Discussion

Planning a bi-national capital: should Jerusalem remain united?

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...[N]one of us is outside or beyond geography, none of us is completely free from the struggle over geography. That struggle is complex and interesting because it is not only about soldiers and cannons, but also about ideas, about forms, about images and imaginings". ¹

Peace between Israelis and Palestinians is generally associated with the establishment of a Palestinian state over the territories conquered by Israel in 1967, including East Jerusalem/ al-Quds. But even many among those who support the legitimate rights of Palestinians over these territories, have reservations about the partition of the Jerusalem/ al-Quds urban area, which is a likely result of such settlement.

The aim of our paper is to propose a model for Jerusalem/ al-Quds, which may alleviate the need to redive sovereignty in the city. It argues that a bi-national, multi-cultural city is a better option (including west Jerusalem) on planning, social, economic and even political grounds. Our paper will briefly sketch the setting of current Palestinian–Israeli relations in the city, and refer to key scholarly concepts and international examples, which may assist in imagining a bi-national, democratic, Jerusalem/ al-Quds. On this basis we will propose a strategy for establishing an autonomous and decentralized “Capital Region” for the future of the Jerusalem/ al-Quds metropolitan area. ²

1. Jewish ‘Ethnocracy’ and the Jerusalem region

The question of Jerusalem/ al-Quds cannot be separated from the broader Zionist–Palestinian struggle over the land of Israel/ Palestine. The events and processes unfolding in the city since 1967 illustrate vividly the existence and consequences of a regime identified elsewhere as a Jewish ‘Ethnocracy’. This regime stretches over the entire land of Israel/ Palestine, and finds a striking expression in the Jerusalem/ al-Quds region. ³

Ethnocratic regimes are established for, and by, a dominant ethnic group for the purpose of ethnics a contested territory. The dominant ‘ethnos’ (and its diasporas) appropriates the state apparatus to facilitate its geographic, economic and political expansion. Thus ethnicity, and not citizenship, is the key to resource distribution. Ethnocratic regimes use a democratic facade of open (though not universal) elections and relatively open media, to facilitate an undemocratic ethnic seizure of contested territories and polities. Such regimes existed in previous centuries in Australia or Canada, and today in states such as Estonia, Latvia, Serbia, Sri Lanka or Malaysia. ⁴

A key point for our discussion here is the chronic instability of most ethnocratic regimes. The expansionist strategies of the dominant ethnos commonly generate resistance from dispossessed and marginalized groups and cause pressures to emerge from international bodies and organizations, and from liberal and left-wing domestic elements. These pressures usually open cracks in the legitimacy and hegemony of the majority group, causing a series of (often violent) transformations and dislocations. ⁵ Major urban areas frequently form the flashpoints of such events, as exemplified in the cities of

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¹ See Yiftachel (1997).
² The concept of ‘ethnocracy’ is developed further in some of Yiftachel’s papers, see: Yiftachel (1998, 1999); see also the work of Mann (1999).
      ³ See Lustick (1993) ground-breaking work the rise and fall of ethnocratic hegemonies.
Belfast, Montreal, Sarajevo or Kuala Lumpur. These cities became focal points for both ethnocentric regimes and for challenges to their oppressive practices.  

The response of ethnocentric governments to destabilizing pressures range between reinforcing domination and reaching compromise. The first option is driven by denial of the rights of consenting groups and the tightening of ethnic control (which often tends to escalate the conflict in the long-term). The second entails a gradual compromise with oppressed groups and putting in train a process of democratization (which faces short-term crises, but is generally more stable in the long-term). The ethnocentric state of Israel is faced with a similar range of options, both in the entire land, and in the Jerusalem/ al-Quds region.

Despite the Israeli–Zionist rhetorics that present Jerusalem as a “unified city”, the Jerusalem/ al-Quds area has become since 1967 an exemplar of an ethnocentric city. This policy is presented by both state and city authorities, and has persistently promoted a project of *Judaization*; that is, the colonial expansion of Jewish political, territorial, demographic and economic control. This attitude became formal and transparent within Israeli political discourse as well as the media, as exemplified by the following newspaper report from 1997:

Prime Minister Netanyahu, The Mayor of the city of Jerusalem Ehud Olmert, and the Minister of Finance, Ne’eman, will meet on Friday in order to discuss the revolutionary proposal of Olmert. According to the Mayor’s proposal, the City of Jerusalem will get a special national priority, in order to struggle against the demographic decline in Jewish population in the city.  

