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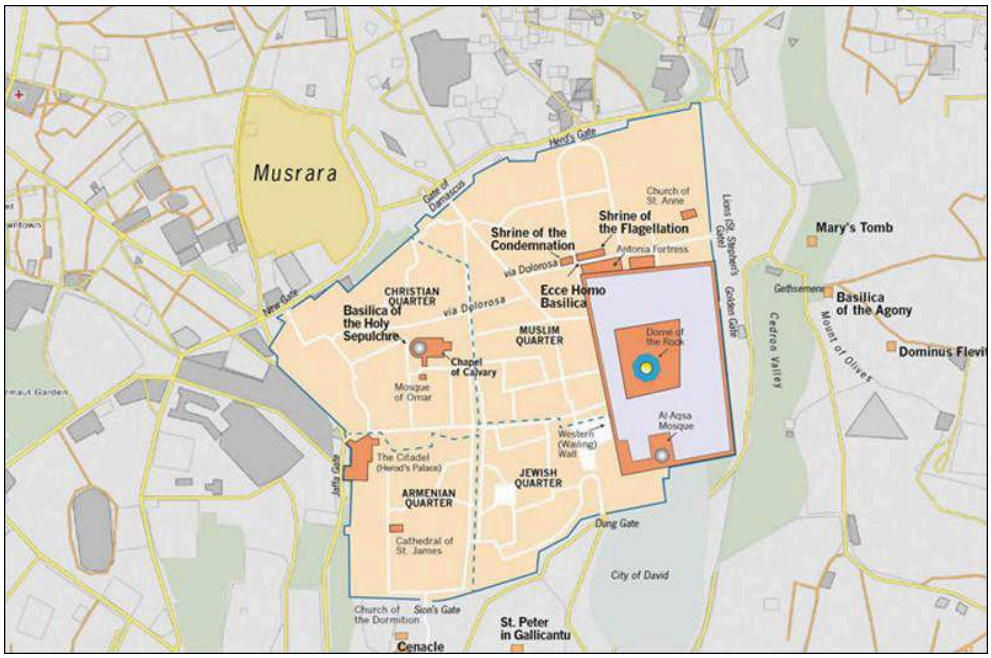
Introduction

1 The article explores the social and spatial complexity of the existence of a subgroup of Jewish immigrants from Arab and Islamic countries in a central urban area, such as the Musrara neighbourhood in the city of Jerusalem, before and after the major political event of the 1967 War, affecting and shaping the whole Middle East.

2 The Musrara/Morashà neighbourhood[1] is an area of Jerusalem bordering the ultra-Orthodox area of Mea' Sharim, the Old City, the Russian Compound and road no. 1, the main transport link, crossing the city from north to south and connecting the new fortress-style neighborhoods (some say, settlements) Pisgat Zeev with the south edge of the city, the industrial and commercial area of Talpiot. This main road used to be for 19 years the historical boundary between East and West Jerusalem, that is between the Jewish State of Israel and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Since 1957, there used to run a separation wall – partly built in concrete and partly made of a barbed wire – dividing the city into two halves connected only through the Mandelbaum Gate[2]. On both sides the two armies were staring at each other and from time to time exchanging fire and the area of Musrara, located along the border, used to be regarded as dangerous, and thus inhabited by low-class workers and poor "new immigrants".

Illustration 1 – Musrara neighbourhood's location



Musrara neighbourhood's location, here marked in yellow, is shown in reference to the Old City, marked in orange.

3 This article focuses on the urban and social history of the Jewish neighbourhood of Musrara, and the two theoretical notions investigated upon are those of "urban space" and "in-between people", as this neighbourhood up to 1967 had been a special case of an urban area of Western Jerusalem directly bordering an "enemy" country, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. In addition to the macro-dimension of a space contested between two States at war with each other, Musrara was also hosting a special community inside the Jewish society: a group made of a majority of Jewish immigrants from the Arab and Islamic countries (*Mizrahim*), an "in-between community" forced between the Arab and the Jewish people, and some Jews of old "Spanish" descent coming from Levantine countries (Sephardic Jews), culturally and linguistically located at the crossroads of "East" and "West". Thus, the analysis of the spatial complexity of the area, materially located at the fringes of what used to be regarded as a "Western bulwark" (Israel), was further complicated by the social presence of a mixed and non-homogeneous group such as that of those marginal Jewish groups, who had been relegated by the dominant groups to the (then) urban periphery (see Yacobi, 2008).

