

JERUSALEM/AL-QUDS 2050: VISION FOR A PLACE OF PEACE

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Introduction

What would it take to make a city claimed by two nations and central to three religions “merely” a city, a place of difference and diversity in which contending ideas and citizenries can co-exist in benign yet creative ways? The intractable conflicts in the Middle East and the cycle of violence among Israelis and Palestinians are deeply embedded in historical struggles over national sovereignty and the right to territory. For this reason, questions about whose state will prevail in what physical location have defined the terms of conflict and negotiation. This also has meant that most proposed solutions to “the Middle East problem” have revolved around competing claims of nation-states, their rights to existence, and their physical and juridically-sanctioned relationships to each other. While true generally, this framing of the problem has been especially dominant in the case of Jerusalem, a city that is geographically and historically an overlay of spaces and artifacts that carry deep meaning for competing peoples and nations. The current struggles of Palestinians and Israelis to each claim this hallowed ground as their capital city has added yet another layer of complexity, conflict, and political division, all of which is reflected in the competing/dual nomenclature Al-Quds/Jerushalayim used to refer to the city – as well as the violence and contestation that continues to accelerate unabated.

Still, we must remember that this city is also a place in which people live, work, shop, worship, and play. Far more than being merely the contested terrain upon which seemingly irreconcilable nation-states struggle for power, the city of Jerusalem¹ has produced its own unique mix of urban cultures, spatial practices, physical connections, economic activities, and political institutions, many of which existed long before twentieth century efforts to classify its peoples in terms of particular national identities. During the Ottoman period, in fact, long before struggles for the creation of a single sovereign national state in this territory, a multiplicity of institutional arrangements governed servicing and representation in the city, and they operated in ways that led to relatively peacefully co-existence among the city’s Jews, Muslims, and Catholics. It is this undeniable historical fact and the promise that it holds for re-

¹ In the remainder of this proposal we purposively employ the term Jerusalem, and not Al-Quds (Arabic) or Jerushalayim (Hebrew), because our main aim is to move beyond binary identity claims that have torn the city apart, and to rediscover the primarily “urban” identities that peoples of different religions, ethnicities, and nationalities can share together.

envisioning the city that offers some hope for Jerusalem's future – and hopefully in ways that can help ease the Palestinian-Israeli conflict more generally.

By no means are we proposing an uncritical return to a period of imperialism. At the end of the Ottoman rule the city was suffering from lack of basic services and most of its residents had neither civil rights nor economic autonomy. However, in this early period the binary -- or even tripartite -- understanding of space and identity that now generates so much controversy was almost completely absent.² This is said, then, not in order to diminish what has happened in the Jerusalem during the last several decades, but to suggest that the linking of land, people, and nationality -- which now serves as the unquestioned basis for almost all negotiations -- is just one of the many possible ways the city could and has been organized. In fact, as a blueprint for current and future actions, it has very little grounding in Jerusalem's own long history. Such observations suggest the importance of thinking about alternative models for organizing and managing the city, including those that disappeared when competing nation-states hijacked the discourses and practices of urban organization.

What would happen if the contending protagonists in the search for harmony in Jerusalem were compelled to recast their understanding of conflicts or tensions, and possible solutions to these problems, not in light of questions about competing nations, but in light of questions about what might make Jerusalem a vibrant, democratic, and peaceful city? What if they cast their eyes towards the types of urban institutions and built environmental patterns that would host a vibrant metropolis, rather than the types of political arrangements that would sustain some form of state legitimacy and sovereignty? Rather than always being hamstrung by the "national question," might there be constructs of *urban* place and meaning to be imagined that could lead to peace, and by so doing, perhaps even help reconcile seemingly intractable national claims? With these questions serving as a foundation for our proposed project, we are seeking a new vantage point for entering into a decades-old conflict, one that may lie between - or across - the conventional points of entry used to address the conflict. Rather than thinking about Jerusalem in terms of the real or symbolic role it will play in the struggle over national sovereignty, we propose to think more seriously about the city in and of itself. Moreover, rather than trying to analyze and address the current urban conditions in a city whose boundaries and internal spaces are under continual transformation or transgression through the acts of contending national states and/or their loyalist combatants, we propose a collective effort at envisioning the city *fifty years hence*.

² "The people of Jerusalem at the beginning of the twentieth century did not identify themselves simply as Christians, Muslims or Jewish; they constructed their religious identity with a zealotry and specificity that entailed drawing very circumscribed sub-boundaries within larger ecclesiastical groupings. Folks identified themselves as Latins, Franciscans, Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, Armenians, Syrians, Jacobites, Copts, Abyssinians, Anglicans, Presbyterians, Arabs, Muslims, Sunnis, Turks, Bedouins, Ashkenazis, Yemenites, Bagdadim, Persians, Karaim and Sephardim, among others, and acted as distinctive groups in their daily demands for Jerusalem spaces. In addition, their religious identity was crisscrossed by different nationalities. Holy City residents responded to different earthly laws, using the legal codes of Turkey, France, Britain, Germany, Greece, Russia, Italy or United States to judge their actions." For more on this history, see "Jerusalem at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century: Spatial Continuity and Social Fragmentation," Nora Libertun Duren, pp 12.

Our assumption is that the mere act of imagining an urban future alternative from the present, especially as seen from the vantage point of the city and its residents rather than the nation-state or from those who are formally empowered with state planning capacities, might actually serve to “liberate” urban residents from the everyday political constraints of brokered negotiations and real-world power (im)balances which have made them incapable of agreeing on even small but steady advances for the city, because of the larger meaning of these compromises.³ Such latitude may be precisely what is necessary in order to engender new means of communication and new topics for dialogue in Jerusalem, a breakthrough which itself may help put an end to the treacherous impasse that still keeps peace at bay.

How will this be achieved? Our aim is to mount a juried, international “Vision Competition” that will solicit innovative proposals for new institutions, novel practices, alternative uses of space, and creative acknowledgements of urban patrimony in ways that would unite rather than divide the citizens of Jerusalem in a sustainable peace environment. There are no limits on who can submit a vision; nor are there expectations about their immediate feasibility or negotiability, or even about the type of vision they offer. Proposals can be spatial, technological, visual, institutional, cultural, legal, social, or economic, among other things, if competitors are inspired to propose visions in this manner. The only requirement is that all competition entries will be expected to give life to the idea of a more peaceful, economically vibrant, pluralist, and democratic Jerusalem. Our assumption is that this mandate – and the originating ideals of the project -- will encourage competitors to shun imaginings that enshrine the privileged but divisive claims of peoples and their religious identities on the one hand, or nations and their historical and ethical claims to existence on the other, and instead craft designs, projects, plans, policies, or other materials that offer a new or alternative narrative about what a united and peaceful Jerusalem could and should look like. The city is the starting and ending point, not the nation. The end result will be the production (in a book) and dissemination (via a traveling exhibition) of these alternative visions for Jerusalem, a mission we hope will inspire both the city’s inhabitants and a much larger circle of diplomats, policymakers, and other interested parties world-wide who seek peace in the region to ask new questions and imagine new possibilities for the city’s future. Our hope is that the production of these visions, and the “conversations” that would ensue through presentation, dissemination, and discussion of these alternative imaginings of the city, could offer some hope of exit from the destructive cycle of violence, hatred, and terror that has not just shattered peoples and nations, but also significant parts of the city itself.

PART I. INTELLECTUAL ORIGINS OF THE PROJECT

The Promise of the City

³ It is this same logic that often prevents Palestinians from exercising their democratic rights at the ballot box in the city, or from attending community meetings about housing or transportation policies. It is not that they do not care about the city; but rather, this response is seen as an act of protest at the larger sovereignty aims under which planning decisions for Jerusalem are being made.

The genesis of this project emerges, in part, from a sense that it may be time to try a new approach to Jerusalem, one that entails envisioning this city as transcending the constraints imposed by nation-states, especially those within which it has become historically embedded. If the superimposition of nationalist projects and aspirations on ethnically or religiously-diverse urban locales like Jerusalem has fanned the flames of aggression and violent conflict, could concerted efforts to think about what social, political, economic, or spatial practices would “emancipate” this city from nationalist blueprints possibly serve as the solution, or, at minimum, help lay a partial foundation for greater tolerance and perhaps even peace? While utopian in conception, this question requires a new way of thinking, which is precisely our aim here. To paraphrase Arjun Appadurai, in his reflection on Benedict Anderson’s claim that the nation is an imagined thing, “we must be prepared to recognize the critical reciprocal of [Anderson’s] insight, that it is the imagination that will have to carry us beyond the nation.”⁴

Yet this project’s inspiration also comes from a multiplicity of writings on “the promise of the city” as the locus of tolerance and cosmopolitanism.⁵ Considerable scholarship on the history and philosophy of cities focuses on them as sites for diversity, tolerance, and democracy. Such claims about the city not only have a grand lineage dating to Max Weber among others, they still flower in many contemporary writings on the city. From Marshall Berman’s notion that the city offers perhaps the only kind of environment in which modern values [of tolerance, freedom, and so on] can be realized”⁶ to Andy Merrifield’s view of the city as host for “togetherness *in difference*”⁷ to Ira Katznelson’s sense that “the compound of liberalism and the city promote a liberalism of depth and complexity”⁸ to Richard Sennett’s idea that the city is a place where strangers meet and his attendant proposition that “people grow only by processes of encountering the unknown”⁹ (a view prefiguring the political theorist Iris Young’s views on the togetherness of strangers in cities), scholars have long celebrated the humanistic potential and endowments of the city. As David Harvey further reminds us, the “figures of ‘the city’ and of ‘Utopia’ have long been intertwined,” as have the

⁴ Arjun Appadurai, “Sovereignty without Territoriality: Notes for a Post-national Geography” in Setha Low and Denise Lawrence-Zuñiga (eds.), The Anthropology of Space and Place – Locating Culture (Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 337. Appadurai is engaging the work of Benedict Anderson, author of a seminal work on nationalism titled Imagined Communities.

