno-national group over another (Yiftachel, 1998). As aforementioned, there is an ongoing debate about the definition of Jerusalem. Moving forward from the 'contested city' terminology, Braier and Yacobi (2017) emphasise on its ethnocentric nature. This vision aligns with Shlomo's proposition to move "beyond the divided city approach" (2017, p.226). Including colonisation and ethno-national dimensions in the analysis, Stern and Yacobi (2017) join Porter and Yiftachel (2019); Samman (2018); Shalhoub-Kevorkian (2016); and Yacobi and Pullan (2014) views to describe Jerusalem as a place of settler-colonialism. In Jerusalem, the ethno-national geopolitical goals find a local-scale application to shape reality (Wari, 2011) illustrating the political importance of space (Lefebvre, 1991). However, other scholars, such as Lentin (2010), go further. They consider the ethnocentric approach is not sufficient to describe the colonial process, and rather use the term 'racial state', creating second class citizens, subordinated to the dominant ethno-racism of the State of Israel. This colonial dimension of Jerusalem is perceptible on the policy level and on urban planning policies (Yacobi, 2015), illustrating the geopolitical stake in Jerusalem. Policies are aimed to ensure, and expand a Jewish-Israeli control over the territory and the population of Jerusalem.

Nevertheless, a more recent growing body of literature also aims to cross the bridge between neoliberalism processes and ethno-national segregation (Rokem and Boano, 2017), highlighting the key role of neoliberalism in the production of space in Jerusalem (Shtern and Rokem, 2021). This overlapping of modern capitalism as both geography producer and actor of settler-colonialism through ethno-national processes gives us a more holistic approach of space production and lived-geography in Jerusalem. It can also be linked to environmental and spatial sustainability (Khamaisi, 2010). Illustrating this ambivalence between neoliberalism and colonialism, Nadia Abu El-Haj refers to the dual nature of the state as the

“Janus-faced” of Israel (2010, p.29), accumulating both neoliberal and colonial dimensions. The state, over neoliberal and colonial practices and interventions, ensures its control over the lives of the Palestinians (Abu El-Haj, 2010).

Furthermore, to follow the existing literature, Jerusalem is extensively studied under the lens of urban apartheid (Yiftachel, 2009). Yacobi (2016, p.101) describes how the urban dynamics in Jerusalem are beyond the analytical framework proposed by ethnocracy, and should now be seen within the urban apartheid context, understood as a “radicalisation of the ethnocratic phase”. According to Yacobi (2016), the apartheid processes in Jerusalem are found in the ghettoisation of Palestinian neighborhoods / villages in the eastern part of the city, disrupted both geographically and socioeconomically. This “product of ideology and policy” (Yacobi, 2016, p.112), seen as intentional, is using planning as a tool for geopolitical objectives, and is resulting in a frontierisation of Palestinian areas in Jerusalem. This phenomenon of frontierisation can also be seen as what Yiftachel calls “grey spaces”, understood as areas neither integrated, nor eliminated, resulting in a “pseudo permanent margin” of Palestinian areas in East Jerusalem (2009, p.89).

2.3. Biopolitics applied in Jerusalem: governing space and bodies

Pursuing the concept of frontierisation and intentional exclusion of some parts of the population, it is possible to link Jerusalem with the state of exception concept developed by Giorgio Agamben (2005), as it has been underlined by Boano and Martén (2013). The state of exception is in perpetual state of emergency, declared by the sovereign, under the security paradigm. From a perceived threat, the exception is directed toward parts of the society itself, to exclude them from the political system, or even eliminate them from the nation-state memory or geography. Agamben stresses the sovereign is both making, enacting, producing the law creating this system, and is also outside and above the law. Agamben describes this impunity of the sovereign in the state of exception as producing ‘bare life’ for those under its rule (1995), as it can be applied to the Israeli control over East Jerusalem. Violence in spatial segregation is creating enclosed spaces where law and order are indefinitely suspended, according to a population segmentation, making the exception the new norm (Azoulay and Ophir, 2005).

These concepts are linked with biopolitics, extensively studied by Foucault (1979), describing the process when life itself becomes part of the mechanism of power and politics. This inclusion of biological life into the nation state politics can be described as the power to “make live and let die” (Foucault, 1976). In Jerusalem, this conception of power is illustrated by the appropriation of the state apparatus, capital, and cultural flows by the dominant group of the desired nation-state —the Jewish-Israeli— at the expense of the marginalised “peripheral ethnic and national minorities” (Braier and Yacobi, 2017, p.111). In East Jerusalem, public authorities use different power-based structures through a set of administrations, regulations, institutions, to control and regulate demographic and social parameters, following a colonial governmentality perspective (Shlomo, 2016). On the ground, this is illustrated by the biopolitical control of Palestinian population in Jerusalem, through direct and indirect means, underlying a shift in the governed object in Jerusalem, from the territory to the population itself (Parsons and Salter, 2008). Studying Jerusalem from a biopolitical perspective is studying how the control over geography means control over bodies, exposing the spatialisation of the political realm, and the colonisation of life itself (Boano and Martén, 2013).

This control over bodies of the biopolitical state, illustrated by an intensive use of statistics (Parsons and Salter, 2008), categorisation of population (Bakker, 2017) and bureaucratic tools (Wari, 2011), is pushing the Palestinians in a the realm of constant uncertainty (Bar, 2019), drawing a pattern of illegality for their physical means of existence (Braier and Yacobi, 2017). In Jerusalem and Palestine, the colonial occupation is taking forms of physical, territorial and infrastructural control, but also control over the bodies, where life is reaching the edge of the bearable, combining both biopolitical and necropolitical power (Mbembe, 2003).

2.4. Infrastructures and planning politics in Jerusalem: a city shaped by low-intensity violence

This induced illegality is driven by the seizure of planning politics by the dominant group. The official, legal tools for the production of space is the object of the sovereign, who restricts the access to official urban development for the oppressed. In East Jerusalem, Palestinians are driven to informal housing production, services and infrastructures (Braier and Yacobi, 2017), enlightening the cruel paradox of the unified Jerusalem rhetoric. In

Jerusalem, urban planning becomes a tool for the urban bio-geopolitics. State racism, discrimination and geopolitical objectives are taking form in the urban realm of lived geography, impacting life and well-being of population, through indirect sets of rules, laws, and regulations of the planning system (Lentin, 2010; Penny, 2010; Jabareen, 2017). Therefore, planning can be seen as the tool reshaping reality, to better control space and demographics on the ground (Yacobi, 2016). Aligning with Rokem and Allegra's views (2016), planning in Jerusalem cannot be separated from the political and social contexts in which it evolves. However, more than an unintentional outcome or product of its environment, I argue urban planning in Jerusalem is a significant determinant in "Judaising East Jerusalem" (Shtern and Yacobi, 2019, p.468). To make the so-called unification of the city irreversible, the sovereign uses a series of facts on the ground enacting the control over Jerusalem for the only Jewish-Israeli majority (Imseis, 1999). Indeed, as stated by Lentin (2010), the state is using a wide range of governmental technologies of the constant state of emergency, like bureaucracy and demographic manipulation, to create or recreate cultural imaginings to ensure control over places and bodies. These processes enlighten the sovereign's power to include and exclude. The outcome of these processes is an undergoing politics of erasure, aiming to rewrite the belongings of place in East Jerusalem villages (Mannergren Selimovic and Strömbom, 2015).

These processes result in an intensification of Israeli presence as well as a physical containment of Palestinian population in East Jerusalem. Through bureaucratic obstacles such as building permits, legal housing is virtually impossible for Palestinians, hindering their urban development, thus making their access to infrastructure such as water and sanitation more scarce. The urban infrastructure in Jerusalem is playing an important role in the urban bio-geopolitics, as both tools and outcomes in the city production. As stated by Dumper (1993), infrastructure —water, sewage, electricity— is a way to secure physical control over Jerusalem by Israel after the annexation in 1967, in order to make a division impossible, and ensure the only Israeli future of Jerusalem.

This is illustrating how infrastructure, like urban water, are highly political objects (Zeiderman et al., 2016). Yet, the literature on Jerusalem's infrastructure is rather scarce, and mostly focused on the urban biopolitics or geopolitics of urban mobility, or security structures in the city. This situation is creating a gap in the invisible politics of infrastructure, fragmenting both time and places in Jerusalem (Handel, 2009). It tends to elude one of the

main ‘battlegrounds’ in East Jerusalem, taking place underground, starting from the various narratives overused in archeological projects to justify colonisation of space, and ending in the water tanks in Palestinian rooftops in East Jerusalem. Metaphorically, water in Jerusalem can illustrate the fault-line described by Lemire, where the city is trapped between “the memory of the dead and the history of the living” (2020).

