

Coexisting in the Divided City  
The differences made by shared public spaces to cross-community  
relations in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels.

A thesis submitted for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy at Trinity College Dublin

2016

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## **Declaration**

*I declare that this thesis has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other university and it is entirely my own work.*

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Julia Murphy', written in a cursive style.

## Summary

This thesis aims to determine whether shared public spaces enhance the level and quality of cross-community relations in divided cities such as Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels; and what differences such spaces can make to intergroup relations in contested cities.

Research therefore consisted of a selection of three different types of shared public spaces – an open area, a park and a shopping centre – in the three cities of Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels. Methodology-wise, a combination of observation, documentary research and semi-structured interviews was carried out in the three case study cities in order to explore the daily use of shared public spaces.

As regards the theoretical basis of the thesis, the intergroup contact theory – which posits that more contact leads to less prejudice – was identified as most relevant for the study of coexistence and intergroup relations in specific spaces within divided cities. However, certain weaknesses of the contact hypothesis perspective were revealed, leading to its combination with notions from Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault drawing more focus on certain key aspects including society, power relations, discourse and domination – all crucial to study the use of public space in a contested city.

The selection of the three cities was based on the interest in comparing different contexts of internal conflict, and how such variations may influence the use of space and intergroup relations in the city. Cities experiencing different levels of intergroup conflict were thus chosen – Jerusalem, with an ongoing occasionally violent conflict, Belfast with an ongoing peace process (post-conflict), and Brussels with an ongoing non-violent conflict. By analysing the same types of spaces in three different cities, this study hopes to provide further understanding of the importance of wider contexts but also the particularity of the urban environment when attempting to implement conflict transformation efforts in divided cities.

Research in Jerusalem revealed that only limited levels of cross-community interaction occurred in shared public spaces; leading to the conclusion that within the wider context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, shared spaces in the city are not expected to make any differences or improvements to intergroup relations. Yet research findings also showed that the selected shared spaces were used on average by both Israelis and Palestinians in a neutral and non-confrontational manner. Therefore the use of shared public spaces during the period of field research led to peaceful coexistence between the different communities in Jerusalem.

Research findings in Belfast also revealed minimal levels of intergroup contact between individuals using shared public spaces in the city centre. However, more cross-community interaction was observed during specific events taking place within the selected spaces which were specifically destined towards bringing the Catholic and Protestant communities closer together. This led to the conclusion that in the specific context of post-conflict Belfast, where dominant political discourses are increasingly underlining the necessity for shared spaces, shared public spaces can occasionally make a minimal effect on intergroup relations in the city.

Research in Brussels showed again that only limited forms of cross-community interaction occurred within the selected shared spaces. Despite the absence of violence between the French-speaking and Dutch-speaking communities in the city, Belgium is nevertheless a deeply divided society where intergroup contact is rare. While the context is void of serious conflict, the current political situation may be described as one where the two linguistic communities are drifting further apart, with no interest or desire to come closer. Brussels remains the only bilingual region, where members of both linguistic communities live in close proximity. At the very least, the sharing of space in the capital is therefore understood as important for maintaining intergroup relations in the country.

Following the comparative study and analysis of the research findings in the three cities, the thesis argues that the presence of shared public spaces in divided cities generally does not enhance levels of cross-community contact; at least not in a systematic manner. However, these spaces do offer the possibility for increased interaction between different communities who may rarely come across each other.

Shared public spaces are therefore not believed to make any notable or short-term differences to intergroup relations in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels. Yet their value in normalising diversity and exposure to other community should be acknowledged. This thesis therefore concludes that on a longer term basis, shared spaces may be somewhat beneficial to intergroup relations in divided cities.

## Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to express my immense gratitude and thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Etain Tannam. Despite having to take over my project at the beginning of my second year of studies, Etain has provided invaluable support, feedback and encouragement during the crucial time of field research. Her guidance and suggestions have helped me steer my PhD project and ultimately produce the following piece of work.

I also wish to thank my first supervisor, Dr. David Tombs, who advised me during the critical first foundational year of the PhD and therefore helped me produce a strong basis for the rest of my studies, before moving to New Zealand. His structured approach and recommendations were greatly appreciated, even his suggestion that 'it might be better to refer to the summer term, rather than the summer holidays'.

Special thanks also go to other members of the Irish School of Ecumenics, including Dr. Gladys Ganiel for offering guidance for field research approaches, Bríd O' Brian for library-related advice, but also Caroline Clarke and Karen Nicholson for their availability and support, as well as David Mitchell and Brendan Browne for their suggestions and tips regarding PhD life and work. I wish to thank the regular coffee break companions, who always brightened the day, even in the midst of intense periods of study.

I would also like to express my thanks and immense gratitude to my research interview participants; Michael Alexander, Marik Shtern, Haim Yacobi, Mandy Turner, Mohamed Owedah, Jodie Asaraf, Gideon Solimani, Rami Nasrallah, Hillel Bardin, Montaser Amro and Amneh Badran in Jerusalem; Chris O'Halloran, Milena Komarova, Stephen Pearson, Richard Dougherty, Ciaran McLaughlin, members of the ForthSpring Youth Club, Martin McMullan, Louise Mallon, Sheila Morris, Gareth Harper, David Boyd and Joe O'Donnell in Belfast; and Serge Govaert, Anne Herscovici, Philippe van Parijs, Mark Elchardus, Eric Corijn, Kris Deschouwer, Philippe Delstanche, Bernard and Conchita Kinoo, Alain Maskens, Alain Joris, Leen de Spiegelaere, Sophie Alexandre and Miriam Stoffen in Brussels; as well as those participants who wished to remain anonymous. Without their generous and gracious participation, the completion of this thesis would not have been possible.

I also wish to thank Frank Gaffikin and Rudi Janssens who provided additional crucial information after the period of field research; and I wish to express my immense gratitude to Professor Scott Bollens for his generous contribution during the final stages of my work. I also convey my gratitude for the help and tips offered by Mick Dumper and Ray Dolphin before and during the field research; as well as the help provided by Suhad Sukallah.

Finally, I wish to thank my family who has been immensely supportive during these years of study. In particular, I thank my parents for their encouragement, presence and constant care for my wellbeing; and my sisters Céline and Anna, whose company helped take some distance from the occasionally grim aspect of studying ethnic conflict. A special mention goes to the family cat, Mina, who was constantly by my side during the last few weeks of thesis completion and submission. I also wish to express a last thanks to my late grandparents Olive and Vince Murphy; whose first-hand experience of World War Two, as well as their faith and pacifism remain an inspiration. Go raibh maith agaibh.

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## Thesis Structure Outline

In order to provide an adequate answer the research question around the differences that shared public spaces can make to intergroup relations in divided cities, the thesis has been structured into eight chapters.

### Chapter One – Introduction

The first chapter of the thesis presents the aims and research rationale of the study, underlining the particularity of public spaces in cities that are geographically, socially or physically divided along ethno-religious, ethno-national or ethno-linguistic lines. While the term ‘shared space’ remains vague, this thesis understands it as a space – usually public – that is used on a regular or even daily basis by members of different and often divided communities. It has been deemed relevant to investigate whether exposure to and interaction with the ‘other’ that occurs in shared public spaces make a difference to intergroup relations and ultimately mitigate or exacerbate intergroup conflict in contested cities. As such, two main research questions have been identified as the common thread structuring the research:

- *Does the presence of shared public spaces enhance the level and quality of cross-community interaction in divided cities such as Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels?*
- *What differences can shared public spaces make to cross-community relations in ethnically divided and contested cities?*

### Chapter Two – Theoretical and Analytical Framework of the Research

A second chapter describes the theoretical and analytical framework, a combination of two different theories – intergroup contact theory and insights from French social theory. This particular combination and framework has emanated from the fact that the focus on divided cities is a relatively recent area of study which is essentially multidisciplinary in nature – including the fields of conflict analysis, sociology, social psychology, urbanism, architecture, geography and political science among others.

Intergroup contact theory has been identified as one of the most relevant theories on which to base the study of coexistence and intergroup relations in specific settings within divided cities. Indeed, the contact hypothesis posits that the more competing groups come into contact, the more they will come to like each other and the less prejudice they will have towards one another. However, a number of limitations have been revealed when applying the theory to the specific context of urban spaces in deeply divided societies, as the Contact Hypothesis generally does not acknowledge the wider context within which intergroup contacts occur and often focuses on optimal contact situations that do not reflect the social reality of everyday life.

In order to counter these weaknesses, the French social theory notions of Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault have been added to the study's theoretical framework, as their understandings of society, culture, power relations, discourse and domination enable a larger perspective on the particular contexts of the spaces in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels. Through this second complementary yet necessary theoretical perspective, the study was able to focus on power and other social dynamics that occur in ethnically divided cities and how these may ultimately affect intergroup contact and relations in shared public spaces.

### **Chapter Three – Research Methods**

The third chapter introduces in detail the methodology used to carry out research in the field. In order to provide adequate answers to the main research questions, the methodology has consisted of selecting three specific types of shared public spaces – an open area, a park and a shopping centre – and carrying out a comparative analysis of such spaces within three different contested cities – Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels. A combination of observation, documentary research and to a lesser extent interviewing forms the basis of the research which is believed to enable a thorough investigation and exploration of intergroup coexistence in three different divided contexts. The comparative element of the study is also underlined, justifying the selection of Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels and further describing the methodological rationale of the research.

### **Chapter Four – Ethnic Identity and Conflict in Deeply Divided Societies**

The fourth chapter of the thesis provides an overview of the three conflicts and the role of identity. The analytical perspective taken by this study understands ethnic identity as a crucial aspect of ethnic conflict that is essentially socially constructed – and can therefore potentially be deconstructed and reconstructed; as suggested by proponents of conflict transformation. However, the salience of ethnic identity and the importance of cultural landscapes in divided societies may hinder any efforts towards transformation and better intergroup relations in certain situations.

Intergroup conflict in Israel and the Palestinian territory, Northern Ireland and Belgium may all be qualified as types of ethnic conflict with varying degrees of ethno-national, ethno-religious, ethno-linguistic and political competition occurring between the different communities. The varying degrees and levels of violence and conflict in the cities will provide an interesting insight in the comparative element of the study of similar types of spaces in different contexts of division and separation. It is indeed undeniable that the situation in Jerusalem, qualified as an open violent conflict with no political agreement is very different

from that of Belfast which is described as a post-violent conflict with an agreement and even more distant from the Brussels situation which is qualified as a non-violent conflict with recurrent political compromises. The study has established whether these very different contexts dramatically transform the potential role of shared public spaces as sites of improved intergroup relations.

### **Chapter Five –Exploring Shared Public Spaces in Jerusalem**

The fifth chapter of the thesis focuses on exploring shared public spaces in Jerusalem. Field research involved observation in three selected spaces – Jaffa Gate Square, Teddy Park and Mamilla mall – over a period of over thirty days, as well as interviews with a range of civil society actors belonging to both the Israeli and Palestinian communities, and further documentary research through reading primary and secondary sources of information such as daily news items, reports, and other data.

Research findings revealed that only limited levels of cross-community interaction occurred in the spaces – albeit in varying degrees, from virtually non-existent in Jaffa Gate Square to more meaningful in Mamilla mall. It was therefore concluded that shared public spaces make only limited or even non-existent differences to cross-community relations in the specific context of Jerusalem, where the conflict is still ongoing and periods of extreme tension are likely to lead to intergroup violence. However, research findings also revealed that on average, the three selected spaces were observed as being used by both the Israeli and Palestinian communities on a regular basis without this causing any tension. In other words, despite the lack of meaningful interaction, peaceful coexistence was observed as being the norm in the spaces. The simple fact that these shared public spaces offer the possibility of proximity and shared experiences with the other community without this leading to heightened tensions on a daily basis is therefore understood as being significant. While shared spaces are thus not considered to be the most effective tools for conflict transformation in Jerusalem, they nevertheless contribute towards creating and normalising a different reality of the city in which both communities live side by side and coexist.

### **Chapter Six –Exploring Shared Public Spaces in Belfast**

Chapter Six involved observation in the selected spaces of Victoria Square area, City Hall Gardens and CastleCourt shopping centre in Belfast, over a period of over thirty days. Research also included interviews with different individuals, mainly within civil society, belonging to both the Protestant and Catholic communities, as well as documentary research of primary and secondary sources of information.

Research findings revealed that as in the Jerusalem case, only limited levels of cross-community interaction occurred within the selected shared spaces in Belfast. Yet more meaningful contact was observed as occurring in some of the spaces during specific events, such as deliberately inclusive carnival parades or festivals. It was therefore concluded that shared public spaces in and of themselves did not provide decisive tools towards conflict transformation efforts in Belfast, however they can play such a role in certain circumstances. However, it was also revealed that in the particular context of Belfast, changing discourses since the peace process have increasingly acknowledged the importance of sharing space as part of a new will to create a shared future for all of Northern Ireland's inhabitants. In other words, shared public spaces are understood and promoted as necessary and positive aspects of urban life to be cherished and used by all of Belfast's communities. Therefore, while shared public spaces in Belfast do not play a decisive role in directly improving intergroup relations in the city, their very existence and their active promotion can be understood as contributing towards the transformation of the city into a more functional, plural and open urban entity.

### **Chapter Seven – Exploring Shared Public Spaces in Brussels**

This seventh and last case study chapter explores the role of shared public spaces in Brussels. As in the previous two chapters, field research involved observation over a period of thirty days in three selected spaces – Dansaert Street area, Brussels Royal Park and City2 shopping centre. Field research also included interviews with members of civil society from both the French-speaking and Dutch-speaking communities, as well as additional documentation of primary and secondary sources such as news items, polls and other data.

As in Jerusalem and Belfast, research findings revealed that only minimal levels of cross-community interaction occurred within the selected spaces in Brussels. Indeed, despite the absence of violence or physical division, Belgian society remains deeply divided along linguistic communitarian lines, leading to very little meaningful contact between Francophones and Flemings on a daily basis. Unlike the Belfast context, there are currently no concerted efforts at the elite level towards bringing the two communities closer together or improving intergroup relations. Therefore, while shared public spaces in Brussels cannot be considered as major tools towards improving cross-community relations due to the lack of interaction they entail, these spaces nevertheless remain some of the rare areas within the city where the two communities come face to face and have the possibility of mixing and reaching out to one another. In other words, shared public spaces in Brussels provide the rare situations of coexistence and interaction between two different spheres of life that rarely come together.



## **Chapter Eight – Conclusion: The Significance of Shared Public Spaces in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels**

The eighth and final chapter of the thesis compares the research findings in the three case studies and draws the theoretical and analytical conclusions. Following the systematic analysis and comparison of the context, setting of the spaces, types of spaces, routines, levels of interaction, special events and role of the spaces in the three cities, the main research questions were answered.

As regards whether the presence of shared public spaces enhanced levels and quality of cross-community interaction, the research findings revealed that their presence in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels generally does not enhance levels of contact. However, it was also revealed that such spaces are not barriers to such contact and do offer the possibility or potential for more meaningful cross-community interaction. Indeed, the study concludes that in all three cities, shared public spaces tend to provide the opportunity for enhanced levels of interaction, without this being a systematic outcome.

In terms of the wider question around the differences that shared spaces can make to cross-community relations in divided cities, the study concludes that such spaces do not make any major systematic differences in the three cities. However, shared public spaces are believed to have some value in normalising regular exposure to the other community, which is a crucial aspect of any healthy modern city, divided or not. It is therefore suggested that the effects – however minimal – of shared spaces on intergroup relations should be evaluated on a longer-term basis, with the understanding that transformation processes take time.

Finally, this thesis acknowledges that the comparison of only three cities may not provide descriptions of the use of shared spaces in a wider range of contested cities in deeply divided societies. However, it is hoped that this study will at least provide an interesting insight into the role of public spaces in certain contested cities; as well as a model for social research which may be applied to a number of comparative studies evaluating or exploring social aspects while taking into account their wider contexts.

## Chapter One: Introduction

The first chapter of the thesis is dedicated to presenting the research aims and situating it within a wider theoretical, empirical and methodological context. The first part of the chapter will introduce the aims of the thesis by highlighting the main goals of the project, and setting the premise to the study of shared public spaces in divided cities. The second part will then present the research rationale, through a literature review focused on the theoretical and empirical justifications of the study. The third and final part of the chapter will subsequently describe the research design of the study, by underlining the comparative nature of the thesis and presenting general methods used as well as briefly describing the field research involved in the three case studies.

### 1. Aims of the Thesis

#### Presentation of the Study Objectives

This doctoral research in the fields of sociology and conflict transformation explores how shared public spaces may transform cross-community relations in ethnically divided cities. It does not aim to examine the causes of ethnic conflicts theoretically, but seeks to reveal:

- How inhabitants of divided cities interact in shared public spaces
- How the usage of these spaces influences intergroup relations
- If shared spaces may be considered as tools contributing towards conflict transformation efforts in such contexts.

The study will focus on specific shared public spaces – open spaces, parks and shopping centres – in the three contested cities of Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels. All three of these cities are inhabited by different ethno-religious, ethno-national or ethno-linguistic groups that are competing for control over territory and power; albeit in very different ways. These three cities are also inhabited by groups and communities whose members feel strongly about their – generally exclusive – identity; Israelis and Palestinians in Jerusalem, Catholics and Protestants in Belfast and Francophones and Flemings in Brussels. Specific attention has been given to public spaces, as they are considered to be the rare areas of cross-community interaction or at least mixing in cities that usually remain and maintain physical, institutional or social separation between different resident groups. While it is debatable whether all three types of urban spaces that have been selected for the study are indeed public spaces (it may be argued that a shopping centre is not a public space) the term ‘shared public space’ has been

deemed the most appropriate and convenient to qualify central spaces in the city that are regularly visited by large numbers of individuals from all walks of life.

### *The Concept of Shared Space*

Shared space has been criticised for being a vague term with limited research being carried out on its supposed positive impact on conflict transformation efforts.<sup>1</sup> Four different types of spaces have been identified by certain urbanism scholars in divided cities such as Belfast – ethnic space, neutral space, shared space and cosmopolitan space. From this perspective, shared space can be understood as “a space that facilitates not just contact, but also engagement across the divide.” Such spaces are considered to be rare in contested cities. Thus public space is closer to neutral space than shared space, the former identified in Belfast as being “based largely in the city centre [...] where public funding for expansion, modernisation and re-imaging has been justified in part on the creation or consolidation of safe space open to both main traditions for employment, shopping, leisure and residence.”<sup>2</sup> Yet the term ‘neutral’ as regards commercial and other activities may be questioned. UN Women has for instance underlined that “to plan spaces that are safe for everyone, space must be “de-neutralised”. That is, public spaces cannot be considered to be the same for everyone everywhere.”<sup>3</sup> A number of scholars including Henri Lefebvre argue that public space can never be neutral, as “far from being merely a neutral medium – or receptacle – of social activities [...] space becomes a stake and a medium for conflicting social representations and strategies [...]”<sup>4</sup> However, in the specific context of public spaces in contested cities, the term ‘neutral space’ might be used as an oversimplification to describe areas of the city that are not as obviously one-sided as other segregated spaces. Given its ambiguity, the term ‘neutral space’ will not be referred to in this thesis.

Public space may also be cosmopolitan space, which is “space that is international in character and has no specific reference in terms of the local division”<sup>5</sup>, such as most of the spaces in cities that attract tourist attention. The Conflict in Cities and the Contested State research project<sup>6</sup> has additionally provided a definition of shared space by explaining that “sharing space may simply mean that people from either side of ethno-national or religious divides get

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<sup>1</sup> Komarova, Milena. “Shared Space in Belfast and the Limits of A Shared Future.” *Conflict in Cities and the Contested State*, no. Working Paper 3 (2008).

<sup>2</sup> Frank Gaffikin, Frank, and Mike Morrissey. *Planning in Divided Cities*. John Wiley & Sons, 2011, p. 102

<sup>3</sup> UN Women. Safe Women Project. 1998. Plan It Safe Kit. Pluto Press, Annandale, Australia: Section 5. <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/380-highlight-the-fact-that-space-is-not-neutral.html?next=381>

<sup>4</sup> Busquet, Grégory. Political Space in the Work of Henri Lefebvre : Ideology and Utopia. UMR LAVUE (Mosaiques), vol 5 2012-13, Université Paris Ouest Nanterre, p. 3

<sup>5</sup> Frank Gaffikin, Frank, and Mike Morrissey. *Planning in Divided Cities*. John Wiley & Sons, 2011., 102

<sup>6</sup> Conflict in Cities Project. ‘Conflict in Cities and the Contested State’. Information. *Conflictincities*. Accessed 12 May 2016. <http://www.conflictincities.org/>.

to see others, observe their customs, and hear their languages as they go about their lives. Slight as such contact may seem, its absence can mean a reduced potential for improving relations in the future.”<sup>7</sup>

In this thesis, shared space is defined as an urban area that is shared and used by different individuals on a regular basis. Space is “a continuous area or expanse which is free, available, or unoccupied”<sup>8</sup>; and sharing is defined as having “a portion of (something) with another or others”, but more precisely to “use, occupy or enjoy (something) jointly with another or others.”<sup>9</sup>In the particular context of ethnically divided and contested cities, the term shared space is often understood as being the opposite and alternative to ‘ethnic space’. At its simplest, then, shared space may be defined as non-segregated space, where individuals from different ethno-religious or linguistic communities come for various purposes (leisure, shopping, work, etc.). This has led to the fact that “those that invest hope in ‘shared space’, amidst urban conflict, assume that this arena can facilitate a greater pluralism of identity and belonging [...]”<sup>10</sup> Some scholars have identified three different types of shared spaces in which individuals may encounter people belonging to the other community – naturally shared space, policy driven shared space and cross-community programmes.<sup>11</sup>

A theoretical framework combining two different perspectives will be applied in order to explore if and how shared public spaces make a difference to intergroup relations in the specific context of three contested cities. The framework is based on the intergroup contact theory perspective (also known as contact hypothesis) highlighting the importance of intergroup contact in reducing prejudice; and the French social theory perspectives of Pierre Bourdieu<sup>12</sup> and Michel Foucault<sup>13</sup> underlining the relevance of context when studying all aspects of social life<sup>14</sup>. The study will ultimately answer the following research questions:

- *Does the presence of shared public spaces enhance the level and quality of cross-community interaction in divided cities such as Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels?*

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<sup>7</sup>Conflict in Cities. “Sharing Space in Divided Cities.” Briefing Paper. Conflict in Cities and the Contested State, November 2012.

<sup>8</sup>“Space.” *Oxford dictionaries* 2016. <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/space>

<sup>9</sup>“Share.” *Oxford dictionaries* 2016. <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/share>

<sup>10</sup>Gaffikin, Frank, Ken Sterrett, Mike Morrissey, and Maeliosa Hardy. “Planning Shared Space for a Shared Future.” *Research Report for Community Relations Council*, 2008, p. 36

<sup>11</sup>McKeown, Shelly, Ed Cairns, and Maurice Stringer. “Is Shared Space Really Shared?” *Shared Space Journal*, no. 12 (February 2012).

<sup>12</sup>Jourdain, Anne and Sidonie Naulin. Héritage et transmission dans la sociologie de Pierre Bourdieu, *Idées économiques et sociales*, n° 166, 2011 (4), p. 80

<sup>13</sup>Pitsoe, Victor. “Foucault’s Discourse and Power: Implications for Instructionist Classroom Management.” *Open Journal of Philosophy* 3, no. 1 (2013): 23–28, p. 24

<sup>14</sup>Cronin, Ciaran. ‘Bourdieu and Foucault on Power and Modernity’. *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 22, no. 6 (11 January 1996): 55–85.

- *What differences can shared public spaces make to cross-community relations in ethnically divided cities?*

## Brief Premise to the Study

Ethnic conflicts often divide whole countries; however they tend to be more visible and striking in cities and towns where the compact nature of urban space forces inhabitants belonging to different communities to live in close proximity. Ethnic division becomes even more important if it occurs in a capital city, where lies the political, economic and cultural heart of the state. Managing or resolving ethnic strife in cities might therefore have a greater impact on the overall conflict, facilitating its resolution on a national scale. Although it could be argued that many modern-day cities are contested in one way or another around issues of pluralism such as power, class<sup>15</sup>, ethnicity and status<sup>16</sup>, there is another kind of divided city which is much more destructive. Certain cities are contested around both issues of pluralism and sovereignty, such as state legitimacy and rival claims of national belonging. The study of divided cities from a conflict resolution perspective is a relatively new phenomenon, and includes different disciplines such as social sciences, peace studies, architecture and urban studies.

The importance of well-developed cities for the civic well-being of all their inhabitants and the state has been underlined by urbanism scholars. A just city is an efficient city, and therefore justice problems and other issues such as urban poverty need to be dealt with for the city to remain functional and attractive.<sup>17</sup> It has been further explained that particular attention should be given to the city – especially the city centre – and that the renewal of civic spirit and a sense of destiny shared by all residents are crucial.<sup>18</sup> However obvious this statement may seem, creating a sense of shared space and shared destiny can be extremely challenging and even impossible in situations of ethnic conflict over national sovereignty, as is the case in many divided cities.

## 2. Research Rationale – Literature Review

### Theoretical Rationale of the Study

The theoretical rationale for this thesis is that ethnic identity is socially constructed, and not simply a historical or genetic development. The political relevance of ethnicity and ethnic identity becomes obvious when more than one ethnic group is present within a given society.

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<sup>15</sup> Tammaru, Tiit, Maarten van Ham, Szymon Marcińczak, and Sako Musterd. *Socio-Economic Segregation in European Capital Cities: East Meets West*. Routledge, 2015.

<sup>16</sup> Nightingale, Carl H. *Segregation: A Global History of Divided Cities*. University of Chicago Press, 2012.

<sup>17</sup> Fainstein, Susan S. *The Just City*. Cornell University Press, 2010.

<sup>18</sup> Morrissey, Mike, and Frank Gaffikin. *City Visions: Imagining Place, Enfranchising People*. Pluto Press, 1999.

If such identities are socially constructed, this would imply that they can be deconstructed and ultimately reconstructed or transformed to become less divisive or confrontational.

Although the research is based within the discipline of sociology, its broader perspective is situated within the field of conflict transformation. This term, preferred to that of conflict resolution, was first developed by John Paul Lederach in the 1980s and focuses on the wide involvement of civil society in peace efforts rather than solely relying on elite and state level work. Lederach's concept of 'moral imagination' is understood as a crucial tool to find constructive ways of rising above cycles of violence in divided societies.<sup>19</sup>

According to Lederach, everything is relational and relationships are therefore central in every aspect of life. Social life is defined by relationships, and Lederach therefore underlines the crucial role of relationships in any efforts of change towards ending violence. Relationships are thus "both the context in which cycles of violence happen and the generative energy from which transcendence of those same cycles bursts forth."<sup>20</sup> This perspective may be likened to Bourdieu's claim that 'the real is relational' and that relations are an inherent part of social constructions. In fact, "the notion of the relational is so central to Bourdieu that he preferred to speak not of his 'theory' but rather of a 'system of relational concepts'."<sup>21</sup>

Lederach's perception of relationships forms the basis of this thesis on intergroup relations in deeply divided societies. He claims that "the centrality of relationship provides the context and potential for breaking violence, for it brings people into the pregnant moments of the moral imagination: the space of recognition that ultimately the quality of our life is dependent on the quality of life of others."<sup>22</sup> Indeed, it is believed that conflicts in ethnically divided cities can be transformed if rival communities come to understand that social and political life in such cities is not limited to a zero-sum game between different ethnic groups. Lederach is therefore adamant that transformation and change will happen when deliberate polarization is no longer seen as the best option in divided societies. In such situations, "cycles of violence are often driven by tenacious requirements to reduce complex history into dualistic polarities that attempt to both describe and contain social reality in artificial ways."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Lederach, John Paul. *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*. Reprint edition. Oxford; New York: OUP USA, 2010.

<sup>20</sup>Lederach, John Paul. *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*. Reprint edition. Oxford; New York: OUP USA, 2010, p. 34

<sup>21</sup>Schinkel, Willem. "Sociological Discourse of the Relational: The Cases of Bourdieu & Latour." *The Sociological Review* 55, no. 4 (2007): 707-729, p. 712

<sup>22</sup>Lederach, John Paul. *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*. Reprint edition. Oxford; New York: OUP USA, 2010, p. 35

<sup>23</sup>Op. Cit., p. 36

Crucially, Lederach states that “genuine constructive change requires engagement of the other. And this is not just a challenge for the leaders – we must encompass and encourage a wide public sphere of genuine human engagement.”<sup>24</sup> Encouraging increased contact and engagement between different rival groups within divided societies should therefore help improve intergroup relations and subsequently decrease the likelihood of violent conflict.

One theoretical perspective that has been identified as particularly relevant for the study of shared spaces and intergroup relations in divided cities is the intergroup contact theory, first introduced by Gordon Allport<sup>25</sup> and further developed by Thomas Pettigrew<sup>26</sup> and other scholars.<sup>27</sup> Unlike many conflict theorists, Allport believed that ethnic conflict was primarily due to prejudice rather than competition over resources. Although he focused his research on ethnic relations in the USA, his findings may be applied to other contexts where ethnic groups have been in conflict. The contact hypothesis posits that increasing contact between rival groups will lead to more familiarity, which will lead to an increase in liking for ‘the other’ and a decrease in prejudice; and therefore to the lessening of the intergroup conflict. From this theoretical perspective, shared public spaces may be understood as crucial contributions toward conflict transformation efforts in ethnically divided cities, as they enhance intergroup mixing and therefore increase the chance of intergroup contact. The proponents of the intergroup contact theory argue that generally speaking, more contact leads to better intergroup relations, yet there is no mention of the specific contexts in which the interaction or contact takes place. Are the effects of shared spaces in heavily militarised cities such as Jerusalem similar to those in peaceful and vibrant cities such as Brussels? These limitations have led to the combination of the contact hypothesis with the additional perspective of Bourdieusian and Foucauldian insights in order to form the theoretical framework of the research (described in Chapter Two). Particular attention needs to be given to the wider context of such contested cities as Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels, as “cities are rarely divided by their own citizens in isolation. They are typically the product of external forces acting on a

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<sup>24</sup>Op. Cit., p. 49

<sup>25</sup>Allport, Gordon Willard. *The Nature of Prejudice*. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1979.

<sup>26</sup>Pettigrew, Thomas F. ‘Intergroup Contact Theory’. *Annual Review of Psychology* 49, no. 1 (1998): 65–85.; Pettigrew, Thomas F., Linda R. Tropp, Ulrich Wagner, and Oliver Christ. ‘Recent Advances in Intergroup Contact Theory’. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 35, no. 3 (May 2011): 271–80.

<sup>27</sup>Dovidio, John F., Samuel L. Gaertner, and Kerry Kawakami. ‘Intergroup Contact: The Past, Present, and the Future’. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 6, no. 1 (1 January 2003): 5–21; Hewstone, Miles, Simon Lollot, Hermann Swart, Elissa Myers, Alberto Voci, Ananthi Al Ramiah, and Ed Cairns. ‘Intergroup Contact and Intergroup Conflict’. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, The Life and Work of Peace Psychologist Ed Cairns, 20, no. 1 (February 2014): 39–53; Verkuyten, Maykel, Jochem Thijs, and Hidde Bekhuis. ‘Intergroup Contact and Ingroup Reappraisal: Examining the Deprovincialization Thesis’. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 73, no. 4 (1 December 2010): 398–416.

city with the intent to protect it, save it, claim it, demoralise it, or enlist it in a larger struggle from which it cannot benefit.”<sup>28</sup>

Pierre Bourdieu argues that symbolic systems – which are forms of cultural expression that regulate communication in societies – are instruments of knowledge and dominance. Symbolic systems therefore form social cohesion by contributing to the moral and cognitive integration of the members of societies.<sup>29</sup> Bourdieu understands culture as what has been defined as such by the dominant classes, which aligns with the social domination theory perspective. One of his main aims is to reveal and bring to light “the hidden forms of domination that are consciously and unconsciously reproduced in everyday life.”<sup>30</sup> Culture, like ethnic identity, is therefore socially constructed. The use of culture by different ethnic groups living on the same territory can thus be an instrument of domination in an ongoing conflict. According to Bourdieu, there is an incessantly changing pattern of cultural forms of domination, competition over power and prestige in any given society.<sup>31</sup> The problem in divided cities is that these cultures are often deemed incompatible, and the celebration of one culture is sometimes considered a threat to the survival of the other. For Bourdieu, the cultural system of society is not only a structure of given meanings, but also a field of action, where different actors and groups struggle for domination.<sup>32</sup> While such struggles remain non-violent and internalised within many societies, this is less the case in contested cities where struggle for power and domination can become more explicit and lead in certain circumstances to the engagement of physical forms of violence by different actors. These more perceptible forms of struggles may in turn influence daily life in these cities, and thus the use of urban space by the different resident communities.

According to Michel Foucault, every society produces its own truths which help to normalise and regularise its discourses and therefore its cohesion.<sup>33</sup> “It is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together”<sup>34</sup> asserts Foucault, and this explains why discourse is so important to understand a given societal or historical context. In the case of divided societies, ethnic groups often strengthen their social cohesion through the assertion of their exclusive culture and identity. This also involves the production of truths which can stigmatise other ethnic groups, and create a victim-aggressor paradigm which can ultimately justify mistrust

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<sup>28</sup> Calame, Jon, and Esther Ruth Charlesworth. *Divided Cities: Belfast, Beirut, Jerusalem, Mostar, and Nicosia*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009, p. 8

<sup>29</sup> Lardinois, Roland. “Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002): A Sociologist in Action.” *Economic and Political Weekly* 37, no. 11 (March 16, 2002): 1019–21, p. 1021

<sup>30</sup> Sulkunen, Pekka. ‘Society Made Visible: On the Cultural Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu’. *Acta Sociologica* 25, no. 2 (1 January 1982): 103–15, p. 107

<sup>31</sup> Bourdieu, Pierre. ‘Les Modes de Domination’. *Actes de La Recherche En Sciences Sociales* 2, no. 2 (1976): 122–32.

<sup>32</sup> Bourdieu, Pierre. ‘Sur Le Pouvoir Symbolique’. *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 32, no. 3 (1977): 405–11.

<sup>33</sup> Foucault, Michel. *L’Ordre Du Discours*. Paris: Editions Flammarion, 2007.

<sup>34</sup> McNay, Lois. *Foucault: A Critical Introduction*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994, p. 107



and incompatibility with the 'other' group. The role of discourse is therefore also important in the consolidation of ethnic groups in contexts of contested cities. In such situations, the state usually lacks an inclusive discourse which could bring these different groups together.

Both Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault shed light on the social mechanisms that occur in all societies, and how these might be intensified in the specific context of ethnically divided cities. Their understandings of power relations and the creation of truths highlights the fact that the societal context is critical for analysing how shared spaces may influence intergroup relations in cities such as Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels. In other words, power struggles between different groups within a given divided society and discourses around opposing truths and histories are very likely to affect how individuals may interact within a given space in a contested city. Crucially, then, "whether contestation among groups is perceived as good or bad, individuals' attitudes toward shared living largely define the urban condition and shape the experience of public space. Hence, intercommunity exchange and contestation are a form of negotiation of power, dominance and space that outlasts the duration of the conflict."<sup>35</sup>

Other scholars have worked on the concepts of power, domination and hegemony; such as Antonio Gramsci, who understood institutions of civil society (such as schools, organisations, and so on) as linking citizens to the state. Crucially, Gramsci's understanding of the political role of civil society is underlined as recognising "the importance of civil society as an arena for political struggle and for transformative politics [...]."<sup>36</sup> Gramsci's concept of hegemony may also help understand and analyse certain social aspects, and it is defined as "the ideological predominance of the cultural norms, values and ideas of the dominant class over the dominated."<sup>37</sup>

In Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels, communities are often divided geographically, socially or institutionally along ethnic lines. Although inhabitants reside together in the city, they nevertheless also live apart in many if not most of their daily social lives. Experience of 'the other' community is therefore greatly limited. Taking the contact hypothesis perspective, shared public spaces in such contexts may be seen as useful tools contributing towards increasing cooperation and reducing intergroup antagonism. However, this view is not shared by all scholars, and consociational theory advocates (Arend Lijphart, John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary amongst others) argue that the best way to achieve peace and stability in ethnically divided societies is to keep conflicting groups apart in order to avoid the outbreak of

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<sup>35</sup> Abdelmonem, Mohamed Gamal, and Rachel McWhinney. "In Search of Common Grounds: Stitching the Divided Landscape of Urban Parks in Belfast." *Cities* 44 (April 2015): 40-49, p. 41

<sup>36</sup> MacKenzie, Iain, ed. *Political Concepts: A Reader and Guide*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005. p. 146

<sup>37</sup> Woolcock, Joseph A. 'Politics, Ideology and Hegemony in Gramsci's Theory'. *Social and Economic Studies* 34, no. 3 (1985): 199-210, p. 204

violence, and only negotiate at the elite political level. It is indeed believed by some scholars that in certain circumstances ‘good fences make good neighbours’; hence implying that in situations of extreme ethnic tension and conflict – where ethnic identity is perceived to be under direct threat – integration is not the best short-term solution towards achieving peace and stability.<sup>38</sup> Compromise therefore needs to be channelled through politicians and other agents at the elite level first rather than directly engaging civil society. Taking this last perspective, shared space would not seem to be a valuable tool for the resolution of conflicts in divided societies. This thesis aims to explore the implications of such spaces in three divided cities, all with different contexts and different types of conflicts.

### *The Choice of Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels*

The broad and overarching way of life in contested cities includes different ethnic groups usually living separately. In the case of Belfast and Jerusalem, this separation is as much physical as psychological and social. In North, East, and West Belfast, Catholic and Protestant neighbourhoods are physically separated by what are known as ‘peacelines’ or ‘peace walls’. Other separations include the ‘West Link’, a large arterial route that separates West and North Belfast from the city centre, and the River Lagan separating East Belfast from the city centre. But the separation is also social, as children do not attend the same schools, youths do not go to the same leisure centres, and even Catholic and Protestant dead are buried apart in certain cemeteries (“within Belfast City Cemetery there is an underground wall that purposefully separates the Catholic and Protestant dead”<sup>39</sup>).

In Jerusalem, the separation is also physical and social, with West Jerusalem essentially Israeli and East Jerusalem essentially Palestinian, as agreed through a United Nations resolution in 1947. But since the early 2000s, a physical separation is being built on the outskirts of East Jerusalem, effectively separating Palestinian neighbourhoods, by what is known as the ‘security barrier’ in Israel and the ‘separation wall’ or ‘annexation wall’ in the Palestinian territory. East and West Jerusalem are also separated by a large arterial road that goes through the whole city. As in Belfast, Israeli and Palestinian children do not attend the same schools, and mixed neighbourhoods are extremely rare.

The situation is quite different in Brussels, where there is no physical separation, and no official Flemish or Francophone neighbourhoods, although Dutch-speaking residents are more

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<sup>38</sup> Lijphart, Arend. *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration*. Yale University Press, 1977; Taylor, Rupert. *Consociational Theory: McGarry and O’Leary and the Northern Ireland Conflict*. 1 edition. London ; New York: Routledge, 2009.

<sup>39</sup>Shirlow, Peter, and Brendan Murtagh. *Belfast: Segregation, Violence and the City*. London; Ann Arbor: Pluto, 2006, p. 13

likely to live in the north of the city. But as in Belfast and Jerusalem, Brussels is surrounded by a motorway, the 'Ring', which serves as a border between the bilingual region of Brussels-Capital and the mono-lingual region of Flanders. Furthermore schools, universities, most professional spheres, and most federal institutions are divided along linguistic lines. In all three cities, division is therefore strongly internalised, and has become an inherent part of city life in which experience of 'the other' is limited to a number of daily activities such as shopping or visiting a park – in other words, using public urban space.

Although Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels are obviously very different kinds of cities with very different historical, social, political, economic and cultural contexts; they can nevertheless be compared on the basis that their different resident groups – Israelis and Palestinians, Protestants and Catholics, and French speakers and Dutch speakers respectively – effectively live together separately.

The interest in studying these three cities is also influenced by their differences in terms of conflict experiences and situations – ongoing conflict in Jerusalem, post-conflict in Belfast and non-violent conflict in Brussels. The research will focus on the role that shared spaces have in each city, and how their effects on intergroup relations may differ – or not – depending on what policies have been implemented and the different discourses around sharing and intergroup relations that exist in the Northern Irish, Israeli and Belgian societies.

### **Empirical Justification of the Study**

The term 'divided city' can be understood in many different ways, either referring to the fact that a city is physically divided (for example by walls), or is a border-city between two states, or even a city divided on a class or social basis (such as gated communities or shanty towns). But there are a number of cities that are divided because different ethno-national communities reside within their boundaries and this heterogeneous context can lead to violent or non-violent conflict. Taking this last perspective, a divided city could be defined as a city where typically two different ethno-national communities reside, in a state of open or latent conflict. The urban area is therefore physically or conceptually divided between different communities who both claim territorial control over the city. Divided cities – also referred to in this thesis as contested cities – are extremely interesting to study, as they offer an exceptional and unique perspective into the interaction between communities in conflict within a relatively confined urban space. They are often the only places where the opposing communities interact and coexist (albeit not always peacefully), and could therefore also be considered as opportunities to encourage conflict transformation and peaceful coexistence. Despite their inherent differences, Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels can all be considered as divided cities – whether

physically (parts of Jerusalem and Belfast), residentially (Jerusalem and Belfast) or institutionally and socially (Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels).

Various studies have sought to examine how cities can transform conflicts through urban planning; the Conflict in Cities and the Contested State Project has for instance examined “how cities can absorb, resist and potentially play a role in transforming such conflicts.”<sup>40</sup> Although the project essentially focused on Belfast and Jerusalem, other cities were also studied, including Nicosia, Berlin, Beirut, Brussels, and Mostar. The project underlines that given the very nature of urban areas, the fact that different and opposing communities live in close proximity can either worsen the conflict or on the contrary encourage cooperation and peaceful coexistence.

The Conflict in Cities Project also underlines the deep connection between divided cities and the wider state, therefore underlining that change at the city level can influence the conflict on a larger, national or even international scale. Other scholars have additionally focused on the urban aspect of physically divided cities such as Belfast, Jerusalem and Nicosia, underlining that “in these troubled places, intercommunal rivalry seems inevitably to recommend physical segregation.”<sup>41</sup> Although separation walls in cities might seem like an aberration, they do help policy makers manage violent conflict in difficult situations. The main problem with urban partitions is that while they do reduce violent confrontations to some degree, they also reinforce fear and paranoia. In other words, the short-term effects of physical separation in violently divided cities might help reduce levels of intergroup violence; but on the long-term the internalisation of such separations cannot be expected to improve intergroup relations. Walls and other physical separations are therefore effective obstacles to both conflict escalation and conflict transformation; thus limiting efforts towards creating a peaceful and plural urban landscape. Indeed, “the problem arises today when walls are built to embody the abstract line, in effect making concrete what should remain elastic.”<sup>42</sup> Such separation walls “allow people to see what they want to see on the other side, the image of their enemy”<sup>43</sup>; they therefore enhance stereotyping and fear of the other. These arguments thus reinforce the contact hypothesis claim that more contact between conflicting groups is necessary to reduce prejudice and intergroup tensions; and also question the relevance of the consociational assertion that ‘good fences make good neighbours’.

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<sup>40</sup>Conflict in Cities. “Sharing Space in Divided Cities.” Briefing Paper. Conflict in Cities and the Contested State, November 2012.

<sup>41</sup>Calame, Jon, and Esther Ruth Charlesworth. *Divided Cities: Belfast, Beirut, Jerusalem, Mostar, and Nicosia*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009, p. 1

<sup>42</sup>Pullan, Wendy. “A One-Sided Wall.” *Index on Censorship* 33, no. 3 (January 7, 2004): 78–82, p.81

<sup>43</sup>Op. Cit., p. 82

The nature of public policy and urban planning perspectives in contested cities are therefore crucial elements that can greatly influence intergroup conflict on the ground. Scott A. Bollens<sup>44</sup> has identified urban polarization as a type of urban conflict which is particularly challenging, and occurs when ethnic or nationalist claims strongly dominate distributional questions at the municipal level. Polarized cities' local policies and governance are deformed by the severity of intergroup conflict, erasing the usual adversary politics between government and opposition common in democratic states, and ultimately making consensus over power-sharing virtually impossible. This is the case in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels, in varying degrees of severity.

Bollens identifies four different types of urban policy strategies that are used by governments in divided cities, which are the neutral strategy, partisan strategy, equity strategy and resolver strategy. Urban public policies can have direct and tangible effects on ethnic geography, and include land-use planning, economic development, housing allocation and production, social service allocation, community participation and empowerment, and municipal government organisation. Urban policies therefore have a huge impact on daily life in the city, which includes intergroup relations. Peaceful coexistence and violent conflict within a plural society thus largely depend on urban policies and planning. This statement correlates with previous arguments around the social construction of ethnic identity and the fact that its intensity depends on the social, political and economic context of the groups involved. If urban policies are deliberately separating ethnic groups within a city, these groups are more likely to fear each other, leading intergroup relations to become restricted, non-existent or even negative.

The classification of urban policy and planning strategies into the four different categories (partisan, neutral, equity and resolver) is of great value for this research as it enables a more detailed contextualisation of the three case studies analysed. A Partisan urban strategy favours one ethnic community over another and is thus a “regressive agent of change.” City policy follows the ethno-nationalist ideology of a specific group often at the expense of the other, and access to policy, planning and allocation decisions are all preferentially distributed to the dominant group. This is the case in Jerusalem. A neutral strategy allocates urban resources and services to different communities in a neutral and colour-blind manner; thus without taking into account the ethnic affiliation of a community or individual. The main aim of this strategy is to depoliticise territorial and other urban issues so as to diffuse intergroup tensions that might appear during the allocation of various resources. This is the case in Belfast. An equity

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<sup>44</sup> Bollens, Scott. A. 'Urban Planning amidst Ethnic Conflict: Jerusalem and Johannesburg'. *Urban Studies* 35, no. 4 (4 January 1998): 729–50; 'Urban Policy in Ethnically Polarized Societies'. *International Political Science Review / Revue Internationale de Science Politique* 19, no. 2 (1 April 1998): 187–215 ; *On Narrow Ground: Urban Policy and Ethnic Conflict in Jerusalem and Belfast*. SUNY Series in Urban Public Policy. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000.

strategy allocates urban resources and services to different communities by giving primacy to ethnic affiliation in order to deal with any intergroup inequalities. The specific needs of each community residing in the city are taken into account in order to better diffuse any tension that could arise from the allocation of goods and services. This is the case in Brussels. A resolver strategy is the strategy that goes the furthest in attempting to deal not only with the symptoms but the root causes of urban polarisation, by attempting to transform competing identities to become more tolerant and open. It is thus “the sole strategy that attempts to resolve the conflict, as opposed to managing it. [...] the resolver urban strategy seeks to facilitate mutual empowerment and peaceful urban coexistence.”<sup>45</sup>

<b>Urban Strategy</b>	<b>Partisan</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Equity</b>	<b>Resolver</b>
<i>Planning</i>	One-sided	Ethnically Neutral	Ethnically Aware	Transformative
<i>Cities</i>	Jerusalem	Belfast	Brussels	Johannesburg

**Table 1: Urban Planning Strategies in Divided Cities**

As a conclusion of his study on the impact of urban policy strategies on ethnic conflicts in polarized cities, Bollens argues that “city policies make a difference – intensifying urban instability in Jerusalem, and hardening ethnic compartmentalisation and urban sclerosis in Belfast.”<sup>46</sup> In Brussels, the impact of urban decision-making, which may be defined as an equity strategy, has managed to successfully maintain the political status-quo between the two linguistic communities yet it has at times also led to tensions for instance due to the differential distribution of seats in Parliament or the different budgets allocated to cultural institutions.<sup>47</sup>

The aim of this research is therefore based on previously studied aspects of contested cities in deeply divided societies including conflict analysis and urbanism. Rather than focusing on urban planning or specific policies implemented at the municipal level (which would involve the disciplines of urbanism or political science) this thesis has studied how different communities use urban space and how this may influence intergroup relations – therefore

<sup>45</sup>Bollens, Scott A. “Urban Policy in Ethnically Polarized Societies.” *International Political Science Review / Revue Internationale de Science Politique* 19, no. 2 (April 1, 1998): 187–215, p. 192

<sup>46</sup>Bollens, Scott. A. *On Narrow Ground: Urban Policy and Ethnic Conflict in Jerusalem and Belfast*. SUNY Series in Urban Public Policy. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000, p. 307

<sup>47</sup> Murphy, Alexander. ‘Brussels: Division in Unity or Unity in Division?’ *Political Geography*, Special Issue Dedicated to Saul B. Cohen, 21, no. 5 (June 2002): 695–700.

involving the discipline of sociology, and covering a less known area within the study of divided cities.

The importance of the role of planning in the creation and design of public spaces in contested cities has been further underlined by scholars focusing on public parks in Belfast, whose study revealed that that “despite the fact that parks are designed to be integrative and accessible to all, the lack of a detailed and coherent spatial strategy that intends to stitch up the physical voids and fill socio-spatial gaps within the landscape of the park could have a damaging effect on the possibility of conciliation.”<sup>48</sup> It is therefore suggested that “a more sophisticated and multi-layered approach to landscape planning and urban design is needed to focus on interweaved routes to essential facilities as a practical pathway towards spatial and social conciliation in both the public space and the city.”<sup>49</sup>

Public space is an essential aspect of any city, as it allows for mixing and interaction between inhabitants and exposure to difference; hence it is the ‘*lieu par excellence*’ through which diversity is maintained within the urban arena.

UN Habitat’s Charter of Public Space defines such space as “all places publicly owned or of public use, accessible and enjoyable by all for free and without a profit motive. Public spaces are a key element of individual and social well-being, the places of community’s collective life, expressions of the diversity of their common, natural and cultural richness and a foundation of their identity. [...] The community recognises itself in its public spaces and pursues the improvement of their spatial quality.”<sup>50</sup> This definition is crucial as it underlines the importance of a feeling of ownership shared by all city inhabitants towards urban space, as well as the necessity to accept diversity for the social well-being of all city dwellers. This is an important yet challenging feat to achieve in the particular context of contested cities, where inhabitants have often internalised the avoidance of diversity and where ownership of urban space may lead to various forms of struggles for domination between different communities.

### *The sociology of public space*

While this research has taken on an original theoretical framework in order accurately analyse the role of shared public spaces in ethnically divided cities, it is important to mention other relevant theoretical perspectives, namely the sociology of public (urban) space.

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<sup>48</sup> Abdelmonem, Mohamed Gamal, and Rachel McWhinney. “In Search of Common Grounds: Stitching the Divided Landscape of Urban Parks in Belfast.” *Cities* 44 (April 2015): 40–49, p. 48

<sup>49</sup> Op. Cit., p. 49

<sup>50</sup> Garau, Pietro. “Global Public Space Toolkit: From Global Principles to Local Policies and Practice.” Toolkit. UN Habitat, February 2016, p. 6

Henri Lefebvre is often considered as one of the most prominent urban theorists of the twentieth century, who highlighted the link between a Marxist approach to capitalist power relations and their embeddedness in the urban fabric of society.<sup>51</sup> According to him, “spatial practice regulates life – it does not create it. Space has no power ‘in itself’, nor does space as such determine spatial contradictions. These are contradictions of society – contradictions between one thing and another within society [...]. The contradiction lies [...] in the clash between a consumption of space which produces surplus value and one which produces only enjoyment – and is therefore ‘unproductive’.”<sup>52</sup>

Lefebvre has famously developed an understanding of the production of space, in order to underline that space is not simply a receptacle of power and domination but plays an active role in shaping social reality in the city. According to him, hegemony exerts itself through space<sup>53</sup>, and “a space is thus neither merely a medium nor a list of ingredients, but an interlinkage of geographic form, built environment, symbolic meanings, and routines of life. [...] People fight not only over a piece of turf, but about the sort of reality that it constitutes.”<sup>54</sup> From Lefebvre’s perspective, “space is produced through day-to-day activities that occur around, within and on it. [...] space is a product of everyday life. It is the creative product of the people whose lives are part of it. Bricks and mortar are incidental to the social activities that produce space. [...] Space can never be abstract because it is a unique product that is part of everyday life.”<sup>55</sup>

Lefebvre’s concept has deep relevance for the study of contested cities, as it demonstrates how important the role of public spaces can be in such contexts. For instance, “Lefebvre’s concepts are central to examining conflict over Jerusalem. The overt, covert and even subliminal fights over Jerusalem reveal disputes that are quarrels precisely over what everyday activities have created these spaces and places. [...] Each group believes that it owns some part of the Jerusalem city – not necessarily ownership in the conventional or legal sense, but the right to control and indeed embrace parts of the city as uniquely theirs.”<sup>56</sup> It has been further argued that “Lefebvre broadened the discussion to centralise space as the ultimate locus and medium of struggle that could affect the transformation of everyday life. [...] Space is an interactive link

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<sup>51</sup> Parker, Simon. *Urban Theory and the Urban Experience: Encountering the City*. Routledge, 2015.

<sup>52</sup> Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Wiley, 1992, pp. 358-9

<sup>53</sup> Lefebvre, Henri. “La Production de L’espace.” *L’Homme et La Société* 31, no. 1 (1974): 15-32, p. 23

<sup>54</sup> Molotch, Harvey. “The Space of Lefebvre.” Edited by Henri Lefebvre and Donald Nicholson-Smith. *Theory and Society* 22, no. 6 (1993): 887-95, p. 888

<sup>55</sup> Shlay, Anne B., and Gillad Rosen. *Jerusalem: The Spatial Politics of a Divided Metropolis*. John Wiley & Sons, 2015, p. 32

<sup>56</sup> Shlay, Anne B., and Gillad Rosen. *Jerusalem: The Spatial Politics of a Divided Metropolis*. John Wiley & Sons, 2015, p. 33



between the macro and micro levels of politics; it is the medium for political decisions, as well as a place for living.”<sup>57</sup>

Space is therefore at the very heart of a city’s life and daily functioning. Understanding how public spaces are used by different competing groups within the specific context of divided cities thus enables a more thorough comprehension of these cities as a whole, and perhaps also their specific needs in terms of conflict transformation efforts.

The importance of linking space in the city to social interaction has long been studied by sociologists and urbanists alike, especially since the beginning of the globalisation process in the second half of the twentieth century. It has been argued that public space is in most cases the site of co-presence and interaction between different groups; and is therefore qualified as ‘space of public usage’.<sup>58</sup> From this perspective, public space is defined as places of shared use, conditioned by plurality and the mixing of occupants – individuals and groups. Such spaces are also the sites of physical exploitation, partial or symbolic appropriation and of communication.<sup>59</sup> In a similar vein, it has been underlined that “public spaces can be conceived as the natural arena for the enactment of the right to the city, a fundamental citizen’s right to freely access, use, appropriate, and transform the urban space.”<sup>60</sup> The importance of public space for city life has been further underlined by the UN Habitat report, stating that “where public space is absent, inadequate, poorly designed, or privatised, the city becomes increasingly segregated. Lines are drawn based on religion, ethnicity, and economic status. The result can be a dangerously polarised city where social tensions are more likely to flare up and where social mobility and economic opportunity are stifled.”<sup>61</sup>

However, public space may also be used or controlled in ways that do not help improve intergroup relations, as “public space discourse can be functional to warrant, as well as undermine, competing sociospatial claims and actions in the public realm that have political resonances.”<sup>62</sup> In addition, “public spaces are shaped by urban policies, economic forces, and cultural trends in contexts of political power enabling and constraining specific forms of human interaction.”<sup>63</sup> This is a very important aspect to take into account, as struggles for

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<sup>57</sup> Samman, Maha. *Trans-Colonial Urban Space in Palestine: Politics and Development*. Routledge, 2013, p. 6

<sup>58</sup> Barbichon, Guy. “Espaces partagés: variation et variété des cultures.” *Espaces et sociétés*, no. 62 (June 1, 1990): 107–34, p. 110

<sup>59</sup> Op. Cit., p. 129

<sup>60</sup> Di Masso, Andrés. “Grounding Citizenship: Toward a Political Psychology of Public Space.” *Political Psychology* 33, no. 1 (2012): 123–43, p. 138

<sup>61</sup> Garau, Pietro. “Global Public Space Toolkit: From Global Principles to Local Policies and Practice.” Toolkit. UN Habitat, February 2016, p. 124

<sup>62</sup> Di Masso, Andrés. “Grounding Citizenship: Toward a Political Psychology of Public Space.” *Political Psychology* 33, no. 1 (2012): 123–43, p. 139

<sup>63</sup> Di Masso, Andrés. “Grounding Citizenship: Toward a Political Psychology of Public Space.” *Political Psychology* 33, no. 1 (2012): 123–43, p. 125

power and domination are nearly constant in contested cities and may ultimately influence the ways public spaces are used by different communities on the ground.

Other urban theorists who have dwelled on the role of space in the city include David Harvey, who underlines the importance of formulating a proper conception of space in order to understand society and urban phenomena. Harvey further states that “space is neither absolute, relative or relational in itself, but it can become one or all simultaneously depending on the circumstances. The problem of the proper conceptualisation of space is resolved through human practice with respect to it. [...] The question “what is space?” is therefore replaced by the question “how is it that different human practices create and make use of distinctive conceptualisations of space?”<sup>64</sup>

Lefebvre, Harvey and other social urbanism scholars would therefore crucially argue that “spaces are not neutral, but reflect and shape of social life. Thus space is not simply a mirror of social relations; it is also a source of social dynamics. [...] Without understanding society as a whole, it is not possible to understand space. A theory of space is therefore an essential element of a comprehensive social theory, and vice-versa.”<sup>65</sup>

It is therefore clear that public spaces play a critical role in the life of any city as they provide the potential for interaction and enable urban co-presence, even in contested cities. Determining the scope and importance of such spaces for divided cities, and their role in transforming intergroup relations in these contexts is the main aim of this research.

Individuals navigate public space with the knowledge that they will interact or at least be exposed to strangers – and in the case of contested cities, this involves coming face to face with ‘the other’. Furthermore, “the routines of social intercourse in established settings allow us to deal with anticipated others without special attention or thought. When a stranger comes into our presence, then, first appearances are likely to enable us to anticipate his category and attributes, his ‘social identity’.”<sup>66</sup> This identification mechanism in the context of divided cities may also include the process of ‘telling’ an individuals’ social and ethnic identity. The notion of ‘telling’ was first coined by Frank Burton<sup>67</sup> and is defined as “the syndrome of signs by which Catholics and Protestants arrive at religious ascription in their everyday interactions. The sectarian social division of the Northern Irish society is partially realised and re-affirmed in the processes whereby Catholics and Protestants selectively determine the religion of their co-

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<sup>64</sup> Harvey, David. *Social Justice and the City*. University of Georgia Press, 2010, p. 13

<sup>65</sup> Konzen, Lucas Pizzolatto. ‘La Ciudad Y Sus Espacios Públicos: La Dimensión Legal Explorada Sociológicamente’. *Diálogos de Saberes: Investigaciones Y Ciencias Sociales*, no. 34 (2011): 273–88, p. 274

<sup>66</sup> Goffman, Erving. *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990, p. 12

<sup>67</sup> Burton, Frank. *Politics of Legitimacy: Struggles in a Belfast Community*. 1st Hardcover edition. London ; Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul Books, 1978.

interactionist.”<sup>68</sup> In other words, telling is an internalised cognitive ethnic identification process.

In divided cities, mixed areas are not widespread and meaningful cross-community interaction is therefore an anomaly rather than the norm. However, it is also important to underline that the regular usage of public spaces by different groups leads to a normalisation of exposure to the other in these specific settings. Burton further explains that telling “creates order in the anomic climate of a sectarian society. In one sense Protestants and Catholics do not know how to interact. Their restricted knowledge of each other prevents communication. Telling contributes to shutting out this anomie before it can start.”<sup>69</sup> In other words, while inhabitants of contested cities such as Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels might have internalised and anticipated the presence of the other group in public spaces, interaction might remain severely limited in such contexts.

Coexistence and interaction on a daily basis between different and often hostile communities is an interesting aspect to study in the particular context of contested cities, especially given their relative rarity within an otherwise deeply divided social and urban environment. While public spaces are a fundamental urban element, their very existence may be questioned in cities divided along ethno-religious, national, political or linguistic lines.

Thus, in divided cities “the conventional logic of shared spaces and services is turned upside down; in a segregated city, each antagonistic community insists on the possession and control of its own streets, airwaves, currencies, utilities, schools, hospitals, and housing to whatever extent possible, on the assumption that those apparently belonging to rival groups could prove dangerous to them.”<sup>70</sup> Public space in most contested cities is therefore the only place where individuals from different ethnic groups actually come face to face and interact; and is thus a pivotal element in the study of troubled intergroup relations.

The role of public space in contested cities is therefore an important aspect to analyse from a conflict transformation perspective, as “central to overcoming such a state of division is the ability to confront issues of exclusive identity and discriminative loyalty in public space in favour of collective belonging and shared commitment to socio-economic revival.”<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup>Burton, Frank. *Politics of Legitimacy: Struggles in a Belfast Community*. 1st Hardcover edition. London ; Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul Books, 1978, p. 4

<sup>69</sup> Op. Cit., p. 66

<sup>70</sup> Pullan, W., and B. Baillie. *Locating Urban Conflicts: Ethnicity, Nationalism and the Everyday*. Springer, 2013, p. 220

<sup>71</sup> Abdelmonem, Mohamed Gamal, and Rachel McWhinney. “In Search of Common Grounds: Stitching the Divided Landscape of Urban Parks in Belfast.” *Cities* 44 (April 2015): 40–49, p. 41

However for some authors, simply imposing shared space in a contested city will not necessarily lead to improved intergroup relations. There is thus a need to mainstream the concept of a shared city throughout the public sphere, as well as a need to create the conditions that will enable the realisation of residents' preference for integrated rather than segregated living.<sup>72</sup> It has been argued that "simply informing the citizens of a divided city that the sources of their divisions have received a political solution is inadequate."<sup>73</sup> From this perspective, simply tolerating each other's differences for the sake of coexistence is a minimum requirement in a shared city. Moreover, it has been underlined that "simply putting groups together does not mean that they will engage in meaningful interactions with one another at the individual level. It is suggested that the impact of shared space on intergroup relations may be reliant on the type of shared space."<sup>74</sup> Therefore, according to certain scholars, shared space in itself will not necessarily enhance intergroup contact and peaceful coexistence and only places where meaningful group interaction is encouraged may result in behavioural change.

As regards the cases examined in this thesis, shared space is a relatively new term in the fields of urban planning and conflict resolution that has mainly emerged in relation to the peace process in Northern Ireland. Over the years, the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement has become a model for peace arrangements around the world, as its main strategies have been deemed highly efficient for mediation and conflict resolution. The term has become increasingly popular in policy and planning efforts in the particular context of post-conflict Northern Ireland, where creating shared space has been assimilated with furthering the peace agreement and has entered dominant discourses on either side of the ethno-political divide. The ongoing peace process which has benefited from the contribution of the European Union has additionally made shared space one of its main priorities in order to achieve conflict transformation in Northern Irish cities such as Belfast.<sup>75</sup> The International Fund for Ireland has also funded local efforts towards creating shared spaces enhancing cross-community contact across Northern Ireland.<sup>76</sup>

It may therefore be argued that the term shared space in relation to conflict transformation was first established and developed within the specific context of the Northern Irish conflict

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<sup>72</sup>Op. Cit., p. 9

<sup>73</sup>Op. Cit., p. 11

<sup>74</sup>McKeown, Shelly, Ed Cairns, and Maurice Stringer. "Is Shared Space Really Shared?" *Shared Space Journal*, no. 12 (February 2012), p. 3

<sup>75</sup> Special EU Programmes Body. "Peace III EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation 2007 - 2013 Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland Operational Programme." Operational Programme. Special EU Programmes Body, 2007.

<sup>76</sup> International Fund for Ireland. "Launch of IFI-Supported 'Shared Space' Project in Manorcunningham." Information. *International Fund for Ireland*, May 1, 2009. <http://www.internationalfundforireland.com/press-releases/227-launch-of-ifi-supported-shared-space-project-in-manorcunningham>.

and ensuing peace process. It is this particular context that formed the basis of this study's enquiry around the role of such spaces in improving intergroup relations in divided cities. In Jerusalem, other terms such as 'coexistence' are preferred and the notion of shared space as a tool for conflict transformation is not widely acknowledged. Shared space is not a term that is generally used in Brussels neither, where divisions between the linguistic communities have not involved physical or geographical separation of the groups in the city.

While shared space has therefore become increasingly popular for funders and peace programme developers, it nevertheless remains a vague term with limited research being carried out on its supposed positive impact on conflict transformation efforts.<sup>77</sup> The term 'shared space' in the context of contested cities has been criticised by certain scholars as "talk about creating 'the shared city' involves some indulgence in an easy but empty 'signifier' – in other words, the ready use of a bland term that invites unanimous consent, but unravels when tested against the detailed reality of ethnic, religious, or ethno-nationalist rivalry and asymmetrical power relationships."<sup>78</sup> It has therefore been argued that "if a 'shared city' means an 'agreed city' and the latter embodies agreement to disagree, and thereby a high degree of separate living in a manner that is mutually respectful and non-threatening, that is one thing. But if it means a significant increase in integrated social interaction and inter-communal collaboration, rooted in values of inclusion, diversity, equity and interdependence, that is a much more ambitious project."<sup>79</sup>

While public spaces may seem ideal places for exchange and tolerance – and therefore effective conflict transformation tools – it is important to acknowledge the limited role of such spaces in transforming intergroup relations. It has for instance been mentioned that "diversity is thought to be negotiated in civic public sphere. The depressing reality, however, is that these spaces tend to be territorialised by particular groups [...] or they are spaces of transit with very little contact between strangers. [...] The city's public spaces are not natural servants of multicultural engagement."<sup>80</sup> In other words, public spaces in cities are probably not the best sites for extensive intergroup contact leading to improved intergroup relations; and this is even less likely in deeply divided societies and cities such as Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels. Indeed, public spaces "seem to fall short of inculcating inter-ethnic understanding, because they are not spaces of interdependence and habitual engagement."<sup>81</sup> However, it may also be argued

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<sup>77</sup> Komarova, Milena. "Shared Space in Belfast and the Limits of A Shared Future." *Conflict in Cities and the Contested State*, no. Working Paper 3 (2008).

<sup>78</sup> Frank Gaffikin, Frank, and Mike Morrissey. *Planning in Divided Cities*. John Wiley & Sons, 2011, p. 102

<sup>79</sup> Op. Cit., p. 225

<sup>80</sup> Amin, Ash. "Ethnicity and the Multicultural City: Living with Diversity." *Environment and Planning A* 34, no. 6 (June 1, 2002): 959–80, p. 70

<sup>81</sup> Op. Cit., p. 71

that a lower level of habitual engagement – habitual exposure – remains necessary for intergroup relations in divided cities.

As the above sections have demonstrated, a debate exists around the worth of shared space in deeply divided societies. This thesis will therefore examine what differences shared public spaces can actually make to cross-community relations in three contested cities hosting various levels of intergroup tension and violence. This will be achieved by establishing if the use of such shared spaces by different groups enhances levels and quality of intergroup contact.

## Conclusion

This first chapter presenting the research has set out the main aims and rationale behind the study on shared public spaces in three divided cities. It has therefore been established that the thesis will attempt to answer the following research questions that have been deemed of academic interest:

- *Does the presence of shared public spaces enhance the level and quality of cross-community interaction in divided cities such as Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels?*
- *What differences can shared public spaces make to cross-community relations in ethnically divided and contested cities?*

The particularity of public spaces – which are places of mixing and diversity – in cities geographically, socially or physically divided along ethno-religious, ethno-national or ethno-linguistic lines has been underlined; as they often represent the only areas where different communities come across each other on a regular basis. It is therefore important to investigate whether exposure to and interaction with the ‘other’ that occurs in shared public spaces makes a difference to intergroup relations and ultimately mitigate or exacerbate intergroup conflict in contested cities. It is hoped that by answering the research questions, this thesis may contribute towards shedding light on the possible use of public space as a tool for conflict transformation in deeply divided societies and cities. Readings have revealed that the role of public space in contested cities has not been widely analysed, and it has been further underlined that “while the notion of division is researched exhaustively in post-conflict cities, the practice of shared living in everyday life remains understudied.”<sup>82</sup> This thesis therefore intends to contribute towards developing this particular aspect of contested cities – everyday coexistence in divided societies.

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<sup>82</sup> Abdelmonem, Mohamed Gamal, and Rachel McWhinney. “In Search of Common Grounds: Stitching the Divided Landscape of Urban Parks in Belfast.” *Cities* 44 (April 2015): 40–49, p. 41

## Chapter Two: Theoretical and Analytical Framework of the Research

An original synthesis of two different theoretical perspectives is provided in this thesis, which has been deemed necessary due to the limited number of studies of shared spaces from an interdisciplinary perspective.

The main theoretical approach to influence the research is the intergroup contact theory, initially developed by Gordon Allport<sup>83</sup> and further improved by other authors including Thomas Pettigrew and Linda Tropp.<sup>84</sup> The contact hypothesis posits that increased contact between conflicting groups will eventually lead to less prejudice and therefore better intergroup relations. Therefore, it is particularly relevant in studying cross-community interactions and relations in shared public spaces. However, a key shortcoming within this particular theory is that it does not take into account the context within which intergroup contact occurs. A second theoretical perspective thus completes the contact hypothesis insight by focusing on the ramifications of the specific contexts of each case study city; the French social theory perspectives of Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault.

This chapter will explain why and how the combination of these two theoretical perspectives will ultimately answer the main research questions and enable the development of an effective methodology for field research. A first part will present the main aspects of intergroup contact theory and underline its importance in studying shared public spaces but also its limitations. A second part will then focus on certain notions developed by Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault, as a means of improving intergroup contact theory's application in the specific context of contested cities. A third part will explore the counter-theory to this framework – consociational theory – that argues that separation is in fact preferable to integration. A fourth and final part will subsequently present a framework for analysing and interpreting shared public spaces based on the combination of key insights and elements drawn from intergroup contact theory and the social theories of Bourdieu and Foucault. This theoretical framework is believed to provide the necessary basis on which to study what differences shared public spaces can make to cross-community relations in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels.

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<sup>83</sup> Allport, Gordon Willard. *The Nature of Prejudice*. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1979.

<sup>84</sup> Pettigrew, Thomas F., and Linda R. Tropp. *When Groups Meet: The Dynamics of Intergroup Contact*. Psychology Press, 2013.

## 1. Intergroup Contact Theory

To better comprehend what might occur between different groups in shared public spaces, the intergroup contact theory has been identified as one of the most relevant theories on which to base this theoretical framework.

### Intergroup Contact Theory Developments

Gordon Allport (1897-1967) initially developed the intergroup contact theory in 1954 and identified four key conditions for intergroup contact to be positive, which were to have equal group status within the situation; common goals; intergroup cooperation; and the support of authorities, the law or custom.<sup>85</sup> The relevance of studying intergroup contact from a conflict transformation perspective may be explained as “some expect this [...] contact to dissolve ethnic conflict; others say that it just intensifies them. [...] Indeed, according to one statement of the basic idea, more contact, in the right circumstances, means less trouble.”<sup>86</sup>

The intergroup contact theory has undergone many developments since Allport’s initial presentation of the hypothesis, and it has been “rationalised in terms of increased perception of similarity as cause and increased liking as effect, and this similarity-liking interpretation has been generally accepted by those doing research on the contact hypothesis.”<sup>87</sup> Thomas Pettigrew and Linda Tropp have studied and developed the theory, but while they have based their research mainly on Allport’s previous findings, their arguments are not entirely similar. Although they agree that Allport’s four conditions for optimal contact are important, Pettigrew and Tropp suggest that it might be more relevant to understand them as facilitating intergroup contact rather than being essential. In other words, intergroup contact can reduce prejudice even without these four features. Pettigrew and Tropp’s study revealed that out of Allport’s four conditions, one (the fourth condition) stood out as having more impact on the contact outcome. Indeed, the authors argue that governmental support for intergroup contact usually increases the likelihood of prejudice reduction.<sup>88</sup>

According to Pettigrew and Tropp, greater exposure to individuals from other groups can significantly enhance their liking. In other words, according to the more recently developed hypothesis of intergroup contact theory, “all things being equal, greater contact and familiarity

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<sup>85</sup>Pettigrew, Thomas F. “Intergroup Contact Theory.” *Annual Review of Psychology* 49, no. 1 (1998): 65–85, p. 66

<sup>86</sup> Forbes, Hugh Donald. *Ethnic Conflict: Commerce, Culture, and the Contact Hypothesis*. Yale University Press, 1997, p. 2

<sup>87</sup> Chirot, Daniel, and Martin E. P. Seligman. *Ethnopolitical Warfare: Causes, Consequences, and Possible Solutions*. American Psychological Association, 2001, p. 357

<sup>88</sup>Pettigrew, Thomas F., Oliver Christ, Ulrich Wagner, and Jost Stellmacher. “Direct and Indirect Intergroup Contact Effects on Prejudice: A Normative Interpretation.” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 31, no. 4 (July 2007): 411–25, p. 421



with members of other groups should enhance liking for those groups.”<sup>89</sup> Pettigrew and Tropp have developed additional criteria for positive intergroup contact, which include the need for research to involve contact between members of different groups, and that some degree of direct interaction must occur – proximity is a necessary but not sufficient condition for social contact. They further acknowledge the importance of context, underlining that “institutional support for contact under conditions of competition or unequal status can often enhance animosity between groups, thereby diminishing the potential for achieving positive outcomes from contact.”<sup>90</sup>

Pettigrew has recognised that the theory may have some weaknesses and suggests four future directions in which to take intergroup contact research – specifying the processes of intergroup contact; a greater focus on intergroup contact that leads to negative effects (such as increased prejudice, distrust and conflict); placing intergroup contact in a longitudinal and multilevel social context; and applying contact to social policy. Pettigrew and Tropp have in more recent research focused on negative contact effects, explaining that “negative contact typically involves situations where the participants feel threatened and did not choose to have the contact. [...] These situations frequently occur in work environments where intergroup competition exists as well as in situations involving intergroup conflict.”<sup>91</sup> For instance, contact between Palestinian civilians and Israeli soldiers at a checkpoint in the West Bank is not expected to be positive, as “neither the Israeli soldiers nor the Palestinian civilians passing through have chosen to be in this situation. And both parties are understandably threatened. The soldiers fear the possibility of a suicide bomber or other attacks upon them. The Palestinians fear humiliation and violence from the gun-toting soldiers. No intergroup contact theorist has ever thought such stressful contact would do anything but worsen intergroup relations.”<sup>92</sup> They therefore acknowledge the relevance of negative contact effects, but argue that “the role of negative intergroup contact may not be as crucial as some critics have assumed.”<sup>93</sup>

In terms of the relevance of the contact hypothesis for policy change, a debate has emerged between social psychology proponents claiming that psychological micro-phenomena such as prejudice and tolerance impact on macro-phenomena including policies; and political scientists that on the contrary argue that intergroup contact is irrelevant to policy, or even

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<sup>89</sup> Pettigrew, Thomas F., and Linda R. Tropp. “A Meta-Analytic Test of Intergroup Contact Theory.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 90, no. 5 (May 2006): 751–83, p. 753

<sup>90</sup>Op. Cit., p. 766

<sup>91</sup>Pettigrew, Thomas F., Linda R. Tropp, Ulrich Wagner, and Oliver Christ. “Recent Advances in Intergroup Contact Theory.” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 35, no. 3 (May 2011): 271–80, p. 277

<sup>92</sup>Op. Cit., p. 277

<sup>93</sup>Op. Cit., p. 277

harmful in situations of intergroup conflict (e.g. consociationalists). The political science perspective posits that micro-phenomena such as intergroup prejudice have little to do with macro-phenomena such as intergroup conflict and violence that may emanate from differential allocations of power, or the failure of a democratic system. This particular perspective is mainly held by consociationist theory advocates who argue that “sometimes, good fences make good neighbours.”<sup>94</sup> However, Pettigrew asserts that “to argue that prejudice has little or nothing to do with intergroup conflict is an extreme position, to say the least. Rather, extensive findings to date reveal *that intergroup contact is a necessary but insufficient condition by itself to resolve intergroup conflict* [italic in text].”<sup>95</sup>

### Weaknesses and Limitations of the Contact Hypothesis

Although the intergroup contact theory provides an interesting perspective from which to study intergroup relations in shared public spaces, a few limitations have been identified. The contact hypothesis is not unanimously considered to be an effective or relevant theory within the academic arena. Criticisms have included the fact that the theory does not take into account the context in which contact occurs; that it focuses on controlled and optimal settings that are very specific and therefore not representative of daily life and interactions; that it systematically likens the effects of interpersonal contact with those of intergroup contact; and that there has been no interest in studying negative effects of contact between groups.<sup>96</sup>

There is no unanimous agreement that increased meaningful contact between different groups will systematically lead to a reduction in prejudice and thus an improvement of relations. Hugh Forbes has therefore warned about the over-simplification of the theory by stating that “the most common intuition today is undoubtedly that contact, when it has any effects at all, has good effects. It destroys prejudices and stereotypes. This layman’s contact hypothesis clashes with the vague but widespread suspicion that increasing contact must be counted among the causes of contemporary ethnic violence.”<sup>97</sup>

Other scholars have been critical of recent developments of the intergroup contact theory, suggesting that it has become too far removed from the reality it intends to analyse. Certain

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<sup>94</sup> McGarry, John, and Brendan O’Leary. *Explaining Northern Ireland: Broken Images*. Wiley, 1995, p. 210

<sup>95</sup> Pettigrew, Thomas F. “Future Directions for Intergroup Contact Theory and Research.” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 32, no. 3 (May 2008): 187–99, p. 196

<sup>96</sup> Forbes, Hugh Donald. *Ethnic Conflict: Commerce, Culture, and the Contact Hypothesis*. Yale University Press, 1997; MacInnis, Cara C., and Elizabeth Page-Gould. ‘How Can Intergroup Interaction Be Bad If Intergroup Contact Is Good? Exploring and Reconciling an Apparent Paradox in the Science of Intergroup Relations’. *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 10, no. 3 (May 2015): 307–27; Dixon, John, Kevin Durrheim, and Colin Tredoux. ‘Beyond the Optimal Contact Strategy: A Reality Check for the Contact Hypothesis’. *American Psychologist* 60, no. 7 (October 2005): 697–711.