As documented widely, 6 Israel has used its military might and economic power to relocate borders and boundaries, grant and deny rights and resources, move populations and reshape the city’s geography for the purpose of increasing Jewish domination. Two central Israeli strategies have been a massive construction of an outer-urban ring of Jewish settlements (‘satellite neighborhoods’), which now host over half the Jewish population of the city, and a parallel containment of all Palestinian development, implemented through housing demolition and the prevention of immigration or population growth in the city. 7

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6 See Bollen (1999, 2000) for comparative analysis of ethnically divided urban areas.
7 Ma’ariv newspaper, 27th May, 1997.

Israel’s ethnocratic management of the city has meant that despite a clear binational reality prevailing in the Jerusalem/al-Quds region, with approximately equal proportions of Jewish and Arab inhabitants, urban governance has been totally dominated by Jews. Palestinians in the metropolitan region were divided into two main groups: (a) residents of the enlarged Jerusalem municipality, who were placed under Israeli law, 10 (in a move erroneously described by Israelis as ‘annexation’) and given Jerusalem residency rights (but not Israeli citizenship); and (b) those in adjoining localities who remained in the ‘occupied territories’, with no residency or movement rights in the city.

Palestinians have also been excluded from the city’s forums of decision-making most notably City Hall – due to their refusal to accept the imposition of Israeli law, or the distorted municipal boundaries imposed on the city to ensure Jewish control. This weakness has meant that Israel has progressed quickly to *Judaize* large parts of the al-Quds urban area and the surrounding hills, with only little and ineffective Palestinian resistance to this move. This Judaization process has taken place while Israeli decision-makers and state leaders as ‘reunited’ portrayed the city, ‘integrated’ and ‘democratic’.

This approach relates to the Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem as an ‘inevitable fact’ that should be kept quiet and passive, as expressed by the previous mayor of Jerusalem, Teddy Kollek, who governed the city for 29 years and was considered ‘dovish’ within Israeli–Jewish circles:

...So, I do not want to give them the feeling that they are equal. I know we can not give them a sense of equality. But I want, here and there, when it does not cost so much, and when it is just an economic effort, to give them, anyway, the feeling that they can live here. If I will not give them such a feeling we will suffer. 11

The one-sided management of the city has also meant that economic development and services were nearly entirely geared towards the needs and aspirations of the city’s Jewish population, leaving the Arab neighborhoods in a state of neglect and underdevelopment. The result has been a gradual physical decline and stagnation in the city’s Arab sectors, the cutting of Arab Jerusalem from the Palestinian hinterland, and the subsequent exodus of Palestinian businesses north and south of the city. At the same time development occurred at a

10 As explained later, following the 1967 war, most Palestinian residents within the Jerusalem municipal area were not offered Israeli citizenship, and have refused to apply for such a status which would legitimize the Israeli occupation.
breakneck pace in the city's ever-expanding and modernizing Jewish areas. However, the city's Palestinian community continued to grow through natural increase, and has struggled to maintain residential construction activity vis-a-vis a restrictive Jewish City Hall, and often in defiance of the city's rules and regulations.

2. Concepts and cases of ethnically and nationally mixed spaces

Our proposal is based on extensive knowledge available in fields such as political science, urban planning, political geography, public policy and ethnic relations for the stable and legitimate management of ethnically and nationally divided cities and political institutions. These are usually based on principles which would transform ethnocentrism to democracy, that is, introduce ethnic power-sharing; broad participation in decision-making; symbolic representation of all major parties in the city's landscape; and proportionality in the allocation of public resources, including land, infrastructure, public facilities and on-going capital flow. At the same time, most of the approaches to the management of ethnically and nationally mixed spaces call for maintaining and fostering ethnic and local autonomy and stress the importance of institutionalizing local democracy.

