A DEBATE ON THE TOP-DOWN APPROACH TO ARCHITECTURAL INTERVENTIONS IN CONFLICTED HISTORIC CITIES: JERUSALEM'S MUSEUM OF TOLERANCE

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The focus of this paper is the extravagant architectural works designed and built in conflicted historic cities, where continuity with the physical environment and social and political realities is critical. The paper will discuss the decision-making process at both the planning and urban-design level and the architectural-design level. For this purpose, the paper will critically evaluate an attempt to intervene architecturally in the conflict zone of the historic walled city of Jerusalem, focusing on Frank Gehry's design proposal for the Museum of Tolerance Jerusalem (MOTJ) and the contradictory symbolic meanings this kind of architecture creates in relation to conflict. The MOTJ project, which has followed a top-down decision-making process since its conception and whose goal is to contribute to peace in Jerusalem, is a helpful example for understanding the relationship between the trilogy of conflict, historic cities, and architectural intervention. The paper concludes that architectural interventions can successfully contribute to conflicted historic sites figuratively and literally only if they are truthful to the empirical reality of the context and based on real and common grounds recognized by all parties involved throughout the process.

INTRODUCTION

In addition to many other sociopolitical and economic definitions, "cities are places distinguished by some kind of monumental definition, that is, where the fabric is more than a blanket of residences" (Kostof, 1991:39). Public buildings and the spaces around them, which are products of architecture and urban design, give a city its scale and identity. Architecture and urban design, following urban-planning policies, shape cities as places made up of buildings, spaces, and citizens. As Vance (cited in Kostof, 1991:41) stated, "The most enduring feature of the city is its physical build, which remains with remarkable persistence, gaining increments that are responsive to the most recent economic demand and reflective of the latest stylistic vogue, but conserving evidence of past urban culture for present and future generations." Thus, any architectural decision or project based on political ideology or merely physical intervention affects the urban context not only physically but also economically, socially, and culturally.

Architecture in unique environments, such as historic or conflicted cities, has a special importance, as it can be a strong tool for promoting peace. The ways in which architectural interventions in conflicted historic cities relate to conflict is the basis of the discussion here. As Lefebvre (1991) argued, for ideas to have meaning, they must have space. Thus, various approaches to any architectural/urban intervention decisions in historic environments or conflict zones should be evaluated carefully, considering the values, realities, and needs of the areas concerned.

The present study argues that unique and valuable historic environments associated with conflict may become a target for extravagant architectural contributions through top-down decision-making processes affected by geopolitical concerns. However, such attempts should be critically questioned for their approach to the issue of conflict. In the debate on top-down approaches to architectural interventions in conflicted historic cities, the question par excellence is "can contrasting architectural and aesthetic interventions offer meaningful contributions to the resolution of conflict in historic cities by supporting a discourse related to tolerance and sustainable peace?"

With this question in mind, this paper discusses extravagant architectural works in the conflict zones of historic cities, where continuity with the physical environment and social and political realities is critical. The paper will discuss the decision-making process at both the planning and urban-design level and the architectural-design level. For this purpose, the paper will critically evaluate an attempt to intervene architecturally in the conflict zone of the historic walled city of Jerusalem, focusing on Frank Gehry's design proposal for the Museum of Tolerance Jerusalem (MOTJ). The main reason for selecting this case study is that the city of Jerusalem represents a unique context for a historic city experiencing ongoing conflict. The project's original architect, Frank Gehry, is one of the most well-known and well-documented architects in the world, with a number of extravagant architectural works in different parts of the world, some of which have been questioned regarding their contrasting contribution to the historic environments in which they are located. This paper will discuss the meanings that extravagant architecture invokes in relation to conflict in historic cities in terms of both why and how such works are designed.

Thus, the MOTJ case study will be analyzed based on three criteria: first, whether it is a meaningful architectural representation considering the reality of its context (as an approach to intervening in conflicted historic cities); second, whether it exhibits ontological continuity with the political reality (as a contribution to resolving conflict); and third, whether it exhibits formal continuity with the existing environment (as new interventions in the historic city juxtapose the old and the new).