<sup>97</sup> Forbes, Hugh Donald. *Ethnic Conflict: Commerce, Culture, and the Contact Hypothesis*. Yale University Press, 1997, p. 210

research practices carried out by contact theorists have been criticised, including the study of interactions occurring under very specific and favourable conditions of contact and the use of changes in levels of personal prejudice as the main measure of contact outcome. It has for instance been argued that “the contact hypothesis requires a reality check – that its proposals for the integration for different groups, while admirable in principle, gloss over the harsher realities of social life in cities [...]. In several important respects, the contact literature has become detached from (and sometimes irrelevant to) everyday life in divided societies.”<sup>98</sup>

Another limitation in the current intergroup contact theory is the lack of contextualisation – there is no mention of the historical, social, political, cultural or economic contexts in which contact occurs. Pettigrew does mention briefly that military occupation might not lead to positive intergroup contact, but that is as far as he goes in attempting to place contact situations within a wider background. As previously mentioned, this study on shared public spaces in contested cities assumes that context is extremely important when researching social matters. According to contact theorists, the vast majority of situations of intergroup contact do lead to less prejudice, and it is argued that there is not much variation between gender, age, geographic location or nationality. One could therefore expect that intergroup contact in shared spaces in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels will lead to positive effects, regardless of the different contexts of these divided cities. Yet a constructivist interpretation would probably suggest a very different outcome. As it is clear that Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels have very different conflict contexts, applying the intergroup contact theory perspective to the research is deemed pertinent yet insufficient. It could therefore be argued that the contact hypothesis does not go far enough in acknowledging the importance of social dynamics around discourse, power, domination, and norms in structuring the context of intergroup contact in the first place. Such elements – studied by French social theorists such as Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault – are crucial for exploring and understanding what occurs in specific situations, such as intergroup contact in ethnically divided cities.

It has been further underlined that “there is a gulf between the idealised forms of contact studied by social psychologists and the mundane interactions that characterised most ordinary encounters between groups. When it is conjured into existence, “optimal contact” usually takes the form of short-lived laboratory analogues or highly localised interventions in the field.”<sup>99</sup> From this perspective, the relevance of the kind of meaningful interaction that occurs in socially engineered cross-community settings may also be questioned. Such controlled

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<sup>98</sup> Dixon, John, Kevin Durrheim, and Colin Tredoux. “Beyond the Optimal Contact Strategy: A Reality Check for the Contact Hypothesis.” *American Psychologist* 60, no. 7 (October 2005): 697–711, p. 697

<sup>99</sup> Dixon, John, Kevin Durrheim, and Colin Tredoux. “Beyond the Optimal Contact Strategy: A Reality Check for the Contact Hypothesis.” *American Psychologist* 60, no. 7 (October 2005): 697–711, p. 700

situations of 'optimal contact' have also been criticised as tokenistic without necessarily creating a positive impact on wider intergroup relations, as they are deemed too far removed from the reality on the ground.<sup>100</sup> Some scholars have therefore suggested a reorientation of the field of intergroup contact research to move "beyond the utopianism of class contact theory, which looks towards some idealised space of optimal interaction, we advocate research that proceeds from where we are now, in the messy, ambivalent, and often still deeply divided arenas of everyday life."<sup>101</sup>

However limited the contact hypothesis might be according to certain scholars, contact and interaction do remain crucial aspects to take into account when studying intergroup relations in divided societies. Indeed, "we have clear evidence that segregation restricts cross-community contact and that absence of contact is associated with stronger ethno-religious identities; these are, in turn, associated with greater anxiety about intergroup contact and more sectarian attitudes that include greater support for violence as a means of solving the ongoing conflict."<sup>102</sup> Other intergroup contact theory advocates have acknowledged the weaknesses described above, but underline that the contact hypothesis has provided valuable and relevant results and that further development of the theory is needed. It has therefore been argued that "we can reflect with some satisfaction on our work to date, but with regard to the study of intergroup contact in relation to intergroup conflict (and not merely the milder issue of prejudice), the future needs to be longer than the past."<sup>103</sup>

### Intergroup Contact in Public Spaces and Contested Cities

Some intergroup contact theorists have described the different effects of contact on intergroup relations that may occur in urban settings, suggesting that there is not just one type of intergroup contact that generally leads to prejudice reduction. For instance, contact produces the smallest positive effects in tourism and the highest in recreation; while the effects of work, organisations, neighbourhoods, schools and universities are situated in between them. Shared interests are therefore seen as major elements to take into account when evaluating the effects of contact on intergroup relations. Sports arenas, fitness centres, clubs, urban gardens, amateur theatres and similar locations demonstrate the binding force of shared interests.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Belfast Interviewees 10 – Martin McMullan, Louise Mallon and Sheila Morris, Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2015

<sup>101</sup> Op. Cit., p. 709

<sup>102</sup> McEvoy, Joanne, and Brendan O'Leary. *Power Sharing in Deeply Divided Places*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013, p. 284

<sup>103</sup> Hewstone, Miles, Simon Lollot, Hermann Swart, Elissa Myers, Alberto Voci, Ananthi Al Ramiah, and Ed Cairns. "Intergroup Contact and Intergroup Conflict." *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, The Life and Work of Peace Psychologist Ed Cairns, 20, no. 1 (February 2014): 39–53, p. 49

<sup>104</sup> Wessel, Terje. "Does Diversity in Urban Space Enhance Intergroup Contact and Tolerance?" *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography* 91, no. 1 (March 1, 2009): 5–17, p. 9

While public spaces might not produce the same levels of shared activity and interest, individuals do generally use shopping centres or parks for similar purposes.

It has crucially been suggested that “more research be conducted on the mundane, seemingly unimportant, encounters that constitute the overwhelming majority of everyday contact experiences.”<sup>105</sup> These mundane kinds of encounters are more likely to occur in public spaces in contested cities, rather than the optimal meaningful interaction posited by the contact hypothesis. Despite not being the place of in-depth intergroup contact, public spaces remain important urban features to study in terms of intergroup relations and conflict transformation within deeply divided societies.

One particular aspect of the contact hypothesis has focused on proximity rather than more in-depth interaction; which is the type of contact more likely to occur in public spaces. As Forbes explains, “studies of proximity are studies of the *opportunity* for interaction, where having opportunity means living or working relatively close to members of an out-group. Proximity in this sense presumably increases interaction: those who live and work close together should tend to interact with each other more frequently than those who live and work apart, but of course they need not do so. Proximity is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for interaction.”<sup>106</sup> Acknowledging that proximity provides the opportunity for interaction may be likened to the theory of affordances that claims that value of a thing is inherently linked to what it affords for.<sup>107</sup> The role of proximity in improving intergroup relations, which is often assumed by contact hypothesis advocates, has been questioned as “close proximity is plainly associated with frequent interaction, and interaction, [...] is consistently associated with positive attitudes. But is proximity consistently associated with positive attitudes? It seems not.”<sup>108</sup>

However, proponents of the theory of affordances would argue that proximity is nevertheless meaningful and valuable for intergroup relations because it offers the opportunity for interaction. The notion of affordance, developed by James J. Gibson (1979), describes the link between the living being and its environment, and their complementarity; thus “the affordances of the environment are what is *offers* the animal, what it *provides* or *furnishes*, either good or ill.”<sup>109</sup> From this perspective, perception drives action; and it could therefore be suggested that shared public spaces are valuable as their affordance allows for enhanced levels

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<sup>105</sup>Dixon, John, Kevin Durrheim, and Colin Tredoux. “Beyond the Optimal Contact Strategy: A Reality Check for the Contact Hypothesis.” *American Psychologist* 60, no. 7 (October 2005): 697–711, p. 703

<sup>106</sup> Forbes, Hugh Donald. *Ethnic Conflict: Commerce, Culture, and the Contact Hypothesis*. Yale University Press, 1997, p. 84

<sup>107</sup> Scarantino, Andrea. ‘Affordances Explained’. *Philosophy of Science* 70, no. 5 (2003): 949–61.

<sup>108</sup> Op. Cit., p. 91

<sup>109</sup> Gibson, James J. *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception: Classic Edition*. Psychology Press, 2014, p. 119

of interaction and their perceptions as spaces of diversity mean that they are used as such by the inhabitants of divided cities. This study will precisely focus on mere exposure and proximity that occurs on a daily basis between members of the different communities residing in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels and their effects on intergroup relations in such settings.

Public spaces in cities are often understood as major places for social cohesion.<sup>110</sup> However there are counter arguments that the types of contact that occur in public spaces might not systematically or necessarily lead to positive effects as “contact might be useful, might lead to ‘familiar strangers’ (Milgram, 2010) or to fleeting interactions, but it is not necessarily enough for relationship building.”<sup>111</sup> Yet, a study on contact in public space also revealed that “encounters between strangers in public space have often been characterised as merely brief and functional (Goffman, 1963; Lofland, 1973). However, the question is whether those brief interactions can be meaningful for people and positively contribute to feelings of comfort. As such, an examination of interactions provides insight into the extent to which being in public spaces with known or unknown others contributes to feeling comfortable and at home and to what extent prejudices can be mitigated.”<sup>112</sup> In her findings, Karin Peters argues that the intergroup contact theory can also be applied to public spaces as “not only intensive and durable contacts, but also fleeting interactions contribute to feeling at home. By seeing each other in public spaces, residents become more familiar with the rules and models of engagement that are used in certain public spaces. [...] Therefore, these spaces – places where people can meet and interact with each other in a more or less neutral way – are important in all cities.”<sup>113</sup>

It may therefore be suggested that the use of urban space by different groups is important for intergroup relations, even if it does not lead to meaningful interactions and systematic prejudice reduction. Co-presence and exposure to difference should therefore not be deemed irrelevant. Furthermore, “public space can play an important role in reintegrating a divided and conflicting society, when there are enough social measures to make peace possible but the legacy of the past conflicts has solidified conflict and segregation in stone, which now needs to be unwound for sowing the seeds of peace. By making places and processes accessible, opening up blocked pathways and establishing desired patterns of movement, using plurality and

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<sup>110</sup> Madanipour, Ali, Sabine Knierbein, and Aglaée Degros. *Public Space and the Challenges of Urban Transformation in Europe*. Routledge, 2013, p. 135

<sup>111</sup> Op. Cit., p. 135

<sup>112</sup> Peters, Karin. *Living Together in Multi-Ethnic Neighbourhoods: The Meaning of Public Spaces for Issues of Social Integration*. Wageningen Academic Pub, 2011, p. 76

<sup>113</sup> Op. Cit., p. 247

variety in landmarks, public spaces have a role to play in supporting the peace process.”<sup>114</sup> This study will focus on different types of urban spaces, not all deliberately engineered towards enhancing peaceful coexistence or supporting a peace process, in order to establish if the most mundane, fleeting experience of the ‘other’ that generally occurs in such spaces has any effect on intergroup relations.

## 2. Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault’s Social Theories

While each of the three examined cities are prone to different levels of conflict, they are all situated within different wider contexts. In order to render the intergroup contact theory more effective and pertinent to the study of shared public spaces in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels, it has been combined with a broader French social theory perspective. More specifically, the notions of Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) and Michel Foucault (1926-1984) have been identified as particularly relevant, as both authors provide interesting and original insights into the role of social contexts, discourse and power relations in the construction of societies, which are deemed to be crucial aspects to take into account when exploring intergroup relations in ethnically divided cities.

### Pierre Bourdieu : Habitus, Field, Doxa and Domination

A number of notions developed by Pierre Bourdieu<sup>115</sup> are of particular interest for the study of ethnic identity, divided societies and contested cities. His concept of *habitus* is a crucial part of his argument on culture and power in modern societies. The *habitus* is a system of durable and transposable dispositions which integrate all past experiences, and functions as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions within a society. Through his or her *habitus*, an individual incorporates a personal and collective history and re-establishes it as dispositions which orientate his or her every day practices and behaviour.<sup>116</sup> The *habitus* thus integrates different aspects of everyday lifestyle, such as housing patterns, style of dressing, taste in dietary patterns, and aesthetic codes within a consistent social identity. In other words, the *habitus* of an individual or a group “defines a symbolic order within which it conducts its practices – in everyday life as well as in the feast. It provides a common framework within which the members of the group understand their own and each other’s actions and through

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<sup>114</sup> Madanipour, Ali, Sabine Knierbein, and Aglaée Degros. *Public Space and the Challenges of Urban Transformation in Europe*. Routledge, 2013, p. 187

<sup>115</sup> Bourdieu, Pierre. *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique*. Paris: Seuil, 2000.

<sup>116</sup> Mérand, Frédéric, and Vincent Pouliot. “Le Monde de Pierre Bourdieu: Éléments Pour Une Théorie Sociale Des Relations Internationales.” *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue Canadienne de Science Politique* 41, no. 3 (September 1, 2008): 603–25, p. 611

which the researcher can make sense of them.”<sup>117</sup> In the case of contested cities, it may be argued that the *habitus* of the inhabitants has integrated a particular aspect of daily life – that of living together apart. Collective histories are founded on selective group histories that often reinforce division through highlighting traumatic collective memories and victimisation mechanisms that usually portray ‘the other’ as the oppressor – the holocaust or Nakba in Jerusalem; Bloody Sunday or the Shankill bomb in Belfast; and discriminatory use of language or collaboration during the world wars in Brussels.

Another relevant notion is that of the *field*, a social configuration structured on the three principle dimensions of power relations, objects of struggle and internalised rules.<sup>118</sup> The *field* is not only a social space where actors share rules and norms; it is also and more importantly a vector of domination. According to Bourdieu, the social space is also a field of power; it is the place where power relations occur and where agents struggle to reinforce their positions and shape the field of power to their advantage.<sup>119</sup> In contested cities, there is not one single field where all actors share all rules and norms as each group creates and recreates its own truths which more often than not contradict those of the other community. Thus, the social space where power relations occur is more severely contested and struggles for positions of power and domination may in certain cases take more explicit or violent forms.

Finally, the *doxa* includes a set of ideas, norms and other knowledge which are generally accepted within a social situation.<sup>120</sup> The *doxa* usually helps the dominant group consolidate its power over society.<sup>121</sup> Bourdieu defined the *doxa* as “common sense” which indicates an undisputed submission to everyday life.<sup>122</sup> The social construction of meaning, including scientific knowledge, obeys the same logic as the construction of social reality. Therefore, “in a determinate social formation, the stabler the objective structures and the more fully they reproduce themselves in agents’ dispositions, the greater the extent of the field of doxa, of that which is taken for granted.”<sup>123</sup> Through the *doxa*, the dominated group or individual is susceptible of adhering to, or at least incorporating, the social representations which favour

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<sup>117</sup>Sulkunen, Pekka. “Society Made Visible: On the Cultural Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu.” *Acta Sociologica* 25, no. 2 (January 1, 1982): 103–15, p. 109

<sup>118</sup>Mérand, Frédéric, and Vincent Pouliot. “Le Monde de Pierre Bourdieu: Éléments Pour Une Théorie Sociale Des Relations Internationales.” *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue Canadienne de Science Politique* 41, no. 3 (September 1, 2008): 603–25, p. 613

<sup>119</sup> Bourdieu, Pierre. *Questions de sociologie*. Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 2002.

<sup>120</sup> Bourdieu, Pierre, and Loïc J. D. Wacquant. *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. University of Chicago Press, 1992.

<sup>121</sup>Op. Cit., p. 613

<sup>122</sup>Op. Cit., p. 622

<sup>123</sup> Bourdieu, Pierre. *Equisse D'une Théorie de La Pratique*. Cambridge University Press, 1977., p. 165-6



the dominant group. Bourdieu argued that the dominated are therefore willing victims of “symbolic violence”.<sup>124</sup> Bourdieu’s notion of doxa is thus “seen as defining perceptions and opinions (essentially, orthodoxy or heterodoxy) which have not been subjected to reflexive thought”<sup>125</sup>, depending on a particular habitus and field type. From a Bourdieusian perspective, the transition from practical action to discourse in society is assimilated to the move from doxa to orthodoxy.

In the case of divided societies, these domination struggles occur at the different levels, both within and between ethnic groups. Each group in contested cities has its own *doxa*, sometimes leading to certain situations where violent repression of members of one group or an armed campaign against another becomes “common sense.” Even in less volatile or tense situations, it may be accepted that political parties remain strictly sectarian or mono-lingual, therefore tending to the needs of only part of the city’s population as this is understood as best serving society as a whole. Bourdieu believed that there is a constant struggle between those who possess the resources to reinforce the field in which they are involved and other actors within a given society.

The place of these struggles is the field of power – which is often the state. Closely linked to this is the notion of capital. Capital is a specific resource of each field (for instance, cultural capital, political capital or economic capital), which the agents attempt to accumulate.<sup>126</sup> Bourdieu understood the state as a meta-capital due to its privileged position in the centre of the field of power. This struggle for domination and the state is far more intense and visible in ethnically divided societies than in class struggles. The “symbolic power” is understood as the performativity of language and its role in the creation of a reality and hierarchy which are usually favourable to the dominant actors within society.<sup>127</sup> Symbolic power in divided cities is a crucial tool for the leaders of different groups that can either impose a reality of imminent threat caused by the presence of another group – therefore leading to an escalation of tension and the perpetuation of intergroup conflict. On the other hand, symbolic power may also be used in the aftermath of a conflict by leaders who perceive the value in reducing tension and reconciling with the other group – thus leading to a de-escalation of violence and the possibility of transforming or even resolving intergroup conflict.

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<sup>124</sup> Bourdieu, Pierre. *Raisons pratiques: sur la théorie de l'action*. Seuil, 1994.

<sup>125</sup> Myles, John F. ‘From Doxa to Experience Issues in Bourdieu’s Adoption of Husserlian Phenomenology’. *Theory, Culture & Society* 21, no. 2 (1 April 2004): 91–107. doi:10.1177/0263276404042136, p. 94

<sup>126</sup> Mérand, Frédéric, and Vincent Pouliot. “Le Monde de Pierre Bourdieu: Éléments Pour Une Théorie Sociale Des Relations Internationales.” *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue Canadienne de Science Politique* 41, no. 3 (September 1, 2008): 603–25, p. 619

<sup>127</sup> Bourdieu, Pierre. *Raisons pratiques: sur la théorie de l'action*. Seuil, 1994.

Although Bourdieu is one of the most important modern sociologists, especially for French academia, he has not widely contributed to the study of international relations, which has been dominated by Anglo-American scholars. However, it has been argued that Bourdieu's social theory is relevant for all types of social sciences, and it can therefore be transposed to the international level. Following this argument, it may be suggested that Bourdieu's social theory can also be used to study inter-ethnic relations in divided cities. Bourdieu's sociology has the advantage of understanding world politics as the place of constant power struggles in which symbolic and material stakes evolve over time.<sup>128</sup> Nothing is fixed, and just like ethnic identity, group relations and identities are socially constructed and changeable.

"One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman"; this famous quote from Simone de Beauvoir<sup>129</sup> (1908-1986) can be transposed to other groups within society. In the case of divided cities, this correlates with the notion of ethnic identity as a social construction. From an anthropological and sociological perspective, a female becomes a woman through constraints and particular rituals. An individual is not born with a specific ethnic identity, as ethnicity and culture are inculcated through rituals, education and social relations. Society therefore transforms and designs the individual in a certain way. But social structures such as identity are not stable within society as there are constant tensions and conflicts between different categories that have been socially created; and such instability may ultimately lead to the transformation of certain of these social structures.

### Michel Foucault: Episteme, Power and Discourse

Among other subjects, Foucault has studied the question of 'the other' in society, namely through his work on the evolution of the concept of madness over time to become increasingly negative and isolating.<sup>130</sup> Using the example of changing perceptions towards madness in societies at different historical periods, he explained that truth, knowledge and reason within any society are all context-dependent. Foucault further argued that the cultural foundations of a given society are not an eternal addition of knowledge and ways of thinking, and that there are radical ruptures in the history of ideas.<sup>131</sup>

The *episteme* is defined as a framework of thought that forms the basis of discourses and knowledge within a given society in a given period of time, and varies greatly depending on the historical context.<sup>132</sup> Ethnic or group identity within a given society is socially constructed

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<sup>128</sup> Op. Cit., p. 622

<sup>129</sup> Beauvoir, Simone de. *Le deuxième sexe, tome 1 : Les faits et les mythes*. Paris: Gallimard, 1986.

<sup>130</sup> Foucault, Michel. *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*. Paris: Gallimard, 1976.

<sup>131</sup> Foucault, Michel. *L'archéologie du savoir*. Paris: Editions Gallimard, 2008.

<sup>132</sup> Op. Cit.

through discourses and knowledge, and therefore by the *episteme*. In other words, all forms of knowledge are relative.<sup>133</sup> From Foucault's perspective, society therefore constantly changes, and it could be argued that a transformation in the *episteme* might encourage the transformation of divisive ethnic identities in contested cities into more tolerant and inclusive identities. Foucault also introduced the concept of *archaeology of knowledge* as the process of disarticulating discourse produced at a given time by different means, such as through scientific texts, manuals, codes, rules of law and so on. The aim of this *archaeology* is not to interpret the discourse, but to describe the conditions which have led to its apparition and its functioning.<sup>134</sup> For instance, in the case of contested cities, this would involve understanding and describing the context in which the conflict arose and is perpetuated, such as through media outlets, rules of law, but also education manuals and so on.

In a similar way to Bourdieu, Foucault has developed a number of notions around society, with that of *power* being his central focus. It is not understood as being exclusively linked to an individual or state; rather, Foucault claimed that power is diffused.<sup>135</sup> Foucault's study of power is more focused on analysing the methods of domination rather than the nature or sources of power. This perspective is therefore close to Bourdieu's analysis of constant struggle for domination within societies. In a similar vein, Henri Lefebvre has highlighted the inherent link between knowledge and power.<sup>136</sup>

Foucault's understanding of power therefore implies that the "control of the individual in modern society is ensured, not through the direct repression of the individual by the state, but through the employment of more invisible mechanisms of normalisation. Discourse is the medium within which these constructs of power and normativity unite."<sup>137</sup> It is interesting to mention that the Palestinian resistance movement seems to be aware of this concept of power and domination through normalisation. Indeed, according to the Palestinian Campaign for Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI), "it is helpful to think of normalisation as a "colonisation of the mind", whereby the oppressed subject comes to believe that the oppressor's reality is the only "normal" reality that must be subscribed to, and that the oppression is a fact of life that must be coped with. Those who engage in normalisation either

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<sup>133</sup>Michel Lallement, "Michel Foucault : Le savoir est le pouvoir", in Dortier, Jean-François, *Philosophies de notre temps : Penseurs d'aujourd'hui, la postmodernité, l'éthique, la politique, les sciences, l'esprit et la pensée*, Auxerre (BP 256, 89004 Cedex): Editions Sciences Humaines, 2000, p. 87

<sup>134</sup>Foucault, Michel. *L'archéologie du savoir*. Paris: Editions Gallimard, 2008.

<sup>135</sup> Foucault, Michel. *Surveiller et punir*. Gallimard, 1975.

<sup>136</sup> Lefebvre, Henri. "La Production de L'espace." *L'Homme et La Société* 31, no. 1 (1974): 15-32, p. 22

<sup>137</sup>Munro, Vanessa E. "On Power and Domination Feminism and the Final Foucault." *European Journal of Political Theory* 2, no. 1 (January 1, 2003): 79-99, p. 85

ignore this oppression, or accept it as the status quo that can be lived with.”<sup>138</sup> Normalisation is therefore understood as a tool of domination, and is highly discouraged. This Palestinian movement is therefore consciously subverting the expectations of those in power (the Israeli government) by refusing to participate in the normalisation of the relations between Palestinian civil society and the Israeli state. From Foucault’s point of view, PACBI is therefore exercising an effective form of resistance.

In Belfast, this imposed normalisation through domination is most striking in the case of the peace walls that physically separate a number of Catholic and Protestant neighbourhoods. Due to external pressure<sup>139</sup>, the Northern Ireland executive has been increasing the number of discourses around the need to take the walls down, therefore normalising their image as overwhelmingly negative within society. However, this particular perspective is not shared by many of the inhabitants who live near the peace walls, who often highlight the lack of any in-depth planning regarding their removal and express their fear of seeing the walls go down.<sup>140</sup> They therefore offer an alternative discourse highlighting the necessity of the walls in ensuring the safety of residents in certain parts of Belfast.<sup>141</sup> Again, it could be argued that this alternative voice – emanating from civil society and therefore far less influential than the elite-level actors – also exercises a form of resistance.

The imposition of a dual mono-lingual system in Brussels in which all inhabitants have to be categorised as either French-speaking or Dutch-speaking, without providing for any other choice of identity including that of bilingualism is increasingly being resisted by members of civil society in recent years. A number of cultural and social initiatives are moving beyond the linguistic divide, despite the lack of any official financial support due to the current system, in which Flemish projects are strictly supported by the Flemish community and Francophone projects by the Francophone community.<sup>142</sup> Such initiatives are therefore also resisting the dominant norm of linguistic dualism in Brussels.

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<sup>138</sup> PACBI. ‘Israel’s Exceptionalism: Normalizing the Abnormal’, 31 October 2011. <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1749>.

<sup>139</sup> ‘Take down Peace Walls, NY Mayor’. *BBC*, 8 May 2008, sec. Northern Ireland. [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/northern\\_ireland/7390938.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/northern_ireland/7390938.stm).

<sup>140</sup> McKittrick, David. ‘“Taking Belfast”’s Peace Walls down Solves Nothing. They Should Be Higher’: Protestants and Catholics Agree Time Is Not Right to Dismantle Barriers’. *The Independent*, 6 May 2013. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/taking-belfasts-peace-walls-down-solves-nothing-they-should-be-higher-protestants-and-catholics-agree-time-is-not-right-to-dismantle-barriers-8605122.html>.

<sup>141</sup> Sommers, Jack. ‘Why Northern Ireland’s “Peace Walls” Show No Signs Of Following Berlin’s Example’. *The Huffington Post*, 9 November 2014. [http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/11/03/peace-walls-northern-ireland\\_n\\_6093634.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/11/03/peace-walls-northern-ireland_n_6093634.html).

<sup>142</sup> Van Leemput, Maya. ‘Foresight in the Brussels Capital Region’. *Futures*, Learning the Future Faster, 42, no. 4 (May 2010): 370–79, p. 375

Discourse is understood as being inherently linked to power and knowledge, and may carry out “the oppression of those “others” in our society, serving to marginalise, silence and oppress them. They are oppressed not only by being denied access to certain knowledge, but by the demands of the dominant group within the society that the “other” shed their differences (in essence, their being, their voices, their cultures) to become “one of us”. Control of knowledge is a form of oppression – only certain groups have access to certain knowledge. [...] Thus, discourse ultimately serves to control not just what but how subjects are constructed. Language, thought, and desire are regulated, and managed through discourse.”<sup>143</sup> Yet there is resistance to this oppression in divided cities, where minority formation both within and between groups have achieved a certain status that enables them to play along the power relations lines. Indeed, different ethnic groups hold on to their identity and their culture which they understand as being under threat, therefore they resist the dominant group’s demands to “shed their differences”.

This research has decided to focus on certain specific themes of Foucault’s work – *power* and *discourse* – which are deemed relevant in the study of cross-community relations in divided cities. These notions of power, domination, and discourse may contribute towards better understanding and analysing intergroup interaction in contested cities. In other words, the use and application of these notions in the three specific contexts of Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels will enable the research to systematically take into account the nature of the power struggles between different groups, what forms of implicit or explicit domination are at work within the cities and how discourses around intergroup relations and conflict affect the daily use of shared public spaces in such contexts.

### Some of Bourdieu and Foucault’s Similar Notions

According to both Bourdieu and Foucault, the linguistic act is a social and historical event which establishes power and domination relations between individuals, based on their institutional and social position.<sup>144</sup> They use different analyses to demonstrate this - Bourdieu by analysing the production and use of culture, and Foucault by studying the history of thought essentially through discourse. But they both conclude that action and experience are socially constructed, and that social structures are based on history and contingency.

The two French authors have provided valuable information which may help to better understand ethnically divided cities, and how they differ from most other modern societies.

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<sup>143</sup>Pitsoe, Victor. “Foucault’s Discourse and Power: Implications for Instructionist Classroom Management.” *Open Journal of Philosophy* 3, no. 1 (2013): 23–28, p. 24

<sup>144</sup>Vazquez Garcia, Francisco. “La tension infinie entre l’histoire et la raison : Foucault et Bourdieu.” *Revue internationale de philosophie* n° 220, no. 2 (June 1, 2002): 343–65, p. 348

Their particular understandings of social structures based on power and domination relations, and their assertion that all knowledge and truth is relative to the social and historical context are deeply relevant to this study. Indeed, the fact that culture and identity are transformed over time and are changeable means that divided societies are not doomed to eternal ethnic conflict. If politicians and decision makers who are eager to promote peace become aware of the social construction of identity or the subjectivity of discourse, they might better understand how to promote peaceful coexistence and tolerance within ethnically divided societies.

According to both Bourdieu and Foucault, all societies encompass constant struggles over power and domination, and it is often these power relations that enhance social cohesion. Conflict is therefore not necessarily negative, and is even often seen as an inherent aspect of a healthy society; as suggested by Lederach.<sup>145</sup> There will always be conflict over power and domination in society, but these struggles rarely escalate into violent conflict. It could therefore be suggested that there will also always be power struggles between different ethnic groups within divided societies, but that if they are carefully monitored and negotiated, such conflicts are not incompatible with more tolerance, inclusiveness and pluralism.

Bourdieu and Foucault put emphasis on the relation between discourse and practice, and thus provide a new theoretical outlook in the fields of human and social sciences: “although the similarities between them are under-analysed, Pierre Bourdieu’s and Michel Foucault’s theories of culture and power are interrelated in some compelling ways.”<sup>146</sup> Indeed, their notions of knowledge, culture and power have deeply influenced contemporary theorisation of institutions, structures and social interactions. For instance, four main concepts in each theorist’s understanding of the study of culture have been identified: Bourdieu’s concepts of *habitus*, *ethos*, *doxa* and *theory of practice*; and Foucault’s concepts of *discipline*, *docile bodies*, *panopticism* and *history of the present*.<sup>147</sup> These concepts have been combined in order to theorise the empirical study of prison culture, and it is clear that certain of these combinations could also be relevant for the study of intergroup relations in divided cities. By combining the notions of *habitus* and *discipline*, *doxa* and *panopticism*, as well as *power* and *domination*, the most crucial contextual aspects of this study on shared public spaces in three divided cities are believed to adequately be covered.

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<sup>145</sup> Lederach, John. *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation: Clear Articulation of the Guiding Principles by a Pioneer in the Field*. Good Books, 2003.

<sup>146</sup>Schlosser, Jennifer A. “Bourdieu and Foucault: A Conceptual Integration Toward an Empirical Sociology of Prisons.” *Critical Criminology* 21, no. 1 (March 1, 2013): 31–46, p. 31

<sup>147</sup>Op. Cit., p. 33

The conceptual linkage of Bourdieu's *habitus* with Foucault's *discipline* is shaped in social spaces, and describes a broad and overarching way of life. Both the *habitus* and *discipline* are accepted by groups of individuals as rational and natural, and typically go unquestioned. Examples of *habitus* and *discipline* include basic laws, shared social values, and selective group histories.

Another relevant combination is that of the *doxa* with *panopticism* (Foucault's social theory on prisons), in which both authors argue that the will of the dominant classes is collectively internalised by the masses and that individuals believe that the current regulation of society is in their best interest. Therefore, compliance with social regulation is internalised, and rules are followed because individuals believe in their validity. This also links in with their combined notions of *power* and *domination*.

Bourdieu and Foucault's perspectives on society can therefore not only be combined for an improved analysis of social formations within particular contexts, but can also be used as an original and strong basis for the study of a variety of social situations.

### 3. Counter Theory: Consociationalism

While conflict transformation generally posits that rival groups need to converge and promote interaction in order to ease tensions, one political science theory suggests that contact is not necessarily to be favoured and that in certain contexts 'good fences make good neighbours'.

#### Elite Power Sharing as a Solution for Divided Societies

The consociational theory, first developed by Arend Lijphart<sup>148</sup>, focuses on maintaining a democratic equilibrium within ethnically divided societies. A consociational democracy is described as "a culturally divided democracy which is stabilised by an agreement among the leaders of the different subcultures to join in the government of the country."<sup>149</sup> This power-sharing model includes a coalition rule and agreements at the elite level over the equitable and proportional distribution of appointments and responsibilities within government. One of the main arguments of the consociational theory is that political institutions based on consociationalism promoted by elite collaboration can, through power sharing, lead to democratic stability in deeply divided societies.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Lijphart, Arend. *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration*. Yale University Press, 1977.

<sup>149</sup> Lijphart, Arend. "The Northern Ireland Problem; Cases, Theories, and Solutions." *British Journal of Political Science* 5, no. 1 (January 1, 1975): 83-106, p. 100

<sup>150</sup> Op. Cit., p. 86

One of Lijphart's main conditions for a stable consociational democracy is the existence of distinct lines of cleavage between the different groups within plural societies. According to him, "rival subcultures may coexist peacefully if there is little contact between them and consequently few occasions for conflict." He takes the example of Northern Ireland to underline that "the Protestant – Catholic cleavage in Northern Ireland is extremely sharp, and this does appear to have the function of the good fences make good neighbours."<sup>151</sup>

Regarding Northern Ireland, Lijphart is adamant that keeping the rival Catholic and Protestant groups apart is the best option to avoid conflict. He rejects efforts to create a more integrated society and bringing communities closer together, which he understands as wishful thinking as "the integration of a deeply divided society may not be possible at all and certainly cannot be achieved in a reasonably short time. Moreover, it is unclear how it is to be accomplished and how public policy can be a useful instrument."<sup>152</sup> Given the fact that Lijphart focuses on political elites cooperating and maintaining societal segregation, it is understandable that he would not view the proponents of contact theory and other like-minded policies to be effective, as they rely on the cooperation and involvement of grassroots organisations and civil society rather than actors at the very top of the societal pyramid.

More recently, John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary's regeneration of consociational theory has included the expectation that such accommodation may be temporary, or one step within the wider context of conflict transformation efforts. They thus argue that "we believe that the only prospect for social transformation, or for sustained public deliberation leading to social transformation, is from within a consociational and territorially pluralist framework. Successful consociation can be biodegradable [...]. It is best in our view to leave consociations to decay organically. Let the people change consociations within their own frames and rules."<sup>153</sup> It is also suggested that further transformation and even integration will become possible following consociational accommodation – "we believe that if the current institutions endure, a common Northern Ireland identity may come to be shared by most unionists and nationalists; but that will be the work of at least two decades, and it will be consociation that eases the path to this shared identity."<sup>154</sup> Taking this liberal consociational perspective, it could be suggested that shared spaces will only become efficient tools for conflict transformation efforts after the establishment, stabilisation, integration and finally natural decay of a consociational power-sharing model of government.

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<sup>151</sup>Op. Cit., p. 102

<sup>152</sup> Op. Cit., p. 105

<sup>153</sup>Taylor, Rupert. *Consociational Theory: McGarry and O'Leary and the Northern Ireland Conflict*. 1 edition. London ; New York: Routledge, 2009, p. 68

<sup>154</sup>Op. Cit., p. 83



Rather than attempting to dissolve or integrate ethnic identities, consociationalists believe that it is better to acknowledge and even underline them in the direct aftermath of ethnic conflict. McGarry and O’Leary agree with Lijphart that different communities and groups should not only be acknowledged but also used as building blocks for accommodation and argue that identities may become inflexible, durable and resilient in certain contexts.<sup>155</sup> As such, “it is just wrong to argue that Consociationalists are all primordialists who regard identities as given, inevitable, and unchanging. Consociationalists only have to believe that, in particular contexts, divided identities are likely to be more durable, should not be wished out of existence, and should be recognised.”<sup>156</sup> The authors further argue that Northern Ireland civil society is reflected in the current party system which remains overwhelmingly divided along sectarian lines, and where “there is no unambiguous indication that the two communities desire to mix socially, as some integrationists appear to assume.”<sup>157</sup>

Most consociationalists agree that that ethnic identities and differences need to be acknowledged in certain circumstances, even if ideally peace efforts should move beyond such divisions. Furthermore, “just because ethnic identities are socially constructed does not correlate to the idea that they can be easily reconstructed. Perhaps, paradoxically, the immediate aftermath of intense ethnic violence, even when a peace process has taken root, may not represent an opportune time to try and transform divisive identities to allow a shared identity to prosper. [...] A more reasonable approach is one which aims to house ethnicity in a secure environment so that it is afforded every chance to eventually defuse.”<sup>158</sup> In other words, a consociational model is more reasonable and desirable than a model focused on neutralising identities through integration in particular contexts situated in the immediate aftermath of violent ethnic conflict.

### Limitations and Paradoxes of Consociationalism

Consociational theory remains a deeply divisive option within academia and politics, and some critics argue that Consociationalists do not “offer sufficient interpretative insight into the meaning of ethnic divisions or provide critical intent to move beyond political accommodation and conflict management to integration and conflict transformation.”<sup>159</sup> Certain scholars are very critical of the consociational tendency to keep groups apart rather than bring them closer together and highlight the dangers of such an approach as “instead of attempting to abolish or

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<sup>155</sup>Op. Cit., p. 17

<sup>156</sup>Op. Cit., p. 70

<sup>157</sup>Op. Cit., p. 67

<sup>158</sup>Nagle, John, and Mary-Alice C. Clancy. *Shared Society Or Benign Apartheid?: Understanding Peace-Building in Divided Societies*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, p. 6

<sup>159</sup>Taylor, Rupert. *Consociational Theory: McGarry and O’Leary and the Northern Ireland Conflict*. 1 edition. London ; New York: Routledge, 2009, p.10

weaken divisions, ethnic polarisation into communal blocs is encouraged, institutionally entrenched and legitimated. [...] it articulates with the language of apartheid.”<sup>160</sup>

The dangers of a consociational model taken to the extreme are underlined by the argument that certain quota systems present risks for democracies as “little by little the leaders who refrain from sensationalism find themselves marginalised. Then, instead of lessening, the sense of belonging to different “tribes” grows stronger, while the sense of belonging to the national community weakens until it disappears, or almost. Always amid bitterness; sometimes in a bloodbath. If you are in Europe, you get Belgium; if you are in the Middle East, you get Lebanon.”<sup>161</sup>

In addition, for some critics, consociational theory “valorises ethnicity per se and makes it normative, such that the space for other ways of being and other forms of politics is diminished. [...] In other words, you don’t vote for lower taxes, ecological laws, and the like; rather, you vote for your own survival (every four years or so).”<sup>162</sup> This is the case in all three cities studied in this thesis – in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels, inhabitants vote along communal or sectarian lines. Difference and segregation thus become institutionalised in consociational societies, and although in the short term such division may help to manage or reduce the conflict between rival communities, it does not address the root causes of the conflict and may even exacerbate them on the long term.

Scott Bollens has similarly argued that while a consociational model of city governance based on power-sharing might be the best option for deeply polarised cities such as Jerusalem or Belfast, the weaknesses of such a model need to be acknowledged. Indeed, without explicit efforts towards normalising mutual tolerance and coexistence on the ground, the political situation can easily become paralysed. Bollens further underlines that limiting agreements to the elite level might not always be effective, as “political arrangements such as consociational democracy that might emerge from [...] national peace accords respond to the basic dual needs for sovereignty and political control but represent agreements at the political level, not at that of daily interaction between ethnic groups and individuals.”<sup>163</sup>

In addition, the explicit elitism present within consociationalism can be dangerous as power is often given to actors and elites who are used to manipulating religious or ethnic differences in

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<sup>160</sup> Op. Cit., p. 5

<sup>161</sup> Maalouf, Amin. *In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong*. New York: Arcade Publishing, 2012, p. 149

<sup>162</sup> Finlay, Andrew. *Governing Ethnic Conflict: Consociation, Identity and the Price of Peace*. Routledge, 2010, p. 37

<sup>163</sup> Bollens, Scott. A. *On Narrow Ground: Urban Policy and Ethnic Conflict in Jerusalem and Belfast*. SUNY Series in Urban Public Policy. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000, p. 337

order to gain more votes.<sup>164</sup> The current political system in Northern Ireland is therefore criticised for furthering ethno-sectarian differences and division in a society that is increasingly willing to move beyond the strict identity dualism.<sup>165</sup> The same could be applied to the Belgian case, and more precisely Brussels where the inhabitants have expressed their wish to have bilingual schools and institutions rather than the current situation in which education, culture and other aspects of social life are separated along linguistic lines.<sup>166</sup>

Moreover, “consociationalists have been criticised for the assertion that elites can effectively regulate conflict in divided societies. As the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985 demonstrates [...] even though political elites may agree on a formula for accommodation, peace cannot endure without grass roots backing.”<sup>167</sup> The consociational approach indeed focuses primarily on elite-level bargaining and peacebuilding without adequately acknowledging the pivotal role of civil society. The consociational theory can therefore be understood as countering the intergroup contact theory that will form part of the theoretical and analytical basis of this on divided cities. From an intergroup contact perspective, separation is not the solution, as “consider the repeated failures of “good fences” from the Great Wall of China and Hadrian’s Wall on Scotland’s border to the modern examples of the Berlin Wall, the Green Line of Cyprus and Israel’s new West Bank Wall. “Good neighbours” hardly resulted from any of these prominent experiments with “good fences”.”<sup>168</sup>

### Incompatibility of Consociational Theory with the Study of Shared Public Spaces

Consociational theory assumes that recognising ethnic differences and distributing power along ethnic, linguistic or sectarian lines is the best short-term option to manage divided societies and avoid intergroup violence. It therefore presumes that groups are separated to the point that simply integrating them into government will not work. In other words, ‘good fences make good neighbours’ is understood as a lesser evil; the alternative being ethnic conflict. Such a perspective also suggests that the different groups within society live separately and rarely come into contact – making power-sharing along group lines easier. Power-sharing, here, is thus very different from sharing space – in fact, it could be assimilated

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<sup>164</sup> Wilson, Robin . Chapter 11 : From Consociationalism to Interculturalism, in eds. Rupert Taylor, Consociational Theory: McGarry and O’Leary and the Northern Ireland Conflict. Routledge. 2009, p. 221

<sup>165</sup> Garry, John, and Kevin McNicholl. ‘Understanding the “Northern Irish” Identity’. Northern Ireland Assembly, 2015. [http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/raise/knowledge\\_exchange/briefing\\_papers/series4/northern\\_ireland\\_identity\\_garry\\_mcnicholl\\_policy\\_document.pdf](http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/raise/knowledge_exchange/briefing_papers/series4/northern_ireland_identity_garry_mcnicholl_policy_document.pdf).

<sup>166</sup> Tout Autre Chose. ‘Une Tout Autre École ? Créons-La ! | Tout Autre Chose’. *Tout Autre Chose*. Accessed 31 January 2016. <http://www.toutautrechose.be/une-tout-autre-ecole-parlons-en>.

<sup>167</sup> Sisk, Timothy D. *Power Sharing and International Mediation in Ethnic Conflicts*. US Institute of Peace Press, 1996, p. 38

<sup>168</sup> Pettigrew, Thomas F. “Future Directions for Intergroup Contact Theory and Research.” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 32, no. 3 (May 2008): 187–99, p. 195

to the dividing of space into equal parts in order to accommodate the territorial claims of all groups.

Yet such a division is simply incompatible with urban life, particularly in capital cities such as Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels where members of the different segments of society reside in close proximity. 'Good fences make good neighbours' is not a viable solution in cities and it is often argued that it is in fact diversity and the mixing of groups that makes the essence of urban fabric. The separation wall in East Jerusalem or the peacelines in Belfast are transforming the urban landscape into highly-securitised places that limit the growth of spaces of encounter that are crucial for the healthy growth of any city.

One may therefore wonder how consociationalism is to be understood from an urban perspective, and more precisely regarding public spaces in the city. One argument that may be put forward in this particular context is the importance – previously underlined in intergroup contact theory – of authority support for the creation of such spaces of encounter. It could be suggested that for shared spaces to make a difference to intergroup relations in divided cities, such places need to be jointly created and approved by the different segments and parties in government within a recognised institutional framework. In other words, spaces specifically intended and created for the purpose of intergroup encounter with the informed support and consent of a consociational government could effectively lead to improved intergroup relations in divided cities. Furthermore, it may be suggested that shared space from a consociational point of view is limited to the elite level of society – hence, the only effective shared spaces are those institutions developed at the initiative of power-sharing consociational governments. Thus for consociationalists, shared spaces will fail to have any effect if they are not specifically created and managed to increase integration by power-sharing elites, given that the very divisions and conflict that necessitate the consociational agreement will impede any meaningful sharing of space. A consociational perspective would also require organic change to occur before any shared space of other types of integration could be pursued in contested cities. In this case, none of the three cities of Jerusalem (no consociation), Belfast (relatively new consociation) and Brussels (established consociation) would be deemed to provide adequate contexts for shared public spaces to improve intergroup relations.

Applying this hypothetical consociational position around shared space to the three case studies would lead to the assumption that only Belfast – where the city council is openly working towards creating 'shared spaces for a shared future' – should prove efficient in creating shared spaces that make a difference to intergroup relations. While Brussels is also subject to consociational decision-making, there is currently no institutional or governmental

support for the creation of spaces of encounter between the two linguistic communities in the capital. Yet shared spaces are becoming increasingly desired and even produced not by the political elites but by civil society and grassroots organisations that are not deemed as important actors in consociational theory. Finally, Jerusalem – where the Palestinian community is excluded from government – lacks any kind of institutional support at the elite or civil society level for the creation of shared spaces for the purposes of bringing the different conflicting communities closer together.

Consociational theory may therefore be understood as a countering intergroup contact theory as at the broader level it prioritises separation rather than integration for the management and transformation of ethnic conflict. From a consociational perspective, contact between different communities is to be avoided or limited to certain controlled situations – namely at the elite level – whereas intergroup contact theory on the contrary argues that the more communities are in contact at every level of society, the better for intergroup relations. In other words, one theory presumes that good fences make good neighbours, while the other assumes that the removal of such fences make even better neighbours.

While consociationalism has its merits and might effectively present one of the best options in terms of creating stable power-sharing democracies in deeply divided societies, its application in divided cities has proved particularly complicated and problematic. This is essentially due to the fact that consociationalism focuses on elite-level politics while intergroup contact theory focuses more on grassroots interaction between individuals belonging to different groups. As such, both theories, rather than being entirely incompatible, operate at different levels of society.

Due to consociational theory's primary focus on elite level activities, it has not been deemed as an appropriate tool to analyse and explore shared public spaces. The combination of intergroup contact theory with a Bourdieusian/Foucauldian approach is therefore expected to enable a better focus on local levels of interaction. Yet a consociational perspective will be acknowledged in the theoretical conclusion of the research in order to offer an alternative explanation to the main findings. One hypothesis which may be applied to this study is that shared spaces are not expected to make any difference to intergroup relations in the absence of elite level construction and support, and that their relevance might only be acknowledgeable in situations where consociation has been applied for a certain period of time.

#### **4. A Framework for Exploring Shared Public Spaces in Divided Cities**

The study of interaction and relations in shared public spaces has therefore identified two very different theoretical perspectives through which to explore and analyse intergroup relations in ethnically divided cities. Intergroup contact theory provides pertinent insights which will contribute towards establishing how different groups interact in shared spaces, yet several limitations have been underlined above. It has thus been argued that the perspectives on social construction and dynamics advanced Bourdieu and Foucault complement and improve intergroup contact theory insights within the specific context of divided cities. Key insights and notions from both theories may be associated to provide a multi-faceted framework on which to base this study.

##### **Intergroup Contact Theory Insights: Authority Support, Meaningful Interaction and Negative Contact Effects**

The purpose of this research is not to test or to verify the intergroup contact theory per se; rather, it will adopt a few of the theory's most interesting insights in order to analyse cross-community interaction and how they affect intergroup relations in divided cities. These main insights will be identified in the following section, and combined with similarly selected notions from Bourdieu and Foucault to form an innovative theoretical framework. The findings of the research may additionally contribute towards further developing certain understudied areas of the intergroup contact theory, namely the effect of proximity and mundane fleeting interactions.

Some shared spaces in divided cities have been purposefully created to enhance more intergroup interaction (Belfast), while other spaces happen to be shared by different ethnic groups even though they were not initially planned for that purpose (Jerusalem and Brussels). Although the most recent advances in intergroup contact theory have found that authority support is not strictly necessary for positive contact outcomes, most scholars agree that this specific condition usually increases their likelihood. It has therefore been deemed relevant to apply this insight to the study of shared public spaces in divided cities, and particular attention will be given to the planning purposes of the three selected types of spaces in each city.

Pettigrew and Tropp underline that for intergroup contact to lead to reduced prejudice and other positive effects, there must be minimum degree of interaction between the participants involved in contact, and that proximity is probably not enough. Yet, Pettigrew also mentions that given that contact generally leads to improved intergroup attitudes, the 'mere exposure effect' (greater exposure to targets in and of itself may significantly enhance liking for those

targets) may in itself lead to positive contact effects.<sup>169</sup> If proximity does not suffice for positive contact outcomes, and individuals need to engage in meaningful interaction with members of the other community, shared public spaces might have a very limited influence on conflict transformation and resolution efforts in divided cities.

Finally, the study of three different cities with different levels of conflict should provide a better insight into the conditions that may lead to negative intergroup contact; as all types of interactions are not expected to lead to positive outcomes, especially in situations of extreme tension and mistrust.

### **Bourdieuian/Foucauldian Notions: Normalised Way of Life, Discourse and Power Struggles**

Bourdieu and Foucault's understandings of society as a place of constant struggle for power and domination, and of action and experience as socially constructed will help understand each context of each shared space individually. In the specific context of shared public spaces in a divided city, the *habitus/discipline* angle can be used to understand the accepted way of life of different groups living separately, as well as selective group histories, basic laws and shared social values. Division along ethnic lines has been internalised in all three cities. Indeed, most workplaces and education spaces are segregated in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels, and this is accepted by most inhabitants as normal. This separation is also residential in Belfast and Jerusalem, as Catholics and Protestants, and Palestinians and Israelis tend to live in separate locations, while this is less the case in Brussels.

The *doxa/panopticism* angle can help to identify the discourses that have been internalised by the different divided societies, and how compliance with social regulation and rules specific to division and shared spaces are internalised. In the specific context of shared spaces, it could be argued that the *doxa/panopticism* combination makes the inhabitants of divided cities believe that they live separately for a reason. Division and segregation are understood as being in the best interest of all the inhabitants of the city. This is especially the case in Jerusalem and Belfast, where certain neighbourhoods are physically divided by walls. It could therefore be argued that the very existence of shared public spaces in these cities is a paradox, especially if they are promoted as conflict resolution tools (as is the case in Belfast), while this is less the case if shared spaces are not specifically intended as such (as is the case in Jerusalem). It is thus important to further study the *doxa/panopticism* dimension around the existence of

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<sup>169</sup> Pettigrew, Thomas F., and Linda R. Tropp. 'A Meta-Analytic Test of Intergroup Contact Theory'. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 90, no. 5 (May 2006): 751-83.

shared public spaces in the three case studies, which might reveal different levels of 'sharedness' within these places.

As all three cities are at different levels of conflict (non-violent in Brussels, post-ceasefire in Belfast and ongoing in Jerusalem), the discourses surrounding division and shared spaces are bound to also be very different. However, all three cities include populations living separately, regardless of the level of violence in each society, and it is therefore important to understand how these divisions are justified and internalised.

The kinds of power and domination dynamics described by Bourdieu and Foucault that occur in societies are neither explicit nor independent. Rather, social meanings and representations of the world are imposed upon society as a whole and are accepted and experienced as legitimate and natural. These selected social ideals are imposed through discourse and are internalised as the norm and the truth, and therefore enhance compliance.

These key notions developed by Bourdieu and Foucault should therefore contribute towards better contextualising the previously identified key insights of intergroup contact theory. It is indeed crucial to take into account the immediate and historical, spatial, temporal and social contexts which may influence cross-community relations in shared spaces. By adding a broader 'Bourdieu-Foucauldian' perspective to the more focused intergroup contact theory insights, this study is believed to create an original yet pertinent framework on which to base the field research.

### **A Combined Theoretical and Analytical Framework for the Study of Shared Public Spaces in Divided Cities**

The originality of the research lies in the association of two very different perspectives of social psychology and sociology in order to structure a multi-level and far-reaching theoretical and analytical framework on which to base the answers to the main research questions.

A difference in scope has been identified between the two chosen theories for analysis, as the selected notions of Bourdieu and Foucault encompass a study of the broad and overarching dynamics that exist within any given society; while the selected insights of intergroup contact theory are more focused on the particular dynamics around cross-group interaction within any given society.

Intergroup contact theory is therefore the more focused theory that deals particularly with effects of intergroup contact in shared spaces, while the Bourdieu-Foucault approach is a wider perspective that comprises particularly relevant aspects of the social context of the divided cities. Although these theoretical perspectives work at different levels of analysis – the



intergroup contact theory has been applied mainly to field research (observation, interviews) and the Bourdieusian/Foucauldian perspective was applied mainly to documentation (discourse analysis) – they only truly become relevant to this study on intergroup relations in shared public spaces when they are drawn together and associated to form this multi-level framework basis.

The theoretical framework of this research will therefore draw upon three insights from the intergroup contact theory – authority support, meaningful interaction, and negative contact effects – and three sets of notions from the Bourdieuso-Foucauldian lens – *habitus/discipline*, *doxa/panopticism* and *power/domination*.

Through intergroup contact theory, research will focus on answering the following questions:

- Was the shared space planned as a space of cross-community encounter by city authorities when first established? (A.1 Authority support)
- Does any meaningful cross-community interaction occur within the shared space and what are the effects of proximity? (A.2 Meaningful interaction)
- Are particular tensions felt within the shared space which may lead to negative interaction? (A.3 Negative contact effects).

The Bourdieusian/Foucauldian perspective will then answer an additional set of questions:

- How is division normalised in the city and how does this affect the idea of inclusion and integration promoted by shared space? (B.1 Habitus/discipline)
- What discourses around separation, shared spaces and conflict are present in the city? (B.2 Doxa/panopticism)
- How are the power struggles between the groups expressed in the city? (B.3 Power/domination).

This particular perspective should enable a more detailed and thorough study of interaction and relations in shared public spaces in divided cities, by taking into account not only the first-hand effects of these spaces, but also by including an understanding of the larger social context in each city. By applying the following theoretical and analytical framework to the study of specific shared public spaces in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels, it is hoped that the research and thesis will offer a satisfactory and pertinent answer to the main research question ‘*what differences can shared spaces make to cross-community relations in ethnically divided cities?*’

**Theoretical and Analytical Framework Model for the Study of Shared Public Spaces in Divided Cities**

A. Intergroup Contact Theory – Cross-community Interaction

*A.1 Authority Support:*

1. Was the shared space planned as a space of cross-community encounter by city authorities when first established?

*A.2 Meaningful Interaction:*

2. Does any meaningful cross-community interaction occur within the shared space and what are the effects of proximity?

*A.3 Negative Contact Effects:*

3. Are particular tensions felt within the shared space which may lead to negative interaction?

B. Bourdieuian/Foucauldian Perspective – Context

*B.1 Habitus/discipline: Normalised and Internalised Way of Life*

4. How is division normalised in the city and how does this affect the idea of inclusion and integration promoted by shared space?

*B.2 Doxa/panopticism: The Role of Discourse*

5. What discourses around separation, shared spaces and conflict are present in the city?

*B.3 Power/domination: Power struggles*

6. How are the power-struggles between the groups expressed in the city?

Table 2: Theoretical and Analytical Framework Model

<b>Expected Research Answers Based on Theoretical Hypotheses</b>	
<b>Intergroup Contact Theory</b>	
<b>Question 1</b>	<i>Was the shared space planned as a space of cross-community encounter by city authorities when first established?</i>
Expected Answer	Yes, its initial purpose was to bring members of different community to interact and share the space.
<b>Question 2</b>	<i>Does any meaningful cross-community interaction occur within the shared space and what are the effects of proximity?</i>
Expected Answer	Yes, contact in shared spaces leads to more cross-community interaction. Proximity tends to positively influence individuals by making diversity and the presence of the other normal.
<b>Question 3</b>	<i>Are particular tensions felt within the shared space which may lead to negative interaction?</i>
Expected Answer	No, shared spaces are usually shared peacefully between members of different groups, who coexist peacefully.
<b>Bourdieu/Foucault Theoretical Perspective</b>	
<b>Question 4</b>	<i>How is division normalised in the city and how does this affect the idea of inclusion and integration promoted by shared space?</i>
Expected Answer	Division is normalised at the political level, but not in terms of urban territory nor at the social level. Inclusion and integration in shared spaces are therefore accepted.
<b>Question 5</b>	<i>What are the discourses around separation, shared spaces and conflict in the city?</i>
Expected Answer	Discourses around the conflict have changed to become less aggressive. Shared spaces are acknowledged as valuable aspects of city life that are to be encouraged.
<b>Question 6</b>	<i>How are the power-struggles between the groups expressed in the city?</i>
Expected Answer	Struggles are expressed non-violently, therefore enabling the peaceful use of shared public spaces in the city.

**Table 3: Expected Research Answers**

## Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the theoretical framework of the study on cross-community interaction in shared public spaces in the cities of Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels. Intergroup contact theory is understood as the most relevant theory to use for the particular study of intergroup relations in shared spaces, as it focuses on intergroup contact and its generally positive outcomes, such as prejudice reduction and better intergroup relations. Yet a number of limitations have been identified in attempting to implement the theory in the specific context of urban spaces in deeply divided societies. Indeed, the contact hypothesis has been mainly criticised for not acknowledging enough the wider contexts in which interactions occur, and focusing on optimal contact situations that are often far removed from the social reality of everyday life. The Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault's notions were identified as efficiently countering this particular weakness. The works of these two pillars of French social theory have enabled the research to take a larger perspective on the particular contexts of the shared spaces in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels.

Bourdieu and Foucault's understandings of society, culture, power relations and discourse have been crucial in underlining the importance of the wider context of the study. Through their theoretical perspective, the study has focused on power and other social dynamics that occur in ethnically divided cities and how these may affect intergroup contact in shared public spaces. It is therefore a complimentary but also necessary perspective to associate with the initial intergroup contact theory.

Consociational theory has been acknowledged as offering a relevant insight into the study of divided cities, yet it cannot be systematically applied to the study of intergroup relations in shared public spaces as it focuses primarily on elite level bargaining. While consociationalism will not be applied to this research due its lack of appropriate tools for the study of grassroots levels of interaction, it may provide an alternative argument to the combined selected theories that will be mentioned in the conclusion of the thesis. This perspective could potentially bridge the gap between the different levels favoured by the theories of intergroup contact (grassroots) and consociation (elite).

The area of study of this thesis is situated within sociology rather than political science, and a sociological approach will therefore be applied to the research. The multi-level nature of the theoretical and analytical framework combining different perspectives is expected to provide an extensive and insightful theoretical structure on which to base the study of cross-community interactions in shared public spaces in contested cities.

## Chapter Three: Research Methods

This chapter intends to provide in-depth information around the methodological approach taken in this thesis. It will start by describing the research design of the study, focusing on its comparative nature and the chosen methods to carry out relevant qualitative research. A second section of the chapter will then present in more detail the qualitative methods used for this particular research – observation, documentation and interviews. Finally the last part of the chapter will introduce the application of the methodology within the different locations of field research.

### 1. Research Design

The study's research design has been based on Joseph Maxwell's model for qualitative research and includes five components that each address a specific set of research concerns:

- Research goals
- Research questions
- Methods
- Validity
- Ethical considerations

#### *Research Goals*

The goals of the research have been developed by answering the following questions:

- 'Why is the study worth doing?'
- 'What issues need to be clarified, and what practices and politics will the research attempt to influence?'<sup>170</sup>

This study on shared public spaces in divided cities is worth carrying out as ethnically divided cities are becoming increasingly problematic due to the globalised nature of contemporary societies and big cities. The particular dynamics of these cities are therefore crucial to understand for the wider study of urban conflict transformation.

The main issues that will be clarified are the behaviours around ethnic identity and intergroup relations that are exacerbated – or not – within shared public spaces, as well as the levels of cross-community interaction that occur in such spaces. This may contribute to better understanding how and if these spaces play a role in improving intergroup relations in contested cities.

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<sup>170</sup>Maxwell, Joseph A. *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach: An Interactive Approach*. SAGE, 2012, p. 4

Although the research is not directly aimed towards policy change, it might nevertheless be considered as an interesting insight to take into account in future urban policy planning within conflict transformation efforts. Ultimately, it is hoped that the study contributes towards better understanding how individuals and groups residing in ethnically divided cities interact and behave in shared public spaces. More knowledge about these behaviours and levels of contact is crucial in order to estimate the effectiveness of shared spaces as tools for conflict transformation and resolution in deeply divided societies.

### *Research questions*

The questions that best capture the goals and conceptual framework of the study include the following:

- Does the presence of shared public spaces enhance the level and quality of cross-community interaction in divided cities?
- What differences can shared spaces make to cross-community relations in ethnically divided cities?

In order to provide a satisfactory answer to the two main research questions, six more detailed field research questions were developed, based on the theoretical framework.

- Was the shared public space planned as a space of cross-community encounter by city authorities when first established? (intergroup contact theory perspective)
- Does any meaningful cross-community interaction occur within the shared space and what are the effects of proximity? (intergroup contact theory perspective)
- Are particular tensions felt within the shared public space which may lead to negative interaction? (intergroup contact theory perspective)
- How is division normalised in the city and how does this affect the idea of inclusion and integration promoted by shared space? (Bourdieu/Foucault perspective)
- What are the discourses around separation, shared spaces and conflict in the city? (Bourdieu/Foucault perspective)
- How are the power-struggles for domination between the groups expressed in the city? (Bourdieu/Foucault Perspective)

Directly answering these detailed questions in each case study and then comparing them has enabled the formulation of a more consistent and detailed answer to the main research. .

### *Methods*

The methods used in this research relied on a comparative and qualitative approach, combining the use of observation, documentary analysis and semi-structured interviews. The conclusion of such a study has ultimately provided an informed opinion on the importance and relevance of shared public spaces as effective tools of urban conflict transformation in the specific context of ethnically divided and contested cities.

By selecting fewer case studies, the research is essentially qualitative rather than quantitative. Qualitative research enables a much more detailed and in-depth analysis of such issues as behaviour, attitudes and perceptions within a given society. This project was more focused on the study of a particular phenomenon or situation in detail (interaction in shared public spaces in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels and how this may influence intergroup relations), rather than on systematic and standardised comparisons, such as comparing intergroup relations in shared spaces in a wider range of divided cities.

The purpose of the study was not to validate one theory or another, nor to prove or disprove a previously developed hypothesis. Rather, the research intended to explore and interpret the dynamics of social interaction in shared public spaces. No hypothesis per se has been developed as it is believed that it would severely limit the scope and quality of the research. By taking an interpretative approach, the study has not attempted to prove anything, but rather has attempted to demonstrate that this particular interpretation of shared public spaces is academically relevant. In other words, this research on the role of shared public spaces in divided cities has not focused on proving the validity of such spaces as conflict transformation tools, but intended to explore and provide a better understanding of what occurs in such spaces, and how this affects urban conflict transformation efforts.

### *Validity*

The investigative limitations of the study are acknowledged, as research has only focused on interactions occurring within three specific spaces in three cities. To address this particular validity threat, it should therefore be underlined that this study is not representative of all cross-community interactions that take place across and throughout Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels. It is also important to underline that certain inhabitants of divided cities might willingly avoid, while others might willingly frequent, shared spaces. This again should be taken into account when analysing data collected in the field. The best way to avoid the absence of a part of the population is to select spaces that are not easily avoided and in which most inhabitants would go to, in order to obtain a more representative sample to study. This has been achieved by selecting open public spaces, parks and shopping centres observed as being used by an important number of members of different groups in the three cities. A

combination of different methods of data collection throughout the research including observation, documentation and interviews diversified and triangulated the research, leading to fewer risks of validity threats.

The danger of selection bias has additionally been acknowledged in this thesis. There is always a risk of selection bias occurring in the case of the comparison of a small number of cases such as shared spaces in only three divided cities. This could lead to the overestimation of posited causes or the ignorance of other important ones. However, if the case selection is properly justified, selection bias does not necessarily need to be a negative outcome of the comparison, as is the case for this particular study of three divided cities. It has been mentioned that comparing a sample of countries that has been intentionally selected has certain benefits; such as greater attention given to the deeper context of the selected case study, focus on variation within the case studies rather than variation between case studies, lower levels of conceptual abstraction, and the ability to engage in qualitative rather than quantitative analysis.<sup>171</sup>

In terms of documentation and data collection in the three cities, limitations were encountered when certain reports or statistical information were only accessible in Hebrew or Arabic in Jerusalem, or in Dutch in Brussels. However, in most cases translations were available and therefore only a very small amount of documents were ultimately withdrawn from the research.

### *Ethical Considerations*

Research ethics is another aspect of the methodology that needs to be taken into account when carrying out field research, especially in sensitive areas such as divided cities. The following ethical considerations were taken during this study on shared public spaces:

- Will the research harm participants?
- Will the research involve privacy invasion?
- Will the research involve informed consent?

In the case of the field research carried out in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels, the study was in no way seen as harming or potentially harming individuals observed in the selected spaces or the interview participants. Privacy invasion was not an issue either, as by definition a public space involves being exposed to the public. Given the nature of public spaces, observation was carried out without the knowledge of those individuals using the space on a regular basis; their

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<sup>171</sup>Landman, Todd. *Issues and Methods in Comparative Politics: An Introduction*. 3rd ed. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon ; New York: Routledge, 2008, p. 82



consent was therefore not given for the collection of data directly involving their behaviours or routines. However, research notes remained vague about specific features of the individuals observed in the spaces, in order to maintain anonymity. The interview participants on the other hand signed a consent form allowing the researcher to use the information they provided in the writing of the thesis. The form also enabled the participants to remain anonymous if they wished, and anonymity was requested on two occasions throughout the research. An ethical consent form was signed and approved by the Trinity College Dublin ethics committee, therefore ensuring the ethical validity of the research.

In terms of risks associated with researching sensitive issues, careful consideration was given to describing shared public spaces as positive aspects of intergroup coexistence in the specific context of Jerusalem, where an asymmetrical conflict is ongoing. Indeed, while acknowledging that such spaces might have some limited value, the study distances itself from any planning policies implemented by the Jerusalem Municipality or Israeli authorities which could use such findings as a pretext to carry on building settlements in East Jerusalem.

### Methodology Literature Review

Readings in different methodologies carried out by researchers in the fields of sociology and social anthropology have enabled the researcher to identify what methods to use in order to collect relevant data regarding intergroup contact in public spaces in divided cities. Michael Young and Peter Willmott's<sup>172</sup> research on family life in the East End of London provided an interesting insight into methodology focusing on the daily lifestyles of a group. A combination of interviews, surveys and observation enabled them to analyse behaviours and feelings emanating from interactions between different groups of residents. This particular study therefore provided an interesting insight into the use of different types of field research through the combination of interviews and observation in order to appropriately describe interactions between different groups within a given context.

Laurent Mucchielli and Véronique Le Goaziou<sup>173</sup> have focused on analysing the events known as the “November 2005 riots” in many French suburbs. The main methodology involved is the interview, and the authors underline that the few interviews that were carried out are not necessarily representative of all the inhabitants of the area studied. Yet, it is argued that they are sufficient to understand the feelings of neglect endured by most of the population in these areas. The authors also underline the relevance of observation in gathering information around

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<sup>172</sup> Young, Michael, Peter Willmott, Geoff Mulgan, and Kate Gavron. *Family and Kinship in East London*. London: Penguin Classics, 2007.

<sup>173</sup> Mucchielli, Laurent, Véronique Le Goaziou, and Collectif. *Quand les banlieues brûlent... : Retour sur les émeutes de novembre 2005*. Paris: Editions La Découverte, 2007.

daily occurrences that might not be revealed through other types of research methods. This particular study thus highlighted the relevance of carrying out observation in public spaces to describe interactions that may occur there, such as daily cross-community interaction in divided cities.

Kobe De Keere, Mark Elchardus and Olivier Servais<sup>174</sup> have carried out a study focusing on relations between the Flemish and Francophone communities in Belgium. The authors use narrative histories to understand what people think about each other; with the ultimate purpose of the research being to identify the main collective histories that appeared in personal histories, and how these influence intergroup relations in Belgium. The authors are mindful to underline the limitations of their research when they explain that their study was based on a restricted number of participants involved in the forums (56 people). This project was of particular relevance for the last case study of this thesis, Brussels, as it remains one of the rare studies focusing on relations between Dutch-speakers and French-speakers in Belgium.

Scott A. Bollens' work on divided cities<sup>175</sup> has also deeply influenced and inspired this study, both in terms of content and format. Interestingly, he underlines that "in addition to allowing for face-to-face interviewing, in-country residence allowed me to immerse myself in the intriguing day-to-day conditions and concerns of "polarised" urban life, as expressed by public officials and people on the street and through popular media."<sup>176</sup> The relevance and academic contribution of the research is also highlighted when Bollens states that "because polarised cities are important microcosms, the usefulness of this work is expected to transcend local contexts and extend to regional and national debates over ethnic conflict management."<sup>177</sup> Travelling and living in all three cities of Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels has also been of great value for the overall research on intergroup relations. First-hand experience of daily life in the three cities over a period of at least two months provided valuable additional insight and information accompanying the data collected through field research in selected public spaces in each city.

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<sup>174</sup> De Keere, Kobe, Mark Elchardus, and Olivier. Servais. *Un pays-deux langues la Belgique au quotidien*. Leuven (Belgique): Lannoo Campus, 2011.

<sup>175</sup> Bollens, Scott. A. *On Narrow Ground: Urban Policy and Ethnic Conflict in Jerusalem and Belfast*. SUNY Series in Urban Public Policy. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000.

<sup>176</sup> Bollens, Scott. A. *On Narrow Ground: Urban Policy and Ethnic Conflict in Jerusalem and Belfast*. SUNY Series in Urban Public Policy. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000, p. 38

<sup>177</sup>Op. Cit., p. 39

## Comparative Approach

In order to provide a satisfactory answer to the main research questions three case studies have been selected. The rationale behind the selection of only three case studies is that studying a wider selection of contested or divided cities such as Belfast, Jerusalem, Nicosia, Johannesburg, Beirut and Mostar amongst others would require a considerable amount of time and resources, and would additionally be based on quantitative rather than qualitative research. It is believed that qualitative research is to be preferred for this particular study, as it enables a more detailed analysis of issues linked to behaviour and interaction within a given population. A qualitative comparative perspective is also more focused on exploring social phenomena rather than systematically proving or disproving a given hypothesis.

According to Bertrand Badie, critical comparatism is an important aspect in the realm of political science research<sup>178</sup>, and he believes that theories should be based on a social and cultural analysis within the historical space. In his book written with Guy Hermet *La Politique Comparée*, Badie underlines the importance of three political variables – space, time and action – as well as cultural and religious factors, in elaborating a comparison in order to evaluate social and political phenomena.<sup>179</sup>

In using a comparative method, this thesis is aware that subjects need to have a minimum in common in order to be adequately compared - “we frequently argue that apples and pears are ‘incomparable’; but the counterargument inevitably is: how do we know unless we compare them?” Apples and pears are “comparable as fruits, as things that can be eaten, as entities that grow on trees; but incomparable, e.g., in their respective shapes.” In other words, “the question always is: comparable with respect to which properties or characteristics, and incomparable (i.e. too dissimilar) with respect to which other properties or characteristics?”<sup>180</sup> In this thesis, the case studies are comparable with respect to their characteristics as cities, and more specifically contested or divided cities where different ethno-national communities live in a state of conflict; as well as the comparable characteristics of the types of shared public spaces in each city. The case studies are incomparable with respect to the type of governmental structures in place in their wider contexts, their respective levels of intergroup violence, as well as the wider implications of the conflicts on a regional and international scale.

