

PHYSICAL, SOCIAL AND FEAR-BASED BARRIERS TO THE MOBILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF WOMEN IN A DIVIDED CITY: PALESTINIAN WOMEN IN JERUSALEM

Abstract

This paper studies the impact of multi-layered transport exclusion on the mobility and accessibility of Palestinian women in Jerusalem. Ethnic segregation, hostile social climate, poor infrastructure and low levels of public transportation create multifaceted barriers to daily travel throughout the city. This research sheds light on the individual needs and decisions of women in making their travel choices in an exclusionary urban environment.

This research is based on in-depth interviews and focus-groups with Palestinian women living in East Jerusalem, under an ethnocentric regime. It examines their public transport and private car use, in light of physical and psychological barriers. Interviews find that cultural and social pressures and the sense of exclusion and fear pose significant limitations to public transport use and destination choice, alongside poor infrastructure, low service levels and discriminatory planning policies. Many women internalize expectations of violence and exclusionary linguistic and visual cues, which serve as fear-based barriers for public transport use. Women's responses fall into a number of categories: avoiding West Jerusalem and minimizing travel; adopting private cars as safer and more practical or, at times, accepting and barreling through fears.

Keywords

Public transport, segregation, divided city, gender and mobility, fear-based exclusion

Introduction

This paper examines the travel decisions of Palestinian women in Jerusalem. Many cities are experiencing an influx of minority groups, and their presence in public space is often a point of tension and even violence. The mobility needs and strategies of Muslim and Middle-Eastern women are little studied – both in the Middle East and majority-Muslim cities, and as minority groups in non-Muslim cities. Palestinian women in Jerusalem face overlapping constraints to their movements, as women, as a minority group and as an occupied population in a divided city.

Beyond individual choices, access throughout a city also plays a role in group identity and politics, particularly for minority or marginalized populations. In Jerusalem, substantial research has focused on measures of connectivity and access for different populations as a question of social justice and political status in a segregated and unequal environment (Rokem and Vaughn, 2017; Nolte and Yacobi, 2015).

Much research on Jerusalem as a divided city tends to focus on group identity. There has been to date little consideration of how gender, class, culture and life-style, together with political identities, affect travel decisions. As in some other Middle-Eastern cities, non-Muslim public spaces serve as a sphere of opportunity for some women both for education and work, and as a temporary escape from patriarchal monitoring of their public presence and conduct (Greenberg-Raanan, 2017).

This study aims to position personal barriers in the context of the politically divided, ethnocratic city. This reveals not just the fact of geographic and infrastructure separation but also internalized self-restrictions drawn from fear, experience and the urban status quo, alongside resistance, subversion and adaptation. Women's experiences and expectations play a significant role in limiting or permitting access to services, opportunities and public spaces for marginalized communities. This research considers their travel choices and experiences, and more broadly seeks to characterize the mechanisms by which mobility infrastructures and practices enforce or

undermine

spatial

segregation.

Literature Review

Travel choice in transport planning has been positioned as a rational maximization of individual utility, and does not usually take into account the intersecting social constructions of gender, both of the individual and the space through which she moves. Urban transport systems are often planned from the viewpoint of a middle class, male, western, car-using population (Levy, 2013, Martens 2016). The male-bias fails to reveal needs and preferences particular to women or minority groups, of also fails to capture travel foregone due to constraints of time, money, social norms or accessibility (Levine, 2013).

As in other spheres, the practices of movement are both a function of gender, and contribute to the construction of gender (Cresswell and Uteng, 2008). Women's urban travel patterns have long been identified as different from men's, with differences in activity patterns and destinations. Women's work commute trips have been found to be shorter and more local, unequal division of household and child-caring labour, as well as the inaccessibility of transit to, for example, women with children or shopping. (Cresswell and Uteng, 2008; Schwanen et al, 2008; Law, 1999.) However, these studies have looked primarily at women in developed countries, and there, do not always hold true across all populations. (Law, 1999.)

At the same time, fear of harassment and assault, particularly sexual, has been found to limit women's mobility significantly, with women self-restricting themselves from some spaces, or making sure to never travel alone. These limit individual mobility and access, but also impact the presence of women in certain public spaces as a group, and thus reinforce them as dangerous and inaccessible (Law, 1999).

Travel by public transport is especially identified as a particularly physical, vulnerable activity, despite the seeming invisibility and meaninglessness of the time spent in transit. In fact, public

transit is a space of physical contact, often involuntary, heightenend awareness and reactivity to others and forced intimacy. It is a space of a certain 'giving up of the self' and 'throwntogetherness'. Studies of interactions on bus routes serving diverse communities find myriads of expressions of exclusion and racism through both overt commentary and verbal attacks, and subtle – but keenly felt and recognized – physical gestures and glances. (Qamhaieh and Chakravarty, 2017; Koefoed et al, 2016; Wilson, 2011; Bissell, 2010).

Available research about muslim women in highly male-dominated muslim cities, shows mobility to be a constant negotiation, but also a source of freedoms and opportunities. Upper-middle class women in Cairo and Dubai (Reichenbach, 2015; de Koning, 2009) rely heavily on cars and avoid public transport. This allows them to visit throughout the city on their own terms, without being subject to harassment on streets and in public transport, and at the same time limits them to specific enclaves of acceptable spaces.