2.5. Analytical framework: the Urban Bio-Geopolitical Matrix in Jerusalem

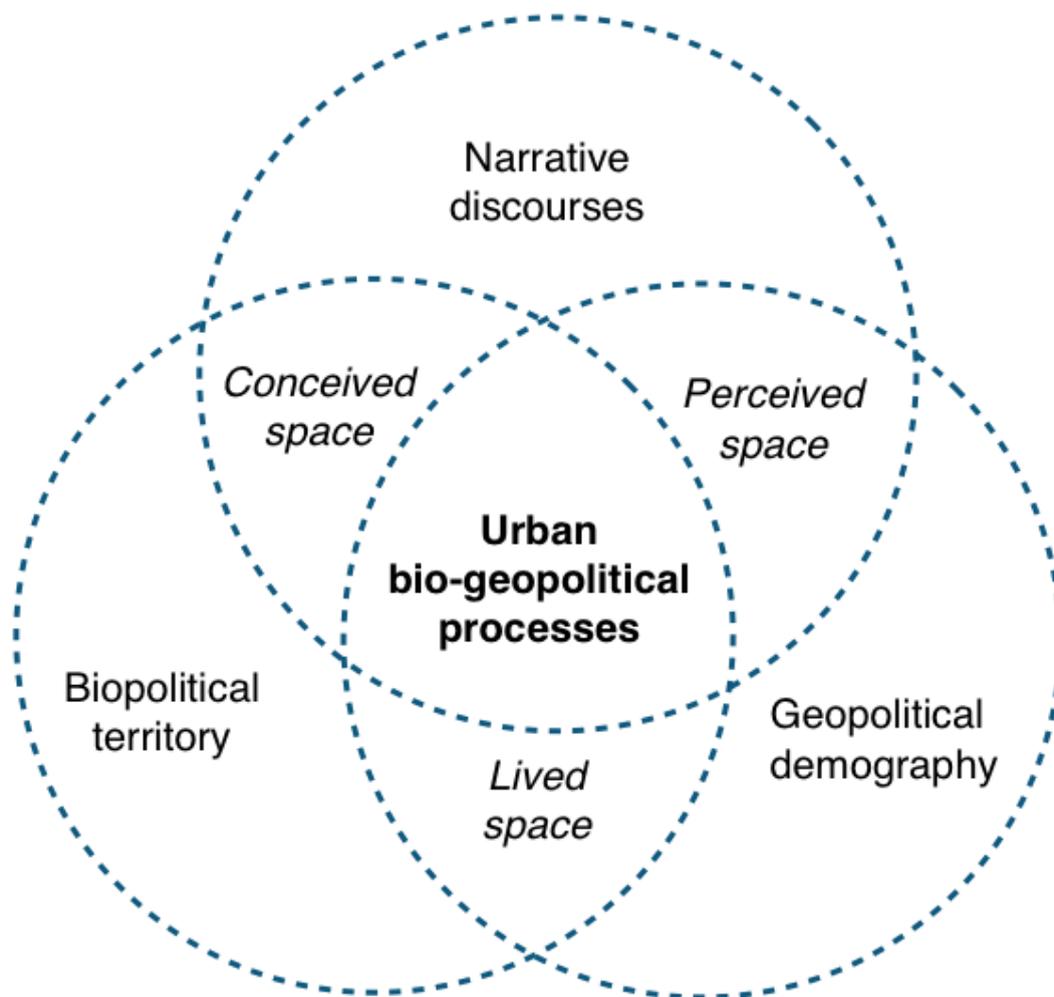


Fig. 1: Analytical framework: urban bio-geopolitical matrix in Jerusalem
Source: author, inspired by Penny (2010).

3. Case study and analysis

3.1. Empirical section

3.1.1. Policy objectives: ensuring a demographic majority for the Jewish-Israeli population in Jerusalem

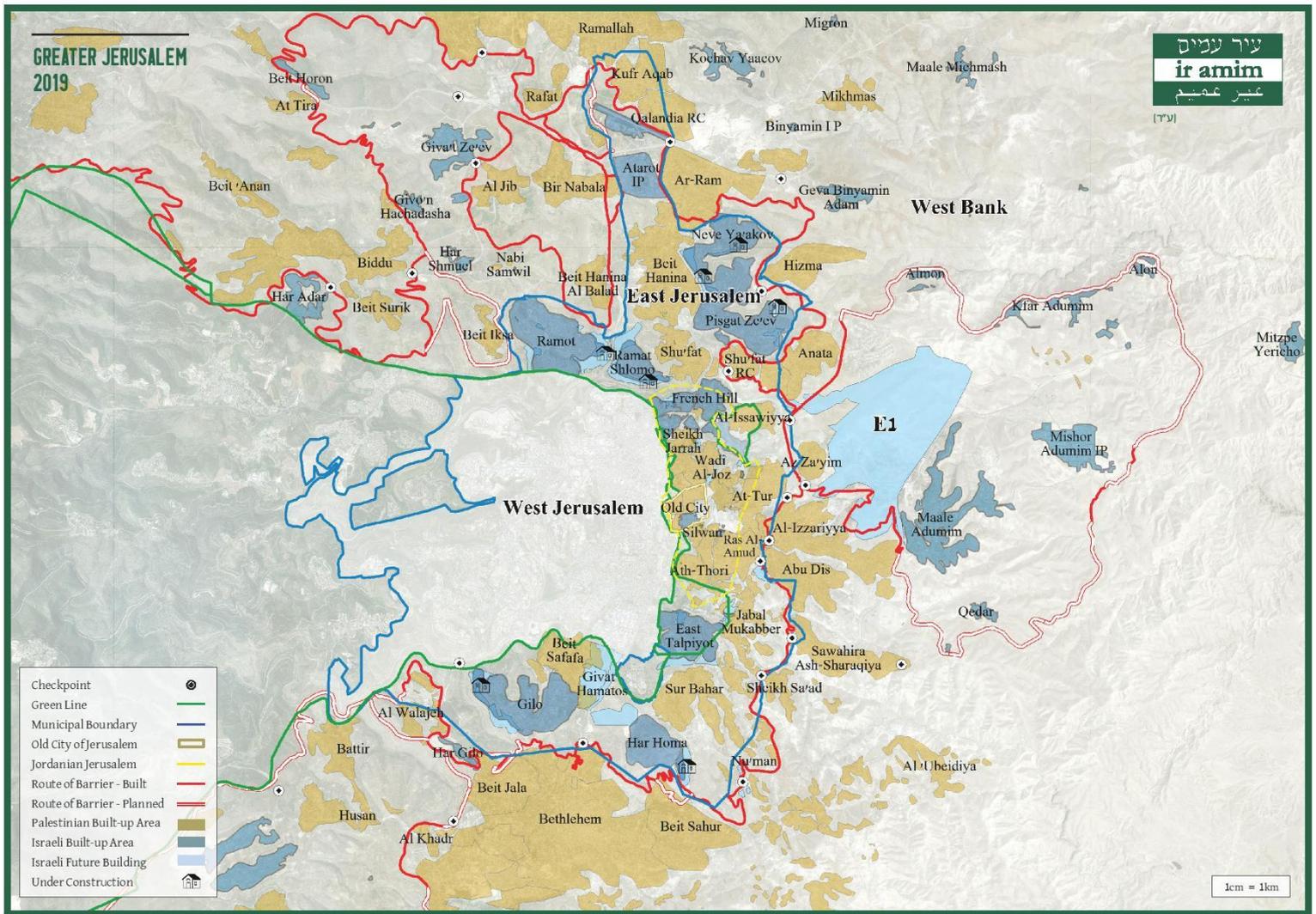


Fig. 2: Map of the Greater Jerusalem.
Source: Ir Amim, 2019.

By taking a look at a map of Jerusalem, one can easily be confused from the multiple boundaries that have shaped Jerusalem over the past decades. After the 1967 war, the Israeli municipality of Jerusalem —after the suppression of the Jordanian municipality— redrew the municipal boundaries. The borders of the city were expanded for the newly formed unique municipality of Jerusalem, including the former Jordanian municipality, and vast peri-urban and rural areas of the West Bank. These new municipality lines include today’s Israeli settlements of Pisgat Ze’ev or Neve Ya’akov, as well as the Old City, and the Palestinian villages of Silwan, Sheikh Jarrah and Beit Hanina.

A closer look at the recent Wall of Separation construction might be even more eye-catching. Indeed, in addition to the municipal boundaries, implemented after the annexation of the eastern part of the city in 1967, the Israeli authorities have been erecting a security fence since 2002. This fence is passing through Arab areas regardless of existing neighbourhoods dynamics, disrupting the daily life of the Palestinian residents, with a series of checkpoints. In addition to the fence and checkpoints, a wide network of road infrastructure is completing the separation-integration process in the outskirts of East Jerusalem. For example, the separation border and the roads de facto attach the Israeli built-up area of Ma’ale Adumim, which is located outside the municipal boundaries. However, the Palestinian area of Kufr Aqab, inside the municipal boundaries, is now beyond the wall, cutting-off 25,000 people from the rest of the city (fig. 2).

This situation of inclusion-exclusion, through a network of infrastructure, roads, rail or walls, implemented by governmental policy, serves one official purpose: maintaining a Jewish-Israeli majority in Jerusalem. As stated by interviewee n°3 during an interview conducted on the 27th July “the whole Israeli philosophy of territorial domination for the Jewish and restricting the Palestinian built up area, is only based on demographic considerations”. The initial demographic balance was clearly announced by the municipality of Jerusalem, according to governmental decisions, to maintain the Arab population in Jerusalem to 30%, and to ensure a large Jewish majority of 70% (Jerusalem Municipality, 2004). This demographic balance was based on the general trend of governmental decisions from the 1970s and 1980s that “solidified in the national policy” to keep the Jerusalem demographic profile as it was in 1967 (interviewee n°1, 2021).

However, considering the demographic trend, and the natural growth of the Palestinian population in Jerusalem, the Outline Plan for Jerusalem 2000 indicates the new demographic objective to attain is an approximate 60/40 ratio (Jerusalem Municipality, 2004). One of the stand out consequences of this demographic balance is the restrictions on Palestinian built-up areas. For instance, the Palestinian population of Jerusalem is only allowed to construct on 10,000 dunams. As a result, the Palestinian residents, representing 40% of the population of the city, lives only on 7% of the territory of Jerusalem (interviewee n°3, 2021).

Furthermore, to ensure a control over the territory, Israeli authorities are driving the urban planning policies in a way “to push Palestinians out of the city”, putting them in a limbo where their status can be revoked, their house demolished, their family evicted. This is a situation where they have “no other choice either to be pushed or to decide to leave” (interviewee n°1, 2021). As emphasised by interviewee n°5 in an interview conducted on the 29th July, “the main policy (is) to take from Palestinians the right to live in their own city”. As illustrated by the interviews conducted and the Outline plan (2004), more than a hidden trend, the exclusion of Palestinian is a systemic, organised, planned project, written in the urban policy for the city.

According to authors (Imseis, 1999; Jabareen, 2017; Shlomo, 2016), this combination of both geographical control and demographic manipulation from Jerusalem’s urban policies has the objective of creating a situation that will not be reversed in the future. In other words, the current urban policies in Jerusalem are meant to prevent a future division of the city where East Jerusalem would be the capital of the future State of Palestine. A fact confirmed during the interviews, stating that Israel is putting “intentional effort to hinder any kind of future possibility to have East Jerusalem connected to the future Palestinian State” (interviewee n°2, 2021). That is to say, “Israel will never let the Palestinians build their own capital in Jerusalem” (interviewee n°5, 2021).