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<sup>178</sup> Bergeron, Josee, *Politique Comparee* by Bertrand Badie, Guy Hermet, *Revue Canadienne de science politique*, vol. 24, no. 3 (1991), p. 650

<sup>179</sup> Badie, Bertrand and Guy Hermet, *La Politique Comparee*, Dalloz : Paris, 2001

<sup>180</sup> Sartori, Giovanni. “Comparing and Miscomparing.” *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 3, no. 3 (January 7, 1991): 243–57, p. 246

The three cities also include public spaces that are frequented by different communities, while the rest of the urban and social space is relatively divided. The levels of division and separation vary from case to case – and this variation will be analysed – but the stance of the thesis is that a certain level of division is undeniably present in all three case studies. These three cities may be considered to belong to what Adrian Guelke has defined as ‘deeply divided societies’; as “a characteristic of deeply divided societies is that they may enjoy long periods of tranquillity, in which there is a truce between the major factions in the society but the fault line remains.”<sup>181</sup>

Palestinians and Israelis, Catholics and Protestants and Flemings and Francophones respectively represent the two major communities in the three case study cities. Guelke further underlines that “the stopping of violent conflict does not necessarily mean an end to deep divisions in society”<sup>182</sup>, therefore justifying the selection of non-violent cases such as Brussels within a comparative study on contested cities.

As captured by the Qualitative Comparative Analysis perspective, “(1) most often, it is a combination of conditions that generate an outcome; (2) several different combinations of conditions may produce the same outcome; and (3) a given condition may have a different impact on the outcome depending on the context. Hence, QCA implements a context-specific notion of causality. This allowance for greater causal complexity also implies that a causal condition may have opposite effects depending on context.”<sup>183</sup> The research around shared public spaces in three case studies will thus compare the theoretical answers provided in each case in order to establish the differences and similarities that may emerge, as well as the existence of different answers to a same question depending on the context of each city. The purpose of the study of shared public spaces in three cities is not to offer an over-arching generalisation of how such spaces affect intergroup relations in all divided cities; rather, it will focus on providing an insight into how public spaces may make a difference to such relations in certain contexts.

While it is clear that the lack of violence in Brussels plays a major role in providing differences between the case studies, the comparative basis of the study is not restricted to levels of violence. One major validity threat to the research would be to follow a circular reasoning in which it is claimed that shared public spaces make greater differences to intergroup relations in situations where violent conflict is absent. This will not be the case, as the comparative basis is focused on the contested nature of cities – which may also include non-violent conflicts that

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<sup>181</sup>Guelke, Adrian. *Politics in Deeply Divided Societies*. Polity, 2012, p. 154

<sup>182</sup> Guelke, Adrian, *Politics in Deeply Divided Societies*, 2012, p. 154

<sup>183</sup> Ragin, Charles C. *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*. Univ of California Press, 2014, p. xxii

might nevertheless negatively influence intergroup relations. The methodological rationale of this study is very similar to Pullan and Baillie's "attitude that contextualisation and where possible, comparison, as well as good respect for difference, can offer insights into both specific situations and urban conflict in general. It offers a variety of ways to locate urban conflict both inside and between cities."<sup>184</sup>

More recently, scholars such as Donatella Della Porta and Yves Mény have further highlighted the relevance of carrying out comparative research by mentioning that "although indispensable to an understanding of any phenomenon, a comparative analysis is not an easy task. It involves, first of all, the need to create concepts that 'travel well' [...]"<sup>185</sup> In this case, the concept of a shared public space travels well as it is present in every urban entity worldwide. The authors crucially argue that "a comparison of several cases can help in getting away from ethnocentrism, by constructing generalizable explanations of the phenomenon and its dynamics."<sup>186</sup>

There is indeed a danger of limiting the analysis of a phenomenon within one case study, and therefore "there is [...] great value in taking the concepts and ideas from one country and seeking to apply them comparatively, and more generally in seeking concepts that travel, both as an aid to comparative research and as an antidote to methodological nationalism."<sup>187</sup>

Comparative studies of Jerusalem and Belfast, as those carried out by Scott Bollens, are relevant and feasible as both cities are the most populated within Israel and Northern Ireland, both include arguments of state legitimacy and both provide accounts of urban planning and management in a contested context. These justifications may also be presented in this study on public spaces in three contested cities, as Brussels also fits these descriptions. Bollens presents the purpose of his research as "to document the anatomy and effect of policy strategies that may transcend particular urban and ideological contexts, while acknowledging the unique national contexts of the two cities."<sup>188</sup> The same perspective may be applied to this thesis; as its main aim is to document the role of shared public spaces that may transcend particular contexts while nevertheless acknowledging the unique specificities of the three cities of Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels.

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<sup>184</sup> Pullan, W., and B. Baillie. *Locating Urban Conflicts: Ethnicity, Nationalism and the Everyday*. Springer, 2013, p. 1

<sup>185</sup> Porta, Donatella Della, and Yves Mény. *Democracy and Corruption in Europe*. A&C Black, 1997, p. 166

<sup>186</sup> Op. Cit., p. 166

<sup>187</sup> Porta, Donatella Della, and Michael Keating. *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences: A Pluralist Perspective*. Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 5

<sup>188</sup> Bollens, Scott. A. *On Narrow Ground: Urban Policy and Ethnic Conflict in Jerusalem and Belfast*. SUNY Series in Urban Public Policy. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000, p. 38

### Research Design Overview based on J. Maxwell's Interactive Model

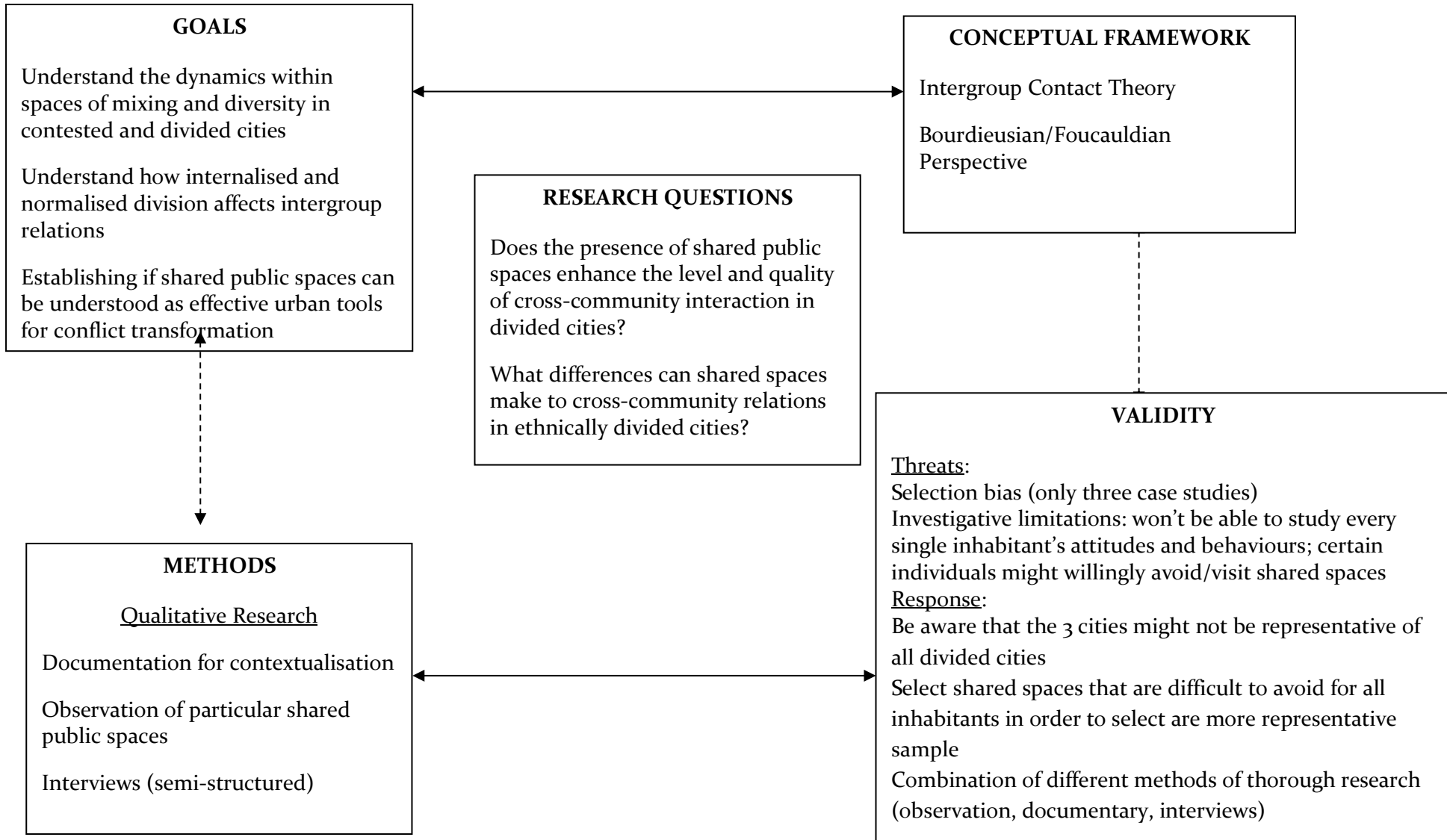


Table 4: Research Design

## 2. Main Methodology: Observation, Documentation and Interviews

A qualitative research methodology was applied to the study of shared public spaces in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels, and has comprised the following components:

- Participant observation in the three selected shared public spaces in order to describe and ascertain what regularly occurs within such settings
- Documentary research in the three cities in order to establish their wider contexts, but also to investigate the more focused aspects of the shared public spaces in each city
- Semi-structured interviews with selected individuals in the three cities in order to assess interpretations and opinions on the role of shared public spaces in the cities.

### Observation

While the research has been based on different types of qualitative research methodology, observation was selected as the main method to be carried out in the three selected shared public spaces. Establishing what occurs in shared public spaces on a regular basis – which involves observation – was considered the most relevant way to answer the main research questions.

Observation is a main means of carrying out qualitative methodology in the field, and comprises “a variety of activities that range from hanging around in the setting, getting to know people, and learning the routines to using strict time sampling to record actions and interactions [...]” Observation has further been defined as entailing “the systematic noting and recording of events, behaviours, interactions, and [objects] in the social setting.”<sup>189</sup>

This type of research “demands first-hand involvement in the social world chosen for study – the researcher is both a participant (to varying degrees) and an observer (also to varying degrees). Immersion in the setting permits the research to hear, see, and begin to experience reality as the participants do.”<sup>190</sup> By carrying out observation in the spaces over a number of days, the study hopes to offer an insight into how they are used by different communities on a daily basis.

While this study has based a major part of its methodology on observation, research has not been carried out in a classic ethnographic format. Indeed, the participant aspect of observation has been greatly reduced due to the nature of the selected setting of observation – public or urban spaces which do not require any kind of assimilation or introduction of the researcher,

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<sup>189</sup> Marhsall, Catherine and Rossman, p. 139

<sup>190</sup> Op cit, p. 140

unlike studies focusing on particular aspects of a given society or community. As a result, far less direct interaction and exchange occurred between the researcher and individuals using the observed spaces. However, a number of interviews were carried out in the three cities in order to provide an additional insight and contextual interpretations of the role of such spaces in transforming intergroup relations.

As there is no clear or unanimously agreed definition of shared space, this study has taken a wider understanding of the term that includes all spaces that are frequented by different communities in ethnically divided cities. This particular perspective is shared by Scott Bollens who also understands shared space (from what he describes as a minimalist definition in contested cities) as consisting of mutual coexistence in the same physical space in the absence of intergroup tension.<sup>191</sup> Research has therefore focused on the more easily accessible spaces within the broader spectrum of shared spaces. Authors of the Conflict in Cities project have crucially underlined that “people’s motivation for sharing space can be spontaneous, pragmatic, or intentional, and sharing can take place at many levels including shopping, the accessing of services such as education and health care, and cultural events and entertainment.”<sup>192</sup> Such an understanding of shared space thus corresponds with the general perspective taken by this specific study on intergroup relations in divided cities.

Observation was carried out in the following spaces in each city:

- Open public space
- Public Park
- Shopping centre/area

While it may be argued that shopping centres are not public spaces, the following description provided by UN Habitat may enable the inclusion of such places within a wider understanding of urban space used by the public – “public spaces host market and accessible commercial activities in fixed premises, public venues and other services (collective and not, public and private), in which the socio-economic dimension of the city is always expressed.”<sup>193</sup>

Observation consisted of visiting the three selected spaces and occasionally other parts of the cities on a regular basis at different times of the day and on different days of the week. Research covered all days of the week over a period of more than a month and is believed to provide a better understanding of daily life in the three spaces in each city; which may

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<sup>191</sup> Interview with Scott Bollens, Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016, Belfast

<sup>192</sup> Conflict in Cities. “Sharing Space in Divided Cities.” Briefing Paper. Conflict in Cities and the Contested State, November 2012.

<sup>193</sup> Garau, Pietro. “Global Public Space Toolkit: From Global Principles to Local Policies and Practice.” Toolkit. UN Habitat, February 2016, p. 29



ultimately enable certain generalisations about their use. Given the unpredictability and randomness of the use of public space, this study cannot apply statistical or rigorously systematic scientific methodology to the research. However, a number of specific indicators and signs were identified and targeted during the field work to provide a relevant interpretative understanding of how such spaces are used by different communities on a regular basis. The following indicators were applied in order to evaluate how the sharing of space could transform intergroup relations:

- Interactions occurring in the space (this may include intra-and inter-group contact, as in certain cases cross-community interaction is not always visible nor obvious)
- Meaningful interactions: in this particular study, meaningful interaction between different groups is described as more in-depth and personal, compared to brief non-personal contact that occurs within the public realm
- Presence of certain social agents, such as security forces that might lead to an imbalance between the groups
- Intergroup tension, confrontation or violence
- General atmosphere of the space: this includes relaxed, tense, festive or neutral ambiances within spaces of coexistence which become noticeable through observation and close scrutiny of a given situation during a length of time ranging from minutes to hours.

The selection of the three types of spaces was done through the use of auditory and visual cues applied to individuals visiting public spaces in the three cities. Indicators such as language, specific clothing or jewellery enabled the identification of individuals belonging to one or the other community, therefore confirming the presence of both groups within a particular place. Specific cues to each case study have been described in more detail at the beginning of each of the case study chapters of the thesis (chapters Five, Six and Seven).

## Documentation

In addition to observation in the field, information was gathered through reading different types of primary and secondary sources of documentation in the three cities. This included reading daily news reports from the local media, reports around different aspects of the cities published by NGOs, international organisations, local institutions or grassroots organisations, surveys and statistics about the populations of the three cities, and scholarly articles. Documentation was carried out before, during and after the field research, spanning the entire period of the PhD studies. News articles and statistical information are considered to be primary sources of data collection, while journal articles and scholarly works are secondary

sources of information that have mainly been used for the contextual basis of the research; most of which is presented in Chapter Four.

## Interviews

A final research methodology carried out on a smaller scale consisted of qualitative semi-structured interviews with a number of different participants. Given time and financial constraints linked to the research, it was decided that interviewing representative samples of inhabitants in all cities through focus groups was neither feasible nor necessary to answer the main research questions. Instead, a limited number of interviews were carried out with participants in each city belonging to civil society or public organisations; such as cross-community organisations, universities, political parties, and NGOs. Interview findings were accordingly used as additional information backing observation and documentary findings rather than forming the main basis of the research answers.

The rationale behind this choice was that those interviewed had first-hand information about intergroup relations and were therefore able to provide valuable information regarding perceptions and feelings of certain inhabitants in the shared spaces studied. Given the number of interviewees in each case study, this study does not claim to be representative but rather offers a particular insight into shared public spaces in contested cities. The same questions were asked in the three cities for comparative purposes, and included queries about the following aspects:

- The current situation in the city in terms of intergroup relations
- Perceived levels of interaction between groups in the city
- The definition of shared space
- Specific shared spaces in the city
- Opinions on the role of shared spaces in improving intergroup relations
- Opinions on the future of intergroup relations in the city

A number of ad-hoc interviews were subsequently carried out after the period of field research with specialists in various relevant fields in order to provide additional validity to the research findings.

### **3. Methodology in Case Study Cities: Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels**

#### Field Research in Jerusalem

Observation of the three selected shared public spaces in Jerusalem was carried out over a period of nearly two months and consisted of a total of thirty two days. Seven days of

observation were carried out in April, seventeen in May and eight in June 2015. Each day of the week was observed on more than one occasion and at different times within the day. Research thus covered six Mondays, five Tuesdays, four Wednesdays, three Thursdays, five Fridays, five Saturdays and four Sundays. Observation was carried out during a total of eleven afternoons, seven mornings to afternoons, five afternoons to early evenings, seven mornings to evenings (hence full days of research), two early mornings and one evening. The small amount of research taking place in the evenings was due to personal safety concerns. By taking the feminist approach on reflexivity<sup>194</sup> in which the researcher's position is acknowledged, it was indeed not deemed safe for a young foreign woman to stay long hours after dark in open public areas. The fact that two of the three selected spaces had opening and closing hours (Mamilla mall and Teddy Park) – and were thus effectively inaccessible at such hours – meant that this limitation did not hinder the overall quality of the data collected through observation in the field.

A number of interviews were additionally carried out with members of both the Israeli and Palestinian communities in Jerusalem, including four women and eight men. The youngest participant was in his twenties, while the oldest was in his seventies; although most interviewees were all settled in their current professional statuses for a number of years – hence their selection due to their expected extensive experience in their respective fields. The interviews were semi-structured, which enabled the researcher to ask specific and detailed questions but also allowed for the respondents to provide wide answers and mention other aspects they believed to be of importance. Most of the interviews were carried out in public spaces or within institutions that the participants represented, located in the Old City, West and East Jerusalem; while one interview occurred in Tel Aviv. Interview length ranged from twenty minutes for the shortest meeting to one and half hours for the longest; while the average length was around forty five minutes.

A number of issues specific to the Jerusalem context were identified during the field research. The first most obvious limitation encountered was that of language, as the researcher spoke neither Hebrew nor Arabic. However, given the international attractiveness and posture of the Holy City, English is also regularly used by many of its inhabitants; and all the interviews were carried out in English with members of both communities. Another limitation that needs to be acknowledged is that given the context of the unresolved conflict in the city, its mention and discussion within civil society is a deeply sensitive and emotional issue. All interview participants generally shared similar opinions on the illegality and negative impact of the

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<sup>194</sup> Wasserfall, Rahel, Reflexivity, feminism and difference, *Qualitative Sociology*, March 1993, volume 16, issue 1, pp. 23-41

Israeli occupation on both the Israeli and Palestinian communities, and the need to improve intergroup relations. While other individuals were contacted, only moderate Israelis and Palestinians favourably answered the interview requests. Their views are therefore not representative of the entire population of the city. This fact had already been established in terms of the limited number of interview carried out in each city, and this obstacle is therefore not believed to greatly limit the relevance of the findings.

	Date of Observation	Time of day	Day of the week	Month	Special event
1	Thursday 23 <sup>rd</sup> April 2015	Afternoon	Thursday (1)	April	Yes – Independence Day
2	Friday 24 <sup>th</sup> April 2015	Afternoon	Friday (1)	April	No
3	Saturday 25 <sup>th</sup> April 2015	Late Morning to Afternoon	Saturday (1)	April	No
4	Sunday 26 <sup>th</sup> April 2015	Afternoon	Sunday (1)	April	No
5	Monday 27 <sup>th</sup> April 2015	Morning to Afternoon	Monday (1)	April	No
6	Wednesday 29 <sup>th</sup> April 2015	Afternoon to early Evening	Wednesday (1)	April	No
7	Thursday 30 <sup>th</sup> April 2015	Morning to Afternoon	Thursday (2)	April	No
8	Friday 1 <sup>st</sup> May 2015	Afternoon to Evening	Friday (2)	May	No
9	Saturday 2 <sup>nd</sup> May 2015	Afternoon to Evening	Saturday (2)	May	No
10	Sunday 3 <sup>rd</sup> May 2015	Afternoon	Sunday (2)	May	No
11	Wednesday 6 <sup>th</sup> May 2015	Morning to Evening	Wednesday (2)	May	No
12	Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup> May 2015	Morning to Evening	Sunday (3)	May	No
13	Monday 11 <sup>th</sup> May 2015	Morning to Evening	Monday (2)	May	No
14	Friday 15 <sup>th</sup> May 2015	Morning to Evening	Friday (3)	May	Yes – Nakba Day
15	Saturday 16 <sup>th</sup> May 2015	Afternoon	Saturday (3)	May	No
16	Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup> May 2015	Morning to Evening	Sunday (4)	May	Yes – Jerusalem Day
17	Monday 18 <sup>th</sup> May 2015	Afternoon to Evening	Monday (3)	May	No
18	Tuesday 19 <sup>th</sup> May 2015	Morning to Evening	Tuesday (1)	May	No
19	Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup> May 2015	Early Morning	Thursday (3)	May	No
20	Monday 25 <sup>th</sup> May 2015	Morning to late Afternoon	Monday (4)	May	Yes - Shavuot
21	Tuesday 26 <sup>th</sup> May 2015	Afternoon to Evening	Tuesday (2)	May	No
22	Wednesday 27 <sup>th</sup> May 2015	Afternoon	Wednesday (3)	May	No
23	Friday 29 <sup>th</sup> May 2015	Afternoon	Friday (4)	May	No
24	Saturday 30 <sup>th</sup> May 2015	Afternoon	Saturday (4)	May	No
25	Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> June 2015	Afternoon	Monday (5)	June	No
26	Tuesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> June 2015	Later morning to Evening	Tuesday (3)	June	No
27	Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> June 2015	Evening	Wednesday (4)	June	Yes – Light Festival
28	Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> June 2015	Early Morning to Afternoon	Monday (6)	June	No
29	Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> June 2015	Late Afternoon	Tuesday (4)	June	No
30	Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> June 2015	Late Morning to Afternoon	Friday (5)	June	No
31	Saturday 13 <sup>th</sup> June 2015	Afternoon	Saturday (5)	June	No
32	Tuesday 16 <sup>th</sup> June 2015	Morning to Afternoon	Tuesday (5)	June	No

Table 5: Observation Days in Jerusalem

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Position/Organisation</b>	<b>Date of Interview</b>
<b>1</b>	Anonymous	Academia	Al Quds University	Wednesday 29 <sup>th</sup> April 2015
<b>2</b>	Michael Alexander	NGO	Combatants for Peace	Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2015
<b>3</b>	Marik Stern	Academia	Ben Gurion University	Wednesday 6 <sup>th</sup> May 2015
<b>4</b>	Prof Haim Yacobi	Academia	Ben Gurion University	Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup> May 2015
<b>5</b>	Mandy Turner	Academia	Kenyon Institute	Monday 11 <sup>th</sup> May 2015
<b>6</b>	Mohamed Owedah	NGO	Combatants for Peace	Monday 11 <sup>th</sup> May 2015
<b>7</b>	Jodie Asaraf	NGO	Jerusalem YMCA	Tuesday 19 <sup>th</sup> May 2015
<b>8</b>	Gideon Solimani	NGO	Emek Shave	Tuesday 19 <sup>th</sup> May 2015
<b>9</b>	Rami Nasrallah	Academia/NGO	IPCC	Wednesday 27 <sup>th</sup> May 2015
<b>10</b>	Hillel Bardin	NGO	Combatants for Peace	Tuesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> June 2015
<b>11</b>	Montaser Amro	NGO	Kids for Peace	Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> June 2015
<b>12</b>	Amneh Badran	Academia	Al Quds University	Saturday 13 <sup>th</sup> June 2015

Table 6: List of Interviews in Jerusalem

## *Jerusalem Field Research Summary in Numbers*

### **Months of Observation in Jerusalem:**

- April 2015 (7 days)
- May 2015 (17 days)
- June 2015 (8 days)

### **Days of the week observed:**

- Monday (8)
- Tuesday (5)
- Wednesday (4)
- Thursday (3)
- Friday (5)
- Saturday (5)
- Sunday (4)

### **Times of the days observed:**

- Morning to afternoon (7)
- Afternoon (11)
- Afternoon to evening (5)
- Morning to evening – full day (7)
- Early morning (2)
- Evening (1)

### **Interview participants' community background:**

- Palestinians (5)
- Israelis (6)
- Internationals (1)

### **Interview participants' gender:**

- Women (4)
- Men (8)

### **Interview participants' age:**

- Youngest: 20s
- Oldest: 70s
- Average: 30s to 50s

### **Interview participants' category and institution/organisation:**

- Academia, Al Quds University (2)
- Academia, Ben Gurion University (2)
- Academia, Kenyon Institute
- NGO, Combatants for Peace (3)
- NGO, Jerusalem YMCA

- NGO, Emek Shave
- NGO, International Peace and Cooperation Centre
- NGO, Kids for Peace

### **Location of interviews:**

- Old City
- West Jerusalem
- East Jerusalem
- Tel Aviv

### **Setting of interviews:**

- Public place/cafe (5)
- Work place (6)
- Personal residence (1)

### **Length of interviews:**

- 20 minutes (1)
- 35 minutes (3)
- 40 minutes (2)
- 45 minutes (3)
- 1 hour (2)
- 1 hour 30 minutes (1)

### **Identified Limitations:**

- Language (Hebrew and Arabic)
- Not representative sample of interviewees – all rather moderate

## Field Research in Belfast

Observation of the three selected shared public spaces in Belfast was carried out during two separate periods; the first from February to April 2015 and the second during the month of October in 2015, in order to achieve an overall observation period of over thirty days. Observation included a total of seven days in February, fourteen days in March, six days in April and another six days in October. Research covered four Mondays, six Tuesdays, three Wednesdays, three Thursdays, four Fridays, six Saturdays and five Sundays. More specifically, observation occurred during eight mornings to afternoons, eleven afternoons, six afternoons to evenings, six mornings to evenings (full days), and one early morning. As in Jerusalem, it was not considered very safe or relevant to carry out lengthy or limited periods of observation during the evenings.

A number of interviews were carried out with members of both the Catholic and Protestant communities, including four women and eight men. The youngest participants were teenagers who formed part of a focus group – the idea of carrying focus groups in the three cities was subsequently abandoned for practical but also methodological purposes – while other ages ranged from thirties to fifties, thus essentially individuals well established within their professional careers. As in Jerusalem, the interviews were semi-structured, and included the same general questions, also enabling the participants to discuss other topics they deemed of interest. Many of the interviews took place in public spaces including cafes, but also within the place of work of the participants, such as institutions and organisations, located in the city centre, West Belfast, the University area and South Belfast. The length of interviews ranged from twenty minutes to one and a half hours, with an average length of around forty five minutes.

No particular limits to the field research were identified in the specific case of Belfast; which may be due to the fact that English is the common language used in the city, but also because the PhD studies were based in this city thus enabling a better understanding of its mechanisms and more time to internalise specific aspects of the research.



	<b>Date of Observation</b>	<b>Time of day</b>	<b>Day of the week</b>	<b>Month</b>	<b>Special event</b>
<b>1</b>	Tuesday 17 <sup>th</sup> February 2015	Morning to late Afternoon	Tuesday (1)	February	No
<b>2</b>	Wednesday 18 <sup>th</sup> February 2015	Morning to late Afternoon	Wednesday (1)	February	Yes – Ash Wednesday
<b>3</b>	Thursday 19 <sup>th</sup> February 2015	Morning to early Afternoon	Thursday (1)	February	No
<b>4</b>	Friday 20 <sup>th</sup> February 2015	Late Afternoon to Evening	Friday (1)	February	No
<b>5</b>	Saturday 21 <sup>st</sup> February 2015	Afternoon	Saturday (1)	February	No
<b>6</b>	Tuesday 24 <sup>th</sup> February 2015	Afternoon	Tuesday (2)	February	No
<b>7</b>	Wednesday 25 <sup>th</sup> February 2015	Morning to Afternoon	Wednesday (2)	February	No
<b>8</b>	Saturday 7 <sup>th</sup> March 2015	Morning to Evening	Saturday (2)	March	Yes – Women’s Day March
<b>9</b>	Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup> March 2015	Afternoon	Sunday (1)	March	No
<b>10</b>	Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> March 2015	Later Morning to Afternoon	Monday (1)	March	No
<b>11</b>	Friday 13 <sup>th</sup> March 2015	Morning to Evening	Friday (2)	March	Yes – National Strike Day
<b>12</b>	Sunday 15 <sup>th</sup> March 2015	Afternoon to early Evening	Sunday (2)	March	No
<b>13</b>	Monday 16 <sup>th</sup> March 2015	Morning to Afternoon	Monday (2)	March	No
<b>14</b>	Tuesday 17 <sup>th</sup> March 2015	Morning to Evening	Tuesday (3)	March	Yes – Saint Patrick’s Day
<b>15</b>	Thursday 19 <sup>th</sup> March 2015	Afternoon	Thursday (2)	March	No
<b>16</b>	Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> March 2015	Afternoon	Sunday (3)	March	No
<b>17</b>	Monday 23 <sup>rd</sup> March 2015	Morning to Evening	Monday (3)	March	No
<b>18</b>	Tuesday 24 <sup>th</sup> March 2015	Morning to Evening	Tuesday (4)	March	No
<b>19</b>	Thursday 26 <sup>th</sup> March 2015	Morning to late afternoon	Thursday (3)	March	No
<b>20</b>	Saturday 28 <sup>th</sup> March 2015	Early afternoon to Evening	Saturday (3)	March	No
<b>21</b>	Sunday 29 <sup>th</sup> March 2015	Afternoon	Sunday (4)	March	No
<b>22</b>	Wednesday 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2015	Early Morning	Wednesday (3)	April	No
<b>23</b>	Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> April 2015	Morning to Evening	Friday (3)	April	Yes – Good Friday
<b>24</b>	Saturday 4 <sup>th</sup> April 2015	Early afternoon to Evening	Saturday (4)	April	Yes – Easter Saturday
<b>25</b>	Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup> April 2015	Late Morning to Afternoon	Sunday (5)	April	Yes – Easter Sunday
<b>26</b>	Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> April 2015	Afternoon to early Evening	Monday (4)	April	Yes – Easter Monday
<b>27</b>	Tuesday 7 <sup>th</sup> April 2015	Afternoon	Tuesday (5)	April	No
<b>28</b>	Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup> October 2015	Afternoon	Tuesday (6)	October	No
<b>29</b>	Friday 9 <sup>th</sup> October 2015	Afternoon	Friday (4)	October	No
<b>30</b>	Saturday 10 <sup>th</sup> October 2016	Afternoon	Saturday (5)	October	No
<b>31</b>	Saturday 17 <sup>th</sup> October 2016	Afternoon – Evening	Saturday (6)	October	No
<b>32</b>	Various days	Afternoon	Misc.	October	No

Table 7: Observation Days in Belfast

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Position/Organisation</b>	<b>Date of Interview/Focus Group</b>
<b>1</b>	Anonymous		Not disclosed in thesis	Wednesday 18 <sup>th</sup> February 2015
<b>2</b>	Chris O'Halloran	NGO	Project Director, Forthspring	Tuesday 24 <sup>th</sup> February 2015
<b>3</b>	Milena Komarova	Academic	Research fellow, Queen's University	Wednesday 25 <sup>th</sup> February 2015
<b>4</b>	Stephen Pearson	Events	Event Manager, Belfast Marathon	Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> March 2015
<b>5</b>	Richard Dougherty	NGO	Youth Manager, Forthspring	Monday 16 <sup>th</sup> March 2015
<b>6</b>	Ciaran McLaughlin	NGO	Suffolk/Lenadoon Interface Network	Thursday 19 <sup>th</sup> March 2015
<b>7</b>	Focus Group 1	Youths	Youth Club, Forthspring	Thursday 19 <sup>th</sup> March 2015
<b>8</b>	Focus Group 2	Youths	Youth Club, Forthspring	Thursday 19 <sup>th</sup> March 2015
<b>9</b>	Gareth Harper	NGO	Managing Director, Peace Players	Monday 23 <sup>rd</sup> March 2015
<b>10</b>	Martin McMullan	NGO	Assistant Director, Youth Action	Monday 23 <sup>rd</sup> March 2015
<b>11</b>	David Boyd	Events	Director, Beat Carnival	Tuesday 24 <sup>th</sup> March 2015
<b>12</b>	Joe O'Donnell	NGO	Director, Belfast Interface Project	Thursday 26 <sup>th</sup> March 2015

**Table 8: List of Interviews in Belfast**

## *Belfast Field Research Summary in Numbers*

### **Months of Observation in Belfast:**

- February 2015 (7 days)
- March 2015 (14 days)
- April 2015 (6 days)
- October 2015 (6 days)

### **Days of the week observed:**

- Monday (4)
- Tuesday (6)
- Wednesday (3)
- Thursday (3)
- Friday (4)
- Saturday (6)
- Sunday (5)

### **Times of the days observed:**

- Morning to afternoon (8)
- Afternoon (11)
- Afternoon to evening (6)
- Morning to evening – full day (6)
- Early morning (1)

### **Interview participants' community background:**

- Catholics (7 or 8)
- Protestants (3)
- Internationals (1)

### **Interview participants' gender:**

- Women (4)
- Men (8)

### **Interview participants' age:**

- Youngest: teens
- Oldest: 60s
- Average: 30s to 50s

### **Interview participants' category and institution/organisation:**

- Academia, Queens University
- Politics, anonymous
- NGO, Forthspring Community Centre (2)
- NGO, Suffolk/Lenadoon Interface Network

- NGO, Peace Players International
- NGO, Youth Action Belfast
- NGO, Belfast Interface Project
- NGO, Belfast Beat
- Events, Belfast Marathon

### **Location of interviews:**

- Belfast city centre
- West Belfast
- South Belfast

### **Setting of interviews:**

- Public place/cafe (2)
- Work place (9)
- Non-physical, via email (1)

### **Length of interviews:**

- 15 minutes (1)
- 20 minutes (1)
- 35 minutes (2)
- 40 minutes (1)
- 45 minutes (4)
- 1 hour 10 minutes (1)
- 1 hour 30 minutes (1)

### **Identified Limitations:**

- Nothing specific to Belfast

## Field Research in Brussels

The three selected shared public spaces in Brussels were observed over a total of over thirty days, over two periods; the first from June to July 2015 and the second during the month of September 2015. Research included three observation days in June, fourteen in July and fifteen in September. Observation covered four Mondays, six Tuesdays, four Wednesdays, five Thursdays, six Fridays, five Saturdays and two Sundays; and included eighteen mornings to afternoons, eight afternoons, three afternoons to evenings and three mornings to evenings (full days). As in the other two case studies, evenings were not deemed particularly safe or relevant for the collection of data in shared public spaces.

Several interviews were additionally carried out with members of both the Flemish and Francophone communities in the city, including five women and nine men. The youngest participants were in their late thirties, while the oldest were in their sixties; other respondent ages ranged from early forties to late fifties, again representing individuals well established within their professional careers. Interviews were semi-structured and provided space for the interviewees to mention other aspects they deemed relevant for the study. The interviews took place in a range of different locations, from public spaces such as cafes to university campuses, the place of work of the interviewees as well as their place of residence. Meetings took place in central Brussels, its different communes such as Schaerbeek, Ixelles and Etterbeek, while one interview occurred in the Flemish periphery of Brussels (Halle). Interview length varied from a minimum of 45 minutes to a maximum of one hour and thirty minutes, with an average length of around one hour; the length of interviews in Brussels were therefore generally longer than those in Jerusalem and Belfast. Interviews were carried out in French with the Francophone participants and in English with the Flemish respondents.

A number of limitations were identified within the specific case of research in Brussels. The most obvious obstacle encountered was that of language, as the researcher is only fluent in French, and not Dutch. However, given the international nature of the city and the fact that French remains the lingua franca while Dutch is only spoken by a minority, speaking French and English enabled to overcome this obstacle and gather relevant data. As mentioned in the Brussels case study chapter, it is particularly challenging to gather statistical information in terms of the linguistic affiliation of the inhabitants of the city due to a change in the law in the 1960s in order to ease intergroup tensions. While alternative sources of information were sporadically discovered, the lack of specific census data covering such a crucial aspect of the study needs to be acknowledged.

Unlike Jerusalem and Belfast, the researcher did not reside within the city Brussels during the period of field research, but in a town situated within the Walloon Region of Belgium. However, travelling to the capital only entailed a short commute and a similar number of days of observation were carried out in the selected spaces as well as in other parts of the city, therefore providing similar detailed levels of information and findings in the three cities.

In addition to limitations, a number of particularities of the Brussels context should be acknowledged within field research methodology. One such fact which differentiates the Belgian city from the other two case studies is that both the Belgian Flemish and Francophone communities have become minorities within the capital, and that over 30% of the inhabitants of Brussels are non-Belgian.<sup>195</sup> The relevance of this reality in terms of studying intergroup relations in shared spaces was highlighted by one interview participant who explained that “the sharing of space is not like between Protestants and Catholics and that englobes [sic] the whole population, or between Jews and Palestinians or Muslims and that englobes – everybody is one of them. In Brussels, you could say that the majority of those present in public spaces are not one of them.”<sup>196</sup> However, by applying language cues during observation, specific spaces hosting important numbers of both Dutch-speakers and French-speakers were identified and therefore deemed relevant for the study of intergroup contact in the city.

Finally, while it may be argued that most of the intergroup tension in Belgium is concentrated at the language border between bilingual Brussels and mono-lingual Flanders – the Brussels periphery – these locations were not deemed central enough to provide a strong comparative basis for the research. Indeed, these areas are mostly situated within small towns, therefore incorporating different dynamics compared to a big city and not necessarily providing the adequate spaces for a thorough comparative analysis. In other words, focusing on spaces in the Brussels periphery would not have permitted an effective wider comparative study of similar types of shared public spaces – open spaces, parks and shopping centres – in three different contested cities.

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<sup>195</sup> Le Soir ‘Les Français sont les étrangers les plus nombreux à Bruxelles’ ; John Coakley ‘The Territorial Management of Ethnic Conflict’, p. 91

<sup>196</sup> Brussels Interviewee 5 – Eric Corijn

	Date of Observation	Time of day	Day of week	Month	Special event
1	Thursday 25 <sup>th</sup> June 2015	Morning – Afternoon	Thursday (1)	June	No
2	Friday 26 <sup>th</sup> June 2015	Noon – Afternoon	Friday (1)	June	No
3	Tuesday 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2015	Morning – Afternoon	Tuesday (1)	June	Yes – Ommegang
4	Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup> July 2015	Morning – Afternoon	Thursday (2)	July	No
5	Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> July 2015	Afternoon – Evening	Friday (2)	July	No
6	Saturday 4 <sup>th</sup> July 2015	Afternoon	Saturday (1)	July	No
7	Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> July 2015	Morning – Afternoon	Monday (1)	July	No
8	Wednesday 8 <sup>th</sup> July 2015	Morning – Afternoon	Wednesday (1)	July	No
9	Friday 10 <sup>th</sup> July 2015	Morning – Afternoon	Friday (3)	July	No
10	Saturday 11 <sup>th</sup> July 2015	Morning – Evening	Saturday (2)	July	Yes – Flemish National Day
11	Sunday 12 <sup>th</sup> July 2015	Afternoon	Sunday (1)	July	No
13	Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup> July 2015	Morning – Afternoon	Wednesday (2)	July	No
14	Thursday 16 <sup>th</sup> July 2015	Morning – Afternoon	Thursday (3)	July	No
15	Monday 20 <sup>th</sup> July 2015	Morning – Afternoon	Monday (3)	July	No
16	Tuesday 21 <sup>st</sup> July 2015	Morning – Early Evening	Tuesday (2)	July	Yes – Belgian National Day
17	Wednesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> July 2015	Morning – Late Afternoon	Wednesday (3)	July	No
18	Saturday 5 <sup>th</sup> September 2015	Morning – Afternoon	Saturday (3)	September	Yes – Comic Strip Festival
19	Sunday 6 <sup>th</sup> September 2015	Morning – Late Afternoon	Sunday (2)	September	Yes – Gordel
20	Tuesday 8 <sup>th</sup> September 2015	Afternoon	Tuesday (3)	September	No
21	Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup> September 2015	Afternoon – Evening	Thursday (4)	September	Yes – Art exhibition
22	Friday 11 <sup>th</sup> September 2015	Early – Late Afternoon	Friday (4)	September	No
23	Saturday 12 <sup>th</sup> September 2015	Late Morning – Afternoon	Saturday (4)	September	No
24	Tuesday 15 <sup>th</sup> September 2015	Late Morning – Evening	Tuesday (4)	September	No
25	Wednesday 16 <sup>th</sup> September 2015	Early – Late Afternoon	Wednesday (4)	September	No
26	Friday 18 <sup>th</sup> September 2015	Early – Late Afternoon	Friday (5)	September	No
27	Saturday 19 <sup>th</sup> September 2015	Morning – Afternoon	Saturday (5)	September	No
28	Tuesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> September 2015	Afternoon	Tuesday (5)	September	No
29	Thursday 24 <sup>th</sup> September 2015	Late Morning - Afternoon	Thursday (5)	September	No
30	Friday 25 <sup>th</sup> September 2015	Later Morning - Afternoon	Friday (6)	September	No
31	Monday 28 <sup>th</sup> September 2015	Afternoon – Early Evening	Monday (4)	September	No
32	Tuesday 29 <sup>th</sup> September 2015	Late Morning - Afternoon	Tuesday (6)	September	No

Table 9: Observation Days in Brussels

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Position/Organisation</b>	<b>Date of Interview</b>
<b>1</b>	Serge Govaert	NGO	CRISP	Friday 26 <sup>th</sup> June 2015
<b>2</b>	Anne Herscovici	Politician	Brussels Parliament	Friday 26 <sup>th</sup> June 2015
<b>3</b>	Philippe Van Parijs	Academia	Université Catholique de Louvain	Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> July 2015
<b>4</b>	Mark Elchardus	Academia	Vrije Universiteit Brussel	Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> July 2015
<b>5</b>	Eric Corijn	Academia	Vrije Universiteit Brussel	Wednesday 8 <sup>th</sup> July 2015
<b>6</b>	Kris Deschouwer	Academia	Vrije Universiteit Brussel	Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> July 2015
<b>7</b>	Philippe Delstanche	Politician	Pro Bruxsel	Tuesday 8 <sup>th</sup> September 2015
<b>8</b>	Bernard and Conchita Kinoo	Resident	Chef	Sunday 13 <sup>th</sup> September 2015
<b>9</b>	Alain Maskens	Politician	Pro-Bruxelles	Tuesday 15 <sup>th</sup> September 2015
<b>10</b>	Alain Joris	Politician	Commission de Communauté Commune (COCOM)	Tuesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> September 2015
<b>11</b>	Leen De Spiegelaere and Sophie Alexandre	Institution	Réseau des Arts de Bruxelles	Tuesday 29 <sup>th</sup> September 2015
<b>12</b>	Miriam Stoffen	NGO	Zinneke	Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> January 2016

**Table 10: List of Interviews in Brussels**

## *Brussels Field Research Summary in Numbers*

### **Months of Observation in Brussels:**

- June 2015 (6 days)
- July 2015 (14 days)
- September 2015 (15 days)

### **Days of the week observed:**

- Monday (4)
- Tuesday (6)
- Wednesday (4)
- Thursday (5)
- Friday (6)
- Saturday (5)
- Sunday (2)

### **Times of the days observed:**

- Morning to afternoon (18)
- Afternoon (8)
- Afternoon to evening (3)
- Morning to evening – full day (3)

### **Interview participants' community background:**

- Flemings (5)
- Francophones (7)

### **Interview participants' gender:**

- Women (5)
- Men (9)

### **Interview participants' age:**

- Youngest: 30s
- Oldest: 60s
- Average: 40s to 50s

### **Interview participants' category and institution/organisation:**

- Academia, Catholic University of Louvain (Francophone)
- Academia, Free University of Brussels –VUB (Flemish) (3)
- Politics, Brussels Parliament
- Politics, Common Community Commission (COCOM)
- Politics, Pro-Bruxsel Party (2)

- NGO, Centre for Socio-Political Research and Information
- NGO, Zinneke
- Institution, Réseau des Arts de Bruxelles
- Other, resident of periphery

### **Location of interviews:**

- City Centre
- Communes of Brussels (Etterbeek, Schaerbeek, Ixelles)
- Halle (Brussels periphery)

### **Setting of interviews:**

- Public place/cafe (3)
- Work place (5)
- Personal residence (4)

### **Length of interviews:**

- 50 minutes (4)
- 1 hour (3)
- 1 hour 15 minutes (2)
- 1 hour 20 minutes (1)
- 1 hour 30 minutes (2)

### **Identified Limitations:**

- Language (Dutch)
- Lack of statistical data on language affiliation
- Residence outside Brussels during field research
- Existence of many other communities in Brussels
- More tension in periphery than city



### ***Ad-hoc Interviews***

In addition to the twelve interviews in each case study city, a number of interviews were carried out with specialists in the fields of policy, urban planning and political science after the period of field research. The purpose of these particular ad-hoc interviews was mainly to provide additional validity and support to the field research findings – or highlight issues that could arise from them. The following four individuals were therefore interviewed:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Field</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>
Anonymous	City Council Policy	Wednesday 17 <sup>th</sup> February 2016	Belfast
Frank Gaffikin	Academia/Urban Planning	Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> February 2016	Belfast
Scott Bollens	Academia/Urban Policy	Thursday 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2016	Belfast
Rudi Janssens	Academia/Political Science	Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> May 2016	Brussels

**Table 11: List of Ad-hoc Interviews**

### **Theoretical and Comparative Framework**

Findings were organised into tables in order to facilitate the comparative process. Alongside single case study tables comparing the different findings in the different three selected shared spaces in each city, other tables were created in order to compare the same types of shared spaces in the three cities, therefore enabling a thorough comparative analysis of the findings across the case studies.

A number of themes were identified after the collection of data through observation, and data was therefore organised into these main themes:

- Identification signs and telling
- Meaningful interaction and coexistence
- Interesting anecdotes and descriptions
- Demographic details
- Special events in the spaces
- Activities and habits
- Security involvement

Similarly, a number of topics were identified within the information provided by interview participants in the three case studies, including:

- Definition and description of shared space
- Shared space in the case study city (location)
- Role of shared spaces and opinions on shared spaces
- Intergroup relations and cross-community interaction in the city
- Opinion on intergroup contact theory
- Opinion on the current situation in the city and its future
- Current context in the city

By combining these two sets of topics, three main themes were established and have formed the structure of the three case study chapters of the thesis:

- Theme 1 – Contextualisation of the Shared Public Spaces: includes the setting of shared spaces (through observation and documentation); findings pertaining to the current context in the city (through observation, documentation and interviewee opinions); and views on the future of the city (through documentation such as polls and interviewee opinions).
- Theme 2 – Daily life and intergroup relations in the shared public spaces: includes findings pertaining to demographics and routines in the spaces (through observation and documentation); special events taking place (through observation and documentation); and meaningful interaction in the spaces (through observation, a bit of documentation and interviews).
- Theme 3 – Interpretation of shared public spaces: includes information pertaining to definitions of shared spaces (through documentation and interviews); the location of the shared spaces in the cities (through observation, documentation and interviews); and the role of shared public spaces in the city (through observation, documentation and interviews).

These three themes subsequently enabled a thorough answer to the six main research questions identified in the theoretical framework of the research.

For instance, theme 1 around the contextualisation of the spaces provided an answer to the theoretical questions pertaining to the Bourdieusian/Foucauldian points of B.1 Habitus/Discipline (Normalised and internalised way of life), B.2 Doxa/Panopticism (The Role of Discourse) and B.3 Power/domination (power struggles); therefore essentially providing relevant information around the importance of situating and acknowledging the context within which intergroup interaction in shared spaces occurs in divided cities.

Theme 2 around the description of daily life and intergroup relations provided answers to the theoretical questions established in the theoretical framework pertaining to the intergroup contact theory, including A.1 Authority support, A.2 meaningful interaction, A.3 negative contact effects, but also B.1 Habitus/Discipline, B.2 Doxa/Panopticism and B.3 Power/Domination. This second theme therefore provided the most complete or full information overall to effectively answer the main research question.

Theme 3 around the interpretation of shared spaces provided answers mainly pertaining to the intergroup contact theory insights identified in the theoretical framework, therefore A.1 authority support, A.2 meaningful interaction and A.3 negative interaction.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has therefore introduced the rationale behind the selection of three types of research methods in order to adequately carry out research in and around shared public spaces in contested cities. Through a combination of observation, documentary research and interviews, this study has explored the dynamics of open public spaces, parks and shopping centres in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels. It is expected that this research design and the ensuing field research will provide some insight into how and if shared public spaces can contribute towards conflict transformation in certain contested and divided environments.

## Chapter Four: Ethnic Identity and Conflict in Deeply Divided Societies

Mapping out and describing a particular conflict is a major aspect of conflict analysis which enables a better understanding of the positions and interests of the parties involved. While this study will not present a detailed map of the conflicts in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels, it will nevertheless briefly situate each city within their wider context and mention the stage of each conflict for comparative purposes. This exposition is based on the escalation and de-escalation model created by Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall which includes escalation phases from difference, contradiction, polarisation towards violence and culminating into war, and de-escalation phases from ceasefire, agreement, normalisation and reconciliation.<sup>197</sup> The authors of this conflict analysis model underline that “by conflict we mean the pursuit of incompatible goals by different groups. This suggests a broader span of time and a wider class of struggle than armed conflict. We intend our usage here to apply to any political conflict, whether it is pursued by peaceful means or by the use of force.”<sup>198</sup> This perspective on conflict therefore enables the comparative study of the three very different situations in Israel and Palestine, Northern Ireland and Belgium – which are all situated within different stages of conflict.

The first part of the chapter will define key terms such as ethnic identity, ethnic conflict, as well as the importance of culture and symbolic landscapes in deeply divided societies. The next parts of the chapter will provide a concise history of the Israeli-Palestinian, Northern Irish and Belgian conflicts, as well as present the demographic and political landscape of the three cities, and describe the conflicts in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels through a conflict analysis approach.

The thesis essentially belongs to the field of sociology, therefore historical facts are not widely analysed but rather used to describe the contextual element of the research – this ultimately justifies the very small section dedicated to the history of the case studies.

### 1. Ethnic Identity, Conflict and Culture in Divided Cities

#### The Social Construction and Reconstruction of Ethnic Identity

Although the three case studies analysed in this thesis are very different, it may be argued that identity is at the heart of each of the conflicts. At its simplest, identity may be defined as “who a person is, or the qualities of a person or group that make them different from others.”<sup>199</sup> From a social science perspective, “identity is the human capacity – rooted in language – to

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<sup>197</sup> Ramsbotham, Oliver, Hugh Miall, and Tom Woodhouse. *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*. Polity, 2011, p. 11

<sup>198</sup> Op. Cit., p. 27

<sup>199</sup> “Identity.” *Cambridge dictionary* 2016. <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/identity>

know 'who's who' (and hence 'what's what'). [...] It is a process – *identification* – not a 'thing'; it is not something that one can *have*, or not, it is something that one *does*.”<sup>200</sup>

Identity and especially ethnic identity becomes an issue in plural societies when it is understood as exclusive, unchanging and biological in nature. Ethnicity is here understood as “the fact or state of belonging to a social group that has a common national or cultural tradition.”<sup>201</sup> Although there is a certain degree of hierarchy in feelings of belongings, it could be argued that identity “is not immutable; it changes with time, and in so doing brings about fundamental changes in behaviour.”<sup>202</sup> Such changes could include different understandings of “us and them” and no longer seeing the “other” as a threat to one’s identity in divided societies, therefore enabling the transformation of negative intergroup relations. In other words, “identity isn’t given once and for all: it is built up and changes throughout a person’s lifetime.”<sup>203</sup> The ‘solitarist’ understanding of identity has been criticised as unique and choiceless and “sees human beings as members of exactly one group [...]. A solitarist approach can be a good way of misunderstanding nearly everyone in the world.”<sup>204</sup> The danger of this over-simplification of identity is that it facilitates the understanding of ethnic conflicts as unavoidable tribal feuds that date back centuries and are a logical outcome of intergroup relations.

Certain scholars argue that ethnicity is innate as it is passed on biologically from generation to generation. For example, it is argued that “the crucial characteristic of an ethnic group is that its members are genetically more closely related to each other than to the members of other groups.”<sup>205</sup> However, no empirical evidence is offered to support the above claims of genetic similarity within ethnic groups. Yet it has also been acknowledged that context determines the political relevance of an ethnic group, and that “this means that ethnic groups are always, to some extent, socially constructed. They are not predetermined and unchanging.”<sup>206</sup> In other words, “the crucial characteristic of an ethnic group is that its members are [*perceived as being*] more closely related to each other than to the members of the other groups”.

A constructivist approach to the nature of identity on the other hand claims that it is produced through discourse and that individual identity depends on discursive practices present within

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<sup>200</sup> Jenkins, Richard. *Social Identity*. Routledge, 2014, p. 4-5

<sup>201</sup> “Ethnicity.” *Oxford dictionaries* 2016. <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/ethnicity>

<sup>202</sup> Maalouf, Amin. *In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong*. New York: Arcade Publishing, 2012, p. 13

<sup>203</sup> Op. Cit., p. 23

<sup>204</sup> Sen, Amartya. *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny*. Penguin Books India, 2007, p. xii

<sup>205</sup> Vanhanen, Tatu. “Domestic Ethnic Conflict and Ethnic Nepotism: A Comparative Analysis.” *Journal of Peace Research* 36, no. 1 (January 1, 1999): 55–73, p. 58

<sup>206</sup> Op. Cit., p. 58

a given societal context. Discourse around identity may therefore “constitute conflict, be prone to instigate conflict, or promote harmony and peace.”<sup>207</sup>

This thesis therefore understands ethnicity as essentially socially constructed. An important number of scholars assert that ethnicity is mutable and the product of social aspirations, and suggest that “as the individual (or group) moves through daily life, ethnicity can change according to variations in the situations and audiences encountered.”<sup>208</sup> In addition, “ethnic identity is largely defined by and dependent on the immediate context.”<sup>209</sup> According to certain scholars, “as a deeply emotional component of personal identity, ethnic identity is socially constructed and reconstructed as people respond to the changing material conditions, semiotic codes, power relations, and relations among groups shaping a specific time and place.”<sup>210</sup> This leads to “polarised communal identities [that] are constructed and reconstructed on a daily basis over long periods of time, sometimes spectacularly (through intimidation and direct attacks), symbolically (public rituals, flags, and emblems), and sometimes in quite mundane ways (what newspaper one buys, where one shops, or where one attends school).”<sup>211</sup> The above types of reinforcement of identities can be respectively applied to the three cities of Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels. In Jerusalem, this is more likely to be spectacularly and occasionally through violence; in Belfast the use of symbols such as flags is still widespread; and in Brussels mundane everyday life reinforces differences through separate education and use of different media outlets.

Identity may also be understood as homogenising and standardising language and thought by introducing false essential and a-temporal units. Roland Barthes, for instance, is critical of the opacity of identity and of social and individual norms that cannot be questioned. According to him, “to proclaim yourself something is always to speak at the behest of a vengeful Other, to enter into his discourse, to argue with him, to seek from him a scrap of identity: “You are...” “Yes, I am...” Ultimately, the attribute is of no importance; what society will not tolerate is that I should be... nothing, or, rather, more precisely, that the something I am should be openly expressed as [...] irrelevant. Just say “I am”, and you will be socially saved.”<sup>212</sup> This understanding of identity as falsely a-temporal and essential is similar to the view that ethnic identity is not fixed nor biologically determined. Yet in cases of deeply divided societies,

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<sup>207</sup> Slocum-Bradley, Dr Nikki R. *Promoting Conflict or Peace through Identity*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2013, p. 11

<sup>208</sup> Nagel, Joane. “Constructing Ethnicity: Creating and Recreating Ethnic Identity and Culture.” *Social Problems* 41, no. 1 (February 1, 1994): 152–76, p. 155

<sup>209</sup> Kinket, Barbara, and Maykel Verkuyten. “Levels of Ethnic Self-Identification and Social Context.” *Social Psychology Quarterly* 60, no. 4 (December 1, 1997): 338–54, p. 339

<sup>210</sup> Smith, Michael Peter. “Postmodernism, Urban Ethnography, and the New Social Space of Ethnic Identity.” *Theory and Society* 21, no. 4 (August 1, 1992): 493–531, p. 513

<sup>211</sup> Ross, Marc Howard. *Culture and Belonging in Divided Societies: Contestation and Symbolic Landscapes*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009, p. 87

<sup>212</sup> Miller, D. A. *Bringing Out Roland Barthes*. University of California Press, 1992, p. 23–24

ethnicity or cultural belonging become the main means of identification. Interestingly, “Barthes seems to see “recognition of an identity” as the price of a tolerance that he views as intolerable.”<sup>213</sup>

### Understanding and Identifying the Roots of Ethnic Conflict

Focusing on exclusive and seemingly incompatible affiliations only leads to further division within plural societies as “for people directly involved in conflicts arising out of identity, [...] nothing else exists except “them” and “us”, the insult and the atonement. “We” are necessarily and by definition innocent victims; “they” are necessarily guilty and have long been so, regardless of what they may be enduring at present.”<sup>214</sup>

The “psychocultural interpretations” and “psychocultural dramas” of ethnic groups help to understand how ethnic identity is formed and maintained, and also why so many ethnic conflicts occur. Psychocultural interpretations are “the shared, deeply rooted worldviews that help groups make sense of daily life and provide psychologically meaningful accounts of a group’s relationship with other groups, their actions and motives.”<sup>215</sup> Group narratives (or dramas), which are how groups and individuals explain conflict to themselves and outsiders, are closely linked to psychocultural interpretations and reveal information about the deep fears and threats to identity that contribute towards conflict. From this perspective, important themes of group narratives link past experiences to strong emotions, and this can create an incentive for certain courses of violent action.<sup>216</sup> The intractability of ethnic conflicts is increased when the conflict becomes an integral part of a group’s identity or culture, and therefore giving up the conflict may be understood as giving up a part of its identity. For instance, “in extreme conflict situations, groups can become so polarised that the conflict itself constitutes a fundamental element in groups’ inverse identities. Adversaries’ identities can become defined in such a way that they are mutually exclusive of one another, indivisible, and non-negotiable. They become inseparable from conflict that tends to be seen in a zero-sum terms reflecting exclusive definitions of “us” and “them”.”<sup>217</sup>

One of the main factors to influence the outbreak of ethnic conflict, which many scholars agree upon, is emotion. Strong emotions, such as group mourning of past violent events – such as genocide or massacres – can lead to the ongoing inability of groups to tolerate each other.

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<sup>213</sup> Villiers, Nicholas De. *Opacity and the Closet: Queer Tactics in Foucault, Barthes, and Warhol*. University of Minnesota Press, 2012, p. 65

<sup>214</sup> Maalouf, Amin. *In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong*. New York: Arcade Publishing, 2012, p. 33

<sup>215</sup> Ross, Marc Howard. “Psychocultural Interpretations and Dramas: Identity Dynamics in Ethnic Conflict.” *Political Psychology* 22, no. 1 (March 1, 2001): 157–78, p. 160

<sup>216</sup> Op. Cit., p. 166

<sup>217</sup> Ross, Marc Howard. *Culture and Belonging in Divided Societies: Contestation and Symbolic Landscapes*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009, p. 86

However, it has been argued that in certain cases symbolic redefinition and political action can go hand-in-hand, and this can then lead to a constructive settlement of psychocultural dramas, even in bitter ethnic conflicts. New rituals and symbols need to be introduced that can link the conflicting groups, or at least make them less threatening to each other.<sup>218</sup> Yet this is very difficult to achieve in cases where ethnic identity and group celebration is defined in opposition to another community.

Closely related to emotions and groups narratives are collective memories, which play an important role in the development and endurance of ethnic conflict as they often help to justify hostility towards the outgroup and continued victimisation of the ingroup. Moreover, “contemporary concerns, attitudes, values and principles are projected onto past events [...]. This [...] conveys the illusion that current states of mind or ideological choice are based on objective historical facts.”<sup>219</sup> Collective memories may therefore transform relatively ‘light’ conflicts over administrative issues into deeply divisive and bitter confrontations with deep-seated emotions and moral values.

Selective group histories are particularly striking in ethnically divided cities. The history of each ethnic group often reinforces the division through highlighting traumatic collective memories and victimisation mechanisms that usually portray “the other” as the oppressor. In Jerusalem, the historical narrative of the Israeli state has a biblical discourse based on the right of the Jewish people to return to the Promised Land. The trauma of the Holocaust is another crucial part of Jewish collective memory, which has had a direct impact on the construction of the state and many of its policies.<sup>220</sup> The trauma of the Nakba (“the catastrophe” in Arabic) is one of the main historical narratives of the Palestinian society, and more ancient narratives are based around Arab victories over European crusaders during the Middle-Ages. Neither of these histories acknowledges the narrative of the other community.<sup>221</sup>

The same can be said of the diverging historical narratives present within the Northern Irish society. Different historical events are celebrated by different communities, such as the commemorations around the 1916 Easter Uprising by many Catholics and the 1916 Battle of the

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<sup>218</sup> Ross, Marc Howard. *Culture and Belonging in Divided Societies: Contestation and Symbolic Landscapes*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009.

<sup>219</sup> Klein, Olivier, Laurent Licata, Nicolas Van der Linden, Aurélie Mercy, and Olivier Luminet. “A Waffle-Shaped Model for How Realistic Dimensions of the Belgian Conflict Structure Collective Memories and Stereotypes.” *Memory Studies* 5, no. 1 (January 1, 2012): 16–31, p. 28

<sup>220</sup> Ofer, Dalia. “We Israelis Remember, But How? The Memory of the Holocaust and the Israeli Experience.” *Israel Studies* 18, no. 2 (July 1, 2013): 70–85.

<sup>221</sup> Stav, Shira. “Nakba and Holocaust: Mechanisms of Comparison and Denial in the Israeli Literary Imagination.” *Jewish Social Studies* 18, no. 3 (April 1, 2012): 85–98.



Somme by many Protestants.<sup>222</sup> Memorials for different tragedies that occurred during the conflict are also often divided along ethnic lines, such as Bloody Sunday in 1972 or the Shankill Road Bombing in 1993. Again, the other community's past traumas are often ignored or not acknowledged.

Although there has not been a violent history between the Francophones and the Flemings in Belgium, the historical narratives diverge from one linguistic community to another. The main historical narrative of the Francophone community is based on the trauma of the occupation and the repression of Belgian resistance, but also the collaboration of the nationalist Flemish movement with the Nazis. The Flemish historical narrative is based on past discriminations against the Flemish language, and the inability of Flemings to use their own language in all aspects of social life.<sup>223</sup> In all three societies, each community tends to view itself as the victim and the other as the oppressor, and the others' past traumas or sufferings are not usually taken into account, or not considered to be as important as those of the ingroup.

### The Importance of Culture and Symbolic Landscapes in Contested Cities

Culture and ethnicity are used as tools of integration and differentiation by groups and individuals in order to ensure their existence and meaning. In other words, "culture is the means by which we make meaning, and with which we make the world meaningful to ourselves and ourselves meaningful to the world. Its vehicle is the symbol. Symbols are quite simply carriers of meaning."<sup>224</sup> Similarly, ethnicity is understood by anthropologists as being a mode of action and representation, which implies a conscious or subconscious decision to symbolically depict oneself or others as bearers of a certain cultural identity. Therefore, "ethnicity has become the politicisation of culture"<sup>225</sup>, and ethnic identity is a politicised form of cultural identity. It thus becomes clear that ethnic identity can be contentious when different ethnic groups compete over resources and territory. Culture has been defined by some political scientists as "a mechanism for connecting people across time and space and provides powerful tools of expressing inclusion and exclusion in a community."<sup>226</sup>

Symbols of cultural and ethnic identity are therefore chosen by ethnic movements in order to "demonstrate ethnic unity, to dramatize injustice, or to animate grievances or movement

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<sup>222</sup>Ross, Marc Howard. "Psychocultural Interpretations and Dramas: Identity Dynamics in Ethnic Conflict." *Political Psychology* 22, no. 1 (March 1, 2001): 157–78.

<sup>223</sup>Klein, Olivier, Laurent Licata, Nicolas Van der Linden, Aurélie Mercy, and Olivier Luminet. "A Waffle-Shaped Model for How Realistic Dimensions of the Belgian Conflict Structure Collective Memories and Stereotypes." *Memory Studies* 5, no. 1 (January 1, 2012): 16–31, p. 25

<sup>224</sup>Cohen, Anthony P. "Culture as Identity: An Anthropologist's View." *New Literary History* 24, no. 1 (January 1, 1993): 195–209, p. 197

<sup>225</sup>Op. Cit., p. 198

<sup>226</sup>Ross, Marc Howard. *Culture and Belonging in Divided Societies: Contestation and Symbolic Landscapes*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009, p. 5

objectives.”<sup>227</sup> Ethnic groups may elect to display visible symbols, such as flags, in order to assert their presence in a contested city. The Irish tricolour and the British Union Jack have become the main symbols of the Catholic and Protestant communities and territories in Belfast, while the Israeli and Palestinian flags are also used to demarcate segregated space in Jerusalem. The red rooster of Wallonia and the black lion of Flanders are highly symbolic images of the two Belgian communities that are increasingly being displayed around Brussels. In all these cases, flags are used to demonstrate territorial possession and boundaries, but also to clearly establish difference and supposed incompatibility between the different ethnic groups. The metaphor of the shopping cart has been used by Joan Nagel to describe the construction of ethnic culture. Ethnic boundary construction is understood as determining the shape of the cart (size, number of wheels, composition), while ethnic culture is composed of what is put into the cart (art, music, religion, language, norms, beliefs, religion, myths, customs). Culture is not a shopping cart that comes already loaded with a set of historical goods, but rather it is constructed by picking and choosing items from the shelves of the past and present.<sup>228</sup>

In deeply divided societies, “the desire to locate the ‘self’ within a social, cultural and political group, via a combination of imaginings and experience, is attached to [...] a process of ‘cultural production’ and the formation of boundaries between the ‘chosen’ and the ‘rejected’.”<sup>229</sup> The importance of the symbolic landscape has been highlighted within the context of ethnic and cultural conflicts as it “communicates social and political meanings through specific public images, physical objects, and other expressive representations. It includes public spaces and especially sacred (but not necessarily religious) sites and other emotionally important and visible venues, as well as representations associated with a group’s identity found in the mass media, theatre, school textbooks, music, literature, and public art.”<sup>230</sup> The symbolic landscape is therefore everywhere in the social fabric of a city or country and plays a pivotal role in determining the normative discourse around the history and narrative of a given group.

Symbolic landscapes are also major instruments of social domination as “they communicate inclusion and exclusion as well as hierarchy, and they portray dominant and subordinate groups in particular ways.”<sup>231</sup> Discourse and symbolic landscapes are thus intimately linked and together construct a group reality that becomes rarely questioned, and are both usually at the

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<sup>227</sup>Nagel, Joane. “Constructing Ethnicity: Creating and Recreating Ethnic Identity and Culture.” *Social Problems* 41, no. 1 (February 1, 1994): 152–76, p. 168

<sup>228</sup>Op. Cit., p. 163

<sup>229</sup> Shirlow, Peter, and Brendan Murtagh. *Belfast: Segregation, Violence and the City*. London; Ann Arbor: Pluto, 2006, p. 14

<sup>230</sup> Ross, Marc Howard. *Culture and Belonging in Divided Societies: Contestation and Symbolic Landscapes*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009, p. 6

<sup>231</sup> Op. Cit., p. 7

heart of bitter conflicts between communities living within one city or society. It is further underlined that “exclusion of groups from the symbolic landscape is an explicit form of denial and assertion of power. In contrast, a more inclusive symbolic landscape is a powerful expression of societal inclusion that communicates a mutually and shared stake in society. [...] Inclusion offers acceptance and legitimation that can reflect and promote changes in intergroup relationships. Through inclusion, groups can more easily identify and help mourn past losses and express hopes and aspirations for a common future.”<sup>232</sup>

Symbolic landscapes are thus crucial mechanisms in the escalation of ethnic conflict and the maintenance of perceptions of incompatible difference, but they can also be understood as tools to be used in peacebuilding efforts. Indeed, “just as rituals play a role in the maintenance of social cohesion within contesting political identity groups, and indeed contestation might increase under transformation process, they also play a role in the development of identities that encourage reconciliation and alternative cross-cutting identities.”<sup>233</sup> This first part of the chapter has therefore set out the interpretative and analytical perspective of the research on intergroup relations in divided cities. Although very different, it may be argued that Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels are all divided cities that include struggles around ethno-national or linguistic identities. These identities are essentially understood as being socially constructed and hence potentially transformable to become less exclusive or divisive. However, it is also important to acknowledge that “in situations where sustained intergroup violence has occurred, ethnic identities tend to become hardened, uncompromising, staunchly held in opposition to the despised rival group, and unlikely to undergo change for the short term, at least.”<sup>234</sup> It might even be argued that this is also the case in situations where violence has not been a major issue in intergroup relations, such as in Belgium. Proponents of consociational theory mention that “we are not arguing that ethnic identities are primordial attachments which are firmly rooted in ethno-biological modes of existence. Clearly, ethnic identities can go through profound change, even disappearing in some cases; individuals often have multiple overlapping identities [...]. At the same time, it needs to be appreciated that once formed some group-based identities provide a high degree of resilience against change, especially when they are continually iterated through narrative forms, symbols, rituals, social and political activities.”<sup>235</sup> It should therefore be underlined that transforming ethnic identities in deeply

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<sup>232</sup> Ross, Marc Howard. *Culture and Belonging in Divided Societies: Contestation and Symbolic Landscapes*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009, p. 7

<sup>233</sup> Bryan, Dominic. “Parades, Flags, Carnivals, and Riots: Public Space, Contestation, and Transformation in Northern Ireland.” *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, Managing Diversity, 21, no. 4 (November 2015): 565–73, p. 572

<sup>234</sup> Nagle, John, and Mary-Alice C. Clancy. *Shared Society Or Benign Apartheid?: Understanding Peace-Building in Divided Societies*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, p. 5

<sup>235</sup> Op. Cit., p. 6

divided cities, while not entirely impossible, will probably prove extremely difficult given the salience of intergroup antagonism in such contexts. The complexities and realities of ethnic identity and conflict in contested cities provide a critical insight into the reasons behind the division of communities in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels. This in turn contributes to better understanding how coexistence in public spaces may make a difference – or not – to intergroup relations.

## 2. The Conflict in Israel and the Palestinian territory

### Historical Background

The main reasons behind the Israeli-Palestinian conflict may be dated back to the first major wave of Zionist immigration in the 1880s<sup>236</sup>, culminating with the creation of the Israeli state in 1948. While many narratives around the current conflict focus on the aftermath of the Six Day War in 1967, it is important to underline the presence of underlying issues around land possession in Palestine from an early period. As explained by Ilan Pappé, “although [left-wing Israel] accepts criticism of post-1967, the period of 1882-67 is off limits.”<sup>237</sup>

Following demands for independence by both populations, the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181 of November 1947 proposed a ‘plan of partition with economic union’ which would comprise of independent Arab and Jewish states, as well the establishment of a Special International Regime for Jerusalem.<sup>238</sup> However the partition plan was rejected by many Arab countries in the region, sparking the 1948 Israeli-Arab war. As a result, and after successive military victories in the next decades, the Israeli state expanded its territory, thus increasingly reducing the initial proposed land for any future Palestinian state.

The creation of the state of Israel in 1948 immediately led to the outbreak to the first of many wars in the region, the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, and the physical division of Jerusalem into two main sectors. A Green Line – a no man’s land – was agreed and separated Israeli-owned West Jerusalem from Jordanian-owned East Jerusalem, including the Old City. It has often been underlined that before this time, intergroup relations between Jews and Palestinians were mainly peaceful, and that “a native identity common to Jews and Arabs developed in Palestine, and [...] the way to understand and analyse it is through an

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<sup>236</sup> Zureik, Elia. *Israel’s Colonial Project in Palestine: Brutal Pursuit*. Routledge, 2015, p. 9

<sup>237</sup> Pappé, Ilan. ‘Post-Zionist Critique on Israel and the Palestinians: Part I: The Academic Debate’. *Journal of Palestine Studies* 26, no. 2 (1997): 29–41, p. 39

<sup>238</sup> UN General Assembly. *United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181 Future Government of Palestine*. UN General Assembly, November 29, 1947.

examination of daily life as it was lived by the inhabitants of cities not yet divided along national lines, who felt themselves and their neighbours to be natives.”<sup>239</sup>

Following the Six Day War in 1967, Israel annexed East Jerusalem putting an end to the physical division of the city. Moreover, “on June 28, 1967, the Israeli Minister for the Interior issued an administrative order expanding the area of the (Israeli) Jerusalem municipality, effectively applying Israeli law, jurisdiction, municipal ordinances, and administration to the Arab part of the city. This order established the legal framework for what become known in Israel as the “Reunification of Jerusalem”, and in non-Israeli sources as the annexation of Jerusalem.”<sup>240</sup> It has indeed been argued that the main policy on the Israeli side was based on “the determination by the Israeli government to consolidate the Israeli Jewish presence in the city and to constrain that of the Palestinians – in all fields – housing, population growth, economy, and cultural expression.”<sup>241</sup>

One of the major contentious issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the status of Jerusalem – considered to be the capital city of both communities. Any effective peace agreement will therefore have to settle the issue of sharing the city between the two sides. The creation of an independent Palestinian state is understood as being impossible without Jerusalem as its capital. The ongoing domination of Israel over the entire city is thus seen by both Palestinians and the international community as including the illegal occupation of east Jerusalem, hence violating Palestinian rights for self-determination.

The first and second intifadas – while very different in nature and intensity of violence – served to further the distrust and divide between the Israeli and Palestinian communities in Jerusalem. The wave of terrorist attacks in Israel and the harsh repression of Palestinian protests claimed many lives and seriously limited any kind of cross-community interaction. It has been estimated that “6 371 Palestinians and 1 083 Israelis were killed during hostilities in the last decade [from 2000 to 2010].”<sup>242</sup>

With the absence of any formal or officially recognised independent state, the Palestinian territory remains to this day effectively under Israeli occupation, with numerous military incursions taking place throughout the area. Over the years, the local Palestinian population has attempted to resist occupation and entered violent conflict in order to achieve

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<sup>239</sup> Klein, Menachem. *Lives in Common: Arabs and Jews in Jerusalem, Jaffa and Hebron*. Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 287

<sup>240</sup> Mayer, Tamar, and Suleiman Ali Mourad. *Jerusalem: Idea and Reality*. London ; New York: Routledge, 2008, p. 267

<sup>241</sup> Dumper, Michael. *Jerusalem Unbound: Geography, History, and the Future of the Holy City*. Columbia University Press, 2014, p. 49

<sup>242</sup> Freedman, Seth. “The Second Intifada, 10 Years on.” *The Guardian*, October 1, 2010. <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/oct/01/israel-palestine-intifada-10-years-on>.

independence. The state of Israel has additionally created settlements in Palestinian territory, effectively implementing a colonisation process in the area supposed to become an independent Palestinian state, leading to further tension between the two populations.<sup>243</sup>

While the situation in Jerusalem had been relatively calm since the end of the second intifada, events during the summer of 2014 drastically changed the reality on the ground. The kidnapping and murder of three Israeli youths<sup>244</sup> in the West Bank and the subsequent retaliatory kidnap and murder of a Palestinian teenager in East Jerusalem<sup>245</sup> led to the escalation of violence and ultimately the outbreak of war between Israel and Gaza (known as Operation Protective Edge).<sup>246</sup> Since then, cycles of tension and violence have afflicted the city, including a series of knife attacks in public spaces and ensuing reprisals from the end of 2015 throughout the first months of 2016.<sup>247</sup>

### Jerusalem's Demographic, Political and Urban Landscape

The state of Israel currently has a population of approximately 8.3 million<sup>248</sup>, consisting of around 75% Israeli Jews and 20% Palestinians (Muslims and Christians)<sup>249</sup>, leading the Palestinian community within the state of Israel to form an important minority. The population of the Palestinian territory (including East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza) comprises an estimated 4.8 million Palestinians<sup>250</sup>, with an additional 547 000 Israeli settlers.<sup>251</sup> Jerusalem is at the very heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and is often considered the key to any viable resolution even to wider tensions in the Middle East. The demographic trends in Israel and in Jerusalem are not static, and in recent decades “the population of Palestinian Jerusalemites has nearly quadrupled, and their proportion of the total population of the city

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<sup>243</sup> McGreal, Chris. 'Israel's Colonisation of Palestine Blocking Peace, Says Jimmy Carter'. *The Guardian*, 18 March 2006. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/mar/18/israel>.