Law, writing in 1999, argued that examination of gender and transport had remained focused on a narrow avenue, particularly relating to women's different travel habits – especially to work – in terms of length and frequency. Meanwhile, less attention had been paid to more intrinsic questions of experience and limitation. (Law, 1999.) For a complete view and progress and novelty in the field, she argues for a coalescing of the material aspects of gender – such as types of work, divisions of household labour or access to vehicles – and the cultural aspects, such as gendered embodiements and interactions in public spaces. (Law, 1999.)

Transport exclusion is characterized by multiple layers, both environmental (such as proximity to a bus stop), and personal (such as physical ability or knowledge of a language.) Multiple sources of exclusion can leave populations with poor and ineffective transport options, in ways not obvious, and not well integrated, to traditional transportation planning. In addition to geography and access, issues of language, (dis)ability, time, income, and subjective considerations of fear, anxiety, comfort and dignity can have a substantial effect on any individual's capacity to make use of available mobility options. (Lucas, 2012.)

Background: Jerusalem

Jerusalem is a city riven by frequent outbreaks of violence and everyday tension and discrimination. There is an unequal, ethnocratic regime, with Jewish residents as full citizens of Israel, and Palestinians holding only far more conditional residency permits. (Yacobi, 2016; Baumann, 2016; Shlomo, 2016; Jabareen, 2010.) 300,000 Palestinians and 550,000 Jews live under the Israeli municipal regime since the 1967 War.

East Jerusalem suffers from substantial under-investment in services and infrastructure including a lack of classrooms, health facilities, open and public spaces and building rights (Choshen, 2016; Shlomo, 2016). Jerusalem master plans have for years stated an explicit goal of increasing the share of the Jewish population in the city. It is often argued that the planning policies are aimed to develop Jerusalem in ways that will benefit Israel in future negotiations on the political borders with a maximum amount of land and a minimum number of Palestinians. (Yacobi, 2016; Shlomo, 2016; Jabareen, 2010.)

In the realm of mobility and transportation, the city has multiple physical barriers to movement. Starting in 2003, Israel constructed a separation wall through East Jerusalem, excluding populous Palestinian areas (Yacobi, 2016). Within the barrier, the central East and West Jerusalem neighbourhoods are nominally unified, with no permanent barriers or divisions. In practice, however, the Jewish and Palestinian populations live almost completely separately. The urban structure and road grid makes even walking or driving between Jewish and Palestinian neighbourhoods difficult and roundabout (Baumann, 2016).

Public transport is operated separately in East Jerusalem and West Jerusalem. Starting in the late 1990's, the largely informal transit system in East Jerusalem has gradually come under regulation by Israel, and by the late 2000's receives a degree of subsidy.

An analysis of the Israeli Ministry of Transport GTFS (accessed May 2017) shows marked discrepancy between East and West Jerusalem public transportation. The East Jerusalem providers operate a total of just 26 routes (including variations) within the city and in the Eastern metropolitan region, compared to over 400 for West Jerusalem. The 26 routes total 243 km, while West Jerusalem services have 4,400 km. Within the Jerusalem municipal boundary, there are 1950 bus stops and 26 light rail stations. Of the latter, seven are in or are adjacent to Palestinian neighbourhoods, and only between 300 and 400 bus stops. The bus routes directly connect Palestinian areas, with only a few spots of overlap or integration with the West Jerusalem transit system or point of access to the Western City, as is the inverse case for West Jerusalem public transport (See Figure 1). Despite zones of overlap, the two systems remain largely unintegrated, with often separate stops, separate terminals and separate ticketing systems.

The light rail 'Red Line', opened in 2011, serves both East and West Jerusalem neighbourhoods. Some have argued that the route of the light rail promotes interactions, a shared space and greater connectivity between central Jewish and Palestinian nodes (Rokem and Vaughn, 2017.) Others argue that it is also a tool of Israeli colonization of eastern Jerusalem, cementing the connection to outlying settlement neighbourhoods, (Nolte, 2016; Baumann, 2016). Long term plans for further light rail development maintain ethnic separation. Only one single line (the 'brown line') offers new services for Palestinian neighbourhoods, and the route bypasses the city core and passes from southern Palestinian areas to northern Palestinian areas, through the Palestinian central business district. This new line has no detailed planning or proximate timeline.

Public transport has frequently been a space of friction within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Buses and the train are frequent sites of terror attacks (New York Times, 2016; The Guardian, 2017), and Palestinian passengers face suspicion and are targeted by police and fellow passengers (Haaretz 2017; 2015; Ynet, 2010). The use and prominence of Arabic language has drawn criticism, (Times of Israel, 2016) as has routing of Palestinian buses through Jewish neighbourhoods. Israeli buses in Jerusalem are frequently stoned (Ynet, 2017) even as Palestinian

drivers have been singled out for racist attacks by ultra-nationalist organizations (Al-Monitor, 2017).

