

Bodies and places in Jerusalem: Gendered feelings and urban policies

Tovi Fenster

Abstract

This paper revisits earlier work on gender and the city (Fenster, 2004, 2005, 2007) and proposes another perspective on how feelings of discomfort, disbelonging and lack of attachment can be attributed to the contextualization of women's bodies in certain places and how urban policies reinforce such contextualization. The paper focuses on the Jewish ultraorthodox Mea Shearim neighborhood, Palestinian East Jerusalem and the Old City, and public spaces and urban parks in West Jerusalem. The connection between this analysis and the epistemological development of planning knowledge and local knowledge is discussed.

Introduction

In this article I would like to revisit some of my early work on gender and the city (Fenster, 2004, 2005, 2007), offering a new angle on how discomfort, disbelonging and disattachment can be attributed to the way women's bodies are contextualized by place, as well as how urban policies¹ reinforce such contextualization, mainly by enforcing patriarchal norms that restrict women's use of these locations. The paper focuses on various places in Jerusalem—a city of multifaceted and diversified characters and also my own city of residence, to which I feel attached and intimately familiar from my own bodily experiences and knowledge of specific urban policies that sometimes make me feel discomfort and disbelonging.

The various places at focus in Jerusalem reflect different types of contextualization of women's bodies and different links between women's bodies and urban policies. The first is the Jewish ultraorthodox Mea Shearim neighborhood, which reflects a religious and cultural contextualization of women's bodies that contradicts urban

policies. The second is Palestinian East Jerusalem and the Old City, which reflect ethno-national contextualization of women's bodies reinforced by discriminatory urban policies and increased deurbanization (a result of lack of development) that imposes greater patriarchal restrictions on Palestinian women's freedom to use and appropriate public spaces. Finally, the third place is public spaces and urban parks in West Jerusalem, indicating how, even in their own ethno-national context, Jewish women avoid their use because of insensitive "male" planning that generates fear.

Looking at these conflictive sites within gendered power contexts helps point out a range of expressions, from the protest of discriminatory urban policies to surrender, compulsion, concession, renunciation, survival and acceptance of existing inequality and discrimination. These reactions result in two embodied actions: avoidance of and appropriation of public spaces, alongside verbal expressions of discomfort and disbelonging. To interpret these feelings, I use Bayat's (2000) concept of the "quiet encroachment of the ordinary." I analyze urban policies that enforce patriarchal norms on these places and the gendered feelings and actions (avoidance and appropriation) that develop out of their everyday use. As will be shown, avoidance of "dangerous places" at "dangerous times" is the predominant strategy adopted by women, both Jewish and Palestinian (Valentine, 1989).

The following section presents a brief review of sense of place and placelessness and their connection to urban policies, after which I briefly discuss the notion of resistance and its various expressions. I then consider the connection between contextualization of women's bodies, urban policies and daily practices as expressed in women's and men's feelings of discomfort, disbelonging and disattachment in these places and their interpretations within gendered power contexts as practices of resistance or acceptance. The connection of this analysis to the epistemological development of planning knowledge and local knowledge is discussed at the end of the paper.

Sense of place: Placelessness and resistance

Sense of place

Sense of place is defined as

Emotive bonds and attachments, both positive and negative, that people develop or experience in particular locations and environments. Also used to describe the distinctiveness or unique character of particular localities and regions (Foote and Azaryahu, 2009:96).

This definition connects feelings such as discomfort and disattachment to places and

environments. Foote and Azaryahu (2009) mention positive associations of sense of place with comfort, safety and wellbeing engendered by place, home and dwelling. They also mention negative feelings to places, using Relph's (1976) terminology of placelessness "to characterize the weakened bonds of attachment to community and home produced by the forces of modernism and postmodernism" (Foote and Azaryahu, 2009:96). The creation of a sense of placelessness is due to the diminishing consistency of place since the mid-nineteenth century as a result of homogenization and standardization, consumption and commodification, and the influence of international patterns of planning and architectural styles, which "gradually effected regional and local differences in style" (Foote and Azaryahu, 2006:98). Placelessness thus means the loss of individuality, distinctiveness and authenticity.

Tuan (1974), who has explored the sense of fear induced by some places and situations, coined the term *topophilia* to indicate the love of space and point out the intimate relationships that individuals and communities have with the places to which they are attached. Place is defined within contemporary cultural geography as what it means to women and men:

These meanings are expressed in terms of values, obligations, intentions and commitments, as well as emotional and social involvements. Since women and men define themselves through attachment to particular places, place is important to identity (Foote and Azaryahu, 2009:97).

Indeed, place or location is important to identity, especially regarding the contextualization of women's bodies, which, as shown in this paper, is place-based. This means that the self-definition of men and women through attachment to particular places is also a result of how their bodies are contextualized and how this contextualization is expressed in urban policies.