<sup>244</sup> Ravid, Barak, Nir Hasson, Amos Harel, Yaniv Kubovich, and Haaretz. "Israel Buries Abducted Teens, Ponders Next Move." *Haaretz*, July 1, 2014. <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.602518>.

<sup>245</sup> Hasson, Nir. "Palestinian Body Found in Jerusalem Forest, After Teen Reported Missing." *Haaretz*, July 2, 2014. <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.602551>.

<sup>246</sup> Jack, Simon. 'Gaza-Israel Conflict: Is the Fighting Over?' *BBC News*, 26 August 2014. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-28252155>.

<sup>247</sup> Harel, Amos. "Eight Attacks in 12 Hours Leave No Doubt: Israel Is in the Midst of an Intifada." *Haaretz*, February 16, 2016. <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.703573>.

<sup>248</sup> Central Bureau of Statistics. "Statistical Abstract of Israel 2015." Annual Statistical Data 2015, 2015. [http://www.cbs.gov.il/reader/?MIval=%2Fshnaton%2Fshnatone\\_new.htm&CYear=2015&Vol=66&CSubject=2&sa=Continue](http://www.cbs.gov.il/reader/?MIval=%2Fshnaton%2Fshnatone_new.htm&CYear=2015&Vol=66&CSubject=2&sa=Continue).

<sup>249</sup> Klinger, Aviad. 'Press Release: 65th Independence Day - More than 8 Million Residents in the State of Israel'. Central Bureau of Statistics, 14 April 2013.

<sup>250</sup> Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics - State of Palestine. "Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics - State of Palestine." Information. *Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics - State of Palestine*. Accessed March 4, 2016. [http://pcbs.gov.ps/site/lang\\_en/538/default.aspx](http://pcbs.gov.ps/site/lang_en/538/default.aspx).

<sup>251</sup> B'Tselem. "Statistics on Settlements and Settler Population." B'Tselem, May 2015. <http://www.btselem.org/settlements/statistics>.

steadily has increased.”<sup>252</sup> There is therefore an imbalance in terms of the demographic trends between the two groups, with the Palestinian population growing much faster than the Jewish community. As of 2013, according to the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, Jerusalem had a population of around 830 000, consisting of 307 600 Palestinians and 522 200 Jews and others.<sup>253</sup> At around 37%, Palestinian residents of Jerusalem are therefore an important minority within the city.

In terms of the political reality on the ground, the Jerusalem municipality is entirely run by Israeli authorities, and is an administrative division of the Jerusalem District within a centralised Israeli state. There are currently no power-sharing mechanisms between the two communities and the Palestinian population is therefore entirely absent from political life in the city. While there is no regulation prohibiting the participation of Palestinians in local elections in Jerusalem, “there has been both a decline in voting as well as much debate in Palestinian circles over the extent to which participation would serve Palestinian interests or simply provide Israel with a propaganda coup by suggesting that Palestinians were accepting its control in the city.”<sup>254</sup> A consequence of this has been the lack of any Palestinian representation in the major political institutions of Jerusalem.

The policies implemented by the one-sided local authorities in Jerusalem have therefore focused nearly exclusively on the needs of the Jewish population of the city, sometimes to the detriment of the Palestinian population. Therefore “although the implementation of power over territory has changed throughout the years, the colonial logic has maintained its hegemony, thus creating new apparatuses of control through legislation, planning and design. Such technologies are usually associated with terminologies that indicate “progress”; yet, [...] these concepts have been manipulated in order to achieve ethno-national spatial and demographic control of the city.”<sup>255</sup>

While the Israeli Jerusalem municipality exerts power over the entire city, its presence is deemed illegal in East Jerusalem by many international organisations such as the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU). The UN General Assembly has further underlined that “any actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the Holy City of Jerusalem are illegal and therefore null and void and have

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<sup>252</sup> Dumper, Michael. *Jerusalem Unbound: Geography, History, and the Future of the Holy City*. Columbia University Press, 2014, p. 85

<sup>253</sup> The Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies. “The Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies :: Statistical Yearbook :: 2015 Edition.” *Statistical Yearbook*, 2015. <http://www.jiis.org/?cmd=statistic.525#.VtQuoUD73cs>.

<sup>254</sup> Dumper, Michael. *Jerusalem Unbound: Geography, History, and the Future of the Holy City*. Columbia University Press, 2014, p. 67

<sup>255</sup> Yacobi, Haim. “Borders, Boundaries and Frontiers: Notes on Jerusalem’s Present Geopolitics.” *Eurasia Border Review* 3, no. 2 (Autumn 2012): 55–69, p. 68

no validity whatsoever, and calls upon Israel to cease all such illegal and unilateral measures.”<sup>256</sup>

What this political reality entails is the lack of Palestinian ownership of space in the city, which may deeply influence its daily use, even in the most mundane ways. The current asymmetry in Jerusalem presents “the Jerusalem Palestinian population with challenges and dilemmas regarding participation in the shaping and appropriation of public space in the city. [...] Although the Palestinian population lives and consumes this space, it is not a partner in its creation and management.”<sup>257</sup>

Scott Bollens has particularly focused on the role of urban planning and policymaking on intergroup relations in divided cities such as Jerusalem. According to him, “urban policymakers and planners have pursued political “unification” or control through policies that entrench a Jewish majority within the Israeli-defined city.”<sup>258</sup> He thus describes the urban planning mechanisms in Jerusalem as essentially partisan – that is, overwhelmingly preferential for one ethnic group at the expense of the other. In the case of Jerusalem, it is clear that the partisan urban strategy implemented by the Israeli government has been detrimental not only to the Palestinians but to all residents of the capital. Indeed, Bollens argues that “in the end, Israeli urban policy that has facilitated Israeli domination of the urban political landscape may be creating the very conditions of Palestinian extremism and antagonism that it set out to suppress in the first place.”<sup>259</sup> However effective the Israeli policies might be for security in the short term, a partisan strategy will ultimately always lead to further tensions and conflict between the communities residing in the city.

It is important to underline the fact that urban planning in Jerusalem has actively participated in the colonisation process of Palestinian land. As Eyal Weizman explains, “the mundane elements of planning and architecture have become tactical tools and the means of dispossession.”<sup>260</sup> This means that seemingly neutral features of the city, such as public spaces, may not be truly neutral and therefore truly shared. This in turn should be taken into account when studying the use of public space by different communities in Jerusalem.

Crucially for the Jerusalem case study, Weizman further claims that “throughout the years of Israeli domination in Jerusalem, about 40 per cent of the land that would have been available

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<sup>256</sup> UN General Assembly. “United Nations General Assembly Resolution 63/30 Jerusalem.” Resolution. Un General Assembly, January 23, 2009.

<sup>257</sup> Hasson, Shlomo. *Jerusalem in the Future: The Challenge of Transition*. Floersheimer Institute for Policy Studies, 2007, p. 75

<sup>258</sup> Op. Cit., p. 65

<sup>259</sup> Bollens, Scott A. *On Narrow Ground: Urban Policy and Ethnic Conflict in Jerusalem and Belfast*. SUNY Series in Urban Public Policy. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000, p. 105

<sup>260</sup> Weizman, Eyal. *Hollow Land: Israel’s Architecture of Occupation*. Verso Books, 2012, p. 5



for Palestinians in the occupied part of the city was parked up in municipal plans as open, public space. This was presented [...] as an amenity for the improvement of the quality of life and air of the residents of the Palestinian neighbourhoods, but it effectively framed them within zones into which expansion was forbidden.”<sup>261</sup> In such a context, the very perception of space has been distorted and instrumentalised by the ongoing conflict.

### Defining the Conflict in Jerusalem

Despite the fact that Jerusalem is no longer physically divided, interactions between the two communities remain fairly limited. It has been underlined that “since 1967, Jerusalem has officially been a united city. However, in reality it has remained divided for decades. A clear mental line still separates the East from the West and Arab settlements from Jewish segments. This division is present in the city’s physical layout, as well as in its daily routines.”<sup>262</sup> Therefore “the two culturally and linguistically disparate Arab and Jewish segments coexist only formally within the municipal border lines, under the same united urban entity.”<sup>263</sup>

The population of Jerusalem is thus mostly segregated; leading to “a city functionally and psychologically divided. Roman and Weingrod (1991) describe this as “living together separately”. Neighbourhood-level residential segregation is almost total. Separate business districts, public transportation systems, and educational and medical facilities are maintained. [...] Interactions that do occur indicate an interdependency that is asymmetric and reflective of the political power imbalance in the city.”<sup>264</sup>

Intergroup relations in Jerusalem have suffered ups and downs in the recent decades, with periods of extreme tension and violence – such as during the second intifada – and other periods of relative calm – such as the last few years until the summer of 2014. Tensions between Palestinian and Israeli residents rose again during the 2014 Gaza war; which ultimately cost the lives of 2131 people.<sup>265</sup> Views on the conflict were very different in the two communities, and one opinion poll “found that 92 per cent of Jewish Israelis believed the war was justified and almost half thought appropriate force had been used by the Israeli military.

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<sup>261</sup> Op. Cit., p. 50

<sup>262</sup> Greenfield-Gilat, Yehuda, Karen Lee Bar-Sinai, and Aya Shapira. “Shared Space: Conflict Resolution and Architecture in Jerusalem.” *Kennedy School Review* 9 (2009): 81–85, p. 81

<sup>263</sup> Op. Cit., p. 82

<sup>264</sup> Bollens, Scott A. *On Narrow Ground: Urban Policy and Ethnic Conflict in Jerusalem and Belfast*. SUNY Series in Urban Public Policy. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000, p. 63

<sup>265</sup> ‘Report Finds High Civilian Death Toll During Gaza War’. *Haaretz*, 13 February 2015. <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.642397>.

[...] No less hardened were the hearts of people in the West Bank, who had no compassion left for the Israelis who were bombarded with thousands of missiles [...].”<sup>266</sup>

Despite segregation and the occasional bouts of violence, Israeli Jews and Palestinians do share the city on a daily basis; thus “urban life has also created types of common identity and coexistence. Only at a few points in time did the conflict become total.”<sup>267</sup> Crucially for conflict management efforts, it has been noted that “because the two sides are forced to coexist and function as urban residents within a metropolitan system, open hostility seen in the West Bank can become moderated in Jerusalem because its effects on the urban system can be detrimental to the economic and social well-being of both sides.”<sup>268</sup> Given the asymmetrical and unilateral reality in Jerusalem, hopes for a peaceful settlement are drastically reduced. Indeed, “a realistic assessment of the current situation [...] surely must conclude that an agreement over the city in the near future is highly unlikely. Despite occasional outbreaks of violence and disorder, and despite the continued local, national, and international opposition to unilateral Israeli measures in East Jerusalem, there is [...] no urgent reason for Israel to make concessions sufficiently far-reaching to meet Palestinian aspirations.”<sup>269</sup> It may therefore be concluded that “the struggle for Jerusalem is viewed as a zero-sum game, in which there are only winners and losers. Jerusalem is not a realm where compromise goes down easy, if at all.”<sup>270</sup>

Interestingly for the comparative element of the research, it has been suggested that Jerusalem could be inspired by Brussels where the plurality and international stance of the city as capital of Belgium, the Flanders region and the EU “has helped to lessen tensions between the two main communities – Fleming and Walloon – of Belgium. [...] And [...] the more “internationalised” the city becomes “the better the comprehension between the Flemish and French” [...]. A more internationalised Jerusalem might yield a similar result.”<sup>271</sup> However for the time being there is no political agreement on the status of Jerusalem, leading to the perpetuation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which has the future of the city at its very heart. The research will attempt to establish how this current situation may influence the co-usage of

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<sup>266</sup>Shehadeh, Raja. *Language of War, Language of Peace: Palestine, Israel and the Search for Justice*. Profile Books, 2015, p. 108

<sup>267</sup> Klein, Menachem. *Lives in Common: Arabs and Jews in Jerusalem, Jaffa and Hebron*. Oxford University Press, 2014, p. vii

<sup>268</sup>Bollens, Scott A. *On Narrow Ground: Urban Policy and Ethnic Conflict in Jerusalem and Belfast*. SUNY Series in Urban Public Policy. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000, p. 63

<sup>269</sup> Dumper, Michael. *Jerusalem Unbound: Geography, History, and the Future of the Holy City*. Columbia University Press, 2014, p. 212

<sup>270</sup> Shlay, Anne B., and Gillad Rosen. *Jerusalem: The Spatial Politics of a Divided Metropolis*. John Wiley & Sons, 2015, p. 7

<sup>271</sup> Emmett, Chad F. “The Capital Cities of Jerusalem.” *Geographical Review* 86, no. 2 (April 1, 1996): 233–58, p. 248

public spaces in Jerusalem, and ultimately the differences that sharing space may make to intergroup relations in that particular context.

Conflict in Jerusalem			
Stage of Conflict	Type of Conflict	Agreement	Urban Strategy
Violence/War	Ongoing occasionally violent	No agreement	Partisan

Table 12: The Conflict in Jerusalem

Based on the conflict escalation and de-escalation model previously mentioned, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict may be situated within the highest stages of conflict, violence, and sometimes escalating to war (Gaza wars). In other words, the situation in Jerusalem is described as an ongoing occasionally violent conflict with no effective agreement or settlement between the opposing parties.

### 3. The Conflict in Northern Ireland

#### Historical Background

The conflict between the Catholic and Protestant communities in Northern Ireland is generally considered to date back to the colonisation process known as the Plantation of Ulster in 1609; as “the deep resentment of the Irish towards the planters and the distrust of the planters towards the Irish, are the roots of the Ulster problem.”<sup>272</sup>

Cultural and religious differences between the two communities were upheld throughout the centuries and exacerbated by systematic discrimination against the indigenous Irish Catholic population in favour of the dominant Protestant community, which only continued after the creation of the new state of Northern Ireland in 1921. The conflict in Northern Ireland has its immediate roots in a harsh colonisation process which the regime established in 1921 and perpetuated by favouring one community over the other. Violence broke out as a result of increasing demands for equality and the right for self-determination by one group, while the other was reticent to relinquish its privileged position within the Northern Irish society and feared for the survival of its cultural and ethnic identity. The future of the region has also been a major issue of contention between the Protestant and Catholic communities, with one group feeling mostly British and wanting to remain within the United Kingdom and the other feeling mostly Irish and demanding the unification of the state with the Republic of Ireland.

Intergroup tensions grew again in 1969 with the Civil Rights Movement demanding equal rights for Catholics and the end of ethno-religious discrimination in Northern Ireland. Several

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<sup>272</sup>Darby, John. *Scorpions in a Bottle: Conflicting Cultures in Northern Ireland*. Minority Rights Publications. London: Minority Rights Group, 1997, p. 21

marches organised by the Movement ended in violence, leading the British Government to send the army to Northern Ireland. The arrival of the army triggered a new phase in the conflict involving armed paramilitaries and a further escalation of violence. As a result of the sudden escalation of violence, the British Government decided to abolish the Northern Ireland Government in March 1972 and imposed Direct Rule which lasted until 2007 and the establishment of a new Northern Ireland power-sharing government.<sup>273</sup>

In April 1998, the political representatives of the two communities as well as most of the paramilitary organisations associated with the two groups signed the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement, effectively putting an end to the violent conflict. A peace process has been implemented as a result of the agreement with the support of both the British and Irish governments, as well as the European Union. Although one might consider Northern Ireland to be a perfect example of a successful peace process leading to a pacified society exempt of violence, it has been stated that after the ceasefires “symbolic contestation becomes even more intense and a principle means for the two sides to express their differences.”<sup>274</sup> In other words, although the levels of violence have drastically reduced since the beginning of the peace process, contestation between Catholics and Protestants still remains a reality within post-conflict Northern Ireland society.

Differences in perceptions and understandings of the past and present are crucial elements to take into account when analysing internal conflicts in divided societies. In the case of Northern Ireland Protestants/Unionists/Loyalists usually understand the conflict through a constitutional and security lens and are mostly concerned about preserving the union with Britain and resisting the threat of a united Ireland. On the other hand, Catholics/Nationalists/Republicans tend to see the conflict as a nationalist struggle for self-determination which can only be resolved with the withdrawal of Britain from Northern Ireland and the reunification of the island.

The conflict in its current form may therefore be summarised as opposing aspirations in terms of political allegiance and state belonging, with a majority of members of the Protestant community wishing to remain part of the United Kingdom and many members of the Catholic community seeking to become part of the Republic of Ireland.

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<sup>273</sup> Adshead, Maura, and Jonathan Tonge. *Politics in Ireland: Convergence and Divergence in a Two-Polity Island*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

<sup>274</sup> Ross, Marc Howard. *Culture and Belonging in Divided Societies: Contestation and Symbolic Landscapes*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009, p. 73

## Belfast's Demographic, Political and Urban Landscape

In terms of demographics, the population of Northern Ireland has been changing over time, comprising of around 1.8 million of which “48 percent claim to view their identity as British, 29 percent as Northern Irish, and 28 per cent as Irish. [...] 45 per cent of the resident population are Catholic, and 48 per cent are Protestant.”<sup>275</sup> While historically a minority in Northern Ireland, the Catholic population has therefore grown in the last decades to become nearly similar in numbers to that of the Protestant population, which has started to decline.

According to the 2011 census, the Belfast population stands at 280 962 people within the Belfast Local Government District.<sup>276</sup> While the Catholic community has historically been a minority in Belfast, this has now changed, as “between 2001 and 2011 the demographic balance in Belfast went through a small but decisive shift. The Catholic population increased by approximately 5500, or 4.2%. Much more significant however was the decline of the Protestant population, from 134 797 to 118 856 – a decline of 15 941, or 11.9%.”<sup>277</sup> This demographic change has influenced the political distribution in the city, as “it was not only the legislative and policy environment that changed but also the political balance of power. In the 1990s Sinn Fein, the political party derived from the Provisional IRA, became the largest political party in the Belfast City Council.”<sup>278</sup>

Since the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement and the subsequent peace process, political parties representing the two communities have been cooperating more effectively and inclusively, leading to the establishment of a power-sharing government in 2007. In terms of its structure, “at the centre of this consociational arrangement is executive power-sharing. The 108-seat NIA [Northern Ireland Assembly] has a dualistic leadership with a First Minister [...] and a Deputy First Minister [...] A central goal of the NIA was the removal of ‘direct rule’ from Westminster through the placing of high-level governmental competency for education, health, economy, social services, environment and finance in the hands of the Executive.”<sup>279</sup>

Since then, increasing efforts have been made to share not only government but also society as a whole, including cities and public spaces. Indeed, “over the same period of time as Northern Ireland moved from low-level war to an uneasy peace, the management of public space was a

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<sup>275</sup> McKeown, Shelley. *Identity, Segregation and Peace-Building in Northern Ireland: A Social Psychological Perspective*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p. 15

<sup>276</sup> Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. ‘2011 Census Population Tables’, 27 March 2011.

<sup>277</sup> Nolan, Paul. “Northern Ireland Peace Monitoring Report Number Three.” Peace Monitoring Report. Community Relations Council, March 2014, p. 22

<sup>278</sup> Bryan, Dominic. “Parades, Flags, Carnivals, and Riots: Public Space, Contestation, and Transformation in Northern Ireland.” *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, Managing Diversity, 21, no. 4 (November 2015): 565–73, p. 571

<sup>279</sup> Shirlow, Peter, and Brendan Murtagh. *Belfast: Segregation, Violence and the City*. London; Ann Arbor: Pluto, 2006, p. 36

major concern for the agencies of the state. Between 1998 and 2008 there were 5 pieces of legislation relating directly to the management of demonstrations and parades and at least 13 reviews, policy reports, protocols, and guidelines relating to public space covering the same period. This [...] does not include the huge amount of policy work done within local councils across the region within the community relations agenda.”<sup>280</sup>

As part of the peace process, additional work was carried out towards improving intergroup relations in Northern Ireland. Section 75 (2) of the Northern Ireland Act of 1998 introduced ‘The Good Relations Duty’, requiring that “a public authority when carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, must have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.”<sup>281</sup> As part of these concerted efforts, Belfast City Council established its own Good Relations Unit which currently aims “to transform a city known for division, into one shared by all.”<sup>282</sup>

While Jerusalem has been defined by Bollens as implementing a partisan urban policy strategy – leading to very negative outcomes for the city and its population – Belfast is defined as being based on a neutral urban strategy; which is also understood as provoking negative consequences despite it being aimed at maintaining peace. The focal point of Belfast’s neutral urban policy and planning strategy, implemented by the British government, was and still is to keep and protect the status quo at any cost, without necessarily dealing with the root causes of the conflict. Bollens explains that “the main means toward conflict containment – the condoning and formalisation of ethnic separation through housing, planning, community development, and “peaceline” policies – likely provides short-term stability at the expense of longer-term opportunities for intergroup negotiation and reconciliation.”<sup>283</sup>

It may however be argued that more recent initiatives within local government such as Belfast City Council are currently working towards creating more shared spaces through the Good Relations Unit – therefore demonstrating a policy shift from conflict management to conflict transformation. Such efforts and initiatives have focused around the establishment of more shared spaces in Belfast in order to normalise daily interaction between the divided communities. The Good Relations Unit of Belfast City Council is currently working on

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<sup>280</sup> Bryan, Dominic. “Parades, Flags, Carnivals, and Riots: Public Space, Contestation, and Transformation in Northern Ireland.” *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, Managing Diversity, 21, no. 4 (November 2015): 565–73, p. 568

<sup>281</sup> Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. “Promoting Good Relations: A Summary Guide for Public Authorities.” Equality Commission For Northern Ireland, March 2008, p. 1

<sup>282</sup> Belfast City Council. “Good Relations - Belfast City Council.” Information. *Belfast City Council*. Accessed February 1, 2016. <http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/community/goodrelations/goodrelations-about.aspx>

<sup>283</sup> Bollens, Scott A. *On Narrow Ground: Urban Policy and Ethnic Conflict in Jerusalem and Belfast*. SUNY Series in Urban Public Policy. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000, p. 331

implementing the PEACE IV Programme of the Special EU Programmes Body.<sup>284</sup> The limits of the neutral urban strategy described by Bollens seem to have been acknowledged and progressive – yet slow – steps are being taken to tackle segregated housing and education. Spatial planning and shared civic spaces have become major topics increasingly mentioned by the Good Relations Unit and other agencies in Belfast.<sup>285</sup>

### Defining the Conflict in Belfast

While the two main communities are still identified through religious markers, it is important to mention that “the ever-present conflict within Northern Ireland is not based upon religion but rather religion acts as a boundary marker with regard to competing aspirations regarding forms of Britishness and Irishness.”<sup>286</sup> Although the Protestant and Catholic communities of Northern Ireland traditionally and historically tended to live separately, the years of violence have dramatically accentuated this reality and created a highly fragmented urban arena; as “in the first eight years of urban civil war, the percentage of households in public housing that resided in streets of complete or near-complete segregation rose from 59 to 89 percent.”<sup>287</sup> The Belfast context is described as a highly divided city where “residential segregation is reinforced through exceedingly low levels of Protestant-Catholic interaction in terms of such activities as movement to bus stop, grocery store, and to visitors or family; and readership of newspaper and football team loyalties.”<sup>288</sup>

Most observers agree that although the situation in Northern Ireland has dramatically improved since the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement in 1998, there do remain many unresolved issues on the ground, leading to the ongoing division of the Protestant and Catholic communities. It has therefore been argued that “there is a lot of evidence to suggest society in Northern Ireland is as divided as it has been since the 1960s. However, if we are to take seriously the idea that rituals matter, then we have to look at the alternative narratives appearing in the public, civic spaces of the city. If we note a significant increase in the organisation of events with popular participation that either involve Catholics and Protestants or project alternative identities, [...] then there appears to be a process taking place that might

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<sup>284</sup> Special EU Programmes Body. ‘Peace IV Programme: Overview’. Information. *Special EU Programmes Body*. Accessed 4 June 2016. [http://www.seupb.eu/2014-2020Programmes/PEACEIV\\_Programme/PEACEIV\\_Overview.aspx](http://www.seupb.eu/2014-2020Programmes/PEACEIV_Programme/PEACEIV_Overview.aspx).

<sup>285</sup> Information provided during an anonymous interview with a member of the Good Relations Unit, Belfast City Council, Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2016

<sup>286</sup> Shirlow, Peter, and Brendan Murtagh. *Belfast: Segregation, Violence and the City*. London; Ann Arbor: Pluto, 2006, p. 15

<sup>287</sup> Bollens, Scott A. *On Narrow Ground: Urban Policy and Ethnic Conflict in Jerusalem and Belfast*. SUNY Series in Urban Public Policy. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000, p. 207

<sup>288</sup> Op. Cit., p. 196

approximate a greater sharing of space. [...] it is reasonable to say that, in terms of the civic public spaces, in the centre of Belfast things have changed.”<sup>289</sup>

Since 1998, deliberate efforts have been made to create new symbols and symbolic landscapes that are more inclusive and less likely to be the source of contestation within the Northern Irish society. Along this same line, active steps have been implemented by the Northern Ireland executive to introduce a policy of shared future in order to “establish, over time, a shared society defined by a culture of tolerance: a normal, civic society, in which all individuals are considered as equals, where differences are resolved through dialogue in the public sphere, and where all individuals are treated impartially. A society where there is equity, respect for diversity and recognition of our interdependence (OFDFM 2005:7).”<sup>290</sup> Such active steps have included “reclaiming shared space” by “developing and protecting town and city centres as safe and welcoming for all people of all walks of life [...]”<sup>291</sup> Shared public space is therefore explicitly mentioned as an important step to achieve as part of the peace process and is officially on the political agenda in Northern Ireland. As such, the term shared space has become an integral part of the official discourse around the improvement of cross-community relations and is presented as a positive and necessary aspect for a peaceful urban life in the province.

The signing of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement has enabled the creation of a power-sharing decentralised government, thus putting an end to direct rule and the establishment of a more representative form of democracy in Northern Ireland. Ceasefires signed by the majority of paramilitary organisations have additionally led to a dramatic drop in sectarian violence and the number of deaths linked to the conflict.

However, despite the many successes of the peace process, it has been noted that “the Agreement shifted the presentation and volume of ethno-sectarian competition but did not challenge the basis upon which it was founded and reproduced.”<sup>292</sup> In other words, the peace process in Northern Ireland may be defined as implementing conflict management and containment efforts without ever achieving the next step towards conflict transformation and reconciliation. Yet it can be argued that rather than inexistent, conflict transformation is a very slow process that is only starting to be perceivable within society. From this perspective, “there

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<sup>289</sup> Bryan, Dominic. “Parades, Flags, Carnivals, and Riots: Public Space, Contestation, and Transformation in Northern Ireland.” *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, Managing Diversity, 21, no. 4 (November 2015): 565–73, p. 570

<sup>290</sup> Ross, Marc Howard. *Culture and Belonging in Divided Societies: Contestation and Symbolic Landscapes*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009, p. 79

<sup>291</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>292</sup> Shirlow, Peter, and Brendan Murtagh. *Belfast: Segregation, Violence and the City*. London; Ann Arbor: Pluto, 2006, p. 35



is evidence from Northern Ireland that a conflict transformation process is revealing itself through changes in the use of public space. [...] It is revealed through some significant legal and policy changes; through the development of a range of rituals, festivals, and events with significant participation; and through the development of identities that potentially cut across the ethno-political divide of Catholic/Nationalist and Protestant/Unionist.”<sup>293</sup> While the political arena remains divided along sectarian lines, and despite the fact that residence and education are still mostly segregated in Belfast, there is therefore hope that change is taking place at a very slow pace, effectively transforming Belfast into a more shared city.

Perhaps it is only in such circumstances, years after the beginning of a peace process that identities slowly start losing their rigidity; thus enabling more in-depth transformation in deeply divided societies. The research will take into account the current situation in Belfast when analysing the daily usage of public spaces and how they might make a difference to intergroup relations in this context.

<b>Conflict in Belfast</b>			
<b>Stage of Conflict</b>	<b>Type of Conflict</b>	<b>Agreement</b>	<b>Urban Strategy</b>
Normalisation/Reconciliation	Ongoing peace process – political conflict	Political agreement	Neutral

**Table 13: The Conflict in Belfast**

In terms of conflict analysis, Belfast may be situated within the de-escalation section of a conflict analysis model, between the phases of normalisation and reconciliation – while it may be argued that this last phase has not been entirely achieved yet. In other words, the situation in Belfast is described as post-conflict management with an ongoing peace process and a signed agreement between the opposing parties.

#### **4. The Conflict in Belgium**

##### **Historical Background**

Following a revolution led by the mainly French-speaking bourgeoisie against the Kingdom of Netherlands, and in the context of post-Napoleonic Europe, Belgium was declared an independent state in 1830. One of the main reasons for the linguistic conflict has been explained by the fact that Belgium is in reality an artificial country, as before this “there was no

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<sup>293</sup> Bryan, Dominic. “Parades, Flags, Carnivals, and Riots: Public Space, Contestation, and Transformation in Northern Ireland.” *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, Managing Diversity, 21, no. 4 (November 2015): 565-73, p. 566

shared sense of “Belgian” identity, no sense of a single people seeking nationhood.”<sup>294</sup> As one Belgian minister famously declared to King Albert I in 1912, “you reign over two people. There are in Belgium Walloons and Flemings; there are no Belgians.”<sup>295</sup>

While there has never been widespread violence between the two linguistic communities, past discriminations against the Dutch language has played a major role in the development of the Flemish movement and subsequent demands for further autonomy and even independence. Indeed, “within Belgium, there was rampant social and economic discrimination against those who spoke Dutch. Francophone Belgians viewed the Flemish majority who could not speak French as uneducated, backward peasants, suitable to do manual labour but little else. [...] Needless to say, many Flemish resented their inability to use their own language, even in their dealings with the government.”<sup>296</sup> Despite being spoken by a majority of its inhabitants, Dutch was only recognised as an official language of Belgium in 1898.<sup>297</sup>

Tensions rose in the post-war period when a bigger and younger Flemish movement demanded greater visibility in administrative and political life in Brussels. Furthermore, “the results of the linguistic census of 1947, which had been kept secret for a while, had been fuelling violent polemics about the status of Brussels for several years. The French language’s advance in the city was confirmed. [...] This French-speaking ‘ripple’, caused by a city that the Flemings considered to be ‘Frenchifying machine’, stirred up emotions and triggered several ‘marches on Brussels’.”<sup>298</sup> This led to further separation and the transformation of the previously unified country into a federal state.

The federalisation process started in the 1960s did ease tensions; however the linguistic conflict has continued to disrupt political life in Belgium. The fact that the responses to linguistic issues have usually included further devolution has drastically reduced cooperation and interaction between the two linguistic communities. Following the 2007 political instability, federal elections were again held in June 2010 leading to an even bigger political crisis which lasted 541 days (under a caretaker government), breaking a world record.<sup>299</sup> Despite the crisis being ultimately solved, each new election is feared to bring its share of linguistic tensions and

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<sup>294</sup> Mnookin, Robert, and Alain Verbeke. “Persistent Nonviolent Conflict with No Reconciliation: The Flemish and Walloons in Belgium.” *Law & Contemporary Problems* 72, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 151–86, p. 157

<sup>295</sup> Destrée, Jules. ‘Lettre Au Roi Sur La Séparation de La Wallonie et de La Flandre’. *La Revue de Belgique*, 1912, p. 8

<sup>296</sup> Mnookin, Robert, and Alain Verbeke. “Persistent Nonviolent Conflict with No Reconciliation: The Flemish and Walloons in Belgium.” *Law & Contemporary Problems* 72, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 151–86, p. 158–159

<sup>297</sup> Klein, Olivier, Laurent Licata, Nicolas Van der Linden, Aurélie Mercy, and Olivier Luminet. “A Waffle-Shaped Model for How Realistic Dimensions of the Belgian Conflict Structure Collective Memories and Stereotypes.” *Memory Studies* 5, no. 1 (January 1, 2012): 16–31, p. 3

<sup>298</sup> Corijn, Eric, and Jessica Van De Ven. *The Brussels Reader*. VUB University Press, 2013, p. 77

<sup>299</sup> Chrisafis, Angelique. ‘Eurozone Crisis Forces Belgium to Finally Form a Government’. *The Guardian*, 1 December 2011. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/dec/01/eurozone-crisis-forces-belgium-government>.

numerous negotiations<sup>300</sup>, clearly demonstrating that the linguistic conflict in Belgium is far from over.

One of the major reasons for the conflict stems from the different perceptions around the drawing of linguistic and territorial boundaries in Belgium. Indeed, “until today, two conflicting principles have been invoked. One stipulates that the language to be used for official business is determined permanently on the basis of the historical distinction between the north and south of the country. The alternative principle stipulates that official linguistic boundaries can and should be adjusted in line with changes in the composition in the population. [...]The use of language has therefore gradually been organised on territorial premises, but without agreement on the operational principles for the drawing of territorial boundaries.”<sup>301</sup>

Another major difference between the perceptions of the French speaking and Dutch speaking communities is their understandings of equality and rights. Flemings tend to understand the refusal of Francophones to speak Dutch in the Flemish territory as breaching a principle of reciprocity. There is a very strong moral dimension to the violation of these principles, as “refusing to address the Flemish administration in Dutch is not considered only as the manifestation of a divergent, though legitimate, political stance but as reflecting a form of disrespect or contempt for the Flemings.”<sup>302</sup> From the Francophone point of view, the restriction of the use of the French language is understood as a form of Flemish intolerance and a lack of respect for minorities.

### Brussels’ Demographic, Political and Urban Landscape

While the two linguistic communities are clearly demarcated at the wider national scale, the situation in Brussels is very different. It is in fact the largest area in which both communities coexist in close proximity. Belgium has a total population of around 10 million, with 58% residing in Flanders, 32% in Wallonia and around 9% in Brussels.<sup>303</sup> The Brussels-Capital

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<sup>300</sup> C., A. “Record À Battre: 541 Jours sans Gouvernement.” *La Libre Belgique*, February 21, 2014. <http://www.lalibre.be/actu/politique-belge/record-a-battre-541-jours-sans-gouvernement-53078bbd35709867e40428f9>.

<sup>301</sup> Deschouwer, Kris, and Philippe Van Parijs. “Electoral Engineering for a Stalled Federation: A Country-Wide Electoral District for Belgium’s Federal Parliament.” *Re-Bel Initiative*, no. 4 (July 2009), p. 8

<sup>302</sup> Klein, Olivier, Laurent Licata, Nicolas Van der Linden, Aurélie Mercy, and Olivier Luminet. “A Waffle-Shaped Model for How Realistic Dimensions of the Belgian Conflict Structure Collective Memories and Stereotypes.” *Memory Studies* 5, no. 1 (January 1, 2012): 16–31, p. 8

<sup>303</sup> Jonges, Joos. “Language and Identity of Dutch Speakers in Brussels: The Act of Language Choice and the Dynamic Process of Identification in a Multilingual Context.” MA Thesis, Leiden University, 2015, p. 10

Region comprises approximately 1 million inhabitants, and the wider metropolis including the periphery has a population of around 1.5 million.<sup>304</sup>

Following tensions triggered by the 1947 census highlighting the increasing ‘Frenchification’ of Brussels, a law was passed in 1961 that made unconstitutional the disclosure of Belgian citizens’ linguistic affiliation in any future census.<sup>305</sup> Since then, there is no detailed information available about the number of French speaking and Dutch speaking individuals living in Brussels. However, surveys have been carried out in order to develop a general idea of the language pattern. Researchers have therefore estimated that there are around 38% Francophones and 5.2% Flemings currently residing in Brussels.<sup>306</sup> One major aspect of Brussels demographics to take into account is the important number of non-Belgians residing in the capital. Indeed, around 50% of the population of Brussels is not of Belgian origin, compared to only 5% of the population in the rest of the country.<sup>307</sup> It may therefore be concluded that both the Francophone and the Flemish communities have become minorities within Brussels<sup>308</sup>; while the Flemish community has become an even smaller minority. This particularity will be acknowledged in the research and as well as how this very diverse and cosmopolitan environment might affect the use of public spaces.

Belgium is a federal state with three separate regions – Wallonia, Flanders and Brussels – and three separate Communities – the Flemish Community, the French-speaking Community and the German Speaking Community. The regions and communities overlap but are not symmetric; the region of Brussels-Capital is run by both the French-speaking Community and the Flemish Community and the Germanic Community is located within the Walloon Region. While Brussels is one of three regions in Belgium, it does not have the same powers and took much longer to establish (about ten years later than the regions of Wallonia and Flanders<sup>309</sup>) and still remains somewhat dependent on the linguistic communities. Thus “power-sharing functions are divided and managed separately by each linguistic group with power only being shared in certain agreed policy areas [...]. Each linguistic community governs its own affairs in education, health and culture. Power is shared in policy areas such as economics, employment

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<sup>304</sup> Dejemeppe, Pierre, Céline Mouchart, Caroline Piersotte, Frédéric Raynaud, and Dirk Van de Putte. *Bruxelles [Dans] 20 Ans*. Agence de Développement Territorial (ADT). Agence de Développement Territorial (ADT), 2009, p.

332

<sup>305</sup> Govaert, Serge. *Bruxelles en capitales, 1958-2000: de l'expo à l'euro*. De Boeck Supérieur, 2000, p. 96

<sup>306</sup> Jonges, Joos. “Language and Identity of Dutch Speakers in Brussels: The Act of Language Choice and the Dynamic Process of Identification in a Multilingual Context.” MA Thesis, Leiden University, 2015, p.12

<sup>307</sup> Réseau des Arts à Bruxelles, and Brussels Kunstenoverle. “Plan Culturel Pour Bruxelles.” Cultural Plan. Réseau des Arts à Bruxelles - Brussels Kunstenoverle, 2009, p. 11

<sup>308</sup> Janssens, Rudi. *Le multilinguisme urbain : Le cas de Bruxelles*. 1st ed. Bruxelles: Racine Lannoo, 2014.

<sup>309</sup> Dejemeppe, Pierre, Céline Mouchart, Caroline Piersotte, Frédéric Raynaud, and Dirk Van de Putte. *Bruxelles [Dans] 20 Ans*. Agence de Développement Territorial (ADT). Agence de Développement Territorial (ADT), 2009, p.

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and transport.”<sup>310</sup> The Brussels Region parliament consists of 89 members, with 72 seats reserved for Francophones and 17 seats for Flemings.

While Scott Bollens has not studied in detail urban strategies in Brussels, his models of policy strategy in polarised cities may be applied to this last case study. Amongst the identified policies of partisan, neutral, and resolver, Bollens also defined the equity strategy which allocates resources and services to different communities by giving priority to ethnic affiliation in order to deal with any intergroup inequalities. Thus, the specific needs of each group are acknowledged in order to diffuse any tension that could arise from the allocation of goods and services in the city. <sup>311</sup> It may therefore be argued that the equity strategy has been implemented in Brussels, as the Flemish minority has received special attention in terms of seats allocated in parliament and that the linguistic communities remain in charge of certain aspects of social life such as education and culture.

However, this equity strategy and near-systematic allocation of goods and services along linguistic lines is increasingly seen as having a negative impact on Brussels. One problem is the legal impossibility to constitute bilingual political lists for regional or national elections; forcing Brussels inhabitants to select a specific ‘linguistic gender’. An increasing number of civil society and grassroots organisations have denounced the situation in Brussels, claiming that “the fragmentation also leads to the dilution of the initiatives of city actors. It makes it impossible to conduct policies on a bigger scale, which leaves any development to the mercy of power struggles and management contradictions. There must be a radical shift in the way Brussels is managed in order to meet today’s challenges.”<sup>312</sup>

### Defining the Conflict in Brussels

The reality on the ground for most Brussels inhabitants includes very distinctive and usually exclusive social spheres of life between the linguistic groups. In essence, Francophones and Flemings coexist in Brussels, but are rarely aware of what is happening on the other side of the linguistic divide.<sup>313</sup> Thus “the positive attitudes between the Dutch and French language communities are restricted by the fact that the language groups tend to live side by side and

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<sup>310</sup> O’Connor, Karl. *Public Administration in Contested Societies*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, p. 43

<sup>311</sup> Scott A. *On Narrow Ground: Urban Policy and Ethnic Conflict in Jerusalem and Belfast*. SUNY Series in Urban Public Policy. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000, p. 23

<sup>312</sup> Etats Généraux de Bruxelles – Staten-Generaal van Brussel – Citizen’s Forum of Brussels. *Het Brussels Maatschappelijk Middenveld Laat Zijn Stem Horen. Thema’senconclusies*. Le Cri Edition: Bruxelles, 2009, p. 336

<sup>313</sup> Dejemeppe, Pierre, Céline Mouchart, Caroline Piersotte, Frédéric Raynaud, and Dirk Van de Putte. *Bruxelles [Dans] 20 Ans*. Agence de Développement Territorial (ADT). Agence de Développement Territorial (ADT), 2009, p.

hardly have contact with each other.”<sup>314</sup> Despite this divided reality, and tensions at the political level, hostility between the two communities in everyday life in the city are becoming increasingly rare. It has thus been mentioned that “it’s not that Flemish and Walloon Belgians hate each other; it’s more that they don’t really see the point of one another. They unsee their other-language-speaking compatriots each day, at least in Brussels.”<sup>315</sup>

The federal reality in Brussels is extremely complex as “all competences linked to persons, such as culture, education and welfare, are decentralised to two homogenous linguistic communities operating with no or minimal coordination on the same territory.”<sup>316</sup> This reality has led to competition and rivalry over key government positions, where “a certain jockeying for position between the two principal language communities of Brussels has frequently been evident – with much being made of the comparative number of native French or Dutch speakers occupying positions in such organisations as the police force, the judiciary, and the Foreign Service.”<sup>317</sup> It has further been argued that the current structure of the Belgian state is enforcing a purification and apartheid process, where inhabitants are incorporated by force into one or the other linguistic community.<sup>318</sup> In other words, despite the lack of heightened intergroup tension and the absence of violence, the two linguistic communities in Belgium are drifting further apart, highlighting incompatible ideals and strengthening exclusivity; thus greatly limiting intergroup cooperation. From this perspective, Brussels may indeed be defined as a divided city.

As previously mentioned, the Region of Brussels-Capital is surrounded by the Region of Flanders, and with the linguistic borders fixed in the 1960s, the capital finds itself constrained and cannot grow at its natural pace. From a Flemish perspective, Brussels is exerting negative cultural and linguistic pressure onto the Flemish periphery, which leads to hostility towards the city and its mainly French speaking inhabitants that are increasingly moving into Flemish territory.<sup>319</sup>

However, it has also been underlined that Belgium’s complex federal system, while furthering separation, has also successfully contained the conflict. Indeed, “amidst national chaos,

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<sup>314</sup> Jonges, Joos. “Language and Identity of Dutch Speakers in Brussels: The Act of Language Choice and the Dynamic Process of Identification in a Multilingual Context.” MA Thesis, Leiden University, 2015, p. 12

<sup>315</sup> Newey, Glen. “A Brief History of a Broken Country.” *Foreign Policy*, March 23, 2016. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/03/23/belgium-history-brussels-attacks-molenbeek/>.

<sup>316</sup> Corijn, Eric, and Jessica Van De Ven. *The Brussels Reader*. VUB University Press, 2013, p. 384

<sup>317</sup> Murphy, Alexander. “Brussels: Division in Unity or Unity in Division?” *Political Geography*, Special Issue Dedicated to Saul B. Cohen, 21, no. 5 (June 2002): 695–700, p. 696–697

<sup>318</sup> Maskens, Alain. *Monoflamands et monowallons? errances et dangers des ideologies mono-identitaires. envoi de l’auteur*. LA LONGUE VUE. Paris: Bruxelles, La Longue Vue, 2000, p. 97

<sup>319</sup> Dejemeppe, Pierre, Céline Mouchart, Caroline Piersotte, Frédéric Raynaud, and Dirk Van de Putte. *Bruxelles [Dans] 20 Ans*. Agence de Développement Territorial (ADT). Agence de Développement Territorial (ADT), 2009, p.

conflict has been successfully managed within the bilingual region of Brussels Capital; the institutional solution has played its part in creating the status quo. It is unfortunate however that it is this same institutional design that serves today to preserve linguistic divisions, despite the population of the city demonstrating its readiness to progress.”<sup>320</sup> The current situation in Brussels and Belgium may thus still be qualified as an ongoing conflict leading the capital and entire country to remain deeply divided along linguistic lines. In other words, “the good news is that the Belgian federal regime – though complicated and inefficient – has helped cabin this conflict and contribute to the absence of violence. [...] But the bad news is that the federal system has not resolved the conflict, much less led to reconciliation, and may have contributed to the amplification of the centrifugal forces that may eventually lead to the breakup of the nation.”<sup>321</sup>

Compared to the other case studies, Brussels might seem as an odd choice for the study of shared public spaces. Indeed, unlike Jerusalem and Belfast, the city does not have a history of violence between its two main linguistic communities. However, it has also been underlined that past discriminations and perceived differences in interests and values have led to levels of intergroup tension throughout the twentieth century, leading to the extensive decentralisation of the Belgian state. Such tensions at the political level have led in recent years to political instability and the inability to form a government for over 540 days. As underlined by one commentator referring to the political crisis, “the problem with Belgium is that its citizens have so little left in common. [...] The Flemish and the Walloon leaders barely know each other anymore. [...] And these are the men who have to form a government together.”<sup>322</sup> This situation is reflected in Brussels, where the bilingual region incorporates ‘power-dividing’ between linguistic communities rather than power-sharing. The weaknesses of such a system based on minimal cooperation have recently drawn international attention in the aftermath of the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks in November 2015 and March 2016. The lack of communication between the linguistic communities and regions in Belgium has been identified as one of the reasons for the failure of the Belgian state in avoiding a terrorist attack. Given the linguistic homogeneity in Flanders and Wallonia, Brussels is in effect the only large city in the country where the two linguistic communities coexist in close proximity. While the number of non-Belgians now residing in the city is acknowledged and may ultimately influence relations between the linguistic communities, the case of Brussels as a contested and divided city nevertheless remains relevant to study and compare. The research will analyse

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<sup>320</sup> O'Connor, Karl. *Public Administration in Contested Societies*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, p. 111

<sup>321</sup> Mnookin, Robert, and Alain Verbeke. “Persistent Nonviolent Conflict with No Reconciliation: The Flemish and Walloons in Belgium.” *Law & Contemporary Problems* 72, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 151–86, p. 185

<sup>322</sup> Buruma, Ian. ‘Le Divorce’. *The New Yorker*, 10 January 2011. <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/01/10/le-divorce>.

how the current situation in Brussels may influence the shared use of public spaces in the city, and ultimately the differences this may make to cross-community relations in this specific context.

<b>Conflict in Brussels</b>			
<b>Stage of Conflict</b>	<b>Type of Conflict</b>	<b>Agreement</b>	<b>Urban Strategy</b>
Contradiction/Polarisation	Ongoing non-violent	Compromises	Equity

**Table 14: The Conflict in Brussels**

Brussels may therefore be situated within the very first stages of escalation of conflict, between the phases of contradiction and polarisation – but with the particularity of a total absence of violence or threat of violence. In other words, the situation in Brussels is described as a non-violent ongoing conflict with continuous compromises between the opposing parties.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has provided a contextual overview of the conflicts in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels. Intergroup conflict in Israel and the Palestinian territory, Northern Ireland and Belgium may all be qualified as types of ethnic conflicts with varying degrees of ethno-national, ethno-religious, ethno-linguistic and ethno-political competition occurring between groups. While ethnic identities in such situations of conflict and intergroup antagonism may become salient and fixed, this research takes the constructivist understanding of identity as socially constructed and therefore subject to change over time and space. Crucially for conflict transformation efforts, this means that intergroup conflict in deeply divided or plural societies is neither predestined nor everlasting. However, as mentioned by consociationalism advocates, it should also be acknowledged that such constructed identities can become temporarily rigid depending on the stage of conflict.



Comparative Conflict Table				
Stages of Conflict	Case Study	Type of Conflict	Agreement	Urban Strategy
Difference				
<i>Contradiction</i>	Brussels	Ongoing non-violent	Compromises	Equity
<i>Polarisation</i>				
<i>Violence</i>	Jerusalem	Ongoing occasionally violent	No agreement	Partisan
<i>War</i>				
Ceasefire				
Agreement				
<i>Normalisation</i>	Belfast	Ongoing peace process	Political agreement	Neutral
<i>Reconciliation</i>				

Table 15: Comparative Table based on the Escalation and De-escalation Model

Comparative Urban Strategy Table (based on Scott Bollens' work)	
Case Study	Urban Strategy
Jerusalem	<i>Partisan Strategy</i>
	One-sided policy focused on entrenching and expanding territorial claims and enforcing control over access
Belfast	<i>Neutral Strategy</i>
	Colour-blind ethnically neutral policy focused on depoliticising territorial issues
Brussels	<i>Equity Strategy</i>
	Ethnicity-based strategy focusing on allocating services in a proportional way to different groups depending on specific needs to diffuse intergroup tension

Table 16: Comparative Urban Strategy Table

Based on the escalation and de-escalation model presented at the very beginning of this chapter, the three case studies have been situated within their wider context of conflict. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict which started in 1948 is situated within the highest stages of conflict escalation, between violence and war, although the latter is limited to certain specific outbreaks over the years (most recently in Gaza). The situation in Jerusalem has additionally been described as an ongoing occasionally violent conflict with no political agreement or settlement between the opposing parties; including the implementation of a partisan urban policy strategy.

The Northern Ireland conflict lasted from 1969 to 1998, although the conflict between the Protestant and Catholic communities started before this time and is not entirely resolved to date. The current conflict between the two communities is situated between the de-escalation phases of normalisation and reconciliation, the latter not being entirely achieved. The situation in Belfast is described as post-conflict management with an ongoing peace process and a signed political agreement between the opposing parties; with the implementation of a neutral policy strategy in the city.

The Belgian linguistic conflict started after the country's inception in 1830 and is situated between the escalation phases of contradiction and polarisation; with the successful avoidance of violence. The situation in Brussels is described as a non-violent ongoing conflict with a tradition of political compromises between the opposing parties; including the implementation of an equity urban policy strategy in the city.

In terms of the comparative element of this study, Scott Bollens argues that “cities such as Jerusalem, Belfast, Johannesburg, Nicosia, Montreal, Algiers, Sarajevo, New Delhi, Beirut and Brussels are urban arenas penetrable by deep intergroup conflict associated with ethnic or political differences.”<sup>323</sup> Public shared spaces in three of these cities – Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels – will be analysed in the remainder of this thesis in order to evaluate their role in transforming intergroup relations. The three cities are extremely interesting to study from a conflict transformation perspective as they “provide the locus of everyday interaction where ethnicity and identity can be created and re-created [...]. They are suppliers of important religious and cultural symbols, zones of intergroup proximity and intimacy.”<sup>324</sup> In the next three chapters, three selected shared public spaces within each of the three cities will be examined.

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<sup>323</sup> Bollens, Scott A. *On Narrow Ground: Urban Policy and Ethnic Conflict in Jerusalem and Belfast*. SUNY Series in Urban Public Policy. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000, p. 3

<sup>324</sup> Bollens, Scott A. *On Narrow Ground: Urban Policy and Ethnic Conflict in Jerusalem and Belfast*. SUNY Series in Urban Public Policy. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000, p. 5

## Chapter Five: Exploring Shared Public Spaces in Jerusalem

Field research in Jerusalem was carried out between Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April and Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2015 and consisted of observation and documentary research, with the addition of a number of in-depth interviews. Observation included thirty two days in three selected shared public spaces – Jaffa Gate Square, Teddy Park and Mamilla mall.

Research was either carried out for the whole day, or at specific times such as the morning, afternoon and early evening. During the period of research, several events were observed in and around the selected spaces including the Israeli Independence Day (Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April), Nakba Day (Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May), Jerusalem Day (Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May), Shavuot (Monday 25<sup>th</sup> May), and the Jerusalem Light Festival (Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June). Additional observation was carried out in other parts of Jerusalem, including Mahane Yehuda Market, the Old Train Tracks Park and Malha mall.

Documentary research included analysis of the English version of the Israeli newspaper Haaretz, as well as the Jerusalem Post and the Times of Israel. Palestinian sources of daily information included Maan News and Wafa; while international outlets such as Al Jazeera, the Guardian, BBC, the New York Times and Le Monde were also regularly consulted. Information on statistics was retrieved through the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, and numbers provided by institutions such as the Jerusalem Institute for Israel studies, NGOs such as B'Tselem and international organisations including the UN.

Along with these two main sources of data collection, semi-structured interviews were carried out with five members of the Palestinian community, six Israelis and one international participant. The interviewees represented an array of different institutions and organisations, including Al Quds University, Ben Gurion University, the Kenyon Institute (British institution), Combatants for Peace, Jerusalem YMCA, Kids for Peace, Emek Shave (Israeli NGO), and the International Peace and Cooperation Centre.

Following the analysis of the information gathered during the field research, three main themes were identified as being particularly relevant to answer the main research question around the differences that shared public spaces may make to cross-community relations in divided cities. This chapter will firstly consist of the contextualisation of the selected shared public spaces within Jerusalem; secondly, a description of daily life and intergroup relations within the shared spaces; and thirdly, the assessment of interpretations of these spaces within Jerusalem.

The research will provide an evaluation of authority support, meaningful interaction and negative contact around shared spaces in Jerusalem through the intergroup contact theory. A Bourdieusian/Foucauldian perspective will also be applied in order to establish the context of shared spaces in Jerusalem, by detailing the normalised way of life, the role of discourse and the power struggles for domination that take place in the city.



Figure 1: Map of Israel and the Palestinian Territory (© OpenStreetMap contributors)

## 1. Theme 1: Contextualising Shared Public Spaces in Jerusalem

### Locating the Shared Spaces in Jerusalem

Alongside the smaller components of documentary research and interviews, observation was carried out as the main methodology over a period of around thirty days within three selected spaces in Jerusalem that were deemed to be used and shared by both the Israeli and Palestinian communities.

In order to establish which spaces were visited and used by the two communities, a number of criteria such as visual and auditory cues were established, not entirely removed from the

process of telling – an internalised cognitive ethnic identification process – that has been previously mentioned in this thesis.<sup>325</sup> Indeed, ‘tell signs’ can often be assimilated to such identification cues as language, clothing or jewellery.

The following ‘tell signs’ and indicators of community belonging were therefore formulated in order to evaluate the presence of different communities within public spaces in Jerusalem:

*Visual cues:*

- Religious and traditional clothing: kippas, long skirts, big black hats, long covering dark clothes for the Jewish community; headscarves, kufiyah, thobes for the Palestinian Muslim community.
- Religious items: Star of David necklaces for the Jewish community; Christian crosses, praying mats for the Palestinian community

*Auditory cues:*

- Hebrew
- Arabic
- Yiddish (to a lesser extent)
- English and other international languages (spoken not only by tourists but also newly arrived Israeli Jews)

Using these indicators of group belonging and applying them to the individuals observed entering and using specific spaces in Jerusalem enabled the identification of areas shared by both Israeli Jews and Palestinians on a regular basis.

Combined with the visual and auditory indicators, the selection of the three spaces was based on the following criteria:

- Public spaces used and visited by representative or sufficient amounts of members of both the Israeli Jewish and Palestinian communities
- An open public space, such as a square or a street
- A public park
- A shopping centre or mall
- Centrality of the spaces within the city

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<sup>325</sup> Finlay, Andrew. “‘Whatever You Say Say Nothing’: An Ethnographic Encounter in Northern Ireland and Its Sequel”. *Sociological Research Online* 4, no. 3 (30 September 1999). <https://www-swetswise-com.elib.tcd.ie/FullTextProxy/swproxy?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.socresonline.org.uk%2F4%2F3%2Ffinlay.html&ts=1417082430677&cs=2702975977&userName=0787353.ipdirect&emCondId=573809&articleID=6406467&yevolD=511291&titleID=188303&remoteAddr=134.226.14.55&hostType=PRO>.

After observation of multiple areas in the city, Jaffa Gate Square, Teddy Park and Mamilla mall were selected respectively as a shared open public space, a shared park and shared shopping centre; all located in the centre of Jerusalem, mostly along the East-West border and previous Green Line.

**Jaffa Gate Square:** With a majority of Palestinian residents, but also many religious Jews coming on a regular basis, the Old City – situated in East Jerusalem – is very mixed. Although observation was not carried out within the Old City per se, Jaffa Gate Square can be considered to be part of it. As there are no public spaces within the Old City, Jaffa Gate square, situated at one of its main entrances, was deemed to be a better suited location in which to analyse intergroup relations. The square is frequented by a very diverse set of individuals, ranging from Israeli Jews, secular Israelis, Muslim and Christian Palestinians, and tourists, amongst others. The sharing of this space is not recent, as “beginning at the end of the nineteenth century, Jews from the city’s new neighbourhoods mixed with the Old City’s Arabs in the open area outside the gate.”<sup>326</sup>

**Teddy Park:** Teddy Park<sup>327</sup>, situated close to the Old City was selected as the second place for observation. Interestingly, it has been stated that the purpose of the park which opened in 2013 was to be “a cross roads “between East and West, for secular and ultra-Orthodox, Jews and Arabs, Christians, Muslims and Jews... that it be a meeting place for everybody, for peace and hope”.<sup>328</sup> The park was initiated and funded by the Jerusalem Foundation, a non-profit organisation working towards “building a multicultural city where all of its people could live together equally – religious and secular, veteran and new immigrant, rich and poor, Muslim, Christian and Jew.”<sup>329</sup> The Jerusalem Foundation has also concentrated among other projects on developing peaceful coexistence through shared living in the city by “supporting projects that encourage interaction and engagement in arts, sports and shared public spaces.”<sup>330</sup> It can therefore be argued that Teddy Park was indeed created as a shared space for the different communities residing in Jerusalem; and both members of the Palestinian and Israeli Jewish communities were observed using the park on a daily basis.

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<sup>326</sup> Klein, Menachem. *Lives in Common: Arabs and Jews in Jerusalem, Jaffa and Hebron*. Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 2

<sup>327</sup> The Jerusalem Foundation. “Teddy Park.” Information. *The Jerusalem Foundation*. Accessed January 28, 2016. <http://www.jerusalemfoundation.org/community/parks-gardens/teddy-park.aspx>.

<sup>328</sup> Prusher, Ilene. ‘The Color of Water: A Fountain of Hope in the Heart of Teddy’s Jerusalem’. *Haaretz*, 3 May 2013. <http://www.haaretz.com/blogs/jerusalem-vivendi/the-color-of-water-a-fountain-of-hope-in-the-heart-of-teddy-s-jerusalem.premium-1.519066>.

<sup>329</sup> “The Jerusalem Foundation.” Information. *The Jerusalem Foundation*. Accessed February 2, 2016.

<sup>330</sup> The Jerusalem Foundation. “Shared Living.” Information. *The Jerusalem Foundation*. Accessed February 2, 2016. <http://projects.jerusalemfoundation.org/coexistence/shared-living.aspx>.

**Mamilla mall:** Mamilla mall is a shopping centre situated in what was previously known as ‘no-man’s land’ – a strip of land running along the Green Line between the Old City and West Jerusalem. It has been instigated and funded by the Jerusalem Municipality<sup>331</sup> and is widely considered to be frequented by both Israelis and Palestinians.<sup>332</sup> In 2008, it was estimated that as many as 20% to 25% of the total number of visitors of the mall were Palestinian.<sup>333</sup> The mall was initially “built as a model of coexistence for Arabs and Jews to work together” and is one of the only malls to employ Palestinian workers, which is understood as increasing the sense of coexistence.<sup>334</sup> The purpose of the mall – a pedestrian open area flanked by shops and cafés – was “to serve as a bridge between the Old City and the western part of downtown Jerusalem.”<sup>335</sup> Mamilla mall is generally perceived as the most shared commercial area in Jerusalem, visited by “a crowd that includes Israeli teenagers seeking the latest fashions, Haredi families on an outing, and hijab-clad window-shopping mothers from East Jerusalem.”<sup>336</sup> The commercial aspects of such shared spaces are understood as enhancing peaceful coexistence, and have been described as “a place in Israel where people of all faiths and degree of religiosity coexist. Where everyone gathers for the same purpose.”<sup>337</sup> Both Israeli Jews and Palestinians were observed to shop and sit in cafés in the mall on a regular basis during the period of field research.

It is however crucial to underline the deeply controversial nature of Mamilla mall, given the unequal balance of power between the conflicting groups in Jerusalem. As described by Marik Shtern, “in its 150 years history, the [Mamilla] quarter has served as a space for commercial exchange and social engagement, violent contestation, occupation, colonisation and most recently, privatisation.”<sup>338</sup> The area around the mall has witnessed deep urban transformation which is understood as facilitating the “historical erasure of Arab Palestinian space. [...] This

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<sup>331</sup>Dvir, Noam. ‘A Man With a Plan’. *Haaretz*, 29 September 2010. <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/a-man-with-a-plan-1.316337>.

<sup>332</sup>Hasson, Nir. ‘Jerusalem Mall: Where Arabs and Jews Shop Together’. *Haaretz*, 22 September 2010. <http://www.haaretz.com/jerusalem-mall-where-arabs-and-jews-shop-together-1.315069>.

<sup>333</sup>Shtern, Marik. ‘Urban Neoliberalism vs. Ethno-National Division: The Case of West Jerusalem’s Shopping Malls’. *Cities* 52 (March 2016): 132–39, p. 135

<sup>334</sup>Eisenbud, Daniel K. ‘Merchants at Jerusalem’s Mamilla Mall React with Shock at Foiled Rosh Hashana Terrorist Plot’. *The Jerusalem Post* | *JPost.com*, 2 September 2013. <http://www.jpost.com/National-News/Merchants-at-Jerusalems-Mamilla-Mall-react-with-shock-at-foiled-Rosh-Hashana-terrorist-plot-324998>

<sup>335</sup>Kroyanker, David. ‘No-Man’s Land Once Again’. *Haaretz*, 21 January 2005. <http://www.haaretz.com/no-man-s-land-once-again-1.147807>.

<sup>336</sup>Klein, Menachem. *Lives in Common: Arabs and Jews in Jerusalem, Jaffa and Hebron*. Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 1

<sup>337</sup>Sommer, Allison Kaplan. “Women of the Mall: The Middle East Needs Less Praying and More Shopping.” *Haaretz*, August 12, 2013. <http://www.haaretz.com/blogs/routine-emergencies/.premium-1.541086>.

<sup>338</sup>Shtern, Marik. ‘Urban Neoliberalism vs. Ethno-National Division: The Case of West Jerusalem’s Shopping Malls’. *Cities* 52 (March 2016): 132–39, p. 135

‘demolition in order to rebuild’ (Wolfe, 2006) penetrates the daily realities of Palestinians, causing suffering and loss.”<sup>339</sup>

Mamilla mall remains an extremely interesting case to study in terms of intergroup contact, as “although [it] is clearly an Israeli compound built in expropriated land, on the boundary between the two parts of the city, its territorial identity is continuously negotiated and contested by the stream of Palestinian customers and visitors.” Furthermore, the mall “is also a central employment centre for young East Jerusalem Palestinians, which constitutes 66% [...] of the quarter’s total sales personnel [...]”<sup>340</sup>

<i>Shared Space</i>	<b>Jaffa Gate Square</b>	<b>Teddy Park</b>	<b>Mamilla Mall</b>
<i>Type of space</i>	Open public square	Public park	Open area shopping centre
<i>Location of space</i>	Old City Entrance, on Green Line between East and West	Near Old City, on Green Line between East and West	Near Old City, on Green Line between East and West
<i>Planned and/or funded by</i>	Jerusalem Municipality (local authority)	Jerusalem Foundation (non-profit organisation)	Jerusalem Municipality (local authority)
<i>Year of planning/opening</i>	2010	2013	2007
<i>Purpose of planned space</i>	Redevelopment and regeneration of space	Space of peaceful coexistence	Space of commercial coexistence

**Table 17: Selected Shared Public Spaces in Jerusalem**

<sup>339</sup> Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Nadera. Living death, recovering life: psychosocial resistance and the power of the dead in East Jerusalem, *Intervention* 2014, Volume 12, Number 1, Page 16 – 29, p. 22

<sup>340</sup> Shtern, Marik. ‘Urban Neoliberalism vs. Ethno-National Division: The Case of West Jerusalem’s Shopping Malls’. *Cities* 52 (March 2016): 132–39, p. 135



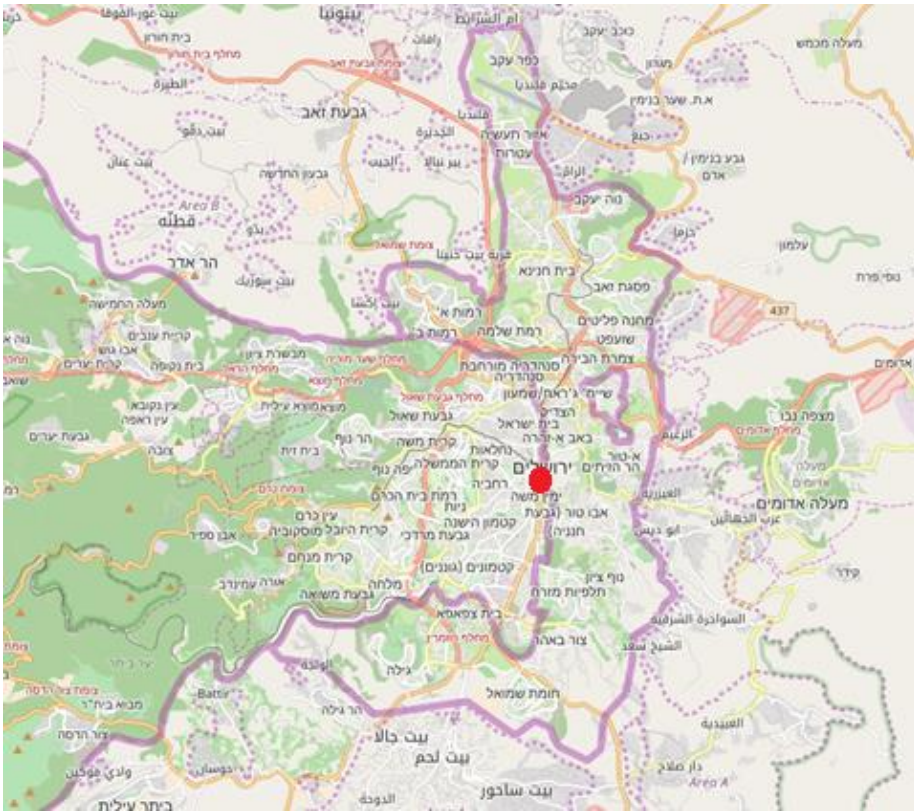


Figure 2: Map of Greater Jerusalem (© OpenStreetMap contributors)

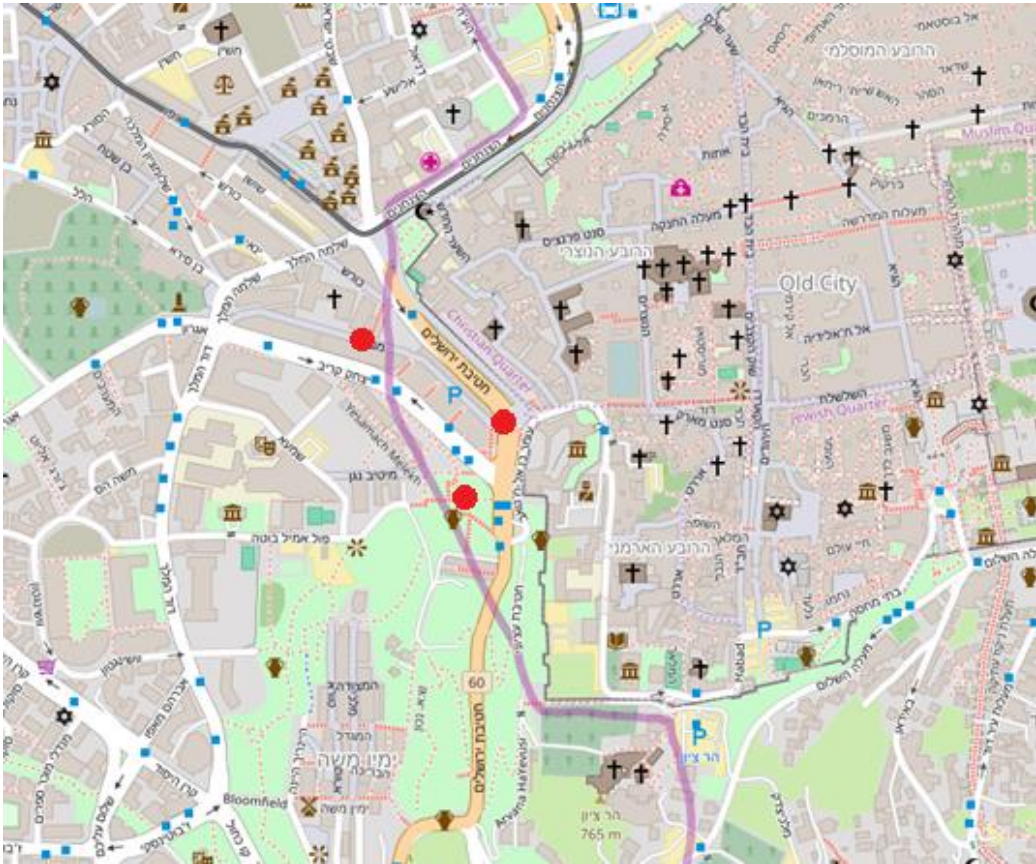


Figure 3: Map of Jerusalem City Centre with Selected Spaces (© OpenStreetMap contributors)



Figure 4: Jaffa Gate Square, view from the entrance into the Old City



Figure 5: Teddy Park, view on the fountain display



Figure 6: Mamilla mall, view on the main street

### The Current Context in Jerusalem: No Signs of Peace

The city of Jerusalem at the time of the field research and since then has suffered from periods of extreme tension and intergroup violence that are clearly not likely to improve intergroup relations in the city.

Tensions linked to the summer 2014 Gaza war have had an overall negative impact on intergroup relations, and it has been underlined that “during this period, there was an increase in acts of incitement between Jewish and Arab citizens, a significant rise in anti-Arab hostility – including violent attacks in public places (e.g. malls and buses) and on social media, demonstrations in Arab towns that turned violent and joint Jewish-Arab demonstrations that were attacked by right wing counter-demonstrations.”<sup>341</sup> Since then cycles of violence have shaken the city<sup>342</sup>, including record numbers of attacks against Israelis and the use of live ammunition against Palestinian protestors across the West Bank.<sup>343</sup> The number of deaths per week also significantly increased since then, as reported by the United Nation’s Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in its weekly Protection of Civilians reports.<sup>344</sup>

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<sup>341</sup> Hai, Avivit, and Liron Shoham. “Jewish-Arab Relations in Israel and the Summer of 2014: Assessments and Insights.” Inter Agency Task Force on Israeli Arab Issues, November 2014, p. 4

<sup>342</sup> Beaumont, Peter. ‘Israel-Palestine: Outlook Bleak as Wave of Violence Passes Six-Month Mark’. *The Guardian*, 31 March 2016. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/31/israel-palestine-violence-knife-attacks-west-bank-gaza>.

<sup>343</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - occupied Palestinian territory. “Humanitarian Bulletin Monthly Report June-August 2014.” Monthly Report. UN OCHA, September 2014, p. 3

<sup>344</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - occupied Palestinian territory. “Protection of Civilians Weekly Report.” Accessed January 28, 2016. <http://www.ochaopt.org/reports.aspx?id=104&page=1>.

Alongside these recent events, the overall context in the city is one in which ongoing inequality in terms of political representativeness, economic opportunity and other rights between the Israeli and Palestinian communities reinforces intergroup antagonism. Numerous humanitarian reports published by different international and non-governmental organisations, such as the UN, the EU, Oxfam, the Red Cross, and Save the Children amongst others<sup>345</sup> have all highlighted these fundamental issues with many condemning the one-sided Israeli policy strategy – especially in terms of settlement constructions and Palestinian home demolitions in East Jerusalem.<sup>346</sup> Such an unbalance in terms of power between the groups is understood as a major reason for the ongoing and seemingly intractable conflict in the region and especially in the city, where inequalities between the two communities are more striking given the constricted nature of the urban fabric.

Jerusalem municipality has been criticised and blamed for neglecting Palestinian areas of the city<sup>347</sup> and blatantly disfavours the Palestinian community<sup>348</sup>; it could therefore be assumed that if basic needs are not on the agenda, then less vital intergroup contact interests are not likely to be acknowledged. Taking into account the crucial role of political discourse and being mindful of the political, social, cultural and economic context in which the contact between different groups occurs (as French social theory would suggest) is therefore pivotal in determining its outcome on intergroup relations.

Residence in the city throughout the field research led to the observation of stark differences in treatment between the two communities, with relatively wealthy Israeli areas of West Jerusalem and neglected Palestinian areas in East Jerusalem<sup>349</sup> as well as the witnessing of sporadic violent clashes between Palestinian youths and Israeli security forces on several occasions in Palestinian neighbourhoods<sup>350</sup> and near the Old City.<sup>351</sup> Tension was additionally felt and observed in certain parts of the city on a regular basis, therefore suggesting that the overall environment was not favourable to positive intergroup relations.

The answers and information provided by the interview participants in Jerusalem also substantiate this generally negative perspective, with many underlining that the situation had worsened since the summer of 2014. It was therefore argued that “things have been very

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<sup>345</sup>See websites of the following organisations : UNOCHA, EU External Action, Oxfam, Red Cross, Save the Children amongst others

<sup>346</sup> EU Heads of Mission. “European Union Heads of Mission Report on Jerusalem.” European Union, 2014.

<sup>347</sup>Hasson, Nir. ‘Court: Jerusalem Municipality Neglected Palestinian Neighborhood of Kafr Aqab’. *Haaretz*, 27 October 2015. <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.682518>.

<sup>348</sup>Hasson, Nir. ‘Jerusalem Must Plan Playgrounds for Palestinian Neighborhoods, Court Orders’. *Haaretz*, 1 January 2016. <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.696515>.