The language and symbology of the rail line in particular also carries a strong Jewish-Zionist character. The station names are markedly Jewish even in mixed and ambiguous locations (Nolte, 2016) and the train often carries prominent decorations marking Jewish and Israeli holidays. As of 2017, for example, a graphic of Israeli flags runs along the entire train, with text reading 'Eternally United Jerusalem', marking 50 years since the war and occupation of 1967. Concurrently, the train has also been a locus of Palestinian and international resistance to Israeli policy in Jerusalem, serving as a target for boycotts and lawsuits (Haaretz, 2017; Barghouti, 2009) and for violent resistance. Stations located in East Jerusalem were burned during an outbreak of violence in 2014, which has been argued to be an attack on Israeli sovereignty (Baumann, 2016).

Despite the residential segregation and conflict around mobility infrastructure, everyday interaction and contact between Jewish and Palestinian populations is common. Essential needs such as hospital or official visits, shopping and education and substantial employment all bring Palestinian into West Jerusalem, with over 50% of the East Jerusalem workers employed in West Jerusalem (JTMP, 2016; Shtern, 2016).

Amongst those in the workforce,. 26% of women (to 17% of men) were employed in their own neighbourhood. (The rest were employed elsewhere in East Jerusalem or in the West Bank.) For all locations of employment, men drove by private car at about twice the rate of women, while women relied much more on public transport, primarily buses.

A study of Jerusalem women's travel habits (Greenberg-Raanan and Shoval, 2014) found Palestinian women spending 40% of their time outside the home in Jewish areas, while very few Jewish women spend any time in Palestinian areas. Only 27% of Palestinian women aged 25-64 are studying or working, and of these, only 15% work in West Jerusalem. In contrast, 84% of Palestinian men of the same age group are either studying or working and of these, 41% work in

West Jerusalem (Jerusalem Transport Master Plan, 2016). This survey was conducted in public spaces and transport terminals, and thus may even over-represent women active outside their homes and immediate neighbourhoods. A 2016 survey by the Jerusalem Institute for Policy Studies estimated that just 18% of Palestinian women of working age were employed. (JIIS, 2016)

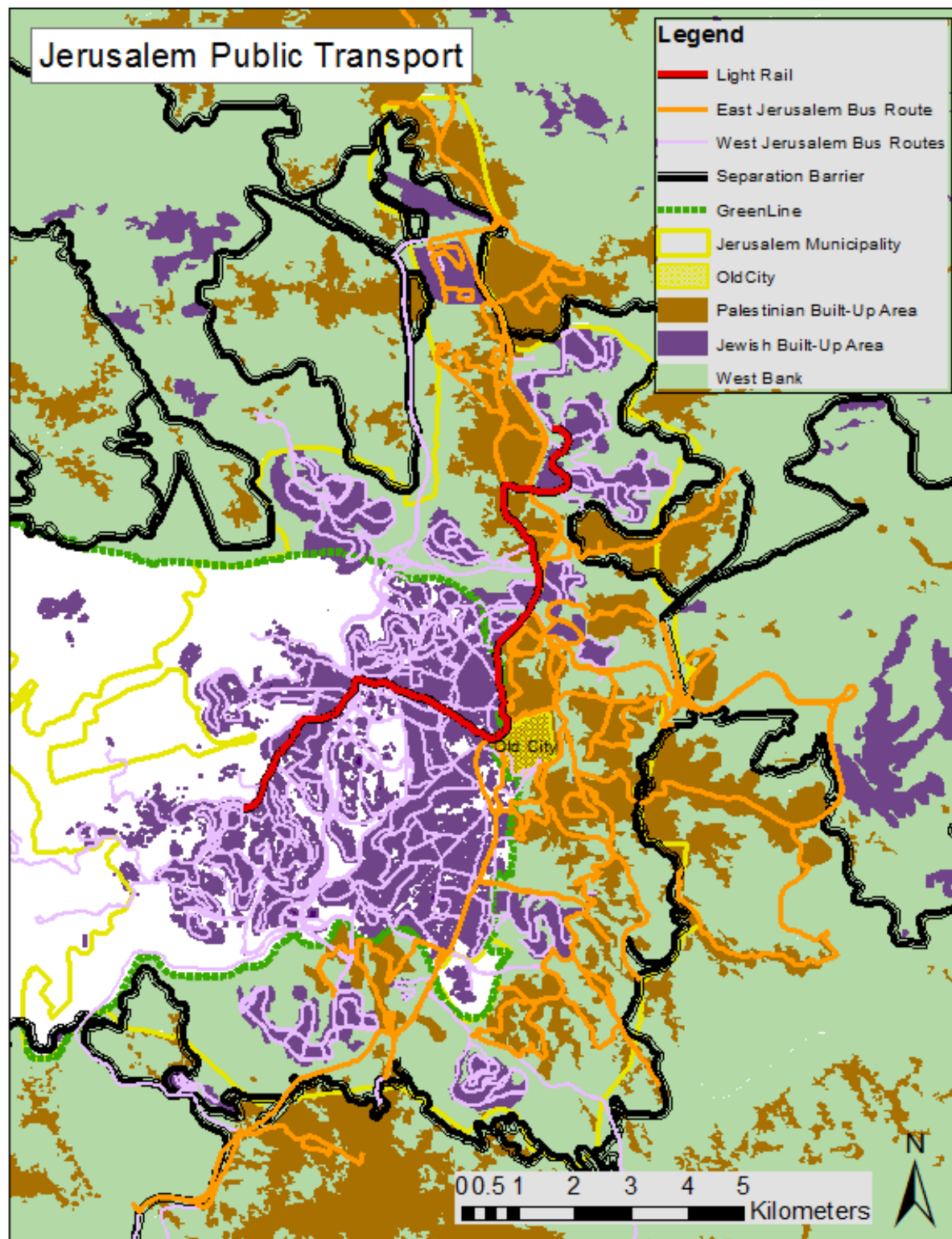


Figure 1: Public transport in Jerusalem, the separation barrier, the green line. Developed by authors from UN OCHA data and Israel Ministry of Transport General Transit Feed Specifications.