This paper is composed of five main sections. Following the introduction, a debate on architectural interventions in conflicted historic cities is presented based on a thorough literature review. Next, the paper will turn its focus to the case study, beginning with an introduction to the effects of conflict on the historic city of Jerusalem. Then, it will proceed with a critical evaluation of the MOTJ

as an example of a top-down approach to architectural intervention in a conflicted historic city with the intention of transforming and resolving conflict. To conclude, the paper will argue that any architectural intervention in a conflicted historic city should be based on a bottom-up approach through strategic urban planning and design, in which all parties involved are recognized and there is a truthful relation to the political realities that created the conflict. The architectural design process that follows in such unique sites should also grasp the realities of the conflicted historic city.

THE TRILOGY OF CONFLICT, HISTORIC CITIES, AND ARCHITECTURAL INTERVENTION: A HYPOTHESIS

Throughout history, architecture and cities have been both the targets and the subjects of political conflict. The relationship between politics and architecture has been the focus of many academic studies. Weizman (2007:5) spoke of architecture in the Israeli-occupied territories "as a kind of political plastic" and "politics in matter." Similarly, Bevan (2006:133) explored the "physicality of politics" by emphasizing the negative effects of conflict on the built environment. Political conflict and the built environment have an interactive relationship in which the ways "people produce, understand, and inhabit spaces and places" are affected both during and after the conflict (Piquard and Swenarton, 2011:2). The relationship between politics and architecture becomes even more complicated when one considers architectural interventions in conflicted historic cities. When looking at historic areas in general, one must consider their special values (scarcity, cultural identity, resource, aesthetic, social and psychological, political, environmental, and/or educational), as well as their level of obsolescence and the development dynamics they possess (Doratli, *et al.*, 2007). However, when historic cities are associated with conflict, the issue becomes more disputed and requires a more careful approach.

The effects of conflict can occur on large scales, such as changes in land use, formulation of new military zones, or changes to the social functions of places. For example, a building or place's use may change from a religious function to a public use: a mosque becomes a guesthouse, or a cemetery becomes a museum. Populations are expected to wrestle with these changes and reinscribe social meanings to these places. However, the loss of land, houses, historic environments, and social meanings can lead to radical disruptions in the community (Piquard and Swenarton, 2011).

According to Piquard and Swenarton (2011:2), "Conflict is often presented as an 'event' that interrupts and disrupts 'normality.' But … it is better understood as a transformative process by which opposing ideas and visions are voiced and root causes of major social problems, inequalities and injustices are challenged." Explorations of the effects of conflict on historic cities have mostly focused on the destruction of invaluable historic architecture by warfare, where "the systematic destruction of buildings or building traditions has been a means of erasing altogether the memories of a community and its presence from a specific location" (Piquard and Swenarton, 2011:6). The destruction of historic buildings and important cultural sites can also be related to issues of selective conservation and genocide (*ibid.*). However, the negative effects of conflict on historic cities are not limited to the destruction of important historic architecture, the creation of empty or abandoned areas, or selective-conservation issues. Reconstruction of both buildings and communities after conflict is an issue that still needs to be explored, and few studies have looked at how architectural interventions can be used to help resolve conflict and heal communities.

Conflict, mostly seen as a destructive force with regard to the built environment, can at the same time play an essential role in the development of architecture, for instance, in prompting the construction of war-related buildings and defensive fortifications, which form an important part of the architectural heritage of communities today (Piquard and Swenarton, 2011). It can also trigger proposals for after-conflict development that may help to restore "normality," such as museums and interactive spaces. In some cases, the "[r]ewriting [of] history through design and architectur-

al narrative [forms] an intrinsic part of the conflict" (*ibid.*:6). This paper argues that working on architecture and space alone cannot improve or transform the negative effects of conflict, yet understanding the spatial dimension of conflict is crucial if the eventual aim is to sustain peace through a truthful response to conflict. Unfortunately, the spatial dimension of conflict is often overlooked by activists and architects working in conflict and post-conflict areas (Piquard and Swenarton, 2011). Architectural interventions can help to not only protect the built heritage in historic environments but also support the move toward a sustainable peace after conflict with a "truthful" response to the status quo. However, to achieve this, a comprehensive approach to the geopolitical reality of the context is necessary.

A "top-down" understanding of intervention, in which the desires of architects, planners, and designers are placed above those of the community and the architecture of the built environment is considered separately from the place, cannot transform conflict. This paper argues that architectural interventions in conflicted historic cities can offer meaningful contributions to conflict only if they are based on the political realities of the context that are recognized by all of those affected by the conflict. This requires the use of a strategic planning and urban-design approach[1] before any decisions are made regarding architectural interventions, as well as a better understanding of the realities of the conflict during the architectural design process.