⁵ For a synthetic view of this promise, and more discussion of difference, democracy, and the city, see Kian Tajikbakhsh, The Promise of the City : Space, Identity, and Politics in Contemporary Social Thought, (University of California, 2001).

⁶ Marshall Berman, All that is Solid Melts into the Air: The Experience of Modernity (Penguin Press, 1988), p. 318.

⁷ Italics in original. Andy Merrifield, “Social Justice and Communities of Difference: a Snapshot from Liverpool” in Andrew Merrifield and Eric Swyngedouw, The Urbanization of Injustice (New York University Press, 1997), p. 201.

⁸ Ira Katznelson, “Social Justice, Liberalism, and the City: Considerations on David Harvey, John Rawls, and Karl Polanyi” in Andrew Merrifield and Eric Swyngedouw, The Urbanization of Injustice (New York University Press, 1997), p. 49. Katznelson defines liberalism as the divide between public and private; guarantee of individual and group rights; moral pluralism.

⁹ Richard Sennett, The Fall of Public Man (Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), p. 295.

notions of city and citizenship, such that “[p]rojects concerning what we want our cities to be are, therefore, projects concerning human possibilities, who we want, or perhaps even more pertinently, who we do not want to become.”¹⁰

Many of these same hopes and ideals sustain Henri Lefebvre’s seminal writings as well, especially his notion of “the right to the city,” a proposition which holds great resonance to those living in divided cities like Jerusalem, where mobility and access to everyday activities and the urban built environment are hindered or strongly curtailed. It is worth remembering that Lefebvre conceives of the city as “gathering the interests of the whole society” as much as those who physically inhabit it.¹¹ But what may be most significant about Lefebvre’s formulation is his use of society -- not the state or nation -- as the conceptual reference point for the city’s humanitarian promise. Moreover, for Lefebvre a city’s “inhabitants” are not necessarily bounded in space or in the formal confines of the city proper. Arbitrary territorial boundaries coercively imposed by national or other state authorities are antithetical to this proposition, and would violate Lefebvre’s notion of the right to the city if they also restricted the flows, the “place(s) of encounter,” the “priority of use value,” and the natural spaces in and surrounding formally-drawn city borders.¹² In this sense, Lefebvre is highlighting “the right to urban life” as much as to the city itself, a presupposition that sustains our desire to place the notion of urbanism as central to any emancipatory political vision. To bring this vision to life so will entail re-imagining both the city and urbanism in such a way as to further the humanitarian and democratic potential of life in Jerusalem.

Lefebvre’s views of urbanism rest not merely on a recognition of the importance of individual access to a wide range of places and spaces, on the exposure to social and class diversity, or on myriad other ways to ‘rightfully’ partake of the city. It also builds heavily on a specific understanding of the relations between cities and nation-states in a way that is particularly relevant for understanding the problems of Jerusalem. Not unlike the classical arguments formulated by Max Weber and paralleled more recently in work by Manuel Castells,¹³ Lefebvre suggests that where cities are dominated by or fused with states one is likely to see violence and a “vacillat[ion] between democracy and tyranny.”¹⁴ The assumption here is that in order to eliminate violence and tyranny, and restore the possibilities for democracy in both city and society at large, this fusion must be challenged.¹⁵ Of course, given

¹⁰ Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*, p. 157, 158.

¹¹ Henri Lefebvre, “The Right to the City,” pp. 158 in H. Lefebvre, *Writing on Cities* (Blackwell Publishers, 1996).

¹² *Ibid.* 158.

¹³ See Manuel Castells’ discussion of the comunidades de Castilla in *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements* (University of California, 1983).

¹⁴ “Rhythmanalysis of Mediterranean Cities,” in *Ibid.*, p.232. This formulation comes from Lefebvre’s analysis of Mediterranean cities. He further notes that in city-states, or places where there is a fusion of city and state, “the State, whether it be inside or outside the city, always remains brutal and powerless, violent but weak, unified by always undermined, under threat.” *Ibid.* p. 233.

¹⁵ The importance of freeing sub-national territories from state domination if democracy is to flower was in fact a central theme in a recent commentary by Tony Judt titled “Jerusalem: The Alternative,” in *The New York Review of Books* (September 25, 2003, pp. 8-9). Although Judt is not an urbanist, nor was he explicitly concerned with

the nature of this challenge and the fact that states are not about to disappear, any progress in disarticulating city and state (national or otherwise) must be best measured in degrees rather than as a total break. Still, Lefebvre is not alone in advocating for a conception of the city as operating on its own terms in order to sustain a society's greatest potential; nor is he alone in seeing cities as the territorial location most likely to generate democratic institutions and practices.

Writing about an entirely different time and place, urban legal theorist Gerald Frug comes to similar conclusions about the challenges to democracy and social justice that arise when cities are dominated by states or not allowed to flower as autonomous domains of decision-making that "gather" – to use Lefebvre's notion -- the multiple localities and social collectivities that constitute society. Taking the U.S. as his focus for study, Frug argues that overbearing "state control has reduced the importance of cities as instruments of public policy and thereby diminished the opportunity for widespread participation in public decision making" in a way that challenges basic fundamentals of liberal democracy. But in a departure from many other urban democratic theorists, especially those who build on the Tocquevillian tradition of reifying neighborhoods, communities, and other smaller-scale territorial units as the bedrock of democracy, Frug is clear in advocating for empowerment and autonomy on the level of the city -- understood as a jurisdictional, legal, and spatial entity larger than the neighborhood but smaller than the nation and sub-national states. In fact, Frug goes so far as to suggest that the legal contours of overly localized power, which in the U.S. rest on the asserted superiority of private interests, both individual and corporate, prevent cities from fulfilling their democratic and civil society function by turning them into "vehicles for separating and dividing different kinds of people rather than bringing them together, withdrawal from public life rather than engagement with others, and the multiplication of private spaces instead of walkable streets and public parks."¹⁶ And the reason for this, he argues, is that this legal context of localism "treats autonomous individuals and the nation-state...as interested in pursuing their own self-interest" in ways that challenge the independent capacity of cities to guarantee the collective urban interest.¹⁷

To be sure, given his focus on the U.S., what Frug has in mind when he uses the notion of city is the metropolitan area, not so much the city's formally cast political boundaries -- many of which trace to earlier historical moments when transportation technology and other political requisites kept American cities relatively circumscribed in size. One of his main concerns is that the divisions between central cities and their suburbs help reinforce fragmentation and spatial separation on the basis of race, income, or other forms of privilege

Jerusalem in his article, he does identify the Israeli state's occupation of contested territorial areas that in urban ecological terms constitute part of the Jerusalem metropolitan area (Samaria, Judea, and Gaza in Judt's view) as a Gordian knot guaranteeing that "Israel will be either a Jewish state (with an every larger majority of un-enfranchised non-Jews) or it will be a democracy. But logically it cannot be both."

¹⁶ Frug, *City Making: Building Communities without Building Walls*, pp. 8-9. Again, it is worth emphasizing that when Frug uses the word city in contradistinction to locality he has in mind the idea of cities as metropolitan bodies which extend in space to include a variety of (fragmented) localities where some form of deliberative power rests.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

that together undermine democratic deliberation in the urban area as whole. But such concerns – in addition to replicating Lefebvre’s intent to envision cities as reflections of society in all its diversity -- merely underscore the importance of thinking of how and on what basis to define the urban unit of analysis around which claims for the right to the city might be forged. They also are relevant to Jerusalem, where questions and concerns about the distinction between the city and the metropolitan area are in fact now on the urban, social, and political agenda. In the case of Jerusalem, questions about what the formal bounds of this future city could or should be in any imagined future are bound to be as controversial as the notion of “denationalizing” the city, and indeed many will see the two issues as intricately connected. Yet as with the latter, progress can be made by discussing what is gained and what is lost *in urban terms* (lifestyles, flows of people can activities, access to historical and cultural spaces, etc.) when certain boundaries are proposed.

And even when restrictive boundaries persist, it is still worth considering whether and how the power of design can be harnessed to a more positive vision of the city. An analogous situation, echoing our project, could be found in the Hauptstadt Berlin competition of the late 1950s, when the West Germans attempted to envision what a unified city would look like in the future. The plan was never implemented, of course, since the East Germans would have nothing to do with its originating premises. Instead, not long afterwards, they erected the Berlin Wall. Even so, one can certainly argue that there was considerable value to the effort to conceptualize a future unified city, and that this kind of forward-looking thinking may well have been useful when, more than three decades later, the city was actually re-unified. Perhaps the Hauptstadt Berlin competition would have been more powerful had it been explicitly visionary and had attempted to project a “Berlin 1990” future, as we seek to do with Jerusalem. Is there not some value in offering the vision -- if not the tools -- for a city’s rebirth just at the moment it seems to have been irreparably torn apart?

