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Ramallah : from '*sumud*' [resilience] to corporate identity

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Ramallah stepped into the twentieth century as a village and by the 1990s it was the small city in the shades of Jerusalem. During the first Intifada (1987-1993) it assumed the role of political command center, where the governing motto of the streets was Sumud, means 'resilience', 'steadfastness', and within that fold popular unity. Upon the launching of the Peace Process Ramallah gradually gained increasing power as the headquarters of the Palestinian Authority. Today it is the uncontested political, economic and cultural center of the OPTs, performs under a consumption-oriented neoliberal economy, and is growing at an alarming pace. This paper examines the change in the perception of the city and its community through primary testimonies; narrating the social and spatial transformations that took place since 1994 as perceived by various typologies of residents. These perceptions are exemplified hand-in-hand with the urbanization pattern in the specific colonial context.

Keywords: Oslo Accords, Ramallah, Otherness, Individuality vs. Collectivism

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Introduction: From Oslo to Ramallah

This paper falls within the scope of a larger research which is examining the socio-spatial shifts resulting from the development processes that have been taking place in the Palestinian city of Ramallah since the signature of the Oslo Accords (OAs) in 1993 between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). During the course of the study it became increasingly evident that what started as secret negotiations in Scandinavian Oslo with rosy promises; that promise has become a confusing predicament for a town that not knowingly turned into the *de facto* capital of a non-existing state. The OAs came as a result of a seven-year popular civil disobedience by the Palestinians against the Israeli occupation, which lasted from 1987 to 1993. This period is known as the 'First Intifada'. It was characterised by non-violent resistance rooted in communities of high social cohesion and solidarity under the collective goal of achieving freedom in the form of statehood.

The OAs are the first agreement to be signed between the Israeli Government and the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. It was envisioned as an agreement that marks the beginning of a five-year interim period, during which the PLO builds state institutions in the form of a Palestinian Authority (PA) that would govern and cater for the needs of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. This process of transition of power was to be funded by the international community.

Today in 2012 and eighteen years after the signature, the five-year interim period has not come to an end, and the international community is still channelling aid to the PA, which has technically and in turn expired thirteen years ago. Since more than six decades the dominant Palestinian political discourse and main collective cause has been a nationalistic one, that of the State. The OAs in turn were formulated and brought into action as a process of State-Making.

Meanwhile, the social composition of Ramallah has dramatically changed, and with it the spatial configuration of this locality. This paper concentrates on the socio-spatial shifts in Ramallah since the commencement of the political process in 1994, as considered to be a direct result of the political discourse. It examines the change in the perception of the city and its community through primary testimonies; narrating the social and spatial transformations that took place since 1994 as perceived by various typologies of residents within this space. These perceptions are exemplified hand-in-hand with the urbanization pattern in the specific colonial context.

A total of twenty-two interviews with specialized professionals, researchers, politicians and decision-makers, investors, artists and journalists were conducted, in addition to eight focus groups with five distinctive age categories between autumn 2011 and that of 2012. A selection of those were chosen for the purpose of this paper² (detailed in references).

Ramallah: Entrapment?

The case of Ramallah is not unique, but uniquely complex. Ramallah is a city that entered the twentieth century as a village and by its end had become a *de facto* capital. Ramallah was always the 'rest stop' north of Jerusalem. This perception of the city remained until the second half of the twentieth century when the Palestinian national liberation movement and many of its factions arrived. Yet, it remained the 'backyard' of Jerusalem.

Fate took a detrimental turn upon the signature of the OAs in 1993. Israel imposed a complete closure banning access of Palestinians to annexed Jerusalem or its own territory.

² The code 'Name - INT.-X' is used to refer to an interview, and 'F.G. - Y' is used to refer to a focus group session; where 'X' refers to the number of the interview, and 'Y' refers to the age group of the focus group.