<sup>349</sup>Jerusalem Observation Form 26 – Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2015

<sup>350</sup> Jerusalem Observation Form 25 –Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2015

<sup>351</sup>Jerusalem Observation Form 16 – Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2015

different since the kidnap and murder of Palestinian teenager Mohammed Abu Khdeir on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2014. [...] There are more riots and violence now since last year. There are more people boycotting Israeli goods even within Jerusalem. It's not easy living here, there is more violence now."<sup>352</sup>

Aside from recent events, it was also argued that the general situation is highly negative given the Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem and the obvious inequality of treatment between the two communities in the city. As one Palestinian respondent explained, "Jerusalem is an occupied city, there is nothing neutral here; one group is controlling the other. So there are no neutral spaces."<sup>353</sup> This is deeply relevant in terms of the perceived differences that shared spaces may make to intergroup relations in the city, as it could be suggested that in a non-neutral situation any kind of interaction is doomed to fail.

One Israeli participant further argued that "the only principle that is implemented deep in urban planning in Jerusalem is conserving the Jewish majority and limiting Palestinian residential expansion. These are the only principles that are systematically implemented since 1967 and until today."<sup>354</sup> This fact is accepted by numerous scholars<sup>355</sup>, journalists and other commentators<sup>356</sup> within<sup>357</sup> and outside<sup>358</sup> Israel. Another participant also discussed the role of planning in increasing intergroup tensions as "you insert Jewish communities in between Palestinian communities [...] that's not good for community relations because these two communities haven't mixed before and they're very suspicious of each other. And let's face it, when a Jewish community comes in, then the security guards come with guns, and that's not exactly like giving a friendly nod to your neighbour."<sup>359</sup> None of the interview participants believed that improving intergroup relations was on any agenda at the municipal and elite level in Jerusalem.

In terms of the normalised and internalised way of life (B.1 in the analytical framework), it is clear from the research that division and separation is still very much the norm in Jerusalem. Periods of increased tension and escalations of violence trigger feelings of threat and highly negative perceptions of the other community. Thus division becomes even more internalised

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<sup>352</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 1 – Anonymous, Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2015

<sup>353</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 1 – Anonymous, Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2015

<sup>354</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 3 – Marik Shtern, Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2015

<sup>355</sup> Scott Bollens reference to situation in Jerusalem in his works and interview

<sup>356</sup> Prusher, Ilene. "Judaizing Jerusalem": The Man Behind the Plan'. *Haaretz*, 9 October 2013.

<http://www.haaretz.com/blogs/jerusalem-vivendi/.premium-1.551494>.

<sup>357</sup> Ramon, Haim. "How to Save Jewish Jerusalem." *Ynet News.com*, November 6, 2015.

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4720166,00.html>.

<sup>358</sup> UN General Assembly. "Experts Examine 'De-Palestinization' of Jerusalem, Reality on Ground at United Nations Meeting on Israeli Settlements." Information. *United Nations*, September 7, 2015.

<http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/gapal1345.doc.htm>.

<sup>359</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 5 – Many Turner, Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2015

and justified in the eyes of many residents. Discourse (B.2) around the conflict can be seen as further deteriorating any chances of positive intergroup relations, with on one hand the policies implemented by the Israeli government and the on the other the increasing popularity of the anti-normalisation movement within the Palestinian society which strongly dissuades from any contact with Israelis.

It should however be acknowledged that the anti-normalisation campaign<sup>360</sup> is also challenging the discourses and normalised aspects of the occupation of Palestinian territories in Jerusalem. The aims of the movement are less to do with limiting individual contact between members of different groups and more focused on highlighting the danger of attempting to normalise and pacify Jerusalem of any Palestinian influence or presence by reinforcing the exclusively Jewish character of the city. The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement<sup>361</sup>, along with the anti-normalisation campaign can also be understood as major actors in the power struggle (B.3) taking place between the Israeli and Palestinian communities in the city and region. By challenging the vision of Jerusalem as a unified city, these grassroots movements enable another urban reality; namely one where Palestinian inhabitants are no longer ignored or neutralised.

### Views on the Future of Jerusalem: Negative Perceptions

The current situation in Jerusalem has been described as overwhelmingly negative for peaceful intergroup relations, leading generally to pessimistic views on its peaceful future.

The results of the Israeli legislative elections in March 2015, with the victory of right-wing parties, have been understood by many observers as not being favourable to the improvement of relations with the Palestinian community.<sup>362</sup> Governmental policies in the next years are therefore not likely to change the current situation of ongoing conflict and occasional bouts of violence. Opinion polls in both communities demonstrate that the recent tensions have damaged intergroup relations and leave little hope for their improvement in the current context. A poll within Palestinian society carried out by the Palestinian Centre for Public Opinion in November 2015 revealed that 62.3% of the public opposed the resumption of peace

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<sup>360</sup>What Is Normalization? | +972 Magazine'. +972 Blog, 27 December 2011. <http://972mag.com/what-is-normalization/31368/>.

<sup>361</sup>Winstanley, Asa. "Israel's 'War' against BDS Is Increasingly Desperate." *Middle East Monitor - The Latest from the Middle East*, January 18, 2016. <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/articles/inquiry/23389-israels-qwarq-against-bds-is-increasingly-desperate>.

<sup>362</sup>Connolly, Kevin. "Israel Election: Netanyahu Win Dims Peace Process Prospects." *BBC News*, March 18, 2015. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-31937224>

negotiations with Israel and that 42.1% were in favour of a violent uprising.<sup>363</sup> A poll within the Peace Index of the Israel Democracy Institute revealed that in October 2015, 53% of Israeli respondents agreed with the statement that “any Palestinian who has perpetrated a terror attack against Jews should be killed on the spot, even if he has been apprehended and no longer poses a threat.”<sup>364</sup> However, it is important to underline that these polls were carried out during a period of violent escalation which has evidently influenced these answers. More recent surveys have demonstrated that in January 2016, 67% of Israeli Jews supported a meeting between the Israeli and Palestinian leaders.<sup>365</sup> A Palestinian poll additionally revealed a decrease in the support for stabbing attacks against Israelis in the first quarter of 2016.<sup>366</sup>

The views expressed by the interview participants in Jerusalem often align with this general overview. Many were deeply concerned and often pessimistic about the future of the conflict in the city. It was for instance stated by one Israeli respondent that “the situation is bad now. So if it’s bad now I should say that I’m pessimistic. [...] And if it’s bad now it will be bad in the future, unless something changes.”<sup>367</sup> Concerns over the increasingly right-wing Israeli government were expressed by another Israeli interviewee who explained that “after the last election I feel that Israel has moved even further to the right than it was before. The right means not having good relations with the Palestinians, I... I’m very pessimistic about the thinking of my people, of Israeli Jews. I think that the government reflects what the electorate wanted; which is not what I want. So I’m very pessimistic about that.”<sup>368</sup> This opinion mirrors the one of a Palestinian participant claiming “I’m very pessimistic. I think especially after the Israeli public voting for right wing parties, I think we have ahead of us four years of acute restriction, of confrontation, and of undermining the rights of the other, of prejudice, you name it. And Jerusalem will be the focal point for all the conflict.”<sup>369</sup>

Despite acknowledging that the current situation was bad, other participants expressed more optimism for the future of the city and relations between Israelis and Palestinians. As one Israeli respondent underlined, “the only optimism that I have is that there is going to be the demographic changes in Jerusalem that could create a different reality and would change the status quo. [...] So you won’t see Palestinians only working in shops and cleaning and infrastructure, you will see them more in more sophisticated work. Then you have different

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<sup>363</sup> Kukali, Nabil. “Recent Polls.” Palestinian Center for Public Opinion, November 16, 2015. <http://www.pcpo.org/index.php/polls>.

<sup>364</sup> Yaar, Ephraim, and Tamar Hermann. “Peace Index: December 2015.” Index. Peace Index. The Israel Democracy Institute, December 2015.

<sup>365</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>366</sup> Shikaki, Khalil, and Walid Ladaweh. ‘Palestinian Public Opinion Poll No (59) - Press Release’, 21 March 2016, p. 1

<sup>367</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 8 – Gideon Solimani, Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2015

<sup>368</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 10 – Hillel Bardin, Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2015

<sup>369</sup> Jerusalem interviewee 12 – Amneh Badran, Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2015

statuses meeting together and it may be more similar classes meeting.”<sup>370</sup> The demographic changes in Israel and Jerusalem are indeed becoming a concern<sup>371</sup> in terms of the increase in Palestinian presence<sup>372</sup>, including the acquisition of Israeli citizenship<sup>373</sup>, and diversity in the city.<sup>374</sup> Interestingly, those interviewees expressing more optimism were mostly Israeli, and only one Palestinian participant shared similar positive views about the future. Optimism was generally based on social and demographic changes occurring in the city rather than on any concrete future policy implementations.

Interview participants also mentioned the increased frustration within the Palestinian community regarding their situation, particularly the younger generations. One Palestinian respondent concluded the interview by underlining “how long can you say that tomorrow there will be peace, tomorrow will end the occupation? If I tell you this is peace and we are going to make it next year, and then next year we will fix it next year. One day I will just tell you leave it, I heard it before.”<sup>375</sup> Some participants predicted that a rise in tensions and violence in Jerusalem was almost inevitable in the near future. These predictions were confirmed several months after the interviews took place, as Jerusalem fell into yet another cycle of violence and reprisals<sup>376</sup> – currently known as the ‘knife intifada’<sup>377</sup> – from September 2015<sup>378</sup> throughout the beginning of 2016.

In terms of theoretical relevance, this study on perceptions of the future of Jerusalem may contribute to a better understanding of the future power struggles (B.3 in the analytical framework) that are likely to take place at some point in the city. Mostly pessimistic perceptions were disclosed as to how these struggles might play out, including predictions of more periods of increased tension and violence to come in the foreseeable future.

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<sup>370</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 3 – Marik Shtern, Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2015

<sup>371</sup>Perry, Dan, and Karin Laub. ‘In Israel, the “demographic Issue” Gains Resonance’. *The Times of Israel*, 20 February 2014. <http://www.timesofisrael.com/in-israel-the-demographic-issue-gains-resonance/>.

<sup>372</sup> “EU Report Warns of the Changing Demographics in Jerusalem.” *Middle East Monitor - The Latest from the Middle East*, March 28, 2014. <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/news/europe/10568-eu-report-warns-of-the-changing-demographics-in-jerusalem>.

<sup>373</sup> Barakat, Rimam. “Quietly, East Jerusalem Palestinians Acquiring Israeli Citizenship | +972 Magazine.” *Blog. +972 Blog*, May 20, 2012. <http://972mag.com/quietly-east-jerusalem-palestinians-are-becoming-israeli-citizens/46298/>.

<sup>374</sup> Gordon, Evelyn. ‘Confronting the Demographic Demon’. *The Jerusalem Post | JPost.com*, 29 May 2014. <http://www.jpost.com/Experts/Confronting-the-demographic-demon-354748>.

<sup>375</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 6 – Mohamed Owedah, Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2015

<sup>376</sup> Beaumont, Peter. ‘What’s Driving the Young Lone Wolves Who Are Stalking the Streets of Israel?’ *The Guardian*, 18 October 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/18/knife-intifada-palestinian-israel-west-bank>.

<sup>377</sup>Qanta, Ahmed. “‘The Knife Intifada’: While the World Mourns Paris, Jihadism Is Destabilizing Israel.” *The Jerusalem Post | JPost.com*, July 12, 2015. <http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/The-knife-intifada-While-the-world-mourns-paris-jihadism-is-destabilizing-israel-436600>.

<sup>378</sup>Avishai, Bernard. ‘What Provoked Palestinian Knife Attacks in Israel?’ *The New Yorker*, 23 October 2015. <http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/what-provoked-palestinian-knife-attacks-in-israel>.



## Theme 1 Findings: Context of Ongoing Conflict

It is clear from the information gathered through observation, documentation and interviews and its consequent analysis that the current context in Jerusalem is not favourable to positive intergroup relations, and that on the contrary increased tensions have often been predicted and have been witnessed in the streets of the city. Acknowledging this highly negative context in Jerusalem is crucial in evaluating how shared spaces may influence relations between the Israeli and Palestinian communities in the city.

Given this reality, shared public spaces are not expected to play any major roles in improving intergroup relations. However, a more focused analysis of what actually occurs within such spaces in Jerusalem is needed before drawing any conclusions. The next section of this chapter will therefore describe daily life within the selected shared spaces in the city.

In terms of answering the theoretical questions that pertain to the Bourdieu/Foucault perspective, the following points may be highlighted about contextualisation of shared public spaces in Jerusalem. While these points might seem obvious, their acknowledgement needs to be clearly established for comparative purposes later in the thesis.

- Bourdieu/Foucault Perspective B.1 Normalised and Internationalised Way of Life: division is deeply entrenched within the lives of Jerusalemites and separation tends to be perceived as necessary given the constant cycles of intergroup violence.
- Bourdieu/Foucault Perspective B.2 The Role of Discourse: discourses and narratives used by the two groups are currently not contributing towards improving intergroup relations; rather, they are further strengthening the internalisation of separation among the inhabitants of the city.
- Bourdieu/Foucault Perspective B.3 Power Struggles: by their explicit and violent nature, power struggles in Jerusalem are understood as reinforcing division and separation.

## 2. Theme 2: Describing Daily Life and Intergroup Relations in Shared Public Spaces in Jerusalem

### Demographics and Routines in the Spaces

The area around Jaffa Gate Square, situated between the Old City and Mamilla mall, was observed to be used mostly as a space of encounter by Christian Palestinian residents of the Old City; many of them belonging to the older generation. Many religious Israeli Jews also walk through the space from West Jerusalem towards the Old City on a daily basis. Teddy Park was also observed as being visited by a mix of communities and individuals, including a

significant amount of Orthodox and religious Jews as well as Palestinians. The particularity of this park is that it hosts an accessible fountain display in which individuals are able to enjoy the cooling effects of the water during the summer heat. Mamilla mall tended to encompass a larger representative population especially in terms of secular Israelis and was mainly used as a place of consumption given its nature as a shopping centre. Both Israelis and Palestinians were spotted in the shops as well as in the cafés and restaurants, both as clients and staff members working within the mall, therefore suggesting that Mamilla is indeed a mixed and shared space. It seems relevant to mention that most of the mall's visitors from both communities were usually situated within the wealthier range of the city's population; this fact was previously underlined by an interview participant who argued that similar classes meeting could possibly lead to improved intergroup relations.<sup>379</sup> Despite the fact that the normalised and internalised way of life in the city revolves around the separation of the two communities into different neighbourhoods and societal systems, at least part of the population regularly uses spaces that are on the contrary shared and offer a different – and more mixed – reality of Jerusalem.

Observation in Jaffa Gate Square, Teddy Park and Mamilla mall also enabled a fairly accurate description of the habits and activities that regularly occurred in these parts of Jerusalem.<sup>380</sup> Jaffa Gate Square tended to be used differently by the different communities inhabiting the city, therefore severely reducing the chance of contact and interaction occurring between and amongst communities present in the space. Teddy Park was used both as a place of transit and as place of relaxation and leisure. Many people using the park as a destination came mainly to enjoy the attraction provided by the fountains. Most of the individuals observed in the park on a regular basis came to sit on the benches or in the grass to enjoy the surroundings as well as the fountains display. Although most individuals present in Mamilla mall were there for commercial purposes, it was also observed to be a place of meeting and hanging out for many young people, Israelis and Palestinians alike. One specific space within the mall was particularly popular with shoppers and passers-by in the area – large stone stairs which were also set up as a seating spot. Interestingly, over the days and weeks of observation in this particular place, it became apparent that a certain degree of separation between the communities was present even within the limits of the steps.

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<sup>379</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 3 – Marik Shtern

<sup>380</sup> Jerusalem Observation Forms 1 to 32 – Thursday 23rd April to Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2015



Figure 7: Mamilla mall, diversity on the steps

Information gathered around demographics and routines in the shared spaces in Jerusalem can therefore be considered relevant in terms of studying the normalised and internalised way of life in the city (B.1). As regards demographics, the upscale context of Mamilla mall would suggest that people of similar socio-economic backgrounds tend to tolerate each other better – as mentioned by one interview respondent.<sup>381</sup> Regarding gender, the only place where there seemed to be a significant difference was in Teddy Park which was mostly used by Palestinian men – Palestinian women were only ever observed in groups; while more Israeli women were seen in the park. The other two shared spaces did not reveal any major differences in terms of the gender or class, nor did these aspects seem to make a difference to intergroup relations in those spaces. It could be argued that the separation of the Israeli and Palestinian communities is such that even within shared spaces the two groups tend keep their distances. This was observed through the different uses of Jaffa Gate Square leading to the space being used separately without any possibility for meaningful interaction, but also on a few occasions in Teddy Park where families were occasionally witnessed sitting in different parts of the site. It could thus be argued that as long as the norm in the city is one of division and inequality, shared spaces can only be expected to generate minimal forms of positive contact between the groups.

It has become clear through observation that the separation of the Palestinian and Israeli communities is such that it has been internalised by most of the inhabitants of Jerusalem,

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<sup>381</sup>Jerusalem Interviewee 3 – Marik Shtern, Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2015

therefore leading to the normalisation of segregation in the city (B.1). This may explain why intergroup contact is so limited in shared spaces – Jerusalemites have only limited experience of interaction with the other community, and cross-community interaction is therefore not considered normal.

### Special Events in and around the Spaces

A number of special events took place in Jerusalem during the period of field research, some of which occurred within the shared spaces selected for analysis; their possible effects on intergroup relations were therefore observed and analysed.

Jerusalem Day is an Israeli national holiday celebrating the reunification of East and West Jerusalem under Israeli rule following the annexation of East Jerusalem and the victory over Jordanian troops, effectively putting an end to the Six Day War in 1967.<sup>382</sup> The narrative around this period of history is widely disputed leading to the celebrations being extremely controversial.<sup>383</sup> In 2015, Jerusalem Day was celebrated on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May and field research carried out on that particular day provided a very interesting insight into the intergroup tensions present in the city.<sup>384</sup>

Although a certain festive atmosphere was felt in areas of West Jerusalem, the overall ambiance on that day in the city was one of unease and tension. Interestingly, tension was also observed between those Israelis celebrating Jerusalem Day and a group of left-wing Israelis protesting against what they considered to be the provocative nature of such celebrations.<sup>385</sup> Observation provided very relevant information in terms of how an event such as Jerusalem Day could influence the very nature of public spaces in the city. These usually shared spaces where both communities feel comfortable enough to mingle suddenly became anything but shared. The sudden aggressive assertion of the one-sided ownership of the space led to one community temporarily avoiding such spaces out of fear for safety. On Jerusalem Day, two of the three shared spaces were suddenly no longer shared, and intergroup interaction that did occur on that day was generally very negative and even violent.<sup>386</sup> It could therefore be suggested that in the case of divided cities such as Jerusalem, the role of shared spaces in influencing intergroup relations is highly dependent on what occurs within them.

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<sup>382</sup>Go Israel. 'Jerusalem Day'. Information. *Www.goisrael.com*. Accessed 12 May 2016.  
[http://www.goisrael.com/Tourism\\_Eng/Tourist%20Information/Jewish%20Themes/Holidays/Pages/Jerusalem%20Day.aspx](http://www.goisrael.com/Tourism_Eng/Tourist%20Information/Jewish%20Themes/Holidays/Pages/Jerusalem%20Day.aspx).

<sup>383</sup>Prusher, Ilene. "On Jerusalem Day, Is There Anything to Celebrate?" *Haaretz*, May 17, 2015.  
<http://www.haaretz.com/blogs/jerusalem-vivendi/.premium-1.656897>.

<sup>384</sup>Jerusalem Observation Form 16 – Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2015

<sup>385</sup>Hasson, Nir. "Clashes Erupt Between Jews, Palestinians at Jerusalem Day March." *Haaretz*, May 17, 2015.  
<http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.656878>.

<sup>386</sup>Yanovsky, Roi. "Clashes at Damascus Gate ahead of Jerusalem Day Celebrations." *Ynet News.com*, May 17, 2015.  
<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4658326,00.html>.



Figure 8: Mamilla mall on Jerusalem Day

The other main event that has been deemed relevant for the study of intergroup relations in shared spaces was the yearly Jerusalem Light Festival which took place in and around the Old City from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> June 2015. The festival focuses on displaying a range of open-air art exhibitions all related to light and includes performances, artwork, installations and statues, visible in the different Quarters of the Old City.<sup>387</sup> Observation of this specific event revealed that the festival was fundamentally different from Jerusalem Day in that it seemed to focus on being open and inclusive<sup>388</sup> – therefore encouraging Palestinian involvement. The very nature of the event produced a very different type of atmosphere in the city, and tension was generally replaced by a festive and relaxed ambiance. While a segment of the Palestinian population did condemn the festival as being yet another encroachment on Palestinian territory within the Old City<sup>389</sup>, numerous groups of Palestinians were observed participating and enjoying the event. Both Palestinian and Israeli families attended the launch of the festival on the first evening, which took place at the entrances of the Old City – making those spaces shared. Such a supposedly inclusive event – even if it was planned by one group and therefore boycotted by a portion of the other group, sometimes leading to clashes<sup>390</sup> – remained the most shared event to be observed in Jerusalem. The mingling of the two communities in a festive atmosphere within the shared space of Jaffa Gate demonstrated that space could also be transformed into a higher quality shared space. Interestingly, the media did not focus on this particular aspect of

<sup>387</sup>Jerusalem Light Festival. “Light Festival in Jerusalem | Jerusalem 2016.” Information. *Lights in Jerusalem*. Accessed January 28, 2016. <http://www.lights-in-jerusalem.com/>.

<sup>388</sup>iTravel Jerusalem. ‘Jerusalem Festival of Light 2016’. Information. *iTravelJerusalem*. Accessed 12 May 2016. <http://www.itraveljerusalem.com/events/jerusalem-festival-of-light/>.

<sup>389</sup>“In Pictures: ‘The Israeli Festival of Lights’...A Judaization of Jerusalem and a Theft of Its History.” *Silwanic*, June 10, 2015. <http://silwanic.net/?p=59242>.

<sup>390</sup>‘Police Clash with Palestinians in Jerusalem during Light Festival’. *The Jerusalem Post* | *JPost.com*, 4 June 2015. <http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Police-clash-with-Palestinians-in-Jerusalem-during-Light-Festival-405013>.

the festival and far more articles dealt with the arrest of Palestinians following protests against the organisation of the event<sup>391</sup> while only one article was found to mention its mixed nature.<sup>392</sup> Again, this tends to demonstrate the pivotal role of discourse, which in this case is not directed towards improving intergroup relations in the city. It is also important to underline that given the current asymmetrical situation in the city and the partisan nature of the authorities, the festive and neutral atmosphere observed during the festival between members of the Israeli and Palestinian communities is not expected to improve in any way intergroup relations in the city on a wider scale. Research has simply revealed that on this particular occasion, an event was observed as being enjoyed by members of both communities; the study does not intend to extrapolate such a description, however neither should it be overlooked.

Indeed, while the event has been described as a-political, the very fact that the Light Festival is organised by the Jerusalem Municipality demonstrates its one-sidedness. Furthermore, it has been underlined that “as the state literally projects itself into colonised space, the ways in which the Light Festival serves to reinforce its power over colonised territory are hidden from view. ‘Culture’ and ‘art’ serve as allegedly neutral and apolitical spheres, while in fact facilitating the signification of the space as Israeli.”<sup>393</sup> The Jerusalem Municipality was involved in the organisation of Jerusalem Day<sup>394</sup> and the Light Festival<sup>395</sup>, yet the outcomes greatly differed; as one gave way to violent confrontations and heightened tension while the other led to a relatively festive atmosphere enjoyed to a certain degree by both communities (although this was not unanimous).

Analysis of particular events in the city (namely Jerusalem Day celebrations) has revealed how important the role of discourse (B.2) is in forming opposing group narratives which may influence intergroup relations. Although the Light Festival was in comparison much more of a shared and inclusive event – as the Palestinian community was encouraged to participate – the complexity of such a festival became noticeable. Indeed, the fact that a portion of the Palestinian population of Jerusalem preferred to boycott the event demonstrated how the

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<sup>391</sup> Euronews. ‘Police Clash with Palestinian Protesters amid Jerusalem Light Festival | Euronews, No Comment’. *No Comment*, 4 June 2015. <http://www.euronews.com/nocomment/2015/06/04/police-clash-with-palestinian-protesters-amid-jerusalem-light-festival/>; Bernstein, Daniel. ‘Police Arrest 3 at Protest against Jerusalem Festival’. *The Times of Israel*, 4 June 2015. <http://www.timesofisrael.com/3-arrested-in-protest-against-festival-in-jerusalem/>.

<sup>392</sup> Harman, Danna. “How the Old City’s Damascus Gate Turned Into a Giant Pinball Machine.” *Haaretz*, June 12, 2012. <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/how-the-old-city-s-damascus-gate-turned-into-a-giant-pinball-machine.premium-1.435945>.

<sup>393</sup> Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Nadera. ‘The Occupation of the Senses: The Prosthetic and Aesthetic of State Terror’. *British Journal of Criminology*, 10 September 2016, p. 7

<sup>394</sup> Jerusalem Municipality. ‘Jerusalem Day 2015’. Information. *Jerusalem Municipality*. Accessed 12 May 2016. <https://www.jerusalem.muni.il/en/Events/Special/YomYerushalayim/Pages/default.aspx>.

<sup>395</sup> Jerusalem Municipality. ‘Light Festival’. Information. *Jerusalem Municipality*. Accessed 12 May 2016. <https://www.jerusalem.muni.il/en/Events/Special/Pages/Lightfestival.aspx>.

organisation of a seemingly inclusive project could depict the constant power-struggles (B.3) occurring between the different groups within the city.

### Interaction and Levels of Intergroup Contact in the Spaces

One of the main purposes of carrying out research in shared public spaces was to establish how their daily use by different communities influences levels of cross-community interaction in the city and to ultimately evaluate the role – if any – of such spaces in transforming intergroup relations.

Given the different nature of the three selected spaces, different levels of interactions were observed; however contact between members of different communities was generally limited in all three spaces. The main conclusion drawn from the days of observation was that not much interaction between Israelis and Palestinians occurred on a regular basis in shared public spaces.

Given the different uses of space in Jaffa Gate Square<sup>396</sup> between Israeli Jews (usually passing by) and Palestinians (more likely to sit and stay longer), hardly any meaningful interaction was observed between the two communities there, although there was usually a relaxed atmosphere around the place.<sup>397</sup>

Observation in Teddy Park yielded similarly low levels of interaction between Israeli and Palestinian visitors and groups sitting apart were occasionally witnessed<sup>398</sup>, demonstrating that the communities tended to keep their distances. However, the fountains attracted children and families from all communities; leading to a high degree of mixing between Orthodox, secular Israeli and Palestinian children playing in very close proximity within the relatively confined water area.<sup>399</sup> The observation of this peaceful coexistence in the park revealed that although interaction was very limited, both communities were able to enjoy the space of the park in the close presence of the other without this causing any palpable tension.<sup>400</sup>

In Mamilla mall although customers would not generally interact, contact between Israeli and Palestinian staff working in the shops, restaurants and cafes was observed on a daily basis<sup>401</sup> and no tension was ever discerned during such interaction.<sup>402</sup> While contact between clients

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<sup>396</sup> Jerusalem Observation Form 30 – Friday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2015

<sup>397</sup> Jerusalem Observation Form 21 – Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2015

<sup>398</sup> Jerusalem Observation Form 2 – Friday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2015

<sup>399</sup> Jerusalem Observation Form 12 – Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2015; Observation Form 15 – Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2015; Observation Form 18 – Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2015; Observation Form 24 – Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> May 2015; Observation Form 25 – Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2015

<sup>400</sup> Observation Form 23 – Friday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2015; Observation Form 24 – Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> May 2015

<sup>401</sup> Jerusalem Observation Form 5 – Monday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2015; Jerusalem Observation Form 18 – Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2015

<sup>402</sup> Jerusalem Observation Form 2 – Friday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2015; Jerusalem Observation Form 5 – Monday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2015

and staff members was almost always carried out in Hebrew, contact between staff members occurred in both Hebrew and Arabic. Observation included the following description - “where I’m sitting there are two groups of young men – one is speaking Hebrew, the other Arabic. They don’t look very different. Oh now I’m confused: the Hebrew speaking group just spoke in Arabic (I heard ‘Salam’ instead of ‘Shalom’) maybe they are all Palestinian.”<sup>403</sup>The observation of this group of restaurant workers sitting on the steps demonstrated that meaningful and even friendly interaction did take place in at least this particular space on a regular basis. While Mamilla mall may not be considered a neutral space, its specificity a commercial centre drawing individuals from both communities is significant. In other words, “though we should not lose sight of the fact that Palestinian consumption at Israeli commercial centres is in many ways reinforcing the Israeli occupation in terms of partial normalisation of the economic relations between the populations, it is equally true that neoliberal commercial spaces, especially those like Mamilla Mall, undermine ethnocratic goals in relation to the identity and composition of urban space.”<sup>404</sup>

It may thus be maintained that despite the very limited occurrence of meaningful interaction and its near absence in certain of the shared spaces observed, relatively peaceful coexistence tended to be the norm in the three shared spaces during the period of field research in Jerusalem.<sup>405</sup>

Observation findings were generally backed by information provided through the interviews, and it was underlined that cross-community interaction was “really, really, really rare.”<sup>406</sup> In fact, “you can live all your life without meeting Palestinians. Unless you look at who is doing the dishes in the restaurant.”<sup>407</sup>This view on the scarcity of interaction has also been underlined by observers and it has been claimed that “Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs pass one another but do not mingle.”<sup>408</sup>The fact that Jerusalem remains fairly segregated in terms of residence was also understood as contributing towards the reduced interaction between the two communities, as “you live in East or West, you live in your own neighbourhood, and you

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<sup>403</sup> Jerusalem Observation Form 4 – Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2015

<sup>404</sup> Shtern, Marik. ‘Urban Neoliberalism vs. Ethno-National Division: The Case of West Jerusalem’s Shopping Malls’. *Cities* 52 (March 2016): 132–39, p. 138

<sup>405</sup> Jerusalem Observation Forms 1 to 32 – Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April to Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2015

<sup>406</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 2 – Michael Alexander, Monday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2015

<sup>407</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 4 – Professor Haim Yacobi, Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2015

<sup>408</sup> Klein, Menachem. *Lives in Common: Arabs and Jews in Jerusalem, Jaffa and Hebron*. Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 1



rarely speak to each other.”<sup>409</sup>The recent upsurge in violence led commentators to argue that divisions are only becoming starker<sup>410</sup>, further reducing cross-community interaction.<sup>411</sup>

Interestingly, interview and documentary findings also revealed another perspective claiming that there was an increasing amount of interaction between Israelis and Palestinians in Jerusalem. The fact that Jerusalem remains an open city inevitably leads to a certain amount of mixing between its inhabitants, which will only become more prominent with the demographic upsurge of Palestinian residents in the city. This reality of increased mixing and interaction has been underlined by certain commentators<sup>412</sup>, and coexistence in the city is becoming a progressively acknowledged aspect of urban life with the increasingly noticeable presence of Palestinians in many public spaces and institutions in Jerusalem.<sup>413</sup> One Israeli interviewee argued that “Jerusalem is one of the most mixed cities in Israel. You know, it’s the biggest Arab city in Israel and the biggest Jewish city in Israel. And it’s much more mixed than people perceive, even the Jerusalemites themselves.”<sup>414</sup> Another participant further mentioned that “I don’t think that either side could go a whole day without interacting with the other. [...] I think that there’s a lot less separation than we think there is.”<sup>415</sup> Those participants who provided those arguments – mainly Israelis – were usually those who were more positive in terms of the future of the city.

This difference in opinions regarding interaction may be partly explained by the different understandings of what interaction actually refers to and what it entails. It could thus be argued that interaction between Israelis and Palestinians in Jerusalem does occur; yet the differences it makes to cross-community relations depends on the type of interaction which is involved – non-meaningful interaction may not be deemed relevant and negative interaction is also a reality that needs to be taken into account.

The unequal situation on the ground between the two communities<sup>416</sup> in terms of rights and political power is generally recognised within the international community<sup>417</sup> and may be

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<sup>409</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 12 – Amneh Badran, Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2015

<sup>410</sup> Bronner, Ethan. “For Israelis and Palestinians, Separation Is Dehumanizing.” *The New York Times*, July 11, 2014. <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/13/sunday-review/for-israelis-and-palestinians-separation-is-dehumanizing.html>.

<sup>411</sup> Gorenberg, Gershom. “Jerusalem, a City Ripping Apart.” *Haaretz*, July 15, 2014. <http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-1.605275>.

<sup>412</sup> Friedman, Matti. ‘Coexistence in Jerusalem | Reporting on the Middle East, Science, and Education’. Blog. *CN Publications*, 4 March 2013. <http://cnpublications.net/2013/03/04/coexistence-in-jerusalem-2/>.

<sup>413</sup> Erlich, Yifat. “A Fragile Coexistence at Jerusalem’s Hadassah Hospital.” *Ynet News.com*, October 20, 2015. <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4712411,00.html>.

<sup>414</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 3 – Marik Shtern, Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2015

<sup>415</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 7 – Jodie Asaraf, Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2015

<sup>416</sup> Black, Ian. “Lives in Common: Arabs and Jews in Jerusalem, Jaffa and Hebron by Menachem Klein - Review.” *The Guardian*, March 20, 2015, sec. World news. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/on-the-middle-east/2015/mar/20/intertwined-histories-in-palestine-and-israel>.

understood as greatly limiting the potential for positive contact in shared public spaces. The shared but unequal aspect of public spaces in Jerusalem has been highlighted by the Conflict in Cities project, stating that “one of the main reasons for Palestinians crossing the boundary between East and West Jerusalem is essentially pragmatic, reflecting the unequal distribution of infrastructure and services between the two communities.”<sup>418</sup> Interview participants also underlined this point, and as one Palestinian respondent explained “but really, do you know Arabs? No. Where is the first time that you met them? At the checkpoint, when I was 18 with my M16 and I was a soldier. That is the problem; this is the first meeting between Palestinians and Israelis.”<sup>419</sup>

The current situation has led to the emergence of various pro-Palestinian movements such as the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) group which strives to change the situation by ceasing all kind of contact with Israel and its citizens.<sup>420</sup> On a more local level, the anti-normalisation movement within the Palestinian society has in recent years discouraged any kind of interaction between Palestinians and Israelis until a political solution to the conflict is found. It has become increasingly frowned upon to develop even friendships with Israelis, let alone other types of contact; and when Palestinians “decide to meet Israelis, they know there are consequences.”<sup>421</sup> Despite this rejection of contact and interaction by part of the Palestinian (and Israeli) population, most of the interview participants believed that contact was to be preferred over division; even if its role in the current context in Jerusalem was very limited. This view is shared among the moderate sector of Israeli society, who promotes cooperation<sup>422</sup> and understands anti-normalisation as threatening peace efforts.<sup>423</sup>

Research findings around intergroup contact directly answer one of the main theory questions on meaningful cross-community interaction and effects of proximity in shared spaces (A.2). In essence, it was revealed that meaningful interaction between members of the different communities in Jerusalem was typically limited in shared spaces. While this may mitigate the relevance of intergroup contact theory in such situations, it should nevertheless be underlined

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<sup>417</sup> Sheppard, Ferrari. ‘I Traveled to Palestine-Israel and Discovered There Is No “Palestinian-Israeli Conflict”’. *The Huffington Post*, 10 February 2014. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ferrari-sheppard/i-traveled-to-palestine\\_b\\_4761896.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ferrari-sheppard/i-traveled-to-palestine_b_4761896.html).

<sup>418</sup> Conflict in Cities. “Sharing Space in Divided Cities.” Briefing Paper. Conflict in Cities and the Contested State, November 2012.

<sup>419</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 6 – Mohamed Owedah, Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2015

<sup>420</sup> Frantzman, Seth J. “Success and Pitfalls of Palestinian Anti-Normalization.” *The Jerusalem Post | JPost.com*, May 31, 2015. <http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Success-and-pitfalls-of-Palestinian-anti-normalization-404641>.

<sup>421</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 2 – Michael Alexander, Monday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2015

<sup>422</sup> Baskin, Gershon. “Encountering Peace: Yes, It Is Difficult to Make Peace.” *The Jerusalem Post | JPost.com*, December 23, 2015. <http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/ENCOUNTERING-PEACE-Yes-it-is-difficult-to-make-peace-438226>.

<sup>423</sup> Braunold, Joel, and Huda Abuarquob. ‘A Bigger Threat Than BDS: Anti-Normalization’. *Haaretz*, 2 July 2015. <http://www.haaretz.com/jewish/the-jewish-thinker/.premium-1.664018>.

that the effects of proximity could be understood as influencing – very minimally and under certain circumstances – intergroup relations in the spaces by generally leading to peaceful coexistence.

## Theme 2 Findings: Limited Interaction within Regularly Shared Spaces

The main conclusions to be drawn from this second section of the chapter are that despite the fact that both communities share physical spaces, this does not generally lead to increased interaction and therefore lessens the potential for the improvement of intergroup relations in the city. Yet the very fact that these shared public spaces offer the opportunity of encounter should not be neglected. Coexistence in Jerusalem is widely considered as a vital aspect to be encouraged<sup>424</sup> by many philanthropist and non-governmental organisations and commentators have called for the further development and celebration of Jerusalem's inherent diversity.<sup>425</sup> Yet such coexistence will not fundamentally change relations if the wider context of an ongoing occupation and colonisation process is not put into question. Referring to the theoretical framework of the research, the findings have revealed the following:

- Intergroup Contact Theory A.1 Authority Support: the role of the Jerusalem Municipality in organising both negative and neutral events for intergroup relations demonstrates the importance of authority support in influencing the role of shared spaces.
- Intergroup Contact Theory A.2 Meaningful Interaction: meaningful interaction between members of the Israeli and Palestinian communities in Jerusalem is typically limited in shared spaces. However, it may be suggested that the exposure effect of sharing a common space does provide the experience of the other and normalises coexistence.
- Intergroup Contact Theory A.3 Negative Contact Effects: the ongoing cycles of violence have recently occasionally led to negative interaction between members of both communities, therefore suggesting that shared spaces may not only make positive differences to intergroup relations in the city.
- Bourdieu/Foucault Perspective B.1 Normalised and Internalised Way of Life: segregation has been normalised in the city, leading to Jerusalemites only having limited experiences of interaction with the other community; cross-community interaction is thus not the norm.

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<sup>424</sup>YMCA Jerusalem. "Jerusalem International YMCA." Information. *YMCA Jerusalem*. Accessed January 29, 2016. <http://ymca.org.il/>.

<sup>425</sup>Ben-Meir, Alon. "Jerusalem Must Exemplify Coexistence." *The Huffington Post*, October 10, 2010. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alon-benmeir/jerusalem-must-exemplify\\_b\\_758234.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alon-benmeir/jerusalem-must-exemplify_b_758234.html).

- Bourdieu/Foucault Perspective B.2 The Role of Discourse: analysis of certain events such as Jerusalem Day celebrations suggests that differing narratives and discourses may influence intergroup relations. The current dominant Israeli discourse around the reunification of Jerusalem does not seem to be aimed towards improving relations with the Palestinian community.
- Bourdieu/Foucault Perspective B.3 Power Struggles: in addition to the very obvious violent confrontations occasionally occurring in Jerusalem, constant power struggles were also depicted at more complex and implicit levels, such as the boycott of the seemingly inclusive and shared Light Festival by members of the Palestinian community.

### 3. Theme 3: Assessing the Interpretation of Shared Public Spaces in Jerusalem

#### Perceptions of Shared Space in Jerusalem

The term shared space has only relatively recently emerged within the context of conflict transformation, and as previously discussed in Chapter One no clearly established definition has gained unanimous acceptance by academics and professionals focusing on this particular theme. Instead of relying on one clear-cut definition, this study has instead focused on exploring and analysing the different understandings of shared space that already exist. Given the relatively small number of publications dedicated to the specificity of shared public spaces in contested and divided cities, the study has primarily focused on the understandings of shared space that emerged from the interviews carried out in the case study cities. The findings are therefore not expected to be representative, but rather will provide an insight into the various interpretations of shared space within a particular context.

Interview participants in Jerusalem were generally not well accustomed to the term ‘shared space’ which is more widely used in the peace process context of Northern Ireland. Various definitions were thus provided demonstrating that the term remains vague in the Jerusalem context. Despite the variety of different answers, a number of similar aspects have been identified. Most of the participants agreed that shared space could usually be understood as public space, encompassing such areas as parks, markets, shopping centres and so on. The following definition provided by one interviewee represents this understanding – “it’s usually a public space, open space, it can be a park or a square, or even a piazza or a street where you have people in like sort of large, you know critical mass of people from different communities

that are physically there.”<sup>426</sup> Other adjectives for shared space included open space, space of encounter, safe space, equal space, neutral space and integrated space.

This broad interpretation of shared space was further confirmed by two participants who argued that contact did not have to occur between members of the different communities within the space for it to be considered shared. Hence from their perspective, “it [shared space] doesn’t have to have interaction, they [individuals] don’t have to interact in any way. It might be a tense encounter, it might be a calm encounter, it might be a, what do you say, ignore each other totally. But still the fact that they are both together in the same space would be for me a shared space or a space of encounter.”<sup>427</sup> Being in the presence of members of the other community was therefore deemed to be the main aspect defining a shared space rather than what type of interaction – if any – occurred in such spaces. Participants also highlighted that this space should be “somewhere where you’d have all the communities that live in the city feel safe enough to go and hang out in.”<sup>428</sup>

Interestingly, the term itself came under scrutiny and criticism by two Israeli academics regarding the use of the adjective ‘shared’ in describing such spaces. Indeed, as one participant explained, “I don’t know if share is the right word, I don’t know. [...] I think there’s a semantic problem here. I would say that the parallel use of spaces, parallel maybe more correct.”<sup>429</sup> This grammatical unease was further explained “because ‘sharing’ is a sensitive word [...] it kind of describes a mutual sharing, right? And that’s not what exactly happens in those kinds of spaces. In many ways Palestinians are guests in Jewish territories [...] temporarily.”<sup>430</sup> Alternative definitions that were suggested by these participants included ‘parallel use of space’ and ‘spaces of encounter’, which also fit most of the descriptions provided by the majority of interview participants in Jerusalem. This ‘parallel use of space’ could suggest that coexisting at a distance might be more feasible in this particular context rather than truly cooperating on a shared and equal basis.

The ownership of space was mentioned as an important aspect by at least one interviewee when attempting to define shared spaces. Given the current context in Jerusalem, the entire city is under Israeli control and it could be argued that space is de facto Israeli owned. It was highlighted by one participant that “if you come to a Jewish place it’s Ok, it’s open for you, you can come and have a coffee and so on but it is a Jewish place.”<sup>431</sup> Linked to this issue, many

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<sup>426</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 2 – Michael Alexander, Monday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2015

<sup>427</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 3 – Marik Shtern, Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2015

<sup>428</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 5 – Mandy Turner, Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2015

<sup>429</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 4 – Haim Yacobi, Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2015

<sup>430</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 3 – Marik Shtern, Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2015

<sup>431</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 8 – Gideon Solimani, Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2015

respondents also underlined that inequality in terms of ownership was problematic in providing a definition of shared space. It was thus mentioned that “you can’t share spaces unless they are used equally, unless they are used for neutral reasons. Not for imposed reasons.”<sup>432</sup> As such, that respondent expressed his doubt in assimilating shared space to public space in Jerusalem, as public space is rarely neutral or equal in the city.

Although not directly providing information on how much meaningful interaction (A.2) occurs within the shared space, some of the participants mentioned that actual contact was not necessary for a space to be considered shared. The mere exposure effect highlighted within the intergroup contact theory would tend to support this claim, therefore suggesting that although intergroup contact might not be systematically enhanced within shared spaces; such spaces do at least offer proximity and the experience of being in the presence of the other community in an overwhelmingly divided urban environment.

### Situating Shared Public Spaces within the City of Jerusalem

The purpose of this small section is to highlight the position of shared public spaces within the wider urban context of the case study. As previously mentioned, the three selected shared spaces are all situated in central Jerusalem, along the now invisible Green Line demarcating the West and East of the city. A few other spaces that were observed as being used by both communities were situated further within Israeli West Jerusalem, while no shared public spaces were identified in Palestinian East Jerusalem. As underlined by one interview participant, “public space is mainly on the Israeli side, there’s no public space on the Palestinian side. Except roads and schools, but nothing concerning parks, nothing concerning community centres, cultural centres, community service centres; they are all dominated by Israeli occupation.”<sup>433</sup> The location of shared public spaces is therefore a crucial element to take into account, as in this case mixing essentially involves Palestinians coming into Israeli space. The lack of public spaces in East Jerusalem has been underlined by numerous commentators<sup>434</sup> and organisations.<sup>435</sup> It was further underlined by a Palestinian interviewee that “Palestinians present everywhere is something that you can feel in the city because we are

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<sup>432</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 9 – Rami Nasrallah, Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2015

<sup>433</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 9 – Rami Nasrallah, Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2015

<sup>434</sup> Zandberg, Esther. ‘Why a Renowned Palestinian Architect Quit Jerusalem’. *Haaretz*, 15 September 2015. <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.675956>.

<sup>435</sup> Ir Amin. “Settlements and National Parks.” Accessed January 29, 2016. <http://www.ir-amim.org.il/en/report/absentees-against-their-will-%E2%80%93-property-expropriation-east-jerusalem-under-absentee-property>.

not talking about a small minority, we are forty percent of the population at least. It's mainly one-sided. We use their space; they don't come to our space."<sup>436</sup>

Yet despite this reality, both communities were observed and generally understood as using and therefore sharing a number of public or urban spaces on a daily basis. Such spaces include the zoo, Hadassah hospital, Hebrew University, Malha mall, the tram and areas along the Green Line, and less specific spaces such as some work spaces, supermarkets, streets, government offices, post offices, shopping centres, parks, and buses.

Information gathered through the interviews further revealed that Mamilla mall was generally considered to be one of the most shared spaces in Jerusalem. As underlined by one Palestinian interviewee, "in Mamilla the selling point is different from other Israeli shopping malls. They don't emphasise the Israeli character of the place. You have Palestinians who are working there in Israeli shops which is different from any other shopping mall. It is close to the Old City, that's part of the flow of the Old City and it's serving a more international global image of Jerusalem so it's orientated to tourism and that was mainly a good selling point to get Palestinians into this, I mean to have more positive interaction."<sup>437</sup> One Israeli participant also mentioned that Mamilla was planned to be a shared space or at least a shopping centre for both the Jewish and Palestinian communities of Jerusalem. Indeed, "initially [...] it was one of the targets. To build a bridge between East and West, Jews and Arabs."<sup>438</sup> The specificity of Mamilla mall has been detailed at the beginning of the chapter, and the fact that the initial architects and organisers of the project were mindful of creating a space to be used and shared by both groups supports this last claim.<sup>439</sup>

Other spaces regarded as shared by a number of the interviewees were parks in the city, especially those situated close to the Green Line between East and West Jerusalem. In such parks "you'll always see families with kids, a mix of Jewish and Arab. Because there's the neighbourhood of Abu Tor nearby and I think it's the closest park they have. So it's another place where you have really a park with mixing."<sup>440</sup> One park that was mentioned by several participants was the Gan Hapaamon Park (also known as the Liberty Bell Park) located close to the Old City. According to one participant, "it's all mixed; that really is a place that is the most mixed. And [...] the fear, the initial fear that Jews would have going there has dissipated pretty

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<sup>436</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 9 – Rami Nasrallah, Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2015

<sup>437</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 9 – Rami Nasrallah, Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2015

<sup>438</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 3 – Marik Shtern, Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2015

<sup>439</sup> Zohar, Gil. 'After 37 Years, Mamilla Eyesore Nears Completion'. *The Jerusalem Post* | *JPost.com*, 25 May 2007. <http://www.gilzohar.ca/articles/israel/i2007-17.html>.

<sup>440</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 2 – Michael Alexander, Monday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2015

much.”<sup>441</sup> Despite the vast majority of participants underlining that Jerusalem remains a divided and even segregated city, such public spaces located close to the Green Line were generally considered to be frequented by members of both communities. As one participant pointed out, “the most evident places where Palestinians and Israelis are meeting would be malls and parks. This is like for Jerusalemites where they would say ‘wow, there are so many Palestinians or so many Israelis here’. Malls and parks would be both the most evident.”<sup>442</sup>

Given the current context in Jerusalem, it could therefore be suggested that positive effects of shared spaces on intergroup relations are mitigated as they are generally owned by one group rather than being truly shared by both communities residing in the city.<sup>443</sup> This reality led one Palestinian interviewee to claim that “there are definitely no shared spaces in Jerusalem [...]. Palestinians are using Israeli spaces but that does not turn it into a shared one.”<sup>444</sup> Again, what constitutes a shared space in Jerusalem may vary depending on what is considered to be shared and what the term implies for intergroup relations. It may be argued that in the case of Jerusalem, shared spaces only exist through a broader understanding of physical place which is limited to the presence and regular use of both communities.

The main aspect to emerge from perceptions of shared space was their relative scarcity in Jerusalem, which remains a deeply divided and even segregated city. Yet despite this reality of entrenched separation between the Palestinian and Israeli Jewish communities, a number of spaces do exist in which both groups feel safe and comfortable enough to visit on a regular basis; thus leading to small degrees of sharing and mixing in the city.

### The Role of Shared Public Spaces in Jerusalem

In the specific context of Jerusalem, the findings described in this chapter may lead to the suggestion that shared public spaces play a minimal or even non-existent role in actively improving intergroup relations in the city.

Indeed, observation in the three selected shared spaces revealed that only minimal levels of intergroup contact occurred on a regular basis between the Israeli and Palestinian communities, therefore mitigating the effects predicted by the contact hypothesis. Moreover, the current situation of inequality between the groups and the one-sided control over the city usually at the expense of the other community means that such spaces are not shared equally.

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<sup>441</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 10 – Hillel Bardin, Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2015

<sup>442</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 3 – Marik Shtern, Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2015

<sup>443</sup> Hartian, Itamar. “Palestine-Israel Journal: Seizing Control of Space in East Jerusalem by Meir Margalit.” *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture*, Jerusalem: The Eye of the Storm, 17, no. 12 (2011).

<sup>444</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 9 – Rami Nasrallah, Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2015



In periods of violence, public spaces also become the focus of intergroup antagonism, as they are the only physical spaces where the two communities come face to face. During the summer of 2014 a number of shared spaces did become spaces of open confrontation when groups of right-wing nationalist Israeli youths attacked any Palestinians they came across.<sup>445</sup> More recently, knife attacks carried out by some Palestinians<sup>446</sup> and nationalist Israeli reactions<sup>447</sup> have often been located within shared spaces. In such circumstances, it becomes clear that physically sharing a space with hostile members of the other community (Israeli or Palestinian) can lead to negative effects on intergroup relations.

On the other hand, observation has also revealed that the regular use of a space by both communities generally prompted peaceful coexistence rather than intergroup tension and confrontation. Taking this more optimistic perspective, it could be argued that shared spaces may at the very least play a role in normalising coexistence in an otherwise divided society. Commentators and organisations<sup>448</sup> working towards improving intergroup relations in Jerusalem have highlighted the importance of coexistence and acknowledging the presence of the other community in the city.<sup>449</sup> The familiarity of regularly experiencing the other in shared public spaces may thus be considered as the most that such spaces can offer in terms of positive effects on relations between Israelis and Palestinians in Jerusalem.

Information gathered through interviews led to similar results, with Palestinian participants arguing that given the current situation and particularly during periods of heightened tension, shared spaces in Jerusalem could not be expected to yield any positive effects. The imbalance and inequality between the groups on the ground was mentioned and led to the mitigation of any positive outcomes that such spaces may offer in divided cities. One respondent crucially underlined that “it’s not the normal conditions where people want to know each other or want to communicate with each other. I don’t see it. And on the contrary I think that in the last few years we have more and more tension in the city.”<sup>450</sup> Following the most recent cycle of violence, another interviewee argued that “the so-called shared spaces are not shared anymore. People are scared. [...] It’s not safe anymore; it’s dangerous these days in Jerusalem.”<sup>451</sup> One Palestinian respondent also explained that the very little difference that such spaces made was

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<sup>445</sup>Hasson, Nir. “Extreme Rightists Attack Palestinians in Jerusalem as Teens Laid to Rest.” *Haaretz*, July 1, 2014. <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.602523>.

<sup>446</sup>Booth, William, and Ruth Eglash. “Israel Calls Palestinian Knife Attacks ‘a New Kind of Terrorism.’” *The Independent*, December 26, 2015. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-calls-palestinian-knife-attacks-a-new-kind-of-terrorism-a6787036.html>.

<sup>447</sup>Hasson, Nir. “Far-Right Activists Chant ‘Death to Arabs,’ Assault Passersby in Jerusalem After Terror Attack.” *Haaretz*, October 4, 2015. <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.678722>.

<sup>448</sup>Nachmani, Avi. “Learning Arabic: The Key to Coexistence.” *Ynet News.com*, January 11, 2016. <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4751488,00.html>.

<sup>449</sup>Seeds of Peace ; Jerusalem Foundation ; YMCA, Kids4Peace amongst others

<sup>450</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 9 – Rami Nasrallah

<sup>451</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 1 – Anonymous

due to the separate use of it, as “it’s a space where both go to but they stay separate. [...] You don’t find people coming together and speaking together, chatting; where the children are playing together and the parents are chatting with each other – no.”<sup>452</sup>

Yet it was also argued that in essence, the sharing of space by different communities could lead to relatively beneficial outcomes. The main argument of this more positive perspective was that “integration and any interactions are much better than division; because at least it has the potential inside it for a positive thing. Division doesn’t have that. [...] Maybe you limit the possibilities for violence, but you also minimise the possibilities for any positive exchange or transformation. In the interaction you have [...] the potential for both.”<sup>453</sup> The value of sharing space was further explained by one Israeli participant as “the fact that you can see people who are, I mean they are not monsters, from both sides. [...] I think in a way it maybe cracks the process of demonization of the other.”<sup>454</sup> Another participant also maintained that shared space “makes people familiar with the other. They might not have a relationship but the more you see the other person the less they are strange. If you’re in the same place like a mall or in a park, you see that you have the same kinds of needs and the kinds of desires in your everyday life.”<sup>455</sup>

It may therefore be suggested that the simple act of sharing a physical space will not necessarily lead to meaningful interaction and therefore to improved intergroup relations. Closely related to this, it appears that the lack of authority support from Jerusalem Municipality in enhancing the effects of shared spaces as spaces of positive encounter and diversity may be one of the reasons for the very limited interaction occurring in such spaces. Finally, this lack of support and context of heightened tensions may in fact lead to the opposite effect than that suggested by the intergroup contact hypothesis – negative intergroup contact. Situations of extreme tension and violence against one or the other community have recently occurred mostly within periods of escalation of violence in the city such as during the summer of 2014 and more recently with the spate of knife attacks in 2015 and 2016. In such periods of violence, shared public spaces have occasionally been transformed into easy targets for attacks<sup>456</sup> against both Israeli<sup>457</sup> and Palestinian<sup>458</sup> inhabitants of the city, therefore negating any positive effects of such spaces on intergroup relations. However, it is important to yet

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<sup>452</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 12 – Amneh Badran

<sup>453</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 3 – Marik Shtern

<sup>454</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 4 – Haim Yacobi

<sup>455</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 7 – Jodie Asaraf

<sup>456</sup> Harel, Amos. ‘East Jerusalem’s Leading Role in Terror Attacks Catches Israel Off Guard’. *Haaretz*, 17 October 2015. <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.680771>.

<sup>457</sup> Yanovsky, Roi. “5 Wounded in Two Attacks at Damascus Gate.” *Ynet News.com*, October 10, 2015. <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4709114,00.html>.

<sup>458</sup> Oppenheimer, Yudith. ‘Hatred in Jerusalem’. *The Jerusalem Post | JPost.com*, 3 September 2014. <http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Hatred-in-Jerusalem-374361>.

again underline the fact that observation carried out in the three selected shared spaces did not yield such negative results, the research occurring in between two separate spaces of increased tension and violence.

### **Theme 3 Findings: Perceived Limited Role of Shared Spaces**

The main conclusion to be drawn from the study of this third theme assessing the interpretations of shared public spaces is that their role in the particular context of Jerusalem is believed to yield only marginal effects – or no effects at all – on intergroup relations between the Israeli and Palestinian communities; hence drastically limiting their potential for conflict transformation efforts in the city. The findings applied to the theoretical framework lead to the following results:

- Intergroup Contact Theory A.1 Authority Support: the lack of support from the Jerusalem Municipality towards enhancing shared spaces as places of encounter and interaction between the communities in Jerusalem is evident.
- Intergroup Contact Theory A.2 Meaningful Interaction: it was revealed through research that the act of sharing a physical space does not necessarily lead to any meaningful interaction; therefore such spaces may not make any difference to intergroup relations in the city.
- Intergroup Contact Theory A.3 Negative Contact Effects: the current context of heightened tensions as well as the unequal status of the two communities may lead to negative types of interaction rather than improved intergroup relations.
- Bourdieu/Foucault Perspective B.2 The Role of Discourse: the term ‘shared space’ is not part of any official or dominant discourse on either side of the divide in Jerusalem; and neither is the importance of improving intergroup relations.

## Shared Public Spaces in Jerusalem Analytical and Theoretical Framework

### A. Intergroup Contact Theory – Cross-community Interaction

#### A.1 Authority Support:

1. Was the shared space planned as a space of cross-community encounter by city authorities when first established?

⇒ Most shared public spaces are not specifically planned as spaces of cross-community encounter and interaction; apart from Mamilla mall which was originally planned as a bridge between East and West Jerusalem and between the Israeli Jewish and Palestinian communities. Teddy Park was planned as a space of coexistence and encounter, but by the non-profit Jerusalem Foundation rather than the municipality.

#### A.2 Meaningful Interaction:

2. Does any meaningful cross-community interaction occur within the shared space and what are the effects of proximity?

⇒ Meaningful interaction is very limited in shared public spaces, yet the sharing of these spaces does generally lead to peaceful coexistence.

#### A.3 Negative Contact Effects:

3. Are particular tensions felt within the shared space which may lead to negative interaction?

⇒ The sharing of public spaces in Jerusalem can occasionally lead to negative or violent interaction during periods of heightened tensions in the city, therefore challenging peaceful coexistence in such spaces.

### B. Bourdieu/Foucault Perspective - Context

#### B.1 Habitus/discipline: Normalised and Internalised Way of Life

4. How is division normalised in the city and how does this affect the idea of inclusion and integration promoted by shared space?

⇒ Division is deeply internalised in Jerusalem society, with different communities living within separate social spheres; segregation is therefore accepted as the norm.

#### B.2 Doxa/panopticism: The Role of Discourse

5. What are the discourses around separation, shared spaces and conflict in the city?

⇒ Discourses and narratives on either side of the divide contribute towards the normalisation of separation and are in part responsible for the regular cycles of violence in Jerusalem.

#### B.3 Power/domination: Power Struggles

6. How are the power-struggles for domination between the groups expressed in the city?

⇒ Power struggles between the two groups occur at many different levels, and trigger violent confrontations and tension; therefore hindering any attempts of cross-community cooperation in the city.

Table 18: Shared Public Spaces in Jerusalem Findings

## Conclusion

Research findings were analysed and categorised into three main themes which enabled a better understanding of the implications of shared public spaces for intergroup relations in Jerusalem. The first theme on contextualisation provided crucial information regarding the overall context of Jerusalem which is currently in a state of quasi open conflict, therefore limiting the positive aspects of intergroup contact in shared spaces. The study of daily life and intergroup relations in the three selected shared spaces revealed that Israelis and Palestinians did indeed use such mixed areas on a regular basis without this being perceived as an issue, often leading to peaceful coexistence. Yet, although regular mixing was observed in shared spaces, contact between members of different communities remained extremely limited. This suggests that shared spaces do not necessarily lead to improved contact between groups in divided cities. Finally, through the analysis of the interpretation of shared spaces, it emerged that such spaces in the particular setting of Jerusalem yielded only marginal effects on relations between the Israeli and Palestinian communities residing in the city. However, coexistence and proximity in shared public spaces may also be considered as comparatively better than segregation in most circumstances.

It may in fact be argued that sharing space in Jerusalem simply cannot provide any benefits to intergroup relations, given the ongoing occupation of part of the city and the implementation of urban policy favouring one community at the expense of the other. The depths of the colonisation process in the city have recently been underlined by Shalhoub-Kevorkian, who argues that “in order to understand colonial violence [...] we must go beyond traditional examinations of relations of domination and control. Not only through occupation of territory and the building of walls, checkpoints and other modes of separation are state apparatuses multiplied, transformed, circulated and deployed [...] but also through sensory and embodied means. Utilising various sensory phenomena (e.g. graffiti, sound, vocabulary, narratives, smells), the settler colony institutionalises itself to cement its legitimacy and hegemony.”<sup>459</sup>

As a conclusion, shared spaces public spaces make only limited or even non-existent differences to cross-community relations in the divided city of Jerusalem. It is however important to underline that given the context of internalised division and violence prevalent in the city, the simple fact that these spaces offer the possibility of proximity and shared experiences with the other community is significant. While shared spaces are therefore not considered to be the most effective tools for conflict transformation efforts in Jerusalem, they

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<sup>459</sup> Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Nadera. ‘The Occupation of the Senses: The Prosthetic and Aesthetic of State Terror’. *British Journal of Criminology*, 10 September 2016, p. 2

nevertheless contribute towards creating a different reality of the city in which both communities reside side by side.

## Chapter Six: Exploring Shared Public Spaces in Belfast

Field research in Belfast took place from Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> February to Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2015, and then from Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> October to Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2015 and included observation and documentary research, along with a number of interviews. Observation consisted of a total of thirty two days in three selected spaces – Victoria Square Area, City Hall Gardens and CastleCourt shopping centre. Similarly to field research in Jerusalem, observation was carried out at different times of the day and on different days of the week. Certain specific events were also observed in and around the spaces, including Ash Wednesday (Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> February), International Women’s Day March (Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March), Saint Patrick’s Day (Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March), and Easter – including Easter Parades (Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> to Monday 6<sup>th</sup> April). Additional observation was also carried out in other parts of Belfast, including parade events in West, East and North Belfast.

Documentary research involved regular reading of the Belfast Telegraph, the Irish News, the Northern Ireland pages of the BBC, the Guardian and the Irish Times, and Irish Independent amongst others. Statistical information was gathered by reading reports such as the Northern Ireland Monitoring Reports published by Paul Nolan, the Northern Life and Times Surveys, and reports published by the Good Relations Unit of Belfast City Council, the European Union Special Programmes Body and the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Interviews were additionally carried out with several individuals, and while their community background was not easily discernible or necessarily exposed it was nevertheless estimated that around six interviewees were Catholic and three Protestant, with one international participant. The interviewees represented a range of organisations and institutions including Queen’s University, Suffolk/Lenadoon Interface Network, Forthspring Inter Community Group, Peace Players International, Youth Action Northern Ireland, Belfast Interface Project and Beat Carnival.

Following the analysis of the data collected during the field research, three main themes were identified as being particularly relevant for this study on shared spaces in divided cities. As in Chapter Four, the contextualisation of the shared spaces in Belfast is first presented, followed by a description of daily life and intergroup relations in those spaces, and thirdly the various interpretations of shared spaces in Belfast is assessed. Intergroup contact theory and the Bourdieusian/Foucauldian perspective will be applied to the research in order to analyse the role of authority support, meaningful interaction and negative contact in shared spaces as well as the normalised and internalised way of life, discourse and power struggles that constitute the context of these spaces in Belfast.

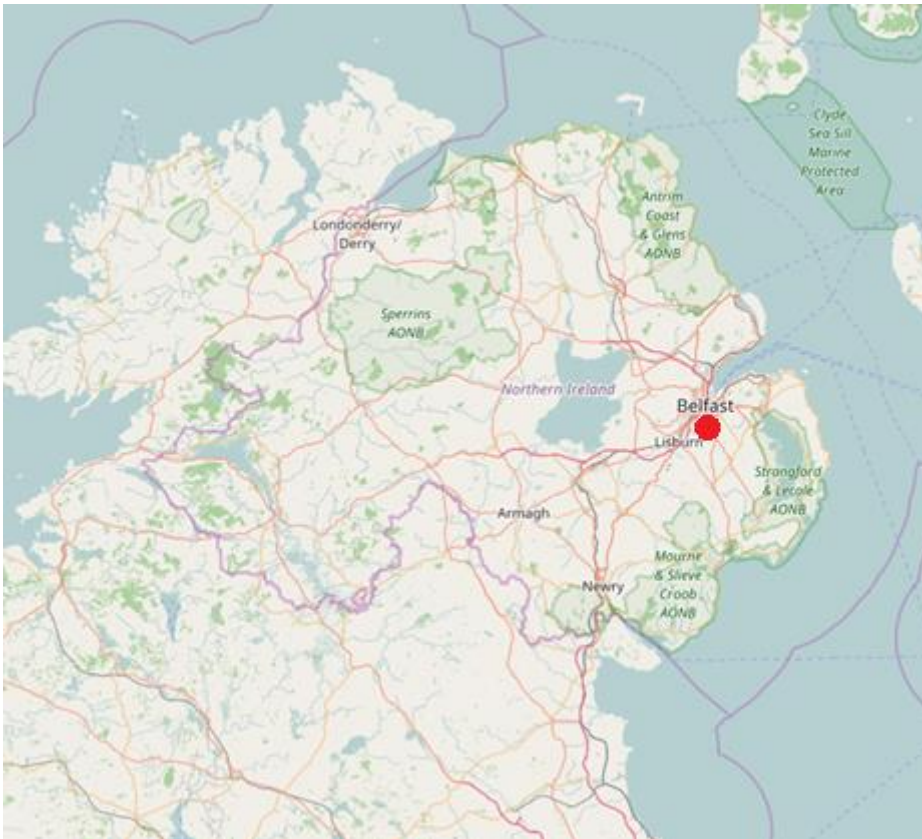


Figure 9: Map of Northern Ireland (© OpenStreetMap contributors)

## 1. Theme 1: Contextualising Shared Public Spaces in Belfast

### Locating the Shared Spaces in Belfast

In order to establish what spaces were visited and used by both communities, a number of criteria such as visual cues were established, including ‘tell signs’. In terms of the accuracy of such a mechanism of identification, one interview participant in Belfast crucially underlined, “I don’t believe that you can tell, but I do think that there are tell signs.”<sup>460</sup>The process of identifying such tell signs as items of clothing was therefore carried out in the city in order to establish the presence of members of both the Catholic and Protestant communities in public spaces. The following indicators of community belonging were therefore established in order to evaluate the presence of different communities within public spaces in Belfast:

#### *Visual cues:*

- Sports shirts: Celtic and Rangers football tops for the Catholic and Protestant communities respectively; Gaelic Athletics Association tops and Irish national sports team shirts for the Catholic community
- Jewellery: cross pendants for the Catholic community

<sup>460</sup> Belfast Interviewee 12 – Joe O’Donnell, Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2015



- Wearing of the poppy in November for the Protestant community
- Wearing of green and other signs assimilated with Irish identity on Saint Patrick's Day for the Catholic community
- School uniforms: Celtic symbols and Gaelic writing for the Catholic community, as well as Saint names
- Charcoal cross on foreheads on Ash Wednesday for the Catholic community

*Auditory cues:*

- Certain first names (such as Irish names, or traditionally Protestant names)
- Irish language (in very rare circumstances)

It is however important to emphasise that these indicators of community belonging are not entirely accurate and can only be applied to a small proportion of individuals entering a space – in most cases, the ethno-religious background could not be identified. Yet the fact that such identification did take place has been deemed sufficient to stipulate – alongside additional information gathered through research – that the spaces observed were indeed used and visited to a certain degree by members of both communities.

Combined with the visual indicators, the selection of the three spaces was based on the following criteria:

- Public spaces used and visited by representative or sufficient amounts of members of both the Protestant and Catholic communities.
- An open public space, such as a square or a street
- A public park
- A shopping centre or mall
- Centrality of the spaces in the city.

After observation of multiple areas in the city, Victoria Square area, City Hall Gardens and CastleCourt shopping centre were selected respectively as a shared open public space, a shared park, and a shared shopping centre; all located in the centre of Belfast. Belfast city centre is generally considered to be shared, as indicated by the Life and Times survey.<sup>461</sup> Plans to focus

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<sup>461</sup> ARK Northern Ireland. "Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey 2014." Survey. ARK Access Research Knowledge, 2014. <http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2014/index.html> , Community Relations, NISAFEWL

efforts on redevelopment for a 'shared future' and enhancing peaceful coexistence within the centre suggest that this view is also widespread at the decision-making levels.<sup>462</sup>

**Victoria Square Area:** While Victoria Square could be considered simply as a shopping centre, observation of the Victoria Square area included the small square in front of its main entrance, therefore qualifying this space as an open area. The fact that Victoria Square itself is an open structure reinforced this view, compared to the more traditional model of CastleCourt shopping centre. The multiple-awards winning edifice<sup>463</sup> has been widely acclaimed as the symbol of the regeneration of Belfast in a new post-conflict and peaceful era. Victoria Square has been hailed as "a new landmark in Belfast city centre that is totally inclusive and accessible to all members of the public"<sup>464</sup> by developers, while the Northern Ireland Executive has underlined that "developments such as Victoria Square are bringing a new confidence to our urban centres thanks to the peace dividend."<sup>465</sup> The structure's role as "a new social and cultural meeting point of a once divided city"<sup>466</sup> has also been underlined.

**City Hall Gardens:** From a historical perspective, the area around City Hall – home to Belfast City Council and therefore local authority – has been traditionally linked to the Protestant community. Irish nationalist and republican parties only started to use this particular space as a symbolic claim for power in the 1990s<sup>467</sup>, up until the election of the first Catholic Lord Mayor in 1997.<sup>468</sup> Since then and the establishment of power-sharing, efforts have been made by successive Lord Mayors<sup>469</sup> as well as grassroots organisations<sup>470</sup> to render City Hall and its gardens as a truly shared space.

**CastleCourt Shopping Centre:** Planned in the late 1980s, CastleCourt was "designed defiantly in modernist glass and steel at a time when street bombing was still a serious problem, and

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<sup>462</sup>Black, Rebecca. "The Bold New Vision for City Centre of Belfast." *BelfastTelegraph.co.uk*, June 21, 2014. <http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/the-bold-new-vision-for-city-centre-of-belfast-30372303.html>.

<sup>463</sup>Victoria Square. 'Awards | Victoria Square, Belfast'. Information. *Victoria Square*. Accessed 12 May 2016. <http://www.victoriasquare.com/awards/>.

<sup>464</sup>RTPI - Royal Town Planning Institute. "Belfast's Victoria Square Scoops Top Planning Prize." Information. *Royal Town Planning Institute*, February 4, 2010. <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/briefing-room/news-releases/2010/february/belfasts-victoria-square-scoops-top-planning-prize/>.

<sup>465</sup>Northern Ireland Executive. 'Ministers Welcome Completion of Victoria Square'. Information. *Northern Ireland Executive*, 5 March 2008.

<sup>466</sup>"Victoria Square Set for Opening." *BBC*, March 5, 2008, sec. Northern Ireland. [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/northern\\_ireland/7279349.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/northern_ireland/7279349.stm).

<sup>467</sup>Nagle, John, and Mary-Alice C. Clancy. *Shared Society Or Benign Apartheid?: Understanding Peace-Building in Divided Societies*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, p. 78

<sup>468</sup>"Belfast's First Catholic Lord Mayor. The Political Mould Was Broken." *The Tablet*, June 7, 1997. <http://archive.thetablet.co.uk/article/7th-june-1997/29/belfasts-first-catholic-lord-mayor-the-political-m>.

<sup>469</sup>Belfast Interviewee 1 – Anonymous, Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2015

<sup>470</sup>Belfast Interviewee 11 – David Boyd, Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2015

was symbolically important to the emerging peacetime Belfast.”<sup>471</sup>It could therefore be argued that the shopping centre was planned as a shared space welcoming shoppers belonging to both communities. The creation of CastleCourt was part of a strategy to re-imagine the city centre of Belfast as a ‘shared space of consumption’ encouraging coexistence.<sup>472</sup>

The Northern Ireland Life and Times survey has also revealed that over 70% of Belfast inhabitants believe that shopping centres are ‘shared and open’ to members of both communities.<sup>473</sup> Furthermore, it has been stated that “the desire for modernist imagery (neutral and forward-looking) rather than traditional conservation (backward-looking, therefore potentially divisive) is reflected in [...] the planners’ preference for large-scale modern retail complexes such as Castle Court and Victoria Square.”<sup>474</sup> Both CastleCourt and Victoria Square can therefore be understood as “attempts to ‘normalise’ the city centre by making it into a commercial shared space for Catholic and Protestant consumers.”<sup>475</sup>The role of authority support in the form of Belfast City Council and the Northern Ireland Executive is here clearly linked to the creation of such shared spaces in the city centre.

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<sup>471</sup>Gaffikin, Frank, Malachy Mceldowney, and Ken Sterrett. “Creating Shared Public Space in the Contested City: The Role of Urban Design.” *Journal of Urban Design* 15, no. 4 (2010): 493–513, p. 507

<sup>472</sup>Nagle, John, and Mary-Alice C. Clancy. *Shared Society Or Benign Apartheid?: Understanding Peace-Building in Divided Societies*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, p. 202

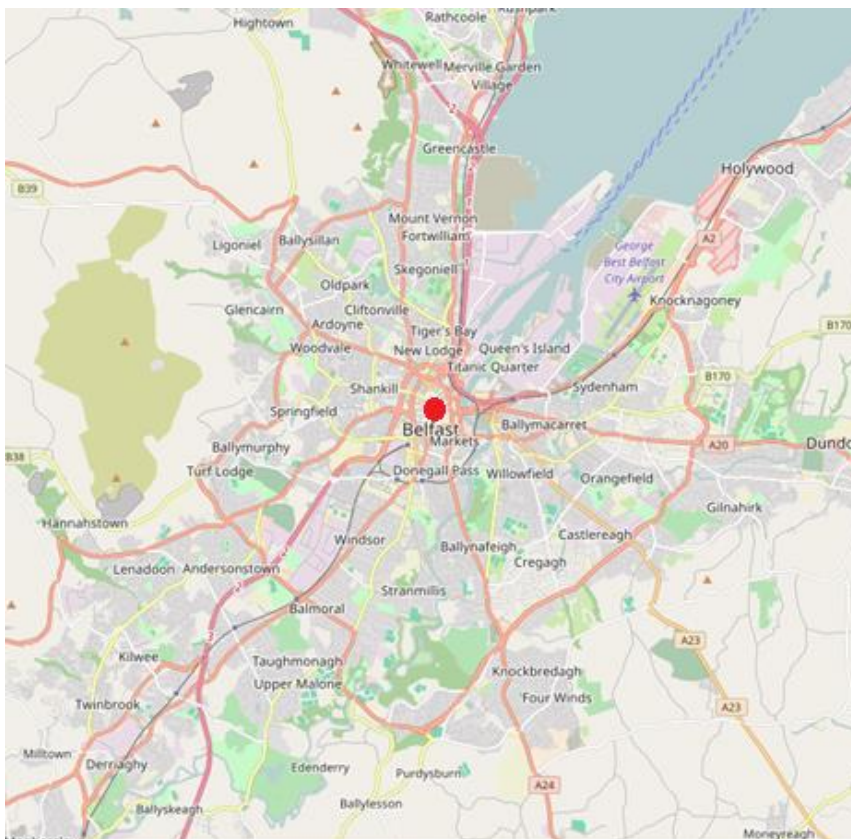
<sup>473</sup> Northern Ireland Life & Times Survey. ‘SHCNOPEN Do You Think That Shopping Centres in This Area Are “Shared and Open” to Both Protestants and Catholics?’ Northern Ireland Life & Times Survey, 2014. [http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2014/Community\\_Relations/SHCNOPEN.html](http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2014/Community_Relations/SHCNOPEN.html).