One example of how urban policies affect women's and men's feelings toward urban environments and their identities is the Israeli mega-project of building a national and a personal home by designing public housing schemes in the 1950s. Kallus and Law-Yone (2000) have pointed out four main urban policies which not only characterize public housing in Israel, but also have had enormous effects on residents' feelings of alienation and discrimination and on their political identities, which later led to the establishment of a social protest movement. Isolation, unification, temporality and spatial ambiguity served to create "new identities of disciplined and loyal citizens" (Kallus and Law-Yone, 2000:174) that met both the state goal of Judaizing peripheral areas in Israel and the social goal of melding the various ethnic Jewish identities and formulating a united homogenous nation. Planners of that period talked about "educating the new Jewish immigrants" to live in small apartments in public housing. But the residents of those public housing schemes resisted in many ways and with

various expressions, verbal and non-verbal. I suggest that the practices of avoidance and temporary appropriation outlined in this paper are part of these expressions. In other words, I propose extending the analysis of resistance to incorporate resistance as a mode of reaction to, or as acceptance of, the power of the hegemony.

Resistance

Existing research on everyday life and resistance perceives practices and tactics of the everyday as political acts that are sometimes defined as a “small protest” (Braverman, 2006). These small protests can be interpreted as conscious or latent, direct or indirect, explicit or implicit acts. These are practices that do not always reflect resistance, but perhaps create it (Kamp, 2002). As Pile (1997) indicates, the list of acts that can be interpreted as resistance is infinite. These acts can be expressed in a gaze, in walking in the city, in appropriation of space, in a journey, in leaving or moving to live in a city, in graffiti, robbery, body piercing, hairstyle, clothing, loud music, practices of cleanliness and dirt or any other practices that one defines as bringing change. Practices that bring change can be defined as a protest against, a challenge to, or an undermining of the hegemonic powers.

How, then, is it possible to identify daily practices as resistance when it is a “small resistance”? Pile argues that the political and the cultural provide the answer—that is, the place and space where this practice happens and the role of those resisting within the power network helps to identify small resistance. Other scholars argue the opposite, pointing to an over-interpretation of practices of everyday life as resistance. Both Bayat (2000) and Katz (2004), for example, claim that analyzing everyday life as resistance is sometimes overly simplistic. Katz points out that daily practices against capitalism are not necessarily about resistance. She challenges the analyses of Scott (1985,1990), as well as of Comaroff and Comaroff (1992), by arguing that if every daily practice is perceived as resistance, it leads to an epistemological problem. Instead, she suggests various definitions of everyday practices, such as resilience and reworking, while a third practice of resistance refers to an act that changes structural power constraints and enables actions that challenge oppression and discrimination. Bayat (2000) presents a similar critique by highlighting the role and power of the state in dictating everyday life. He mainly refers to individuals and communities in developing countries that challenge the modernist governance and order in the city. These individuals and communities are subverted by the elite in their society, who also consist of those working in governance. Some of the practices he mentions are building without permits, living in the streets and emigrating from rural to urban areas. These practices, he claims, are not political and are not acts of resistance, but are the result of the urge to survive and the strong will to improve one’s lifestyle. He

refers to the quiet, ongoing actions of ordinary women and men (and not activists). This is why, Bayat argues, these women and men act individually and not collectively or publicly, although he concedes that there is a cumulative impact of their similar individual actions. He defines these actions of the poor in developing countries as the “quiet encroachment of the ordinary,” which better describes the nature of these actions than resistance. He goes on by saying that these poor women and men cannot afford to resist because resisting to modernism is far too expensive for them.

The next section elaborates women’s (and one man’s) feelings of discomfort and disbelonging that result from the contextualization of their bodies in specific urban locations and are connected to urban policies in these locations. Their feelings represent a range of interpretations of the resistance–acceptance spectrum.

Bodies and places: Gendered feelings and urban policies

Women’s bodies contextualized by place: Mea Shearim neighborhood

How are we allowed to use and perform with our bodies in public spaces, and how are our bodies contextualized in specific places such as Mea Shearim? Before discussing performativity, body and embodiment and their contextualization in the neighborhood, a brief background on the unique nature of this neighborhood is in order. The ultraorthodox character of Mea Shearim (“One Hundred Gates”) was determined in 1874, when the neighborhood was established as one of the first to be built in West Jerusalem, outside the walls of the Old City. This is part of the Jewish return to the sacred Land of Israel and especially the fulfilment of the demand to settle in the holiest city of Jerusalem.²

The founders of Mea Shearim, members of the ultraorthodox community, set up clear rules to maintain its religious identity and homogeneity. For example, they decided that residents would not sell or rent their flats to non-ultraorthodox Jews, let alone non-Jews (Ben Arie, 1979). This means that the neighborhood has been characterized from the outset as a “ghettoized space,” a reflection of the strong religious identities of its residents. Its site allocation, distant from what was then the city center (in the Old City) and from any means of public transportation, was meant to maintain its religious identity and its distinctive lifestyle (Ben Arie, 1979), but today the neighborhood has become part of the expanding city center. Thus, it illustrates conflicts of use because of the way women’s bodies are contextualized as sites of temptation and potential sin and thus should be covered in a very specific way, designated in street signs asking women not to walk in the neighborhood in “immodest” clothing (Photo 1; for elaboration, see Fenster 2005, 2007). The residents of Mea Shearim seek to apply

their religious dress codes to all women who enter their neighborhood, whether they are orthodox Jews or not. Women who fail to follow these codes are subject to verbal and physical abuse (ultraorthodox men throw tomatoes at them and curse them).³