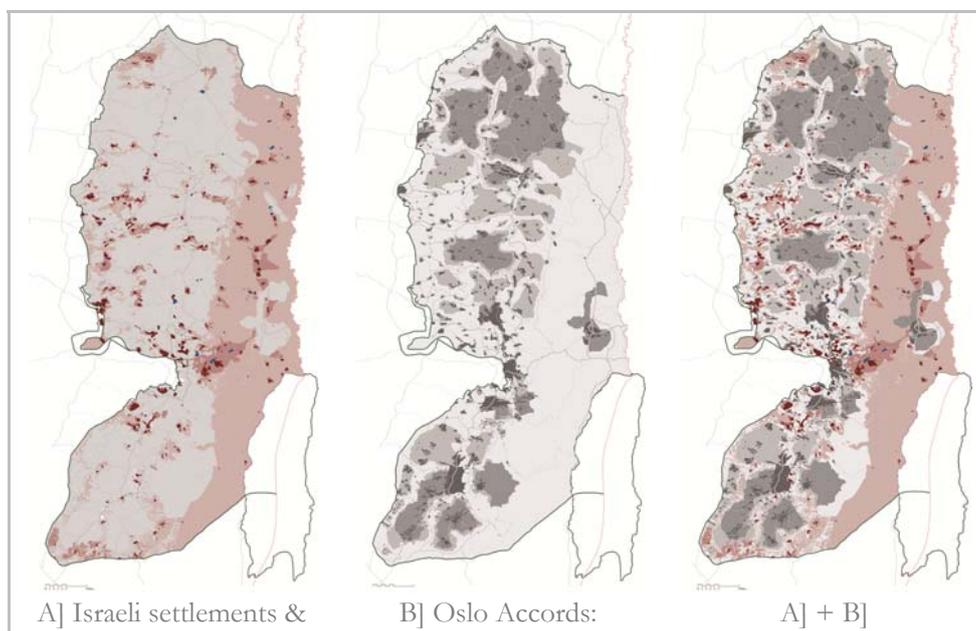


The result was a shift of offices and headquarters of institutions to Ramallah, in order to maintain accessibility for the Palestinian public. As for the Palestinian Authority's (PA) headquarters, Arafat³ preferred Gaza as the 'temporary' stop before the Palestinian state is declared in five-years-time; when he would move to Jerusalem, or so he thought. Meanwhile, a base was needed in the West Bank (WB). Ramallah as the locus of concentration of political factions, centrally located within the WB and the backyard of Jerusalem was chosen.

Besides geography, Taraki notes that Ramallah and due to its early internationalization had set an advantage over its larger twin-town El-Bireh in terms of a compatible social atmosphere that is attractive for new-comers, as well as its 'historic designation as a liberal, open, and tolerant town' (2008a : 65).

"In my opinion, the reason for [choosing Ramallah] is due to the social composition... Ask yourselves: why is everything concentrated in Ramallah and almost nothing in El-Bireh which is now non-differentiable spatially from Ramallah?" (F.G. – Fifty+)

A major complication for Ramallah is its geographic confinement. It is not allowed to grow to the south as that territory has been long confiscated by the Israeli government and incorporated into its 'Greater Jerusalem' plan. Towards the East it has fully expanded along its border with the municipality of El-Bireh. Towards the West it is approaching saturation along the border with the neighbouring municipality of Beitunya. In addition, these three municipalities – Ramallah, El-Bireh and Beitunya – are surrounded by a ring of Israeli settlements and their accompanying no-man's land. The only remaining corridor is that towards the north. However, it is only a short distance before Area A⁴ (in which expansion can take place) comes to end, and Areas B and C commence.



³ Yasser Arafat – co-founder of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1964, and Fatah Party in 1959. Upon the establishment of the Palestinian Authority (PA) in 1996 he was elected president by the Palestinian people, and ruled in this position until he passed away in 2004.

⁴ According to the OAs the West Bank has been sliced into Areas A, B & C, which outline the variation of authority between the PA and the Israeli Government. This is detailed in Fig.1 above.