4 Yet, the 1967 War abruptly changed the position of the neighbourhood from "marginal" to "central", both from a spatial and political point of view, immediately after the military conquest of the Arab half of the city. Therefore, Musrara and its habitants were turned into a "core area" and "a crucial group", strategically located between the Jewish city and the Arab city.

5 Analyzing the urban impact of a major event such as the 1967 War and its memory from the perspective of the Mizrahi and Sephardic residents of the Musrara neighbourhood of Jerusalem, is thus emblematic of the economic, social and psychological conditions prevailing among the underprivileged Jewish groups living in the city in those years. Methodologically, the article relies heavily on urban and micro-history and a circumscribed set of interviews carried by the authors with Jewish families of Arab and

Sephardic descent continuously residing in the neighbourhood before and after 1967[3], questioned about their daily life and the natural acceptance of the danger to which they were exposed before 1967, up to the opportunities disclosed to them by the unexpected conquest of the other half of the city, the Arab side.

The wars' impact on Jerusalem's urban space: the case of Musrara

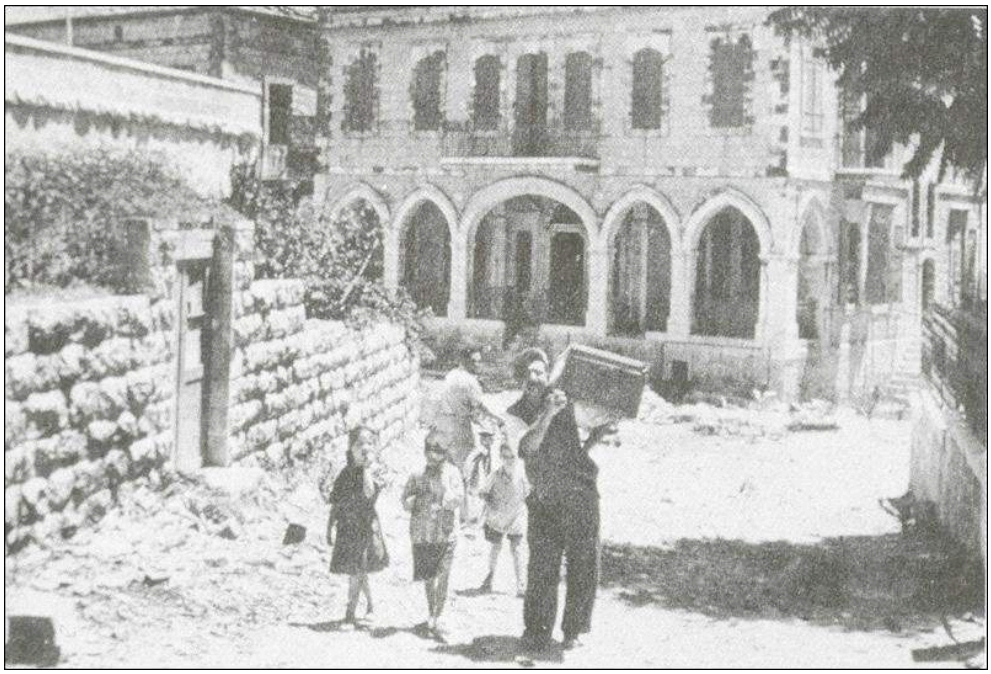
6 The city of Jerusalem did not easily fit into the inverse-Burgess spatial pattern as defined in the theory of the Chicago School on housing in Mediterranean and Latin American urban areas. According to the latter theory, in Southern European and Mediterranean cities rich people are concentrated in the city-centre and the working class relegated to the peripheries, whereas the reverse trend is dominant in Northern Europe and U.S. cities (sub-urbanism), where the city-centre hosts mainly office buildings, while the bourgeoisie tends preferably to live in residential areas located in the outer rings. The "Mediterranean paradigm" (Leontidou, 1990, p. 10) seemed to depict a model of urban growth characterized by low-division among neighbourhoods on the basis of class- or ethnic-segregation (if not "vertical", which means at different levels of the same building). However, the majority of Israeli cities do not follow this pattern. The latter are basically new towns and revolve around a city-centre whose historical value it is not much greater than that of residential areas located in the second or third urban rings, and where ethnic segregation is, indeed, a dominant trend.