Several comparative examples may prove useful for constructing a shared future for the Jerusalem/al-Quds region. One is Brussels, which has been delineated as an autonomous binational province as part of the Belgian constitutional changes, undertaken during the last two decades. Belgium has been transformed into a unitary state into a bi-ethnic federation, with large-scale autonomy awarded for Dutch-speaking Flemish and French-speaking Wallons in their respective regions. Within this new state structure, Brussels has remained a joint capital city, 'belonging' to both Wallons and Flemish. It has a separate constitutional status, and is governed according to the principles of power sharing and accommodation between the two groups. Brussels urban affairs are administered in a decentralized fashion as a 'cluster of cities', where local matters of planning, development and education are determined by local communities.

Brussels also resembles Jerusalem due to its high international status, as the administrative hub of the European Union. Although tensions between Flemish and Walloons have not disappeared under the new arrangement, and despite the excessively rigid and over-regulated structure of Wallon-Flemish relations, the Brussels region appears to be functioning reasonably. It has gradually moderated the scope and level of conflicts between the two groups, and institutionalized ways of resolving ethnic urban tensions.

A further relevant example is that of Chandigarh, India. The legendary Indian Prime Minister Nehru promoted the building of this city during the early 1950s. It was the capital of the state of Punjab and was planned by Le-Corbusier, as a modern, open, government center. But during the early 1960s, ethnontational pressure by the Sikhs caused the partition of Punjab into two states — Haryana to the south and Punjab to the north. Yet, the people occupying both the states wished to maintain their capital in the internationally acclaimed city of Chandigarh, which was geographically close to their new border.

As a result, a city region was carved out as an autonomous region, officially controlled by the Indian Federal Government in New Delhi, but in practice self-governed by the multiethnic residents of Chandigarh who periodically elect their representatives to City Hall. Chandigarh functions coterminously as the capital of two states, and even some of the government buildings, such as the Supreme Court and parliament house are shared, with different wings of these buildings designated for Punjab and Haryana. Like Brussels, Chandigarh has an internal decentralized structure, with most urban affairs being determined on a local, 'sector' (quarter) level. Like Brussels, Chandigarh is not identical to Jerusalem/al-Quds, and has many features unique to its Indian setting. Yet it offers a very useful example of a capital city shared by two states with a history of ethnic tensions and separatism. The two states have managed to side-step their territorial and ethnic tensions, and manage jointly a city cherished by both people.

Both Brussels and Chandigarh, then, illustrate the ability of two neighboring ethnic groups, residing in their homeland, to share a capital city, with a reasonable degree of stability and prosperity. Further, and equally important, the arrangements in the shared city have assisted in stabilizing and democratizing the broader scene of ethnic relations far beyond the boundaries of the cities in question.

The strategy presented below for the Jerusalem/al-Quds region also draws on the many ideas, plans and proposals already formulated by experts and activists.

12 Another aspect of the on-going drive for (Jewish) development has been the increasingly adverse impact of international capital on the city's landscape, often without long-term planning or environmental controls, and with little participation of the city's communities.
14 On these principles, see leading texts on public policy in multi-ethnic democracies: Libbert (1984), Kymlicka (1995) and McGarry and O'Leary (1993).
15 See De-Ridder (1996) and Murphy (1988).
for Jerusalem/al-Quds. Notable among these have been the options prepared by the Jerusalem Planning Center at the Orient House, and the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, as well as by experts such as Abu-Odeh, Benvenisti, Khamaisi, Hasson and Khalidi.  

3. Towards a united capital region for Jerusalem/al-Quds?

Our strategy would enable the Jerusalem/al-Quds region to function as one metropolis, yet reflect the collective aspirations and ethnonational identities of the two peoples. The proposal is presented here at a sketchy and conceptual level of detail and we recognize, of course, that its details must be further worked out for it to become implementable.