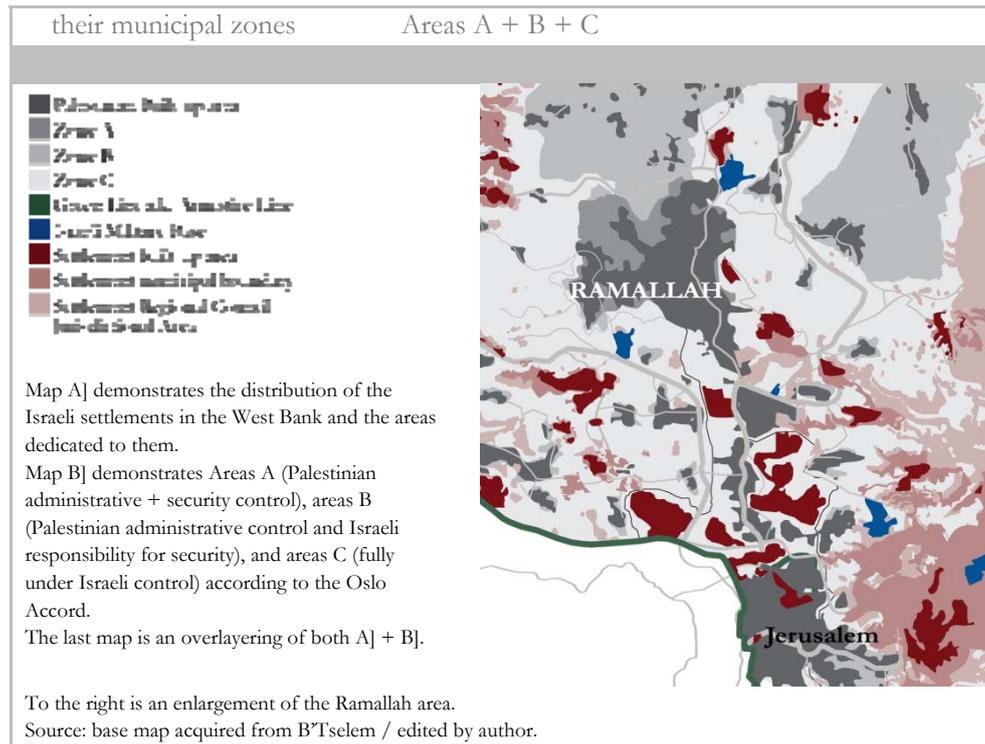


Figure 1. The Layers of the West Bank & around Ramallah (including El-Bireh & Beitunya)

First Intifada: *Sumud*

In the Palestinian context *Intifada* stands for “uprising”, and is associated with mass civil disobedience. In the contemporary history of Palestine the term has been used twice; for the period between 1987 and 1993 which is known as the *First Intifada*, and the second sparked in the year 2000 and was named as the *Second Intifada*. The end of the latter has not been named, and in comparison with the former it is not considered to be of comparative importance neither in terms of impact, nor to have succeeded in gathering significant popular support.

The *first Intifada* has been widely associated with the term *Sumud*, which means “resilience” and “steadfastness”. This stems from the dominant characteristics of the period of 1987-1993 in terms of the presence of a highly sophisticated network of grassroots committees that catered for the daily needs of Palestinians on one hand, and on the other was acting as the executive arm of the political leadership. The activities varied from social services for local communities to activities of resistance and civil disobedience against the Israeli Army and its Civil Administration. This was enabled through the elaborate network of unions and organizations which were established in the 1970s-1980s (Shikaki 1996, Arouri 2004, Taraki 2008). *Sumud* was equivalent to non-questionable social solidarity, commitment, voluntarism, and the collective will to sacrifice for the collective good.

“In the period [of the *first intifada*] in which the political parties were strong, there were social factors acting against any droop. Our houses were the cafés and loci of congregation. Did either of you ever hold a meeting in a café? when a journalist called for an interview with a politician? or the members of a party met? There were no headquarters for parties and the houses were the hotels and the cafés and all of the spaces that now have moved out of the house and into the city itself.” (F.G. – Fifty+)

“... if you say we are going to take youth and give them money to do things, at that time, we called this grand treason.”(F.G. – Fifty+)

The First Intifada remains to be an important reference when discussing the national Palestinian struggle, as the few coming pages will demonstrate.