7 Within the Israeli and the Mediterranean context, the case of Jerusalem stands as a peculiar one, as its urban growth and current outline did not bear any resemblance neither to other Mediterranean cities, nor to any Northern European or U.S. capital. The fact that Jerusalem has always been a city continuously at war, contended by two competing national groups and internationally disputed, has caused urban planning to develop under unusual circumstances altogether, compared to other Mediterranean cities. In fact, the same concepts of "city-centre" and the dichotomy of "core-periphery" in the context of Jerusalem are not clear-cut and easily displayed, as the areas concerned and their material structure are constantly changing. Many "city-centres" are simultaneously able to coexist and flourish, in relation to different economic hubs or ethnic groups (polycentrism). However, the Old City remains a central crossroad, and it is in this respect that Musrara is regarded as a "central area", though its history has been quite remote from the limelight.

8 The radical changes brought over by the 1967 War did not only affect the international status of Jerusalem, but also its urban and social structures, conferring a new prominence to previous spatially- and socially-discriminated groups and distressed areas. The neighbourhood of Musrara fully fell in the latter category, as a poor, decentralized and overcrowded area inhabited by Jewish groups, who in turn were a special target of social assistance. It turned, almost overnight, into a central area of a city which doubled in extension and population. In time, Musrara would have evolved into a luxurious neighbourhood, the site of prestigious cultural and political state institutions, but completely emptied of its previous inhabitants. By then, the "gentrification process" of the area would have been accomplished. However, what is interesting to highlight here is the role played by this "in-between" community in the process of expansion and conquest of Jerusalem and in relation to the urban evolution

of the neighbourhood from a “social slum” into a rich “central borough”, exploiting the beautiful physical remains of the great absentees: the Palestinians, who had vacated it in 1948.

Illustration 2 – View of the neighbourhood of al-Musrarah



A view of the neighbourhood of al-Musrarah, vacated by its Arab residents and ruined by war, as it used to look in 1948.

Source : CZA,Central Zionist Archives’ picture.

Mizrahi and Sephardic Jews along the No Man’s Land

9 Before the 1967 War, Jerusalem used to be a small city, only nominally the capital of a State whose leading centre revolved around the coast. It suffered from many logistical and supply problems, was mostly poor and collectively affected by a “ghetto mentality”, that is the feeling of being constantly under siege and under threat of annihilation. Although the metaphor of the “ghetto” stemmed from the European Jews’ (Ashkenazi) Holocaust collective experience, the feeling of being sealed off and estranged from the surrounding region and the Arab world became a common one for all Israeli Jews, particularly for the people of Jerusalem. The writer Avraham B. Yehoshua defined Western Jerusalem of those years as “the city who sits alone, a wall in its heart”, but recalled also with nostalgia the “Jewish Jerusalem of those blighted years –the period of the relatively small, almost homogeneous city with no holy places (apart from Mount Zion)” (Golani, 2004, p. 280).

10 The paradox of the first twenty years of Israeli history was that the Jews who had more in common with the Arab world, from a cultural and linguistic point of view, the Mizrahi and Sephardic Jews -or Jews who had come from Arab, Islamic and Levantine countries (or Palestine itself)-, had been actually sent to the front-line of the conflict. Their relocation in the most porous and dangerous areas of the country -that is the Northern border of Israel, the Negev and the No man’s land in Jerusalem- made them

suffer the immediate and tangible consequences of Arab rejection: the continuous infiltrations of *feddayin* and the permanent insecurity on the borders. In Musrara, for instance, most of the residents were new immigrants who had come to the country during the mass immigration of the 50s (the Great ‘Aliyah, 1948-52) and from Morocco some years later, in 1956, once the restrictions to immigration from that country had been raised: those new immigrants had been transferred by the authorities to the area with no alternative (HaCohen, 2003). The majority barely knew that this used to be the part of the city most exposed to the shooting of Jordanian snipers[4].

11 The allocation of the Arab abandoned houses to those new immigrants had entailed an improvement in living conditions for their families, marking the switch from the precarious conditions of the transit camps (*ma’abarot*) to the relatively secured ones of a fixed address. As much as overcrowding continued to be a “plague” of the large families -those consisting even of 9 to 11 people per family (Mossek, 2009)[5]-, Musrara offered to the new immigrants the first occasion to rebuild their lives and start planning ahead their future. Most of the immigrants had been so excited about the change that they could not even consider to move out of the neighbourhood in case of trouble. Whether or not it was regarded as a dangerous area by their fellow (Ashkenazi or veteran) Jewish citizens of Jerusalem, they did not mind, as among different communities of the city there was only a loose connection.