How does this contextualization affect secular women's use of the neighborhood? Let's start with Davidson and Milligan's statement that the body is actually "the first and foremost, most immediate and intimately felt geography...it is the site of emotional experience and expression, par excellence" (2004:523). Our bodies are contextualized differently in different urban locations, and we express our feelings about such contextualization through the body and embodied practices of resistance–acceptance, expressed in avoidance or temporary appropriation. This results in secular women's expressions of their feelings of discomfort, disbelonging and disattachment experienced when using the neighborhood's spaces:

Mea Shearim is a less comfortable place for me. I can't dress the way I like.... I like to walk there but... (Suzana, July 13, 2000).

Mea Shearim is a place I avoid visiting. I don't dare because I feel it's not only that I don't belong, but it's like a gated place only for the ultraorthodox [women and men] and only for Jews, so I never went there and don't even think of going (Magda, March 25, 2001).

It's very uncomfortable for me to go to Mea Shearim, it's hard for me to accept the authority of somebody who is extremist and rejects me from humanity. "They" will not accept me in all of the clothes that I wear, and I have to force myself to adopt their own identity, and it is not comfortable for me. The same in churches or mosques (Sarit, April 22, 2000).

By reading the narratives of these women, we can learn how their everyday embodied experiences "construct each other in complex and nuanced ways" (Longhurst, 2005:93). The tactics that these women adopt in order to cope with the way their bodies are contextualized is to avoid the use of Mea Shearim spaces, like Magda, or to express resilience (Katz, 2004) to accepting "the authority," like Sarit. These women act individually. They avoid using these spaces as "small resistance" (Braverman, 2006) or as an urge to survive, not as a political act but as a "quiet encroachment of the ordinary" (following Bayat, 2000), because these are quiet and ongoing actions of ordinary women, as well as small, independent, individual initiatives, as Katz (2004) points out. Here, the body as a site of resistance or acceptance is reflected in secular women's refusal to obey or respect the physical and gendered power codes of Mea Shearim. But this refusal is expressed in their avoidance of this neighborhood because of their feelings of discomfort and disbelonging. What causes these negative feelings?

And to what extent is it related to urban policies?

I argue that the cultural contextualization of the women's bodies in Mea Shearim is, in fact, manifested in municipal urban policies that, for example, do not challenge the ultraorthodox community's restrictions on women's clothing, modesty and the use of the neighborhood spaces. To test my contention, I talked to the Chief of the City Enforcement Department at the Jerusalem Municipality, a department responsible for enforcing municipal bylaws, including those concerning licensing of street signs and businesses. I asked him about the legality of the signs in the streets of Mea Shearim. He affirmed that, in general, the municipality is very strict about enforcing municipal bylaws by imposing the licensing of street signs and businesses. But in Mea Shearim, he said, it is different. Although the signs are illegal, as they were not approved or licensed by the municipality, the city does not enforce the law. The Chief of the City Enforcement Department defined this area as "outside the law and outside enforcing the law" (interview, July 20, 2003). He ascribed the difficulty in enforcing this bylaw in Mea Shearim to lack of personnel. He also said: "Even if we take down these signs, they will put them up again." It is clearly a policy of the municipality not to fight this phenomenon, perhaps because of the relative power that this group has in the municipality and the government as a whole.⁴

This municipal attitude, indirectly supporting the contextualization of women's bodies as immodest, is contrasted by that in Britain, for example, where a large number of Jewish ultraorthodox communities live (particularly Manchester and London). Such conflicts do not occur there, as the ultraorthodox communities keep their own identities within the legal framework of the state and without violating women's right of use of the city. In Manchester, where they comprise 90% of the city's Jewish community, the ultraorthodox express their need for segregation and the marking of clear boundaries between themselves and the rest of the "world" (Valins, 2000). However, their practices do not include control of women's bodies and clothing, but of living in homogeneous communities as an act of security. The same holds in London, where the community wanted to mark the boundaries of the Jewish Sabbath with special columns, but did not implement this until they received a planning permit from one of the boroughs in London (Valins, 2000). This comparison shows that the discriminatory policies, or the lack of enforcement, in Jerusalem is a clearcut municipal policy that causes the sense of placelessness, disbelonging and discomfort felt by secular Jewish women toward Mea Shearim.