The main components of our strategy, as expanded below, seek to transform the city from ethnocracy to democracy, by redesigning its political geography, with key steps including:

- the demarcation of an autonomous Capital Region to be placed under joint Israeli and Palestinian sovereignty, to function as the capital(s) of both Israel and Palestine, and as a modern, democratic metropolis;
- the establishment of an umbrella entity: the ‘Capital Region Authority’ to oversee the development and planning of the metropolitan region;
- the creation of a set of new local municipalities to manage most aspects of urban life in the various quarters, towns and villages which make up the metropolitan area (Fig. 1);

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• the demarcation of a small area around the Old City, and the establishment of (a religious) 'Holy City Council' to manage this area.

These steps will create a bi-national, multicultural city, shared on equal terms between Israelis and Palestinians, while allowing the many communities and localities to express and enhance their identity and character. The metropolitan region will be administered by a decentralized, federal-type urban regime and governed openly and democratically.

4. A worthy move?

Why should Israelis and Palestinians prefer this option? Why should they head towards a joint urban future, which may be fraught with tensions and rivalries? Should they attempt to create a shared polity and society with a group towards whom they may feel mistrust, anger and fear? Is the model we propose, a risky recipe for endless conflicts and struggles between mutually suspicious collectivities?

We suggest that despite the unavoidable difficulties and risks associated with any period of profound transition, and despite the on-going tensions between Israelis and Palestinians, which are not likely to disappear quickly, the one-city approach is preferable to partition on several grounds. First, it appears the two states will benefit from the new arrangement. They will have the entire Jerusalem/Al-Quds region, with its enormous symbolic and economic resources, as officially part of their sovereignty. Even under the arrangement of a shared space, their position on the question of Jerusalem is likely to improve both domestically and internationally.

We also argue that maintaining a united city will enhance greatly its chances for economic development and prosperity. Given the momentum of the world's globalising economy, and the potential for a diminishing role of state borders, an integrated Jerusalem/Al-Quds metropolitan region is likely to attract international investment and become a true cosmopolis. Its functioning as an integrated urban region would also enhance the volume of tourists, forming a central and growing driving force of the city's economy. Its division would definitely hamper such prospects.

Further, collective and personal security is also likely to be enhanced under the new arrangement. On a collective level, the mutual recognition of Palestine and Israel in the capital city of its neighboring nation will undoubtedly ease both Israeli-Palestinian and Middle Eastern tensions, and alleviate security threats deriving from the city's contested status. Likewise, personal security will be augmented, mainly because both states (with their well-developed security apparatuses) will have the highest of interests to maintain law and order in their political capitals.

Finally, on a broader level, achieving peace with a united Capital Region will send a message of genuine reconciliation to the rest of Israel/Palestine and beyond. Needless to say, the injustices of the past will keep surfacing, and claims and counterclaims for the city are likely to linger for generations, accompanied by possible outbreak of violence. The legacy left by the manipulation of the term 'united Jerusalem' during the last three decades, which only thinly covered a reality of forceful conquest and domination, is also likely to hamper efforts to built trust in a shared city.

Yet, our proposal for the city entails genuine unity, both geographically – by including the entire metropolitan region (in contrast to the current distortion of urban boundaries by Israeli authorities), and politically – by incorporating equally into the political structure the city's Jewish and Palestinian collectivities. This reality is likely to gradually change the attitudes and increase mutual Jewish-Palestinian confidence. Such a process might transform both people's consciousness towards the 'other' as well as towards their own territoriality.

Hence, it may be that instead of viewing the future of Jerusalem/Al-Quds as an obstacle for peace, as has been traditionally the case with policy-makers on both sides, a united Jerusalem/Al-Quds can become a catalyst for Jewish-Palestinian reconciliation. The model of a shared Jerusalem may form a reference points for groups elsewhere in the Land of Israel/Palestine, where frameworks for just, equal and democratic coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians need to be creatively invented and implemented.