Personal accounts on the neighbourhood before 1967

12 The first families had been directed to the neighbourhood so quickly after the end of the 1948 War, that while entering their new houses, they had been confronted with stoves and cutleries of the previous Arab owners displayed in the pantry or on the main table. Some of them also found with amazement a big key still hanging from the wall or stuck in the keyhole.

13 Among the interviews collected on the spot, Rina Sabak, a Saloniki Jew, recalled, for instance, how she had moved in the neighbourhood with her husband upon their arrival from Pardes Hanna via Marseille in 1950. Both had been living in camps for longer than a year and had been eager to settle down in a place they could finally build their home in. That place was designed to be Musrara, where they had heard from the camp assistants already in Pardes Hanna that there were Arab houses left behind. In fact, Musrara had been founded by upper class Arab-Christian residents during the late 19th century, as a part of the "departure from the walls”- the period during which people began living outside the walls of the Old City-, but its Arab residents had fled or had been expelled in 1948 and not permitted to return to their homes since.

14 A new Jewish population consisting of new immigrants had then rapidly settled down in the area. These people used to live out of petty trade, seasonal- or day-jobs sponsored by the government (mostly in road-surfacing and reforestation): among them, Rina Sabak’s husband, who had to put up with fixing roofs and being randomly hired in cement- and stone-factories. The old generations did not speak Hebrew, but their children (Tsabar), born in the country, became perfectly bilingual in both Hebrew and Judeo-Arabic (and sometimes French or other languages of the country of origin). Rina Sabak remembered that in the 50s all the inhabitants of the neighbourhood came from different countries and had no language in common. However, in the immigrant atmosphere dominant in that area of the city in the early 50s, language barriers were

posing no problem, as the new immigrants (the *'olim*) were able to communicate with each other, resorting to gestures and pushed by daily urges. She did not refer to any Zionist upbringing before making *'aliyah*, but she regarded herself as a pioneer (ha-Halutza) anyway, because she had immigrated in the early years of independence and had been a staunch supporter of the Labour (and then ruling) Party since.

15 Similar, but more bitter, was the personal account of Yisrael Dahan, of Moroccan origins, 67-years-old resident of the quarter (by May 2011). He had come to the country in 1956, while immigrants from Morocco were still one of the targets of selection by the Immigration Department of the Jewish Agency. His family was poor and uneducated and they came from the South Atlas region, the most rural and remote area of that country. He had been selected by the emissaries of the Youth 'Aliyah for immigration at age 12, whereas his family had to stay behind. When the family finally joined him, he had moved in with them in Musrara.

16 He described the house they had been assigned to as a small 2 room-apartment shared by two families, with neither toilets nor bathtubs, as the single shower available –a hose- was installed in the yard outside and both families had to compete for it. Notwithstanding this fact, the relocation had marked a sensitive improvement in the family conditions, both from a material and a psychological perspective. He also mentioned the early presence of "Yekke" (or German immigrants) in the neighbourhood in the late 50s, but, according to him, they had not stayed there for long, thanks to the German reparations handed out to them by the Government. Thus, most of the Yekke or European Jews (Ashkenazi) living in Musrara, had succeeded in a short time in saving up enough money to afford a house elsewhere.

17 Local life was strongly group-based and marked by collective habits, as the Musrara society was a close world: cohesive and supportive among its members, but not open to outsiders. Yisrael Dahan mentioned that its residents, including the youngsters, did not venture often in other areas of the city and regarded the city-centre of Jerusalem as far as Tel Aviv. However, Rina Sabak stated, on the contrary, that her husband and she used to go twice a week to the cinema located nearby Jaffa Street, outside the neighbourhood and in the city-centre, and that that used to be a popular rite. Thus, it might be inferred that the connection of Musrara with the rest of the Jewish city (Western Jerusalem) was somehow a personal connection, affected and marked by the social status and the more or less European cultural background of the person involved.