Women's bodies contextualized by place: East Jerusalem and the Old City

East Jerusalem, including the Old City of Jerusalem, is inhabited by the majority of the Palestinian population in the city. It is characterized as the most degraded part of

Jerusalem, a result of many years of discriminatory urban policies (Photo 2). Such degradation slowly causes deurbanization, that is, urban spaces become less vital, alive, colorful, diversified, free and inviting to women. Urban policies regarding this part of the city show how the degradation takes place officially. It starts with the primary principle that guided the planners of Jerusalem: “preserving the ratio that existed in 1967 between the Jewish and Palestinian populations, 70:30 in the greater city (both West and East Jerusalem), according to government policy” (Aharon, 1996). This means that the major goal of planning is *not* to improve quality of life, but rather to maintain a demographic ethno-national ratio—which sometimes was the reason underlying the lack of planning and development in East Jerusalem. In addition, the declared purpose of the Jerusalem Local Outline Plan of 2000 is to limit the scope of the Palestinian population in Jerusalem by restricting Arab building while increasing the Jewish population beyond its natural growth (whether by creating attractive jobs or by creating a surplus of apartments in the market, causing a reduction in housing prices). The total planned area for Palestinian neighborhoods in East Jerusalem is 2,000 hectares. This is only 15% of the total area of Jerusalem and 28% of the total area of East Jerusalem (Bimkom, Forthcoming), whereas the Palestinian population makes up 37.2% of the total population.⁵ In 2011, the budget for East Jerusalem was only 10% of the total municipal budget, the rest going to West Jerusalem. The East Jerusalem budget is divided into: education 52.9%, welfare 13.6%, garbage collection 12.2%, infrastructure 8.1% and city improvement 1.4%, with less than 1.0% each going to youth, culture, sports, health, engineering and other.

This situation of continuous urban degradation and deurbanization leads to avoidance of use of these spaces, as shown in the following Jewish and Palestinian life stories:

Because of the political situation, I avoid going to the Old City of Jerusalem. In Tel Aviv I feel more at home because I grew up in Europe and Tel Aviv is more like Europe. I have a problem with both communities, my own side (the Palestinians) and the Israeli side. I don't feel comfortable in the Old City because of the tension. In every corner you see religious Jewish people and also the Israeli army. This is not a *city* and they also have CCTV cameras. Jerusalem is a beautiful city but it loses its beauty. I used to enjoy being in the Old City because it's beautiful architecturally, but now it's changed and it hurts (Muhammad, Palestinian man, Jerusalem, April 2000).

I avoid going to Selah a Din Street in East Jerusalem because of the Israeli army and the [Israeli] police. It's a place of conflict, no infrastructure, no parking. The street is ruled by the Mafia—young Palestinians. It's not like in West Jerusalem, where there are better services and efficient transportation (Amal, Palestinian woman, Jerusalem, August 2000).

I don't feel comfortable in East Jerusalem because it's not meant for me and it's not mine. The dirt and the esthetics really affect me. I therefore avoid going there. I feel it in my body that I don't belong there, it's an ex-territorial area for me. I also feel unwanted there (Neta, Jewish Israeli woman, Jerusalem, June 2000).

These feelings are embodied. Neta says: "I feel it in my body." The body is the social coder, the signifier of the tensions described above. We transform these bodily experiences into embodied feelings presented in the stories of Muhammad and Amal, both Palestinians living in East Jerusalem. Both mention the deurbanization of East Jerusalem; it was a city, but is not anymore. Their feelings of discomfort and disbelonging emphasize, as Bayat (2000) notes, the role and power of the state in dictating everyday life by urban policies of the "not"—not cleaning, not developing (infrastructure and parking), not expanding, or, in short, slowly killing urbanity in East Jerusalem and the Old City. Their reaction is avoidance, as a coping strategy to keep themselves safe (Valentine, 1989). I read these stories as resistance (primarily political) combined with acceptance and defeat. When Neta says "it's not mine and I don't belong," for her, this is a practice of avoidance by choice. She chooses not to visit the Old City's spaces because of its degradation (lack of development and dirt) and the embodied sense that she is not part of this place. Muhammad's and Amal's reactions also express the tensions in the area, the conflict, the lack of appropriate infrastructure and parking; all are articulated and manifested in the daily expressions of the occupation and their embodied feelings of discomfort and disbelonging as resistance. Both Muhammad and Amal are critical of East Jerusalem spaces or of the *city*, as Muhammad put it, and of the sense of disattachment they feel, especially when they refer to their own people—the youth or the society in general. They are ambivalent: they love the city, but also feel discomfort; they find it beautiful and esthetic, but disappointing; they think it is both enjoyable and painful; in their mind, it is unique but also neglected and dirty. It is their cry against the degradation that the city experiences. Another possibility is to read these stories as surrender and defeat, as a cry against discriminatory urban policies that mark urban spaces as "forbidden" and "permitted" for women. That is, the degradation and lack of development in fact expand the "forbidden" spaces and restrict women's freedom of movement because of the perception of more spaces as unsecured and fearful.