CONFLICT AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE HISTORIC CITY OF JERUSALEM

The current conflict over Jerusalem dates back to the 1948 war in which Israel declared its statehood. Consequently, Jerusalem was divided into two parts — East Jerusalem, held by Jordan, and West Jerusalem, under the control of Israel — which led to the displacement of many residents. The Old City of Jerusalem became the dividing line between the two states, which were separated with barbed wire, minefields, and military posts following what became known as the "Green Line." Following the Six-Day War in 1967, Israeli forces recaptured East Jerusalem and declared the city, "complete and united," its capital.[2] Arab citizens in this part of the city were granted the status of "permanent citizens," which does not make them equal to other non-Arab citizens in Jerusalem. The Old City of Jerusalem remains an area of conflict, and the Arab and Jewish communities in Jerusalem lead largely separate existences. War and territorial partitioning have had a significant impact on the historic environment of Jerusalem, a negative effect on tourism, and other financial and social impacts.

Bruce and Creighton (2006) noted that the symbolic value of the city walls became the target of political opportunism; for instance, after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, David Ben-Gurion, former Israeli prime minister (1948-1963), advocated dismantling the city walls.[3] There are numerous examples of "selective conservation" in Jerusalem, such as the preservation of David's Tower and the defensive walls in Jerusalem's Jewish Quarter. However, particularly in the last two decades, numerous attempts have been made to transform existing historic structures in the city by incorporating contemporary elements (Kliot and Mansfeld, 1999).

Jerusalem possesses exceptional historical meanings and resources. The Old City of Jerusalem and its walls were nominated as a World Heritage Site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1981, which emphasized the importance of the historical architecture of the walled city. However, the area was nominated on condition that a more effective "buffer zone" would be established for the city in order to preserve the integrity of the built environment. In 1982, UNESCO added the city to its "World Heritage in Danger" list, a status that was most recently confirmed in 2015 (UNESCO, 2015).

One could argue that, in Jerusalem, conflict and a lack of awareness have significantly impacted the city's historic resources. There have been attempts to "popularize" the walled city, rather than to revitalize it, for the sake of attracting tourists, and these efforts have primarily focused on economic

gain. Architecture with extravagant aesthetics has become one of the most popular and (often) easiest ways to accomplish this objective. Accordingly, following its main aim and objectives, this paper turns next to an analysis of Gehry's MOTJ project proposal as a conceptual example of such architecture in Jerusalem, where political conflict is still an everyday issue at all levels.

CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURAL INTERVENTION IN THE CONFLICTED HISTORIC CITY OF JERUSALEM: THE MOTJ PROJECT

A Brief Description of the MOTJ Project

The MOTJ project addresses the social and political issues associated with the context in Jerusalem and adopts a figurative and rhetorical approach to conflict by challenging architecture's role to represent the unrepresentable. However, it does not employ an instrumental or direct relationship to architecture and politics; rather, it disregards conflict. As an urban artifact, it articulates a nonexistent discourse of peace, tolerance, and coexistence. Such works of architecture act as particular and subjective interpretations of a given conflict, using architectural representation to articulate selective meaning. As this intervention project in Jerusalem is a conceptual proposal and has not yet been implemented,[4] there is no built work to critique. Therefore, the authors utilized the following methods to assess the proposal:

(1) observing the building proposed by Gehry in relation to its surroundings using maps, figures, and illustrations of the project provided on the architect's official website;

(2) visiting the site in person and establishing how the proposed building would be inserted to assess its physical relationship with the existing built environment; and

(3) collecting documents through various interviews and/or declarations related to how the architect thought about or intended to contribute to the conflicted site in question.

Frank Gehry grew up in Canada, the son of Polish Jews. In 2006, he was invited to design the MOTJ by the Los Angeles-based Simon Wiesenthal Center (SWC). The project was planned as an extension of the MOT in Los Angeles, which is an institutional museum "dedicated to challenging visitors to understand the Holocaust in both historic and contemporary contexts and confront all forms of prejudice and discrimination in our world today" (SWC, 2014). Samuel G. Freedman (2004) argued that the museum is part of a "new generation of cultural institutions that have emerged over the past decade that — rather than displaying wondrous objects, as was the traditional function of a museum — seek to inculcate values."