Figure 2. Palestinian Youth on a day of civil disobedience in 1987, WB (source: hansimann.wordpress.com)

Framework: the city, the unit, the space, the social formation

Social impacts of development processes are varied, diverse, and immense in scope and literature. This section focuses on the increasingly present ‘otherness’ expressed physically in the creation of spaces of difference, and the emergence and intensity of social stratification and ‘elite formation’. In the case of Ramallah these two concepts are always crossed-compared with the notion of State-building, as this has been the main preoccupation of the political discourse.

Otherness and Spaces of Difference

Nations, States, and Cities are generally perceived as homogeneous units, and stereotypes are casually constructed. Nevertheless, Lefebvre argues that a city is not a single unit, rather a compilation of spaces of conflict (1991). According to Brewer (2006) nations associate with ‘collective memory’, where common history and experience play a major factor in maintenance of social solidarity.

“We cannot remain nostalgic to the political work, dedication of the masses, the secret underground activism and the romance of the process. This was an exceptional process, but not the norm. The norm is what we are gradually heading to, particularly here in Ramallah, with freedom of expression and choice amongst other aspects. This is not as rosy or romantic as the times of the 80s, but it is nevertheless the human norm; one wants to relax and enjoy his/her time as an individual, and if that means they will have to overlook the occupation, they will.” (F.G.: 50+ yrs.)

Yuval-Davis (2000) argues that there is no such thing as ‘pure’ nation-state. Building on Anderson’s (1991) theory of ‘imagined communities’, she states that ‘collectivism’ has turned into ‘us’ and ‘them’. These clusters have their individual sets of requirements for membership, be it language, ideology, or social class among others.

In the case of Ramallah these could be easily linked to the dichotomy between English-and Arabic-speakers, veiled Muslim and the non-veiled, the *Returnee* and the *Refugee*, etc.

“There were lots of new people arriving into the city, leading to its growth physically. There were also numerous investments. This was accompanied by the arrival of a political elite [Palestinian returnees⁵], and a growth in awareness; not particularly in positive terms. There was an image of a different living style that arrived, politically, economically, living style, construction/built environment, cafés and entertainment, which all led to a change in the track of the resistance. Ramallah was consumption based before Oslo, yet the agreement caused a dramatic shift and increase.” (F.G.: 30-45 yrs.)

Harvey asserts the inexistence of homogeneity by writing: "Social space is complex, non-homogeneous, perhaps discontinuous, and almost certainly different from the physical space in which the engineer and the planner typically work" (2009:35).

The absence of homogeneity is explained in relation to the observed variety of individuals, groups, and time in relation to ethnicity, ideology, and religion on one hand, and on the other age, gender and class. The width of the spectrum translates to the ‘multiplicity of identities’, which often and with time generates feelings and ideologies of ‘otherness’.

“The *Ramallites* including those who came and have been living in the city since 20 years, are now subtly fighting against the intruders. It has become about maintaining a form of existence. Loci in which the so-called *intruders* inhabit, are deserted by those who consider themselves natives to the space. Some openly say that they do not want the culture of Jenin or Hebron or other moving to Ramallah.” (F.G.: 30-45 yrs.)

“When they come from Nablus and other areas it is because they are being suppressed by the Israelis. So we ‘host them’ to help them make their lives easier...” (F.G.: 17 yrs. #2)

“Yes, when the people of Jenin all end up here then it will be over.” (F.G.: 17 yrs. #1)

“I am the daughter of Ramallah, I like walking in it, I have my memories here.[...] But today, it is impossible to walk in these streets, we became strangers in our own city.[...] I live in this paradox, in this conflict with myself. On one side this is my city, on the other I do not relate to the people walking in its streets.” (F.G.: 50+ yrs.)