The Value of Historical Imagination

So why at this time in history would we want to think about a new vision for Jerusalem as a city that is institutionally autonomous from competing nation-states while at the same time capable of collectively embracing all the distinctive religious or ethnic groups that people it? To embark on such a project, which calls for an analytical bypassing of nation-states, will not only invite controversy and opposition both within and outside the Middle East, primarily because it entails working against the grain of prevailing approaches to conflict resolution proposed by peacemaking specialists for the Middle East and most other regions of the world.¹⁸ It also will require critical reflection on past failed efforts to establish Jerusalem’s relative “independence” as a city, especially as embodied in the 1947 and 1948 UN mandates to make Jerusalem an international jurisdiction under UN trusteeship. If such efforts to de-link

¹⁸In Bruce Stanley’s words, “[t]he urban scale, as a site for or actor in the resolution of international social conflicts, ethno-national conflicts or inter-state war,” is generally not considered in contemporary international relations literature or practice (although in studies of earlier historical periods, the same cannot be said). See Bruce Stanley “City Wars or Cities of Peace: (Re)Integrating the Urban into Conflict Resolution,” *Globalization and World Cities Study Group Network (GaWC) Research Bulletin* 123, October 2003, pp. 11-12.

Jerusalem from the nationalist claims of Arab and Israeli nation-states were so unsuccessful in the past, why would we consider that they might be revived in some form now --even if only in imagining the future? After all, it was precisely the inability of the parties to the 1947 UN resolution on Jerusalem to separate the question of the city from the nation (Israel and Jordan at the time) that undermined the international resolution for Jerusalem in the first place, despite its passage by the UN.

One commanding reason it is worth proposing that the city serve as the analytic entry point for producing peace is the fact that conditions change, and with historical change we see new opportunities that may have been foreclosed in the past. Indeed, the world is a different place that it was when the original UN resolution on Jerusalem was produced more than half a century ago. Now we are facing a world in which the powers and responsibilities of the nation-state are being transformed by globalization, when the asserted value of the state as the primordial agent of domestic politics is under question on a variety of fronts, and when cities themselves are becoming actors in the global scene.¹⁹ In the words of Manuel Castells, “the tendency towards state centralism and domination by the state over the city is being opposed all over the world by a massive popular appeal for local autonomy and urban self-management. The revival of democracy depends upon the capacity of connecting the new demands, values, and projects to the institutions that manage society.”²⁰ In the case of divided cities, Scott Bollens argues that the nation-state has already been questioned “as the territorial answer to the problem of human political, economic, and social organization. The disintegration of many states is compelling international aid organizations, mediators, and political negotiators to increasingly look at sub-state regions and urban areas as more appropriate scales of involvement.”²¹ And Bruce Stanley even suggests that ignoring the urban scale in peace building approaches “is to miss much of the primary restructuring occurring in the global order.”²² Thus we now are presented with an historic opportunity, grounded in real world changes in the relations between globalization, cities, and states, to be skeptical about the appropriateness of the longstanding fusion of city and nation, to identify its liabilities, and perhaps search for alternative forms of achieving democracy, the guarantee of rights, and other principled aims for residents of the city.

In a general sense, urbanists would not necessarily be the only ones to marshal their historical imagination to think along such revisionist lines, at least in terms of challenging the role of the national-state in producing intractable problems in Israel and Palestine. In a recent essay in *The New York Review of Books*, Tony Judt laid bare some of the local implications of struggling to secure national states built on ethnic or religious identities, and he suggested that this framing of the problem might be considered a legacy of the past that ought to be

¹⁹ Some of the first to make this observation were Manuel Castells and Jordi Borja, in *The Local and the Global*. For a general overview of the changing dynamics of cities in the context of globalization, see also Short and Kim (ed.), *Globalization and the City*.

²⁰ Manuel Castells, “The New Historical Relationship between Space and Society” in Alexander R. Cuthbert (ed.), *Designing Cities: Critical Readings in Urban Design* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), p. 65.

²¹ Scott Bollens, *Urban Peace Building in Divided Societies: Belfast and Johannesburg* (Westview Press, 1999), p. 7.

²² Stanley, “City Wars or Cities of Peace,” op. cit., p. 2.

transcended in the struggle for a better future.²³ Yet even Judt is still trapped by his own presuppositions about states as well as a failure to explicitly recognize that the conditions of tolerance and diversity he seeks to enable are often most evident in cities. This possibility is already implicit in his own formulation of the problem and the solution. Indeed, when arguing for the importance of establishing political conditions that embrace pluralism and a multiethnic and multicultural experience, Judt gives as his example not another nation-state, but “London or Paris or Geneva” as places that show “Western civilization...[to be] a patchwork of colors and religions and languages, of Christians, Jews, Muslims, Arabs, Indians, and many others...”²⁴ Such understandings of the historic conditions of cosmopolitanism and tolerance in cities should be celebrated and built upon in the search for peace, although to date very few have tried to do this in the case of Jerusalem.

Yet in using the experience of cities rather than nations as a starting point for imagining a peaceful Jerusalem fifty years hence, we must take advantage of the opportunities created by changing global conditions and not merely rely on the promise of urbanism. These changes include the rapidly accelerating globalization of the world economy, which has created new constraints on the capacities of nation-states to control economic, cultural, and social dynamics within their borders, thereby placing a wedge between nation-states and the basic actors and institutions responsible for conditions within countries and cities.²⁵ More importantly, with these new global dynamics many cities have been empowered vis-à-vis their host nation states in ways that are relatively unprecedented in modern history. Not since the pre-modern period when cities existed as sovereign political and economic entities, have certain urban locations been catapulted to such a position in the global economy. Of course, globalization does not empower all cities equally; and it does not mean that every urban location – including a city like Jerusalem – holds the potential to become the economic and political powerhouse of a London or a New York or a Tokyo. After all, globalization can also make cities dependent on external actors and institutions in ways that limit their economic and political autonomy. But the point is that globalization is changing the nature and character of economic and political relations between cities, nations, and their constituent actors and institutions. The increased global flows of capital and the concentration of globally-networked activities have offered many cities new opportunities to solicit or manage foreign investments, sign transnational

²³ Tony Judt, “Jerusalem,” *op. cit.* Specifically, Judt argues that the problem of the Arab-Israeli conflict owes to the fact that “the founders of the Jewish (nation) state had been influenced by the same concepts and categories as their fin-de-siècle contemporaries back in Warsaw, or Odessa, or Bucharest,” meaning that the “problem with Israel, in short, is not – as is sometimes suggested – that it is a European ‘enclave’ in the Arab world; but rather that it arrived too late. It has imported a characteristically late-nineteenth century separatist project into a world that has moved on, a world of individual rights, open frontiers, and international law....The very idea of a ‘Jewish state’ -- a state in which Jews and the Jewish religion have exclusive privileges from which non-Jewish citizens are forever excluded – is rooted in another time and place.”

²⁴ Judt, *Ibid.*, p. 10.

²⁵ For example, much of the globalization literature highlights the important role played by transnational actors – ranging from corporations and capitalists to social movements – in molding conditions inside countries in relatively unprecedented ways. For some of the best treatments of this subject, see recent work by Leslie Sklair and Joseph Stiglitz.

agreements, and act with many of the same capacities previously reserved for nation-states. And as cities themselves become key global actors, we are beginning to see the development of city-to-city alliances and affiliated institutions and practices that further empower cities and their citizens vis-à-vis nation states.²⁶ Such real world changes, wrought by the last several decades of globalization, could be harnessed in the service of imagining a new and different Jerusalem, free from the ongoing nationalist struggles that have made it much more divided, contested, fragmented, and ethnically circumscribed than it was even in 1947.

Yet history – and historical imagination -- is relevant not only in the sense that, with changed temporal conditions, now may be a good time to rethink the original idea of an international city free from any particular nationalist control, and structured around uniquely “urban” needs. It also valuable in its more conventional sense: as a reference point for past legacies which continue to mark the present. Jerusalem’s long and complex history not only shows us how destructive were early twentieth-century efforts to impose a nation-state logic on this religiously and ethnically diverse city, which for centuries had functioned relatively well without a single sovereign nation.²⁷ It also offers some clues as to how and why efforts to imagine a city belonging to no nation-state(s) might bring it one step closer to peace. Indeed, if one looks to back to Jerusalem’s history, it is clear that while ethnic, religious, and nationalist claims are old, none are older than those claims about the right to the city²⁸.

During the end of the Ottoman Period, when Jerusalem was a key node in the Islamic imperial orbit, there was no strict correspondence between nationality and place of residence in

²⁶ Most of the city-to-city networks are in place in Europe, facilitated by activities and negotiations at the European Union level; but they still set a precedent for other cities world wide. For more on the ways that globalization has changed the status of cities, see recent work by Saskia Sassen, Anthony King, and others mentioned earlier.