"In place" or "out of place" in West Jerusalem

Although part of the majority Jewish secular population in West Jerusalem, Rebecca expresses a sense of fear and a lack of security in using urban spaces because of insensitive male planning. She herself chose to discuss these specific spaces when I asked her what the meaning of comfort and discomfort is in various parts of the city.

Rebecca talked about the pedestrian avenue near her home:

The avenue by my street is scary because there is only one exit from it, you can't leave it from everywhere...and there are benches where weird "creatures" can sit and molest you and you feel trapped...so it's not so pleasant.... If you get into the avenue, you're lost.... It's really male planning; "they" did it because of the transportation, but it prevents me from walking along the avenue (Rebecca, Jerusalem, February 2000).

Photo 3 shows Rebecca's avenue in one of the affluent neighborhoods of West Jerusalem, where urban policies promoted a high level of development, but the lack of awareness of planners created a "planning trap," as Rebecca points out. This causes her to feel unsafe and even fearful of using this space. Indeed, as Valentine asserts, "women's inhabited use of space is a spatial expression of patriarchy" (1989:385). Here patriarchal principles are spatially expressed in the way this avenue has been planned. Like the case of public housing in Israel, Rebecca's story emphasizes how the physical environment affects the human body and sense of placelessness and how a specific spatial arrangement (planning) leads to feelings of discomfort and thus the avoidance of these spaces.

Gendered and ethno-national temporary appropriation

Public parks are another example of places where temporary appropriation takes place. Although the park is designed to serve everyone and be appropriated by everyone, part of the temporary appropriation of its area is by males (Photo 4), preventing use of the same area or even nearby areas by females. Young male football players usually appropriate large parts of the park to play in. They appropriate not only the space where they are physically located, but the entire grassy area where they hold their football games. This is a clear example of how spaces are "privatized" and "masculinized" for football and other ball games, making them dangerous for other uses, such as by women and children. Picnics, barbecues and birthday parties are another example of appropriation of the park that creates a sense of privacy and intimacy for those who appropriate it, as they also demarcate clear boundaries (by putting up chairs, ropes, balloons, blankets and so on) and transform these spaces into "forbidden" places for other people.

Urban policies in the park are reflected in the dictation of specific codes of conduct: "Do not light a fire," "Do not play football," "Do not ride a bicycle" are some of the restrictions created precisely to keep the park area as public as possible and to allow various uses of the park without creating conflicts between them. However, these restrictions often go unobserved, as you can find people playing football, lighting fires

and having barbecues even under the very sign that forbids them. It is interesting to note how the park, which is perceived as an open, “natural” place, is full of prohibitions and regulations, but this time they are created to preserve its inclusive character. The breaking of these prohibitions and regulations can be read either as bad manners and norms, or as a challenge and protest against these regulations and a desire to break the forbidden/permitted binary.

Temporary appropriation also occurs in several urban parks on the seam between Jewish and Palestinian populations in Jerusalem, where the division of use of park spaces is on a national basis. Jews and Palestinians each gather in and use different parts of the parks and never mix. Sometimes this temporary appropriation takes place on different days of the same weekend (Fridays for Palestinians and Saturdays for Jews), and both communities are aware of this division of use and act accordingly. The park is neither Jewish nor Palestinian; it is located on the seam, thus enabling its use by both groups, among men and women alike. For Palestinians, it is in high demand due to urban policies which do not develop enough urban parks in East Jerusalem. While data on the percentage of open spaces and parks in East Jerusalem as compared to West Jerusalem is not available, a rough estimate⁶ indicates many more areas of open space in West Jerusalem.

There are several ways to read these spatial practices. It is possible to interpret temporary appropriation as a quiet encroachment of the ordinary (Bayat, 2000), especially among the Palestinians. That is, this is the reaction of poor Palestinians who wish to survive and make their life better by having picnics out in the open. These are not organized practices and are not meant to express political protest, but rather are acts of living their daily lives. Nevertheless, as Bayat (2000) mentions, when more and more individuals practice quiet encroachment, it becomes resistance. Here, too, because of the Palestinians’ increasing numbers in the parks, their presence becomes highly prominent, and even that can be seen as a latent protest to challenge their invisibility in urban policies.

Another striking example of using city spaces in a way that challenges planning regulations is the practice of crossing streets where there are no pedestrian crossings, although this is not significantly gendered. In Jerusalem, it is a common to find informal paths within traffic islands or in urban parks, created by constant use across grassy and planted areas. The choice to use informal shortcuts rather than formal (planned) pedestrian crossings can be seen as disobeying norms and laws, but also as an act of protest against transportation planning, which does not always take pedestrian needs into consideration.

Finally, another act of temporary appropriation that can also be read as an act of protest and resistance and connected to planning issues is the gathering of youth in city centers or urban parks, which prevents the use of those spaces by others. Sibley

(1995) sees such youth gatherings as a challenge to existing norms and behavior, especially in the street, where the principles of “permitted” and “forbidden” behavior are looser than at home or in school. Thus, the street represents a liminal space in terms of its vague codes of discipline and its “in betweenness” (private/public) for the youth.