3.1.2. Urban planning, a tool in the conflict

Another important consequence of the fence in Jerusalem is the separation between East Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank. As a result “the city was cut off” from the other Palestinian territories, and “Jerusalemites are left on their own”, dramatically impacting the use of the city (interviewee n°2, 2021).

In the context of the struggle over Jerusalem, the conflict has direct consequences on urban production, as it is “guiding the urban policies in East Jerusalem” (interviewee n°1, 2021). Indeed, more than a consequence, urban planning becomes a tool in the conflict, an additional weapon used by the Israeli authorities to ensure their control of East Jerusalem. Urban planning is here “a partisan tool used by Israel as a demographic balance goal” and to achieve “geopolitical goals” (interviewee n°3, 2021). Jerusalem then becomes the ground of national geopolitical objectives, as the conflict “interferes with planning and planning becomes a tool in East Jerusalem”. This tool is aimed specifically to execute the “demographic policies of the State of Israel” (interviewee n°1, 2021), highlighting the interconnection between national and municipal policies.

In addition to the ethnonational conception of Jerusalem, discussed in the literature (Shtern and Rokem, 2021; Braier and Yacobi, 2017; Yiftachel, 2006), urban planning is also impacted by “neoliberal approaches”, with the governmental intentions for Jerusalem to “become a metropolis” (interviewee n°1, 2021). In consequence, ethnonationalism and neoliberalism are entangled in the urban geopolitics of Jerusalem. Correspondingly, interviewee n°3 explains how West Jerusalem is meant to turn “into a Manhattan”, highlighting the substantial contrast between the vision and reality, or between West Jerusalem and the Israeli settlements on one side, and the Palestinian areas of East Jerusalem on the other side — there are also significant differences between Palestinian areas located on both sides of the fence, but for the scope of this dissertation, the analysis concentrates on areas inside the wall.

To ensure the demographic majority of the Israeli-Jewish population in Jerusalem, corresponding to the national objectives, the authorities, are both developing Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem, and restricting development for Palestinian areas. As a result, while Jewish-Israelis can occupy large parts of the territory in the East in settlements produced by the government, the economic life and built environment in Palestinian areas is reduced to minimum, focusing mainly on the “intensification” and “densification of Palestinian neighbourhoods” , resulting in “more restrictions on Palestinian development” (interviewee n°3, 2021). One such explanation can be found in the land ownership issues, as Israel is developing a complex built-up project through state-owned land, while most of Palestinian land is privately owned, as explained by interviewee n°1 (2021).

The settlement process is the cause of major disruption in East Jerusalem. Settlements can be divided into 2 main groups: one with the neighbourhoods settlements, organised on large former rural areas, seized by the state to construct an entire collective neighbourhood, in East Jerusalem or further in the West Bank, hosting tens of thousands of people for the largest ones such as Pisgat Ze'ev or Gilo. The second category of settlements includes the individual settlements, inside Palestinian neighbourhoods and villages, where residents are “evicted from their home”, replaced by settlers families and also “with security” officers (interviewee n°2, 2021), introducing a dual, modular provision and perception of security-insecurity with Israeli armed guards for settlers security inside Palestinian areas, as explained by Volinz (2018). To sum up the geopolitical process of settlements used by authorities to isolate Palestinians, and control the territory from its core, interviewee n°5 explains that “the whole process is to build around neighbourhoods, and inside neighbourhoods”, in order to control both the place, and the life. As explained further, “tourism is a very important part of the Municipality of Jerusalem’s political agenda”, and is substantially guiding planning policies in the eastern area of the city, as part of the Judaization process where the “Muslim part is excluded” (interviewee n°4, 2021).

3.1.3. (Non) Planning in practice: the building permits and the Jerusalem 2000 Outline Plan

The cornerstone of the de-development processes appears to be the building permits. Indeed, as stated during all interviews conducted, receiving a building permit for Palestinians in East Jerusalem is almost impossible. As a result, it is not possible to legally build a house for Palestinians, or even to add any new construction on the land because, as interviewee n°5 said, the authorities “won’t let you” (2021). Then, the only possibility for Palestinians to face the high natural growth in East Jerusalem is “to add one room, one floor, to an existing construction”, directly contributing to the increasing density in Palestinian neighbourhoods, as is the case in Silwan (interviewee n°3, 2021). This picture is clearly confirmed by a careful reading of the Local Outline Plan Jerusalem 2000 prepared for the municipality of Jerusalem by the Planning administration, citing “increasing the residential building capacity by densification” as a core principle for the residential development of East Jerusalem (Jerusalem Municipality, 2004, p22). Further, the Outline Plan states the housing problems for the “originally rural” Arab population of Jerusalem are due to “the significant size of the population and lack of financial resources”, proposing “a densification of the rural villages

and densification and thickening of the existing urban neighbourhoods” as a unique solution for the Palestinians. In contrast, both “densification of existent neighbourhoods and building new neighbourhoods” are underlined for the Jewish population “in order to maintain a Jewish majority in the city” (Jerusalem Municipality, 2004, p.32). Even more, both “reasonable prices” and “employment places, services, quality of life, and urban experiences should be ensured” for the Jewish majority, while nothing is said about it for the Palestinian population.

One of the reasons given by interviewee n°2 is the absence of “regular planning for these neighbourhoods” preventing residents to “ask for permits to build new homes” (2021). As matter of fact, Palestinian neighbourhoods are excluded from general plans in Jerusalem, preventing any possible planning and construction of new Palestinian neighbourhoods, and that has been the case since 1967 (interviewee n°3, 2021).

The direct consequence of such practices, as Palestinian Jerusalemites do not have any other choice, is to build their home anyway, illegally. In this regard, tens of thousands of housing units in East Jerusalem can be considered as illegally constructed (interviewee n°3, 2021; interviewee n°1, 2021). The “criminalisation” of Palestinians by the authorities in Jerusalem is constant, and is repressing “acts of pure survival” (interviewee n°2, 2021), pushing the Palestinian population into a limbo, where their existence is threatened. In this marginalisation situation, Palestinians are turned into law breakers if their house is erected without the quixotic building permit, forcing them to pay large fines, and living in the constant fear of house demolition or eviction (interviewee n°1, 2021).

3.1.4. Planning, policy and water infrastructure: the de-development of East Jerusalem

The corollary of the absence of proper planning for the Palestinian population of the city is the lack of access to infrastructure, such as water, electricity, garbage collection, roads or sewage system. One explanation given during interviews is the fact that the Palestinian neighbourhoods and their infrastructure and services are designed for the population of 1967. Since 1967, the Palestinian population has increased, however the amount of infrastructure, or investment for infrastructure has not. As a result of the lack of investment in infrastructure, the inappropriate planning and development policies, and the “ongoing neglect since 1967”, parts of East Jerusalem are turning into slums (interviewee n°1, 2021).

The key determinant in the lack of access to water infrastructure is related to the building permissions¹. One can not legally connect their home to the municipal water system without a permit. This is the case for more than 100,000 people in East Jerusalem according to ACRI (interviewee n°2, 2021). In consequence, the “access to infrastructures, like water like sewage like electricity are being done in a pirate way” (interviewee n°2, 2021), adding up to the illegality phenomenon for Palestinians. This explains the significant water saving practices in East Jerusalem. For example, in areas like Silwan it is frequent to see black water tanks on the roof; to store water, in case of a shortage, or a disruption of supply, as the water flow is inconsistent². This practice, used in the absence of alternatives, represents a threat for health, as the quality of water might be deteriorated. In the case of the sewage system, people are mostly relying on septic tanks, which come with significant public and environmental health threats. Even if some efforts are made by the municipality, for example with the construction of a few sewerage pipes or water supply network lines in the East (fig.3) and if “in the recent years the municipality is trying to close the gap”, “it is still far from enough” (interviewee n°1, 2021).