5. Putting flesh on the bones

In more detail, the proposal entails the delineation of the entire Jerusalem/Al-Quds metropolitan region – to be known as 'Capital Region' – as a separate and autonomous political unit, under shared Israeli and Palestinian sovereignty. It will stretch from al-Birya in the north, Ma'aleh Adumim in the east, Beit Jala in the south and Mevaseret Zion in the west, where some 750,000 people reside, in almost equal proportions of

18 Historically, most proposals that have dealt with the future of Jerusalem had emphasized the division of the city as a key to solve the conflict. For a detailed review of these proposals see: Hirsh and House-Cariel (1994) and Klein (1999).
Palestinians and Jews. The area will be officially placed under joint Israeli and Palestinian sovereignty, and be managed by a joint Metropolitan authority, headed concurrently (or alternatively) by a Palestinian and an Israeli. The Capital Region Authority is planned to be a 'thin' political institution. Its Assembly is planned to have representatives from the region's local governments and from the Israeli and Palestinian ministries. Its main staff will be professional, in the fields of engineering, planning, transport and environment.

The urban region will include two capital precincts, which will host the Palestinian and Israeli government quarters. The Israeli government precinct will remain in its place (which will probably be enlarged), while the location of the Palestinian precinct will be chosen by the Palestinian people and the al-Quds community. Some possibilities include the Shatayyir, Wadi Joz or Jabel Mukabber areas. The city as a whole will be mutually recognized as a state capital by Israel and Palestine. This will guarantee the eternal rights of both peoples in the city, and slow the disastrous demographic and geographic competition between Israelis and Palestinians underway since 1967.

The name we chose to describe the metropolitan area - the Capital Region - purposely stirs away from using the titles of 'Jerusalem' and 'al-Quds'. This is in order to avoid the manipulation and distortion of spatial representation through which the two sides have attached the names of Jerusalem/al-Quds, with their immense symbolic powers, to areas which had never been part of the city. This approach has been highly evident among Israeli-Jewish policy-makers and shapers of the public discourse, which imposed the name 'Jerusalem' on a large number of localities in the city's eastern, northern and southern hinterlands.

This occurred with the unilateral expansion of the Jerusalem municipal area in 1967 over localities such as Shu'fat, Beit Hanina or Sur Baher, and with the building of new Jewish settlements on surrounding (and often distant) hills, such as Gilo and Ramot, now considered part of 'Jerusalem'. The manipulation was further evident in later years with the invention of new terms and entities, such as 'Greater Jerusalem' or 'the Jerusalem envelope' which covered much larger areas, and acted as 'signposts' of Jewish control over oulying areas, cynically employing the cherished term of 'Jerusalem'. Given the sanctity of Jerusalem in Jewish religion, culture and history, the effect of this geographical distortion was twofold: to legitimate the Judaization of Arab areas renamed as 'Jerusalem', and to freeze, silence or marginalize any critical voices who were portrayed as 'supporting the division of Jerusalem'.

The name Capital Region, thus aims to take the sting out of the religious, historical and political mega-importance attached to anything with (real or manipulated) association to 'Jerusalem' (or, to a lesser extent, to 'al-Quds'). We hope to create a mainly administrative and professional entity, which will govern the city's everyday affairs and future development, without constant reference to heroic or tragic national narratives, or to sacred religious and historical sites.

As a parallel step, the proposed plan will delineate a small area covering the Old City and the immediate vicinity, to be called 'Holy Jerusalem/al-Quds'. This small area, stretching over about three square kilometers, will be the only locality in the metropolis to carry the names of Jerusalem/al-Quds. This will be historically credible in the eyes of many, as the area in and around the Old City truly reflects the location of the sacred and cherished Jerusalem/al-Quds to whom Jews, Muslims and Christians have developed a special religious and national bond.

Therefore, and unlike other proposals for the area (most notably the one associated with Abu-Mazen and Belkin) our plan aims to radically reduce the extent and scope of Jerusalem/al-Quds. We perceive this as a long-term step in diffusing the potential of these names to invoke hard-line national narratives, and harden political positions, as destructively evident during past decades. Let us contract Jerusalem/al-Quds to their appropriate and credible proportions.