A study of mixed spaces in the city found that those which were frequented by both Jews and

Palestinians were primarily located in the Western city or on boundary zones, and marked particularly by an international, tourist-oriented or global-neoliberal character, blurring the ethnicized spatial divisions (Shtern, 2010; 2016). It is primarily Palestinian residents of Jerusalem who navigate the urban layout and security infrastructure into public spaces and institutions positioned within the Jewish city. As studies find (Shtern, 2016; Baumann, 2016; Greenberg-Raanan 2017) this is in many instances not by choice or interest in mixing, as by necessity and a lack of infrastructure and amenities in East Jerusalem.

Methodology

Findings are based on a series of in-depth semi-structured interviews and multi-participant focus-groups, conducted with Palestinian women in Jerusalem over the course of the first half of 2017. A total of 46 women participated, 38 in focus-groups and 8 in personal interviews, a sample size which fits well within guidelines for qualitative research (Francis et al, 2010; Guest et al, 2006). Focus groups were held at a college, a community center and with an NGO.

Interviews were primarily carried out in Hebrew and Arabic, and the panels in Arabic, with the assistance of translators. Notes and transcripts were taken through the interviews, but the interviews were not taped in order to maintain trust and confidentiality. All were conducted prior to an outbreak of violence in July 2017.

As researchers affiliated with an Israeli institution, there were obvious barriers of trust when interviewing Palestinian women in East Jerusalem. Focus-groups were conducted with the presence of translators and facilitators who had long relationships with these groups, and were consulted about their willingness to participate in advance. All panels were held in familiar environments in East Jerusalem. For in-depth interviews, respondents were approached both through snowballing and at random.

Focus-groups addressed the following questions:

- Which places in the city do you visit regularly, and how do you get there?
- Are there places where you never go? Are there places you never go but want to?
- What are your experiences of transport in East Jerusalem like?

- Do you drive? If not, are you planning on getting a license and vehicle?
- Why? What are the advantages and disadvantages of driving for you?
- How does your family feel about your travel habits, by car and public transport?
- Do you feel there are social limitations to your movements as a woman?
- What are your experiences of transport in West Jerusalem like?
- How do those experiences make you feel? Do they affect your decisions of where to go?
- How does knowing/not knowing Hebrew affect you in travelling around the city?
- How does the security situation impact the way you move around the city?

Personal interviews delved more deeply into the subjective emotional and social issues related to travel, and particularly to travel in West Jerusalem. Thematic analysis was carried out (Braun and Clarke, 2006) and findings organized into themes. Several of the participants, as well as community workers and planners in East Jerusalem, were invited to view the findings and discuss and validate the research for its accuracy and fairness in representing their experiences and sense of the city.

Findings

Several key patterns emerged consistently from the panel and interview participants. For all the women, the centre of their lives lay strongly in East Jerusalem, and the majority had little cause, and little experience, of spending time in West Jerusalem or using West Jerusalem public transport. This was particularly true of younger women (under 30) many of whom reported never having been to West Jerusalem at all. Older women had accumulated more experience through occasional visits for specific, necessary functions – primarily visits to hospitals and health centers, or government and municipal offices. For most of the participants, these were infrequent, several times a year or less.

Palestinian women traveling within East Jerusalem noted low service levels and neglected infrastructure. These accessibility problems are exacerbated by a securitized and divided landscape, cautious and conservative norms in regard to women's mobility, as well as security concerns. For Palestinian women travelling in West Jerusalem, a complex situation emerges, with mobility limited by language, information and fear based exclusion as well as routes and time-based exclusion. Some women overcome these travel barriers in West Jerusalem, at times accepting their own fear, discomfort and risk in order to move throughout the Western city.