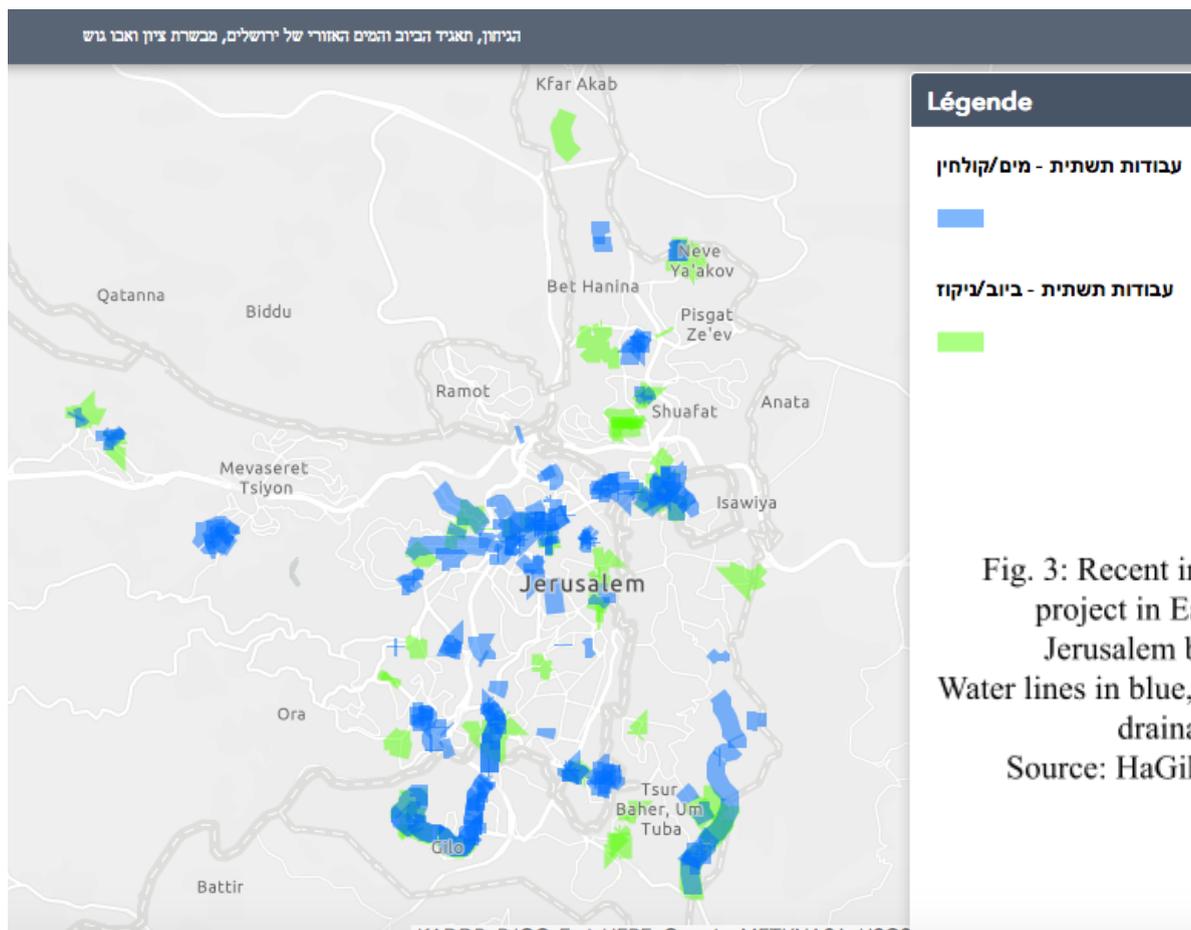
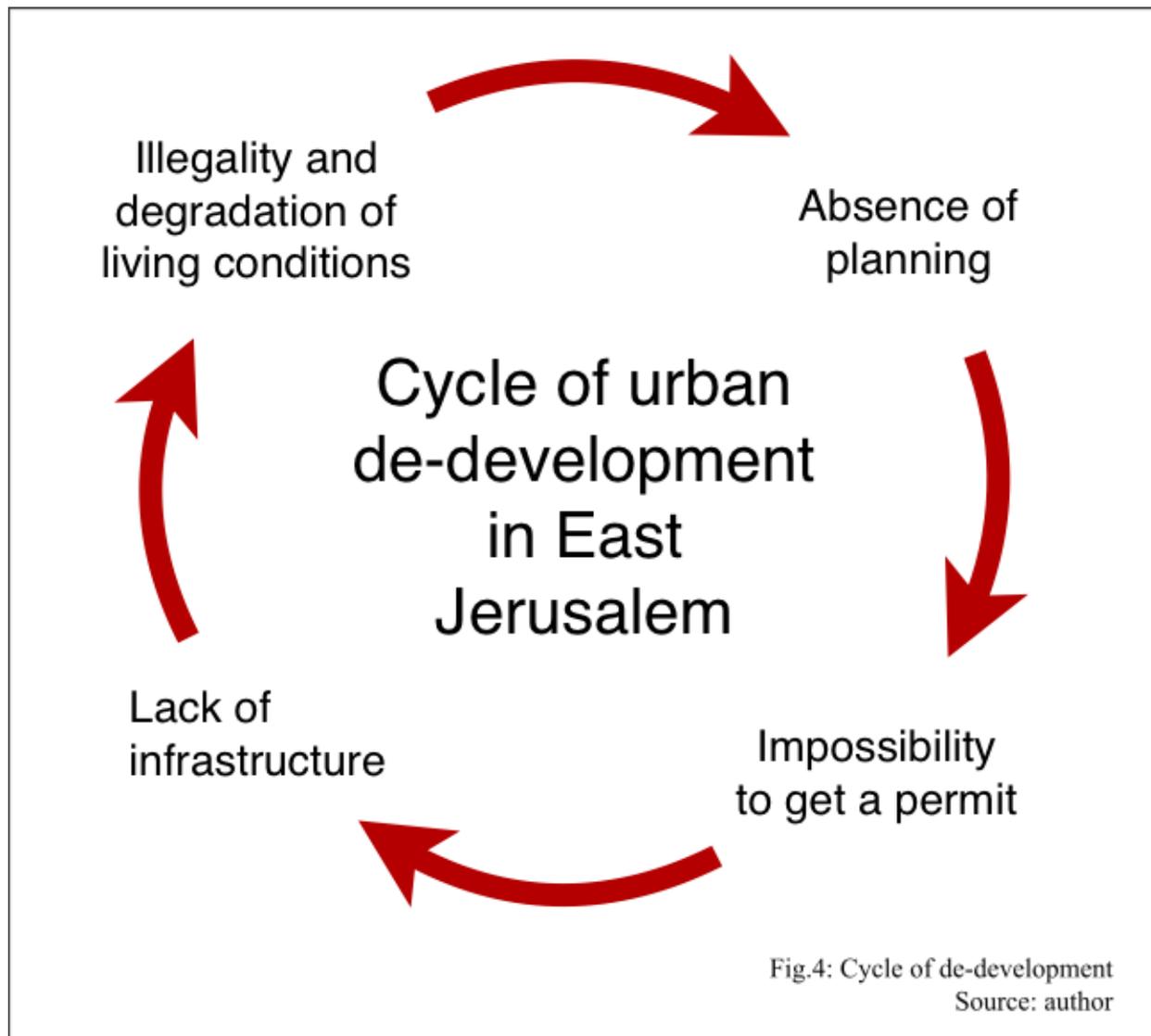


Fig. 3: Recent infrastructure project in East and West Jerusalem by HaGihon, Water lines in blue, sewage and drainage in green. Source: HaGihon working map, 2021

¹ Personal communication with E. Glazer, PhD, UCL, 2021

² *ibid.*

Moreover, if the Outline Plan considers the “implementation of infrastructures projects in the eastern part of the city” under a vague description, this is conditioned to “a significant augmentation of the enforcement of the planning and building law as a condition for applying the principles of the outline plan” (Jerusalem Municipality, 2004). In essence, the meaning is the Israeli law must be enforced as a prerequisite for any infrastructure projects implementation in East Jerusalem.



This entangled situation of absence of proper planning, housing shortage and high density, impossibility to have access to building permit, important fines, and constant fear of housing demolition leads East Jerusalem to a context of de-development, or a “slumisation” process. In addition to the important lack of physical infrastructure such as water or

sanitation, there is also a lack of economic development. Indeed, the urban renewal, revitalisation, and economic functions are not considered in the plans for the city centre of East Jerusalem, and according to interviewee n°3, this situation is a “non-planning, a non-development for the Palestinians” in order to “preserve the city rationale as it is” (2021). In addition to the structural problems of infrastructure and public services in the Palestinian areas of Jerusalem, the development of the archeological park and settlements in Silwan is hardening daily lives of Palestinians residents, by restricting their use of space, or directly damaging their houses (interviewee n°4, 2021).

3.1.5. Urban planning in Jerusalem: the direct commands of national policies

A major issue for the implementation of local plans in East Jerusalem for Palestinian areas, is the lack of willingness to approve those plans by the authorities, namely the Israeli central government (interviewee n°3, 2021). Indeed, in the urban planning chessboard of Jerusalem, “the municipality is basically a pion” (interviewee n°1, 2021). If the municipality of Jerusalem is the arm taking actions, the coordination and decisions are made at the national, governmental level. The municipality is only “carrying out the governmental policy” (interviewee n°1, 2021), and is totally dependent on the central government. As explained by interviewee n°1, the over centralisation of the urban planning, in accordance with the national law, creates a severe disconnection between the decisions made for planning, and the people actually living and experiencing these decisions --the Palestinian Jerusalemites. As an example given by interviewee n°1 to illustrate the complex situation, in order to take any planning action the municipality has to go through the approval of the district committees, but these committees are “made up of governmental officials” (2021). In a nutshell, the urban planning in Jerusalem is decided by, and for the Israeli central government, and the municipality is just a bureaucratic tool.

This dual game and disproportionate power relations between central and local authorities might explain the growing importance of lobbies and private organisations in the decision making for the urban planning and land use in East Jerusalem. For instance, the settlers' organisations have a strong influence. As a consequence, in an area such as Silwan, the organisation City of David —Elad, discussed further— has been granted control over public areas like the archeological park, with an important role in the “changing of history narrative” (interviewee n°2, 2021). Elad is directly administering the National park of

Silwan, and participating in the decision making process, the urban planning, and the evictions of Palestinian residents. Settlers' organisations contribute de facto to the de-development of Silwan.

3.1.6. Palestinians in East Jerusalem: from the policy of neglect to the politics of erasure

In light of the different elements presented in this section, and with the concepts discussed in the literature review, it is possible to observe Jerusalem as an urban arena where a major power imbalance takes place, in the form of urban planning policies. Since the annexation of East Jerusalem in 1967, the Palestinian population has been constantly neglected by the local and national authorities, materialised by a lack of funding and a deterioration of living conditions and access to basic infrastructure and services such as water and sanitation. This constant and systematic neglectful approach toward an entire population led to the de-development of what was before “up to middle class neighbourhoods” (interviewee n°3, 2021). In addition to this obvious policy of neglect, the more recent interest in some specific neighbourhoods such as the Palestinian area of Silwan, by private organisations like Elad raise the question of the place of symbolism and the narrative in the conflict over East Jerusalem. In accordance with the official objective of maintaining a solid Jewish majority in the city, Silwan residents are witnessing both the depletion of their infrastructure, and the arrival of settlers, actively participating in a colonisation project, threatening the Palestinian residents with eviction. This phenomenon leads to the question of whether the policy of neglect is a way toward a politics of erasure for the Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem?

3.2. Silwan, time and place

3.2.1. Past and present in Silwan

Located at the immediate proximity of the southern wall of the Old City, the Palestinian urbanised village of Silwan is based on the site of one of the earliest human settlements in Jerusalem, around the Gihon spring, dating back to at least 5000 BCE

(Greenberg, 2009). The area has been continuously inhabited for more than three millennia (Uddin, 2021), specifically in Wadi Hilweh, part of Silwan, the site of the alleged biblical City of David (Settlement Monitor, 2015). Until 1967 and the annexation of East Jerusalem, Silwan was a traditional village, predominantly rural dominated by an agrarian activity (Yiftachel, 2016), due to the presence of springs for irrigation (Bimkom, 2013). After 1967, Silwan witnessed a demographic change, characterised by significant population growth, and densification of housing, transfiguring the built environment. Today, Silwan is the home of approximately 55,000 people (The Guardian, 2021), with an extremely majoritarian Palestinian population, and a few hundreds Jewish-Israeli settlers. On the slopes adjacent to the Old City, on a relatively limited area, Silwan is one of the densest neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem (Mannergren Selimovic and Strömbom, 2015).