Gendered bodies, feelings and urban policies: Another type of local knowledge?

So far, I have illustrated the complex relations between women’s bodies and places that are reinforced by urban policies. I have shown how the contextualization of women’s bodies causes feelings of discomfort, disbelonging, lack of attachment and sense of placelessness, especially in Mea Shearim, East Jerusalem and the Old City. I have also shown how it results in acts of resistance or acceptance. In this section I’d like to highlight the concrete effects of these personal daily feelings, which I consider local knowledge.

Local knowledge is defined in the literature as an interpretative approach based on an embodied subjective knowledge that is accumulated as a result of our daily life experiences (Forester, 1989, 1999; Healey, 1992, 1997; Sandercock, 2003). The literature on local knowledge in general, and with regard to planning in particular, suggests using this term as a critique to modernist thinking in planning and perceives knowledge as embedded in power relations (Foucault, 1980). Local knowledge is “based on practices of talking, listening, seeing, contemplating, sharing; [it is] knowledges expressed in visual and other symbolic, ritual and artistic ways” (Sandercock, 2003:76).

The involvement of local knowledge in planning situations is part of the critique on professional planning developed since the 1960s. Here I highlight two perspectives of this critique. The first emphasizes how the physical built environment, planned only on the basis of professional knowledge, creates a sense of placelessness, of discomfort and disbelonging. This perspective points to the significance of local knowledge as a substantive source in planning and development, like the case of public housing in Israel (Kallus and Law-Yone, 2000), the identity-blind planning of the pedestrian avenue where Rebecca avoids walking, or the use of urban parks by youth. The second perspective criticizes the non-implementation of planning schemes as expressing urban politics that cause feelings of discomfort and disbelonging and sometimes lead to practices of resistance in contested urban spaces. It emphasizes the role that power plays in urban policies that affect the design of urban spaces, pointing to the “dark side of planning” (Fenster, 2002, 2004; Yiftachel, 1994; Yiftachel and Yacobi, 2003). It refers to situations where planning operates structurally as a tool of social,

political and cultural control and of rationalizing power relations “scientifically” in an uncritical manner in the name of economic efficiency, hygiene or urban order (Yacobi, 2003), as is the case in the Old City and East Jerusalem, as well as Mea Shearim.

Actually, these two perspectives are two representations of power within planning and urban politics: the first prioritizes professional planning knowledge over the local one; the second prioritizes ethno-national and religious considerations over the rights and wellbeing of women and men of all identities. In particular, this latter situation jeopardizes the quality of life of Jewish secular and Palestinian women. Here it is not simply a matter of knowledge—the knowledge exists and is well known—it is a matter of political considerations of the hegemony. Thus, although presented separately, the two perspectives are connected as power relations that dictate which knowledge to include when formulating urban policies and which to ignore.

The first perspective, critiquing the use of only professional knowledge, has resulted in a series of alternative planning approaches that mainly acknowledge the effects of power relations on how the built environment is designed and ordered. Thus, theoretical and methodological frameworks of involving communities have been formulated with a focus on respecting local knowledge in planning and urban policies, together with professional planning knowledge. These approaches propose a mixture of professional and local knowledge in formulating urban policies, so as to balance power relations both between communities and the state/planners and within the communities themselves.

The critique of non-implementation and unjust urban policies has resulted in the development of critical post-colonial urban theory that uses local knowledge to critique colonial powers, as well as their determination of Western knowledge as “professional” and “universal” and the other type—usually the non-Western—as “local” (Harding, 1996). Knowledge, these approaches argue, cannot be seen as universal and neutral, as is perceived by modernist thinking in planning. Another aspect of critical urban theory engages notions of urban development with urban order, the right to the city (Lefebvre, 1991,1992) and other critical concepts that emphasize the significance of ethno-national, religious and economic powers in dictating which knowledge is included and which is not in the formulation of urban policies (see, e.g., Brenner, 2009; Brenner, Marcuse and Mayer, 2009; King, 1990; Robinson, 2006)

To return to the narratives presented here—those relating to everyday life in Mea Shearim, East Jerusalem and the Old City, and urban spaces and parks in West Jerusalem, and to the use of parks, streets, sidewalks, public housing and transportation planning—I would like to clarify the importance of including personal everyday feelings toward urban spaces as local knowledge, and their direct connection to urban policies, especially those that derive from civil discrimination. First, the paper has illustrated the connection between discomfort, disbelonging and lack of commitment,

on the one hand, and underdeveloped infrastructure and services, on the other. This connection causes deurbanization and thus women's avoidance of certain urban spaces in the city. Second, the paper highlights sense of discomfort and disbelonging as an identity-related issue, mainly with respect to less powerful groups, such as Palestinian women in East Jerusalem, who express this sense of "lack of" and avoid using most of West Jerusalem. In addition, Jewish women express their sense of fear and lack of security because of insensitive urban policies—those that ignore gender separation in Mea Shearim and cause them to feel discomfort, and those that are blind to women's security issues, like the pedestrian avenue Rebecca avoids entering. Third, the crossing of streets can be perceived as local knowledge that can be used for transportation and park planning, as it shows the daily physical routes of the majority of women and men using these spaces with the tangible expression of informal paths. This is a good illustration of how professional planning can use local knowledge in designing the location of pedestrian crossings, traffic lights or footpaths in urban parks.