Under the proposal, the small area designated as 'Holy Jerusalem/al-Quds' will be declared as existing under 'Divine control', and be managed by an international religious 'Holy City Council', consisting of equal Christian, Muslim and Jewish representation. It is expected that the area will be largely preserved, and hence face relatively little pressures of redevelopment. The responsibility for security and infrastructure, and hence the official sovereignty, will remain with the Israeli/Palestinian Capital Region Authority, but this will have little impact on the actual management of the many holy places, inter-religious affairs and tourism, which will be controlled by the proposed 'Holy Jerusalem Council'. This arrangement will allow both Israeli and Palestinians symbols of sovereignty (such as flags or signs) to be hoisted over key points, such as the Haram al-Sharif or the Wailing Wall, while the actual running of the Old City will be managed by bodies external to the Israeli or Palestinian states.

6. Governing urban communities

A lynchpin in our proposed model is the tier of local municipalities, where most urban governance will take place. This part of the urban governance structure will

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20 This approach has already appeared in previous proposals for solving the conflict over the future of Jerusalem (see: Hirsh and House-Curiel, 1994).
form the backbone of the region's communal, local and urban planning management. Whereas the 'umbrella' Capital Region Authority, as noted, will be mainly made of professional experts, and the Holy City Council made of mainly religious figures, the local municipalities will perform the full range of urban governance, including local planning, education, housing, economic development, environmental control and the daily procedures of urban democracy.

Accordingly, each Local Council will govern a population of around 30-50,000 residents. An effort will be made to arrange the metropolis into quarters and towns, which will reflect the various religious, denominational, historical, local, and ethnic character of the multitude of communities in the capital region (Fig. 2).

At times, this will simply entail the recognition of long-standing, or geographically distinct, communities, villages or towns, as self-governing localities. Such places may include, for example, Beit Hanina, al-Azariyya, Beit Safafa, Mevaseret Zion, Gilo or Ramot. But in other places the structure will need to amalgamate several neighborhoods of similar complexities and create new local councils as centers of urban government and communities. The redesign of municipal entities will attempt to create blocks of neighborhoods as a way of reducing the current frictions between radically different populations (such as secular and ultra-orthodox Jews) over the shaping of public spaces.

The naming of the new local councils will also be important, and we suggest symbolic names, which may reflect/create local attachments and characters. These may include titles such as Jerushalayim Hama'aravit (for secular Jewish neighborhoods); Kiryat Yehuda (for the orthodox Jewish areas); al-Quds al-Sharkiya (for the inner Arab neighborhoods); or Iksssa al-Faq (Upper Ikssa, for future Arab suburban neighborhoods in the city's northern parts).

What will be the political association of the new Capital Region with the Israeli and the Palestinian states? It is suggested that the city's Palestinian and Israeli residents will be full members of their national political communities. As such, they would vote to their respective parliaments, and be subject to the respective Palestinian and Israeli legal systems (Hasson, 1996). The entire city region will be open to Israelis and Palestinian Jerusalemites for work, residency and leisure. In case, border controls are required by any of the two states, these will be placed on exit points from the city. This arrangement will ensure that the Israeli and Palestinian states are able to control movements into their sovereign areas, without compromising free entry from the two states into their capital cities.

The special status of the Capital Region Authority will be further expressed in its autonomy and responsibility in areas such as infrastructure, metropolitan transport and environment. But in order to diffuse po-

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**Capital Region Authority:**

**Status:**
- A separate autonomous political unit, under shared Israeli and Palestinian sovereignty.
- Funded equally by both Israel and Palestine.

**Responsibilities:**
- To oversee the development of the metropolitan area.
- Responsibility for security and infrastructure in the territory of the Holy City Council.

**Composition:**
- Joint metropolitan authority headed concurrently or alternatively by Palestinian or Israeli.
- Its assembly will be composed of representatives from the local government.
- Mainly professional staff in the field of planning, engineering, transportation and environment.

**Holy City Council**

"Holy Jerusalem-al-Quds":

**Status:**
- Managed by international religious representatives.

**Responsibilities:**
- Management of the holy places.

**Composition:**
- Equal number of Christians, Muslims and Jewish members.

**Local Municipalities:** (see map 1)

**Status:**
- Self-governing localities.
- Based on taxes.

**Responsibilities:**
- To manage most aspects of urban daily life, including local planning, education, housing, economic development, environmental control.