The site proposed for the MOTJ is located just to the west of the Old City of Jerusalem in an area that includes an old Muslim cemetery (M'amman Allah or Mamilla),[5] close to the line dividing the Arab and Israeli inhabitants of the city (Figure 1) (Khalidi, 2009). Its location in relation to the cemetery has been a source of great political and legal dispute during the project's development (Shamir, 2011).

Gehry's 230,000 ft.^{2} (21,367 m^2) proposed museum building is a five-story, semicircular complex. It features numerous facilities, including a rectilinear, limestone-clad educational center; transparent glass theaters; and a blue-ribbon-like conference center covered by Gehry's infamous titanium. These facilities have a direct visual view to the circular centerpiece of the building, christened the Grand Hall, which is covered with glass. The circular hall, designed to represent the "living room" of Jerusalem, is accessible from entry doors all along its circumference, thereby allowing visual and physical connection in every direction (Makdisi, 2010:543). The hall is surrounded and supported by 16 titanium "Pillars of Tolerance" inscribed with the names of donors (*ibid.*). As Gehry described it, "I was trying to make a building that had body language. [Because all of the other structures on the site face the Grand Hall,] families and children are constantly in view, in your face, so that you never escape from the issue of what this place is all about" (Freedman, 2004).

Critical Evaluation of the MOTJ Project

The rising phenomenon of architecture that replicates the appearances and images of the architect(s) behind it has become the subject of much criticism. Signature buildings can become a singular tool for promoting cities, disregarding existing landmarks and cultural objects in the process and committing significant amounts of resources to a single project (Riza and Doratli, 2015). Issues related to harmony and the juxtaposition of the old and the new (*i.e.*, the consideration of context) are also associated with this phenomenon. Although these kinds of projects often attempt to regenerate underused urban assets, they can also overwhelm the existing character of the places where they are located (*ibid.*).

The critique presented in this paper is limited to architectural interventions in conflicted historic cities. Gehry's MOTJ proposal is an attempt to introduce a contemporary intervention in close proximity to the historic walled city. Gehry is known internationally by his signature buildings, whose architecture is indifferent to politics, which may prevent them from needing to be contextually relevant or responsible. However, Jerusalem is associated with conflict. Therefore, the case of the MOTJ project will be discussed not only as an architectural intervention in a historic site but also based on its symbolic stance in relation to the context of the local conflict.
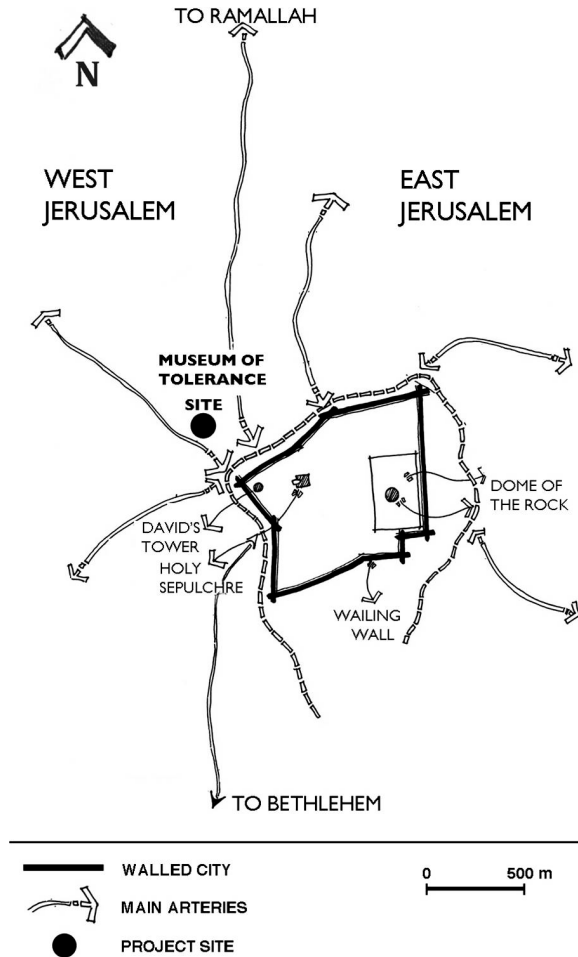

FIGURE 1. An amended map of Jerusalem indicating the site of the MOTJ.