Today, Silwan is also considered as one of the poorest neighbourhoods in Jerusalem (Poser, 2019). The urbanised village is undergoing a constant intentional and unintentional neglect, leading to a lack of basic infrastructure (Ir Amim, 2009) such as roads and sidewalks (B'Tselem, 2020), schools and education (Ir Amim, 2012), public spaces (Bimkom, 2013), garbage collection (ACRI, 2009), and also water and sewage services. As seen in fig. 5, Palestinian houses are equipped with black water tanks on the roof. This is used as a heating technique but also as reservoirs in case of water shortage (Bresler, 2010), due to a lack of connection to water supply. This lack of water and sewage infrastructure is the result of entangled planning issues already mentioned. The Jerusalem 2000 Outline Plan, the only master plan for Jerusalem, does not provide a comprehensive plan for infrastructure in Palestinian neighbourhoods, and both the sewage system and water supply network are incomplete (Bimkom, 2014). This is forcing the residents to rely on cesspits, rooftop water tanks, or pirate connections. The neglected area of Silwan is illustrating the ongoing de-development occurring in East Jerusalem, where Palestinians are deprived of their urban lives, and their right to develop (UN Habitat, 2015).

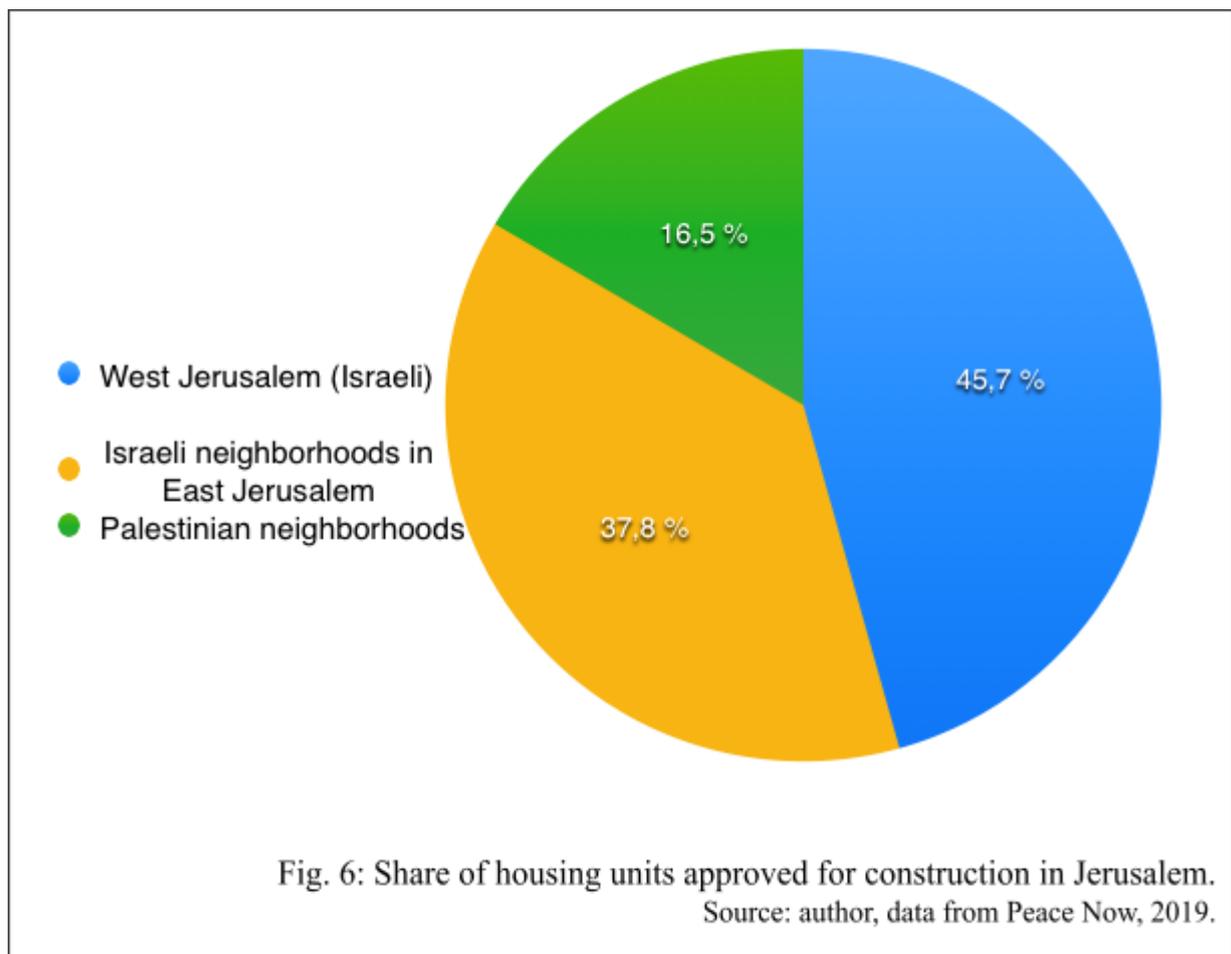


Fig. 5: Black water tanks on Palestinian rooftops, East Jerusalem
Source: Bresler, 2010.

3.2.2. Building permit regime

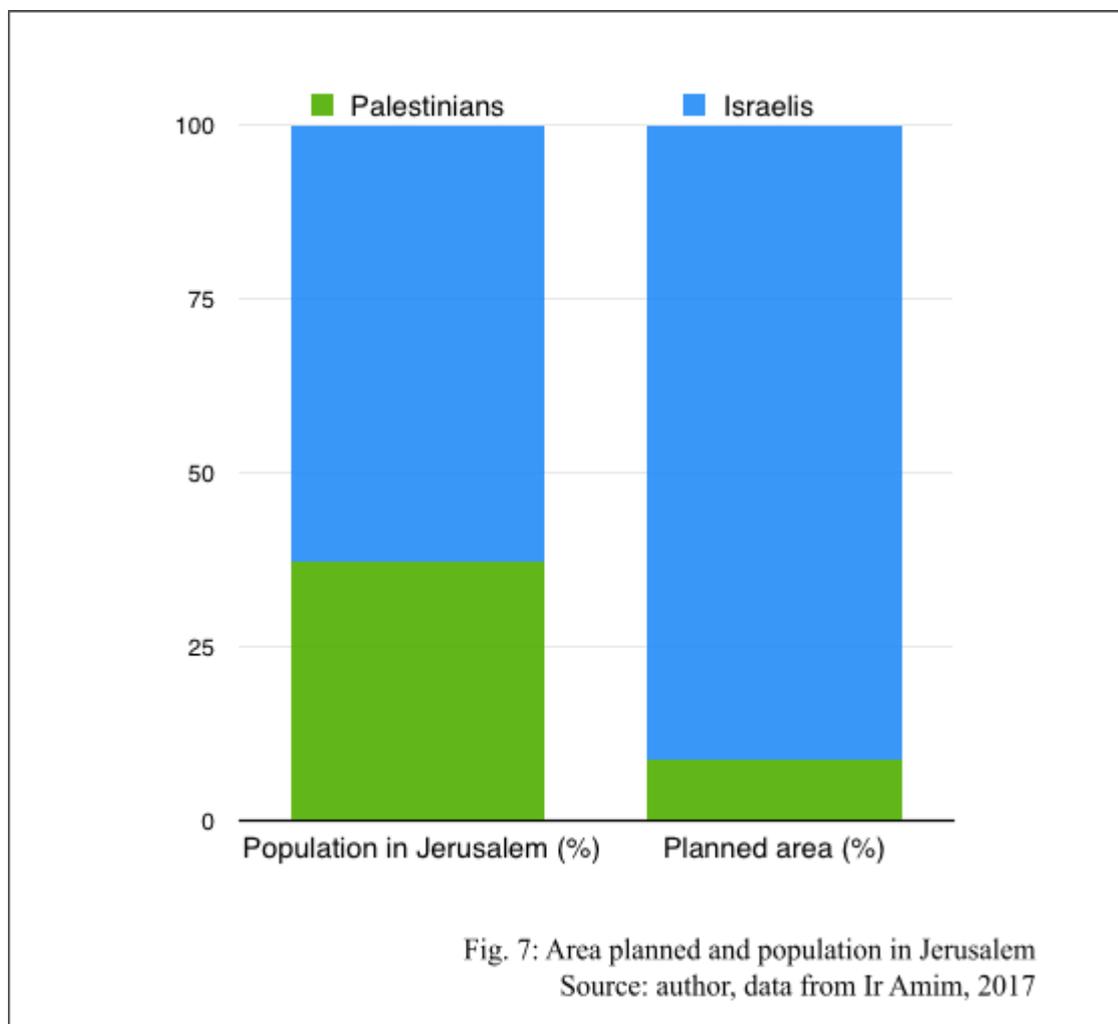
As explained earlier, most of the homes in Silwan —and to some extent in East Jerusalem— were built after 1967, without a building permit. For example, most of the ninety houses of al-Bustan neighbourhood —part of Silwan— were built during the 1980s and 1990s (Makdisi, 2010), illustrating the rapid mutation of the built environment. As shown in fig.6, between 1991 and 2018, only 9,500 Palestinian housing units received an approval for

the construction, against almost 50,000 for Israelis in West and East Jerusalem combined. Furthermore, since 1967, the government has initiated the construction of more than 55,000 housing units for Israelis in the annexed territory, but only 600 for the Palestinians (Peace Now, 2019). Essentially, construction projects in East Jerusalem serve paramount political motivations, resulting in bureaucratic deterrents, and absence of planning for Palestinians due to impossible procedures (Ir Amim, 2017). The exclusion of Palestinians from the urban planning processes is ultimately causing the inadequate infrastructure provision, thus failing to address Palestinians' basic needs (Jabareen, 2010).



