

# **ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION**

Urban Morphologies of Conflict: Israeli Planning and Palestinian life in Jerusalem

By

Omar M. Yousef

Doctor of Philosophy in Planning, Policy and Design

University of California, Irvine, 2009.

Professor Scott A. Bollens, Chair

This thesis investigates the question of how Israeli policies have affected Palestinians urban behavior and along with it, political attitudes regarding the ongoing peace process, since the signing of Oslo Accords in 1993. Focusing on land and housing production, I explore how the Palestinian inhabitants of East Jerusalem have experienced a dramatic spatial and political change due to a range of Israeli planning and security policies which have culminated in the construction of the Israeli wall of separation through the city's Palestinian neighborhoods.

I argue that there is a dynamic, interactive relationship between spatial urban change, resulting behavioral patterns and change in political attitudes of the population; I develop a three dimensional prism of spatial analysis. In the process of spatial production as conceptualized by Henri Lefebvre, the main focus is on the everyday life of ordinary inhabitants and their tactics of survival. I utilize an ethnographic-phenomenological perspective based on "extended case method" with an interpretive-integrative approach.

Specifically, I combine between observations, semi-structured interviews and the study of available data.

In various ways, findings indicate that throughout the peace process, Israeli urban policy, spatial planning and security technology have been interpreted by Palestinians as being part of a larger pattern of unhindered intensification of Israeli policy of urban exclusion, ethnic discrimination and territorial control over Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territories. Palestinian neighborhoods were excluded outside the wall and inhabitants were denied access to the city; inside the municipality pressure is heightened to limit Palestinian growth and home demolition is threatening hundreds of buildings.

People are associating the social and territorial fragmentation and urban dislocation with the future two-state solution and are having difficulties in imagining this political solution under the current spatial and political conditions. This is deeply alienating Palestinians in Jerusalem and is undermining the credibility of the peace process, the negotiating Palestinian Authority and the declared target of a two-state solution.

The resulting urban problems are serious and require urgent solutions. To make people buy into the peace process, PA and all stake holders need to combine political peace making with urban peace-building.