In turn this multiplicity is the code for the creation of exclusive spaces such as gated communities and social clubs. Children grow to teens and later adults, subsequently the playground is replaced with entertainment spaces such as cinemas, cultural centres, exhibitions, restaurants and bars, or maybe the house, the family, and the worship place (Low 2000, Yuval-Davis 2000, Harvey 2009, Moreau 2009). Combined with the economic factor, this is generally what some refer to as the social production of space, which is a social, economic, ideological, and technological process of creation of a physical space (Low 2000).

⁵ Returnees: term used to describe the Palestinians that returned to Palestine / or entered Palestine for the first time with the signature of the OAs.

The otherness and differentiation of space further facilitates the human practice of classification and labelling, and creation of mental boundaries which in turn minimizes the contact and exchange between the different sides (Lefebvre 1991, Low 2000).

“[M]any of the new comers to the city even those of the lower-middle class, feel discriminated against, inequality of opportunities, and accentuated elitism portrayed in how they are treated by organization, or the people who feel that Ramallah is theirs, and so on. They do name some zones in the city where they choose not to go to, because of these attitudes against them. These zones are not gated with physical barriers, but are so in other aspects, mainly financial. So the point I am trying to make here is that Ramallah is spatially polarizing, it is becoming more socially differentiating.” (Faraki, int-1)

As exemplary:

“This leads me to speak about a growing scary aspect of Ramallah. In world cities they call them Shanty-towns, the *Ru'a'* (mobs) within a city space.[...] Like in *Im-el-Sbarayet*, *Beitunya*, and others... These are not exactly shanty towns with tin roofs, but the living environment reminds me of such.[...] This is a side-effect of the concentration of capital, where people come from other cities to work here leaving their families in their cities of origin. And it is from here that the naming *tailandieb* (Thai) originated in referring to them, i.e. like migrant workers.[...] So it might not be exactly a shanty town, but it is similar in terms of characteristics. I think if we had a Shanty neighbourhood, those people would all inhabit it.” (F.G.: 30-45 yrs.)

Given the capitalist structure of communities, Smith revisits Marx's ideas remarks that "social relations of capitalism are more clearly and sharply observable at the periphery of the systems than at the centre" (Smith 1995:236).

This argument is further endorsed by Harvey (2009), who asserts that groups adopt distinctive forms of behaviour and activity styles which encapsulate the individuals, and hence they do not penetrate beyond marked 'edges'.

“[F]or leisure, I used to be focused on *Pronto* until there was a 'foreign invasion' of it, and since then I've been frequently going to *Beit Aneeseh*, not to isolate myself, but because simply I feel comfortable there. Indeed, the places we frequent are influenced by the people that we hang around with and their taste as well.” (F.G.: 25-30 yrs.)

“[NGO employees] enjoy an income that is significantly higher than the average, and that in addition to their closeness to the 'foreign'. They visit a different set of cafés and restaurants, and enjoy activities that are catered for by their level of income and the accompanied privileges.” (F.G.: 30-45 yrs.)

According to Low (2000), boundaries whether mental or physical are an expression of territories of influence, and exist in places of 'difference' and 'contrast'; hence, where there are conflicts. These boundaries create the idea of 'the stranger' among the citizens of the area.

“It is true that you almost know no one within the city. And no one knows you. And particularly this estrangement is the goal of these strategies. Since the [Palestinian] Authority was established no one knows anyone else. This process in its turn has created a new environment, new organizations, new mode of thinking of the people and the connection and continuity with the past is missing. The sons of the past are still living with it, while neighbored by the generations of 1991 and after who have absolutely no relation to the former phase of history.” (F.G.: 50+ yrs.)



The multiplicity in the idea of 'the stranger' is in turn a reflection of the multiplicity of identities within a space, which are not only multi-layered but also crosscutting, which deforms the repetitive expressions of 'cultural preservation' and 'collective will' (Yuval-Davis 2000). In Ramallah 'the stranger' is many persons, the 'collective culture' inquiry results in extreme responses ranging between pure Christianity, conservative Islam, and progressive secularism. 'Collective will' beyond the issue of an end to the Israeli occupation is simply unidentifiable.