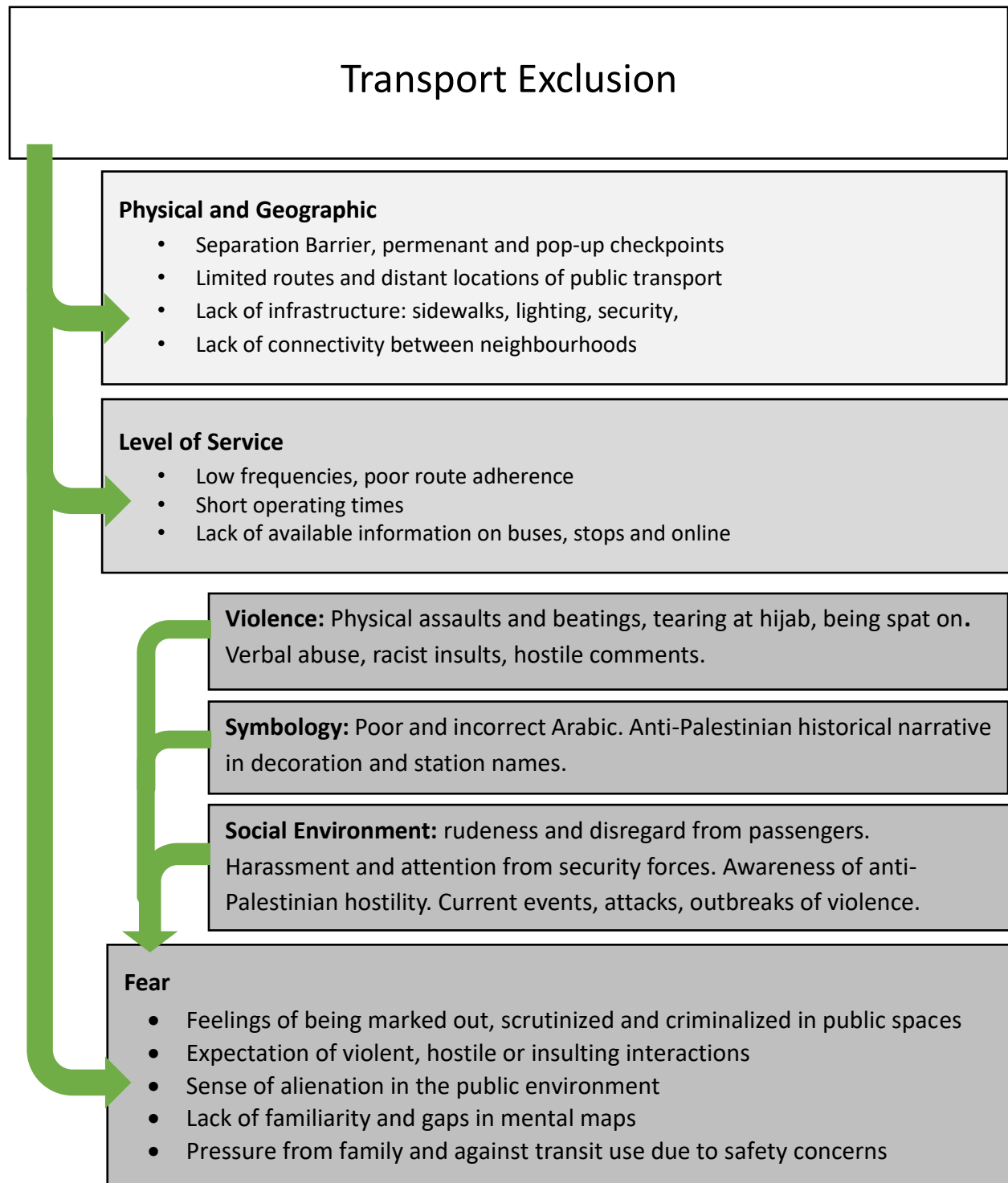


Figure 1 summarizes the barriers encountered by Palestinian women in their daily travels, which are detailed in the following section. Technical barriers, of distance, time and information, as well as fear and a sense of exclusion which consists of a number of interrelated factors. Finally the

approaches to navigating space are considered – the preference for private car use, and the use of public transport despite these difficulties.

Geographic and Physical Exclusion

All the women interviewed had extensive experience of Palestinian public transport within East Jerusalem, and almost all reported low levels of service and unmet transportation needs.

If I take a taxi, I can go absolutely anywhere. I'd be all over the place if I could afford it. I want to go out more. Really, who likes to be cooped up at home? All the weekend, I'm so bored, and so are the kids. But where can we go? If my friends didn't pick me up, with their cars, I would never get out. With 4 kids, I have to pay 40, 80 shekels [10, 20 US Dollars] if I want to take them to have a day out.

Office Manager, 40s, Ras al Amud

For many women, the nearest bus stop was a substantial distance away, without infrastructure such as sidewalks and lighting, that made walking dangerous and unacceptable. Bus frequencies were reported to be too low and operating hours short, with most routes operating only to 6 PM and a few until 9 PM. Driving or being driven were important components of navigating work and education, and many women said they could not have attended university or arrived at work without cars or taxis. For younger women, their ability to be at work, school or socialize, particularly after nightfall, was reliant on a lift from a parent, typically their father. Older women reported often, or even exclusively, taking a taxi, particularly if they were going shopping or taking children with them.

Women's mobility and presence along in public spaces, especially at night, was often described as circumscribed and conditional on familial acceptance. Walking or riding a bus at night was seen as being socially dubious, both unsafe and suspicious.

There is social pressure against using the bus as a woman, especially late. There can be experiences of harassment, assumption that something is untoward if you're alone on the bus after dark.

Social Worker, 27, Ras al Amud

My husband, my family, want me to drive rather than use public transport. Sometimes they exaggerate about how dangerous public transport is, but they're also right.

Architect, 28, Beit Hanina

West Jerusalem transport was regularly used by only a small minority, the rail or the bus. For the most part, women explained that they had little cause to visit West Jerusalem, and most preferred to take a taxi if they needed to.

I go to West Jerusalem maybe once every four or five years. I've been on the train once – it seemed fine. If I need to get to a hospital, I'll usually have a ride, or take a taxi. I won't take the bus. I don't go there to the malls or anything.