**Composition:**
- Urban governance is composed of representatives that are elected in each district.

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Fig. 2. A proposed administrative model for the Capital Region Authority.
tential tensions with both the Israeli and Palestinian states and with the city’s municipalities, as already mentioned, the Regional Authority will concentrate on professional matters, and will oversee the smooth functioning of the region’s urban systems. It will have its own set of ‘ministries’ (for environment, planning, transport, infrastructure and the like), and a Capital Region police force.

The Capital Region Authority is not planned to draw on local taxes, but be funded equally by the Israeli and Palestinian states. Beyond the financial resources of the Authority, a special long-term fund should be established for the purpose of ‘affirmative development’, that is, development which aims to reduce inequalities. This is necessary, as the Jerusalem/al-Quds area is rife with disparities, most notably between Jewish and Palestinian neighborhoods, but also between the wealthy and the poor groups among each national community.

This special ‘affirmative development’ fund, which may be drawn from international sources, is imperative for the improvement of Arab-Jewish relations, in order to gradually rectify the effects of decades of neglect and discrimination which left the city’s Arab areas in a grave state of repair and underdevelopment. The fund will also enable the city to increase residential opportunities for its Palestinian residents who have been highly constrained by Israeli policies. This will be achieved by either constructing new Arab neighborhoods or compensating Arabs for property lost through unilateral confiscation or expropriation.

In sum, the institutional and geographical arrangements outlined above will create a federal-like metropolis, which can be described as a ‘cluster of cities’. This suits well the current wisdom in metropolitan governance and planning, which emphasizes the advantages of a decentralized form of urban management. This approach seeks to strengthen local democracy and identity while avoiding the alienation often associated with large urban areas, and maintaining an over-arching metropolitan identity. 21

Are Israelis and Palestinians ready to take the challenge and risks associated with turning Jerusalem into a genuinely shared city? Are they willing to compromise the notion of full and official ethnonational sovereignty for the economic, cultural and environmental welfare of the city residents and visitors? Would they abandon the drive to create ethnocratic and counter-ethnocratic spaces in their national capitals?

We are fully aware of the difficulties and hardships tied to the implementation of a shared city strategy, but believe a transformation from ethnocracy to equal coexistence is possible. Such a transformation will need to be imagined by policy-makers who are likely to make major decisions about the city in the near future. We hope these will lead to the establishment of an undivided city, which would fit the description of Jerusalem the sacred texts as both a City of Peace (Ir shalom) and a City of a United Whole (Ir shalem), thereby forming a model for the rest of Israel/Palestine and beyond.

7. Postscript

The reader has to keep in mind that our paper was originally written in Summer 1999 and was slightly updated in summer 2000. During both periods Israel and the Palestinians were negotiating through several channels in an attempt to define the terms of future peaceful coexistence.

Since that time, however, another major round of violence has erupted, plunging relations between Jews and Palestinians to extremely low ebb. The latest round of violence is of particular relevance to our essay, because it sprung in the heart of Jerusalem — the Haram al-Sharif or Har Habayit — and has since been symbolically labeled the ‘al-Aksa Intifada’.

The new uprising also followed the most earnest attempt so far by the Israeli government to negotiate a peace deal with the Palestinians. According to several accounts, one of the major unresolved bones of contention was the question of Jerusalem in general, and the division of sovereignty over the Old City in particular.

We recognise of course that the inter-ethnic violence of the last year, and the increasingly harsh methods required to prolong the Israeli occupation, have had extremely negative implications for coexistence in the city, of the nature proposed by our plan. Nevertheless, the problems experienced in the peace negotiations as regards the exact demarcation of boundaries, and the persistent exigencies of urban life, are likely to enhance the principles highlighted in our plan.

In particular, whatever the exact location of borders, the city will need to develop binational frameworks for spatial, economic, environmental and political management, as well as for maintaining security. In this context we believe that our plan still offers a sustainable long-term strategy for the city. When the guns are eventually silenced, planning can, and should, help to create the peaceful city that the two wounded peoples of Israel/Palestine truly deserve.

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