²⁷ To be sure, long before the partition of Palestine in 1948, the efforts of “imagined communities” of religious authority to imprint their character on Jerusalem -- or make it theirs in a cultural or symbolic sense -- brought tension and controversy. Yet despite this fact, deeply grounded in the longstanding history of Jerusalem as a sacred locale for the world’s three great religions, it was not until nation-states started making sovereignty claims on Jerusalem that pervasive violence and intractable urban conflicts truly became the norm. This was first clear during the two World Wars, when the nation-states in question were neither Palestine nor Jordan nor Israel but other colonial, imperial, or global powers whose struggles to exert dominion over Jerusalem factored into their own plans for war-making and national sovereignty

²⁸ Given that the three religions competing for the city converge in their belief in certain passages of the Bible, the contestation does not tend to be about the holiness of the space, but rather about who is a legitimate occupier of it. For example, in the late Ottoman days it was common for different religious group to compete among each other for control over maintenance of the Holy Sepulcher, or of the steps leading to it. European nations then used these claims to extend their national influence in Jerusalem, especially at the beginning of the 20th century. In the words of the German historian Schölch “The Europeans powers did not strive for territorial controls in Palestine but for ‘influence.’ The easiest way to establish ‘influence was the policy of ‘protection’ of religious minorities. The Russians already has the Orthodox Christians and the French had the Catholics to ‘protect’. To make things even, England and Prussia (later Germany) tried to find or create their own minorities to be ‘protected.’ From 1839 the British took the Jews under their wing, and a small Protestant community was created by way of conversion. The policy of religious-cultural penetration and of ‘religious protectorates’ thus made Jerusalem an arena of European rivalries.” From Alexander Schölch “19th Century,” cited by Dumper in ‘The Politics of Jerusalem since 1967.’.

Jerusalem, a situation that created a delicate social and political equilibrium among the different peoples in the city -- but that also prevented extreme violence. Under a governing system known as ‘capitulations,’ residents of religious extractions/nationalist proclivities other than an Islam/Ottoman identity were governed by their own laws and differentially represented by relevant local consuls in all city matters. One of the consequences of this legal arrangement was that no single nation-state was able to establish a religiously or nationalistically-based political monopoly over the territory of Jerusalem and its inhabitants. This rather unique situation prevented the development of large scale social conflict within the city boundaries, in spite of the open antagonism that many groups felt towards each other. Yet it also meant that European nations would need to adopt other means for imposing their imperial claims. One such strategy was to establish themselves as ‘protectors’ of local non-citizens, a state of affairs which sustained the practice of continuous negotiation within and between local and international forces (mainly Great Britain, France, Russia, Germany, Italy/the Vatican, and the Ottoman government).²⁹ These negotiations generally revolved around which national state’s “clients” would be granted rights to occupy particular spaces in the city (especially those with primordial or contested religious significance). However, European nations also used Jerusalem’s ambiguous legal and sovereignty status to further justify their rights to intervene on behalf of their preferred clients. If during the Ottoman Empire the fragmentation of the legal system set limits on the content and character of Jerusalem’s urban development, then in the framework of competing imperialisms the city was almost completely lost to its own residents.

When the Ottoman Empire was not strong enough to fully expulse rival European nations, and imperializing European nations themselves could establish full hegemony over Jerusalem, this system of clientelistic representation and negotiation kept extremely violent conflict at bay. However, when some of these nations began to feel more militarily empowered or challenged, this fragile diplomatic balanced was lost. At the brink of World War I, when geopolitical conditions on a world scale became unsettled and precarious, these vying nation-states soon sought to use their control over Jerusalem to strengthen their position in the global battle for hegemony. This was especially true with respect to Germans and their alliance with the Ottoman government, and with British military actions in the area (which included the creation of a detailed cartography of the area). The increased imperial and transnational power of certain European nations soon altered the way the space of the city was occupied. These transformations become most notorious in the period when British forces governed Jerusalem and imported their planning techniques, conceived in the European framework of exclusive nationalities. The spatial and ethnical mosaic and mismatch which characterized the previous eras was replaced by a conscious alignment of people’s nationalities with specific territorial areas of Jerusalem. It is in precisely this moment that the binary social and spatial understanding of Jerusalem as being comprised of Arab and Jewish populations (the same logic that later sustained the dividing wall) emerged – a dynamic outcome that can be traced to purposeful state planning action by non-resident forces who had little concern for the city as such.

²⁹ For a fascinating account of the history of struggles over Jerusalem and the current state of affairs, see Bernard Wasserstein, Divided Jerusalem: The Struggle for the Holy City (Yale University Press, 2002).

Of course, the inherent religious sanctity of the city also factored into its history of governance. To the extent that several of the world's major religions claim Jerusalem as part of their heritage, such declarations were historically used as justifications for minimizing the priorities of local residents, often at the expense of the daily-life conditions in the city. Of course, until religion became a proxy for the nation-state this practice helped blur the fault-lines of conflict among city residents, in no small part because it motivated Jerusalem's inhabitants to use external religious claims as the basis for disputing local claims for power over city spaces. Indeed, before the 20th century much of the struggle within and over Jerusalem was waged in the name of Christianity and Islam, albeit often through the actions of states (e.g. Italy) acting on behalf of certain religious communities (the Vatican). Yet, it was precisely the sacredness of Jerusalem that has made it a tool for legitimizing competing demands; and it was this uncontested (multi) religious sanctity of the city that helped inform the United Nations Resolution 181 (II) of November 29th 1947³⁰, which mandated an international regime for the city as a way of establishing unity among its diverse religious populations. And even though this arrangement never truly came to life,³¹ it reveals clearly the symbolic magnitude of what was at stake for much of recent history: Jerusalem was perceived as far too meaningful to the world's greatest religions to be administered by its own residents.

The larger point here is that Jerusalem's destiny has never been defined through the democratic acts or locally-cast desires of residents who are struggling in and for the city itself. Rather, Jerusalem's diverse peoples have been seen as portals – individually or collectively -- to symbolic and power contestations much larger than themselves, be they imperialistic or religious or ethnic. One of the negative consequences of this practice is the loss of democracy, as residents are routinely denied access to the institutions and practices to self-determine conditions in their city. Instead, the role, character and meaning of the city, and ultimately the preferred 'solutions' for its problems, have always been imposed from the "outside," on the basis of external reference points defined in terms of imperial, national, or religious aims. If there is something radically utopian in our proposal, then, it is the desire to empower Jerusalem residents to think from their *own urban vantage points*, independent of external national or transnational aims. That is, we want to encourage and cultivate an autonomously urban vision of the city, one that would be meaningful to the social, cultural, ecological and economic life of Jerusalem and its own residents – regardless of how this proposal would be accommodated within the larger nationalist or imperial claims.

Part II. OUR PROPOSAL

³⁰ "A. SPECIAL REGIME: The City of Jerusalem shall be established as a *corpus separatum* under a special international regime and shall be administered by the United Nations. The Trusteeship Council shall be designated to discharge the responsibilities of the Administering Authority on behalf of the United Nation". From UN Resolution 181 (II) Nov, 29. 1947.

³¹ After the 1948 war between Israel and the Arab states, the Israel-Jordan Armistice Agreement of 1949 divided the city between Jordan and Israel. Later, the Eastern sector was occupied by Israel in 1967 war and annexed in 1980.

Project Overview

This project, titled *Jerusalem 2050: Vision for a Place of Peace*, seeks to open new windows of understanding -- from within the region and around the world -- about the shared hopes, dreams, and desires of urban citizens from Jerusalem who want to make their city peaceful, but who have been prevented from doing so because the aims of competing national states to control this urban territory have pushed urban livability concerns off the agenda. *Jerusalem 2050* was conceived in response to the deteriorating situation in the city (from the building of the wall to the accelerating and ongoing violence) and to the failures of Track I and Track II diplomacy, the latter of which may partly owe to the great inequality in power balances among the negotiating parties. As a strategy for generating peace and understanding, this project differs from conventional approaches in several ways: 1) **It focuses on the city, not nations, and in so doing emphasizes the uniquely tolerant and cosmopolitan character of the urban experience;** 2) **it encourages imagination and vision, not the real politics of negotiation and political trade-offs;** 3) **it proceeds under the premise that when given an opportunity to voice their desires and dreams about the city, most citizens -- be they Muslims, Christians, or Jews, Palestinians or Israelis, residents or not -- are likely to find common ground and share similar sentiments about what might make the city of Jerusalem a vibrant, peaceful, tolerant and democratic place;** and 4) **it does not aim to be a ‘solution’ for the city, but rather, to provide imaginative tools which open alternative, innovative ways for discussing and eventually dealing with urban and political conflict.** In short, it assumes that the production and examination of “non-negotiated” visions for the city can generate new forms of awareness and open new avenues of dialogue that might help break the impasse that now seems to have stalled Track I and Track I diplomacy.

This project offers a multidisciplinary, multi-staged strategy for arriving at a new and more positive vision for Jerusalem, built around the mounting of an international, juried Vision Competition that will solicit imaginative entries from the region and around the world. This three-year long project has four distinct phases leading to a Vision Competition whose results would culminate in a book and a traveling, international exhibition of prize-winning entries. The competition is conceived with the understanding that all entries, no matter from whom or where they originate, will be expected to imagine (in terms of institutions, practices, meanings of place, renderings of space, interpretations of history, etc.) what it would take to create a peaceful, vibrant, and democratic Jerusalem in 2050. All stages of the project building on the expertise of MIT faculty and Cambridge-based affiliated scholars and postdoctoral fellows (we count among us a small number of Palestinians and Israelis) whose combined knowledge of Urban Studies and Planning, Political Science, Architecture and Design, History, and Anthropology, serves as the foundation for the planning and execution of the project in partnership with selected university participants from the region.