These are but a few examples that can increase the awareness of planners and decision makers regarding the implications of their urban policies and planning practices on women's and men's daily feelings of placelessness. While the paper has focused mainly on how women's bodies are contextualized in different places in Jerusalem, its analyses and conclusions are relevant to the complex relations of gendered bodies and the environment in almost any city around the world.

Notes

- 1 The term "urban policies" refers to policies of urban development set by the state and municipality, such as housing, infrastructure, construction of buildings, education, welfare and health services and municipal services (garbage collection and street cleaning). Such policies thus refer not only to the physical tangible component of city management, but also to its social, economic and political components.
- 2 This is also why there are ongoing Jewish secular and religious conflicts in Jerusalem, which are usually the result of disagreements about the meanings and expressions of the rights of each community's members to use public spaces that reflect their beliefs, both in daily life and especially on the Sabbath, the holy Jewish day. Hasson and Gonen (1996) and Shilav (1997) emphasize the dynamics of these "spaces of conflicts" and the various strategies each side adopts to meet its goals. Such spaces of conflict are constructed from time to time, especially when the municipality's policies of opening or closing businesses or public services on the Sabbath are in

flux. For example, a few years ago, the then new secular mayor ordered the opening of municipal public parking on the Sabbath. This caused fierce reactions among the ultraorthodox, as well as counter-demonstrations of secular residents against what they perceived as religious coercion.

- 3 In another paper (Fenster, 2007) I address the conflict of rights—the right to the city of secular women and the right to difference of ultraorthodox Jewish women and men living in Mea Shearim. No doubt, this is an example of the complexities of exploring different expressions of belonging of women and men inhabiting and using the same spaces (especially residents and visitors or tourists).
- 4 Because of the high rate of their municipal voting patterns (almost 100%) and the relatively low voting rate of secular residents of Jerusalem (30%–40%), the religious usually have majority representation in the municipality and have much more power than their relative proportion in the population.
- 5 I'd like to thank Meir Margalit, member of the Jerusalem Municipal Council, for providing the budget and population data that appear in this section.
- 6 This estimate was provided by Meir Margalit, member of the Jerusalem Municipal Council.

References

- Aharon, Oren. (1996). *Planning in the Arab Sector in Jerusalem 1967–1996*. Jerusalem: Jerusalem Municipality (Hebrew).
- Bayat, Asef. (2000). "From 'dangerous classes' to 'quiet rebels'." *International Sociology* 15,3:533–557.
- Ben Arie, Yehoshua. (1979). *The City as a Mirror of a Period: The New Jerusalem at its Beginnings*. Jerusalem: Yad Itzhak Ben Zvi (Hebrew).
- Bimkom, Planners for Planning Rights in Israel (Forthcoming). *Planning Trap in East Jerusalem: Updates*. Jerusalem: Bimkom.
- Braverman, Iris. (2006). "Illegality in East Jerusalem." *Theory and Practice* 28:11–42 (Hebrew).
- Comaroff, James, and Comaroff, Jean. (1992). *Ethnography and Historical Imagination*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Brenner, Neil. (2009). "What is critical urban theory?" *City* 13,2–3:198–207.
- Brenner, Neil, Marcuse, Peter, and Mayer, Margit. (2009). "Cities for women and men, not for profit." *City* 13,2–3:176–184.