<sup>474</sup>Gaffikin, Frank, Malachy Mceldowney, and Ken Sterrett. “Creating Shared Public Space in the Contested City: The Role of Urban Design.” *Journal of Urban Design* 15, no. 4 (2010): 493–513, p. 505

<sup>475</sup> Nagle, John, and Mary-Alice C. Clancy. *Shared Society Or Benign Apartheid?: Understanding Peace-Building in Divided Societies*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, p. 185

<i>Shared Space</i>	<b>Victoria Square</b>	<b>City Hall Gardens</b>	<b>CastleCourt</b>
<i>Type of space</i>	Open public space/Open commercial structure	Public park	Shopping centre
<i>Location of space</i>	East of the city centre	Centre of the city	West of the city centre
<i>Planned and/or funded by</i>	Belfast Regeneration Programme in 2008 (international, national and local authority)	Belfast City Council (local authority)	Belfast City Council in 1980s (local authority)
<i>Year of planning/opening</i>	2008	1906	1987
<i>Purpose of planned space</i>	Inclusive and accessible commercial shared space	Creation of green public space	Neutral non-sectarian commercial space

**Table 19: Selected Shared Spaces in Belfast**



**Figure 10: Map of Greater Belfast (© OpenStreetMap contributors)**

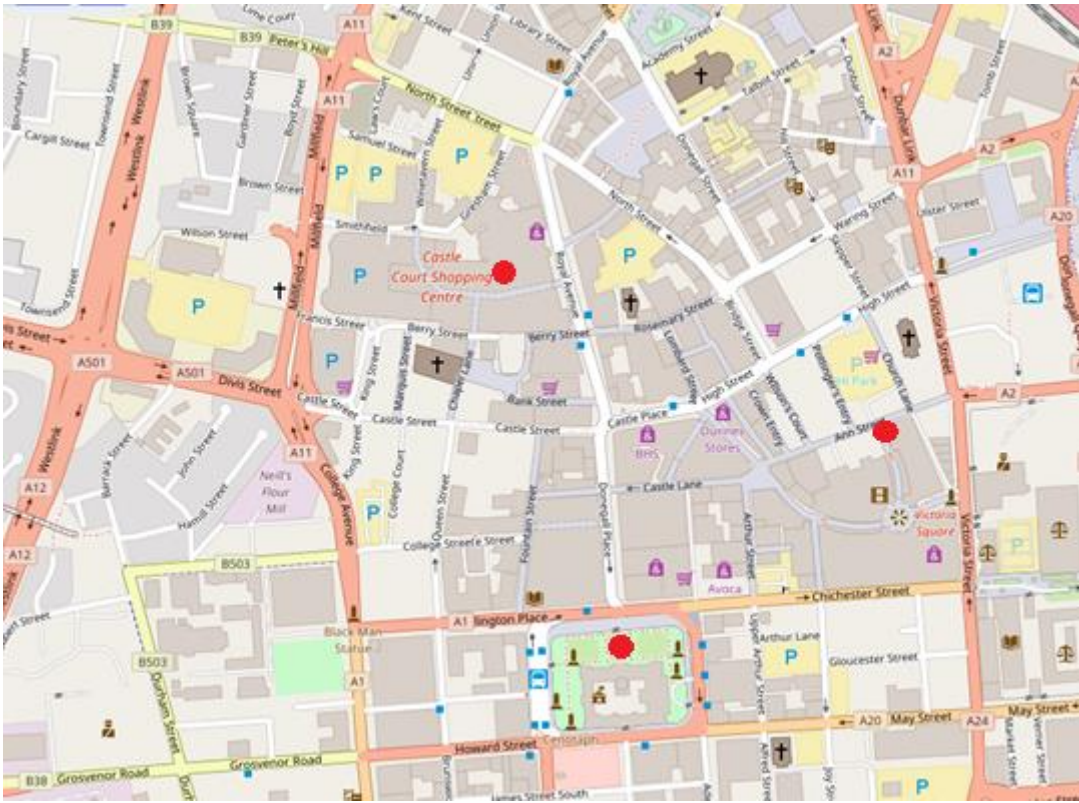


Figure 11: Map of Belfast City Centre, Selected Spaces (© OpenStreetMap contributors)



Figure 12: Victoria Square area, outside the entrance to the shopping centre



Figure 13: City Hall Gardens



Figure 14: CastleCourt shopping centre

## The Current Context in Belfast: Slow Peace Process

After years of violence, Belfast has since 1998 moved into a post-conflict era with an ongoing peace process; society is therefore currently in transition rather than being entirely transformed. The general situation has improved in terms of levels of violence and political agreements, yet there is still place for improvement in terms of overcoming divisions and creating a truly shared society.

Levels of sectarian violence have dramatically decreased, as demonstrated by the smaller number of deaths<sup>476</sup> and injuries caused by intergroup conflict.<sup>477</sup> The introduction of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 Section 75 requiring public bodies to promote good relations between the communities, as well as the establishment of the Good Relations Unit<sup>478</sup> by Belfast City Council also demonstrate the change of discourse and trajectory at the elite level in Northern Ireland towards reconciliation.<sup>479</sup> However, many aspects of Northern Irish society still remain deeply divided along sectarian lines. For instance, the number of peacelines or peace walls – physically separating Catholic and Protestant neighbourhoods in mostly disadvantaged areas of the city – has increased rather than decreased since the beginning of the peace process. The Belfast Interface Project has underlined that “barriers have been constructed steadily since 1969, with most barriers constructed though the 1990s – 12 were constructed prior to the 1994 ceasefires and 14 in the second half of the decade. The figures also indicate that one third of those barriers [...] have been built since the ceasefires.”<sup>480</sup> This divided reality of Belfast<sup>481</sup> is widely acknowledged, with the publication of many scholarly works<sup>482</sup> and news items highlighting the continuing difficulties at the social and political levels<sup>483</sup> and the lack of in-depth structural transformation of Northern Irish society.<sup>484</sup> Frustration and concern over the very slow process<sup>485</sup> and increasing belief in the

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<sup>476</sup>Melaugh, Martin. “Draft List of Deaths Related to the Conflict from 2002 to Present.” CAIN Web Service, August 17, 2015. <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/violence/deathsfrom2002draft.htm>.

<sup>477</sup>Rogers, Simon. ‘Deaths in the Northern Ireland Conflict since 1969’. *The Guardian*, 10 June 2010, sec. News. <http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2010/jun/10/deaths-in-northern-ireland-conflict-data>.

<sup>478</sup>Belfast City Council. “Good Relations - Belfast City Council.” Information. *Belfast City Council*. Accessed February 1, 2016.

<sup>479</sup>Russell, David. “Belfast: Strategies for a Shared City.” *Shared Space Journal*, no. 1 (August 2005).

<sup>480</sup>Belfast Interface Project. ‘Belfast Interfaces: Security Barriers and Defensive Use of Space’. Belfast Interface Project, 2011, p. 12

<sup>481</sup>O’Hagan, Sean. “Belfast, Divided in the Name of Peace.” *The Guardian*, January 22, 2012, sec. UK news. <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2012/jan/22/peace-walls-troubles-belfast-feature>; ; Evans, Margaret. ‘Uneasy Peace, the Segregated Reality of Northern Ireland’. *CBC News*, 2 October 2012. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/uneasy-peace-the-segregated-reality-of-northern-ireland-1.1255828>.

<sup>482</sup>Shirlow, Peter, and Brendan Murtagh. *Belfast: Segregation, Violence and the City*. London; Ann Arbor: Pluto, 2006

<sup>483</sup>Clarke, Liam. “15 Years after Good Friday Agreement, and Still No Peace Dividend for Northern Ireland.” *Belfast Telegraph.co.uk*, March 9, 2013. <http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/politics/15-years-after-good-friday-agreement-and-still-no-peace-dividend-for-northern-ireland-29182842.html>.

<sup>484</sup>Brown, Paul. ‘Northern Ireland Divide Grows Ever Wider’. *The Guardian*, 4 January 2002. <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2002/jan/04/northernireland.paulbrown>.

leadership's lack of commitment in terms of peacebuilding<sup>486</sup> is being increasingly underlined by numerous commentators.<sup>487</sup>

Criticism around the image of Belfast as a 'post-conflict' city that has moved on has also been underlined by commentators exposing the twin speed transition of the city since the peace process. According to Brendan Murtagh, "a twin speed city has emerged in the last decade in which those with education and skills are doing well in key growth sectors whilst those without resources are increasingly corralled in 'sink' estates, stratified by poverty, segregation and fear. Thus, new interface separation barriers have been built in the last ten years at the same time as new mixed housing spaces have developed in the high value end of the housing market [...]."<sup>488</sup>

Residence in the city throughout most of period of the PhD studies (around two and a half years) enabled a more in-depth observation of daily life and a profound understanding of post-conflict Belfast. The city was not generally considered as stressful or unpleasant, however residing near a peaceline in North Belfast provided first-hand experience of everyday life in a segregated urban context.<sup>489</sup> Occasional tensions were witnessed at interface areas during certain events, such as the 11<sup>th</sup> July bonfires<sup>490</sup> and especially during the Twelfth of July parades in North Belfast.<sup>491</sup> Tensions and confrontations between the different communities and security forces were also observed on several occasions in the city centre, including during the flag protests in November 2013 and Saint Patrick's Day celebrations in 2014, 2015 and 2016.

This mixed perspective on Belfast was also revealed through the interviews carried out in the city. While acknowledging improvements, most if not all interview participants expressed their disappointment in the fact that Belfast was still very much a divided and even segregated city. The positive aspects of the current situation were often understood as being limited to the

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<sup>485</sup>Clarke, Liam. 'Northern Ireland Peace Process on the Brink: Sinn Fein Call for Army Prosecutions While Holding Get out of Jail Free Cards'. *BelfastTelegraph.co.uk*, 27 February 2014.

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/opinion/debateni/liam-clarke/northern-ireland-peace-process-on-the-brink-sinn-fein-call-for-army-prosecutions-while-holding-get-out-of-jail-free-cards-30046424.html>; Hughes, Jim. 'Is the Northern Ireland Peace Process Flagging?' *British Politics and Policy at LSE*, 30 January 2013. <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/is-the-northern-ireland-peace-process-flagging/>.

<sup>486</sup>Macauley, Tony. 'A Lack of Clarity in Northern Ireland's Peace Building'. *Northern Ireland Foundation*, 3 July 2012. <http://northernireland.foundation/2012/07/03/a-lack-of-clarity-in-northern-irelands-peace-building-tony-macauley/>.

<sup>487</sup>Long, Sophie. 'Moving beyond Political Paralysis in Northern Ireland'. Blog. *openDemocracy*, 7 November 2015. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/sophie-long/good-friday-agreement-mark-two-beyond-political-paralysis-in-northern-ireland>.; Meredith, Fiona. 'Why Our Equality Commission Must Be Held to Account'.

*BelfastTelegraph.co.uk*, 9 October 2015. <http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/opinion/columnists/fionola-meredith/why-our-equality-commission-must-be-held-to-account-31594100.html>.

<sup>488</sup> Murtagh, Brendan. 'New Spaces and Old in 'Post Conflict' Belfast'. *Conflict in Cities and the Contested State*. Working Paper No.5, 2008. p. 4

<sup>489</sup> Field Research Form 2.2 Belfast: A Walk in Ardoyne, Afternoon of 11<sup>th</sup> July 2014

<sup>490</sup> Field Research Form 2.3 Belfast: Bonfire Night, Evening of 11<sup>th</sup> July 2014

<sup>491</sup> Field Research Form 2.4 Belfast: Twelfth Parades, 12<sup>th</sup> July 2014



decrease in levels of lethal violence and did not include notable improved intergroup relations or in-depth reconciliation. As one participant explained, “I think it’s better than it was, as you say. It’s not as good as it could be. So in a lot of parts of Belfast [...] the armed conflict [...] would be over, but the psychological barriers would still remain.”<sup>492</sup> While violence may have reduced, its root causes were not deemed to have been efficiently tackled as “despite this striking change in some way, it does remain superficial. In the sense that all those kinds of spatial pockets of sectarianism, segregation and deprivation that have existed during the Troubles continue, or many of them continue to exist [...].”<sup>493</sup> A number of interview participants were also very critical about the perceived lack of efforts towards peacebuilding. One participant expressed his feelings regarding the situation - “the lack of engagement and dialogue frustrates me [...]. I find the lack of that more concerning for me in terms of shared space [...]. We just kind of keep coexisting or something [...]. You still live a life of apartheid in a way.”<sup>494</sup>

In terms of the normalised way of life (B.1), it is clear that division is still very much the norm in Belfast. The establishment of shared spaces in the city centre is not seen as countering the fact that most of daily life still revolves around separation and the duplication of services.<sup>495</sup> Although discourse (B.2) in recent years has focused on the benefits of sharing space and the need to move towards better intergroup relations, party politics have also been employing community-based narratives which might limit any concrete changes on the ground.<sup>496</sup> However, it is important to also underline the strong authority support (A.1) for the peace process<sup>497</sup> and peacebuilding efforts in Northern Ireland<sup>498</sup>, meaning that any return to violent conflict remains highly unlikely. Power struggles (B.3) between the two communities might have dramatically decreased in terms of violent confrontations, yet the reality of party

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<sup>492</sup> Belfast Interviewee 2 – Chris O’Halloran, Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2015

<sup>493</sup> Belfast Interviewee 3 – Milena Komarova, Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2015

<sup>494</sup> Belfast Interviewee 10 – Martin McMullan, Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2015

<sup>495</sup> McKittrick, David. ‘£1.5bn: Annual Cost of the Enduring Sectarianism in Northern’. *The Independent*, 23 August 2007. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/this-britain/16315bn-annual-cost-of-the-enduring-sectarianism-in-northern-ireland-462649.html>.

<sup>496</sup> ‘Northern Ireland Remains Sectarian and without Political Leadership’. *The Guardian*, 14 December 2012, sec. Opinion. <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/dec/14/northern-ireland-sectarian-divide>.

<sup>497</sup> Office for the First Minister and deputy First Minister. “Report on the Inquiry into Building a United Community.” Northern Ireland Assembly, 2015. <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/committees/office-of-the-first-minister-and-deputy-first-minister/reports/report-on-the-inquiry-into-building-a-united-community/>.

<sup>498</sup> Belfast City Council. ‘Building Peace and Uniting Communities - Belfast City Council’. Information. *Belfast City Council*, 4 August 2015. <http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/News/News-53303.aspx>.

politics divided along sectarian lines effectively continues the conflict through less violent means.<sup>499</sup>

### Views of the Future of Belfast: Green Shoots

Despite the slow pace of the peace process described above, Northern Ireland is generally understood as being on track towards a better and brighter future – or at the very least, one better than its violent past.

Numerous surveys have been carried out over the years, providing an interesting insight into public opinion on certain key themes around society, peace and conflict that can help understand the most common views in terms of the future of the city. According to the Northern Ireland Life and Times survey in 2012, 51% of the respondents believed that relations between Protestants and Catholics were better than they were five years ago.<sup>500</sup> Even more relevant for the future, it was also revealed that 47% believed that intergroup relations would be better in five years' time, compared to 40% about the same and 7% worse.<sup>501</sup>

However, other survey results have also demonstrated the increasing frustration expressed by many inhabitants in Northern Ireland in terms of the slow transformation of society and the lack of constructive and noticeable changes especially in disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Belfast (where most of the peacelines are located). The Northern Ireland Peace Monitoring Report has stated that 69% of individuals residing close to interfaces “think the walls are still necessary at the present time because of the potential for violence.”<sup>502</sup> A more alarming survey result reportedly revealed that 45% of the public believed that there would be lasting peace in Northern Ireland, therefore suggesting that a majority of around 55% believed that this would not be the case. It was however underlined that “despite the lack of faith in the durability of the peace process among around 55% of those interviewed, there still remains strong support both for power-sharing government and the Police Service of Northern Ireland.”<sup>503</sup> The occasional clashes and sectarian confrontations that occur on a yearly basis demonstrate that certain deep-seated issues around identity, territory and sectarianism remain unresolved;

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<sup>499</sup> O'Hara, Victoria. 'Northern Ireland's Political Parties Remain Divided on Ways to Improve Political Structures'. *Belfast Telegraph.co.uk*, 22 September 2014. <http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/politics/northern-irelands-political-parties-remain-divided-on-ways-to-improve-political-structures-30604237.html>.

<sup>500</sup> Northern Ireland Life & Times Survey. 'RLRELAGO What about Relations between Protestants and Catholics?' Northern Ireland Life & Times Survey, 2014. [http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2014/Community\\_Relations/RLRELAGO.html](http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2014/Community_Relations/RLRELAGO.html).

<sup>501</sup> Northern Ireland Life & Times Survey. 'RLRELFUT And What about in 5 Years Time?' Northern Ireland Life & Times Survey, 2012. [http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2012/Community\\_Relations/RLRELFUT.html](http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2012/Community_Relations/RLRELFUT.html).

<sup>502</sup> Nolan, Paul. "Northern Ireland Peace Monitoring Report Number Three." Peace Monitoring Report. Community Relations Council, March 2014., p. 63. <http://www.community-relations.org.uk/programmes/peace-monitoring/>

<sup>503</sup> McDonald, Henry. 2015. 'Majority of People in Northern Ireland Believe Peace Will Not Last'. *The Guardian*, September 10, sec. UK news. <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/sep/10/majority-of-people-in-northern-ireland-believe-peace-will-not-last>.

therefore suggesting that sectarianism still exists in the city.<sup>504</sup> The fact that many issues relating to the past conflict have still not been effectively addressed has been highlighted as affecting the future of Northern Irish society<sup>505</sup> by a number of commentators.<sup>506</sup> Considerable improvements are therefore not expected to happen in the near future given the current lack on in-depth focus on reconciliation.

Information provided through the interviews complemented this general view, with some participants expressing their concerns about the future of the city. It was for instance argued that “it’s almost as if a benign segregation is good enough. There’s relatively little movement in terms of moving beyond a situation where we’re thankful that armed conflict is a thing of the past. You know. We still have segregated schools systems; we still have segregated residential areas. [...] So it’s better than it was, but I suppose the danger here [...] is that we accept this as good enough. [...] Our experience really is that sectarianism is transmitted intergenerationally and there’s no reason to think that it’s gone.”<sup>507</sup> It was additionally stated that “there’s some distance to travel [...] and [...] a lot of work to be done just in terms of building the relationships that will allow for a truly shared future or an integrated future, as opposed to what we have now which is probably a cold peace because people aren’t killing each other [...] but beneath the surface it’s still a case of sharing stuff out, ‘I’m ok as long as you get that and I get this’ as opposed to really thinking about ‘ok, well how great could this space be if we really shared it’. [...] So I think there’s some distance still to travel in terms of a truly shared and integrated future.”<sup>508</sup>

This analysis of the perceptions around the future of Belfast may contribute towards a better understanding of the importance of authority support (A.1) and discourse (B.2) around continuing the implementation of the peace process.<sup>509</sup> Discourse since the peace process on either side of the divide has focused on creating ‘shared space for a shared future’<sup>510</sup>, however this has not materialised into truly transformative policies on the ground. In other words, the

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<sup>504</sup> Holman, Rachel. “Belfast Clashes Reveal Unresolved Sectarian Tensions.” *The France 24 Observers*, June 22, 2011. <http://observers.france24.com/en/20110622-northern-ireland-belfast-clashes-reveal-unresolved-sectarian-tensions-catholic-protestant>; McDonald, Henry. “Sectarian Violence Erupts in Belfast, Injuring 26 Police Officers.” *The Guardian*, September 2, 2012, sec. UK news. <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2012/sep/02/sectarian-violence-belfast>.

<sup>505</sup> ‘Northern Ireland: Bricks, Stones and Stalemate’. *The Guardian*, 5 September 2012, sec. Opinion. <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/sep/05/northern-ireland-stalemate-post-conflict-parties>.

<sup>506</sup> ‘Kearney, Declan. ‘Sectarianism Undermines the Primacy of Democratic Politics’. *Belfast Telegraph.co.uk*, 23 January 2014. <http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/opinion/debateni/sectarianism-undermines-the-primacy-of-democratic-politics-29941131.html>.

<sup>507</sup> Belfast Interviewee 2 – Chris O’Halloran, Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2015

<sup>508</sup> Belfast Interviewee 9 – Gareth Harper, Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2015

<sup>509</sup> Sinn Fein. “De Brún Meets Community Groups on Peace II Extension.” Information. *Sinn Fein*, December 3, 2004. <http://www.sinnfein.ie/contents/3558>.

<sup>510</sup> Gaffikin, Frank, Ken Sterrett, Mike Morrissey, and Maeliosa Hardy. “Planning Shared Space for a Shared Future.” *Research Report for Community Relations Council*, 2008.

peace process has led to major improvements in terms of sectarian violence<sup>511</sup> and intergroup relations, but Northern Ireland society has still some way to go in terms of peacebuilding and reconciliation.<sup>512</sup>

### Theme 1 Findings: Context of Conflict Transformation Process

Contextualisation of Belfast has provided relevant information which may contribute towards answering some of the questions derived from the Bourdieu/Foucault approach. Efforts have been made by both communities to engage in dialogue rather than violent confrontation, and shared spaces are increasingly understood as being essential aspects of post-conflict urban life. Therefore it could be argued that discourses (B.2) around a ‘shared space for a shared future’ are enabling the establishment and acceptance of such spaces of mixing and coexistence in the city centre by a vast majority of the inhabitants of Belfast. However, it has also been underlined that the normalised and internalised way of life in Belfast (B.1) still remains deeply entrenched in division and separation. Not only is physical division in the form of peace walls still a reality in the city, their existence is understood by many residents as being necessary in terms of safety and good relations. It could be suggested that while the years of conflict are now over, it will take time for deep-seated perceptions and accepted ways of life to truly transform. The fact that power struggles (B.3) between the two communities have changed from violent confrontations to political debates<sup>513</sup>, rather than being truly solved, might explain why challenging internalised division is so difficult to achieve.<sup>514</sup>

The main conclusion to be drawn from the information gathered around the context in Belfast is that while the city might be on the right path towards conflict transformation and improved intergroup relations, there is still a way to go before the city becomes a truly shared space. The danger with this situation, as underlined by some of the interview respondents, is to accept this current state of ‘cold peace’ and the absence of violence as sufficient in terms of intergroup relations and conflict transformation. Nevertheless, shared public spaces do contribute towards normalising coexistence in the city centre, and they are increasingly being acknowledged as necessary features of healthy urban life in a post-conflict city. In terms of the theoretical framework, the following findings were made:

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<sup>511</sup>Mankin, Don. ‘Belfast -- Bloody Past, Hopeful Future’. *The Huffington Post*, 24 December 2011. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/don-mankin/belfast-bloody-past-hopeful\\_b\\_1028981.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/don-mankin/belfast-bloody-past-hopeful_b_1028981.html).

<sup>512</sup>Lodge, Tom. “Northern Ireland: Between Peace and Reconciliation.” Blog. *OpenDemocracy*, June 3, 2009. <http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/northern-ireland-between-peace-and-reconciliation>

<sup>513</sup>Black, Rebecca. ‘Northern Ireland Politics Returning to “Divide and Conquer” ahead of 2015 Election’. *Belfast Telegraph.co.uk*, 27 January 2015. <http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/politics/northern-ireland-politics-returning-to-divide-and-conquer-ahead-of-2015-election-30939827.html>.

<sup>514</sup>“NI’s Parties ‘Want Segregation.’” *BBC*, November 3, 2007, sec. Northern Ireland. [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/northern\\_ireland/7076732.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/northern_ireland/7076732.stm).

- Bourdieu/Foucault Perspective B.1 Normalised and Internalised Way of Life: daily life in Belfast still remains deeply entrenched in separation. Not only is physical division in the form of peace walls still a reality in the city, their existence is understood as being necessary in terms of safety and good relations by many residents.
- Bourdieu/Foucault Perspective B.2 The Role of Discourse: the emergence of discourses on either side of the divide around ‘shared space for a shared future’ since the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement enables the establishment and acceptance of such spaces of mixing and coexistence in the city centre as something positive by a vast majority of Belfast inhabitants.
- Bourdieu/Foucault Perspective B.3 Power Struggles: power struggles between the two communities have been transformed from violent confrontations into political debates, yet issues around identity and national belonging remain unresolved.

## 2. Theme 2: Describing Daily Life and Intergroup Relations in Shared Public Spaces in Belfast

### Demographics and Routines in the Spaces

All three shared spaces hosted a very mixed set of users, ranging from elderly people, children, shoppers, office workers, and so on. City Hall Park was widely used by people walking through to get to the main shopping area of the city, others on their way to and from work, and yet others – mainly older individuals – using the park as a place to sit and relax. Several groups of youths were observed on a daily basis near City Hall, the biggest being a Goth/Metal group including many young adults and teenagers. CastleCourt shopping centre and Victoria Square were also very mixed, yet it is worth mentioning that they did seem to differ in terms of the socio-economic backgrounds of their respective visitors. Both spaces were observed as being used by both communities on a regular basis.

In terms of demographics, class differences became fairly visible between the upscale Victoria Square and the more working-class CastleCourt; although these differences did not tend to demonstrate any major variations in terms of intergroup relations among the individuals visiting those spaces. The general perception among many Belfast inhabitants is that CastleCourt is a lower-end shopping centre, with discount shops and fast-food outlets, while Victoria Square is seen as a higher-end centre with many brand shops and restaurants.

Research also revealed that CastleCourt was widely considered to be a predominantly Catholic mall while Victoria Square a mainly Protestant space – this being based on their geographical

locations close to residential areas belonging to one or the other community, as well as the perception of economic differences between the two groups.<sup>515</sup> Smaller groups of youths often wearing tracksuits tended to visit CastleCourt, while larger groups of teenagers often wearing brand names were observed in Victoria Square. Elderly people were also observed on a regular basis in CastleCourt, yet were virtually absent from Victoria Square. More individuals belonging to immigrant communities as well as disabled people were observed in CastleCourt than Victoria Square.<sup>516</sup> Regarding gender distribution among visitors of the three selected shared spaces, no great variations in terms of interaction were observed.<sup>517</sup>

Observation of daily routines in shared public spaces revealed that although Belfast remains highly divided in terms of residence, sharing space with the other community in the city centre has been normalised (B.1), and although only minimal interaction might occur, individuals seem to be feel safe and comfortable enough to be in the presence of the other on a daily basis.

### Special Events in and around the Spaces

Saint Patrick's Day, which is celebrated on 17<sup>th</sup> March every year, is the national holiday of the Republic of Ireland. Most of the Catholic community of Northern Ireland also celebrates this day; while it is not a tradition within the Protestant community. Although primarily a Catholic celebration in recent years efforts by Belfast City Council have been made to make the festivities more inclusive.<sup>518</sup> For the past few years a Saint Patrick's Day parade has been organised, bringing together different artists and groups from both communities, in an effort to create an inclusive carnival-style parade in the streets of Belfast.<sup>519</sup> Research carried out on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2015 around City Hall Park involved the observation of the parade<sup>520</sup>, which included participants from both communities and focused more on the carnival aspect in order to create more inclusiveness. Irish tricolours were actively discouraged and more neutral shamrock flags were distributed to the crowds. The atmosphere in the city centre during the parade was very festive and relaxed, and although it is highly probable that most of the onlookers were members of the Catholic community, members of the Protestant community were nevertheless also enjoying the festivities.<sup>521</sup> A small fund provided by the Good Relations

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<sup>515</sup> Belfast Interviewee 10 – Martin McMullan, Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2015

<sup>516</sup> Belfast Observation Forms 1 to 31 – Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2015 to Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2015

<sup>517</sup> Belfast Observation Forms 1 to 31 – Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2015 to Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2015

<sup>518</sup> St Patrick's Day: Belfast Parade "Biggest in Years". *BBC News*, 16 March 2014. <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-26601887>.

<sup>519</sup> Neill, Sara. 'St Patrick's Day: The Top Ten Parades and Parties for 2015'. *Belfast Telegraph.co.uk*, 16 March 2015. <http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/st-patricks-day-the-top-ten-parades-and-parties-for-2015-31068535.html>.

<sup>520</sup> Belfast Observation Form 14 – Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2015

<sup>521</sup> Beat Carnival . St Patrick's Day Carnival Parade 2009 - Belfast." *Beat Carnival*, March 18, 2009. <http://www.beatcarnival.com/news/18-march-2009/st-patricks-day-carnival-parade-2009-belfast>.

Unit for smaller scale community celebrations of Saint Patrick has reportedly been used mainly by the Protestant community.<sup>522</sup>

An informal interview with a young woman selling Irish tricolours during the previous year's parade (2014) led to the following description: "when asked about if it caused any problems, mentioning the issue with the flag protests, she said not at all, that those were just a very loud minority, creating an unwelcome fuss. She then added that she is Protestant, and that she's happy to sell Irish tricolours on St Patrick's Day. She wasn't asked about her religious background, it came out naturally, as if she wanted to make a point that Northern Ireland has moved on, and that Protestants have no issue with the Irish flag flying in Belfast for an Irish festival. She was also very keen to say that Northern Ireland had changed, and that Protestants were also enjoying the celebrations as much as the Catholics. "We've moved on" she says. She also explained that the very small minority making a fuss about the flag were very good at ruining the otherwise peaceful coexistence in Belfast."<sup>523</sup>The way that Saint Patrick's Day is celebrated today in Belfast through a very colourful parade crucially demonstrates that events previously deemed as very divisive and strictly one-sided can be transformed into being more inclusive and therefore shared.<sup>524</sup> In addition, "surveys [...] suggest that more Protestants were attending the event [...]. As such, there is some evidence that the St. Patrick's Day event is being attended by Protestant as well as Catholics and that those participating recognise the importance of making it a shared event."<sup>525</sup>It should however be mentioned that this view is not acknowledged by everyone<sup>526</sup>, yet it has been underlined that "at the very least St Patrick's Day has provided some space for coexistence."<sup>527</sup>

However, observation on Saint Patrick's Day also offered an insight into the ongoing sectarian tensions that remain in the city, as a more confrontational and negative interaction occurred later on during the day.<sup>528</sup> Once the parade ended, flag protestors – members of the Protestant community angered by the decision to reduce the days of flying the Union Jack on official

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<sup>522</sup> Interview with a member of the Good Relations Unit, Belfast City Council, Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2016

<sup>523</sup> Belfast Field Research Form 1 – Saint Patrick's Day Celebrations, 16<sup>th</sup> March 2014

<sup>524</sup> 'Fun-Filled St Patrick Day Celebrations in Northern Ireland'. *RTE.ie*. Accessed 12 May 2016.

<http://www.rte.ie/lifestyle/travel/features/2013/0304/372027-fun-filled-st-patrick-day-celebrations-in-northern-ireland/>.

<sup>525</sup> Bryan, Dominic. "Parades, Flags, Carnivals, and Riots: Public Space, Contestation, and Transformation in Northern Ireland." *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, Managing Diversity, 21, no. 4 (November 2015): 565–73, p. 571

<sup>526</sup> 'St Patrick's Day Parade Was Colourful but Hardly Inclusive'. *News Letter*, 24 March 2009.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/st-patrick-s-day-parade-was-colourful-but-hardly-inclusive-1-1882640>.

<sup>527</sup> Stevenson, Clifford. 'Beyond Divided Territories: How Changing Popular Understandings of Public Space in Northern Ireland Can Facilitate New Identity Dynamics'. *Institute for British-Irish Studies*, no. king Papers in British-Irish Studies No 102 (2010).

<sup>528</sup> McCullough, Chris. 'St Patrick's Day's Darker Side as PSNI Break up Clashes at City Hall'. *Belfastlive*, 17 March 2015. <http://www.belfastlive.co.uk/news/belfast-news/st-patricks-days-darker-side-8862798>.

buildings in Northern Ireland<sup>529</sup> – decided to carry out their regular protest in front of City Hall. Their presence provoked angry responses by many Catholic youths celebrating Saint Patrick’s Day in a less inclusive manner, namely by draping themselves in Irish tricolours and wearing other obvious signs of ethno-religious belonging such as sports shirts. Observation of this confrontation related “it’s getting very tense now; more youths with tricolours are arriving to face the flag protestors. [...] There’s a bit of shouting going on between the two sides. [...] The two groups are facing each other; chanting, swearing, making rude hand gestures.”<sup>530</sup>

Therefore while the success of the Saint Patrick’s Day parade itself as a shared and inclusive event was clear, the events that took place in its wake demonstrated the fragility of the city in terms of sectarian violence – and the presence of unresolved sectarian issues.<sup>531</sup> A highly symbolic confrontation took place right in front of City Hall, pitting union-jack wielding protestors against Irish tricolour-draped youths. Given that the two groups were there, it could be argued that the City Hall area was indeed shared, albeit not in a very peaceful or reconciliatory way. This would tend to reinforce the claims of certain interviewees about the importance of what actually occurs in shared space rather than the physicality of space itself.



**Figure 15: Confrontation between flag protestors and youths in Belfast city centre, 17th March 2015**

Another event that was observed in City Hall Park during the Easter period yielded very different results compared to the tense Saint Patrick’s Day stand-off. Belfast City Council organised a fair-like celebration in City Hall Gardens called ‘Spring into Easter’ for the duration

<sup>529</sup> ‘Q&A: Northern Ireland Flag Protesters’. *BBC News*, 28 November 2014. <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-20651163>.

<sup>530</sup> Belfast Observation Form 14 – Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2015

<sup>531</sup> ‘St Patrick’s Day: Young Girl Struck with Missile as Revellers Clash with Loyalist Protesters at Belfast City Hall’. *Belfast Telegraph.co.uk*, 17 March 2015. <http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/st-patricks-day-young-girl-struck-with-missile-as-revellers-clash-with-loyalist-protesters-at-belfast-city-hall-31074006.html>.



of the Easter weekend from 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> April 2015.<sup>532</sup> Observation in City Hall Park revealed that this particular event was family-friendly and very inclusive, drawing young families but also people of all ages from all over the city and from all communities – Easter being celebrated by both the Catholic and Protestant communities. Research led to the following observation of the festival on Easter Monday: “what really stood out was that people were generally very relaxed and happy; a lot of people were smiling. [...] I spotted a few more O’Neills shirts and at least three Northern Ireland football shirts [...]. All this tends to demonstrate that the event at City Hall Park was successful in bringing people from different communities together into a shared space to participate in a shared event.”<sup>533</sup> It can therefore be concluded that the Easter festival organised by Belfast City Council truly transformed City Hall Park into a truly shared space where members of both communities were observed enjoying the fair-like activities and even each other’s company.

These two very different events observed during the period of field research in Belfast contribute towards better understanding the role of shared spaces in the city. It would seem that although shared public spaces do have a value, it is rather the shared events that take place within these spaces that are ultimately more relevant for transforming intergroup relations. The fact that such events as Saint Patrick’s Day parade<sup>534</sup> or the ‘Spring into Easter’ festival<sup>535</sup> were partially organised by Belfast City Council demonstrates the critical role of authority support<sup>536</sup> (A.1) in influencing the differences that shared spaces may make to intergroup relations in divided cities. However, it is also crucial to underline that Saint Patrick’s carnival Parade was initiated at the grassroots level by Beat Carnival that focuses on creating shared events in the city.<sup>537</sup> Therefore, authority support and initiatives are not essential in creating inclusive and shared events in Belfast.<sup>538</sup> Discourses (B.2) around the events, including explicitly using the term ‘inclusive’, can also be seen as influencing the events in a positive way. Yet the sudden turn of events on Saint Patrick’s Day also exposed the fragility of the post-conflict Belfast society in which power struggles (B.3) over flags and other symbols still exist.

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<sup>532</sup>Belfast City Council. “Spring into Easter - Belfast City Council.” Information. *Belfast City Council*. Accessed January 29, 2016. <http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/events/Event-56482.aspx>.

<sup>533</sup> Belfast Observation Form 26 – Monday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2015

<sup>534</sup>Belfast City Council. “Belfast’s St Patrick’s Day Carnival Parade and Concert - Belfast City Council.” Information. *Belfast City Council*, March 17, 2016. <http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/events/Event-58303.aspx>.

<sup>535</sup>“Lord Mayor Launches ‘Spring into Easter’ Festival – Belfast Times.” *Belfast Times*, April 8, 2014. <http://www.belfasttimes.co.uk/lord-mayor-launches-spring-into-easter-festival/>.

<sup>536</sup>Belfast Council to Fund St Patrick’s Day Event’. *The Irish Times*, 6 January 2006. <http://www.irishtimes.com/news/belfast-council-to-fund-st-patrick-s-day-event-1.998177>.

<sup>537</sup>Boyd, David. ‘Beat Carnival to Produce Belfast St Patrick’s Carnival’. Information. *Beat Carnival*, 20 January 2014. <http://www.beatcarnival.com/news/20-january-2014/beat-carnival-produce-belfast-st-patricks-carnival>.

<sup>538</sup>Beat Carnival. “Beat Carnival Vision.” Information. *Beat Carnival*. Accessed January 29, 2016. <http://www.beatcarnival.com/beat-carnival-vision>.

## Interaction and Levels of Intergroup Contact in the Spaces

As in Jerusalem, the different nature of the selected shared spaces led to the observation of different levels of interaction between their users. The main conclusion to be drawn from the days of observation was that not much meaningful interaction between Catholics and Protestants happened on a regular basis in shared public spaces.<sup>539</sup>

The structure of the Victoria Square area, with a semi-open building surrounded by pedestrian streets used as places of transit rather than areas to spend time in led to very little interaction occurring between the users of this particular space. It was noted that many groups of youths from different backgrounds and parts of the city tend to meet up in the city centre and Victoria Square on Saturday afternoons and evenings<sup>540</sup>, sometimes leading to anti-social behaviour. While most youths tend to coexist in the centre, some of these groups have been reported to engage in pre-arranged fights, sometimes of sectarian nature.<sup>541</sup> However, antisocial behaviour was only ever witnessed within the specific area of Victoria Square and its surrounding streets during Saint Patrick's Day celebrations.

City Hall Park yielded the most in terms of actual interaction, with occasional contact being observed between individuals sitting on benches or during certain events such as the Easter festival.<sup>542</sup> During the 'Spring into Easter' event, it was observed that "parents are chatting to each other while queuing for face painting or at other stalls. There is definitely more interaction between people in the park today than on an ordinary day."<sup>543</sup> It was further revealed that "even people who don't know each other exchange smiles and sometimes a few words – usually about the weather. Interaction does occur."<sup>544</sup> Yet it should be underlined that the increase in interaction was prompted by the festival, therefore suggesting that the shared space itself does not necessarily lead to increased levels of contact.

More regular occurrences in City Hall also led to the observation of interesting forms interaction, albeit in a reduced and limited way. While the weekly flag protest did not usually lead to any kind of interaction with passers-by and people using the park, its presence was nevertheless acknowledged, often leading to a slightly tense atmosphere. Although the interaction between the flag protestors and other individuals in the space was usually limited

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<sup>539</sup>Belfast Observation Forms 1 to 31 – Tuesday 17th February 2015 to Saturday 17th October 2015

<sup>540</sup>Belfast Observation Form 20 – Saturday 28th March 2015

<sup>541</sup> McAleese, Deborah. 'Teenage Gangs Planning Mass Fights in Belfast on Social Media'. *Belfast Telegraph.co.uk*, 25 February 2015. <http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/teenage-gangs-planning-mass-fights-in-belfast-on-social-media-31020153.html>; Ratcliffe, Rebecca. 'Two Arrests in Belfast after Prearranged Fight between 200 Youths'. *The Guardian*, 19 July 2015, sec. UK news. <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/jul/19/two-arrests-facebook-arranged-fight-200-youths-belfast>.

<sup>542</sup> Belfast Observation Form 25 – Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2015

<sup>543</sup> Belfast Observation Form 24 – Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2015

<sup>544</sup> Belfast Observation Form 26 – Monday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2015

to quick glances or deliberate avoidance, this in itself created a context of unease in the space – “locals who pass by to get into the park ignore them completely or send them looks.”<sup>545</sup> Observation of such aspects around flags demonstrates the significance of symbols of ethnic identity and their presence in public spaces, previously mentioned in Chapter Three.

Observation in CastleCourt shopping centre yielded more limited types of interaction; however contact between staff working in different shops was witnessed as a regular occurrence<sup>546</sup> (which was less the case in Victoria Square). CastleCourt has a more traditional structure and its relatively compact nature leads employees to work in closer proximity, therefore increasing the potential for interaction. While minimal, interaction between shoppers was also observed on several occasions.<sup>547</sup> Despite the centre’s locality which has led it to be perceived as a mainly Catholic shopping area, observation findings suggest that CastleCourt employs and is used by members of both communities. While detailed information pertaining to the community background of staff is not easily determined, it is not believed that such a centre would deliberately apply a sectarian-based selection of its employees (further documentary research tends to corroborate this point<sup>548</sup>).

The information gathered through observation in the three selected spaces suggests that all kinds of interaction – including the absence of any contact – occur in shared spaces, and they do not necessarily lead to improved intergroup relations. Despite this lack of interaction – especially in CastleCourt and Victoria Square – all three shared spaces tended to be perceived as safe and welcoming areas by those visiting them on a daily basis. At the end of the field research, it was concluded that “witnessing people mingling – even anonymously or unconsciously – is a sign that these spaces are becoming normalised as places of mixing.”<sup>549</sup>

Despite the observed lack of interaction in the selected shared spaces, the fact that tension was only rarely witnessed has led to the conclusion that intergroup relations in the city have somewhat improved since the peace process; therefore leading to peaceful coexistence in most urban spaces in the city centre. Numerous reports, such as the research report<sup>550</sup>

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<sup>545</sup> Belfast Observation Form 5 – Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2015

<sup>546</sup> Belfast Observation Forms 1 to 31 – Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2015 to Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2015

<sup>547</sup> Observation Form 23 – Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2015

<sup>548</sup> Barnes, Ciaran. “The Three Killers No Longer Working at CastleCourt Shop in Belfast Flagship Mall.”

*Belfast Telegraph.co.uk*, October 6, 2014 <http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/sunday-life/news/the-three-killers-no-longer-working-at-castlecourt-shop-in-belfast-flagship-mall-30641388.html>.; this article mentions that a shop employee in CastleCourt was affiliated with the UDA, a Protestant paramilitary organisation, therefore suggesting that not all staff are Catholic.

<sup>549</sup> Belfast Observation Form 31 – Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2015

<sup>550</sup> Morrow, Duncan, Gillian Robinson, and Lizanne Dowds. “The Long View of Community Relations in Northern Ireland: 1989-2012.” ARK Research Report. ARK Access Research Knowledge, December 2013.

commissioned by the Northern Ireland Executive<sup>551</sup> and survey results published by Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey<sup>552</sup> have indeed underlined the improved nature of cross-community relations between Catholics and Protestants. Additional survey results revealed that shopping centres were generally considered to be ‘shared and open’ to both communities<sup>553</sup> and that city centres were mostly considered safe and welcoming to everyone in Northern Ireland.<sup>554</sup>

Information gathered from the interviews led to similar understandings of the limited nature of interactions in shared public spaces in Belfast. However, answers tended to vary depending on the nature of the shared space mentioned. Most participants were keen to point out that relations between the two communities had improved since the peace process, and that this reality should be acknowledged. It was stated that “I think that we have very good relations right across the city. [...] We also have at grassroots community level a significant level of interaction as well. [...] Certainly much, much better than before.”<sup>555</sup> It was also acknowledged by some interviewees that cross-community interaction had improved thanks to the establishment of more shared spaces and events.

However, some interviewees also underlined that interaction between the two groups was in fact still very limited and restricted. The arranged interaction that occurs in reconciliation groups in shared community buildings was also criticised, as “people come together for a limited time, [...] there’s interaction for a restricted period of evenings over weeks, they go away on a residential, and people then retreat back to their trenches and that interaction ends.”<sup>556</sup> This last claim clearly mitigates the differences that shared spaces may make to intergroup relations, as even if interaction is enhanced within such spaces, it may not necessarily lead to fundamental changes in perceptions and lifestyle – as the whole environment of daily life is still conditioned by division.

The following view on relations between the two communities was additionally expressed: “what’s the most that we can actually hope for in this divided society? [...] Some people would say [...] the most we can hope for is to coexist peacefully, or to coexist with the absence of

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<sup>551</sup>Ganiel, Gladys. ‘Community Relations in Northern Ireland after the Flags Protest – Roundtable at the Royal Irish Academy’. *Sluggar O’Toole*, 28 February 2014. <http://sluggerotoole.com/2014/02/28/community-relations-in-northern-ireland-after-the-flags-protest-roundtable-at-the-royal-irish-academy/>.

<sup>552</sup>Northern Ireland Life & Times Survey. ‘Module: Community Relations’. Northern Ireland Life & Times Survey, 2014. [http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2014/Community\\_Relations/index.html](http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2014/Community_Relations/index.html).

<sup>553</sup> Northern Ireland Life & Times Survey. ‘Module: Community Relations’. Northern Ireland Life & Times Survey, 2014. [http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2014/Community\\_Relations/index.html](http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2014/Community_Relations/index.html).

<sup>554</sup><sup>554</sup> Northern Ireland Life & Times Survey. ‘NISAFEWL Towns and City Centres Are Safe and Welcoming for People of All Walks of Life’. Northern Ireland Life & Times Survey, 2014. [http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2014/Community\\_Relations/NISAFEWL.html](http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2014/Community_Relations/NISAFEWL.html).

<sup>555</sup> Belfast Interviewee 1 – Anonymous, Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2015

<sup>556</sup> Belfast Interviewee 6 – Ciaran McLaughlin, Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2015

violence, learning to respect the other community. The idea that we can share a society, the idea that there can be some type of harmonious coming together of the two communities is completely unrealistic.”<sup>557</sup> This less optimistic view is increasingly being shared due to the lack of wide-scale reconciliation<sup>558</sup> in Northern Ireland<sup>559</sup> since the peace process.

Research findings have revealed that meaningful interaction between members of different communities in Belfast is typically limited in shared public spaces. Particular events within shared spaces were however observed as yielding higher levels of interaction than on average regular days. It appears that shared spaces may lead to increased levels of intergroup contact and therefore potentially more positive intergroup relations, however many conditions need to be applied for this to occur. Two of the major conditions that may ultimately lead to shared spaces making a difference to intergroup relations in Belfast are the type of shared space (a more socially controlled area focused on conversation) and the context surrounding and within the shared space (certain events may lead to more positive, albeit sometimes negative interaction). Despite these different types of shared spaces situated at different ends of a ‘shared space continuum’, it may be concluded that shared spaces in Belfast are generally beneficial to the city and its residents – however limited their actual role in transforming intergroup relations may be.

## **Theme 2 Findings: Limited Interaction within Regularly Shared Spaces**

This second theme on daily life and intergroup relations in shared public spaces has revealed that although the shared spaces in Belfast city centre are used by both communities on a regular basis without causing tension or violence, meaningful interaction between Catholics and Protestants still remains limited. Indeed, “since much public space operates as temporary ‘places of transit’, its capacity to facilitate meaningful engagement among strangers or opponents can be over-stated.”<sup>560</sup> Meaningful social interaction was generally not observed or understood as being a regular occurrence, with the exceptions of the ‘Spring into Easter’ festival described above. Yet the existence of such spaces could be seen as challenging the internalised and normalised segregated reality that remains strong in interface areas of the city, therefore providing a different and more inclusive lifestyle accessible to all in the centre. It could thus be concluded that shared public spaces in Belfast do not have the ability to

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<sup>557</sup> Belfast Interviewee 6 – Ciaran McLaughlin, Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2015

<sup>558</sup> Meagher, Kevin. “Truth and Reconciliation? The Reality Is Northern Ireland Will Have Neither”. *New Statesman*, 13 January 2016. <http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/devolution/2016/01/truth-and-reconciliation-reality-northern-ireland-will-have-neither>.

<sup>559</sup> “Northern Ireland Nowhere near Reconciliation, Says Hain”. *Belfast Telegraph.co.uk*, 15 July 2015. <http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/northern-ireland-nowhere-near-reconciliation-says-hain-31378160.html>.

<sup>560</sup> Gaffikin, Frank, Malachy McEldowney, Gavan Rafferty, and Ken Sterrett. “Public Space for a Shared Belfast: A Research Report for Belfast City Council.” Research Report. Belfast City Council, January 2008.

significantly improve intergroup relations; however they do contribute towards the transformation of the divided city into a more integrated infrastructure directed towards increasing and pacifying intergroup contact. The incorporation of the research findings within the analytical framework have led to the following results:

- Bourdieu/Foucault Perspective B.1 Normalised and Internalised Way of Life: daily life in Belfast consists of an interesting combination of internalised division along sectarian lines with the acceptance and normalisation of shared spaces in the city centre.
- Intergroup Contact Theory A.1 Authority Support: the fact that the term ‘shared space’ has been increasingly used by Belfast City Council and the power-sharing government as an element of the peace process implemented by the EU may explain why such spaces in the city centre are being regularly used by both communities without causing any tension. However, shared events such as carnival parades are also bringing groups closer together without the direct intervention of authority support.
- Intergroup Contact Theory A.2 Meaningful Interaction: while shared spaces in Belfast city centre are regularly visited by members of both the Catholic and Protestant communities, it was revealed that only minimal interaction occurs between individuals in such spaces.
- Intergroup Contact Theory A.3 Negative Contact Effects: while negative or violent interaction in shared spaces has become a rare occurrence, certain events or circumstances can still lead to sectarian strife in Belfast – therefore leading to the non-peaceful sharing of space.
- Bourdieu/Foucault Perspective B.2 The Role of Discourse: the increasing amount of discourses around shared spaces and their importance for intergroup relations would seem to play a role in their successful internalisation within society; despite the fact that such spaces of encounter do remain the exception in the city.
- Bourdieu/Foucault Perspective B.3 Power Struggles: tensions and power struggles do still occasionally resurface outside of the political arena, as illustrated by the flag-wielding confrontation that took place on Saint Patrick’s Day.

### **3. Theme 3: Assessing the Interpretation of Shared Public Spaces in Belfast**

#### **Perceptions of Shared Space in Belfast**

Unlike Jerusalem, the term shared space has been extensively used in recent years in Belfast and has become an integral part of efforts towards pursuing the peace process, as the use of

the term in relation to intergroup relations and conflict resolution first appeared in the context of post-1998 agreement Northern Ireland. While there is no universally accepted definition of shared space even in Belfast, in this specific context it is generally understood as “a place that is safe and devoid of sectarian paraphernalia”, which is accessible to all inhabitants of the city.<sup>561</sup>

A more detailed description provided by the Belfast Interface Project explains that “space is shared where there is socially integrated use, and safe and free movement with welcome access for all. It is space that is free from fear, hostility or threat. It has been called WAGS space – that is welcoming, accessible, good quality, safe space.”<sup>562</sup> The term WAGS was initially developed by Belfast City Council<sup>563</sup>, providing the following definition: “shared space means a place where different forms of cultural heritage can be expressed in an environment that is safe, welcoming, good quality and accessible for all members of society.”<sup>564</sup> This term is the most commonly adopted and acknowledged within Northern Irish society as a whole. However, the vagueness of this particular definition has been highlighted on numerous occasions and the lack of any consensus at the decision-making elite level around working definitions for such words as ‘reconciliation’, ‘integration’ and ‘sharing’ is understood as limiting their roles and effects in terms of policy implementation.<sup>565</sup>

These general understandings of shared space were further mentioned by the interview participants, therefore confirming that certain criteria are commonly perceived as forming shared space in Belfast. Safe and welcoming were mentioned by the majority of participants when describing the term. At its simplest, then, shared space was understood as “a space – any space – within a city or elsewhere that people feel comfortable being in. And not a threat like, I mean comfortable and feeling safe.”<sup>566</sup> An even broader definition was provided, and consisted of “a shared space is, I suppose, a space that is neither theirs nor ours. It’s neutral.”<sup>567</sup> Yet most of the participants then underlined that they personally understood shared space as being more than simply a neutral space. As one interviewee argued, “I suppose I would say that a shared space is more than those things. [...] It’s not just a space that’s safe in the sense that people won’t get attacked when they go in and out – although that’s important. But it needs to

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<sup>561</sup>Belfast, Forum for Alternative, The, and Belfast Conflict Resolution Consortium. “Projects | Forum for Alternative Belfast.” Project Report. Forum for Alternative Belfast, 2011. <http://www.forumbelfast.org/projects/shared-space-2011.php>.

<sup>562</sup> Goldie, Roz, and Brid Ruddy. “Developing Good Practice in Promoting Shared Space at Interfaces.” *Shared Space Journal*, no. 11 (March 2011), p. 22

<sup>563</sup> Belfast Interviewee 2 – Chris O’Halloran, Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2015

<sup>564</sup> Belfast City Council. ‘Good Relations Plan’. Plan. Good Relations Unit, 2011.p. 5

<sup>565</sup>Belfast, Forum for Alternative, The, and Belfast Conflict Resolution Consortium. “Projects | Forum for Alternative Belfast.” Project Report. Forum for Alternative Belfast, 2011. <http://www.forumbelfast.org/projects/shared-space-2011.php>.

<sup>566</sup> Belfast Interviewee 12 – Joe O’Donnell, Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2015

<sup>567</sup> Belfast Interviewee 6 – Ciaran McLaughlin, Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2015

be a place where people feel safe to talk about things that they might not feel safe to talk about in other places, perhaps that aren't shared."<sup>568</sup>

These variations in definitions were highlighted by one interviewee who explained "there's a continuum in terms of sharing, if that makes sense. From things that are more shared to things that are less shared. [...] So when you ask what is shared, what are shared spaces, it's about where a place is set on that continuum."<sup>569</sup> Taking this perspective, it becomes clear that the role of a shared space may very much depend on where it is situated on the continuum – spaces that explicitly encourage and engineer cross-community interaction are likely to yield more positive results than a 'neutral' shared public space.

Several interview participants expressed criticism regarding the use of the term shared space in the particular context of post-conflict Belfast, arguing that "it's very vague and sensitive and it's been high jacked I think, this 'shared future, shared space' to the point that it's almost been rendered meaningless."<sup>570</sup> It was further mentioned that "in some sense the whole discourse [...] of shared space in the way it's been used and applied to Belfast has become kind of misleading and nonsensical in many ways."<sup>571</sup>

The variety of terms and definitions that exist around shared space in Belfast provides an interesting insight into the different understandings of what is actually being shared within such spaces. Based on the research findings, shared space is increasingly perceived as something more than simply a neutral space where members of different communities come together in a physical place. More importance and relevance is given to the specific type of socially engineered shared spaces such as cross-community centres and organisations; situated at the other end of the 'shared space continuum'.

### **Situating Shared Public Spaces within the City of Belfast**

Following an initial analysis of the city through observation and the experience of residing in the city, it was revealed that most urban spaces situated within Belfast city centre can be considered to be shared by both the Protestant and Catholic communities; while segregation and division is more observable in the city outskirts. Another type of shared space also exists in the Belfast context which includes more focused community centres and buildings often situated close to interface areas that more explicitly work towards improving relations through cross-community contact.

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<sup>568</sup> Belfast Interviewee 2 – Chris O'Halloran, Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2015

<sup>569</sup> Belfast Interviewee 2 – Chris O'Halloran, Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2015

<sup>570</sup> Belfast Interviewee 1 – Anonymous, Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2015

<sup>571</sup> Belfast Interviewee 3 – Milena Komarova, Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2015



There are therefore two types of spaces that may be considered as shared in Belfast, located along the 'shared space continuum'. The shared public spaces in the city centre are not generally expected to lead to the same outcomes as more specific shared facilities in the wider urban area. Many cross-community groups and organisations define themselves as shared spaces, and are usually located in unshared or segregated parts of the city.<sup>572</sup> These particular types of shared spaces actively encourage intergroup contact therefore leading to higher levels of sharing and more significant effects on intergroup relations.

Information provided through the interviews revealed similar understandings of what constitutes a shared space in Belfast. At the wider end of the shared space spectrum, a few participants mentioned that public spaces in the city centre of Belfast were effectively shared. The importance of the city centre for intergroup relations was underlined by one participant who explained "once young people get to the age of around eighteen or so and start using the city centre, that's when they would start mixing with people from other communities. [...] So that the city centre as a shared space has a really important function for them."<sup>573</sup> Yet it was also mentioned that the city centre is "probably more neutral. [...] there are small degrees of sharing [...]."<sup>574</sup> It was further stated "I think the majority of people would say for example the city centre is [a shared space], but not on all occasions."<sup>575</sup> Thus, although most interviewees did agree that public spaces in the city centre of Belfast could be considered shared, most of them tended to understand this sharing as minimal.

More specific locations, such as community centres were equally stated when discussing what spaces in Belfast were shared. One such space that was mentioned on at least two occasions was the Suffolk/Lenadoon interface building, which was understood as "a great example [...]. That wasn't like that years ago. And I think maybe about ten years ago, the two communities got together – so Catholic and Protestant, Suffolk and Lenadoon – and talked about what they could do with the space. And kind of that now, from what I understand, is utilised by both sides of the community, whereas that wouldn't have been years ago."<sup>576</sup> Participants working for different youth and cross-community organisations also tended to mention their place of work as more effective shared spaces leading to meaningful interaction.

Finally, along with physical spaces several participants also mentioned shared events that occur in Belfast, such as the Belfast Marathon during which "running is open to all and has no

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<sup>572</sup>The Duncairn Centre for Culture and Arts; Suffolk Lenadoon Interface Group; Forthspring Community Centre; PeacePlayers International; Community Dialogue; amongst others

<sup>573</sup> Belfast Interviewee 2 – Chris O'Halloran, Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2015

<sup>574</sup> Belfast Interviewee 5 – Richard Dougherty, Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2015

<sup>575</sup> Belfast Interviewee 12 – Joe O'Donnell, Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2015

<sup>576</sup> Belfast Interviewee 10 – Martin McMullan, Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2015

religious affiliation. [...] the event is deemed as socially inclusive to all.”<sup>577</sup> Another event similarly deemed as inclusive was the previously discussed Saint Patrick’s Day parade which was understood as being “much more of a shared event both in terms of participants and audience.”<sup>578</sup> Events taking place in schools between children belonging to the different communities was also mentioned. This last aspect of what was considered as a shared space is deeply relevant as it demonstrates that perceptions of shared space in the specific context of Belfast are not limited to physical spaces. Again, what occurs in shared spaces may be understood as more important than the simple physical act of sharing a location. Certain events were understood as playing a major role in transforming space, such as the work carried out by the alternative and non-sectarian carnival parades initiated by Belfast Beat. As described by its director, “the carnival work is about creating shared space in public spaces in the city, whether it’s the street or a square or footpaths or even the grounds of City Hall, which have been perceived in the past as just being a Unionist space and building. [...] It was about saying ‘this is a shared space from now on’.”<sup>579</sup>

It is therefore clear from these findings that shared spaces are not widespread in Belfast, which still remains a highly divided city. Furthermore, not all shared spaces are considered to be the same; while public spaces in the city centre are considered to be neutral shared spaces, specific buildings and centres are understood as providing a more constructive place of sharing – involving a certain amount of contact and interaction.

This second question around what spaces in Belfast were considered to be shared provided an insight into the importance of authority support (A.1) in the creation of such spaces. Indeed, planning in Belfast in recent years has explicitly focused on transforming the city centre into a truly shared space – a Welcoming, Accessible, Good quality and Safe space for all inhabitants of the city. The city centre is largely considered to be the most obvious shared space in Belfast; however it tends to be located at the broader end of the shared space continuum due to the lack of systematic cross-community interaction it engenders.<sup>580</sup> Despite the fact that the city centre remains neutral rather than truly shared, it is undeniable that both the Catholic and Protestant communities feel comfortable and safe enough to regularly use these public spaces.

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<sup>577</sup> Belfast Interviewee 4 – Stephen Pearson, Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2015

<sup>578</sup> Belfast Interviewee 11 – David Boyd, Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2015

<sup>579</sup> Belfast Interviewee 11 – David Boyd

<sup>580</sup> Gaffikin, Frank, Malachy McEldowney, Gavan Rafferty, and Ken Sterrett. “Public Space for a Shared Belfast: A Research Report for Belfast City Council.” Research Report. Belfast City Council, January 2008.

## The Role of Shared Public Spaces in Belfast

As previously described, observation in the three selected spaces revealed that generally only limited levels of cross-community interaction occurred on a regular basis between members of the Protestant and Catholic communities. This may therefore negate the effects predicted by the intergroup contact theory in the specific context of shared public spaces. It was also observed that in a few rare occasions, certain events could lead to intergroup antagonism – therefore leading to less than optimal intergroup relations.

However, the overwhelming majority of observation days described peaceful coexistence within the spaces and a lack of any palpable tension between the individuals and groups using them on a daily basis. This in itself is significant as “slight as such contact may seem, its absence can mean a reduced potential for improving relations in the future.”<sup>581</sup> The importance of shared events taking place in the public urban arena should also be taken into account, given that “there is evidence that key civic events in the city have developed in a way that means they can be shared. [...] Legislation and policy in Northern Ireland after the 1998 agreement created a structure within which events in public spaces are encouraged to reflect ideas of equality and good community relations.”<sup>582</sup>

Moreover, the more focused types of shared spaces that actively work towards increasing levels of cross-community interact are being increasingly criticised; and recent research on intergroup contact effects in Northern Ireland has revealed that “conversations in mixed company remain superficial, differing perspectives are not discussed, stereotypes are not challenged and the other remains only vaguely understood.”<sup>583</sup> The benefits of sharing space for improved intergroup relations in the more proactive context of contact groups is therefore not guaranteed either.

Many interview participants agreed with the fact that physically sharing spaces was not enough to influence intergroup relations in Belfast. As one participant explained, “if we stick to my sports example, it’s not just enough to throw a ball and giving the opportunity. I think you miss a trick if you don’t engage in a conversation or facilitate an engagement of the conversation.”<sup>584</sup> It was also argued that public spaces in the city centre were in fact only

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<sup>581</sup> Conflict in Cities. “Sharing Space in Divided Cities.” Briefing Paper. Conflict in Cities and the Contested State, November 2012.

<sup>582</sup> Bryan, Dominic. “Parades, Flags, Carnivals, and Riots: Public Space, Contestation, and Transformation in Northern Ireland.” *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, Managing Diversity, 21, no. 4 (November 2015): 565–73, p. 572

<sup>583</sup> Jarman, Neil, John Bell, C. McGratton, and E. Meehan. “Routine Divisions: Segregation and Daily Life in Northern Ireland.” In *Everyday Life after the Conflict: The Impact of Devolution and North-South Cooperation*. Manchester University Press, 2012, p. 4

<sup>584</sup> Belfast Interviewee 9 – Gareth Harper

superficially shared, and that “it’s almost like a pacified space, [...] in a sense it’s very passive, so you’re sort of sharing the city centre but will not do anything or say anything that will rock the boat with the other. [...] You know, we want it to be a shared space, but it can only be when the other isn’t there or the other isn’t kind of provoking [...] it’s very superficial for me sometimes the city centre.”<sup>585</sup>

However, the importance of public spaces was underlined as “it is important to have those public spaces where people are able to come across each other. Not even, let’s not speak about meeting or interaction; let’s talk about coming across each other and simply [...] recognising each other as members of kind of a common social body.”<sup>586</sup> Another participant further highlighted the significance of physically sharing a space such as a supermarket where “people come there because they need to get their shopping [...].And you’re talking to people there and it’s not ‘are you a Protestant? Are you a Catholic?’ before I speak to you. [...] So those sorts of places are actually, you know, there’s a lot of community relations going on, just when people are mixing.”<sup>587</sup> However, a number of interview participants also underlined the fact that “probably most people who use the city centre from different community backgrounds will have a limited shared experience in that shared space. They’re not sharing their experiences; they’re sharing the piece of ground that they walk on. [...] Those people from different backgrounds wouldn’t have many shared experiences in the city centre – apart from shopping. Shopping for peace, I suppose.”<sup>588</sup>

The benefits of rebranding the city centre as a ‘neutral’ shared space focused on commercial activity is not unanimously seen as greatly improving intergroup relations or benefiting the inhabitants of Belfast. For instance, William JV Neill argues that “‘lipstick on the gorilla’ seems an apt metaphor for this planning period [1980s] given its ultimately cosmetic approach and the failure to deal at a deeper level with cultural identity and meaning wrapped up in the city centre which cannot be naively interpreted as ‘neutral space’, however much diluted with newly-arrived corporate logos. Having an interest in the city as a shopper, in short, is not the same as an emotional stake where one’s cultural identity is acknowledged under the common umbrella of citizen.”<sup>589</sup> Although it is clear that shared events and physically shared public spaces might not yield much in terms of positive or improved intergroup relations, they do have some value in terms of normalising diversity. As one respondent concluded, “it’s very hard to hate someone you know, someone you are socialising with, someone who you share a

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<sup>585</sup> Belfast Interviewee 10 – Martin McMullan

<sup>586</sup> Belfast Interviewee 3 – Milena Komarova

<sup>587</sup> Belfast Interviewee 5 – Richard Dougherty

<sup>588</sup> Belfast Interviewee 2 – Chris O’Halloran

<sup>589</sup> Neill, William J. V. *Urban Planning and Cultural Identity*. Psychology Press, 2004, p. 193

space with; it's easy to hate someone you don't know, you don't understand, you can't talk with, you don't discuss issues with [...]. So certainly the more we can create those shared spaces – whatever way we can describe them – they will only get better. The relationships will only improve.”<sup>590</sup>

Despite acknowledging their relative importance, interview participants also underlined that what happens in the space is far more relevant than the space itself, as “just calling it shared space doesn't of course [...] make it so. I do think it's about the activity that people bring there, bring to the space.”<sup>591</sup> The respondents thus generally agreed that shared public spaces such as the city centre did not make major differences to intergroup relations given their essentially passive and neutral nature. On the other hand, it was argued that shared events in shared spaces, or shared spaces with a cross-community relations agenda usually yielded more positive results in terms of intergroup relations. Again, the significance of context when evaluating how shared spaces may influence intergroup relations emerged from many discussions. What happens within the space was ultimately understood as being a crucial factor in determining the outcome of such a shared space on intergroup relations, rather than the physical space itself. Therefore, as one interviewee concluded “again it's working from the premise that it's what you do with the space that will determine how people interact in it.”<sup>592</sup> This determining aspect demonstrates how shared spaces may produce very different effects depending on where they are located within the ‘shared space continuum’ – therefore suggesting that shared public spaces might not make much difference while cross-community groups might indeed improve intergroup relations.

Findings in this section of the chapter may contribute towards answering some of the theory questions associated with authority support (A.1) and meaningful interaction (A.2), as well as discourse (B.2). The fact that since the peace process the terms ‘shared space’ and ‘shared future’ have been widely used by authorities in discourses around planning in the city should be underlined. Indeed, the city centre is described as a shared space by Belfast City Council and this demonstrates clear authority support for the creation and promotion of such spaces in the city since the signing of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement and the subsequent Peace Packages instigated by the Special EU Programmes Body.<sup>593</sup> These spaces are therefore presented as positive areas of exchange and mixing, which may ultimately influence their outcome on intergroup relations – however minimally this may be.

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<sup>590</sup> Belfast Interviewee 12 – Joe O'Donnell

<sup>591</sup> Belfast Interviewee 11 – David Boyd

<sup>592</sup> Belfast Interviewee 1 – Anonymous

<sup>593</sup> Special EU Programmes Body. “PEACE III Programme: Creating Shared Public Spaces.” Information. *Special EU Programmes Body*. Accessed December 15, 2015.

The role of authority support in enhancing the creation of shared public space in Belfast has been widely acknowledged, and “over the same period of time as Northern Ireland moved from low-level war to an uneasy peace, the management of public space was a major concern for the agencies of the state.”<sup>594</sup>It should be underlined that negative contact in shared spaces has become increasingly rare in Belfast in recent years. The inclusion of the term shared space in dominant discourses on either side of the divide and its assimilation to a positive and desirable aspect of urban life in the city may be understood as leading to a generally favourable opinion on shared spaces by at least part of the population – while occasionally criticised, not a single reference was found claiming that shared spaces were not important or beneficial for post-conflict Belfast.

### **Theme 3 Findings: Perceived Mitigated, but Important Role of Shared Spaces**

The main conclusion that can be drawn from the interpretation of shared spaces is that while they are generally considered to be valuable places in Belfast, their respective effects on relations between the Catholic and Protestant communities greatly depends on where a particular space is situated within the ‘shared space continuum’. In other words, a shared public space will undoubtedly lead to minimal positive intergroup relations due to the lack of meaningful interaction it entails; while cross-community projects in shared groups are more likely to benefit intergroup relations due to their focus on conversations and in-depth interaction – although this is not guaranteed. The following results have been established by applying the findings to the analytical framework of the research:

- Intergroup Contact Theory A.1 Authority Support: Belfast City Council and other decision-making institutions in Northern Ireland, as well as the Special EU Programmes Body are now actively working towards making Belfast a shared city, therefore implementing and encouraging the creation of more public shared spaces in the city.
- Intergroup Contact Theory A.2 Meaningful Interaction: not all shared spaces are the same; rather there is a ‘shared space continuum’ which is understood as leading to different levels of meaningful interaction occurring within them. At one end of the continuum, shared public spaces do not tend to yield much in terms of contact, while cross-community centres actively encourage contact and dialogue. While shared public spaces might not lead to significant levels of meaningful interaction, they do have a value in bringing the different communities to coexist peacefully in the city centre.

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<sup>594</sup> Bryan, Dominic. “Parades, Flags, Carnivals, and Riots: Public Space, Contestation, and Transformation in Northern Ireland.” *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology, Managing Diversity*, 21, no. 4 (November 2015): 565-73, p. 568

- Intergroup Contact Theory A.3 Negative Contact Effects: sectarian violence in shared spaces in Belfast has become increasingly uncommon, and such confrontations are usually focused around interface areas in the periphery of the city.
- Bourdieu/Foucault Perspective B.2 The Role of Discourse: the term 'shared space' has been internalised within the dominant discourses on either side of the divide depicting shared public space as a desirable and positive aspect of urban life that will benefit all of Belfast's inhabitants.

## Shared Public Spaces in Belfast Analytical and Theoretical Framework

### A. Intergroup Contact Theory – Cross-community Interaction

#### A.1 Authority Support:

1. Was the shared space planned as a space of cross-community encounter by city authorities when first established?
  - ⇒ Shared public spaces in Belfast are currently being promoted as spaces of cross-community encounter by Belfast City Council, with the support of the EU peace programme.

#### A.2 Meaningful Interaction:

2. Does any meaningful cross-community interaction occur within the shared space and what are the effects of proximity?
  - ⇒ Meaningful interaction in shared public spaces remains limited, yet such spaces do provide the experience of the other and the effects of proximity are believed to contribute towards the normalisation and pacification of intergroup relations. Certain events tended to increase the shared aspect of spaces by focusing on inclusivity.

#### A.3 Negative Contact Effects:

3. Are particular tensions felt within the shared space which may lead to negative interaction?
  - ⇒ While increasingly rare, sectarian violence still occasionally occurs in shared public spaces, thus mitigating its role in enhancing good relations in the city.

### B. Bourdieu/Foucault Perspective – Context

#### B.1 Habitus/discipline: Normalised and Internalised Way of Life

4. How is division normalised in the city and how does this affect the idea of inclusion and integration promoted by shared space?
  - ⇒ While Belfast remains a deeply divided society, shared spaces are also becoming a normalised aspect of city life.

#### B.2 Doxa/panopticism: The Role of Discourse

5. What are the discourses around separation, shared spaces and conflict in the city?
  - ⇒ Discourses on either side of the divide have dramatically changed since the peace process and currently openly praise the benefits of shared spaces for all inhabitants of Belfast and actively encourage their creation.

#### B.3 Power/domination: Power struggles

6. How are the power-struggles for domination between the groups expressed in the city?
  - ⇒ Power struggles between the communities have been transformed from violent confrontations into political debates, and are therefore still present within Belfast society.

Table 20: Shared Public Spaces in Belfast Findings



## Conclusion

Research findings were analysed and organised into three main themes which enabled a better understanding of the role of shared public spaces in Belfast. The first theme around the contextualisation of shared spaces provided crucial information regarding the overall context of the city which is currently in a complex state where the conflict has been transformed into a less violent form yet the root causes remain essentially unresolved. This may thus mitigate the positive differences made by shared spaces to intergroup relations, as division remains deeply entrenched within societal norms.

The study of daily life and intergroup relations in the shared spaces led to the conclusion that while these spaces have been accepted and internalised in Belfast, cross-community interaction in such locations is still fairly limited. Yet peaceful coexistence observed on a daily basis also demonstrates that such spaces are valuable for normalising and maintaining minimal yet essential intergroup relations in a post-conflict setting.

Finally, the third and last theme on the interpretation of shared spaces revealed that there are multiple models of shared space; situating a given space on the 'shared space continuum' has thus been deemed as an effective way of evaluating its role in conflict transformation efforts. The fact that such a continuum exists in Belfast demonstrates that the overall context since the peace process has enabled the evolution of the term from a neutral, 'sanitised' and pacified space to a space where in-depth conversations about identity, difference and acceptance have become possible.

Such an evolution would probably not have been conceivable without the dramatic decrease in violence and the political agreements which have led to a power-sharing government in Northern Ireland. In other words, "the peace process has thus had an impact on daily practices and perceptions of safety, sharing and opportunities for mixing and for crossing hitherto fixed, if largely invisible, boundaries, but such changes still remain uneven and tentative."<sup>595</sup> This evolution of the understanding of 'shared space' is also present within the Good Relations Unit that is increasingly focusing on the creation of shared civic spaces in the city centre, thus moving beyond neutrality and tolerance towards welcoming and celebrating diversity.<sup>596</sup> The role of international support in the form of the Special EU Programmes Body should not be overlooked, as it suggests that in certain contexts the drive to create shared spaces may be initiated from an external actor. It can therefore be concluded that while shared public spaces

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<sup>595</sup>Jarman, Neil, John Bell, C. McGratton, and E. Meehan. "Routine Divisions: Segregation and Daily Life in Northern Ireland." In *Everyday Life after the Conflict: The Impact of Devolution and North-South Cooperation*. Manchester University Press, 2012, p. 18

<sup>596</sup> Interview with a member of the Good Relations Unit, Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2016, Belfast

in Belfast do not play a decisive role in improving intergroup relations, their very existence may be understood as contributing towards transforming the city into a more functional, plural and open urban entity.