Stage One, already complete, sustained a series of seminars devoted to discussing the ways in which the imposition of the nation on the city has generated intractable conflicts in Jerusalem. Participants in the seminars also debated the value of vision and design as means

for exiting from the current conflict generated by negotiations among politically unequal partners. *Stage Two*, which we are now entering, builds on the ideas generated in the scholarly seminars and incorporates them into the contents of a Vision Competition. In this stage, background preparations include hosting an April 2005 seminar in which invited visionaries from the region and elsewhere are called upon to offer their views of a peaceful, democratic, vibrant, and tolerant Jerusalem in 2050. In this conference the city is to be conceived from a variety of disciplinary and conceptual vantage points (economics, law, religion, political theory, demography/geography, history, and literature). The narratives offered by our invited visionaries will be published in the competition booklet, and serve as a reference point for subsequent competition entrants, who will generate and render their own visions for the city in 2050. In this second stage, we also seek to formalize an academic partnership between MIT and several teams of scholars in Palestinian and Israeli universities, whose faculty and students would gather materials necessary for the competition and/or produce competition entries themselves. *Stage Three* produces the Vision Competition and enables a world-wide range of entries (more on this below). *Stage Four* disseminates the winning competition entries with an eye to policy worlds and the public at large as well as the university. The former is achieved by mounting a conference where relevant actors with the power to change conditions in the city (ranging from NGOs and other citizen organizations as well as government diplomats from the region and the international community) can reflect on the designs; the latter is achieved by a more scholarly analysis of the variations in entries and the overall epistemological value of the four-stage process.

Methodological Aims and Assumptions

We propose this multi-disciplinary approach because we believe that the nature of the city, and the way out of its conflicts, cannot be reduced to a single, negotiated view. In making this claim, we are reacting to the “consensus-building” approach to urban policy and problems now predominant in city planning practices, in which a shared commitment to negotiated problem-solving trumps all other approaches. In the case of Jerusalem, such strategies are sometimes part of the problem, leading to conflict over the terms and outcomes (not to mention perceived betrayals) of negotiation. Further, given the complex history and character of the city, those involved in negotiations are more often than not selected for their (national) political allegiances, not their urban loyalties, and thus do not fully represent the multiplicity of actors and views existing in the city. Thus, in order to break out of the stalemate that seems to have further reinforced despair and conflict, and that has served to relegate questions of urban livability to the back burner of national political diplomacy, we seek to bypass the standard route of negotiation between “representative” peoples and turn instead to the liberating and regenerative potential of imagination and vision. Rather than aiming for unity or synthesis among the competing parties in their plans for the city’s future, our project encourages bold and ‘non-negotiated’ visions of the city, with the assumption that only through such processes can we have a good understanding of the basic urban conditions on which most residents – no matter their religious or ethnic identity – can agree must be met.

A second but related ideological pillar of this project is the deep belief in design as a more radical -- and at the same time more subtle -- mode of mediating or even transcending urban conflict. Following this logic, then, we do not work under pre-determined or politically motivated assumptions about national sovereignty or ethno-religious power, which then are rendered by urban designers in the service of negotiated political aims. Rather, we seek to encourage “non-negotiable” views of urban life and the city’s future, both by its residents and others who might also accept Henri Lefebvre’s notion of the “right to the city,” views which will then be given life and form through the sensitivity of urban planning and design. As such, this project implies a reversal of the conventional policymaking approach to urban conflict, which is often mimicked by designers. Instead of assuming that design serves as the technical realization of well-defined political aims, we solicit the production of designs -- or visions of the city and its built environment -- that will be so imaginative and compelling as to transform or recast current political constraints. This might be accomplished, for example, by using design to re-align or re-mix the social and spatial relations between persons or communities who in the real world of politics have found it necessary to define themselves on the basis of binary identities (be they Muslim vs. Jewish or Palestinian vs. Israeli). The epistemological premise here is that because the city – or the urban built environment and the flows of persons, activities, and spaces that comprise it – lends itself much less easily to binary representation, there are many more possibilities for arriving at democratically “subversive” or socially liberating urban arrangements and shared spaces through design – especially as compared to formal politics. As such, a provocative or bold new design for the urban built environment could be instrumental in producing a reframing of the relations between (binary) political actors, thereby helping the city exist from conflict instead of merely giving form to contested but politically negotiated accords which limit what the city could be.

A Vision Competition: What It Will Accomplish That Other Initiatives Have Not

Given Jerusalem’s contested history, clearly we are neither the first nor the last to seek new ways to find a peaceful solution to one of the most intractable conflicts of our times. We are more than aware that there have been enormous and continual efforts to create peace among the Palestinians and the Israelis. Professional peace brokers, international diplomats, and Jerusalem residents have struggled to reach accords that bring the disputing parties together in a discussion of what needs to be changed. Foundations and non-governmental organizations world-wide also have supported a variety of grassroots projects and other academic initiatives whose aim is to improve the living conditions of citizens in Jerusalem and its immediate surrounds.³² Yet very different sets of actors and institutions have been involved in these distinct types of initiatives. Professional negotiators, bi- and multi-lateral peace brokers, national or international diplomats, and representatives of formal political groups (parties, movements, etc.) have tended to devote themselves to the what are called Track I and Track II diplomacy efforts, structured around formal negotiations among those representing

³² See *Appendix A: Past Efforts to Build Peace among Palestinians and Israelis*.

states or those with a serious stake in national sovereignty issues. In contrast, when the city is the subject of discussion it is mainly urban planners, NGOs, neighborhood organizations, and other citizen-led advocacy groups, involved in what is now called Track III diplomacy, who are leading the efforts at building peaceful co-existence in the city. This has meant that progress made on one front is not usually attached to progress on the other, with well-funded efforts often working at cross-purposes. For example, when Palestinian and Israeli citizens in Jerusalem get together and negotiate or agree on new plans for public space, shared housing arrangements, or other urban amenities, these gains are sometimes read as undermining power balances or negotiation efforts between advocates at the level of the nation, and vice-versa. Perhaps even more important, despite their failure to interact with each other the problems posed by these two sets of protagonists (i.e. those pre-occupied with national sovereignty and power and those devoted to bettering the city and) are intricately embedded in the other. And it may be precisely the embeddedness of the city's problems with the nation's that has most stalled progress, and on both fronts.³³ Without a solution on the nation-state question, peace-making in Jerusalem has been practically impossible; but without solving the Jerusalem problem, no peace between Arab (whether with a Palestinian or some other nomenclature) and Israeli nations seems likely.³⁴

The value of a Vision Competition for Jerusalem 2050 is that it can *temporarily de-link discussions of the future of the city from discussions of the nation and national balances of power, in ways that might temporarily bracket some of the larger sovereignty questions that have kept political negotiators and urban planners alike from being able to think about what is best for the city and its inhabitants.* This can be helpful on several counts, the economic as well as the political among them. After all, it is partly because national sovereignty concerns have over determined most of the policy and planning decisions for Jerusalem that the city – and the metropolitan region more generally -- has fallen into startling economic decline. Jerusalem is now the most impoverished and economically distressed city in Israel, in addition to being the site of continual violence and attacks. Similar national sovereignty concerns also have played a role in the building of a wall that divides not just peoples but open spaces, and that shatters the longstanding social and spatial patterns of urban life that used to serve as the some of the few ways that Palestinians and Israelis would encounter each other on a daily basis: from use of markets to labor mobility to access to basic health and welfare institutions. But if people were inspired to think about the city in its own terms, and were free to imagine what kind of spatial, social, and economic practices or opportunities would be good for the entire city and all its peoples, not just particular locations, persons, or neighborhoods, they would undoubtedly offer something different. Just to allow people the opportunity to express their desires in this way

³³ This was true both in the Oslo Accords and in the recent Geneva Accords.

³⁴ For a discussion of this catch-22, see Naomi Chazan, "Negotiating the Non-Negotiable: Jerusalem in the Framework of an Israeli-Palestinian Settlement." For a similar accounting that brings the view up to date from 1991 (where Chazan left off) up through the Oslo Accords and into 2001, see Wasserstein, Divided Jerusalem, *ibid.*

could lead to a questioning of the anticipated and unanticipated consequences of the “national” logic that is partly responsible for the difficult conditions that now exist.

All this is not to say that any such efforts to revive and restore a way of thinking about the city as analytically independent or autonomous from the nation(s) would be the only way to achieve peace, or even to suggest that such imaginings would directly lead to an acceptable new plan for the city, implementable in its proposed form in the current political conditions. Struggles over national sovereignty clearly will not disappear in this region (or elsewhere), even if a plethora of compelling visions for Jerusalem were to emerge from the competition. And for this reason, those currently holding the power to implement plans and policies in Jerusalem are unlikely to sign on to a vision produced by this competition if it does not privilege national sovereignty concerns. But that is exactly the point. Owing to the political and historical conditions at hand, this is not a competition with a client ready, willing, and able to build or bring to life the “best” entry, as is often the case with competitions (ranging from the building of Holocaust Memorials world-wide to the recent World Trade Center Competition). Rather, it is a competition designed to elicit visions for the city that tap into the deep desires and dreams of those who live in it and/or wish to see Jerusalem as peaceful place unconstrained by nationalist projects. Just the mere act of inviting, assessing, and acknowledging a large number of visions from a variety of interested people could change the terms of local, national, and international discussion about the city and its the future. Moreover, the knowledge gained from assessing the points of convergence and divergence among different competition entries (ranging from where renderers set the boundaries of the city to how they envision the management of different religious sites to what proportion of the city is to be opened to public as opposed to private or ethnically/religiously “exclusive” space) could serve as valuable material for policy-makers and diplomats -- who will have the institutional or national political wherewithal to make changes in the city and the region in the near future or some other time.