- Davidson, Janice, and Milligan, Christine. (2004). "Embodying emotion, sensing place: Introducing emotional geographies." *Social and Cultural Geographies* 5,4:523–532.
- Fenster, Tovi. (2002). "Planning as control: Cultural and gendered manipulation and misuse of knowledge." *Hagar, International Social Science Review* 1:67–84.
- _____. (2004) *The Global City and the Holy City: Narratives on Planning Knowledge and Diversity*. London: Pearson.
- _____. (2005). "The right to the gendered city: Different formations of belonging in everyday life." *The Journal of Gender Studies* 14,3:217–231.
- _____. (2007). "Gender, religion and urban management: Women's everyday life in the city." In K. Morin and J. K. Guelka (eds.), *Women, Religion & Space* (pp. 41–60). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.
- Foote, Kenneth E., and Azaryahu, Maoz. (2009). "Sense of place." In Rob Kitchin and Nigel Thrift (eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography online* (pp. 96–100). London: Elsevier.
- Forester, John. (1989). *Planning in the Face of Power*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- _____. (1999). *The Deliberative Practitioner: Encouraging Participatory Processes*. Boston: MIT Press.
- Foucault, Michel. (1980). *Power/Knowledge*. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Harding, Sandra. (1996). "Gendered ways of knowing and the 'epistemological crisis' of the West." In N. Goldberg, J. Tarule, B. Clinchy and H. Belenky (eds.), *Knowledge, Difference, and Power* (pp. 431–454). New York: Basic Books,
- Hasson, S., and Gonen, A. (1996) *The Struggle for the Cultural Character of Jerusalem*. Jerusalem: Floersheimer Institute (Hebrew).
- Healey, Patsy. (1992). "A planner's day: Knowledge and action in communicative practice." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 58,1:9–20.
- _____. (1997). *Collaborative Planning*, London: Macmillan Press
- Kallus, Rachel, and Law-Yone, Hubert. (2000). "National home/personal home: The role of public housing in shaping space." *Theory and Criticism* 16: 153–180 (Hebrew).
- Kamp, Adriana. (2002). "Women's and men's migration, or the 'big fire': State control and resistance in the Israeli frontier." In H. Hever, Y. Shenhav and P. Mutsafi (eds.), *Mizrahim in Israel* (pp. 36–67). Jerusalem: Van Leer and HaKibbutz Hameuhad (Hebrew).
- Katz, Cindi. (2004). *Growing up Global: Economic Restructuring and Children's Everyday Lives*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- King, Anthony. (1990). *Urbanism, Colonialism and the World Economy: Cultural and*

- Spatial Foundations of the World Urban System*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Lefebvre, Henri. (1991). *Critique of Everyday Life*. London: Verso.
- _____. (1992). *The Production of Space*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Longhurst, Robyn. (2005). "The body." In D. Atkinson, P. Jackson, D. Sibley and N. Washbourne (eds.), *Cultural Geography: A Critical Dictionary of Key Concepts* (pp. 91–97). London and New York: Tauris.
- Pile, Steve. (1997). "Opposition, political identities and spaces of resistance." In S. Pile and N. Thrift (eds.), *Geographies of Resistance* (pp. 1–32). London: Routledge.
- Relph, Edward. (1976). *Place and Placelessness*. London: Pion.
- Robinson, Jennifer. (2006). *Ordinary Cities: Between Modernity and Development*. London: Routledge.
- Sandercock, Leonie. (2003). *Cosmopolis II: Mongrel Cities in the 21st Century*. London: Continuum.
- Scott, James. (1985). *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- _____. (1990). *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Shilav, Y. (1997). *Governance in an Ultra-Orthodox City*. Jerusalem: Floresheimer Institute (Hebrew).
- Sibley, David. (1995). *Geographies of Exclusion*. London: Routledge.
- Tuan, Yu Fi. (1974). *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Valentine, Gill. (1989). "The geography of women's fear." *Area* 21:385–390.
- Valins, Oliver. (2000). "Institutionalised religion: Sacred texts and Jewish spatial practice." *Geoforum* 31:575–586.
- Yacobi, Haim. (2003). "Everyday life in Lod: On power, identity and spatial protest." *Jamaa* 10:69–109.
- Yiftachel, Oren. (1994). "The dark side of modernism: Planning as control of an ethnic minority." In S. Watson and K. Gibson (eds.), *Postmodern Cities and Spaces* (pp. 216–242). Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Yiftachel, Oren, and Yacobi, Haim. (2003). "Urban ethnocracy: Ethnicization and the production of space in an Israeli mixed city." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 21,6:673–693.

Photo captions



Photo 1: Street signs telling women to maintain modesty in Mea Shearim, Jerusalem



Photo 2: Dirt and neglect in the allies of the Old City of Jerusalem

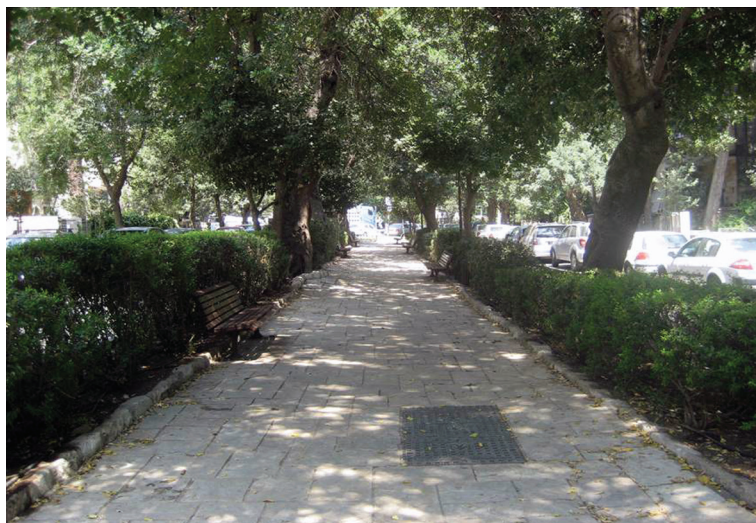


Photo 3: Planning trap – the pedestrian avenue in Jerusalem



Photo 4: Temporary appropriation by youth in urban park, Jerusalem