18 What emerges as a common mark of the neighbourhood before 1967 was poverty. Daily life was built around local institutions, among which the *mo'adon* (youth centre) and the market, as if the area represented a self-sufficient community. The youth and kids used to spend their afternoon in the youth centre and to be given there two loaves of black bread, rice and some cheese, in order not to weigh for subsistence too heavily on their families, some of whom did not earn enough to supply them daily with food. The food was offered by social assistants and thus sponsored by the State, but at times the religious parties were involved too. The people of Musrara used to share everything and own many things in common: for instance, food, shopping and kitchen stuff, and to help new immigrants settling down. The doors used to be left open so that neighbours could come in to visit without previous notice.

19 In the neighbourhood there were two schools, one state-led and one religious. Both of them were considered of poor quality. Few pupils were admitted to better schools outside the neighbourhood, generally more difficult and demanding. On a regular basis,

the connection with state authorities, besides social assistants and the parties before election-time, was loose and the only representatives of the state they seldom met were duty soldiers, patrolling the border, posted in the turrets located along the wall marking the beginning of the no man's land.

20 Etty and Shoshi Tubul, two sisters from Morocco, both in their late 50s, added some details to the whole picture. They recalled that both their parents had been directed straight to Musrara by the authorities, but they saw a difference between them in relation to the learning level of Hebrew: the mother had picked it up soon fairly well, whereas the father had long strived to utter a few words. The reason was that the father –as the majority of local men- had been all day away working in construction sites, paving roads or planting trees, most of the time surrounded by other new immigrants, while the mother had stayed at home but had been more exposed to Hebrew by shopping in the market, bringing children to school and accomplishing daily tasks. Both husband and wife needed to support the family through work outside the house, but the division of labour among them was such that men earn their living by heavy works and women in services.

A strange feeling of Arab-Jewish fearless proximity

21 A strong feeling of personal safety and overall security was generally felt by the Musrara residents: children could play outside on the streets far from their parents and young girls could freely cross the neighbourhood after dawn, as their fellow residents were watching over them and would rush helping, in case of need. This feeling of personal safety appears to clash with the official historical account of arbitrary attacks from the Jordanian side. However, the residents recall violence as a sudden and unforeseeable break in daily life, and not as an ordinary, recurring and premeditate act. From time to time, some people were shot by snipers with no apparent motivation. For example, according to the account of the Tubul sisters, once one of the youngsters hanging around the *mo'adon* had been shot without notice while he was studying for an exam and soldiers too were seldom targeted while crossing in the main square by foot. Another neighbourhood resident, named Charles Schwartz, recalled that a lady in her fifties, who used to drink coffee just outside her house, had been shot while sipping her cup as usual on a regular day. Also a neighbour Arab-Christian carpenter had been killed while at work: the fact that the latter victim had been an Arab seemed to prove to local residents the accidental character of those killings.

22 However, the same residents shared the firm belief that it would not have been possible to anticipate violence and take cover. Besides, there used to be no shelters in the neighbourhood and the "infiltrations" of Arabs[6] and Jews across the no man's land, in both directions, occurred very often. Nonetheless, despite those facts, they seemed to substantiate the claim that it was not dangerous to live in Musrara and that they had not been scared of living close to the Arabs. Actually, contacts were rare. The Jordanian Legionnaire's soldiers started a conversation from time to time with local Jews and some of them even spoke Hebrew. The soldiers offered apples to the Jewish kids playing down in the yards close to the wall. The kids were not afraid to come close to the Jordanian soldiers and sometimes were successful in smuggling themselves inside the Old City through an opening in the wall.

23 The most paradoxical circumstance, indeed, was the extreme closeness of the Old City, which stayed a banned and forbidden, as much as yearned for, place. The high walls dividing Musrara from the no man's land, located only 10 meters away from the local houses, hindered the view of the residents beyond them. The residents recalled that on the other side of the walls, the Old City was 50 years behind: they could see there either Mercedes cars or donkeys.

24 The great absentees from those accounts were always the Arabs of Palestine, the former house-owners, who had left behind them the same houses they had seized only a few months before without apparently leaving any sign of their passage in the memory of the successive residents. The new immigrants were too busy to start off a new life to wonder about the past.

Illustration 3 – View of Musrara from the opposite side, over the No Man's Land

A view of Musrara from the opposite side, over the No Man's Land. It highlights the role of Musrara as a "border community" until 1967.

Source : Israelimage.com 9116.