An additional reason we propose a Vision Competition for the city is that *our aim is to consciously depart from the conventional political negotiation strategies* used to engender peace in the region. We could label these as Track I or Track II negotiations, consensus-building strategies, or even as participatory planning. What each of these conventional approaches share in common is their commitment to convening the principal partners in a conflict -- Palestinians and Israelis in this case – in the common task of searching for, discussing, or negotiating a mutually agreed upon project or course of action. These strategies have become the bread and butter of the NGO world, such that it is difficult to find foundations or NGOs themselves who are not fully committed to problem-solving through the use of these commitments and techniques. Part of this may owe to changes in the fields of planning and policy, generated by the participatory democratic critique of top-down planning and policymaking. Part of this also owes to the legitimacy and opportunities for progress that such techniques lend to foundation and NGO activities. Indeed, to the extent that directly involving the protagonists in a conflict jointly in a search for their solution will help legitimize these collective efforts, such strategies are a key to overall project success. Further, bringing those most affected by policy or planning solutions directly into discussion of the available options

does give a needed dose of “reality” to the process, and helps insure that proposed solutions have some relation to conditions on the ground and to the desires of those most affected. Thus there have been reasons to pursue such strategies.

However, we also must be prepared to think critically about the conditions under which these approaches – as opposed to others – bear the most fruit. If anything, after close to two decades of serious negotiating efforts, conditions are worse in Jerusalem than ever before. It is our sense that in the case of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict generally -- and particularly in terms of our aims to solicit visions for a place of peace in Jerusalem -- it may be time to try yet another strategic approach, at least as a pilot or provisional tactic whose benefits will be evaluated and accessed in the long-term. That is, rather than bringing together a group of Palestinians and Israelis who currently live in the city to negotiate a mutually agreed-upon single, consensual vision (as occurred with a subgroup of partisans involved in the Oslo and Geneva accords), we will mount a competition that provides an opportunity for all interested publics to offer a vision. These visions will not necessarily have to emerge out of a consensual or negotiated process, but rather, they will give life to the deepest dreams and desires of individuals and their hopes for a more peaceful, democratic, and tolerant Jerusalem.³⁵

Of course, we fully expect that the majority of competition entries will come from the region; and as part of our effort to build partnership activities among Palestinians and Israelis, we will purposefully mount a small number of joint teams of Muslim and Jewish students from the city and region more generally who may choose to collectively render their visions for the future of Jerusalem (more on that below). But collective imagining is not the same as negotiation. To be sure, our medium and longer-term aims are to present the visions that do get produced in precisely this type of participatory democratic format, for discussion and negotiation with the key Palestinian and Israeli protagonists from the city and region more generally. But we do think that the most imaginative, creative, and utopian visions with the greatest emancipatory and politically path-breaking potential will be produced if the practical requisites of negotiation are not introduced too early in the process of visioning. Hence we propose to begin with a competition, not yet another negotiation process.

We come to this conclusion for several reasons. First, there is ample evidence to suggest these types of direct negotiations among Palestinians and Israelis are extremely difficult to mount and manage, at least at the level of the city as a whole, and that consensus is often quite elusive. It took years for the contending parties to agree on the Oslo Accords (and more recently the Geneva Accords were almost as difficult), and here we are, decades into such experiments, with both urban and political conditions in Jerusalem looking more treacherous as

³⁵There is historical precedent for believing in the constructive, emancipatory, and even “practical” power of utopian thinking, at least when applied to cities. This is evident in a closer look at the impact of projects as diverse as Fourier’s utopian urban vision to Frank Lloyd Wright’s broad-acre city, to Ebenezer Howard’s Garden City, as well as Le Corbusier’s work. Despite any flaws in conceptions, or controversy about their premises or aims, each of these visionaries was able to make a difference in the real world of cities by inspiring new ways of thinking about how to organize urban activities and populations so as to overcome the major dilemmas of their times. For more on their designs and their impact on city planning, see Appendix B.

time goes on. Moreover, some have argued that such representative but managed negotiations are often a part of the problem, because they raise difficult questions about who is entitled to represent an entire group of people in a negotiation about their future. There also are questions about whether this process really works well when there are serious historical and contemporary power imbalances between the players.³⁶ For precisely this reason, some even have argued that the 2nd Intifada emerged out of citizen dissatisfaction with the leadership involved in the Oslo Accords, as well as resentment towards these leaders for being compelled to negotiate away or compromise on conditions in the city that residents felt should be non-negotiable. Of course, these are very high level deliberations built on discussions of large scale concerns, including national-state priorities, not partnerships of negotiation-ready Palestinians and Israelis mounted on a small scale with NGO or foundation support. But the same questions will emerge if the city is the topic of negotiation. The question of who would be invited to advance the Palestinian and Israeli “side” in a vision competition for the entire city is in fact highly unproblematic. Will it be academics, activists, politicians, private sector actors, and why?

Second, the purpose of this competition is break out of the impasses of the past, not to yield yet another mirror reflection of the sorry and highly polarized state of Palestinian-Israeli political relations, or yet another round of subtle diplomatic intricacies. One way to do this is to reject the *a priori* designation of participants only on the base of a binary Palestinian or Israeli identity, something that has been all but required in the participatory, negotiation, and consensus-building strategies for this part of the world. Such an approach has not only served to reinforce a pre-conceived, essentialist separation of actors into two distinct camps, thereby making it even harder for individual participants to find possible venues of collaboration or common interests. Negotiations conducted under this pattern of binary (i.e. Palestinian vs. Israeli or Jewish vs. Muslim) identification are also hampered by problems of legitimacy, since leadership cannot genuinely represent their supposed constituencies. And again, the inequality of power resources between these groups harms the validity of the negotiations in themselves.

Third, we are committed to thinking about the city as the object of discussion and transformation, not the usual larger or smaller-scale suspects (neighborhood or community on the one hand, or the nation, on the other). In fact, we hope that assessing conditions and developing a project for this intermediate scale in itself will constitute some sort of analytical – not to mention procedural – breakthrough in producing new paths for peace in the region. However, when the city is the subject of study and action, it must be recognized to be a multi-disciplinary unit whose future cannot be determined only through political negotiation, and

³⁶ The position long supported by many pro-Palestinian activists, with Edward Said being among the most high profile spokespersons for this position, was that such efforts were deeply flawed. With respect to the Oslo Accords, in particular, Said saw the problem as resting in the fact that “there were not two ‘sides’ to the negotiations. There was Israel, an established modern state with an awesome military apparatus (by some estimates the fourth-strongest in the world today), occupying land and people seized twenty six years earlier in a war. And there were the Palestinians, a dispersed displaced, disinherited community with neither an army nor a territory of their own.” This in turn meant that “[h]aving nothing to give up, the Palestinians had nothing to negotiate. To ‘deal’ with the occupier, after all, is to surrender or collaborate” See Tony Judt, “The Rootless Cosmopolitan,” *The Nation*, July 19/26, 2004, p. 29.

only through the involvement of folks whose identities are set on the basis of religion or ethnicity. Indeed, why wouldn't we invited negotiation "partners" on the basis of economic function, or spatial location, or any other relevant "urban" identity that is meaningful in the life of a city's inhabitants? The idea that a political consensus would be 'naturally' translated into the spatial arrangement of the city reveals a deep misunderstanding of the inherently contested nature of urban spaces. Material configurations have their own norms beyond any policy imposed on them. Also, the city is not an abstract space which can be manipulated to follow a political project, but there is an inherent "urban" resistance to transformations.

One of the clearest examples of this is made evident in the discussion of politically imposed boundaries on the city. If Jerusalem is going to be economically vibrant as well as democratic, pluralistic, and tolerant -- aims which are in fact inter-related -- then its limits cannot be determined univocally through negotiated policies bounded by national sovereignty concerns. Rather, to make the city function well one may need to be imagining on a very different scale than of one were imagining a nation's future. Moreover, cities are multi-faceted organisms with infrastructural, servicing, employment, recreation, and housing needs -- just to name a few. To make a city vibrant entails thinking about how all the pieces fit together, something that is often sacrificed when nationalist objectives, like security, over-determine all other urban functions (as has been the case with the dividing wall). We believe that only through a multidisciplinary approach we could grasp these different perspectives; and we believe that the city's inherent diversity and plurality -- not a binary interpretation based on religion or national identity -- should be both celebrated and used as the basis for visioning a future. Following this approach, issues of sovereignty would be discussed in relation to the needs and varieties of scales required to make Jerusalem's economy, ecology, democracy, religion and all other relevant considerations fully functional, rather than the other way around.

Last but not least -- and to come full circle in a fashion -- we are committed to mounting a Vision Competition because *we want to be able to generate the best possible array of solutions for Jerusalem without prematurely foreclosing options*. These proposed solutions can themselves be used at later stages for discussion, deliberation, and development of consensus about what is needed to enable either the particular vision or its implicit social justice aims. That is why we are hoping to solicit multiple visions through the competition, rather than thinking about what it would take to get a multiplicity of fragmented and competing forces (split within and between the two "sides") to actually negotiate and agree on just one view. The visions that the Competition is expected to generate are not likely to be restrained approaches conjured up in light of what is only possible now given the real politics of the current situation. Rather, they are bound to be idealistic if not daring conceptions of what a vibrant, peaceful, and democratic Jerusalem would look like. Rather than shying away from prescriptive, idealistic statements, then, this project celebrates them. It sees the value of offering utopian visions for Jerusalem as one way of enabling protagonists to think "outside the box," with the expectation that such an exercise will help produce new or innovative options for the city which may have been overlooked because of prior constraints on framing the problem of negotiating the solution. Then we work "backwards" from these visions to understand and address the political constraints on getting there. By so doing, we hope to

reverse the conventional teleology and prevailing practice as applied to the city, in which political negotiations always take priority, with designs or plans always the outcome of politically acceptable ‘solutions’ rather than the responses to the urban requisites of the city and its peoples.