## Chapter Seven: Exploring Shared Public Spaces in Brussels

Field research in Brussels was carried out between Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June and Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2015, and then from Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> to Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2015, and included observation and documentary research, as well as a number of interviews. Observation consisted of a total of thirty two days in three selected spaces – Dansaert Street area, Brussels Royal Park and City2 shopping centre. As in the other two case studies, research was carried out at different times of the day and different days of the week. Events observed in and around the selected spaces included the Ommegang festival (Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> June), the Flemish national day (Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> July), the Belgian national day (Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> July) and the Gordelfestival (Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> September). Additional observation in other parts of the city, including the periphery, was also carried out.

Documentary research included regular reading of daily news reports in the French-speaking media outlets such as the RTBF, Le Soir, and la Libre Belgique; while Dutch-speaking newspapers such as De Standaard were occasionally consulted with the help of DaarDaar, a website specialising in translating Flemish news items into French. Statistical information about Brussels inhabitants was not easily gathered, as linguistic affiliation has been removed from the Belgian census following intergroup tension in the 1960s. Scholarly articles as well as opinion polls and elections results were therefore used to overcome this obstacle to provide relevant and appropriate data for the research.

A smaller aspect of the field research involved semi-structured interviews with seven Francophone and five Flemish participants. The interviewees represented an array of different institutions and organisations, including the Brussels Parliament, the Common Community Commission (Brussels Region Government), the Centre for socio-political research and information, the Free University of Brussels (VUB), the Catholic University of Louvain (ULC), the Réseau des Arts de Bruxelles/Brussels Kunstenoverleg, and Zinneke (NGO).

This final case study chapter is similarly divided into three main themes, with a first theme contextualising the shared spaces in Brussels, through the introduction of the three selected shared public spaces for field research, a presentation of the current situation in the city, as well as views on its future. A second theme will then describe daily life and intergroup relations in the selected spaces, through the observation of demographics and routines, special events and levels cross-community interaction. A third and final theme will subsequently assess the interpretations of shared public spaces in the particular context of Brussels, highlighting perceptions around and the location of such spaces in the city, as well as by evaluating their role in terms of their influence on intergroup relations. As in the previous

chapters, the theoretical framework will be applied in order to analyse the role of authority support, meaningful interaction, negative contact; as well as the normalised way of life, the role of discourse and power struggles within the Brussels context.

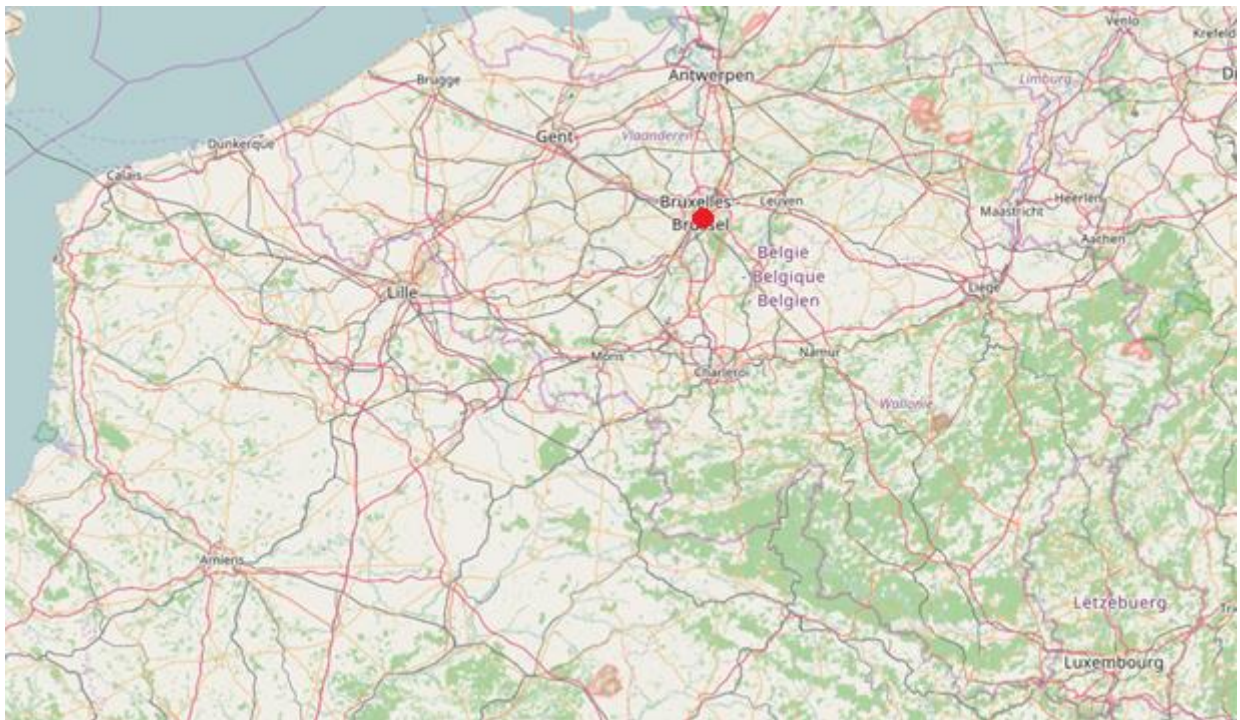


Figure 16: Map of Belgium (© OpenStreetMap contributors)

## 1. Theme 1: Contextualising Shared Public Spaces in Brussels

### Locating the Shared Spaces in Brussels

In order to establish what spaces were visited and used by both communities, a number of criteria were established; the most important of which was language use. Apart from the obvious auditory cue of language, it remained impossible to identify a community background simply through visual cues.

#### *Auditory Cues:*

- French
- Flemish/Dutch

It is however important to underline that given the fact that many inhabitants of Brussels speak French without belonging to the French-speaking Belgian community, particular attention was given to the use of Dutch – which could be assimilated to the Flemish community far more accurately.

Combined with the auditory indicators, the selection of the three spaces was based on the following criteria:

- Public spaces used and visited by representative or sufficient amounts of members of both the French and Dutch-speaking communities
- An open public space, such as a square or a street
- A public park
- A shopping centre or mall
- Centrality of the spaces in the city.

After observation of multiple areas in the city, Dansaert Street area, Brussels Royal Park and City2 shopping centre were selected respectively as a shared open public space, a shared park, and a shared shopping centre; all located in the centre of Brussels.

While this study qualifies Brussels as a divided city (which is also the case of other scholars<sup>597</sup>), it is nevertheless crucial to underline a major differing trait with the other two case studies. Unlike Jerusalem and Belfast, Brussels is not territorially divided along linguistic lines, and members of the Dutch-speaking and French-speaking communities do not reside in geographically defined and separate areas of the city. As such, it could be argued that many if not all public spaces in Brussels are de facto shared between the two communities. However, given the small proportion of residents belonging to the Flemish community (around 10% or less<sup>598</sup>), it could also be argued that certain public spaces might be more shared than others.

**Dansaert Street Area:** The small square off the Dansaert Street is in one of the rare neighbourhoods with a strong Flemish presence – as underlined by a number of interview participants and commentators.<sup>599</sup> Indeed, “The Antoine Dansaert Street [...] is considered the cultural Flemish heart of this area, with cultural institutions, organisations, bars and restaurants open to the Dutch language group; information and menus are offered in both Dutch and French, whereas in other parts of the city French is often the only option.”<sup>600</sup> The neighbourhood has gone through a gentrification process in the early 1990s initiated by communal authorities<sup>601</sup>, leading to an increase in residence of young adults<sup>602</sup> – many of them

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<sup>597</sup> Conflict in Cities Project. ‘Conflict in Cities and the Contested State’. Information. *Conflictincities*. Accessed 12 May 2016. <http://www.conflictincities.org/>.

<sup>598</sup> Lamfalussy, Christophe. “5,3 % de Flamands À Bruxelles.” *La Libre Belgique*, September 3, 2010. <http://www.lalibre.be/actu/belgique/5-3-de-flamands-a-bruxelles-51b8c37ce4b0de6db9bd3f84>.

<sup>599</sup> ‘La Monnaie, Un Coin de Flandre ?’ *La Libre Belgique*, 25 May 2009. <http://www.lalibre.be/actu/belgique/la-monnaie-un-coin-de-flandre-51b8ab43e4b0de6db9b6dc89>.

<sup>600</sup> Jonges, Joos. “Language and Identity of Dutch Speakers in Brussels: The Act of Language Choice and the Dynamic Process of Identification in a Multilingual Context.” MA Thesis, Leiden University, 2015.

<sup>601</sup> Dessouroux, Christian, Mathieu Van Criekingen, and Jean-Michel Decroly. ‘Embellissement sous surveillance : une géographie des politiques de réaménagement des espaces publics au centre de Bruxelles’. *Belgeo. Revue belge de géographie*, no. 2 (30 June 2009): 169–86.

Dutch-speaking<sup>603</sup> – alongside inhabitants belonging to a variety of different migrant communities.

**Brussels Royal Park:** The Royal Park<sup>604</sup> was opened in 1780<sup>605</sup> and is located at the very centre of Brussels, close to the royal palace. The park is surrounded by most of the Belgian regional and federal institutions<sup>606</sup> (representing the three regions of Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels) and is often understood as being used by a higher proportion of Dutch-speaking visitors<sup>607</sup> than other parts of the city.

**City2 Shopping Centre:** City2<sup>608</sup> was selected to fit the last shared space criteria mainly because of its locality as the main commercial structure in the city centre of Brussels; the other main shopping centres are situated in the outskirts of the city.

The three selected spaces were not deliberately planned as spaces of encounter between Dutch-speakers and French-speakers, as intergroup relations are not usually considered to be an issue in Brussels. Research for additional information further confirmed this by revealing the lack of any documentation regarding this specific planning aspect.

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<sup>602</sup> Mathieu Van Criekingen, Richard W., and Jean-Michael Decroly. "Revisiting the Diversity of Gentrification: Neighbourhood Renewal Processes in Brussels and Montreal." *Urban Studies (Routledge)* 40, no. 12 (November 2003): 2451–68.

<sup>603</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>604</sup> Ville de Bruxelles. 'Parc de Bruxelles - Ville de Bruxelles'. Information. *Bruxelles*. Accessed 12 May 2016. <http://www.bruxelles.be/artdet.cfm/5460>.

<sup>605</sup> State, Paul F. *Historical Dictionary of Brussels*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2015, p. 326

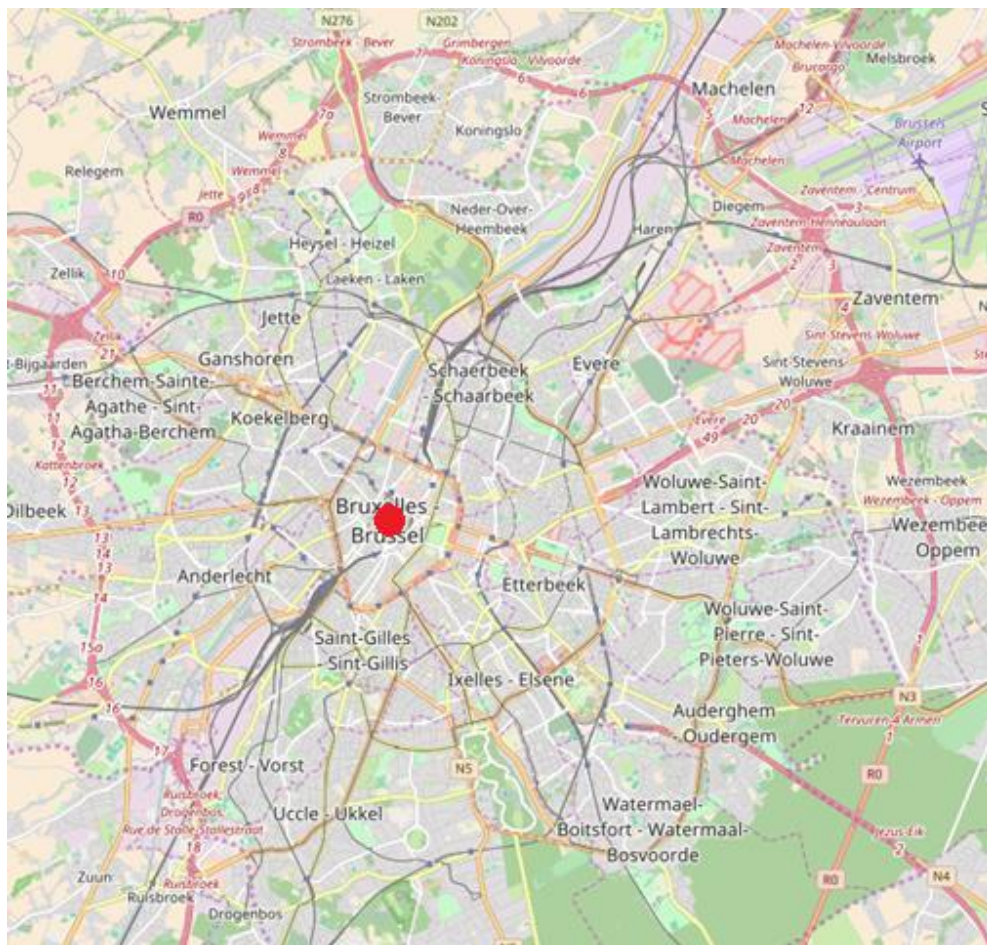
<sup>606</sup> Eupedia. 'Guide de Bruxelles'. Information. *Eupedia*. Accessed 12 May 2016. [http://www.eupedia.com/guide\\_de\\_voyage/belgique/bruxelles.shtml](http://www.eupedia.com/guide_de_voyage/belgique/bruxelles.shtml).

<sup>607</sup> Mennekens, Herman. 'Bruxelles, Ville Culturelle Entre Barcelone et Berlin'. Réseau des Arts de Bruxelles, January 2011.

<sup>608</sup> City2. 'City2 Shopping Mall : The Key to the City Center - Home'. Information. *City2.be*. Accessed 12 May 2016. <http://www.city2.be/en/home.html?IDC=9&IDD=21&LANG=en>.

<i>Shared Space</i>	<b>Dansaert Square</b>	<b>Royal Park</b>	<b>City2</b>
<i>Type of space</i>	Open public square	Public park	Shopping centre
<i>Location of space</i>	North-West of city centre	Centre	North-West of city centre
<i>Planned and/or funded by</i>	Brussels Region – Communal authorities	Royal authority	Société des Centres Commerciaux
<i>Year of planning/opening</i>	1990s	1870	1978
<i>Purpose of planned space</i>	Regeneration of public square	Public Green Space	Shopping and leisure centre in city centre

**Table 21: Selected Shared Spaces in Brussels**



**Figure 17: Map of Greater Brussels (© OpenStreetMap contributors)**

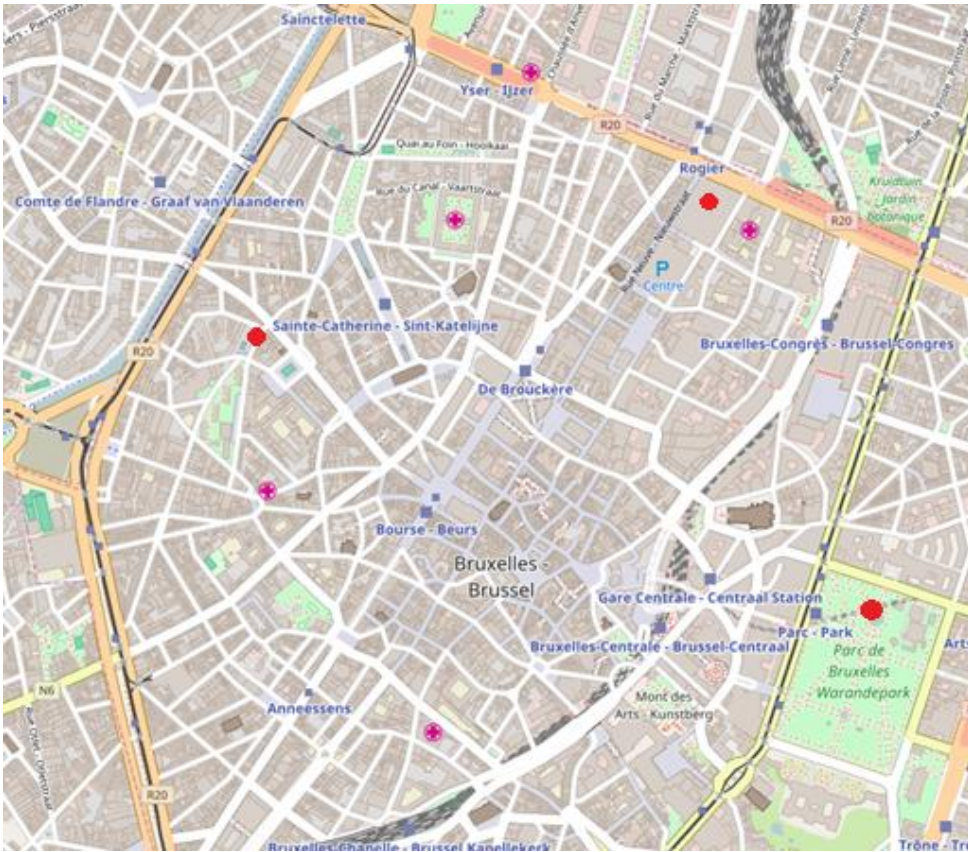


Figure 18: Map of Brussels City Centre with selected Shared Spaces (© OpenStreetMap contributors)



Figure 19: Dansaert Street Area, little square





Figure 20: Brussels Royal Park



Figure 21: City 2 Shopping Centre

## The Current Context in Brussels: Institutional Separation

The situation in Brussels appears to be by far the most stable of the three case studies in terms of intergroup relations, as the linguistic conflict at the heart of the division never escalated into widespread violent confrontation between the francophone and Flemish communities in Belgium. However, recent events ranging from the lack of government for over 500 days to the tragic suicide attacks in March 2016 have drawn international attention to the small kingdom. On closer inspection, and following field research in Brussels, it was revealed that the situation in Brussels might not be as optimal as expected.

A first aspect that needs to be acknowledged when examining relations between the two linguistic groups in Brussels is the significant proportion of the city population that is not of Belgian origin. Indeed, while Brussels officially remains a bilingual city with the equal use of French and Dutch, recent figures have demonstrated that Arabic has overtaken Dutch to become the second spoken language in the city's households.<sup>609</sup> In other words, and as generally acknowledged, "while Brussels is still a bilingual city from a political point of view, this is no longer the case in linguistic-sociological terms."<sup>610</sup> Despite this reality, the political and institutional structure of the city, which has been described in Chapter Three, leads to the city to be effectively divided along linguistic lines.

The linguistic division is extensive, with separate political parties, schools, news outlets and cultural centres; leading members of the Flemish and francophone communities to live in essentially exclusive social spheres. These divisions have been so entrenched that the term of 'linguistic apartheid'<sup>611</sup> has been used on several occasions to describe the institutional reality in the country and its capital.<sup>612</sup> Aligning social, political and certain economic matters strictly along linguistic lines has led to a natural decrease in cross-community cooperation and interaction in recent years following the consecutive state reforms providing more autonomy to Belgium's mono-lingual regions. Brussels is officially the only bilingual region and city in the country; and in essence it has become the main area where the two linguistic communities come and live together. It has however been underlined that while "the various political actors

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<sup>609</sup>Plan Marnix. "Multilingual Brussels - Plan Marnix." Plan Marnix. Accessed January 31, 2016. <http://www.marnixplan.org/MULTILINGUAL-BRUSSELS?lang=en>.

<sup>610</sup>Janssens, Rudi. "Language Conflict in Brussels: Political Mind-Set versus Linguistic Practice." *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 2015, no. 235 (2015): 53-76.

<sup>611</sup>Traynor, Ian, and Brussels. "The Language Divide at the Heart of a Split That Is Tearing Belgium Apart." *The Guardian*, May 9, 2010, sec. World news. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/may/09/belgium-flanders-wallonia-french-dutch>

<sup>612</sup>Waterfield, Bruno. "The Problem with Belgium". *The Telegraph*, 31 July 2008. [http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/brunowaterfield/4769146/The\\_problem\\_with\\_Belgium/](http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/brunowaterfield/4769146/The_problem_with_Belgium/).

within Brussels “talk” to each other; the various public administrations and organisations do not. They operate within the status quo of the political design.”<sup>613</sup>

While in the past this strict separation was accepted as necessary as it enabled the protection of the eroding Flemish language and identity in the capital, the levels of division today are increasingly being understood as causing harm to the city and its inhabitants. The imposition of institutional separation has been criticised, as “the political discourse starts from the assumption that the language background of the residents of Brussels is a binary zero-sum game, where the citizens belong to either the French or Dutch-speaking language community.”<sup>614</sup> Moreover, “the aim of the [language] policy was not to create bilingual citizens in Brussels. [...] bilingual forms in the administration or bilingual education do not fit this logic.”<sup>615</sup> Yet crucially it was underlined that this division was not desired by the majority of the inhabitants of Brussels, who on the contrary would be willing to see the city become more effectively bilingual.<sup>616</sup> As a result, an important grassroots movement within the capital has emerged in recent years in order to counter the institutional divide through the creation of new political parties<sup>617</sup> and the initiation of joint cultural projects.<sup>618</sup>

Given the fact that the existing divisions within Brussels are not materialised through geographic or physical separation in the city, they were not easily discernible through observation in the field. However, regular visits to the city during the months of field research did provide an insight into the high levels of institutional, political and socio-cultural divisions which increasingly became noticeable. Despite this divided reality, the current situation in Brussels was observed as being overwhelmingly peaceful and virtually no intergroup tension was ever felt or witnessed throughout the period of research.

Interviews carried out in Brussels provided similar perceptions in terms of the current context of the city. The fact that Brussels has become a very mixed city, in which the two linguistic communities have become only part of the entire population, was underlined as “the other in the public space [...] is not necessarily the Dutch-speaker in Brussels. There are so few of them

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<sup>613</sup>Janssens, Rudi. “Language Conflict in Brussels: Political Mind-Set versus Linguistic Practice.” *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 2015, no. 235 (2015): 53–76.

<sup>614</sup> Op. Cit., p. 72

<sup>615</sup> Op. Cit., p. 62

<sup>616</sup> TIBEM - Tweetaligheid in Beweging - Bilinguisme en Mouvement. “TIBEM - Tweetaligheid in Beweging - Bilinguisme En Mouvement.” Information. *TIBEM - Tweetaligheid in Beweging - Bilinguisme En Mouvement*. Accessed April 14, 2016. [http://www.tibem.be/page\\_view.php?text=tibem1&textItem=21](http://www.tibem.be/page_view.php?text=tibem1&textItem=21).

<sup>617</sup> Pro Brussel. ‘Qui Sommes Nous ? - Wie Zijn We?’ Information. *Pro Brussel - Ensemble, Samen, Together*. Accessed 12 May 2016. <http://probrussel.weebly.com/qui-sommes-nous---wie-zijn-we.html>.

<sup>618</sup>Réseau des Arts à Bruxelles. ‘Culture-Cultuur | Contenu Annoncé Pour l’Accord de Coopération Culturelle | Réseau Des Arts À Bruxelles’. Information. *Réseau Des Arts À Bruxelles*. Accessed 14 April 2016. <http://www.reseaudesartsabruelles.be/fr/actualites/culture-cultuur-accord-de-cooperation-culturelle>.

that I have a feeling that the other in public spaces in Brussels is the Turk, the Moroccan, [...].”<sup>619</sup>

However, it was also acknowledged that there remained deep divisions between the two groups. It was for instance argued that “Brussels is not a bilingual city. [...] If you look at it from the point of view of the official state framing, Brussels is a region where two mono-linguistic institutions operate. There is nothing bilingual. [...] And in fact it’s apartheid.”<sup>620</sup> This type of ‘voluntary apartheid’ was understood as being caused by the increasing institutional separation between the two linguistic communities, and one respondent further underlined that “many of our institutions of course are separate. And for a number of years now, especially since the late 1980s when the education got separated, the educational system was split up, many people live in fact in a mono-lingual environment. And only a few institutions have remained national institutions. For instance also the political parties have split, so there is no bilingual party anymore.”<sup>621</sup>

Interview participants were also critical of this institutional divide, and it was underlined that “the real problems have remained. Because the real problem is a Brussels problem and the institutional situation is entirely against Brussels in many aspects because it is still based on identity criteria. [...] I mean a civil servant today needs to have a linguistic gender.”<sup>622</sup> It was further mentioned that “in the institutions, nearly everything is decided on the basis of linguistic affiliation [...] which does not leave any place for Brussels.”<sup>623</sup>

The complexity of the federalisation process when applied to the Brussels region was described by one interviewee, according to whom “most of the time the different institutions are not organised in the same way; the sectors are divided differently, the kind of competences are not described in the same way, so the way it’s operated in the field – the social work, the cultural work, and the educational work – is quite different as well. So most of the time it’s not even possible to find the equivalent for one or the other.”<sup>624</sup>

The study of intergroup relations between both communities is therefore very complex and should take into account the very mixed reality of Brussels, which is not reflected at the institutional level. Another aspect that needs to be acknowledged is the fact that given the very small numbers of Dutch-speakers residing in Brussels, the city is essentially French-speaking – therefore leading to an imbalanced situation between the two communities in shared

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<sup>619</sup> Brussels Interviewee 2 – Serge Govaert, translated from French, Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2015

<sup>620</sup> Brussels Interviewee 5 – Eric Corijn, Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2015

<sup>621</sup> Brussels Interviewee 4 – Mark Elchardus, Monday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2015

<sup>622</sup> Brussels Interviewee 9 – Alain Maskens, translated from French, Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2015

<sup>623</sup> Brussels Interviewee 9 – Alain Maskens

<sup>624</sup> Brussels Interviewee 12 – Myriam Stoffen, Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2016

spaces.<sup>625</sup> While the Flemish community in Brussels benefits from strong minority rights in the city in terms of institutional representation<sup>626</sup>, this does not change the fact that Dutch remains a minority language in Brussels.

In terms of the normalised way of life (B.1), it was revealed that separation along linguistic lines between the Dutch-speaking and French-speaking communities in Brussels was internalised to the point that only certain grassroots organisations questioned its validity. Yet thanks to the efforts of such organisations, political discourses (B.2) within the city are gradually changing to become more open to the idea of making Brussels a truly bilingual region.

### Views of the Future of Brussels: The Cost of Federalisation

A brief overview of the current situation in Brussels has revealed that despite the absence of violence, tensions between the different linguistic communities in the country contribute to further separation on the ground, including in the capital city. While the outbreak of violent conflict between Francophones and Flemings remains extremely improbable, the ongoing federalisation process is increasingly causing concern, and the threat of Belgium's dissolution has been mentioned on numerous occasions in recent years.<sup>627</sup>

Criticisms of the current political and institutional structure of the Belgian state may be increasing, but there is no widespread acknowledgement of its weaknesses within official political discourses at the elite level. It is therefore unlikely that the federalisation process will be questioned or drastically transformed in the foreseeable future. It has also been suggested by observers that "inefficiency and frustration, and possibly corruption, favouritism, the lack of transparency, and instability, might be the price of maintaining a unified Belgium."<sup>628</sup> Indeed, it has been argued by federalisation scholars that "the tensions between the two language groups have been and remain strictly verbal tensions, with no significant acts of physical violence. Highly complex state structures are the price which must be paid for that."<sup>629</sup>

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<sup>625</sup> Brussels Interviewee 6 – Kris Deschouwer, Monday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2015

<sup>626</sup> Jacobs, Dirk. "The Challenge of Minority Representation in Brussels." In *Immigració I Qüestió Nacional. Minories Subestatals I Immigració a Europa*. Editorial Mediterrània: Barcelona, 2004.

<sup>627</sup> 'Co., L., and B. Dy. "La Fin de La Belgique En 2025? Bart De Wever «éviterait de Préciser Les Dates»." *Le Soir*, January 7, 2016. <http://www.lesoir.be/1086808/article/actualite/belgique/politique/2016-01-06/fin-belgique-en-2025-bart-wever-eviterait-preciser-dates>; Brodey, Sam. 'Belgium Might Not Be a Country by the next World Cup'. *Mother Jones*, 1 July 2014. <http://www.motherjones.com/mixed-media/2014/07/belgium-world-cup-flanders-wallonia>, Henley, Jon. "Bye Bye Belgium? | The Guardian | Guardian.co.uk." *The Guardian*, November 13, 2007. <http://www.theguardian.com/g2/story/0,,2209988,00.html>.

<sup>628</sup> Mnookin, Robert, and Alain Verbeke. "Persistent Nonviolent Conflict with No Reconciliation: The Flemish and Walloons in Belgium." *Law & Contemporary Problems* 72, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 151–86, p. 184

<sup>629</sup> Deschouwer, Kris. *The Politics of Belgium: Governing a Divided Society*. Comparative Government and Politics. Basingstoke ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 77

However, while the political reality is fostering division, actors at the civil society level have been increasingly collaborating in Brussels in order to actively counter this damaging duality. Grassroots organisations are playing a major role in transforming the city, highlighting for instance that “it is high time to proclaim that the population of Brussels can no longer be reduced to two groups, “Flemings” on the one side, and Francophones on the other.”<sup>630</sup> In fact, the incentive to create bridges between the two linguistic groups and the many other communities residing in Brussels and developing shared spaces has been nearly exclusively instigated by such organisations<sup>631</sup>, rather than by decision-makers at the elite level. Such grassroots initiatives have led to an increase in the number of practicing bilingual residents in Brussels, including a 10% rise in the number of bilingual families in recent years.<sup>632</sup>

Relations between the two linguistic groups are generally considered to have improved in recent years, and it has been underlined that “unlike thirty years ago, conflicts over language use in commercial establishments are relatively rare in Brussels today, and there is an apparent growing willingness among Brussels’ residents speaking one language to learn the other major national language.”<sup>633</sup>

Interview participants in Brussels also underlined these aspects, and were relatively optimistic in terms of intergroup relations in the future as “there is a general climate of communitarian appeasement.”<sup>634</sup> The main reason for the improvement of relations and decrease in tension was explained by the fact that “the linguistic problem today is eclipsed; at least it doesn’t have the weight that it used to have because today’s Brussels population is not the same as in the past.”<sup>635</sup> Another interviewee also underlined that “when you see the dynamism of the Brussels population, of the Brussels movements, I think something’s happening that could really change the situation.”<sup>636</sup>

However, some participants did mention that the current federalisation process of the country would inevitably lead to more division, which might negatively affect Brussels. Indeed, “there is a language border and borders around Brussels but the whole interpretation of what it actually means and where it should be, that language border is constantly being debated. [...]

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<sup>630</sup>L’appel Bruxellois “Nous existons” (2006) | Toudi’. *La Revue Toudi*, no. 74 (April 2007).

<http://www.larevuetoudi.org/fr/story/lappel-bruxellois-nous-existons-2006>.

<sup>631</sup>Tout Autre Chose. “Une Tout Autre École ? Créons-La ! | Tout Autre Chose.” *Tout Autre Chose*. Accessed January 31, 2016. <http://www.toutautrechose.be/une-tout-autre-ecole-parlons-en>.

<sup>632</sup>Gathon, Marie. ‘10 % de Familles Bilingues En plus À Bruxelles’. *Le Vif L’Express*, 21 March 2013.

<http://www.levif.be/actualite/belgique/10-de-familles-bilingues-en-plus-a-bruxelles/article-normal-74733.html>.

<sup>633</sup>Murphy, Alexander. “Brussels: Division in Unity or Unity in Division?” *Political Geography*, Special Issue Dedicated to Saul B. Cohen, 21, no. 5 (June 2002): 695–700, p. 699

<sup>634</sup> Brussels Interviewee 2 – Serge Govaert

<sup>635</sup> Brussels Interviewee 2 – Serge Govaert

<sup>636</sup> Brussels Interviewee 9 – Alain Maskens

So yes, there will be further conflicts again. And yes, I mean the direction of the solutions will probably be further devolution.”<sup>637</sup>

While the increasing institutional division of Belgium was criticised, it was also suggested that separation may have avoided a more sinister outcome to the linguistic conflict. On respondent therefore argued that “it is necessary. [...] Not the division of political parties, but the federalisation [...] is a very important aspect which has led to a greater efficiency and to the pacification of relations, so to enable Wallonia and Flanders to get along.”<sup>638</sup> This view is similar to the statement that relations between the linguistic groups have improved thanks to division, as “you see an evolution in the relations... but the evolution is actually caused by the fact that there is more and more separation between the two language communities.”<sup>639</sup> Another participant also suggested that “it is perhaps because we went through with this absurdity that there was no bloodbath in the past.”<sup>640</sup> It was further claimed that “consociation democracy is good; I cannot think of an alternative. [...] But then if you go for separation, good fences make good neighbours, a large degree of autonomy, you need to take care that the joint decision making is democratic. Because that does not come automatically to the country; the thing that comes automatically is reinforcement of the sub-states identities – which is fine, which is ok, if at the same time you can keep a common identity going.”<sup>641</sup>

Yet the dangers of identity politics were also acknowledged, and it was highlighted “look at places such as Sarajevo where [...] the structures that were established continued to be based on compromises that put forward identity ideologies. They have their three-president system and obviously this system perpetuates the importance of difference instead of appeasing these ideologies.”<sup>642</sup> This was also recognised by the first respondent, who therefore concluded that “on the one hand yes; I think if the solution helps to go on peacefully then it’s a good solution. But then there is also, what is in the political science literature called the paradox of federalism that is that if you go on building institutions based on identities that you reinforce, you reify the identities, you make them stronger than what they are in fact. And then you reinforce, you do not pacify, you fuel the conflict. So I don’t know which direction that can go for Belgium.”<sup>643</sup>

It has become clear through the research that authority support (A.1) from both the French and Flemish Communities for shared spaces in Brussels is non-existent. Instead, the ongoing federalisation process – which is the result of multiple compromises between the linguistic

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<sup>637</sup> Brussels Interviewee 6 – Kris Deschouwer

<sup>638</sup> Brussels Interviewee 3 – Philippe van Parijs, translated from French, Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2015

<sup>639</sup> Interview with Rudi Janssens, Monday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2016, Brussels

<sup>640</sup> Brussels Interviewee 9 – Alain Maskens

<sup>641</sup> Brussels Interviewee 6 – Kris Deschouwer

<sup>642</sup> Brussels Interviewee 9 – Alain Maskens

<sup>643</sup> Brussels Interviewee 6 – Kris Deschouwer

communities – is leading to further separation at the national level. On the country scale, authority support from the Flemish and Walloon regions is in fact focusing on reinforcing exclusively mono-lingual territories rather than creating shared spaces. It has indeed been acknowledged that “there appears to be little interest in reconciliation or in further integration. Today’s debate rests instead on whether Belgium’s two parts should separate further.”<sup>644</sup>The main discourse (B.2) on all sides mainly revolves around the fact that separation is the answer to cross-community tensions, therefore suggesting that it will improve intergroup relations. However, it should be acknowledged that in Brussels, certain political actors are starting to change their positions and are becoming more open to the idea of better integration and collaboration between the linguistic communities<sup>645</sup> in the city, as a result of grassroots pressure.

### Theme 1 Findings: Context of Ongoing Division

The study of the contextualisation of shared spaces in Brussels has led to the conclusion that while the linguistic conflict in Belgium has never escalated into widespread violence, Belgian society is nevertheless deeply divided. Even in Brussels, which is the only bilingual region in the country, social spheres are nearly entirely monolingual and exclusive. It is the grassroots level civil society that has contributed the most in terms of efforts made towards moving beyond the communitarian divide and making Brussels a truly shared city. After applying the research findings to the analytical framework, the following results were established:

- Bourdieu/Foucault Perspective B.1 Normalised and Internalised Way Life: while physical segregation is non-existent in Brussels, daily life revolves around a clearly established linguistic duality which tends to limit meaningful intergroup contact.
- Bourdieu/Foucault Perspective B.2 The Role Discourse: most discourses on either side of the linguistic divide are primarily if not exclusively directed towards one specific mono-lingual community rather than the entire population of Belgium or Brussels – the sharing of space is therefore not a popular or regular topic at the decision-making level.
- Bourdieu/Foucault Perspective B.3 Power Struggles: power struggles between the Flemish and Francophone communities in Brussels is often limited to the elite political and institutional level, while ordinary Brussels citizens generally do not feel as strongly about the linguistic conflict.

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<sup>644</sup>Mnookin, Robert, and Alain Verbeke. “Persistent Nonviolent Conflict with No Reconciliation: The Flemish and Walloons in Belgium.” *Law & Contemporary Problems* 72, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 151–86, p. 185

<sup>645</sup> ‘Doukeridis: Il Faut Organiser Un Enseignement Bilingue À Bruxelles’. *La Libre Belgique*, 22 January 2014. <http://www.lalibre.be/actu/belgique/doukeridis-il-faut-organiser-un-enseignement-bilingue-a-bruxelles-52df861e3570ba3e183fccf2>.



## 2. Theme 2: Describing Daily Life and Intergroup Relations in Shared Public Spaces in Brussels

### Demographics and Routines in the Spaces

The little square off the Dansaert Street was visited on a daily basis by both French-speaking teenagers (mostly of African and North-African descent) playing football and Dutch-speaking young adults regularly going in the bar situated close by; this particular square was very mixed and shared in terms of different communities.<sup>646</sup> The Royal Park was regularly visited by office workers located in the institutional federal and regional buildings close-by – therefore bilingual as well as monolingual French and Dutch – who came on their lunch breaks to sit and eat on the benches or to jog around the park. On weekends, the office workers were replaced by families belonging to both language groups coming to enjoy a stroll in the park. City2 shopping centre was observed as being used by both the French-speaking and Dutch-speaking communities on a daily basis – although much more French was heard than Dutch. Observation over several weeks interestingly revealed different demographic tendencies on different days of the week; such as an increased presence of members of the Muslim community, including many families, on Friday afternoons, and a slight increase in the presence of members of the Dutch-speaking community, also mainly families, on Saturday afternoons.

In terms of demographics, all three shared spaces were visited by a wide range of individuals belonging to different socio-economic groups. The Dansaert area in particular provided an interesting combination including the young upscale Flemish community and the more modest-income communities of Arab and African origins. As regards gender, observation in the three selected shared spaces revealed a relatively even distribution and no great variations in terms of interaction.<sup>647</sup>

The study of daily routines revealed that while Belgium is effectively divided into two main linguistic regions (Flanders and Wallonia); Brussels remains the only place of large-scale mixing and interaction between the two linguistic communities. Therefore, despite a normalised division at the national scale, inhabitants of Brussels have internalised (B.1) the very mixed nature of their city which is often considered to be a shared space in itself.

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<sup>646</sup> Brussels Observation Forms 1 to 32 – Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June to Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2015

<sup>647</sup> Brussels Observation Forms 1 to 32 – Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June to Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2015

## Special Events in and around the Spaces

The Gordelfestival (the 'belt festival' in Dutch) is a predominantly if not exclusively Flemish cycling event that takes place annually around the Brussels periphery.<sup>648</sup> The Gordel is described by the Flemish authorities as a family-friendly sports activity in which inhabitants of the towns located in the Brussels periphery are invited to cycle around the green and wooded belt that surrounds the capital. Yet it is understood as holding a very clear political message by many members of the Francophone community and inhabitants of Brussels, by effectively delimitating the language borders between the bilingual region of Brussels and the monolingual region of Flanders. In fact, it has also been openly acknowledged as such by Flemish politicians, underlining their desire to protect and preserve Flemish identity in the region.<sup>649</sup> It has been argued that the event's "main purpose is not sports [...]. The message is clear: we, inhabitants of Flanders, are coming here to demonstrate the Flemish character of this periphery that we want to separate at all costs from Brussels."<sup>650</sup>

In previous years the Gordelfestival caused slight tension between members of the French community residing in the Flemish periphery of Brussels and those Flemish activists keen in demarcating their territory as exclusively Flemish<sup>651</sup> – and therefore as clearly unshared.<sup>652</sup> Observation carried out in a Flemish town situated in the Brussels periphery but with a majority of French-speaking residents, provided the following description: "I follow the signs and end up in the courtyard of a farm where a few cyclists wearing yellow are sitting on benches. [...] It's completely Dutch-speaking here, and I noticed that a few people are staring at me [...]. I have to admit that I don't feel very comfortable or welcome here. As I walk out I pass a French-speaking couple walking their dog; they seem to want to go into the courtyard but when they see what's there they decide not to."<sup>653</sup> This was the only time that any kind of tension linked to intergroup relations between the linguistic communities was ever felt or witnessed during the period of observation in Brussels. These slight tensions<sup>654</sup> (that have been

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<sup>648</sup>Gordelfestival. "EN - Het Gordelfestival." Information. *Gordelfestival*. Accessed January 31, 2016.

<http://www.gordelfestival.be/eng>.

<sup>649</sup> Hope, Alan. 'Gordel Festival Mixes Traditional Focus with Quirky Activities | Flanders Today'. *Flanders Today*, 28 August 2015. <http://www.flandertoday.eu/living/gordel-festival-mixes-traditional-focus-quirky-activities>.

<sup>650</sup>Maskens, Alain. *Monoflamands et monovallons? errances et dangers des ideologies mono-identitaires. envoi de l'auteur*. LA LONGUE VUE. Paris: Bruxelles, La Longue Vue, 2000, p. 96

<sup>651</sup>Hupin, Baptiste. 'Le Gordel Sera plus Touristique Mais Gardera Son Caractère Flamand'. *RTBF Info*, 8 February 2013. [http://www.rtb.be/info/belgique/detail\\_le-nouveau-gordel-sera-plus-touristique-mais-restera-flamand?id=7924354](http://www.rtb.be/info/belgique/detail_le-nouveau-gordel-sera-plus-touristique-mais-restera-flamand?id=7924354).

<sup>652</sup>"Gordelfestival: Clous et Morceaux de Verre À Rhode-Saint-Genèse." *RTBF Info*, September 1, 2013. [http://www.rtb.be/info/belgique/detail\\_gordelfestival-clous-et-morceaux-de-verre-a-rhode-saint-genese?id=8079219](http://www.rtb.be/info/belgique/detail_gordelfestival-clous-et-morceaux-de-verre-a-rhode-saint-genese?id=8079219).

<sup>653</sup> Brussels Observation Form 19 – Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2015

<sup>654</sup>Gordel: Le Mouvement Flamand Prépare Plusieurs Actions À Rhode-Saint-Genèse'. *L'avenir.net*, 1 September 2012. [http://www.lavenir.net/cnt/dmf20120901\\_00199509](http://www.lavenir.net/cnt/dmf20120901_00199509).

reducing in recent years) are regularly reported in both Dutch-speaking<sup>655</sup> and French-speaking<sup>656</sup> media.



Figure 22: Gordelfestival, sign along the route

Another event that was deemed particularly relevant for the study of intergroup relations in Brussels was the Belgian National Day, which celebrates the independence of Belgium on 21<sup>st</sup> July 1831.<sup>657</sup> The Royal Park was transformed for the day into a giant fairground with many activities and events taking place.<sup>658</sup> The celebrations also included an annual military parade reviewed by the King and ended with fireworks in the evening. It was observed that “all spaces [...] were frequented and visited by members of both linguistic communities. Although overall more French was heard, given the demographic reality on the ground, a fair amount of Dutch was also spoken in these spaces therefore confirming that the Flemish community does partake in the national day festivities.”<sup>659</sup> The Flemish community was therefore witnessed taking part in the national celebrations in relatively important numbers. The atmosphere in Brussels was very festive and relaxed and brief interactions between strangers in the form of smiles and laughter were observed in the park. Many members of new communities also

<sup>655</sup>“Nauwelijks incidenten op eerste editie Gordelfestival.” *De Standaard*, September 1, 2013. [http://www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20130901\\_00717490](http://www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20130901_00717490).

<sup>656</sup> Cleeren, Betty. ‘La Dernière Édition Du Gordel Ne Sera sans Doute Pas La plus Sereine de Toutes’. *RTBF Info*, 31 August 2012. [https://www.rtbf.be/info/regions/detail\\_la-derniere-edition-du-gordel-ne-sera-sans-doute-pas-la-plus-sereine-de-toutes?id=7830326](https://www.rtbf.be/info/regions/detail_la-derniere-edition-du-gordel-ne-sera-sans-doute-pas-la-plus-sereine-de-toutes?id=7830326).

<sup>657</sup> Belgium.be. “National Day and Feast Days of Communities and Regions.” Information. *Belgium.be*. Accessed January 31, 2016. <http://www.belgium.be>.

<sup>658</sup> Ville de Bruxelles. ‘National Day in the Park - City of Brussels’. Information. *Brussels.be*. Accessed 12 May 2016. <http://www.brussels.be/artdet.cfm?id=4843&agendaaid=680>.

<sup>659</sup> Brussels Observation Form 16 – Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2015

residing in Brussels were also observed taking part in the celebrations. The importance of the national day in terms of bringing together the two linguistic communities is regularly mentioned by the media<sup>660</sup>, given the increasing distance observed between the two groups.<sup>661</sup>

The Zinneke parade is a multicultural event that occurs every two years in Brussels since its creation in 2000. One of its main purposes is “to get people who as a rule seldom or never work together to cooperate: groups of inhabitants who are very different from each other, [...] people who speak different languages and who have settled in a variety of places in the city”<sup>662</sup>. “Zinneke” is a Brussels term for a stray dog, highlighting the importance of mixing cultures in a city like Brussels. Given that the Zinneke Parade is a biannual event, observation of the parade took place in May 2014. Observation on that day revealed that the parade was indeed very mixed in terms of linguistic communities and substantially more Dutch was heard being spoken than usual, therefore highlighting the shared nature of the event. For instance, “one Flemish volunteer was happy to explain what the event was all about, and she was adamant that it was a truly shared parade and said not to care much about the fact that the city was essentially French-speaking. “For me, the most important is communication, and in Brussels language is not a barrier to communication”.”<sup>663</sup> The parade has become the focus of a number of studies on urbanism and community creation, drawing interest as “there is not a single community that is promoted during the parade.”<sup>664</sup> The Zinneke Parade is indeed specifically dedicated to the celebration of diversity and difference in a very colourful and carnival-style parade that intends to blur community lines.

The importance of the Zinneke Parade in terms of intergroup relations has been underlined, as “workshops are as much meeting places for people whose paths would never cross in everyday life otherwise as havens of creativity.”<sup>665</sup> The particularity of the parade in terms of its “ability to generate a space for cultural development in public spaces, with limited use of traditional cultural infrastructure” has also been noted.<sup>666</sup> The parade was further described as “one of the few initiatives that actually reaches people across communities but for that it has to pay

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<sup>660</sup>A.W. “Fête Nationale: 10.000 Personnes Au Parc Royal Pour Voir Le Roi Philippe et La Reine Mathilde.” *La Libre Belgique*, July 21, 2014. <http://www.lalibre.be/actu/belgique/fete-nationale-10-000-personnes-au-parc-royal-pour-voir-le-roi-philippe-et-la-reine-mathilde-photos-et-videos-53ccc0763570667a638c4971>. ; ‘Le Succès de La Fête Nationale’. *Le Vif L’Express*, 22 July 2010. <http://www.levif.be/actualite/belgique/le-succes-de-la-fete-nationale/article-normal-146745.html>.

<sup>661</sup>Thys, John. “Belgique: Pour Conjurer La Crise, Les Belges Célèbrent L’unité de Leur Pays.” *Ladepeche.fr*, July 21, 2008. <http://www.ladepeche.fr/article/2008/07/21/465175-belgique-conjurer- crise-belges-celebrent-unite-pays.html>.

<sup>662</sup>Magazinneke 19. *Issuu*. Accessed May 11, 2014. [http://issuu.com/diszinneke/docs/magazinneke\\_def\\_site](http://issuu.com/diszinneke/docs/magazinneke_def_site).

<sup>663</sup>Reyskens, Peter, and Joke Vandenabeele. “Parading Urban Togetherness: A Video Record of Brussels’ Zinneke Parade.” *Social & Cultural Geography* 0, no. 0 (January 8, 2016): 1–21, p. 4

<sup>664</sup>Mangano, Stefania, and Anupama Sekhar. “Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) - Cities: Living Labs for Culture?” Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), November 2015, p. 40. <http://asef.org/pubs/asef-publications/3703-cities-living-labs-for-culture->.

<sup>665</sup>Op. Cit., p. 40

<sup>666</sup>Op. Cit., p. 41

the price of dealing with demands and requirements of several distinct authorities and funding bodies.”<sup>667</sup> Observation of the ninth edition of the Zinneke Parade<sup>668</sup>, which took place on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2016, confirmed findings expressed above in terms of its efficiency in drawing different groups and communities together. Set in the streets of central Brussels just two months after the terrorists attacks, this particular parade had additional symbolic importance for the people of Brussels and drew crowds to celebrate diversity in the city.<sup>669</sup>

The analysis of special events in and around the city has led to the conclusion that political discourse (B.2) can influence the outcome of an event (especially in the case of the Gordelfestival) and authority support (in this case the Flemish Region) in organising such events (A.1). This last event revealed that tensions between the communities still existed; therefore highlighting the power struggles (B.3) that dominate political life in the Brussels periphery. However, the lack of such support did not hinder the shared aspect of other events (Zinneke Parade).

### Interaction and Levels of Intergroup Contact in the Spaces

As in the other two case studies, the different nature of the three spaces led to their different usage and varying levels of interaction – yet meaningful intergroup contact was generally not observed as a widespread phenomenon. The days of field research led to the conclusion that only limited levels of interaction occurred between French-speakers and Dutch-speakers on a daily basis in shared public spaces.

A certain degree of interaction was witnessed in the little square off Dansaert Street<sup>670</sup>, but it differed from the other shared spaces in that much more contact occurred in Dutch, and Dutch tended to be used as the main language of interaction more than in other parts of Brussels.<sup>671</sup> Despite this, interaction was observed to happen in both French and Dutch, and sometimes in English and also Arabic, usually involving linguistic adjustments.<sup>672</sup>

Interaction did occur between strangers in the Royal Park, usually sitting on the benches near the fountains. Interestingly, the main language of communication was not only French but also English.<sup>673</sup> In City2 shopping centre, interaction in both languages was observed between

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<sup>667</sup>Van Leemput, Maya. “Foresight in the Brussels Capital Region.” *Futures*, Learning the Future Faster, 42, no. 4 (May 2010): 370–79, p. 375

<sup>668</sup>Zinneke. “Theme 2015-2016 - Zinneke”. Information. *Zinneke*. Accessed 5 June 2016.  
<http://www.zinneke.org/Theme-2015-2016>.

<sup>669</sup>“Thousands March in Brussels in “Zinneke Parade”. *Euronews*, 21 May 2016.  
<http://www.euronews.com/2016/05/21/thousands-march-in-brussels-in-zinneke-parade/>.

<sup>670</sup>Brussels Observation Form 5 – Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2015

<sup>671</sup>Brussels Observation Forms 1 to 32 – Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June to Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2015

<sup>672</sup>Brussels Observation Form 16 – Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2015; Observation Form 26 – Friday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2015

<sup>673</sup>Brussels Observation Form 30 – Friday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2015

customers and staff. The following encounter was witnessed: “a Flemish man of a certain age enters the shop and asks for something in Dutch to one of the staff members at the reception, who answers back in fluent Dutch. He then comes back to pay for his purchase and they carry on the interaction in Dutch. The staff member then switches back to French when dealing with the next client.”<sup>674</sup> However, most interaction between Dutch-speaking customers and French-speaking staff usually took place in French.<sup>675</sup> In both cases, a linguistic adjustment was made without this causing any kind of tension.

Observation in the three selected shared spaces revealed that “both linguistic communities are present in the shared spaces [...] and that they seemingly frequent these places without any fear or reservations. However, the nature of the shared spaces does not tend to encourage intergroup interaction on a personal level – yet there is not a barrier to such interaction either.”<sup>676</sup>

Further information gathered through the interviews also provided a wider insight into levels of cross-community interaction within the city as a whole. Several participants were adamant that there were no issues regarding relations between the linguistic communities in Brussels, and that interaction was generally positive. It was stated that “there are a lot of people who have Flemish friends and Flemings who have francophone friends. There are bilingual people, who switch from one language to the other. So I would say a lot [of interaction], yes.”<sup>677</sup> Closely related to this statement, many interviewees assured that relations had improved in Brussels between the two communities. This improvement (which interestingly implies that relations were not always optimal) was explained mainly by the fact that individuals were more open to the other’s language and to using it. The effort of making a linguistic adjustment in order to facilitate communication with the other is therefore no longer seen as inherently negative.

Another reason given for these improved relations was the existence of an auto-selection process in the decision to live in Brussels, as “many of the people who wanted to remain very Flemish in Brussels have moved out of Brussels. So that the people who remain are Flemish are Dutch-speaking and want to maintain that but have somewhat of an open mind to it; it’s a bilingual city.”<sup>678</sup> Recent surveys have additionally revealed that more Flemish citizens feel first of all Belgian and that fewer of them feel above all Flemish.<sup>679</sup> It has also been underlined that

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<sup>674</sup> Brussels Observation Form 9 – Friday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2015

<sup>675</sup> Brussels Observation Form 6 – Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2015

<sup>676</sup> Brussels Observation Form 31 – Monday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2015

<sup>677</sup> Brussels Interviewee 1 – Anne Herscovici, translated from French, Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2015

<sup>678</sup> Brussels Interviewee 4 – Mark Elchardus

<sup>679</sup> Lefevre, Muriel. ‘Non, Les Wallons Ne Sont Pas plus Tolérants Que Les Flamands’. *Le VifL’Express*, 8 May 2015. <http://www.levif.be/actualite/belgique/non-les-wallons-ne-sont-pas-plus-tolerants-que-les-flamands/article-normal-393983.html>.

members of the two linguistic communities coexist in perfect harmony in the Brussels, which is less the case at the national level.<sup>680</sup>

However, a number of other interview respondents argued that interaction between the two communities in the capital was not widespread. One participant underlined the fact that the rare interactions that did occur were usually limited to the elite level, therefore “I don’t think that there is much to be seen in terms of intergroup relations, specifically things that have been set up to cross the border. If there are such things it’s institutions again, I mean the Théâtre National and KVS they collaborate and they do things together and they use subtitles or with a translation of what is going on. But this is very marginal. It’s quite elitist of course. Ordinary people, if I may say so, well, do not come across each other.”<sup>681</sup> The main reason for the lack of meaningful interaction occurring between the two linguistic communities was explained by the fact that they live in separate social spheres and are effectively ‘worlds apart’. It was therefore stated that “they are [...] two worlds that are quite efficiently ignoring each other. [...] Culturally speaking they are two different worlds that ignore each other. They don’t read the same papers; they don’t listen to the same music, all that’s true.”<sup>682</sup> This last point has been increasingly mentioned since the recent cycles of political crises in 2008 and 2010.<sup>683</sup>

A difference was made between interaction at the political level and the citizen’s level, but also the type of interaction involved – public or private. It was for instance underlined that “for the inhabitants of Brussels, there is of course interaction at the levels of politics; the Brussels region is governed together by Dutch-speakers and French-speakers. But apart from that, in the private life of people and also part of the public life, going to pubs, going to restaurants; this will be separated. I cannot see many places, if any, where there is indeed active interaction between the two groups. Of course one of the major barriers for this to happen is language.”<sup>684</sup>

The institutionalisation of separation was further underlined by another participant who explained that “once you are in one system, it’s actually very difficult I think personally to be open to... so all the information that you get via the school is Flemish information. You go to that sports club, you have this association, but it’s a Flemish association. You have the afterschool care that’s also in Dutch; it’s all in a one-community network.”<sup>685</sup> Brussels civil

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<sup>680</sup>Bral, Guido Jan, Gauthier De Crombrughe, Véronique Donnadille, Philippe Elsen, and Regine Nickmann. ‘Bruxelles, Ville Tolérante et Ouverte’. *La Libre Belgique*, 24 September 2010.

<http://www.lalibre.be/debats/opinions/bruxelles-ville-tolerante-et-ouverte-51b8c4aae4bode6db9bd956d>.

<sup>681</sup> Brussels Interviewee 6 – Kris Deschouwer

<sup>682</sup> Brussels Interviewee 2 – Serge Govaert, translated from French

<sup>683</sup> ‘En Belgique, nous vivons déjà dans des mondes séparés’. *Le Monde.fr*, 31 July 2008, sec. International.

[http://www.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2008/07/31/en-belgique-nous-vivons-deja-dans-des-mondes-separes\\_1079235\\_3214.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2008/07/31/en-belgique-nous-vivons-deja-dans-des-mondes-separes_1079235_3214.html).

<sup>684</sup> Brussels Interviewee 6 – Kris Deschouwer

<sup>685</sup> Brussels Interviewees 11 – Leen de Spiegelaere

society organisations have been very critical of this institutionally imposed separation, which is understood as creating a benign apartheid, rather than being caused by inherent cultural differences between the linguistic communities.<sup>686</sup>

It was also mentioned by certain interview participants that interactions between members of the two communities were not always positive or neutral, namely in the Brussels periphery where tensions are more obvious. One participant described the tensions that exist in a town in the periphery, Dilbeek, where “it’s sometimes a little bit strange, there are big billboards that they have put up and that say for instance ‘Dilbeek: Where the Flemish are Welcome’. It gives you a good feeling if you are French-speaking and you go and live in that street, right? So the pattern of segregation I think is much stronger there. [...] There you have this segregation, much more than in Brussels itself.”<sup>687</sup> The rigidity and inflexibility of some of the linguistic laws that have been implemented by Flemish politicians in the Brussels periphery are usually the main cause of these intergroup tensions between the two communities. This tends to demonstrate, as suggested by a number of participants, that tensions around the linguistic conflict have been fuelled by the political sphere rather than emanating from the grass-roots levels. Anecdotes around linguistic tensions<sup>688</sup> in the periphery have regularly been reported, even in international media<sup>689</sup>, especially during the last political crisis in 2010.<sup>690</sup>

Meaningful interaction between individuals belonging to the different linguistic communities was observed as being relatively limited in shared public spaces in Brussels. Yet it is important to underline that the interview participants provided very different answers in terms of what they believed was the level of interaction that occurred between Dutch-speakers and French-speakers in the capital. Those interviewees who argued that interaction did occur usually mentioned the cultural sector and specific environments such as theatres where contact led to positive intergroup relations. Therefore the nature of the shared space seems to be understood as pivotal in determining how it may influence cross-community relations in the city. What emerged from the research on this particular topic was that while Brussels is not a physically divided city, shared spaces do play a role in bringing the two communities closer together or at

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<sup>686</sup>“Vivre Ensemble Dans La Ville. La Culture a Bruxelles: Urbaine? Interculturelle? Intercommunautaire?” Culture & Démocratie: Productions. Culture & Démocratie, December 2006, p. 4

<sup>687</sup> Brussels Interviewee 4 – Mark Elchardus

<sup>688</sup> Ebels, Philip. “Along the Language Frontier.” Blog. *openDemocracy*, October 27, 2010.

<http://www.opendemocracy.net/philip-ebels/along-language-frontier>.

<sup>689</sup> Waterfield, Bruno. ‘Children at Flemish School in Brussels Punished for Speaking French’. *The Telegraph*, 15 February 2012. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/belgium/9084449/PIC-AND-PUB-PLSSint-Pieterscollege-Children-at-Flemish-school-in-Brussels-punished-for-speaking-French.html>.; Quatremer, Jean. ‘Coulisses de Bruxelles - Belgique: Deux Langues de plus En plus Étrangères’. *Libération*, 11 June 2010.

<sup>690</sup> ‘Arrêt Sur Image Politique : “De La Haine...”’ *La Libre Belgique*, 14 November 2007.

<http://www.lalibre.be/debats/opinions/arret-sur-image-politique-de-la-haine-51b89679e4bode6db9boeoe2>.



least providing the opportunity for coexistence and interaction as French-speakers and Dutch-speakers live very much separately on a daily basis.

## Theme 2 Findings: Scarce Interaction within Regularly Shared Spaces

The second theme on daily life and intergroup relations in shared spaces in Brussels has revealed that while both linguistic communities do use shared public spaces in the city, it is not believed that much meaningful interaction occurs between them. Although the linguistic conflict in Belgium is not understood as causing any strife for citizens on a daily basis, the fact that members of both communities tend to live in separate social spheres even in Brussels is an important aspect to take into account. Given this reality in which Flemings and Francophones effectively 'live together separately' in the capital city, it could be argued that shared public spaces are important parts of daily urban life for all its inhabitants. To conclude this section, it may be suggested that shared public spaces in Brussels – that is, most if not all public spaces in the city – do play a role in normalising intergroup relations and coexistence in a country where the ongoing federalisation process is leading to further division and separation along linguistic lines. In terms of the analytical framework, the following results were established:

- Intergroup Contact Theory A.1 Authority Support: there are no current plans to create shared spaces at the elite political level in Brussels. Efforts towards encouraging more intergroup contact have been essentially made by the civil society sector.
- Intergroup Contact Theory A.2 Meaningful Interaction: despite the lack of violence in Brussels, meaningful interaction between members of the two linguistic communities remains relatively limited. Shared public spaces are not understood as leading to significantly increased levels of intergroup contact.
- Intergroup Contact Theory A.3 Negative Contact Effects: while the situation remains peaceful in the Brussels region, contact between Flemings and Francophones in certain areas of the Brussels periphery have led to negative experiences due to tensions around linguistic laws.
- Bourdieu/Foucault Perspective B.1 Normalised and Internalised Way of Life: diversity and mixing has been internalised within the Brussels population, yet the exclusive nature of the language communities had also led to the normalisation of separate mono-lingual social spheres which rarely interact.
- Bourdieu/Foucault Perspective B.2 The Role of Discourse: improving intergroup relations is not a topic that is present within political discourses in Brussels. Rather, discourses focusing on single-identity celebrations such as those around the Gordelfestival lead to increasing tensions between the communities in the periphery of the capital.

- Bourdieu/Foucault Perspective B.3 Power Struggles: power struggles that occasionally become more obvious during certain events tend to remain within the political sphere in the Brussels Region, while they have more of an effect on citizens and society in the Brussels Periphery where the stakes in terms of language, identity and territory are perceived to be higher.

### 3. Theme 3: Assessing the Interpretation of Shared Public Spaces in Brussels

#### Perceptions of Shared Space in Brussels

Unlike Belfast, the term ‘shared space’ is not widely used in Brussels, and even less so in terms of intergroup relations. Indeed, grassroots organisations working towards bringing the linguistic communities closer together usually use such terms as ‘cooperation’ or ‘collaboration’, and as this aspect is not on the political agenda, sharing space is not mentioned at the elite level either. Therefore, as in the Jerusalem case, the study has primarily focused on the understandings of shared space that emerged from the interviews. These findings are thus not representative, but should provide an additional insight into the interpretations of such spaces within the particular context of Brussels.

Interview participants in Brussels were therefore not familiar with the term ‘shared space’, and they therefore provided sometimes vague or tentative definitions of what a shared space may be. One participant suggested that “I would say a space where everybody feels welcome and that everybody can appropriate.”<sup>691</sup> The common themes of choice, feeling welcome and ownership were considered as key aspects of shared spaces. It was also claimed by at least two participants that direct interaction was not necessary in order for a space to be shared, as “it’s a space where people come, move around, walk around, sit, talk – but not necessarily with the other.”<sup>692</sup> It could therefore be argued that most interviewees tended to agree with the following answer “I don’t know the concept theoretically but shared space would be I would say part of the public space where two or more groups, well can feel at home. And do, I don’t know, not necessarily actively doing things together but being able to go there. I do assume that this is much more meaningful in areas or cities where there is a territorial divide which is not so much the case in Brussels.”<sup>693</sup>

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<sup>691</sup> Brussels Interviewees 11 – Leen De Spiegelaere

<sup>692</sup> Brussels Interviewee 3 – Philippe van Parijs, quote translated from French

<sup>693</sup> Brussels Interviewee 6 – Kris Deschouwer

This last point about shared spaces not being an issue in Brussels was also mentioned on several other occasions, as one interviewee pointed out “but I don’t see any space that wouldn’t be shared.”<sup>694</sup> It was also argued that “I would say that public space is by definition shared.”<sup>695</sup> This would explain the difficulty for many of the respondents to provide a definition to the term shared space in the context of Brussels. Overall a broad understanding of shared spaces was provided, including such places as public spaces, markets, parks, libraries, concert halls, and even streets.

One interview participant provided a very in-depth and thus different definition of shared space as “space where on a constant basis all actors are involved, being as different as can be, have to find solutions for how to define, organise, structure, decide that space. That means that people have to take time to listen to each other, to get to know each other, to invent new practices; that everybody has, there again, to step out of their comfort zone. That means to step out of the references that are yours in order to create a shared framework of references of that structure, that space.”<sup>696</sup> This definition is thus far removed from the understanding of shared space as a public space, as the term ‘shared’ is here associated with active participation and cooperation – therefore implying high levels of interaction and contact between members of different communities that rarely occur in public spaces on a regular basis.

Furthermore, the use of the term ‘shared space’ was criticised by another interviewee: “it’s a notion I am really doubtful about, because shared, sharing is something to do with exchange also. We share something... the commons are not always sharing, it’s co-using also. But you can particularly co-use something – you understand the difference? [...] The commons is something that you cannot divide, that you need to share [...] you need to accommodate to something that is not yours that you can only use as a use; but that doesn’t mean shared use.”<sup>697</sup> It was therefore suggested that space and especially public space was essentially co-used by different individuals in a city, rather than being shared; therefore implying far less direct effects on intergroup relations.

In a similar vein, another respondent argued that there was a fundamental difference between public space and a truly shared space, and underlined that “it’s absolutely not enough to talk about shared spaces; because then we are talking about real relationships, exchanges, how do we know each other, how do we talk to each other, what do we know about each other, how do we care for each other. And then [...] how do we co-construct our neighbourhood, our street,

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<sup>694</sup> Brussels Interviewee 1 – Anne Herscovici, quote translated from French

<sup>695</sup> Brussels Interviewee 7 – Philippe Delstanche, quote translated from French, Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2015

<sup>696</sup> Brussels Interviewee 12 – Myriam Stoffen

<sup>697</sup> Brussels Interviewee 5 – Eric Corijn

our environment.”<sup>698</sup> From this perspective, it could be argued that truly shared spaces in any city are extremely rare.

The answers provided by the interview participants mainly revealed that the sharing of space – and therefore the division of space – in the particular context of Brussels was not understood as major aspect of cross-community relations in the city. While shared space was not seen as being an issue, its definition was nevertheless relatively cohesive among the answers provided by the interviewees and implied a broader understanding of the term in which meaningful interaction was not deemed to be essential.

### **Situating Shared Public Spaces within the City of Brussels**

Following the analysis of the city through observation, it was revealed that most if not all urban spaces in Brussels were shared by both the Flemish and Francophone communities. However, it is important to underline that due to the minority status of the Dutch-speaking community in the city, certain spaces were observed to be more shared than others, depending on the distribution the Flemish group within the city. For comparative purposes, the three selected spaces are all located in the centre of Brussels, in areas where a significant proportion of visitors were identified as belonging to both linguistic communities.

Brussels has often been referred to as the only shared city in Belgium, where the two linguistic communities live in close proximity<sup>699</sup>, therefore contrasting with the wider regional and linguistic division of the country.<sup>700</sup> However, it has also been mentioned that the city tends to be segregated in terms of mentalities<sup>701</sup>, and it is being increasingly acknowledged within Belgian academia that “there is no real prospect of living together under a strong national government.”<sup>702</sup> Despite the fact that certain residential tendencies have led members of the linguistic communities to concentrate in different parts of the city, all public spaces are usually understood as shared.

This understanding of public space in Brussels was similarly revealed through the interviews carried out in the city. Some interviewees were categorical that “the question of the sharing of Brussels space between Dutch-speakers and francophones is a non-issue.”<sup>703</sup> Another respondent argued that “the public spaces, I mean in Brussels all the cinemas always show

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<sup>698</sup> Brussels Interviewee 12 – Myriam Stoffen

<sup>699</sup> O'Connor, Karl. *Public Administration in Contested Societies*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, p. 52

<sup>700</sup> Hilgers, Mathieu, and Eric Mangez. *Bourdieu's Theory of Social Fields: Concepts and Applications*. Routledge, 2014, p. 196

<sup>701</sup> “Vivre Ensemble Dans La Ville. La Culture a Bruxelles: Urbaine? Interculturelle? Intercommunautaire?” Culture & Démocratie: Productions. Culture & Démocratie, December 2006, p. 4

<sup>702</sup> Op. Cit., p. 186

<sup>703</sup> Brussels Interviewee 3 – Philippe van Parijs, translated from French

films with French and Dutch subtitles, all signage is in both languages, I mean everything operates in both languages.”<sup>704</sup>

It was therefore explained that “everybody can take a tram and travel around Brussels you will never be in a situation where one would say ‘this is a French-speaker or this is a Dutch-speaker, what is he or she doing here?’ I mean the intensity level of the conflict, if conflict there is in Brussels, is so extremely low [...] that indeed I would say that the city is a shared space.”<sup>705</sup> It was also underlined by another interviewee that in fact Brussels was “the only place where the two communities meet”<sup>706</sup>, as the rest of the country is homogeneously divided along linguistic lines.

However, a number of interview participants did acknowledge that certain geographical tendencies existed in terms of residence. As one respondent explained, “you have municipalities that are historically more Dutch-speaking than French-speaking. For example all the municipalities in the south of Brussels, the Dutch-speaking population is a very, very small minority.”<sup>707</sup> Most participants did mention that Dutch-speakers tended to live in the north of the city, but they often also underlined that fact that this did not affect the sharing of space in Brussels. These residential tendencies have recently been acknowledged through several censuses.<sup>708</sup>

It was also suggested by at least one participant that a shared space wasn’t necessarily a public space as “if I would apply it to the Belgian and Brussels situation, I wouldn’t necessarily think of geographical spaces so much. Because I don’t think that there have been tensions around that. Geographical public spaces or restaurants or cinemas and so- on have been used by both communities. [...] I even have the impression that Brussels always was a shared space in that sense; without it being explicit.”<sup>709</sup> Yet shared activity groups where real interaction occurs between the two linguistic communities were rarely mentioned, implying that it is not a widespread aspect of Brussels city life.

While most urban spaces might be shared on a regular basis between different linguistic communities in the city, the previous findings nevertheless demonstrate the Brussels does remain a divided city in many other aspects. It could therefore be suggested that cross-community coexistence and shared experiences are limited to the urban physical dimension,

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<sup>704</sup> Brussels Interviewee 9 – Alain Maskens, translated from French

<sup>705</sup> Brussels Interviewee 6 – Kris Deschouwer

<sup>706</sup> Brussels Interviewee 11 – Sophie Alexandre, Tuesday 29th September 2015

<sup>707</sup> Brussels Interviewee 10 – Alain Joris, translated from French, Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2015

<sup>708</sup> Romainville, Alice. ‘Une « flamandisation » de Bruxelles ?’ *Belgeo. Revue belge de géographie*, no. 3 (30 September 2005): 349–72.

<sup>709</sup> Brussels Interviewee 4 – Mark Elchardus

and do not go far beyond this point. This is understood as justifying the selection of Brussels for the study of public spaces in such a non-physically divided context.

Information pertaining to the perceptions of space has revealed that the sharing of space in Brussels is not present within political discourses on either side of the linguistic divide, and authority support among the Flemish and French Communities for the creation of such spaces is therefore inexistent. The primary reason for this lack of interest between the linguistic communities is simply that francophones and Dutch-speakers have always shared space in the capital, without it being an issue. In fact, Brussels is often understood as the only space in Belgium where members of the Flemish and francophone communities coexist and live side by side; Brussels is thus seen as the only shared city in an overwhelmingly divided country.

### **The Role of Shared Public Spaces in Brussels**

Based on the findings described in this chapter, it may be concluded that shared public spaces play only a small role in actively improving intergroup relations in Brussels. This is even more striking as despite the fact that most of the urban spaces in the city are shared on a regular basis by both the Dutch-speaking and French-speaking communities, daily life in Brussels remains essentially exclusively mono-lingual and therefore divided.

Observation in the three selected spaces revealed on average only low levels of interaction between the communities, despite the lack of heightened intergroup tensions. Peaceful coexistence was therefore the norm during the days of field research in Brussels, demonstrating the normalisation of diversity in the capital. While this finding might seem ordinary and predictable, it is deemed significant as Brussels is the only bilingual and large city in which the linguistic groups live side by side within a wider divided state structure. Shared public spaces in Brussels therefore provide the rare opportunities for members of the Francophone and Flemish communities to come face to face, interact and coexist on a regular basis.

From a strictly urban perspective, public space is generally understood as a crucial aspect of any city, as “by being present in public space, others encounter you and are forced to deal with you”<sup>710</sup>; yet this does not necessarily lead to meaningful interaction with the other.<sup>711</sup> The importance of shared public spaces has been widely expressed by scholars<sup>712</sup> and

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<sup>710</sup>Eckardt, Frank, and John Eade. *The Ethnically Diverse City*. BWV Verlag, 2011, p. 213

<sup>711</sup>Madanipour, Ali, Sabine Knierbein, and Aglaée Degros. *Public Space and the Challenges of Urban Transformation in Europe*. Routledge, 2013, p. 135

<sup>712</sup> Op. Cit., p. 134

professionals<sup>73</sup> alike, and their relevance for intergroup relations has also been underlined, as “it appears that the contact hypothesis also applies to public spaces, although it relates more to the affective component of acknowledging and being aware of diversity, than the more cognitive aspect of getting to know the other.”<sup>74</sup>

Information gathered through the interviews led to a similar understanding of the role of shared public spaces in Brussels. One interviewee mentioned “well shopping centres I would say are not really spaces where one can form close ties and I don’t see why that would be any different between two linguistic communities than between two groups of people.”<sup>75</sup>

However, a number of respondents believed that shared spaces were necessary in Brussels, where the tendency remains of further division between the two linguistic communities. Yet the type of shared space mentioned in this context usually referred to more specific areas than public spaces, as it was for instance argued that “neighbourhood parties, for example these are widespread phenomena in Brussels. Well, that type of space, that type of sharing of space, effectively creates conviviality which sometimes happens in both languages.”<sup>76</sup> One participant underlined that in certain bilingual federal institutions “you talk about public matters and citizenship matters, and you do it across communities. [...] And then you realise that we still have many of the same sensibilities, that what we look for, what we consider a good example of citizenship is the same, regardless of the linguistic community. So there you get really I think a shared space, a meeting ground and we share its positive effects.”<sup>77</sup> Another respondent working in the cultural sector and who has focused on joint projects further argued that “it’s in a way creating a space where they can meet and I think it really helps you know. [...] And it really helps just to meet and talk and to understand the other.”<sup>78</sup>

It was also mentioned that shared public spaces were needed not only for the benefit of intergroup relations but also for the sustainable functioning of the city from an urban perspective. Indeed, “to become society, communities have to be pointed at their lack, what they are missing, at where the other and the radical other is necessary to make society. That is not a question of two communities meeting [...] because when they meet they don’t dissolve themselves. So you need really not a dissolution of communities, but you need cracks [...]. And

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<sup>73</sup> Walljasper, Jay. “Public Spaces Make the World Go ’Round.” Blog. *Shareable*, July 18, 2012.

<http://www.shareable.net/blog/public-spaces-make-the-world-go-round>.