Stratification and Elite Formation

According to Taraki (2010) social relations and practices are dictated by people's attitudes towards events in history among other aspects, where the collective memory and culture is created. In this respect, Palestinian refugee camps were symbols for resistance and some formed localities for the emergence of what she refers to as 'alternative awareness'. Under the contemporary social shifts in Ramallah, the neighbouring refugee camp of Al-Amary is nowadays widely perceived as a locus of chaos, disorder and insecurity. This comes at a time where the city is experiencing increased consciousness towards social status and class, higher awareness to its national positioning, and greater fragmentation based on social class.

"On the one hand, they are firmly built into the national struggle against the Israeli Occupation and are valued as human reminders of the historical injustice and the abuse of human rights. The camps played a crucial role during the two Intifadas and regularly serve as visible symbols of the Palestinian struggle. On the other, [...] [today they are] looked on as outsiders, sometimes even intruders and are automatically positioned at the margins" (Alkhalili 2009:27)

"The national movement project for which there were decades of sacrifice, suddenly, when you see the camp which used to be the symbol of that struggle transformed and 'cleaned', you ask yourself whether that dream is still alive, or has been swallowed by the growing liberal economy and interests." (Anani, int-2)

These changes in perception of space and the set of dominant concepts about what is acceptable are highly influenced by the restructuring of the economic and – more importantly the – national value systems, and by such the priorities of the individuals:

"[The strategy in place is] about that of supporting the individual. At our times there were almost no Banks and getting a loan was a very hard process. One depended on the network for support, and only in the minimum. Today taking a loan to buy a car or house or make a wedding or whatever is as easy as going for a drink in a café, and that is the main source of distraction from the collective national struggle." (F.G.: 30-45 yrs.)

The growth of the Banking sector, the private sector via incentives for investors, and the proliferation of foreign-aid dependant organizations that are of 'high employment levels, low productivity, and expenditures on non-sustainable areas' (Kassis, int-3); together and gradually they led to the disengagement from the public sphere and its concerns towards the individual.

Foreign Aid Programs fostered the emergence of what Taraki (2008a) refers to as the 'new middle class'. Those are educated professionals holding positions such as high-ranking public servants and NGO workers. The PA has normalized a certain culture of 'privileges' and 'officialdom' through its institutions and through the western NGOs, which paved the way for the rise of formal looks, ambiences, and entourage. Short after, those were dubbed as the 'Oslo-elite' (Taraki 2008a, As'ad int-4). The concentration of this social category in Ramallah is due to:



1. The centralization of the public sector in the city,
2. Being the locus of the headquarters for a large portion of the private sector,
3. Presence of all foreign institutions and representative offices as well as the NGOs, and
4. Last but not least, the Israeli policy of closures and checkpoints which made daily commuting impossible (Abdallah, int-5).

In addition to job-oriented migration to Ramallah lies what many perceive as socially-motivated. Yuval-Davis (2000) argues that cities tend to become a haven for individuals wanting to escape commitment to the traditional form of 'culture', since in cities the boundaries between the public and private provide a cover for a differentiation in respect to what is generally regarded as normative practice in the confrontation between the individual and the collective through the exposed and hidden space.

"For youth, they are looking for a space of expression, of opportunities, diversity, amongst many other attractions that Ramallah offers particularly for the young generations." (F.G.: 50+ yrs.)

"I am picky, I only like the atmosphere of Ramallah!.. Even when I am in Jenin with my family, I constantly have the feeling that I need to get back to Ramallah. I have been in Ramallah for 12 years now." (F.G.: 30-45 yrs.)