As Palestinians do not have access to building permits, it is virtually impossible for them to legally connect their homes to the water supply system. Therefore, Palestinians are indirectly pushed to create pirate connections to have access to water, highly degrading their living standards. Indeed, according to the Jerusalem 2000 Outline Plan, without a permit, it is not possible to get a legal connection to water, sewage or electricity, illustrating an explicit correlation between the “planning system and the deprivation of Palestinians from the Right

to the City to an extreme degree” (Wari, 2011, p.470). Chiodelli (2012) argues this marginalisation of Palestinian residents in Jerusalem, forced to rely on illegal housing solutions, is directly correlated to Israeli urban policies, in the scope of a political aim to contain Palestinian demographic expansion and ensure the physical Israeli control over Jerusalem. Indeed, the official policy enacted in the Jerusalem 2000 Outline Plan emphasises on the illegal buildings (Jerusalem Municipality, 2004). As most of the houses are built “illegally” in Silwan due to the virtual impossibility to obtain a construction permit, Palestinian houses are threaten by demolition orders, used to “make room for the expanding settler presence” in Silwan neighbourhoods such as al-Bustan, where many demolition orders have been issued (MERIP, 2010).



However, as noted by Chiodelli (2012), this repressive policy is affecting “almost exclusively” the Palestinian population in East Jerusalem. Although, if Palestinians have to build houses illegally (in regards to the Israeli law) for survival purposes, 80% of the 6,969

violations to the building law recorded by Chiodelli (2012) took place in neighbourhoods in West Jerusalem. Nevertheless, 90% of the demolition orders occurred in Palestinian areas (Chiodelli 2012), illustrating a discrimination in the application of the law. In February 2021, the municipality of Jerusalem has requested demolition orders for 70 homes in al-Bustan, the part of Silwan bordering the Old City, directly threatening the Palestinian inhabitants of the area (Abukhater, 2021). This case illustrates the colonisation objectives of the authorities to reshape the areas around the Old City, in order to Judaize East Jerusalem, turning those areas into a frontier (Yacobi, 2016), and facilitate the future vision of Jerusalem. Thus, Israel is promoting an “architecture of erasure” (Makdisi, 2010) towards the Palestinian Jerusalemites, using several means of action.

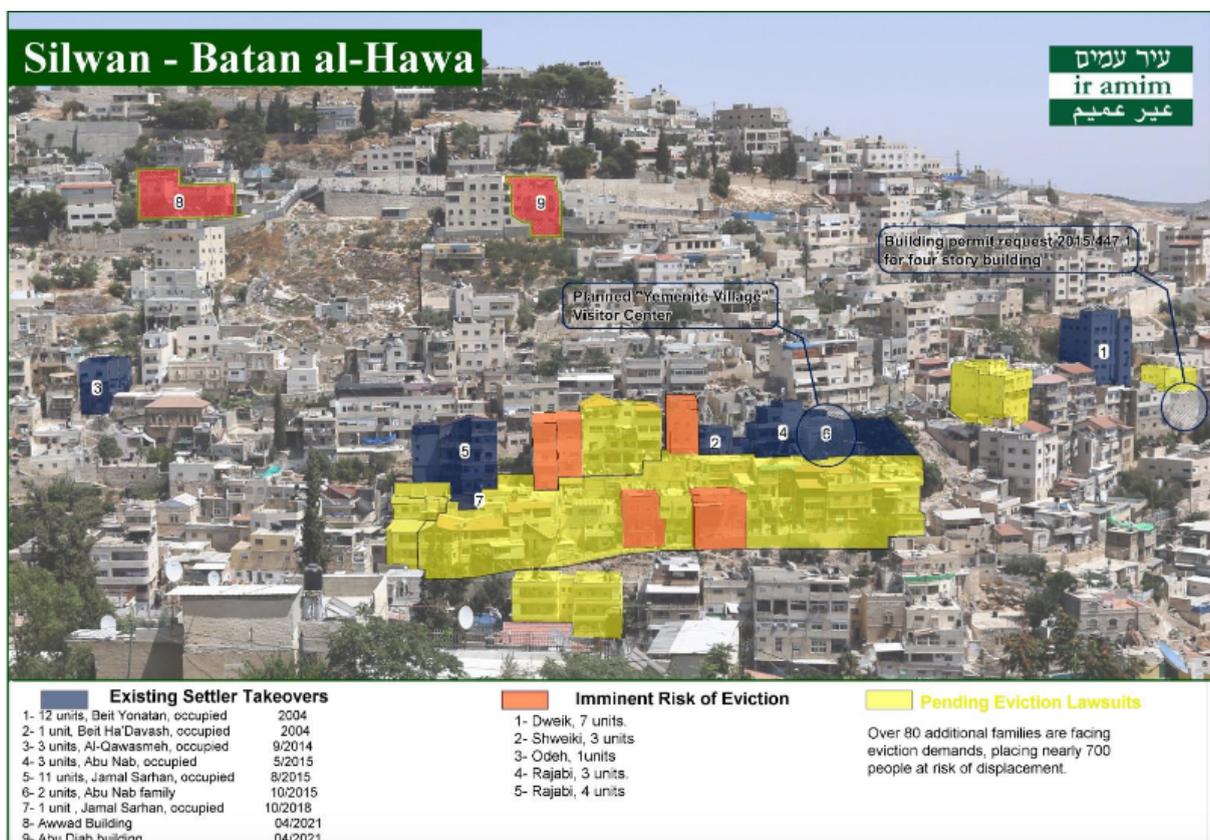


Fig. 8: Existing settlements and eviction risk in Batan al-Hawa, Silwan
Source: Ir Amim, 2021

In addition to the de-development of Silwan impacting the physical place, the area is also undergoing a rewriting of its history, where Palestinians are both physically evicted, and their legitimate presence is denied. Thus, both Silwan’s time and place are stolen, in light of a

politics of erasure. From ancient Jerusalem's underground water system, the Gihon spring and the Siloam pool (Pullan and Gwiazida, 2009), Silwan embodies the ethno-national discourses, and represents a bridge between the Israeli imagined past and desired future for Jerusalem. Silwan has a key role in the future vision for Jerusalem, as a large, exclusively Jewish-Israeli metropolis.

3.2.3. The role of settlers' organisations

A turning point occurred in the 1980s, when the government massively encouraged settlements in East Jerusalem (Ir Amim, 2009), with a broader use of the Absentee Law. The Absentee Property Law, enacted in 1950, allows the State to seize a property if the owner leaves—to an Arab country— becoming 'absent' (NRC, 2017). Under the influence of Ariel Sharon—yet to become Minister of Construction and Housing, of Infrastructure, and later Prime Minister of Israel—the definition of “absentee property” was widened to allow the easier seizure of properties in East Jerusalem and accelerate settlements for organisations in the heart of Palestinian neighbourhoods (NRC, 2017). In 1992, the 'Klugman Report' commissioned by Rabin's government clearly revealed that numerous properties were transferred from Palestinian residents to Jewish-Israeli organisations under the assistance of the State of Israel, including 23 properties in Silwan transferred to the right-wing settlers organisation 'Elad' (1992).

Elad is an organisation founded in 1986 by David Be'eri—a former military commander— aiming to develop the so-called “biblical City of David” and its surroundings, through archeological excavations and tourism development (City of David, 2021). Elad's colonisation activities are based in Silwan, and concentrates on the slope of Wadi Hilweh (Landy, 2017). In cooperation with the Jewish National Fund, various governmental companies and security forces, and helped by the Absentee Property law, Elad has acquired several Palestinian houses in Silwan since the late 1980s, using a wide range of legal and policy mechanisms (Ir Amim, 2009; Al Haq, 2020). Elad is also using fear, threat, paramilitary and intelligence operations to take over houses, as in the seizure of the Abbasi's house at night in October 1991 (Ir Amim, 2009).

However, after the aforementioned Klugman report's publication, settlers' organisations changed strategies to acquire houses. During the 1990s, Elad tried to persuade

—or threaten— Palestinian residents to sell their houses to them. Nevertheless, since the 1990s, the settlement policy changed direction in Silwan, targeting the control of public spaces with the development of national parks —including the archeological park— helped by the Israel Nature and Parks Authority (Ir Amim, 2009). This phase aims to take control over large public areas where construction becomes strictly limited. A significant part of Silwan falls under this denomination (fig.9).