PART III. PROJECT EXECUTION

GETTING STARTED

During Fall 2003 and Spring 2004 seed funds from the Center for International Studies and the Department of Urban Studies and Planning enabled us to mount two Public Seminars at MIT to begin the project. The first seminar examined the topic of ‘Cities in Conflict’ and focused on regions of the world where the challenge of nation-building worked itself out in cities or where religious, racial, or ethnic tensions have a longstanding presence. One of the conclusions to emerge was the fact that many of today’s urban ethnic conflicts are structured around the symbolic construction of identity at national level, which then is displayed into the space of the city. In addition to this, we found that political solutions constructed out of national identity discourses tended to reinforce the narratives that had triggered conflict in the first place. Following these insights, we came to the conclusion that we must understand and question the articulation of the city and the state if we want to understand conflict, especially in capital cities since there is a dialectic of conflict that reinforces nationalist discourses within these cities. During the second seminar, titled ‘Cities Against Nationalism: Urbanism as Visionary Politics,’ we pursued this theme further, and invited speakers to examine larger questions about the relations between cities and nations. The *Cities Against Nationalism* speaker series was intended to stimulate a new way of thinking about relations between cities and nations (or nationalism) in comparative and historical context, and particularly the conditions under which these relations are established, transformed, and or transcended, and what this could mean for understanding urban conflict.³⁷ The format of the seminar entailed a general presentation, not necessarily focused on Jerusalem, followed by a commentary from a Jerusalem expert. We made an effort to invite representatives of both Israeli and Palestinian perspectives to make commentaries and to join the seminar. In addition, the lectures were discussed in a working group whose mission was to advance the Jerusalem Project to the next level.

It was through these discussions and deliberations that we finalized the basic contours of the Vision Competition and what we would need to do to make it happen. There are three key stages, discussed below: 1) Creating the Competition Booklet; 2) Mounting the Vision Competition; and 3) Publication, Exhibition, and Reflection of Results. To successfully work husband the project to completion, we will need a Project Director and Research Assistsant, who together would be responsible for overseeing each stage of the project.

³⁷ Guest in this series were Gerald Frug, Naomi Chazan, Lawrence Vale, Neil Brenner, David Harvey, Yosef Jabareen, Sumantra Bose, Tovi Fenster, Jo Beall, Raef Zreik, Richard Sennett, Leila Farsakh, Jonathan Glover, Leslie Sklair, Menachem Klein, and Bruce Mazlish.

STAGE 1: CREATING THE COMPETITION BOOKLET

For the successful mounting of the Vision Competition we first need to produce a competition booklet, which in addition to all the standard information required in a design competition will need to give life to the larger ideals of the project. These ideals include a desire to keep wide open the possibility of imagining an alternative future for the city, and a commitment to moving beyond the real world politics of negotiation that have led to the current transformation of the urban built environment (i.e. construction of the wall) while also foreclosing other creative solutions to the city's problems. In the service of articulating and disseminating these ideals, we plan to mount a Visionaries Conference, held in April 2005, in which we will invite scholars from seven key disciplines (history, literature, economics, religion, demography/geography, political theory, and law) to share their utopian views for the city in 2050. In the group will be scholars who now live or originate from Jerusalem, as well as those whose "distance" from the real politics of the conflict will give them a slightly different perspective. We have selected this particular array of arts, humanities, and social science disciplines because individually and combined, they touch on most all the essential aspects of the city's character, functioning, and meaning -- and by so doing offer a broad-based knowledge and interpretive platform upon which designers, planners, and other competition entrants will be able to build their own imaginative proposals for the city. The set of papers these 14 invited "visionaries" will produce, and the collective ideas they will generate through the inter-disciplinary dialogue that will take place during the conference, will be presented as vivid descriptions of possible Jerusalem 2050 scenarios. The expectation is that these scenarios, when published in the competition booklet, will give subsequent competition entrants a sense of the imaginative disciplinary scope and transcendent character of what we are seeking in the Vision Competition.

In addition to the scenarios offered by the participants in the Spring 2005 Visionaries Conference, the competition booklet would provide basic maps, graphics, and other visual and textual materials on the city, as well as description of the origins, aims, and procedures to be followed in the competition. The booklet itself, once disseminated, would serve three primary goals: 1) As a reference document it will provide the necessary information for competitors to conceive, develop, and submit their designs, as well as to familiarize themselves with the current political, philosophical and technical state of affairs in Jerusalem; 2) As a collection of inspirational visions the booklet will give life to the creative value and emancipatory potential of thinking in an inter-disciplinary fashion about the urban built environment in one of the most contested cities of the world; and 3) By underscoring the power of design and creative imaginings of space as a way of modeling social, political and economical outcomes, the booklet -- and the competition entries that it will inspire and enable -- can help contribute to educating the public-at-large about the potentially healing and regenerative power of urban design.

Visionaries' Conference and Papers

The Visionaries Conference, held in April 2005, will consist of a two day encounter in which fourteen 'experts' will be invited to Cambridge, MA. They will talk, listen, and react to each other's attempts to respond to the question of what a vibrant, democratic, and peaceful Jerusalem in the year 2050 might look like. We will invite experts selected on the basis of three criteria: knowledge of Jerusalem, balance, and disciplinary expertise. Specifically, we hope that some of our invitees would be deeply rooted in daily conditions in Jerusalem, while some of them would have a more global understanding of Jerusalem and urban conflicts more generally. Also, we would look for balance in elective affinity with Palestinian and Israeli concerns among participants. Finally, they would represent eight different disciplinary approaches to the city: History, Economics, Politics, Sociology, Religion, Law, Literature, and Arts. It is important to reaffirm that we are thinking about the issue of "balance" as we invite scholars for each of these disciplinary categories. But we do so not to reproduce the binary nationalist and ethno-religious logic of negotiation now predominant in most funding of projects for the region, but rather, to allow for a wider set of perspectives to be exposed, to reinforce the project's legitimacy in as broad a set of communities as possible, and to avoid unwarranted suspicions about bias and/or the truly democratic aims of the project. Thus our roster of participants will not necessarily yield the usual suspects. Far from asking invitees to come in "representation" of particular religious or ethnic or nationalist allegiances, we invite them as experts in a particular discipline who have an appreciation for the cosmopolitanism of cities more generally, and perhaps even an abiding urban interest in Jerusalem in particular. It is with these criteria in mind that we will ask them to offer a view of Jerusalem 2050.

Our hope is that each scholar will present his/her own understanding of what future designs or visions might make Jerusalem a more peaceful, vibrant, sustainable and democratic city by the year 2050. We also hope that sets of paired "local" (i.e. currently embedded in Jerusalem politics) and "global" (i.e. more distant from the ongoing political fray, but knowledgeable of the general situation) experts in the same discipline will comment on each other's visions for the city. All conference participants will be asked to collectively reflect on the ways that working with different disciplinary frames of references (or even the "local" versus "global" frame of reference) might have factored into ways of thinking about the various futures envisioned for Jerusalem. There will be a series of cross-disciplinary roundtables, the aim of which is to have scholars from each discipline examine their own methods -- and assumptions -- for the study of the city, and then compare them to those employed by the scholars in other disciplines. These issues, and a general overview of the Visionaries Conference deliberations and progress, will be synthesized in an overview paper that will also be included in the competition booklet.

We expect that one of the key issues that will emerge out of this discussion, and throughout the conference for that matter, is the question of boundaries, and what they could or should be given a particularly disciplinary perspective. We have consciously decided to leave "open" definitions of the territorial limits of Jerusalem for 2050, not just because we seek to liberate our visionaries from being overly constrained by the real-world negotiations and on-the-ground dynamics that have recast and made so violently contentious these boundaries over

the decades. We also work under the assumption that if invitees were encouraged to rethink the most appropriate city boundaries from their own disciplinary (i.e. sectoral) vantage points – whether they be economic, religious, social, or whatever, and explain the value of these renderings, we might have an additional basis for thinking about an alternative future, as well as for questioning the use of primarily political criteria for crafting the built environment of the city.

It is the openness with which we are approaching the current boundaries and built environment of the city, the disciplinary and methodological reflexivity we have built into the content of the Visionaries Conference, the decision to make an open call for competition entries, and the futuristic focus on fifty years hence that distinguish this project from previous efforts to offer alternative visions for Jerusalem. The closest approximation of our efforts was given life in a design exercise on Jerusalem hosted by Michael Sorkin (and funded by the Graham Foundation) more than a decade ago, in which a variety of projects for the city were produced and published. That project unfolded on the basis of fixed assumptions about the city (in terms of boundaries and the built environment as well as the value of binary representation), and with an eye less to livability and more to aesthetics. But current conditions in Jerusalem inspire us to question the implications of accepting these same assumptions and priorities today, especially now as the city is even more fragmented and even more contested than even a decade ago. With increased violence in the city and the region at large, and with a dividing wall in place, there is both more need and less scope for finding peaceful, non-belligerent, civic interactions without questioning the spatial status quo. The Visionaries Conference – and the larger Vision Competition aims towards which it serves -- builds exactly on this premise: that only imagination and design unconstrained by the realpolitik of binary representation and power are capable of offering one of the few roads left to peace.