The post-1967 neighbourhood outlook

25 The 1967 War had a major impact on the city and on Israeli society as a whole. The military seizure of Jerusalem brought the Israeli society back in contact with its refuted Jewish messianic inspiration, blurring the Zionist argument that had caused the State to exist (Shapiro, 1984). What used to be a pragmatic–led State, turned since that moment on into the potential accomplishment of a bi-millenarian prophecy, according to which the return of the Jews to Palestine (the Zionist homecoming) was no longer an historical event, but a transcendental one.

26 In light of this new definition of Zionism, the concept of "land" and the task of its redemption (this time of the West Bank and East Jerusalem) gained a new centrality. The "ghetto" mentality - as Israel used to define the feeling of permanent siege determined by the previous 1948 Partition Plan borders- was defeated forever.

27 Generally speaking, the *Mizrahi* and Sephardic Jews of the neighbourhood recall their life as having been shaken from the foundations by the 1967 War, and its startling positive result, as a great "liberation war". All of a sudden, the wall that marked their marginal location "on the border" in pre-1967 Israel, was pulled down by pickaxes and new roads were opened up towards the Old City, within whose limits the Wailing Wall - the millenarian craved symbol of the return to Zion and the possibility to rebuild the Temple- was located. The victory bestowed on the underprivileged residents of the neighbourhood of Musrara (as much as to others in similar conditions, such as Mamilla, Shivta Israel, Yemin Moshe, Abu Tor and Talpiot), offered to the area a new geographical centrality and aroused in its dwellers a new self-awareness. They also have suffered and fought in the 1967 War (Amir, 2008, p. 82).

28 In the post-1967 Israel, spanning all the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and encompassing more than a million Palestinians, the command of Arabic turned out to be an asset and economic growth perspectives multiplied, reaching out to new strata of population (such as the poor *Mizrahim*) and absorbing the Palestinian as the new labour force in the Israeli domestic market. The oral witnesses agreed on the fact that after 1967, more opportunities opened to all, and spread at all layers of society. Furthermore in comparison to the previous period, when it seemed that, even for those with money, there was nothing to buy. However, some of them stated also that not only money, also drugs started being passed along.

29 Thus the 1967 War marked for a consistent percentage of local *Mizrahim* and Sephardim the shift from working- to middle class, from endemic poverty to some stability through a considerable improvement of life conditions. At the same time, those who were longing for radical changes brought by the victory but did not succeed in profiting from the "war chest", developed a strong feeling of frustration towards the political establishment and its refusal of redistributing state revenues among the poorer strata of the population, 20 % of which lived on or below the poverty line (Time, 1971). In other words some *Mizrahim* and Sephardim experienced a social upgrading, while many others found themselves abandoned by the State, even after having fulfilled their military duty service, at times of a general increase of national wealth. Therefore, those left out from the "war's dividends" radicalized in their opposition to the ruling class.

30 It is no accident, then, that the Black Panthers' movement[7] saw the light right in the aftermath of the War: it would have been active with demonstrations in the years comprised between 1971 and 1973 (Dahan-Kalev, 1992). The then Prime Minister Golda Meir took the challenge so seriously that she warned about the possibility of a civil war in case the Black Panthers' demonstrations would have continued much longer. She claimed that Israel was bordering "an internal war that would be rooted in social problems and would be more frightening than any war on the borders" (Time, 1971). The inspiring core group of the Black Panthers had taken its roots in Musrara, indeed one of the neighbourhoods that had suffered the most from the twofold impact of the war and the victory, and that all of its core activists were *Mizrahi* underprivileged youth, who had rebelled against their parents' passivity and submission to the State's

policies. They had also revolted against religion, and the power it had to tame poor people and push them to abide to the authorities' decisions, whether or not they were in their own interest. Some 30 years later, though, the same disillusioned activists would have turned again to religion, "coming back with an answer", that is rediscovering faith and resorting to tradition as the only way to make sense of their lives for lack of opportunities of social mobility (Mossek, 2009).

31 The 1967 War succeeded in releasing new forces by spreading euphoria and boosting welfare, but also in nurturing new social claims. As a direct consequence of the war, for instance, the newly-acquired centrality of Musrara turned the neighbourhood in an object of property speculation and increasingly stronger pressures were exerted on the old residents in order to push them to leave their houses and vacate an area with great potential of development. In fact, since the 80s, the neighbourhood embarked on a different period altogether, shaped by the neoliberal policies of the new right-wing government of the Herut-Likud, also taken over and carried out by the later coalition- and Labour-led governments in the 80s and 90s up to nowadays (2013).