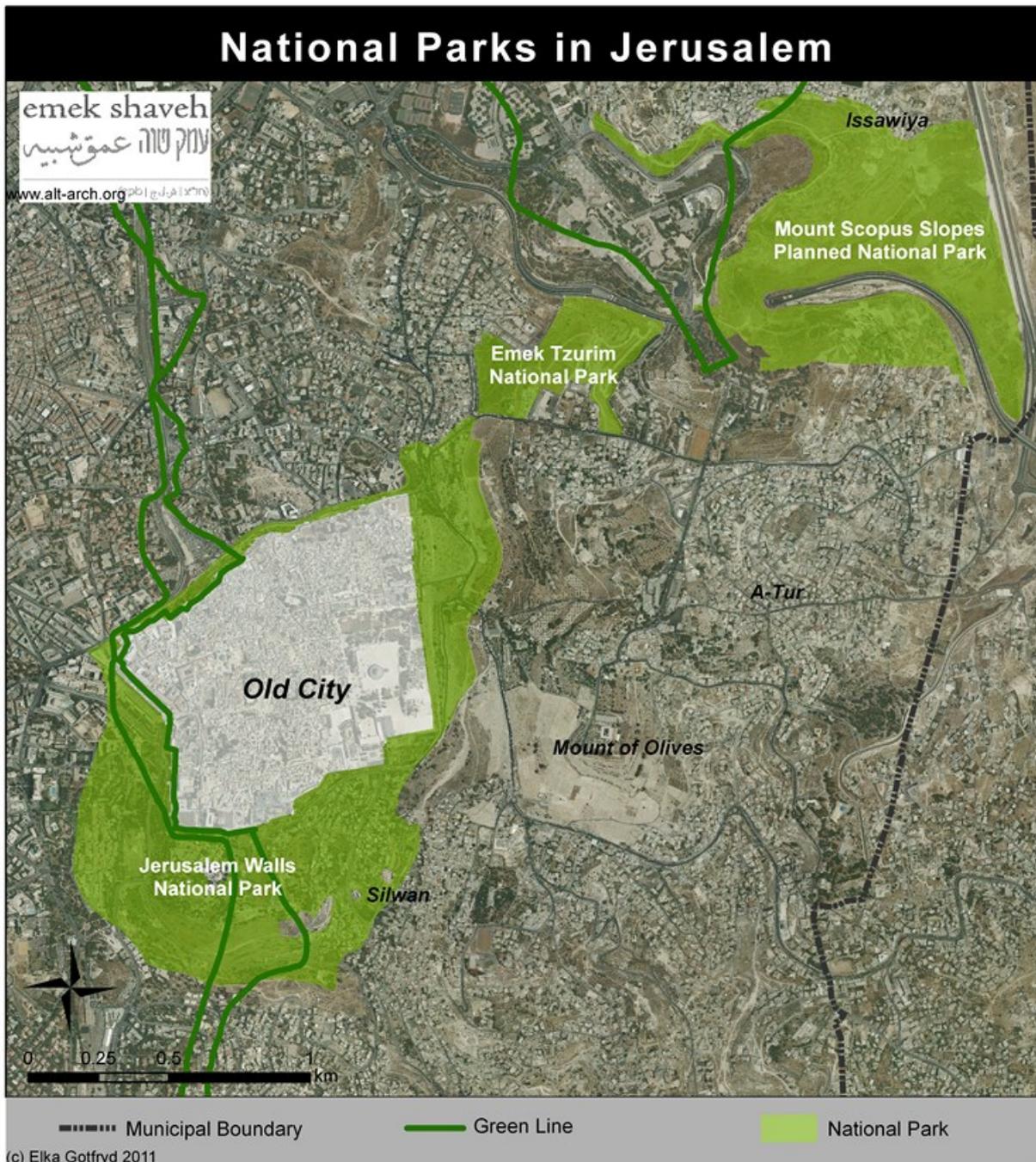


Fig. 9: National parks in Jerusalem
 Source: Emek Shaveh, 2016

3.2.4. The Judaisation of Silwan, or the politics of erasure

In order to encompass the Old City and Judaise Jerusalem, the authorities are pursuing the creation of a wide touristic compound, in cooperation with settlers' organisation in East Jerusalem (Isaac, 2018). This strategy is based on the creation of national parks, and tourist sites in both East and West Jerusalem, to ensure the control of the entire city, promoting its exclusively Jewish-Israeli character while negating native Palestinians' claim. As explained during an interview with interviewee n°4 from Emek Shaveh, the private organisation Elad has been granted the full management of the 'City of David' archeological park covering the Wadi Hilweh area in Silwan.

He explains Elad uses archeology to expand the settlements' activities, and help the Judaisation process of East Jerusalem, in the areas around the Old City such as Silwan. In the Israeli society and for the government, archeology is seen "as a zero sum game (...) in the Israeli Palestinian conflict", where findings and remains serve to negate the other (interviewee n°4, 2021).

Elad also intends to dig and develop a series of underground tunnels, linking different archeological sites in Silwan referring to as only Jewish and avoiding other cultural strata, up to the Western wall, as explained by interviewee n°4. By doing so, touristic tours would take place simultaneously above and underground, around the ancient water systems, in a way to avoid any interactions with Palestinian residents. By doing so, Jerusalem is presented as only Jewish-Israeli, erasing Palestinians.

In addition to the impossibility to build any construction for Palestinians on the land covered by the national park, the expansion of settlements and tourism parks in Silwan is also for the local and central governments, and Elad "a tool to control the narratives and ensure the projection of Jerusalem to the outside world as a united (East and West) Jewish city" (Isaac, 2018).

Archaeological sites in Silwan

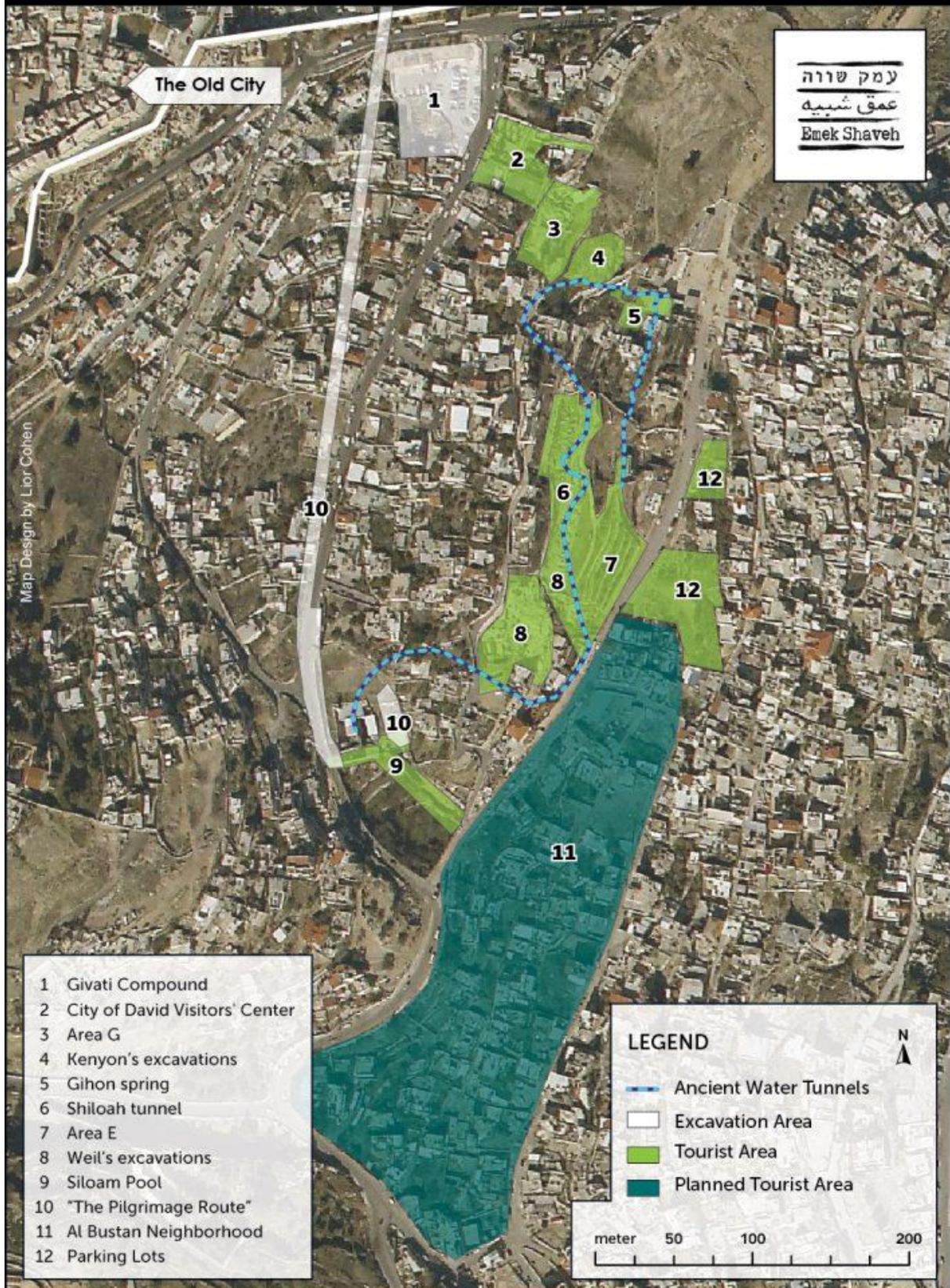


Fig. 10: Archeological sites in Silwan
 Source: Emek Shaveh, 2020

Thus, Israel's government, through the cooperation with settlers organisations, is attempting to achieve national geopolitical objectives to ensure control over Jerusalem. Using legal mechanisms, Israel aims to contain and restrict Palestinian physical life in Jerusalem, and use narrative instruments to immaterially erase Palestinian pasts and hopes. From this perspective, the ancient water supply system of Jerusalem is indirectly used by Israel as justification for colonisation projects and geopolitical ends, resulting in low intensity violence towards Palestinians. Such a process can be linked with Arendt's conception of violence, being "by nature instrumental; like all means, it always stands in need of guidance and justification through the end it pursues" (Arendt, 1970). This process in Silwan is denying both Palestinian time and place, negating Palestinian existence, excluding them from urban space both lived and conceived. It is the result of a systematic politics of erasure toward Palestinians. By taking control over both place and time, Israel is securing its dominance over space and thus over lives. As explained by Cheshin, Hutman and Melamed (1999, p.10), "whoever physically dominated Jerusalem would determine the city's fate", translating the bio-geopolitical matrix in Jerusalem.

Such erasure can be observed in master plans, such as the Jerusalem 2000 Outline Plan, or the recent plan Jerusalem 5800 (fig.11), aiming to increase private investment and participation, with the construction of facilities and infrastructure for tourism (Jerusalem 5800). In the Outline Plan (Jerusalem Municipality, 2004), Palestinians are negated in their being, as there is no mention of the word "Palestinian" —same thing for the later Jerusalem 5800 plan. Palestinians are referred as "Arabs", a neutral terminology, erasing the connection between the Palestinian communities and land. Moreover, the Plan only refers to Palestinian areas in Jerusalem as "chaotic", "illegal", or "problematic". For Jabareen, this is highlighting that for the authorities, Palestinian Jerusalemites are not considered as "urban residents, but as invaders who cause chaos" (2010, p.34). In addition, the only official version of the Plan is in Hebrew, excluding the Palestinian Arabic speakers from the comprehension of the Plan, that has been written exclusively by Israelis, with no Palestinians among the writers. Finally, the recently proposed master plan Jerusalem 5800 clearly states its goal to design a futuristic Jerusalem metropolis, ensuring prosperity for Israel and the Jewish people only (Jerusalem 5800), with no consideration of Palestinians.