<sup>74</sup> Peters, Karin. *Living Together in Multi-Ethnic Neighbourhoods: The Meaning of Public Spaces for Issues of Social Integration*. Wageningen Academic Pub, 2011, p. 210

<sup>75</sup> Brussels Interviewee 2 – Serge Govaert, translated from French

<sup>76</sup> Brussels Interviewee 2 – Serge Govaert, translated from French

<sup>77</sup> Brussels Interviewee 4 – Mark Elchardus

<sup>78</sup> Brussels Interviewees 11 – Leen de Spiegelaere and Sophie Alexandre

that is for me the essence of urbanity; you are never on your own, you cannot be on your own.”<sup>719</sup> Another respondent similarly explained that “the more on a daily basis it’s natural to be confronted with differences, to see differences, to be confronted with things that might strike you [...]; the more healthy it is I think for society. But as I said before it’s [...] not enough. But I think it’s very important, it’s a first step.”<sup>720</sup>

Intergroup tensions are usually more important in the periphery and it was thus underlined that “if you look at the reverse and say where you see the tension, I think you would see them much more clearly in the communes around Brussels. That’s where people try to mark their territory, they look at others as intruders and ‘this is our territory’.”<sup>721</sup> In those areas where tension is more palpable between the different linguistic communities, a very different understanding of the role shared space was expressed by participants. One francophone inhabitant of the periphery explained that “there are people who don’t come anymore, who don’t come shopping to Halle anymore; they are put off, they don’t come anymore. Before at the market little signs and all that were in both languages; but the municipality banned that, everything is now only in Flemish.”<sup>722</sup> It is therefore clear from this last account that shared space does not necessarily positively influence intergroup relations, and that context including authority support and political discourses may mitigate the benefits of such spaces of encounter. While most intergroup tension is concentrated around the periphery of Brussels, these areas are not officially located within the bilingual region of Brussels Capital and research was thus focused on more central parts of the city, where divisions remain entrenched despite the lack of tension.

Following these findings it could be suggested that due to the absence of any history of violence caused by the linguistic division, intergroup relations are not understood as needing any particular improvement within Belgian society. Authority support emanating from the different linguistic Communities and territorial Regions (A.1) for the creation of spaces of encounter to improve cross-community relations is therefore non-existent, and so are any political discourses (B.2) around their establishment in the capital. It was further revealed that the value of shared spaces was nevertheless acknowledged, ranging from the importance of public space for a healthy city to more focused collaborative cross-community projects that form the rare bridges between the linguistic groups in Brussels.

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<sup>719</sup> Brussels Interviewee 5 – Eric Corijn

<sup>720</sup> Brussels Interviewee 12 – Myriam Stoffen

<sup>721</sup> Brussels Interviewee 4 – Mark Elchardus

<sup>722</sup> Brussels Interviewees 8 – Bernard and Conchita Kinoo, translated from French, Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2015



### Theme 3 Findings: Perceived Limited, but Beneficial Role of Shared Spaces

The main conclusion to be drawn from the interpretation of shared spaces in Brussels is that given the low intensity of the linguistic conflict in Belgium, cross-community relations in the capital were not generally understood as being a major or urgent issue to be dealt with at the policy level. Yet it has emerged that while the absence of violence is undeniable, intergroup relations between the Dutch-speaking and French-speaking communities tends to be extremely limited due to the political federalisation process leading to increasing levels of separation. This reality may lead to the suggestion that shared spaces do in fact play a role in transforming intergroup relations or at least contributing towards the preservation of coexistence and encounter in an increasingly divided country. In terms of the findings applied to the analytical framework, the following results are described:

- Intergroup Contact Theory A.1 Authority Support: the sharing of space in Brussels is not seen as problematic because the city in itself is understood as being the sole shared space within the wider national context between the regions of Flanders and Wallonia.
- Intergroup Contact Theory A.2 Meaningful Interaction: shared public spaces in Brussels do not usually lead to significant interaction between members of the two communities.
- Intergroup Contact Theory A.3 Negative Contact Effects: shared public spaces in the Brussels periphery, such as at the Halle market or shops, have led to occasionally hostile interactions between members of the communities, therefore demonstrating that tensions around linguistic belonging do remain an ongoing issue in Belgium.
- Bourdieu/Foucault Perspective B.2 The Role of Discourse: the term 'shared space' is not part of any official or dominant discourse in Brussels; however this might change with the increasing role of civil society in bringing the two linguistic communities closer together.

## Shared Public Spaces in Brussels Analytical and Theoretical Framework

### A. Intergroup Contact Theory – Cross-community Interaction

#### A.1 Authority Support:

1. Was the shared space planned as a space of cross-community encounter by city authorities when first established?

- ⇒ Shared public spaces in Brussels have not been specifically planned as spaces of encounter between the Dutch speaking and French speaking communities in Brussels.

#### A.2 Meaningful Interaction:

2. Does any meaningful cross-community interaction occur within the shared space and what are the effects of proximity?

- ⇒ Meaningful interaction between members of the linguistic communities remain relatively limited in shared public spaces, but the sharing of space leads to peaceful coexistence. Certain events increased the shared nature of spaces through inclusive celebrations, therefore leading to increased contact.

#### A.3 Negative Contact Effects:

3. Are particular tensions felt within the shared space which may lead to negative interaction?

- ⇒ The sharing of public space in the periphery of Brussels, in certain areas belonging to the Flemish Region occasionally leads to relatively negative interaction – although such tensions do not lead to violence.

### B. Bourdieu/Foucault Perspective – Context

#### B.1 Habitus/discipline: Normalised and Internalised Way of Life

4. How is division normalised in the city and how does this affect the idea of inclusion and integration promoted by shared space?

- ⇒ Daily life revolves around belonging to a specific linguistic community, therefore leading to separate and exclusive social spheres rather than an integrated society.

#### B.2 Doxa/panopticism: The Role of Discourse

5. What are the discourses around separation, shared spaces and conflict in the city?

- ⇒ Discourses are more focused on continuing the federalisation process, which ultimately leads to more division; the sharing of space is not on the agenda.

#### B.3 Power/domination: Power struggles

6. How are the power-struggles for domination between the groups expressed in the city?

- ⇒ Power struggles between the linguistic communities primarily unfold at the political and intuitional levels and rarely overflow beyond this arena into civil society.

Table 22: Shared Public Spaces in Brussels Findings

## Conclusion

Research findings were analysed and organised into three main themes which enabled a better understanding of the role of shared public spaces in Brussels. The study of their contextualisation in the city provided relevant information regarding the ongoing federalisation process occurring at the national level. The analysis of the second theme around daily life and intergroup relations demonstrated that despite the absence of violence or physical division, Belgian society remains deeply divided along linguistic communitarian lines. It was therefore revealed that meaningful interaction between members of the two communities within the city was relatively limited. Finally, the interpretation of shared spaces revealed that the improvement of intergroup relations between the Dutch-speaking and French-speaking communities in Brussels was usually not considered to be an urgent matter. While further division and autonomy along linguistic lines might be regarded as efficient in the two mono-lingual regions of Wallonia and Flanders, the current communitarian regimen which is also implemented in the bilingual region of Brussels has led to absurd situations and the increasing drifting apart of its residents. Shared public spaces might therefore provide the rare situations of coexistence and interaction between two different social and communitarian spheres that rarely come together.

Beyond the urban level, the lack of shared space in the form of cross-regional or bilingual exchange in Belgium has recently surfaced in relation to the inability of the state to prevent the terrorist attacks in Paris (November 2015) and Brussels (March 2016). The complexity emanating from the federal state structure – where the notion of dividing is preferred to that of sharing – has been mentioned as factor influencing anti-terrorism and security effectiveness.<sup>723</sup>

The ongoing conflict between the linguistic communities in Belgium is therefore understood as triggering the decentralisation of the state and the subsequent dysfunction of security services and their inability to properly communicate – ultimately leading to the failure to prevent a terrorist attack on Belgian soil.<sup>724</sup> It may thus be argued that while the linguistic conflict in Belgium has never turned violent, the Brussels attacks in March 2016 demonstrate that such divisions have put the safety and security of Belgian citizens at risk, indirectly leading to tragic loss of life. In other words, Belgium's increasing separation of its linguistic communities and the lack of interest or investment in shared space at a more conceptual level may be more harmful to its citizens than previously assumed.

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<sup>723</sup> King, Tim. "Belgium Is a Failed State." Blog. *POLITICO*, November 19, 2015.

<http://www.politico.eu/article/belgium-failed-state-security-services-molenbeek-terrorism/>.

<sup>724</sup> 'Attentats. Une Semaine Après, Les Plaies Se Rouvrent En Belgique'. *Ouest-France.fr*, 29 March 2016.

<http://www.ouest-france.fr/societe/faits-divers/attentat/attentats-bruxelles/attentats-une-semaine-apres-les-plaies-se-rouvrent-en-belgique-4128470/>.

As concluded by scholars, “Belgium’s future lies in a model of living apart together – in which the spouses can do business with each other, have some shared assets, and treat each other with respect. Such a relationship requires the capacity to communicate effectively.”<sup>725</sup> Shared spaces in Brussels may therefore be understood as important aspects that provide a space of encounter between the Flemish and francophone communities within the city, but also that Brussels in itself plays a major role as the sole shared region in a country whose components are increasingly drifting apart.

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<sup>725</sup>Mnookin, Robert, and Alain Verbeke. “Persistent Nonviolent Conflict with No Reconciliation: The Flemish and Walloons in Belgium.” *Law & Contemporary Problems* 72, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 151–86, p. 186

## Chapter Eight: Conclusion - The Significance of Shared Public Spaces in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels

This chapter will compare the findings described in the previous three case study chapters in order to identify variations and similarities around the impact of shared public spaces on intergroup relations in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels. This comparative analysis will provide an insight into the role and contribution of shared spaces in wider conflict transformation efforts in deeply divided societies. The first three sections of the chapter will compare the findings in the three different cities, with the first part highlighting the different contexts and understandings of such spaces in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels. The second part compares daily life in the selected shared public spaces in each city, while the third part assesses the role of these spaces in the three contexts. The findings will then be compiled, compared and applied to the theoretical and analytical framework previously detailed in Chapter Two, which will enable the formulation of the study's conclusions by answering the main research questions.

### 1. Acknowledging the Contexts and Understandings of Shared Public Spaces in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels

The situation in Jerusalem is one where the conflict is ongoing with no agreement between the parties in sight, with the continuing occupation of Palestinian land. While there is not open warfare in the city, the situation is extremely tense with numerous bouts of violence regularly resurfacing – such as attacks on Israeli citizens or security forces<sup>726</sup> and the repression of Palestinian protests.<sup>727</sup> Information gathered through documentation including local and international media and NGO reports<sup>728</sup> generally describe a negative overview of the situation.<sup>729</sup> Observation carried out during the field research in Jerusalem also led to a similar conclusion in terms of the ongoing nature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, through the witnessing of heightened security presence in the city as well as tense and violent confrontations between Palestinian youths and Israeli security forces in East Jerusalem.<sup>730</sup> Interview participants in Jerusalem also clearly exposed the dire situation in the city, which was qualified as “relatively calm, very tense underneath the surface. And it can explode any

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<sup>726</sup>Hasson, Nir, Gili Cohen, Jack Khoury, Yaniv Kubovich, and Barak Ravid. 'Israeli Border Policewoman Killed, Another Wounded in Jerusalem Attack'. *Haaretz*, 4 February 2016. <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.701245>.

<sup>727</sup>'Protesters Demand Return of Palestinian Bodies in Occupied East Jerusalem'. *Maan News Agency*, 4 February 2016. <http://www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?ID=770118>.

<sup>728</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - occupied Palestinian territory. "Humanitarian Bulletin Monthly Report February 2016." Monthly Report. UN OCHA, 16 March 2016, p. 1

<sup>729</sup> Op. Cit., p. 7

<sup>730</sup> Researcher's personal diary in Jerusalem entry, Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2015, Jerusalem Observation Form 25 - Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2015

time.”<sup>731</sup> Improvement of intergroup relations between the Israeli and Palestinian communities through the establishment of a peace agreement is not understood as a likely occurrence in the foreseeable future.

Belfast is in a post-conflict era since the paramilitary cease-fires and the subsequent signing of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement in 1998 which led to the establishment of a power-sharing government in 2007. Violence has dramatically decreased in recent years<sup>732</sup> and sectarian attacks continue to decline.<sup>733</sup> Political and public discourses have also shifted from confrontation to peaceful coexistence, with an increasing focus on working towards creating a ‘shared future’.<sup>734</sup> Observation of parades leading to tension but also generally peaceful coexistence in public spaces showed that while improving, the situation in Northern Ireland is not yet fully transformed. Interview participants acknowledged this shift in conflict intensity, but it was also often underlined that Belfast was “very much still segregated.”<sup>735</sup> Although the overall situation in Belfast is better than it used to be during the years of violence, criticisms have increased in terms of the lack of deep societal transformation in Northern Ireland.

Violent conflict has never been an issue in Brussels where the competing communities have shared “a pragmatic willingness to compromise”<sup>736</sup>; however Belgium is divided along linguistic lines. Observation in Brussels revealed that tensions between the two groups in public spaces is virtually inexistent, however demonstrations of national or linguistic belonging and the contrasting and sometimes antagonistic political discourses demonstrated that Belgium is indeed a divided country. While the conflict in Belgium was usually understood as not being excessively harmful to the inhabitants of Brussels, interview participants from the city underlined the negative impact of the linguistic divide. It was also argued that “the reason for which Belgium won’t separate is because neither the Flemings nor the Walloons want to give up Brussels. [...] So they’re stuck to each other. And so in a way, I’ve done this analogy with Israel and Palestine – Brussels is a bit our own Jerusalem.”<sup>737</sup> Pessimism or at least concern about the future of the city has been observed in Brussels, where the ongoing federalisation

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<sup>731</sup> Jerusalem Interviewee 2 – Michael Alexander

<sup>732</sup> Jarman, Neil. ‘No Longer A Problem? Sectarian Violence in Northern Ireland’. Institute for Conflict Research, March 2005, p. 20

<sup>733</sup> Nolan, Paul. “Northern Ireland Peace Monitoring Report Number Two.” Monitoring Report. Peace Monitoring Report. Community Relations Council, 2013, p. 50

<sup>734</sup> Hayward, Katy, and Catherine O’Donnell. *Political Discourse and Conflict Resolution: Debating Peace in Northern Ireland*. Routledge, 2010.

<sup>735</sup> Belfast Interviewee 1 - Anonymous

<sup>736</sup> Halberstam, Daniel, and Mathias Reimann. *Federalism and Legal Unification: A Comparative Empirical Investigation of Twenty Systems*. Springer Science & Business Media, 2013, p. 146

<sup>737</sup> Brussels Interviewee 3 – Philippe van Parijs

process is often understood as leading to further division and separation of the two linguistic communities and therefore negatively impacting the bilingual region of Brussels.<sup>738</sup>

Chapter One (Introduction) showed that the term 'shared space' remains relatively vague as no official or single definition currently exists. A number of scholars including Frank Gaffikin and Scott Bollens have been critical of the term, underlining that it has been increasingly used as an 'empty signifier' for policy and planning purposes.

Several interview participants in the three cities also questioned the validity of the term 'shared space' in relation to their settings and what they supposedly entail. In Jerusalem, the term 'shared' was questioned and replaced with different wordings such as 'parallel use of space' or 'space of encounter'.<sup>739</sup> In Belfast, the term was essentially criticised for being too vague, and therefore fitting various light political statements lacking in-depth propositions. Finally, in Brussels the term was also criticised and replaced by the term 'co-usage'. Depending on the various interpretations that exist within the shared space continuum, what constitutes a shared space in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels may be very different. However, this research has focused on a broader understanding that enabled the study of three types of public spaces in the three selected cities.

Through observation, it was found that only a few of the many public spaces in Jerusalem were in fact shared by the Israeli and Palestinian communities on a regular basis. The three spaces selected for analysis form part of a very small proportion of urban areas that are used daily by the two groups in the city. Observation in Belfast revealed that most of the city centre is used by both the Protestant and Catholic communities, leading most central public spaces to be shared. On a more focused level, specific buildings often situated close to interfaces outside the city centre host more proactive types of shared spaces enhancing socially engineered and controlled intergroup contact. Unlike Jerusalem, then, there is an incentive from all levels of society towards creating more shared spaces in the city – which might be explained by the fact that Belfast is now in a post-conflict phase in which the authorities are implementing a peace process. Research in Brussels led to the conclusion that despite social and institutional divisions, most if not all public spaces in the capital are used by both the French-speaking and Dutch-speaking communities on a daily basis. Therefore, more attention can be given to specific deliberate events that work towards actively bringing the two linguistic communities closer together in Brussels, such as the Zinneke Parade. The scarcity of such events may be

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<sup>738</sup> Halberstam, Daniel, and Mathias Reimann. *Federalism and Legal Unification: A Comparative Empirical Investigation of Twenty Systems*. Springer Science & Business Media, 2013, p. 147

<sup>739</sup> See Chapter IV Jerusalem

understood as a clear indicator that cross-community activities remain the exception rather than the norm in the city.

Despite the very different situations in the three cities leading to varying degrees of coexistence and daily usage of shared space, public spaces in the city centres of Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels can all be considered as embodying the most diversity – hence cross-community encounter – within their wider urban arenas.

## **2. Daily Usage of Shared Public Spaces in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels**

Three specific types of urban space were selected in each city in order to provide adequate comparative material – an open public space, a public park and a shopping centre. Over the course of field research in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels, observation was carried out in these selected spaces in order to gather information about their usage by the different communities inhabiting the three cities.

The locations of the three open public spaces in the cities are all relatively similar, with Jaffa Gate Square, Victoria Square area and Dansaert Street area all concentrated close to the city centre. It was crucial for this research to identify the policy makers behind the planning and/or funding of the spaces in each city, in order to establish if this had any influence on how individuals used them. In Jerusalem, planning for Jaffa Gate Square was implemented by the Jerusalem Municipality and completed in 2010. In Belfast, Victoria Square opened in 2008 after being initiated by the Belfast Regeneration Programme supported by public sector organisations including Belfast City Council but also the European Union through its peace package. The little square off the Dansaert Street was renovated in the early 1990s by the newly established Brussels Region and its communes.

Finally, the purpose of the planning of such spaces should also be taken into account. Jaffa Gate Square was renovated as part of a plan focusing on the restoration and regeneration of the space between Mamilla mall and the Old City. Victoria Square was not only planned as a major commercial and leisure structure, but also as an inclusive and accessible shared space for all of Belfast's inhabitants. The Dansaert area was renovated as part of a wider plan of regeneration and gentrification of certain parts of Brussels. Out of the three open spaces, then, only Victoria Square was deliberately designed as a shared space drawing the different communities together.



Open Public Spaces in the three cities			
	Jerusalem	Belfast	Brussels
<i>Name of Space</i>	Jaffa Gate Square	Victoria Square Area	Dansaert Square Area
<i>Location</i>	Central, on Green Line	Central, near East	Central, near North
<i>Planner/Funder</i>	Jerusalem Municipality	Belfast Regeneration Programme	Brussels Region Government
<i>Year</i>	2010	2008	1990s
<i>Purpose</i>	Redevelopment and regeneration of space	Inclusive and accessible commercial shared space	Regeneration of public square

Table 23: Open Public Spaces Comparison

Teddy Park was planned by the Jerusalem Foundation in 2013, and was initiated by a non-profit organisation, not the local authority. City Hall Gardens were planned as part of the architecture of Belfast City Hall, which opened in 1906, therefore before the onset of the conflict. The Brussels Royal Park is by far the oldest space to be observed; at it opened in 1780 and was planned by royal authority even before the creation of the Belgian state.

Public Parks in the three cities			
	Jerusalem	Belfast	Brussels
<i>Name of Space</i>	Teddy Park	City Hall Gardens	Brussels Royal Park
<i>Location</i>	Central	Central, City Centre	Central, City Centre
<i>Planner/Funder</i>	Jerusalem Foundation	Belfast City Council	Royal Authority
<i>Year</i>	2013	1906	1870
<i>Purpose</i>	Space of peaceful coexistence	Public Green Space	Public Green Space

Table 24: Public Parks Comparison

Teddy Park was specifically planned by the Jerusalem Foundation as a space of peaceful coexistence between the Palestinian and Israeli communities in Jerusalem. On the other hand, both City Hall Gardens and the Brussels Royal Park were primarily planned in order to include a green public space in the centres of Belfast and Brussels. Therefore, out of the three parks, only Teddy Park – initiated at grassroots level – was planned as a shared space to be used by both the Israeli and Palestinian communities living in Jerusalem.

Finally, the three selected shopping centres of Mamilla mall, CastleCourt and City2 were also all located centrally in their respective cities. Mamilla mall is Jerusalem's most recent commercial centre, opening in 2007 after a very long delay in terms of planning and construction – all supervised by the Jerusalem Municipality. CastleCourt was initiated by the Belfast Area Urban Plan and opened in 1987, before the establishment of power-sharing in

Northern Ireland. City2 shopping centre is the biggest commercial structure in the centre of Brussels and opened in 1978, before the establishment of the Brussels Region and was planned by the independent Société des Centres Commerciaux, with the support of the Agglomeration of Brussels (the less independent predecessor of the Brussels Region).

Mamilla mall was not only planned as an upscale and trendy open-air shopping centre, but also as a space of commercial coexistence. CastleCourt, although created before the cease-fires and peace process was also planned as a neutral non-sectarian commercial space. Only City2 shopping centre was primarily and solely built as a shopping and leisure centre in the heart of the city of Brussels. Out of the three commercial areas selected, two of them were therefore intentionally designed to enhance peaceful coexistence between all city inhabitants. However, in the case of Mamilla, the underlying causes of the conflict are not acknowledged when attempting to bring different communities into a commercial area.

The role of commercial spaces – which are not technically public spaces – in the context of contested cities is particularly interesting to underline, even if they are not explicitly planned as shared spaces. As Frank Gaffikin explains, “development driven by the market can appear neutral and disinterested, since the profit motive does not wear visible political colours, and it can appear inevitable that such contemporary urban economics trumps politics.”<sup>740</sup>

<b>Shopping Centres in the three cities</b>			
	<b>Jerusalem</b>	<b>Belfast</b>	<b>Brussels</b>
<i>Name of Space</i>	Mamilla Mall	CastleCourt	City2
<i>Location</i>	Central	Central	Central
<i>Planner/Funder</i>	Jerusalem Municipality	Belfast City Council	Société des Centres Commerciaux
<i>Year</i>	2007	1987	1978
<i>Purpose</i>	Space of commercial coexistence	Neutral non-sectarian commercial space	Shopping and leisure centre in city centre

Table 25: Shopping Centres Comparison

Describing daily occurrences in the selected shared spaces was one of the main objectives of the field research, with special attention given to who visited the spaces and when, as well as the presence – or lack – of intergroup tension.

Jaffa Gate Square was predominantly visited by Orthodox and religious Jews heading into the holy places in the Old City as well as Christian Palestinians sitting in the square. There was therefore a clear difference in the usage of space, as a place of transit by one community and as a hangout place by the other. The Victoria Square area was very mixed in terms of visitors, and

<sup>740</sup>Gaffikin, Frank, and Mike Morrissey. *Planning in Divided Cities*. John Wiley & Sons, 2011, p. 263

drawing an important number of youth groups in the late afternoons and evenings. The space was similarly used by the two communities, given its commercial nature. The Dansaert area tended to be used differently by some communities; with on the one hand Dutch-speakers coming for a drink at the bar or to read nearby and French-speaking youths playing football further away. However, French-speakers were also observed going to the bar, and therefore using the space in a similar way to the Dutch-speakers. Therefore, only Jaffa Gate Square tended to lead to a ‘separate use of space’, while the other two areas usually entailed an analogous use of space.

<b>Routines in Open Public Spaces</b>			
	<b>Jaffa Gate Square (Jerusalem)</b>	<b>Victoria Square Area (Belfast)</b>	<b>Dansaert Square Area (Brussels)</b>
<i>Group Presence</i>	Mixed, religious	Mixed, middle class	Mixed
<i>Usage of Space</i>	Place of transit	Commercial	Various
<i>General Atmosphere</i>	Neutral, but occasionally tense	Neutral, peaceful	Relaxed, peaceful

**Table 26: Routines in Open Public Spaces Comparison**

While Teddy Park was used as a place of passage by both communities, Israelis and Palestinians were also seen visiting the park for leisurely purposes – with children and families particularly attracted to the fountain display. City Hall Gardens became more frequently used during the lunch hours, when office workers as well as shoppers came on their break. Outside of these hours, the space was primarily used as a place of transit to and from different locations in the city centre. The Brussels Royal Park was used in a similar way to the park in Belfast, with office workers – many of them Dutch-speakers – coming on their lunch break. More families were observed using the park on the weekend and holidays. The observation of public parks in the three cities therefore revealed a more shared and common use of these spaces of leisure, where members of different communities came to enjoy the surroundings and relax.

<b>Routines in Public Parks</b>			
	<b>Teddy Park (Jerusalem)</b>	<b>City Hall Gardens (Belfast)</b>	<b>Brussels Royal Park (Brussels)</b>
<i>Group Presence</i>	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed
<i>Usage of Space</i>	Mainly for leisure	Various	Mainly for leisure
<i>General Atmosphere</i>	Relaxed, peaceful	Relaxed, peaceful but occasionally tense	Relaxed, peaceful

**Table 27: Routines in Public Parks Comparison**

The shopping centres in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels yielded the most similarities in terms of usage of space: all groups were observed visiting those particular places for essentially commercial but also leisure purposes. In all three cities, different communities were observed

visiting shops and cafes located in shopping centres, leading these specific places to enhance – usually implicitly – peaceful coexistence between members of different groups. The shared use of commercial space for similar purposes may therefore normalise coexistence and contact with the other through the shared experience of shopping – ‘shopping for peace’, as described by one Belfast interview participant.<sup>741</sup>

<b>Routines in Shopping Centres</b>			
	<b>Mamilla Mall (Jerusalem)</b>	<b>CastleCourt (Belfast)</b>	<b>City2 (Brussels)</b>
<i>Group Presence</i>	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed
<i>Usage of Space</i>	Commercial	Commercial	Commercial
<i>General Atmosphere</i>	Usually neutral, relaxed and peaceful	Neutral, relaxed	Neutral

**Table 28: Routines in Shopping Centres Comparison**

The comparison of how and by whom shared spaces were used revealed similarities between places of identical nature in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels. Open public areas tended to include the most diverse usage of space among the different communities, therefore leading to lower expectations of cross-community interaction occurring on a daily basis. However, both the parks and shopping centres were used in similar ways, therefore suggesting that such leisurely activities as shopping, going to a cafe or spending time in a park may lead to more shared experiences and thus more likelihood of peaceful coexistence between the communities present in such spaces.

One of the major objectives of observing daily life in the selected shared spaces in the three cities was to establish the levels of cross-community interaction that generally take place in such settings.

Despite the very different contexts in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels, observation results yielded surprisingly similar levels of intergroup contact in the selected shared spaces – it was revealed that only limited interaction occurred between groups in these particular settings in the three cities. Open public spaces in the form of Jaffa Gate Square, Victoria Square area and the Dansaert area were all primarily used as places of transit to and from other locations within Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels. As such, this particular category yielded the least amount of observed interaction between users of all backgrounds; with the exception of the Dansaert square in Brussels that did involve higher levels of cross-community interaction between individuals sitting at the terrace of the nearby bar.

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<sup>741</sup> Belfast Interviewee 2 – Chris O’Halloran

Levels of Interaction in Open Public Spaces			
	Jaffa Gate Square (Jerusalem)	Victoria Square Area (Belfast)	Dansaert Square Area (Brussels)
<i>Observed Interactions</i>	Extremely limited, virtually inexistent	Limited but peaceful	Occasionally meaningful

Table 29: Levels of Interaction in Open Public Spaces Comparison

Slightly more interaction was witnessed in the three public parks given the similar use of the space by the different communities present. Israeli and Palestinian children playing side by side in the fountains of Teddy Park was particularly interesting to observe as it did not involve any kind of tension between them, nor between their parents sitting close by. Interaction in the Brussels Park between Dutch-speakers and French-speakers was observed on several occasions, between office workers but also locals enjoying the park. City Hall Gardens tended to yield less meaningful interaction on a regular basis, but led to increased levels of intergroup contact during specific events such as the ‘Spring into Easter’ festival.

Levels of Interaction in Public Parks			
	Teddy Park (Jerusalem)	City Hall Gardens (Belfast)	Brussels Royal Park (Brussels)
<i>Observed Interactions</i>	Limited but peaceful	Limited but peaceful	Limited but peaceful

Table 30: Levels of Interaction in Public Parks Comparison

The study of the three shopping centres revealed that commercial interaction between members of different groups in those particular places is widespread in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels. While such encounters might be purely for commercial purposes, it seems important to acknowledge their existence and highlight the fact that they generally do not lead to negative interaction. As in parks, members of different communities were observed visiting the same shops and cafes and buying similar items of clothing and other goods without this creating any kind of tension. Research in three different types of spaces in three different cities therefore revealed that while yielding varying degrees of interaction, all spaces were generally used by the different communities in a neutral manner, therefore leading to peaceful coexistence on most days of observation.

Levels of Interaction in Shopping Centres			
	Mamilla Mall (Jerusalem)	CastleCourt (Belfast)	City2 (Brussels)
<i>Observed Interactions</i>	Regular, peaceful	Regular, peaceful	Regular, peaceful

Table 31: Levels of Interaction in Shopping Centres Comparison

Despite different levels of conflict in the wider context of each city, sharing space in open public areas, parks and shopping centres on average led to peaceful coexistence between

members of different groups. This may give credit to the argument that the effects of proximity, or mere exposure, do play a role in reducing tensions and normalising diversity in divided contexts.

Answers provided by some interview participants in the three cities also mentioned this more positive perspective, underlining the normalised or increasing nature of the interactions that occur in shared public spaces. The comparison of routines and interactions in three selected shared public spaces has demonstrated that similarities in terms of usage of space and levels of cross-community interaction do exist between the case studies. While the main aspect to emerge from the field research is that shared public spaces do not tend to enhance intergroup contact, it could be argued that low-level encounters and exposure to the other in such spaces do have limited value. Indeed, negative or violent interaction was only rarely observed during the field research in the selected spaces; and most interview participants also acknowledged that while limited, interaction was generally neutral rather than negative.

### **3. Assessing the Role of Shared Public Spaces in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels**

Certain events observed in all three cities demonstrated that shared public spaces could become the sites of intergroup tension when used to celebrate exclusive group identity or controversial historical commemorations. In Jerusalem, observation of Jerusalem Day celebrations revealed the highly controversial nature of the event leading to extremely high tension and violent confrontations between the Israeli and Palestinian communities. In Belfast, different events taking place on Saint Patrick's Day were observed as leading to increased tension in the city centre. The focus of the tension was at the front of City Hall, where groups of Catholic youths celebrating Saint Patrick's Day confronted a Loyalist flag protest group. Both gatherings were seen as being essentially exclusive and offensive to the other community, leading to an extremely tense situation in the centre of Belfast. Although much reduced compared to the two other contested events in Jerusalem and Belfast, tense encounters during the Gordelfestival were observed between members of the French-speaking and Dutch-speaking communities in certain parts of the Brussels periphery. The event is essentially about underlining the mono-lingual nature of the Flemish towns situated along the border with Brussels, and may therefore be qualified as exclusive and not particularly welcoming to French-speakers.

During the three events of Jerusalem Day, Saint Patrick's Day and the Gordelfestival, spaces usually used by the different communities residing in the cities were suddenly transformed into essentially unshared spaces, or at least not shared in a neutral or positive way. This may

suggest that it is more what occurs within such spaces rather than their public and shared nature that may ultimately influence levels of cross-community contact and their negative or positive outcome on intergroup relations. This may also imply that such spaces need a certain amount of control in sensitive or volatile contexts, such as municipal initiatives enhancing peaceful coexistence. From a consociationalist perspective, it could even be argued that without significant leadership on their use by policy makers, shared public spaces may do more harm than good in a bitterly contested or divided city. In short, shared public spaces were not seen as preventing or reducing negative interactions between different communities during the proceedings of such controversial events.

<b>Observed Events leading to Negative Outcomes</b>				
	<i>Event</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Organiser(s)</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
<b>Jerusalem</b>	Jerusalem Day	Commemoration	Municipality and grassroots	Extreme tension and violence
<b>Belfast</b>	St. Patrick's Day	Celebration and Protest	Grassroots, individuals	Tension and confrontation
<b>Brussels</b>	Gordelfestival	Festival	Communes and grassroots	Mild tension

**Table 32: Events leading to Negative Outcomes Comparison**

However, as previously underlined, peaceful coexistence between different communities was observed as being the norm aside from these specific events. Furthermore, a number of other events yielded on the contrary neutral or even positive effects on intergroup relations in the three cities. In Jerusalem, the Light Festival concentrated in and around the Old City was observed as being much more inclusive than any other event in the city. Indeed, while the event was not immune to controversy, members of both the Israeli and the Palestinian communities were observed visiting the art displays and enjoying the event. As a result, the general atmosphere during the festival was mainly relaxed and festive, rather than tense and volatile. However, given the one-sided partisan policy present in the city, it is clear that such an event – while appearing neutral and inclusive – is not expected to improve intergroup relations in any meaningful or relevant way. In Belfast, the Saint Patrick's Day carnival parade was observed as focusing on inclusivity with the distribution of more neutral emblems and avoiding solely Irish representations. The 'Spring into Easter' event within City Hall Gardens was also observed as being shared with the participation of members of both the Protestant and Catholic communities in a festive atmosphere. Finally, two events were also observed as enhancing inclusiveness and peaceful coexistence in Brussels. The first was the Zinneke Parade, specifically planned as an inclusive event encompassing the different communities residing in Brussels. The Belgian national day celebrations were also observed as being an

essentially inclusive and cross-community event, by highlighting the unity of the country and therefore the links between the two linguistic communities.

<b>Observed Events leading to Neutral or Positive Outcomes</b>				
	<i>Event</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Organiser(s)</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
<b>Jerusalem</b>	Light Festival	Festival	Municipality	Reduced tension, more inclusive
<b>Belfast</b>	Spring Into Easter	Festival	City Council	Festive and inclusive
	St. Patrick's Day Parade	Carnival Parade	Grassroots	Festive and inclusive
<b>Brussels</b>	Zinneke Parade	Carnival Parade	Grassroots	Festive and inclusive
	National Day	Commemoration	State and Region	Festive and inclusive

**Table 33: Events leading to Neutral or Positive Outcomes Comparison**

The role of civil society and grassroots organisations in contributing towards improved intergroup relations in divided cities should thus be acknowledged and highlighted. The similar initiatives of Belfast Beat and Zinneke (in Belfast and Brussels respectively) support this point, as they both purposefully create parades that celebrate diversity and inclusiveness; explicitly working towards mixing and enhancing interaction between different resident communities. It has been mentioned that “the Zinneke Parade is however not at all the only parade that establishes urban togetherness, or the only parade in which people are exposed to others. We know of similar parades through collaborations with the Zinneke Parade, notably the Beat Initiative in Belfast and the Part Tot Parata in Bologna.”<sup>742</sup> It is important to underline that the most inclusive and shared events to be observed in Brussels and Belfast were organised by these grassroots carnival groups. This fact is deeply relevant as it demonstrates that the artistic, creative, eclectic and alternative features offered and produced by civil society in contested cities play a major role in transforming space in the urban arena; therefore suggesting that elite level politics are not indispensable for shared spaces to improve intergroup relations.

It may therefore be concluded that specific events occurring in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels can either lead to increased tensions through controversial celebrations, or on the contrary to better relations through more inclusive festivities. The identity of the organisers did not make much difference to the positive or negative outcomes of these events, as both local authorities (elite-level) and civil society (grassroots) organisations were involved in the preparation of controversial as well as inclusive events.

<sup>742</sup>Reyskens, Peter, and Joke Vandenabeele. “Parading Urban Togetherness: A Video Record of Brussels’ Zinneke Parade.” *Social & Cultural Geography* 0, no. 0 (January 8, 2016): 1–21, p. 19



Overall, based on the findings described above, it could be argued that shared public spaces do not play any meaningful role in improving intergroup relations and should therefore not be considered as major contributors towards conflict transformation efforts in divided cities. While observation in the shared spaces in the three cities did reveal that peaceful coexistence was the norm in such settings, the wider contexts of Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels demonstrate that this reality has not directly influenced intergroup conflict on a broader city and state level. Interviews carried out in the three cities provided similar understandings of the role of shared spaces; especially in Jerusalem where the current context of repeated cycles of violence is understood as mitigating the positive effects of sharing space. In Belfast, despite the normalisation of the term 'shared space', public spaces such as the city centre are not always understood as providing concrete solutions to sectarianism and segregation. The quality of interaction was underlined as an important factor to take into account when evaluating the role of shared spaces. For instance "we cannot simply assume that such interactions that may actually take place and do actually take place can be translated into a wider respect for difference, or go very deeply and be very meaningful."<sup>743</sup>The same may be said about Brussels, where observed interactions were minimal despite the generally peaceful context of the city – especially compared to Jerusalem and Belfast. Another aspect that mitigated the role of shared spaces for Flemish participants was the unbalance in terms of language use in such spaces. Therefore, despite the very different situation compared to Jerusalem, research has revealed the importance of taking into account the asymmetry of sharing spaces between different groups in the city.

However, it might also be argued that despite this lack of meaningful interaction, shared public spaces in divided cities play all the same a small role in conflict transformation efforts. Indeed, as previously mentioned, the effects of proximity and exposure to the other group may normalise a level of diversity in contested cities, which might in the long term lead to more tolerance for difference. The very fact that peaceful coexistence was observed as a regular occurrence in shared public spaces in the three cities is understood as supporting this claim. Interviews with participants in the three cities also provided information backing this more positive perspective. While no participant claimed that shared spaces in Jerusalem would actively help resolve the conflict, several interviewees did acknowledge their value. The importance of mere exposure in shared spaces was also underlined by interview participants in Belfast, and the limited experiences provided by one-off events was understood as having some value. In Brussels, the importance of shared space was essentially assimilated to the

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<sup>743</sup> Belfast Interviewee 3- Milena Komarova

importance of public spaces for healthy cities from an urbanism perspective, rather than specifically related to intergroup relations.

Therefore, while sharing space is not likely to transform intergroup relations in any immediate or meaningful manner, their very existence and the fact that they enable normalised exposure to ‘the other’ is undeniably significant for contested cities in deeply divided societies. This also implies that despite the obvious differences in terms of the direct environment of Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels and its effects on intergroup relations in the cities, the role of shared public spaces might not be entirely dependent on the overall context in which they are situated.

The comparative analysis of shared public spaces in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels has provided an interesting insight into the significance of such spaces for intergroup relations in contested cities. The difference in levels of conflict in the three cities enabled a better understanding of how important shared urban space is in cities where opposing groups have normalised social, institutional and even physical division into everyday life. The comparison of similar types of spaces in the cities has also revealed how daily routines in shared spaces are internalised by inhabitants, in light of very different contexts. Returning to the three main themes identified in the previous case study chapters, the following tables summarise the theoretical findings in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels.

<b>Theme 1 – Contextualisation of Shared Spaces</b>			
	<b>Jerusalem</b>	<b>Belfast</b>	<b>Brussels</b>
<i>B.1 Normalised Way of Life</i>	Deeply entrenched division Separation perceived as necessary	Still deeply divided Peace walls still perceived as necessary	No physical segregation But linguistic duality and division at institutional level
<i>B.2 Role of Discourse</i>	Deeply divisive discourses and narratives	New discourses since peace process encouraging sharing	Limited to one community, sometimes divisive
<i>B.3 Power Struggles</i>	Explicit and often violent	Transformation from violence into political debates	Limited to the institutional and political level

**Table 34: Theme 1 - Contextualisation of Shared Spaces Comparison**

<b>Theme 2 – Daily Life and Intergroup Relations</b>			
	<b>Jerusalem</b>	<b>Belfast</b>	<b>Brussels</b>
<i>A.1 Authority Support</i>	Jerusalem Municipality organising both divisive and inclusive events	‘Shared space’ is a key term used by Belfast City Council since peace process	Intergroup contact encouraged by civil society Total absence of interest from authorities
<i>A.2 Meaningful Interaction</i>	Limited interaction But peaceful coexistence observed	Limited interaction But peaceful coexistence observed	Limited interaction But peaceful coexistence observed
<i>A.3 Negative Interaction</i>	Ongoing cycles of intergroup violence	Increasingly rare, but occasionally violent	Occasional low-level non-violent negative contact in periphery
<i>B.1 Normalised and Internalised Way of Life</i>	Intergroup contact is not normalised	Combination of segregation but normalisation of shared spaces in city centre	Diversity internalised and normalised but no normalisation of bilingual interaction
<i>B.2 Role of Discourse</i>	Discourses around events are divisive	Increase in discourses around shared space Still divisive political discourses around past	Certain discourses around events and policies are divisive
<i>B.3 Power Struggles</i>	Occasional violent and tense protests	Occasional tense protests	Very rare tension in reaction to certain events

**Table 35: Theme 2 - Daily Life and Intergroup Relations Comparison**

<b>Theme 3 – Interpretation of Shared Space</b>			
	<b>Jerusalem</b>	<b>Belfast</b>	<b>Brussels</b>
<i>A.1 Authority Support</i>	Lack of support from Jerusalem Municipality towards creating shared spaces	Belfast City Council, UK government and EU all working towards creating more shared spaces	No authority support because sharing space is not considered to be an issue
<i>A.2 Meaningful Interaction</i>	Sharing space does not necessarily lead to meaningful interaction	Depends on shared space continuum Shared public space does not lead to in-depth interaction	Sharing space does not necessarily lead to meaningful interaction, depends on context
<i>A.3 Negative Contact Effect</i>	Violence can lead to negative contact in shared spaces	Sectarian violence in shared spaces becoming rare	Occasional tensions in shared spaces in periphery
<i>B.3 Role of Discourse</i>	Shared space is not part of any official or dominant discourse in the city	Term shared space has been internalised within dominant discourse in both groups	Shared space is not currently part of any official or dominant discourse in the city, but this might change

**Table 36: Theme 3 - Interpretation of Shared Space Comparison**

These findings will now be compared and analysed within the theoretical and analytical framework previously detailed in Chapter Two. A combined version of these results across the three cities will then be examined in light of the expected results based on the theoretical hypotheses taken from the intergroup contact theory and the Bourdieusian/Foucauldian perspectives.

#### **4. Theoretical and Analytical Conclusions**

Following the analysis of the field research carried out in the three cities, the study was able to answer the six main research questions that have guided this project on the use of shared spaces in divided cities. The research findings in the three different cities were compared in order to provide a comprehensive set of answers.

##### ***Authority Support: were the shared spaces planned as spaces of cross-community encounter by city authorities when first established?***

In Jerusalem, two of the three shared public spaces were specifically planned as such – one (Mamilla Mall) by Jerusalem Municipality (therefore through authority support) and the other (Teddy Park) by a non-profit organisation (therefore initiated by a grassroots organisation).

However, most of the public spaces in Jerusalem were not specifically planned as spaces of cross-community encounter.

In Belfast, Belfast City Council is actively working on creating shared spaces in the city centre in order to bring the Catholic and Protestant communities closer together, with the support of the European Union. Shared spaces therefore benefit from explicit authority support in Belfast.

In Brussels, there has been no authority support for the creation of specific areas of encounter between the linguistic groups. However, civil society and the cultural sector have recently been working towards creating bilingual events.

The consociational perspective to managing divided societies may be applied to this authority support aspect of the research. Indeed, it could be argued that shared public spaces are most effective in improving intergroup relations when they benefit from and are initiated by local or wider authority support. However, based on the field research results, authority support for the creation of shared spaces for improved intergroup relations is not present in all cases. Given the similar uses of space observed in the three cities, it may be argued that authority support is not a prerequisite for the sharing of space between groups in divided cities. It may therefore be suggested that a combination of both elite level and grassroots efforts towards the creation of shared spaces might lead to the most effective outcome, as asserted by numerous commentators.<sup>744</sup> Indeed, as underlined by UN Habitat, “participation in city plans and city planning has long been advocated as an essential tool to make planning and urban governance responsive, transparent and accountable – in one word, ‘sustainable’. Participation by civil society has the potential to empower communities, build social capital, lead to better design of urban projects and allow for citizens’ concerns to be incorporated into development strategies.”<sup>745</sup> This finding provides an alternative path, echoed by Lederach<sup>746</sup>, to the polarised debate which currently exists within academia between proponents of conflict resolution through elite-level bargaining and those relying on civil society or Track 3 mediation techniques.<sup>747</sup>

***Meaningful Interaction: does any meaningful cross-community interaction occur within the shared spaces and what are the effects of proximity?***

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<sup>744</sup> Commentators including those interviewed in Belfast on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> February (Good Relations Unit), on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February (Frank Gaffikin) and on Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> March (Scott Bollens)

<sup>745</sup> Garau, Pietro. “Global Public Space Toolkit: From Global Principles to Local Policies and Practice.” Toolkit. UN Habitat, February 2016, p. 21. <http://unhabitat.org/books/global-public-space-toolkit-from-global-principles-to-local-policies-and-practice/>.

<sup>746</sup> Lederach, John. *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation: Clear Articulation of the Guiding Principles by a Pioneer in the Field*. Good Books, 2003.

<sup>747</sup> Brown, Kris, and Fionnuala Ni Aolain. “Good Fences Make Good Neighbours: Assessing the Role of Consociational Politics.” *Political Settlements Research Programme*, no. Working Paper 3 (January 20, 2016), p. 13

Only limited cross-community interaction generally occurs in shared public spaces. This is an extremely interesting outcome, as despite the very different contexts in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels; inhabitants of these cities were observed using the shared spaces in a similar way without any major tensions. Therefore, while interaction was limited, peaceful coexistence was observed as the norm in the three shared spaces in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels. Interviews additionally revealed that although interaction was also perceived as being generally limited; a number of participants in all three cities underlined the value of sharing space and therefore the importance of experiencing and being exposed to the other on a daily basis. Consequently, it may be suggested that mere exposure to the other community in a divided environment does have some value for intergroup relations.

***Negative Contact Effects: are particular tensions felt within the shared spaces which may lead to negative interaction?***

In Jerusalem, while negative interaction was rarely observed within the selected spaces, tensions were witnessed and mentioned by interview participants and documentary sources within the wider city context. In other words, despite the general peaceful and neutral atmosphere in shared public spaces, intergroup tension and violent confrontations do also occur in the city. While increasingly rare, sectarian violence was occasionally observed and reported in shared spaces in the city centre. Public spaces in the Brussels periphery are periodically the site of low-level non-violent negative contact between groups.

In all three cities, shared public spaces are more often than not used by different communities without any particular tension or negative interaction. However, given the different contexts in the three cities, it remains more likely that the peaceful coexistence balance may be disrupted in Jerusalem and to a lesser extent in Belfast than in Brussels.

***Normalised and Internalised Way of Life: how is division normalised in the cities and how does this affect the idea of inclusion and integration promoted by shared spaces?***

Division is deeply internalised in Jerusalem, and communities live in separate social spheres; segregation is therefore accepted as the norm. In Belfast, while intergroup relations have improved, society still remains deeply divided. However, shared spaces are also increasingly becoming internalised as the norm in the city centre. In Brussels, daily life nearly entirely revolves around the belonging to a specific linguistic community, often leading to separate and exclusive social spheres despite the lack of any physical segregation. However, sharing space and experiencing diversity is also normalised due to the high degree of international mixing that occurs in Brussels.

Division is therefore the norm in all three cities, albeit in varying degrees. But shared public spaces also tend to be accepted and internalised as normal urban features of the cities, as demonstrated by their daily use by different communities. While such shared spaces are rare in Jerusalem, they are increasing in number in Belfast and are widespread in Brussels; therefore leading to an interesting dichotomy in all three cities between living separately while sharing space on a regular basis.

***The Role of Discourse: what are the discourses around separation, shared spaces and conflict in the city?***

In Jerusalem, the dominant discourses on either side of the divide are generally contributing towards the normalisation of separation and often reignite cycles of intergroup tension and violence. Sharing space is thus absent from any of these narratives and discourses.

Discourses have been transformed in Belfast since the peace process, leading to the explicit engagement towards reconciliation and the sharing of space between the communities in the city. Shared spaces are therefore described within dominant discourses as highly positive places that should be encouraged and are beneficial for Northern Ireland society as a whole.

In Brussels, dominant discourses within the two linguistic groups remain essentially exclusive and focus primarily on continuing the federalisation process. However, given the increasing role of civil society in encouraging and underlining the importance of bilingualism and cross-community cooperation, discourses within the city might change.

Therefore, the only dominant discourses to actively acknowledge the importance of shared spaces for improved intergroup relations are situated in Belfast, while discourses in Jerusalem are still deeply rooted in territorial conflict. There might be a slow change in more local discourses towards acknowledging the importance of cooperation in Brussels, but this is not the case at the national level.

***Power struggles: how are the power-struggles between the groups expressed in the cities?***

In Jerusalem, power struggles between the groups occasionally lead to violent confrontations, sometimes affecting the shared aspect of spaces. In Belfast, power struggles between the communities have mostly been transformed, generally leading shared spaces to continue to be

shared even during political crises. In Brussels, power struggles between the two linguistic communities have generally been limited to the political and institutional sphere; but have entrenched divisions and pushed the two communities further apart. Power struggles are therefore expressed in very different ways in the three cities, although this was not observed as leading to major differences in the use of shared public spaces by the different communities on a daily basis – at least not during the period of field research.



## Comparative Theoretical Framework and Research Questions Findings

### **A. Intergroup Contact Theory – Cross-community Interaction**

#### *A.1 Authority Support*

1. Were the shared spaces planned as a space of cross-community encounter by city authorities when first established?  
⇒ Not all shared public spaces are initially planned as spaces of cross-community encounter. However, it may be suggested that levels of acceptance and ownership of such shared spaces by all communities are likely to be higher in situations where their beneficial aspect is highlighted by local authorities.

#### *A.2 Meaningful Interaction:*

2. Does any meaningful cross-community interaction occur within the shared spaces and what are the effects of proximity?  
⇒ Meaningful interaction between members of different communities is usually limited in shared public spaces; however proximity and similar usage of space with the other usually leads to peaceful coexistence.

#### *A.3 Negative Contact Effects*

3. Are particular tensions felt within the shared spaces which may lead to negative interaction?  
⇒ While shared public spaces are usually used peacefully by different communities, they can occasionally be the sites of intergroup confrontation.

### **B. Bourdieu/Foucault Perspective – Context**

#### *B.1 Habitus/discipline: Normalised and Internalised Way of Life*

4. How is division normalised in the cities and how does this affect the idea of inclusion and integration promoted by shared space?  
⇒ Division is normalised at the political and social level, and shared spaces are therefore exceptions in certain contexts of physically segregated cities. However the sharing of space on a regular basis also tends to demonstrate a level of normalisation of such spaces of mixing within the urban environment.

#### *B.2 Doxa/panopticism: Role of Discourse*

5. What are the discourses around separation, shared spaces and conflict in the cities?  
⇒ Discourses around intergroup conflict are not necessarily diminished or less aggressive, and shared spaces are not often acknowledged as valuable aspects of city life to be encouraged.

#### *B.3 Power/domination: Power struggles*

6. How are the power-struggles between the groups expressed in the cities?  
⇒ Power struggles, similarly to discourses around the conflict, may be expressed violently in shared spaces, usually triggered by specific controversial and divisive events.

The combined answers of the results in the three cities were then compared to the expected answers based on the theoretical perspectives that guided the research, as described in Chapter Two.

***Authority Support: were the shared spaces planned as a space of cross-community encounter by city authorities when first established?***

Expected answer: Yes, their initial purpose was to bring members of different communities to interact and share the space peacefully.

Observed answer: Not all shared spaces are initially planned as spaces of cross-community encounter and peaceful coexistence. However, local or higher authority levels can in certain contexts explicitly praise the positive effects of sharing space and this in turn may accelerate the normalisation and internalisation of the value of such spaces within the cities' populations. It could be suggested that a combination of authority and grassroots support might offer the most difference in terms of the role of such spaces in transforming intergroup relations. Yet authority support in itself is not required for public spaces to be shared and used by different communities in a neutral, peaceful and relaxed manner.

***Meaningful Interaction: does any meaningful cross-community interaction occur within the shared spaces and what are the effects of proximity?***

Expected answer: Yes, contact in shared public spaces leads to more cross-community interaction. Regular exposure to the members of the other community and the proximity it entails leads to the normalisation of diversity and difference in the city, and therefore increases tolerance.

Observed answer: Meaningful interaction between members of different communities is usually limited in shared public spaces; however proximity and similar usage of space in the presence of members of the other community does usually lead to peaceful coexistence.

***Negative Contact Effects: are particular tensions felt within the shared spaces which may lead to negative interaction?***

Expected answer: No, shared public spaces are usually shared neutrally between members of different groups, who have normalised peaceful coexistence within these settings.

Observed answer: While shared public spaces are generally used peacefully by different communities, they can occasionally be the sites of intergroup confrontation. In other words,

urban spaces in contested cities can be shared violently, therefore mitigating their role as tools for conflict transformation.

***Normalised and Internalised Way of Life: how is division normalised in the cities and how does this affect the idea of inclusion and integration promoted by shared spaces?***

Expected answer: Division is normalised at the political level, but not in terms of urban territory nor at the social level. Inclusion and integration in shared public spaces are therefore accepted.

Observed answer: Division is normalised at the political and social level, and shared spaces are therefore exceptions in certain contexts of physically segregated cities (such as parts of Belfast and Jerusalem). The paradox of shared public spaces lies in the fact that most of them are used by different groups and communities on a regular basis, therefore suggesting that these seemingly abnormal spheres of sharing and mixing in an otherwise divided environment have also been normalised and internalised by the populations visiting them.

***The Role of Discourse: what are the discourses around separation, shared spaces and conflict in the city?***

Expected answer: Discourses around the conflict have changed to become less aggressive. Shared public spaces are acknowledged as valuable aspects of city life that are to be encouraged.

Observed answer: Discourses around intergroup conflict are not necessarily diminished or less aggressive, and shared public spaces are not often acknowledged as valuable aspects of city life or intergroup relations to be encouraged.

***Power struggles: how are the power-struggles between the groups expressed in the cities?***

Expected answer: Power struggles are expressed non-violently, therefore enabling the peaceful use of shared public spaces in the city.

Observed answer: Power struggles, similarly to discourses around the conflict, may be expressed violently in shared public spaces, usually triggered by specific controversial and divisive events. However, even in the case of intergroup violence in parts of the city, shared public spaces may still be used peacefully by members of the conflicting communities.

These answers therefore demonstrate that the expected results based on the theoretical hypotheses of Intergroup Contact Theory and the Bourdieu/Foucault perspective do not

systematically correspond to the findings revealed through field research in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels. Given this discrepancy, the consociationalist counter theory may be applied to the research in order to provide an additional perspective that might explain this variation.

***Consociational perspective: were the shared spaces planned and accepted as a result of elite-level bargaining?***

Expected answer: Yes, the shared public spaces were initiated and developed following a consociationally-based agreement between all power-sharing parties.

Jerusalem: No, there is no consociational model of government in Jerusalem as the Palestinian community is not included in power-sharing.

Belfast: Yes, the consociational regime established in 2007 is actively working towards creating more shared spaces in Belfast in order to foster better intergroup relations.

Brussels: No, while there is a consociational regime in Brussels, it has not been actively working towards creating spaces of encounter between the linguistic communities.

Observed answer: Most shared public spaces were not planned or accepted as a result of elite-level bargaining, as certain contexts do not include a consociational model of government while others are not necessarily focused on creating spaces of cross-community encounter. However, it may be suggested that levels of acceptance and ownership of such shared spaces by all communities are likely to be higher in contexts where power-sharing has been agreed between different groups, therefore suggesting willingness for cooperation rather than confrontation at the elite level between communities – generally found in contexts of pacified intergroup relations. Indeed, as underlined by Bourdieu and Foucault's notions around power and domination, the discourse used by elites and decision-makers has far-reaching effects on the way a society functions. If the main discourse used by opposing groups around intergroup relations is one of pacification and the need for shared spaces, the peaceful sharing of space between different communities will increasingly be internalised within society. It could therefore be argued that a power-sharing model of government – including, but not limited to consociationalism – in contested cities offers the best basis on which to promote truly shared spaces that will be enjoyed and embraced by all inhabitants. However, as underlined in Chapter Two, while the consociational theory could be applied to the study of decision-making in divided cities, it is not an adequate tool for the study of the role of shared public spaces within such contexts.

## Expected and Observed Answers of Theoretical Framework

<b>Intergroup Contact Theory</b>	
<b>Question 1</b>	<i>Were the shared spaces planned as spaces of cross-community encounter by city authorities when first established?</i>
Expected Answer	Yes, their initial purpose was to bring members of different communities to interact and share the space.
Observed Answer	Not all shared spaces are initially planned as spaces of cross-community encounter and peaceful coexistence, hence authority support is not a pre-requisite for spaces to be used and shared by different communities.
<b>Question 2</b>	<i>Does any meaningful cross-community interaction occur within the shared spaces and what are the effects of proximity?</i>
Expected Answer	Yes, contact in shared spaces leads to more cross-community interaction. Proximity tends to positively influence individuals by making diversity and the presence of the other normal.
Observed Answer	Meaningful interaction between members of different communities is usually limited in shared public spaces; however proximity and similar usage of space with the other does tend to lead to peaceful coexistence.
<b>Question 3</b>	<i>Are particular tensions felt within the shared spaces which may lead to negative interaction?</i>
Expected Answer	No, shared spaces are usually shared peacefully between members of different groups, who coexist peacefully.
Observed Answer	While shared spaces are usually used peacefully by different communities, they can occasionally be the sites of intergroup confrontation and therefore negative interaction.
<b>Bourdieu/Foucault Perspective</b>	
<b>Question 4</b>	<i>How is division normalised in the city and how does this affect the idea of inclusion and integration promoted by shared space?</i>
Expected Answer	Division is normalised at the political level, but not in terms of urban territory nor at the social level. Inclusion and integration in shared spaces are therefore accepted.
Observed Answer	Division is normalised at most levels, even physically in certain cases. Yet shared public spaces, due to their regular usage by different communities, are also internalised by the visiting populations.
<b>Question 5</b>	<i>What are the discourses around separation, shared spaces and conflict in the city?</i>
Expected Answer	Discourses around the conflict have changed to become less aggressive. Shared spaces are acknowledged as valuable aspects of city life that are to be encouraged.
Observed Answer	Discourses around intergroup conflict are not necessarily diminished or less aggressive, and shared spaces are not often acknowledged as valuable aspects of city life to be encouraged.
<b>Question 6</b>	<i>How are the power-struggles between the groups expressed in the city?</i>
Expected Answer	Struggles are expressed in non-violently, therefore enabling the peaceful use of shared public spaces in the city.
Observed Answer	Power struggles, similarly to discourses around the conflict, may be expressed violently in shared spaces, usually triggered by specific controversial and divisive events.

Table 38: Expected and Observed Answers of Theoretical Framework

## Concluding Remarks

Overall, the presence of shared public spaces in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels does not generally enhance levels of cross-community interaction; however neither do they pose any barriers to contact. In all three cities, shared public spaces provide the opportunity for enhanced levels of interaction, without this being a systematic outcome.

In other words, the affordance of these spaces includes higher levels of intergroup contact. According to the theory of affordances, then, shared public spaces afford cross-community interaction. In terms of social interaction, “what other persons afford, comprises the whole realm of social significance for human beings. We pay the closest attention to the optical and acoustic information that specifies what the other person is, invites, threatens, and does.”<sup>748</sup> This is therefore close to the notion of telling, in which auditory and visual cues are applied and used in certain contexts in order to identify the ethnic identity of an individual – which is perceived as providing information pertaining to the relative safety or unsafety of a situation.

Shared public spaces are therefore not believed to make major or immediate differences to intergroup relations in the three cities. Furthermore, “studies of proximity [...] show no clear and consistent correlation between greater proximity and lower levels of prejudice.”<sup>749</sup> However, such spaces are nevertheless believed to have some value in normalising regular exposure to the other community, which is a crucial aspect of any healthy city – divided or not. As underlined by Frank Gaffikin, shared public spaces are “not immediately transformative but accumulatively over a long period of time, the more you can amplify those spaces in a divided city, [...] the better.”<sup>750</sup> It is thus suggested that the effects – if any – of shared spaces on intergroup relations should be evaluated on a longer-term basis, as transformation processes take time.

Therefore, “there may be a role for the irregular, random and ramshackle ‘public’ spaces that hold some of the improvisation, spontaneity and messiness that also characterise an interesting and vibrant cityscape. Space that facilitates chance encounter, happenstance, the accidental and contingent, and allows for exploration and discovery is part of what a dynamic urban environment should offer.”<sup>751</sup> These urban aspects are even more crucial in cities and societies where limited encounter and division have been internalised to the point that different communities live separately – as is the case in varying degrees in Jerusalem, Belfast

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<sup>748</sup> Op. Cit., p. 120

<sup>749</sup> Forbes, Hugh Donald. *Ethnic Conflict: Commerce, Culture, and the Contact Hypothesis*. Yale University Press, 1997, p. 112

<sup>750</sup> Interview with Frank Gaffikin, Belfast, Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2016

<sup>751</sup> Gaffikin, Frank, Malachy McEldowney, Gavan Rafferty, and Ken Sterrett. “Public Space for a Shared Belfast: A Research Report for Belfast City Council.” Research Report. Belfast City Council, January 2008, p. 25

and Brussels. In other words, public spaces are important aspects of the urban fabric of any city, but their presence is even more compelling in contested cities where sharing space is the exception rather than the norm.

Ongoing and future work under the EU Peace IV programme on creating a shared civic space in Belfast city centre – which is understood as going beyond neutrality and tolerance and towards a celebration of diversity and strengthening the sense of ownership of the inhabitants<sup>752</sup> – will be interesting to observe and analyse in the coming years. Such space, situated in the middle of the shared space continuum, might provide the adequate amount of elite and grassroots collaboration needed for shared spaces to yield the most beneficial results in terms of intergroup relations in divided cities.

The timing and spatial aspects of shared public spaces need be acknowledged as factors likely to influence the benefits of sharing space in contested cities. The location of shared spaces may indeed determine their accessibility; central locations might not be as easily accessible for marginalised or lower income groups, but might nevertheless be more approachable by different communities if situated close to a perceived boundary or interface and therefore not located within one groups' territory. In terms of timing, it may be argued that certain contexts probably lead to more effective changes to intergroup relations, when an agreement is made at the political level between the different groups, leading to power sharing. Conflict transformation is understandably a slow-paced process, and “war and conflict took a long time, and so does peacebuilding. So public space is really critical to build into the landscape of contested cities, but I’m not sure it produces short term positive results.”<sup>753</sup>

Certain elements have been identified as influencing the effects of shared public spaces on intergroup relations, such as the presence of a power-sharing government, a post-conflict situation, cooperation or collaboration at elite or grassroots level, and so on. In other words, the differences that shared spaces can make to intergroup relations greatly vary depending on the wider context within which they are situated. At the lowest end of the scale, the most minimal or limited effect of shared space resides in its very existence within a deeply divided environment. At the highest end of the scale, in the right circumstances (including the aspects described above), shared space may enhance levels of peaceful cross-community interaction, leading to positive intergroup relations within the space. It however remains to be established how such sporadic events that lead to these positive effects actually influence intergroup relations and conflict at the broader city or national level.

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<sup>752</sup> Interview with a member of the Good Relations Unit, Belfast City Council, Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2016

<sup>753</sup> Interview with Scott Bollens, Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016, Belfast

As mentioned at the very beginning of the thesis, while the intergroup contact theory was deemed the most appropriate theoretical perspective through which to examine intergroup relations in shared public spaces, the research highlighted certain of its limitations. The answers provided by this research have demonstrated that the sharing of space, while rarely leading to negative outcomes, does not generally lead to more interaction or any major changes to group relations. It may thus be suggested that for intergroup relations to be effectively improved in divided cities, more in-depth sharing consisting of dialogue groups in controlled settings and more explicit and implicit support (whether from grassroots or elite level) for such sharing need to be established. The type of mundane fleeting encounters that occur in public spaces might however be a first step towards normalising these conflict transformation efforts in contested or divided urban settings.

While drawing conclusions from the analysis of only three case studies is not expected to provide any far-reaching answers to the two main research questions, it is believed that this research may at least provide an interesting insight into the role of public spaces in divided societies and cities. The study of three selected shared public spaces in three selected cities has not revealed a representative description of all cities divided or contested between different communities. It may however provide a model for social research applicable to a number of comparative studies attempting to evaluate or explore differences and similarities within cases while acknowledging their wider contexts.

By applying a combination of two different theoretical perspectives, the research enabled a new angle of approach to the study of intergroup relations in shared public spaces in the particular context of divided cities. While the limitations of intergroup contact theory have been underlined, rather than rejecting it as a whole the study demonstrates that the theory can be improved in order to better understand interaction in contextual settings. One suggestion for improving the scope and relevance of intergroup contact theory has been to study the ‘significance of mundane encounters between groups’<sup>754</sup>; which is precisely what this research has attempted to accomplish. Indeed, the study of shared public spaces may be described as focusing “on the mundane, seemingly unimportant, encounters that constitute the overwhelming majority of everyday contact experiences.”<sup>755</sup>

Research findings have revealed that shared public spaces do not produce any fundamental or immediate transformative benefits for intergroup relations in contested cities. However, by focusing on longer-term objectives, the importance and relevance of shared spaces as part of

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<sup>754</sup> Dixon, John, Kevin Durrheim, and Colin Tredoux. “Beyond the Optimal Contact Strategy: A Reality Check for the Contact Hypothesis.” *American Psychologist* 60, no. 7 (October 2005): 697–711, p. 703

<sup>755</sup> Op. Cit, p. 703



wider conflict transformation efforts become evident. This thesis concludes that shared public spaces are “necessary but insufficient steps”<sup>756</sup> towards improving intergroup relations in deeply divided societies. Indeed, if “public spaces play an important role in the manifestation of conflict [they] therefore, logically, play an important role in the transformation of conflict.”<sup>757</sup> Following the theory of affordances’ claim that “the meaning and value of a thing consists of what it affords”<sup>758</sup>, this thesis finally argues that while shared public spaces do not systematically lead to higher levels of intergroup contact and thus improved relations, they should nevertheless be considered as valuable elements for conflict transformation in divided cities.

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<sup>756</sup> Interview with Frank Gaffikin, Belfast, Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2016

<sup>757</sup> Bryan, Dominic. “Parades, Flags, Carnivals, and Riots: Public Space, Contestation, and Transformation in Northern Ireland.” *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology, Managing Diversity*, 21, no. 4 (November 2015): 565–73, p. 571

<sup>758</sup> Gibson, James Jerome, Edward S. Reed, and Rebecca Jones. *Reasons for Realism: Selected Essays of James J. Gibson*. L. Erlbaum, 1982, p. 407

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## Annex: Comparative Research Findings Tables

The following tables present the comparative analysis of the three main themes identified throughout the field research in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels.

### Theme 1: Contextualising Shared Public Spaces in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels

Current Context in the Cities		
Jerusalem	Belfast	Brussels
Tensions have recently increased Very volatile situation People are often actively avoiding shared spaces Shared Spaces have become places of intergroup violence City is segregated Inequality between groups	Decrease in violence and general improvement since Peace Process Sectarian attitudes remain City still very much segregated (peace walls) Superficial change Imperfect peace	No intergroup violence in recent decades Increasing institutional division and segregation Both communities becoming minorities in very mixed city Institutional organisation around 'soft apartheid' Strong communitarian logic of separation
<b>Ongoing conflict with no intergroup agreement</b>	<b>Post-conflict with GFA Conflict management rather than transformation</b>	<b>Non-violent conflict Political compromises</b>

Views on the Future of the Cities		
Jerusalem	Belfast	Brussels
Mostly pessimism Optimism but not in near future More violence is unavoidable As long as situation stays the same there won't be any improvements	A lot of disappointment A lot of cynicism Fear of acceptance of benign segregation as good enough Still no shared society But also hope with 'green shoots' developing	Mostly optimism Relations have improved But institutional separation is making interaction very rare Linguistic conflict is becoming a thing of the past More efforts to live together
<b>Mostly pessimistic overview</b>	<b>Mostly disappointed overview</b>	<b>Mostly optimistic overview</b>

<b>Locating the Selected Shared Spaces in the Cities</b>			
	<b>Jerusalem</b>	<b>Belfast</b>	<b>Brussels</b>
<b>Shared Space 1</b>	Jaffa Gate Square	Victoria Square Area	Dansaert Area Square
<i>Type of space</i>	Open public square	Open commercial structure	Open public square
<i>Location</i>	Old City Entrance (Green Line)	City centre – East	City centre – North-West
<i>Planner</i>	Jerusalem Municipality – local authority	Belfast Regeneration Programme (public sector organisations including Belfast City Council and EU) – local, regional and international authorities	Brussels Region and Brussels communes – local authorities
<i>Year</i>	2010	2008	1989- early 1990s
<i>Purpose</i>	Restoration and regeneration of space	Inclusive and accessible commercial shared space	Regeneration and gentrification of space
<b>Shared Space 2</b>	Teddy Park	City Hall Gardens	Brussels Royal Park
<i>Type of space</i>	Public park	Public park	Public park
<i>Location</i>	Near Old City (Green Line)	City centre – centre	City centre – centre
<i>Planner</i>	Jerusalem Foundation – non-profit organisation	Local authority before conflict	Royal authority before conflict
<i>Year</i>	2013	1906	1780
<i>Purpose</i>	Space of peaceful coexistence	Creation of green public space	Creation of green public space
<b>Shared Space 3</b>	Mamilla Mall	CastleCourt Shopping Centre	City2 Shopping Centre
<i>Type of space</i>	Open air shopping centre	Shopping centre	Shopping centre
<i>Location</i>	Near Old City (Green Line)	City centre – West	City centre – North-West
<i>Planner</i>	Jerusalem Municipality – local authority	Belfast urban area plan – governmental authority	Société des Centres Commerciaux and Agglomération of Brussels – local authority
<i>Year</i>	2007	1987	1978
<i>Purpose</i>	Space of commercial coexistence	Neutral non-sectarian commercial space	Shopping and leisure centre in city centre

## Theme 2: Describing Daily Life and Intergroup Relations in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels

Demographics and Routines in the Spaces		
Jerusalem	Belfast	Brussels
Variations in the three shared spaces but generally mixed	Small variations in the three shared spaces but generally mixed	Variations in the three shared spaces but generally mixed
Jaffa Gate Square	Victoria Square	Dansaert Square
Separate use of the space Not much interaction	Anonymous space Not much interaction	Very mixed small space Interaction occurs
Teddy Park	City Hall Park	Royal Park
Sharing of the park Mixing in the fountains A little interaction	Sharing of the park Mixing at activities Interaction occurs	Fairly mixed space Sharing of the park Interaction occurs
Mamilla Mall	CastleCourt Shopping Centre	City2 Shopping Centre
Very mixed space Interaction occurs Mostly middle/upper class	Fairly mixed space Mostly working class Not much interaction	Fairly mixed space A little interaction Rather middle class

Special Events in and around the Spaces		
Jerusalem	Belfast	Brussels
Jerusalem Day	Saint Patrick's Day	Gordelfestival
Organised by municipality and nationalist organisations Very exclusive event Spaces become unshared Tensions and violence	Organised by groups, organisations (flag protest) Exclusive events Spaces are shared but not peacefully Tensions and violence	Organised by elite level and organisations Exclusive event Spaces become unshared Tense and uncomfortable atmosphere but no violence
Jerusalem Light Festival	Saint Patrick's Day Parade	Zinneke Parade
Organised by municipality and organisations Inclusive event Relaxed and festive atmosphere	Organised by Council and grass-roots Inclusive event Relaxed and festive atmosphere	Organised by grass-roots, not elite level Inclusive event Relaxed and festive atmosphere
	Leap Into Easter	Belgian National Day
	Organised by City Hall and Council Inclusive event Relaxed and festive atmosphere	Organised by the state and municipality Inclusive event Relaxed and festive atmosphere

<b>Interaction and Levels of Intergroup Contact in the Spaces</b>		
<b>Jerusalem</b>	<b>Belfast</b>	<b>Brussels</b>
Mostly limited observed interaction Sometimes violent	Mostly limited observed interaction Sometimes tense	Mostly limited observed interaction Mostly peaceful
More interaction in the past Anti-normalisation influence Very limited interaction Forced, unwanted interaction Unequal interaction High degree of violence	Improved relations But still segregation Limited interaction due to walls Interaction limited to controlled settings Small degree of violence	Improved relations But limited interaction Daily life remains divided Only occasional collaborations Dynamic of drifting apart Total absence of violence
<b>Limited and negative</b>	<b>Improving but still limited</b>	<b>Increasingly limited</b>

### Theme 3: Assessing the Interpretation of Shared Public Spaces in Jerusalem, Belfast and Brussels

<b>Perceptions of Shared Space in the Cities</b>		
<b>Jerusalem</b>	<b>Belfast</b>	<b>Brussels</b>
<i>Wider Definitions of Shared Space</i>		
Public space Open space Space of encounter Doesn't necessarily include interaction Parallel use of space Neutral space	Vague term Not a neutral space Neutral space Neither theirs nor ours	Living together on a same territory Doesn't necessarily include interaction Co-using rather than sharing Public space
<b>Public space</b>	<b>Neutral space</b>	<b>Public space</b>
<i>More Detailed Definitions of Shared Space</i>		
Integrated space Space used equally Safe Space Choice of going to space	WAGS Continuum of shared spaces Psychological, not only physical Where people can come as themselves	Choice of going to space Welcoming space Safe space More than a public space Necessary interaction
<b>Safety, equality and choice</b>	<b>Continuum</b>	<b>Safety and choice</b>

<b>Situating Shared Public Spaces within the Cities</b>		
<b>Jerusalem</b>	<b>Belfast</b>	<b>Brussels</b>
Mamilla mall Old City Universities, Hospitals Parks Streets Transport	City Hall City Centre Parks Community centres Universities, Hospitals	Brussels itself is a shared space Shared activity groups Public spaces
<b>A few rare places</b>	<b>Central and public places</b>	<b>Nearly every place</b>

<b>The Role of Shared Public Spaces in the Cities</b>		
<b>Jerusalem</b>	<b>Belfast</b>	<b>Brussels</b>
<i>Positive Role of Shared Public Spaces</i>		
Not huge importance but can't hurt Interaction needs to be an option Makes people familiar with the other	Some events can be transformative Important for people to come across each other Creates a shared experience	Can lead to realising that there are similar sensibilities Can bring people together Necessary for healthy society
<b>Mere exposure can't hurt</b>	<b>Mere exposure can't hurt</b>	<b>Mere exposure important</b>
<i>Negative or Non-Existent Role of Shared Public Spaces</i>		
Less and less shared No positive impact today Marginal if not negative impact Shared space on unequal basis Very limited impact Won't change the situation	What is done in the space is more important than the space itself Limited shared experiences in the city centre Limited success Superficial impact Not enough, need meaningful conversations Separate use of spaces Pacified and nullified rather than truly shared Just calling a space shared doesn't make it so	Limited impact Not necessarily leading to meaningful interaction Depends on kind of shared space and what happens Sharing space separately Not symmetrical sharing
<b>Can hurt in violent contexts</b>	<b>Context is crucial</b>	<b>Limited role</b>