32 The area was first singled out for financial aids in in the form of subsidized loans in the framework of the Project Renewal (launched in 1974, Jewish Virtual Library 2013), a major national and governmental project of architectural and residential qualification of distressed urban areas. The overall goal of the project was renovating the buildings and upgrading the already existing infrastructures, thus enlarging the housing units built in the 50s under immigration pressure: the "famous" cheap two-storey family houses, usually no bigger than 32 square meters in size. However, in Musrara the popular housing blocs were few and the majority of housing was constituted by ancient Arab houses and large foreigners-owned buildings of the late 19th century in decay. Those were buildings of cultural interest, such as the Pontifical Institute of Notre Dame, and not only immigrants households. Therefore, the proclaimed government's objective of upgrading the neighbourhood and spurring old residents to buy their own apartments through State aids, was indeed concealing, from the very beginning, the goal that once the renovation process over, the old stone Arab houses would have been turned into the target of financial speculation by entrepreneurs looking for new investments' opportunities in the city-centre[8]. As a result, Musrara would have been emptied of many of its old residents in the span of a decade.

Final remarks

33 After 1967, Musrara became the target of Jewish Jerusalem expansion, as major government-sponsored housing complexes were built in the neighbourhoods located both along the no man's land and in East Jerusalem. The main push came from security and political reasons, but right-wing groups were also very active in "redeeming the city" from Arab control.

34 In the case of Musrara, the government policies progressively pushed out the former residents and turned the area into a well-off quarter, where nowadays the Ministry of Education, the City Hall complex of Safra Square, the *ha-Tefer* Museum of Tolerance and the Musrara-Morasha music school are located. Some of the oldest residents -second- and third-generation *Mizrahim* and Sephardim, are still residing in the neighborhood in the small portion where a few original blocks are standing. There it is possible to feel the old social atmosphere of the neighbourhood with its inhabitants' ambiguous stance

towards official Zionism, which does not embrace nor value Judeo-Arabic culture. However, the solidarity among the poor Sephardic and *Mizrahi* fringes of society has disintegrated and a sort of "privatization of poverty" has replaced it and it is now undermining any ambition to protest.

35 Not all the former *Mizrahi* and Sephardic residents are nostalgic of the past. The majority of the middle-class *Mizrahi* and Sephardic Jews –those who made it into the mainstream society- became less and less politicized, and moved out to better neighborhoods (French Hill, Ramat Eshkol, Givat ha-Mivtar, Talpiot and Talpiot East, Karen Avraham, Ma'aleh Adumim) (Cohen and Leon, 2008). They now portray themselves as "traditionalists", which means selectively religion-observant, and contribute in giving to the city its dominant conformist religious atmosphere.

36 All in all, the history of Musrara has overlapped with that of the country, and particularly of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It was the story of the physical border dividing Israelis and Palestinians, Jews and Arabs until 1967, that after that date turned into the reality of unilaterally unified city, conquered and ruled by the State of Israel. Israeli and Palestinians are still confronting each other, though, and do not easily feel at ease in the opposite half of the city. Guy Briller, an artist who in 2011 initiated an exhibition on the memory of the no man's land, stated that "if you are Palestinian, at the Damascus Gate you are at home (but) in Musrara, you are in danger. At any moment you could be arrested and made to stand with your face to the wall". The paradox being that the two areas are just ten metres away from each other.

37 *Mizrahi* and Sephardic Jews have never really acted as a "cultural bridge" between the two people, but their physical presence used to create a social and cultural buffer zone in liminal areas such as Musrara, which has now been eroded: today, Israelis and Palestinians stare at each other from opposing fronts as if no continuity and no middle way was to be found among them.

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NOTES

1. Musrara is also known by its Hebrew name, Morashà.

2. In the words of the Israeli writer Batya Gur: "So kam es, dass im Jahr 1957 eine graue Betonmauer die Stadt in zwei Haelften teilte, und fuer uns, die zehnjaehrigen Kinder, beudetete sie das Ende unserer Welt; auf der anderen Seite begann das Gebirge der Finsternis" (Batya Gur, 2000, p. 116-117).