Anani describes this phenomenon by saying:

"In terms of civil liberty, the growth of this trend in Ramallah faces as a down side the increased conservatism and radicalism in religion. The liberty of Ramallah is weird if you ask me. Youngs are leaving their villages and cities and coming here so a wider social freedom particularly in terms of the relations between the two sexes. But seeing girls, going out to bars and drinking alcohol is the fast version of liberalization without understanding the real essence of the concept. Those people still hold the same conservative beliefs they grew up with, but have taken a new outfit for social behavior. And one must note that there is no absolute freedom in Ramallah. In comparison to other Palestinian urban centers, yes, we have lots of freedom, however, in comparison to other cities like New York and London, we barely have any, we are still a village." (Anani, int-2)

Under public pressures for community alignment within the boundaries of what is perceived as the common culture, the play on the dichotomy of public-private coupled with pursuit of change in life mode leads to the creation of urban subcultures (Yuval-Davis 2000). With this background, Ramallah is starting to take the form of a cosmopolis that is isolated from the rest of Palestine, where new local forms and practices are emerging, and where the social sphere of Palestine as a whole is shrinking (Taraki 2010). This is physically exhibited in the economic functioning mechanisms (such as companies and NGOs), cultural activities (exhibitions and concerts), and the evermore-increasing number of leisure space and opportunities.

According to Lefebvre counter-culture and counter-space as forms of resistance to dominant order are in fact an expression of domination of bourgeoisie in a neocapital form over space. He argues that spaces of leisure are a form of division between social and mental spaces and realities, between the censorship and intellectuality, and between everyday modes of life and those considered out of the ordinary. Lefebvre considers these spaces as revealing of the breaking points between tradition and contemporary mode of life, calling them the "epitome of contradictory space" (Lefebvre 1991:385). Following Lefebvre's thesis, increasing leisure and economic spaces in Ramallah that resemble an expression of a growing bourgeoisie and stratification are a reflection of the Palestinian elite class (Brynen 2000, Taraki 2008, Aruri 2010).



Growth: the euphoria, the change, the missing perspective



Figure 3. Old Centre of Ramallah - a panorama image differentiating old structures from new. (source: author)

In preparation for the promised state the donor community pledged billions of dollars for the upgrading and development of the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) simultaneously with institutional capacity building of the PA. On its end, the PA provided all possible incentives for investments of their varying scales. The development processes that took place in Ramallah over the past eighteen years were neither continuous nor flowing. Several disruptions occurred, shifts in balance of power, and a great discrepancy between the declared goals and the results on the ground.

However, over less than two decades Ramallah was host to tangible and persistent processes of transformation, changing its face and personality. The population of the city has doubled between the mid 1990s and today: from an estimate of about 15,000 inhabitants in 1993 to 31,356 in 2012 (PCBS 2011). As for social relations, they shifted from focus on *Sumud* (resilience and steadfastness) in face of the Israeli occupation as the city assumed the role of the 'operations room' for the national liberation movement, to a globalized cosmopolis ruled by neoliberal consumption-oriented structures and behaviour.

A relative stability within the city that was custom-provided by the PA has provided a selective illusion of security and freedom that citizens choose to act on in order to maintain their mental sanity as As'ad describes it:

"We do know that we are not free, but in order to be able to go on living, and so that our children could see us as proud people, we have to convince ourselves that we do control something, that we do have an opinion. However we all know and silently agree that we are not free, and that we have a real crisis. I personally believe that people are stressed, phobic, less tolerant, and metaphorically speaking we are walking time bombs." (As'ad, int-4)

Summing much of the aforementioned aspects: behaviour, living standards and style and relating that to the urban development of the city, Aburahme describes the new middle class by saying:

"The current evolution of the built environment is, to a large extent, part of a clear and ostentatious mobilization of a middle class determined to become more socially visible, a class that has little interest in 'old' politics of national projects - a class largely preoccupied with social distinction. With its ascension, new subjectivities premised on consumption as a social value have emerged and, as corollaries, discourses of non-violence and post-national/civil-society politics have been disseminated to reach an almost hegemonic level". (Aburahme 2009:505)

Taraki also notes:

"[The new middle class have] truly grasped what this stage in the history of Palestine requires. The national movement died, Oslo is over, and it is the same in every other country in the region, people are starting to think individually and about guaranteeing their own future instead of the past collective." (Taraki, int-11)

The rise of individual thinking and the subsequent prioritization of interests according to personal aspirations rather than the former national collective gave way to the re-identification of the space within the city. Neighbourhoods become a reflection of behaviour patterns and financial status. There is a general agreement among Palestinian scholars, professionals and academics (Samara 2010, Taraki 2008a, Aburahme 2009, Kassis [int-3], Anani [int-2] and Arouri [int-6]) that this shift in social behaviour is associated with the consolidation of the neoliberal project in Palestine, which was promoted by the donor community through the World Bank and IMF policies. The neoliberal project has transformed the economic structure of Ramallah to a consumption-based behaviour embodied in the growing services sector. Aburahme warns of the 'trade-off':

"The right to normalcy, to the reproduction of daily life, to difference - all of which the occupation targets - are rights worth fighting for. As is the right to trappings, potentialities and contradictions of urban modernity, no matter how intellectually problematic these can be. But beware the trade off. Here, today, urbanization cannot be divorced from colonialism. Ramallah is spared the nightly incursions of places like Nablus and Jenin for a reason; if it is given room to breathe then to be sure there is a price to pay. Local and contained micro-freedoms are ultimately paid for with the disintegration of national strategy." (Aburahme 2009:507)

In this regard Yazan Khalili stated:

"The *status quo* should not persist. But what is missing is the alternative. It is not that we have no alternatives because we do, the issue is that there is fear of them. In my opinion it implies returning to an era that is harder than the current one. We are all part of this meaningless system and we are benefiting from it, I am benefiting from it. Nonetheless that does not imply that I would not prefer the dismantlement of the PA, because I do, as well as a return to a more organic economy that suits our political agendas.[...] In the end, we need to ask what is the goal of all of this? What is happening today here in Ramallah is absurd, in the sense of: 'what's next?'. We have neither achieved statehood and solved our existential problematic, nor not a state. The society has to take a move, has to get out of the current absurdity of the vicious cycle. This is what I meant by the general collective destruction. The personal success is based on a collective destruction." (Khalili, int-7).

Ramallah is expanding within shifting borders, reorienting socially in accordance with an ephemeral donor-dependent economy - from *Sumud* to consumption, and seems to be trapped in a permanent status of temporality.

"In the disaster of 1948 the refugees found shelter in neighboring countries as a 'temporary' measure. they left their food cooking on stoves, thinking to return in a few hours. they scattered in tents and camps of zinc and tin 'temporarily.' The commandos took arms and fought from Amman 'temporarily,' then from Beirut 'temporarily,' then they moved to Tunis and Damascus 'temporarily.' We drew up interim programs for liberation 'temporarily' and they told us they had accepted Oslo Agreements 'temporarily,' and so on, and so on. Each one said to himself and to others 'until things become clearer.' " (Barghouthi 2005:26)



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Selected Interviews and Focus Groups

Taraki, int-1	Dr. Lisa Taraki (Dep. of Sociology, Birzeit University)
Anani, int-2	Dr. Yazid Anani (Dep. of Architecture, Birzeit University)
Kassis, int-3	Dr. Mudar Kassis (Dep. of Philosophy, Birzeit University)
As'ad int-4	Shurouq As'ad (free lance journalist)
Abdallah, int-5	Ing. Mahmoud Abdallah (Member of Municipal Council)
Arouri int-6	Mr. Tayseer Arouri (former politician)
Khalili, int-7	Yazan Khalili (free lance artist)
F.G. – Fifty+	Fifty years old minimum
F.G.: 30-45 yrs	Age between 30-45
F.G.: 25-30 yrs.	Age between 25 and 30 years old
F.G.: 17 yrs. #1	17 year old Group 1
F.G.: 17 yrs. #2	17 year old Group 2