4. Discussion

Under the concepts of *bare life* and *state of exception*, Agamben (1995; 2005) explains how the human body and life remain beyond the material attribute, where their status switches from normality to exceptionality. From these concepts, Boano and Martén analyse the process of “biopolitical consolidation into urban life” (2013, p.9) in Jerusalem, to produce the *city of exception* conceptualisation. In their analysis of Agamben’s *Homo Sacer*, territorial sovereignty shifts into biopower in Jerusalem. This is characterised by the production of asymmetries between differently labelled populations, one —the Jewish-Israelis— whose life, health and status are protected, and the other —the Palestinians— pushed aside in the frontier of human life. One of the tools used to achieve such a political end is biased urban planning, with severe consequences over the materiality of life through its impact on infrastructure and services —water and sanitation. Here lies the urban bio-geopolitical matrix this dissertation tries to uncover. Geopolitical and demographic objectives determine the control over territory —through urban planning— but also over life —bare life and (non) citizenship status.

As a *modus operandi*, Israel seeks total control over the eastern territories of Jerusalem, and *de facto* over the lives of its residents. By taking control over water or electricity resources and ensuring the (non) distribution of them according to exclusionary legal practices, Israel is deploying an “entire array of institutions, legal devices, bureaucratic apparatuses, social practices” aiming to control both collectively and individually the population, where livelihood can be revoked (Gordon, 2008, p.3).

As suggested by Jabareen (2010), urban planning in Jerusalem overlaps three intertwined strategies. First, a “politics of demography” aiming to favour a significant Jewish-Israeli presence in East Jerusalem, at the expense of the Palestinian communities. Second, a “politics of geography”, seeking to seize Palestinian lands through a wide range of legal mechanisms. Finally a “politics of exclusion”, pursuing a systematic exclusion of Palestinians from any decision-making process in planning for Jerusalem. These strategies on the municipal scale, are a way for Israel to perform a national mission by planning the city, towards a Greater Jerusalem, and excluding Palestinians from it (Jabareen, 2010).

As explained in detail in the previous section, archeology is a specific tool extensively used to perform the colonisation and Judaisation projects in East Jerusalem. From the place of archeology, we can see water as an underlying lens in the conflict over Jerusalem, and its interconnection with planning. Water here is both an implicit cause of urban bio-geopolitical processes, and a consequence of them.

To begin with, water can be seen as a justification for the Judaisation process, from the water systems of ancient Jerusalem, leading today to a massive excavation project in Silwan. These archeological excavations led by Elad result in a critical seizure of lands for settlements in Silwan, and illustrate the interconnections between private organisations—such as Elad—and state agencies and central government, or the bridges between neoliberalism and ethno-nationalism in the development of settler-colonialism in East Jerusalem. Therefore, water becomes a justification to perform such a project, as part of a wider vision of the future Jerusalem expressed in the Jerusalem 5800 master plan. In this plan, Jerusalem is depicted as an attractive high-tech metropolis, emphasising on tourism development, where the archeological park of Silwan is one attraction. Silwan is a cornerstone of the Jewish-Israeli ethno-national narrative, but where Palestinians are absent. Today, Silwan is one of the most threatened neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem, and its Palestinian residents live in constant fear of seeing their house demolished, and their lives, past, present and future, erased.

Then, water—amidst other public services—is also in the consequences of the urban bio-geopolitical matrix in Jerusalem. Indeed for Palestinian Jerusalemites, access to public services and infrastructure like water and sanitation is impeded because of urban planning policies. Urban planning for Palestinian areas in East Jerusalem is made in a way to prevent any spatial growth or expansion of these neighbourhoods, guided by demographic objectives—to limit the Palestinian inhabitants below 40%. The boundaries of these neighbourhoods like Silwan, being predominantly rural before 1967, have been frozen, and any development is hindered. Hence, due to the natural population growth, the only way to shelter everyone is through over-densification of housing. Thereupon, infrastructure in East Jerusalem and Silwan were designed for the 1967 population (interviewee n°1, 2021), but since then, no or little improvement has been made by the municipality. As a result, East Jerusalem is lacking dozens of kilometres of sewage lines, water supply, and faces frequent shortages in energy and public services. These areas like Silwan, which were once neighbourhoods with a decent

quality of life, are now impoverished, and witnessing a ‘slumisation’ process, or de-development.

This situation entails a large threat on health and well-being for the Palestinian population, whose access to water is hampered. To cope with frequent shortages or low pressure in water, residents have to use black water tanks on the roof. On the other hand, Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem or the West Bank usually have a full supply of water, as well as West Jerusalem, where “water is often taken for granted”³. The water situation in East Jerusalem is entangled with other processes. According to the Jerusalem 2000 Outline Plan, provision of water lines can be constructed only under roads (Jerusalem Municipality, 2004). However, the presence of quality roads in East Jerusalem is less frequent than in other areas, adding a first, physical obstacle to a good water supply. The provision of water services and sanitation with sewage, is poorly developed by the Municipality of Jerusalem in Palestinian areas (Najjar, 2007). Additionally, this provision of infrastructure is also limited due to the significant absence of plans for urban development or construction in Palestinian areas, or the non-application of these plans in East Jerusalem, frozen by the political agenda. As planning is virtually impossible to implement, the authorities are refraining the physical development of infrastructure in neighbourhoods like Silwan (Ir Amim, 2015). Finally, due to the building permits, Palestinian residents are pushed to a spectrum of illegality. This permit is almost impossible to obtain, but it is necessary to build any house, or to legally connect a home to water. Hence, most of the homes in Silwan are considered as illegal buildings, with no possibility to have a secured, legal connection to the water supply network, and can be targeted by a demolition order.

To summarise, the erasure of Palestinians in areas like Silwan is dual. With an urban dispositif (Boano, 2016), including law, public policies, administrative and bureaucratic mechanisms, and institutional structures, the sovereign —the State of Israel— is exercising its power and control over the subjects —the East Jerusalem’s Palestinians. This dispositif where life is controlled by power, is resulting in several practical outcomes, interconnected to one another. As cited before, in neighbourhoods like Silwan, it is practically impossible to obtain a legal building permit. As a consequence, residents are facing a dramatic housing shortage, with a population density of 1.8 people per room in East Jerusalem —against 1 for

³ Personal communication with E. Glazer, PhD, UCL, 2021

the western part (IPCC, 2020). Moreover, without a building permit, it is not possible to legally connect homes to the water supply system. Therefore, residents witness shortages or low water pressure, have to stock water, or to rely on pirate connections, putting themselves on a spectrum of illegality, at risk of being fined, as well as threatening their health and well-being. These consequences, as a result of legal and policy mechanisms, are both intentional and unintentional, direct and indirect, making the life of Palestinians harder in East Jerusalem. This constitutes an attempt to the physical restriction and erasure of Palestinians, according to geopolitical demographic objectives.

Furthermore, the erasure also occurs on the territorial space, by taking over geography. By intensifying Israeli settlements, the Municipality of Jerusalem—instrument of the central government—is contributing to cripple Palestinian territories in East Jerusalem. This series of facts on the grounds aim to isolate Palestinian areas of East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank, but also to keep them outside of the normality of Jerusalem, putting them in a realm of exceptionality. The long term consequence of this urban dispositif is the annexation of East Jerusalem into Israel's vision of Jerusalem, but to exclude the Palestinian majority of East Jerusalem. In essence, this is an annexation of the territory without the inclusion of the population.

In addition to the geographical disruption, the past and narrative are also key elements in the erasure of Palestinians, specifically in Silwan. With archeological excavations, the State and private settlers' organisations are developing touristic activities focused on highlighting the Jewish-Israeli character of Jerusalem, ignoring other cultural layers. In this vision, Jerusalem corresponds to the ethno-national discourse of a Jewish-Israeli capital, where Palestinians are absent. This absence, if not physical, is orchestrated through a series of infrastructure such as underground pathways and touristic activities in Silwan where one would not see any Palestinian residents. Consequently, beyond the official demographic objective to maintain a solid Jewish majority in Jerusalem, the other, long term end is to design a future Jerusalem, without Palestinians. A city where they do not belong, nor exist, where they are invisible. The secondary aim of such a policy is also to prevent any future division of the city, and above all to prevent the development of East Jerusalem as future capital of the State of Palestine.

5. Conclusion

To conclude, urban planning in Jerusalem is decided following urban bio-geopolitical processes, directly impacting residents' lives, through a neglected provision of water in the East. However, a deeper study of infrastructure like water and sanitation in Jerusalem is needed, to better analyse these processes. In addition, the study of Jerusalem under an urban bio-geopolitical dimension is still overlooked, and needs further investigation. Guided by bio-geopolitical objectives and means, aiming to first enhance the exclusively Jewish-Israeli nature of the city, Israel restricts, controls, hinders every form of Palestinian urban lives, using facts on the ground, policy and legal instruments, and changing historical narratives. The aim is to design and build a future Jerusalem, exclusively Israeli, with no visible presence of the Palestinian elements. This vision, designed in the Jerusalem 2000 Outline Plan, is finalised in the Jerusalem 5800 plan. In East and West Jerusalem, space is conceived, perceived and lived (Penny, 2010) by, and for one sovereign power, for one ethno-national group only at the expense of the Palestinian other.

Conceived, because space in Jerusalem, both East and West is designed and imagined by technocrats, city engineers, bureaucratic committees, exclusively Israeli. They follow dominant discourses, applying security and biopolitical control over the space.

Perceived, because the conception of the space in Jerusalem is guided by ethno-national discourses and ideology, where representation of the space is taking form on the ground through policy and bureaucratic mechanisms to shape space according to this representation. Space in East and West Jerusalem is perceived by Israel, as exclusively Israeli territories.

Lived, because space is an everyday experience of exclusion and violence for the Palestinian other, subjected to the sovereign power. Jerusalem in itself, as a city, does not exist. It is rather the result of conflictual ideas, and different forms of urban lives, making the city dual on the lived urban experiences, the physical or material boundaries, the perception of space, or the allocation of infrastructures. In this sense, the Palestinian Jerusalem can appear as deliberately “not planned”.

To conclude, Jerusalem appears as a complex city, with distinct urban bodies, dimensions, and conceptions, dominated by the same entity, making Jerusalem planned or unplanned. Jerusalem is determined by narrative discourses, geopolitical objectives and biopolitical processes, impacting its conception, perception and its experience of urban lives (see fig.1). In Jerusalem, geography is produced by and for Israel, through a set of bio-geopolitical processes, to create the future Jerusalem, a city without Palestinian, where the Palestinian story is not even heard.

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