3. The information gathered in this paragraph is taken from a series of oral interviews of old Sephardic and Mizrahi residents of Musrara/Morashà carried out between April and May 2011 in the neighbourhood by the author in French, Hebrew and Judeo-Arabic (the latter thanks to the translation by Evelyn Deutsch). All the people interviewed had been living in the neighbourhood before and after the 1967 War. Particularly relevant were the interviews of Charles and Esther Schwartz, Shoshi and Rina Sabak, Etty and Shoshi Tubul.

4. « La politique affichée visait à « renforcer les frontières » pour éviter les incursions militaires arabes et empêcher les réfugiés palestiniens de revenir dans leur pays. Les *mizrahim* étaient plus exposées, car l'armée défendait beaucoup moins bien leurs villages que les implantations ashkénazes » (Shohat, 2006, p. 81).

5. The housing overcrowding of *Mizrahim* in Musrara is shown in the documentary movie by Nissim Mossek on the "ha-Panterim ha-Shorim" ("The Black Panthers"), where interiors crammed with beds and bedstraws on the grounds are shot, where large families of more than 7-8 members were living together in a small flat or a wing or a corner of deserted buildings such as the monastery of Notre Dame or abandoned Arab houses (see Mossek, 2009).
6. Before the 1967 War, in fact, East Jerusalem was ruled by the Kingdom of Jordan and the inhabitants of the Arab side of the city were Jordanians, Palestinians and Bedouins. Moreover, until 1967, the Palestinians were commonly referred to as "Arabs" from Palestine, according to the definition applied by UNRWA: "the Arabs residing in the British Mandatory Palestine between 1946 and 1948". They started being recognized as an independent people only following the emergence of the group of *al-Fatah* inside the PLO (1969). By the Jews, they continued to be perceived as a people "part of the Arab nation", that is as "Arabs", until the Israeli government formally recognized them as an independent nation with the 1993 Oslo Accords.
7. About the name "Black Panthers", in a newspaper interview released by *Ha'aretz* by Sa'adia Marciano the 12th of March 1971, the activists claimed that "We knew that something similar existed abroad, in the United States: it was called Black Panthers and fought the good fight. Over there, discrimination was carried out between Blacks and Whites and we felt close to the Blacks." (*Ha'aretz* interview of March 12, 1971, quoted in Trevisan Semi, "Dal conflitto cultural al conflitto sociale: evoluzione della protesta delle '*Edot ha-Mizrah* in Israele", Oriente Moderno, 12, (1971), 860. The *Mizrahim* had been already "bracing" and taking to the street protesting against social exclusion in 1959 in Haifa, during the Wadi Salib riots. See also Yifat Weiss (2007) Wadi Salib: A Confiscated Memory.
8. The official Jewish Virtual Library source on the Project Renewal denies that: "With the betterment of the quality of life in the neighborhoods, the steady departure of stronger population groups has been virtually halted. Apartment prices, which had been much lower than market prices, have risen steadily, as the demand for housing in the neighborhoods has increased. (See: Jewish Virtual Library, "Project Renewal", http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0016_0_16111.html)

RÉSUMÉS

L'article analyse la complexité socio-spatiale du quartier de Musrara à Jérusalem, avant et après l'événement politique majeur que constitue la guerre de 1967. Cet article se concentre sur l'histoire urbaine et sociale du quartier juif de Musrara, et la position « entre-deux » des Juifs venus du Levant et des pays arabo-musulmans (les *Mizrahim*), coincés entre Arabes et Juifs. Ainsi, la complexité spatiale de cette zone, localisée (à l'époque) aux marges d'Israël, s'accroît encore par la présence d'un groupe juif marginalisé, relégué à la périphérie urbaine par les groupes dominants. Néanmoins, la guerre de 1967 changea radicalement la position de Musrara, le transformant en « zone centrale », localisée stratégiquement entre la ville juive et la ville arabe.

The article analyses the social and spatial complexity of the neighbourhood of Musrara in the city of Jerusalem, before and after the major political event of the 1967 War. This article focuses on the urban and social history of the Jewish neighbourhood of Musrara and the position of an "in-between people", as the Jewish immigrants from the Levant and Arab and Islamic countries (*Mizrahim*), stuck between the Arab and the Jewish people. Thus, the spatial complexity of the

area, materially located at the (then) fringes of Israel, is further complicated by the presence of a marginal Jewish group, relegated by the dominant groups to the urban periphery. Yet, the 1967 War was to abruptly change the position of Musrara, turning it into a "core area", strategically located between the Jewish city and the Arab city.

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