Volunteer, 60s, Beit Hanina

A woman living next to a Jewish settlement felt uncomfortable with its bus line– ‘Well, the Egged bus does go there, but - you know, it isn't there for us.’

Level of Service

Within the Palestinian bus system, used to travel exclusively within East Jerusalem destinations, significant issues of service level and quality were reported to make travel difficult, expensive and frustrating. Travel time was usually singled out as the most serious issue, with long waits, unpredictable arrivals and departures, winding routes through heavy traffic and required transfers leading to door-to-door travel times of hours for even short distances. Crowding and poor vehicle conditions were also mentioned often, as well as the lack of information about destinations and travel times.

I have to wake up at 4 AM to get to an 8 AM class. Its 15 minutes walk to the bus station, then the bus can take up to an hour to get to Damascus Gate station, mostly because of traffic. There are a lot of schools and school kids, then the next bus – assuming it is at the stop – is another thirty minutes to the university. The buses are full and it's a long trip.

Student, 20, Jabel Mukaber

I almost always take a taxi, not the bus. For the bus, I wait 15, 30 minutes, then it comes and its full like a sardine can. The price is the same, it's not so much about the time as the comfort, being able to get

a seat...on the bus there's no air-conditioning, the windows don't open, it's like being in a sauna! They put up these bus-stops, signs, that have nothing – nothing! – written on them. No numbers, no destinations, no information...If I want to tell a friend how to come to my house, what am I supposed to say? What number is the bus she should take? What stop should she get off at? It's a really big problem, no one knows where anyone is going.

Office Manager, 40s, Ras al Amud

As well as such shortfalls in service quality, the urban security structures also impede public transport in East Jerusalem. Frequency road closures and pop-up checkpoints lead to buses being stopped or diverted far from their routes. Women reported waiting for hours, often giving up and walking to their destinations.

On the morning of my university entrance exam, a year ago, there was an attack in Jabel Mukaber. The army closed all the roads and there were no buses. I had to walk all the way to the Old City [and the bus station.]

Student, 20, Jabel Mukaber

The place where I take the bus at Silwan is near a settlement, so soldiers check the IDs of everyone on the bus every morning. We can be stuck half an hour. Even though I remember to have my ID, if someone else has forgotten, we're together, stuck together, we'll have to wait a long time.

Student, 19, Silwan

Women describe not just inconvenience from these situations but a deep sense of frustration and helplessness, and disregard, generating feelings of hostility towards the situation and the authorities.

I hate the buses. All the buses... I work in Beit Hanina and Shuafat, teaching students in their homes. It sometimes takes me so long to get there that I feel despair at what a waste of time it is, and how low the value of it is to me.

Student, 19, Silwan

If our buses here were like Egged, I would be travelling all day long...All the waiting, in the hot sun, waiting at the checkpoints, waiting for the bus that doesn't come, its like an explosion waiting to

happen. That's what were afraid of, that there's going to come this moment where no one can be calm anymore.

Office Manager, 40s, Ras al Amud

Language, Symbology and Perception of Exclusion

Travel in West Jerusalem, while often described as physically more comfortable and the system more effective, was also seen as a hostile and alienating environment.

Issues of language, signage and understanding how to navigate the system were a frequent barrier. Arabic language has been added recently to public transport, including station signs, announcements and explanations. However, many women reported that this was riddled with mistakes, was often a direct – and incorrect – transliteration from Hebrew, or just didn't make sense.

People don't know how to use the system in West Jerusalem. They don't read Hebrew. My mother, she's in her 70s now. She's not going to learn Hebrew now to navigate in West Jerusalem. She takes a taxi whenever she's going. My [Jewish] colleagues, they taught me how to use the system, showed me the apps to put on my phone.

Office Manager, 40s, Ras al Amud

Several, who had learned Hebrew as adults, mentioned that they could only understand the Arabic in the public transport system after they had learned Hebrew. The situation was consistently described as being bad enough to substantially hinder the ability to navigate the system, not a minor issue of accuracy or style.

The instructions don't make much sense in Arabic. I never understood them until I learned Hebrew. I felt lost.

Architect, 30, Abu-Tor

As well as a technical barrier, the language was also perceived strongly in terms of belonging and respect. The use of Arabic was felt by many respondents to be fraudulent, a kind of 'playacting'. The Arabic signs, one woman said, 'are really for the Jews too.' Respondents expressed a sense that the city and transport operators were performing and appeasing a rhetoric of inclusion for the benefit of the majority population, not genuinely attending to the needs of the minority.

This sense of a false inclusiveness also extended to the location and planning of the rail line, with the inclusion of stops in Palestinian neighbourhoods described as being done because 'there was no other choice.' Some respondents also discussed the urban effects of the train, as damaging commercial streets and neighbourhood fabric. Students made note of the 'unofficial' quality of the buses accessing the university, where the Palestinian buses stopping near the university but not entering the campus as the Israeli buses do.

Physical and Verbal Violence

In this environment, women reported frequent encounters of disregard, aggression and overt violence when they did venture into the Western city. Several women described being personally physically attacked and beaten, as well as reporting the experiences of friends and acquaintances. Other reported incidents such as being spat on, insulted or singled out by transport or security officials.