After the Visionary Conference ends, participants will produce a completed paper -- which will be due within 3 months – for reproduction and inclusion in the competition booklet. Although it would be of extremely pragmatic value to find that a convergence of topics and hierarchies of action emerged from the invited visionaries' proposals, this is not the main aim of the conference. Its principal contribution will be to widen the ways of thinking and understanding Jerusalem, and how to take innovative steps to make it more tolerant, democratic, and vibrant. It is in the following stages – where we mount the competition, collect and evaluate the design submissions, and enable the policy discussion of the visions – that we will face the challenge of how to synthesize or act upon the complexity of views proposed.

Technical Material and Graphic Information

In order to produce the technical material to be included in the booklet, we also seek to establish partnerships with local (Jerusalem-based) researchers and universities. Our aim is to include their most updated information about the city (economy, built environment, demography, and so on), as well as to incorporate other relevant materials or data that might respond to the concerns and insights provided in the 'visionaries conference'. Again, one of the most controversial elements in the larger project is the delimitation of the borders of the city itself. We would like to think that the definition has not been decided *a-priori*, based on the

current real politics of the city, but is one which emerges from and enables the vision that each entry desires to depict. Yet in order to truly allow for such decisions, we would need to provide relatively accurate information about the local conditions in Jerusalem in terms of city infrastructure (water piping and sources, sewerages, transportation, energy sources and distribution, communication lines and technologies), built environment (building volumes, uses, materials and conditions), and social characteristics (population demographic data, mapping of social centers and communal activities). Given the scale and complexity of the task of collecting this material, we have already started to make contacts with local participants in Jerusalem, who in conjunction with student teams would produce the data and graphic material for the competition booklet. In addition, given that a great part of this information is time-variant, we would include it in a website, which will be continuously updated and enriched with information about Jerusalem region.

The Jurors & The International Advisory Board

In addition to the visionaries papers and the materials produced in Jerusalem, the booklet will contain an overview of the competition, a description of its connection to the whole project aims, elaboration of the competition itself, the characteristics of the future exhibitions and publication to be produced (with winning entries), and discussion of the composition of the jury and their criteria for selecting the winning entries. Given that we believe that the process is a valuable tool to broaden the horizon of public understanding of conflicts and the role of design, we aim to attract a broad audience, and would not be restrictive in terms of eligibility for participation. A special category would exist for those entries which are created from current residents of Jerusalem, and multidisciplinary teams will be encouraged. But in order to guarantee the greatest integrity and legitimacy for the project, as well as insure a steady stream of competition entrants, we will need to identify and involve potential Jurors (7 total) and members of an International Advisory Board, from early on. Jurors themselves will have to feel comfortable that the aims we have established in the Competition Booklet. Thus they must be incorporated into the process from the beginning, starting with the Visionaries Conference. They will also be involved in final discussions about the production and content of the booklet, as it will have to be something on which they are willing to put their names.

STAGE 2: MOUNTING “THE VISION COMPETITION”

We are aware that our project is ambitious: We want to open the competition to as many people as possible, and at the same time we want to find excellence among the entries. We truly believe that this is a didactic process which would enrich those who participate in it, and thus we are working under the assumption that with the right advertising, we will generate considerable public interest in the competition. But in order to increase our pool of entrants, the booklet and would be sent to a large number of universities, to Architecture and Planning Professional Associations, Art Museums, and Education and Peace Centers worldwide. The competition would be open for any individual who would like to participate, regardless of his

background or nationality. Still, diversity of participants is our best bet to have unexpected and creative results. In order to attain the quality that we desire, we must rely on four tools: a challenging booklet, a useful and informative website, international visibility and legitimacy, and a wise jury.

The Competitors

Given that we believe that the process is a valuable tool in itself to broaden the horizon of public understanding of conflicts and the role of design, we aim to attract a large audience from the region, and would not be restrictive in terms of eligibility for participation. Aligned with the spirit in which we created the “Visionaries Conference” we are beginning to establish partnership with universities in the region as well as beyond. A special category would exist for those entries which are created from current residents in Jerusalem and/or teams that include MIT students or faculty. In order to guarantee a minimum number of competitor designs we seek to established partnerships with universities in Israel, in Palestine, and at least one in Europe. The idea is that the project would be included in the design curricula of Architecture and Planning students, who would produce a team project for the competition guided by the course professor. Funds and technical support would be allocated to facilitate their participation.

Judging the Entries

The task of judging is inherently difficult, and even more so when creation is involved. One of the first questions then, is what to judge in the competition entries. Until Jurors are selected and given the opportunity to discuss criteria with the project team, it is difficult to be more than very general. But on that level, our response can be simple – even if the task of the jurors will not. The winning entries would be those who can achieve two goals: First, they must have demonstrated a serious commitment to envisioning a vibrant, democratic, peaceful, and tolerant Jerusalem. Second, they should show some effort to generate an environment that makes these conditions sustainable over time. The unique freedom that competitors would enjoy, such as the absence of national interests, international pressures, or the employment of a a time horizon which allows them to think beyond today’s constraints should not be taken lightly. In their designs they will be expected to take full advantage of these premises by exploiting the potential of what could be achieved in Jerusalem if one were to imagine a different arrangement of the city space and its institutions. Also, we suspect that the more these visions are relying on these premises, the more they can make them integral to the functioning of the city, hence collaborating towards their endurance.

The Jury would not select “the one and only” best vision among all entries – such an act would be contradictory with our stated goal of seeking to generate a multiplicity of new visions. But Jurors will be expected to highlight the entries that stand out, and to articulate the basis on which they do. Also, the jurors would consider how each entry relates its vision to the papers born out of the “Visionaries Conference” (published in the competition booklet). The aim is not to find the most accurate translation of them, but to use them as an inspiration for the vision produced, and perhaps even to respond to the particular weaknesses and biases of the

published visions. Either way, the winning entries should be evocative and also have the ability to convey the idea that their proposed Jerusalem spatial arrangement would allow for a different course of events to take place in the city. Moreover, they should spark such a strong desire for that new vision of Jerusalem that others might be inspired to find ways to accomplish it. If our fundraising goals are achieved, the top 10 winning entries would receive \$30,000 each.

The judgment process will start with a number of private meetings, when jurors will review all entries and finalize their deliberations with a one day open event to publicly discuss their thoughts and viewpoints with members of the International Advisory Board and working group. As stated before, the competition is as much a search for a product as an end in itself. With the first idea in mind, we would be expecting to find ideas that may help guide future development in the region. To the extent that this competition is intended to tap into the desires and understandings of those interested in Jerusalem, but who traditionally do not participate in the negotiations process, some attention will be paid to the profile of who is submitting the entry, and not just the product. In the jury's deliberations -as well as in the public event- they will be expected to explain clearly how these two criteria weighed in the evaluation of each entry. The aim for the one day event with the Jury is to allow participants and a broader public to understand the bases for their evaluation and the nature of the question raised by the entries.

STAGE 3: PUBLICATION, EXHIBITION, AND REFLECTION

Publication and Exhibition

The entries selected, the information and the material contained in the booklet, and evaluative texts written by members of the Jury will all be exhibited at the universities and cultural centers participating in the project. Considerable time will be devoted to exhibiting the competition results among a variety of neighborhoods peopled by Arabs and Jews in and outside the city of Jerusalem. We will solicit their responses and reflections on the ideas, and whenever possible, convene them together for collective discussion of the entries. In addition, the competition results will be disseminated to cultural and community centers at different cities in the world, especially those locations identified as 'cities in conflict.' The hope is that the visions produce for the case of Jerusalem could inspire protagonists in other conflictive cities to take the results generated in this case and translate them to their own context.

A book of the winning designs (and commentaries on them by Jurors and other invited scholars) will also be published. The book will also contain the collection of essays and writings produced at all stages of the "Jerusalem-A Vision for a Place of Peace" project. It will include further reflection by some of the organizers of the project and, last but not least, the reactions generated by the exhibition at different cities. Once the book is printed and distributed, this project would be completed, although the task of enabling a new City of Peace would only have just started.

Reflection and Practical Action

The final stage of the project involves dissemination of the winning competition entries in the policy world and the public at large. This would be achieved by mounting a conference where those relevant policy actors with the most power to change conditions in the city (ranging from NGOs and other citizen organizations – religious and secular -- as well as planners and government diplomats from the region and the international diplomatic community) can reflect on the designs and the commentaries produced by citizens in the region itself. Essentially, the questions to be raised in this event will concern the practical value of the visions and the exercise overall, and what might be learned from them. Do they open new windows of understanding about how to organize the city in a more democratic and tolerant way, and what would it take to implement one or all of these visions?

In addition, our aim is to assess the scholarly value of the competition, something to be achieved by empirical and analytical reflection of the nature of variations in entries and the overall epistemological value of the four-stage process. This will be accomplished by convening a group of scholars representing the fields of urbanism, politics, and Middle East studies, who would then discuss whether and why the competition was able to provide a new way of understanding Jerusalem and whether and why such understandings could effect change in the region. For example, conference participants will reflect on the extent of consensus or disagreement about the basic dimensions, character, and nature of the city. They will seek to understand why some scenarios may have generated more entries than others did. They will look for common hopes and aspirations about the city, as well as differences, and whether they are grounded in different ideological beliefs and views of the city or something else. These analyses will also be published in a book, completing the cycle of reflection and learning while also producing yet another way of understanding what is at stake in the city and how much room for maneuver there is for change.