Once a friend wanted to take the train, but I was scared so I took a taxi, but I told her it was ok, you go and take the train, and we would meet there. After a little while, when I was in the taxi, she called me, and she was crying. Some boys had attacked her, beaten her, and torn off her hijab. So I don't ever go on the train.

Unemployed, 28, Old City

The hijab, worn by all the study participants, was particularly often identified as a source of risk. Having a hijab pulled or ripped off was reported by several women, and many more directly tied wearing it to being visible, and vulnerable, in West Jerusalem. Verbal abuse, insults and hostile comments were also reported by a number of women, both from passengers and from train conductors.

I was on the train, and another woman got a fine, and she yelled at the conductor, 'why are you doing this? What am I, an Arab?!' I felt awful. My daughter loves the train, and I want to teach her about sustainability, but I don't want to expose her to that. I drive, even when the train is more practical. I only got a car after I started working by City Hall [in West Jerusalem].

Architect, 28, Beit Hanina

My ticket didn't work, and as I was swiping it a conductor comes and grabs my hand and starts saying – just, horrible things, so many awful words. That us Arabs, we never pay, we always take, we don't work. He said it so many times, made me go with him all the way to the end of the line, past my stop. I told him that I would pay the fine if he wanted, right then, but he couldn't talk that way. I told him 'we work harder than anyone, harder than the Jews.' He gave me a fine, and told me to go pay it right then, right away.

Office Manager, 40s, Ras al Amud

As well as such overt acts, smaller, more subtle gestures were widely discussed. These were things such as rudeness from fellow passengers in the form of hostile and suspicious looks, having requests for directions ignored, not being sat next to or not being offered a seat and even a perception that buses skipped stops on seeing a Palestinian woman.

Emotions and Coping in Hostile Public Environments

Such incidents, as well as the broader atmosphere and behavior of transport officials, security personnel and private citizens, added up to a sense of anxiety and caution at any possibility of spending time in West Jerusalem outside limited enclaves. Using public transport is seen as fraught and potentially dangerous, both by women themselves, and through family pressure and safety concerns. One woman reported that she didn't use a convenient West Jerusalem bus route because she needed to walk through a Jewish neighbourhood to get to it, and was often stopped and questioned by soldiers when passing. Participants widely agreed that wearing a hijab or speaking Arabic marked them as suspicious in the Jewish parts of the city both by security personnel and by other passengers.

I don't feel comfortable, I know it's a Jewish bus, and they're looking at me. I can sense Jews are scared of me. It depends on the people on the bus, it helps that there are a lot of other Palestinians. It would be easier if I didn't wear a Hijab.

Social Worker, 27, Abu Tor

Many women reported that they avoided Jewish public transport after a terror attack, during periods of high political tension or military conflict, and then returned to gradually over time. Other reported generally preferring Palestinian buses, but making a compromise to using the train if a particular destination was strongly more convenient, or even if the weather was bad and a 'Jewish' stop was closer. At the same time, other avoided the buses, or stopped using them entirely once they had access to a vehicle.

I used to use the buses before, when the political situation felt less hostile. Now I'm always stressed on the train, always looking around.

Architect, 30, Abu Tor

The train was marked out as easier to access in this regard than the west Jerusalem buses. The train's proximity and passage to Palestinian parts of the city and the greater visibility of Palestinian population, compared to the buses, was perceived as making it safer and less uncomfortable to use. On the buses, several women remarked, they might find themselves as the only Palestinians.

West Jerusalem more broadly was felt by many of the participants to be inaccessible to Palestinian women, with most reporting never visiting the western city at all. Even those women who regularly visited specific locales – such as the university, a workplace or a shopping mall – had little experience or familiarity beyond these specific spots. The idea of visiting other areas, for socializing or shopping, was encountered with caution. Being in a Jewish public area as a Palestinian woman, they expected, even if they had not directly experienced it there, to be met with hostility and suspicion.

Tell me, when you look at me, do you think that I am a terrorist?

Student, 19, Silwan

I've never been to West Jerusalem, but I want to go to the promenade, to museums and...you know...the kind of places that we don't have in East Jerusalem. But it frightens me that people will look at me like I'm a terrorist, and they'll be scared of me. It will take more courage to go, but I'm working on it.

Student, 20, Jabel Mukaber

Using the West Jerusalem public transport that would have made those areas accessible was described as a hurdle, or a skill to learn, requiring a substantial amount of courage and determination. A woman who regularly rode the train noted that it would be very useful for her to have the West Jerusalem buses as well - but that she had not yet managed to work up the courage.

At the same time, despite their sense of discomfort and awareness of safety issues, as well as social and family pressure to avoid public transport, a number of women, both young and older, reported that they travelled in West Jerusalem regardless. *"My family think I'm crazy for taking the bus, especially after attacks. I don't care, I do it anyway."* Rather than a blanket decision to use or not use a mode of transport, and visit or avoid particular environments, women are making a daily negotiation, reckoning their own sense of security, awareness of the current level of tension, and at times simply barreling through their own sense of insecurity.

I take the buses in West Jerusalem, yes. I'm not bothered by it all. I feel there is some hostility, but I don't care anymore.

Pensioner, 60s, Ras al Amud

The train is lovely, wonderful! I take it, I'm not scared. Why mention it? Well, there's stories, there's an expectation, and I've had a few incidents...But really, nothing terrible has happened. People are good, I'm always offered a seat.

Office Manager, 40s, Ras al Amud

Preference for Private Car Use

Against this setting, all the women interviewed showed a strong preference for the private car, primarily as drivers. Amongst the younger women, all either had, or were in the process of acquiring, driver's licenses. Among the older women interviewed, none were drivers, citing a generational gap and a cultural shift. (One older woman described taking the driver's exam in secret). However, they reported that almost all of their daughters drove. Younger women similarly reported not just acceptance but often encouragement from their families, as this would allow them greater participation in productive and high-status education and work.

Driving was perceived as largely safe and appropriate practice for all the women interviewed. While some observed that men were 'intuitively' better with cars and urban navigation, others argued that women are actually better, more careful drivers. For women with children, the practicality of a car was impossible to match with the available public transport, and for all the women, being drivers, or aspiring to drive, was a substantial improvement in accessibility and life opportunities

In the evening hours in particular driving was considered much more acceptable than taking transit. Women working towards driver's licenses described an expected sense of liberation and independence, allowing them to attend more events and opportunities to socialize and both be less reliant, and less demanding, of their parents or partners.

I could go out, I could be the one picking up my friends if we're going to a wedding or out to Ramallah. Having a driving license and car would be a source of independence and of responsibility. I want to live on my own, have my own car that I pay for, and my own place to live and to pay for my studies by myself. That's a certain respect, a status in society that I want to have.

Student, 19, Silwan

Beyond convenience and efficiency, the idea of driving and car-ownership formed a strong personal aspiration for younger women. Most reported paying the substantial expense of

studying for a driver's license and a car from their own income, from independent employment. Being a driver is part of a progressively changing vision of their lives, which includes academic study, professional work and living independently, away from their parents.

Why did I do the license? Well, all my siblings have driver's licenses, and all my brothers' wives. They kept saying, oh, you should get one. Me, when I decide I can do something, I do it. I knew I could pass the tests if I wanted to - so I did!

Office Manager, 40s, Ras al Amud

Conclusions and Discussion

As these interviews show, the physical and geographic barriers to mobility – walls, checkpoints, residential and transport segregation – form only a first layer of separation and exclusion. The effective segregation of the city is also maintained through increasingly subtle layers of the character and atmosphere of public spaces and policing, and self-policing, of the presence of different population groups. This may be true of both majority and minority populations and of all genders, but for Palestinian women the lack of mobility options leads to a particularly pronounced lack of opportunities, with social and political restrictions limiting access to school, work and even social lives in both the East and the West of the city.

The omnipresent security apparatus, in the form of armed guards and military presence creates a sense of precariousness and alienation for Palestinian women in visiting Jewish spaces. This is true even when they are not particularly targeted or approached. Even if women did not expect direct physical violence – which, in many instances, they do – they felt, and fully expected to continue feeling that they are automatically suspect and their presence securitized and criminalized. Even potentially neutral gestures and interactions are perceived as hostile and exclusionary, and they maintain a constant level of anxiety, tension and hyper-sensitivity to the surrounding environment.

The division in the city is thus internalized for women as a sense that their presence would be not only scrutinized by the authorities, but is actively unwelcome by the general public. There is a strong expectation that any visit to the Western city, including for the most innocuous purposes, would be self-defeatingly hostile and uncomfortable.

This is built up from the knowledge that Jews likewise avoid the Eastern city as inherently dangerous and hostile, the poor signage in Arabic, the multiple expressions of Jewish-Zionist narratives and hegemony, as well as personal or second-hand experiences of harrassments and micro-agressions. These create a sense that the division of the city is massive barrier to overcome, and not to be undertaken lightly or without strong cause and guidance, despite the lack of any physical divisions through most of it.

The role of the transport infrastructure therefore appears to operate on two levels. Public transport— stops and stations, the interiors of vehicles themselves — is in itself a public space and host to all the concerns and limitations of Palestinian women visiting Jewish-oriented public space in the city. At the same time, transit also naturally facilitates, or fails to facilitated, access throughout the city. The systemic and spatial segregation between the two transportation systems makes movement between them not just unfamiliar, impractical and uneconomic, but also leaves the two halves of the city invisible and unknown to eachother despite the physical proximity, as Jewish and Palestinian services rarely pass through the spaces of the other.

These collected barriers culminate in a personal, emotional wall in the use of public transport for Palestinian women as a minority in a diverse, divided city. Not merely a source of discomfort and inconvenience, this preliminary research suggests it is a significant basis for exclusion from public spaces and activities and even a strong factor in mode choice towards private vehicles.

As these findings show, this kind of exclusion from public transport and public spaces requires multiple modes of address. An extensive improvement in the service quality of the Palestinian bus system may be a start, as is greater integration to the Western public transport system.

Beyond obvious technical aspects, such as the integration of ticketing and stops, the social hostility, alienation and fear need to be addressed directly. In order to make public transport an attractive option for Palestinian women, and to facilitate their access to opportunities throughout the city, transit must generate a sense of inclusiveness and comfort rather than being a space of fear.

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