There are many reasons to question the extent to which the MOTJ project addresses the multiple contexts of the site in which it is located and whether the aesthetic qualities of Gehry's design articulate an attitude toward harmony with the historic built environment. For instance, one could say that the alien appearance of the structure contrasts with the historic texture (shapes and materials) of the city, that it does not address preexisting relationships to urban texture (forms), or that it is not in harmony with the heights and proportions of the immediate surroundings. The striking differences between the appearance of Gehry's design and the existing environment stem from the design's technological aesthetics and architectural forms, which are not familiar to the setting. However, the location of the project has led to it becoming the dominant symbol of the area, and the project is mostly contested on this basis.

The MOTJ is to be constructed in very close proximity to historic structures and the Old City, and Gehry's building does not fit organically or exhibit continuity in terms of appearance, forms, or materials with the surrounding buildings, which were built during the period of rural expansion

outside the Old City in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The white stone that covers the facades of most of the surrounding buildings sharply contrasts with the disjointed titanium elements that swirl and twist in every direction in Gehry's proposal for the MOTJ. The spaces are arranged to overlook the central Grand Hall and exhibit limited relation to, reference to, or continuity with the rest of the area's immediate surroundings. When joined together, the five-story building mass creates a sculptural effect in the midst of Independence Park.

When construction began, human remains from the historic Mamilla cemetery were uncovered at the site, leading to demonstrations by Palestinians and some Israeli activists against the proposal and a call for an alternative location for the museum to be identified. These concerns were presented to the Israeli Supreme Court, which stated that the site had served as a parking lot, road, and part of Independence Park and thus could be developed as a museum (Khalidi, 2009). Scholars, cultural figures, religious leaders, and a group of architects opposed the museum on the grounds that it was "a blow to peaceful coexistence" (Architects and Planners for Justice in Palestine, 2008) in the city due to its location. Meron Benvenisti, the former deputy mayor of Jerusalem, called the building "so hallucinatory, so irrelevant, so foreign, so megalomaniac" (Freedman, 2004), and many Orthodox Jews found it disturbing to locate a museum dedicated to tolerance on a site where Muslims had buried their dead for hundreds of years (Architects and Planners for Justice in Palestine, 2008).

Although the proposed site for the MOTJ is situated in a historic area of Jerusalem very close to the historically significant city walls, Gehry's building design creates the same "shocking" effect as his other works outside Jerusalem in non-historic cities. The choice of color and materials, such as the blue-ribbon forms and shiny titanium, are not familiar to the city image of Jerusalem and are not suitable to the local climate. If such a material is used to reflect the river in Bilbao, how can it be justified in Jerusalem's sunny summers? To passersby, the building would be more reminiscent of Bilbao's Guggenheim or the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles than of Jerusalem. This mirrors criticism of Gehry's general approach, namely that he "lifts a site out of its immediate context and ties it to the global network of other high profile Gehry sites" (Makdisi, 2010:541). The building's reference to a global network of sites is not the only criticism of Gehry's style in this case; for instance, he chose not to utilize stone in Jerusalem's unique context and to use curved lines, that is, "the non-Euclidean curves, swirls and blobs that became [Gehry's] signature gestures in the 1990s," as Foster (2001) asserted. The extravagant aesthetics of the project and its form, size, materials, and colors shift attention from the monumentality of the historic city and compete with those of existing historic structures. The use of Jerusalem stone on a small portion of the facade does not provide a strong relationship with the nearby structures because it is interpreted within the context of Jerusalem merely as a mechanically cut stone to use as cladding. Moreover, the use of this stone appears even weaker and more arbitrary when viewed against Gehry's dramatic forms.

Disagreement related to the physical appearance of a building can be attributed to different viewpoints, and a wide range of potential criticisms can be made of most works. Nonetheless, aesthetic works should transcend their status as icons. It is also reasonable to assume that they may contrast with their surroundings. Therefore, the irregular appearance of Gehry's MOTJ design and the fact that it is not completely covered in stone are not the primary critiques of Gehry's building. The argument presented here is that the design in Gehry's proposal adopts an approach to its setting — in this case, the conflict and the historic city — using an aesthetic that does not consider the context or the conflict in the city. Buildings and architecture in general not only function to garner attention but are also meant to improve the surroundings by addressing the social, cultural, and political issues imbedded in their context. Therefore, this paper extends the critique of the building's aesthetics in relation to its stated aim of promoting tolerance and resolving the conflict that characterizes its local context. Although there is literature discussing the relationship between peace negotiations and the physical environment (Seidel, 1978), in this case, the project is located at a highly conflicted site, where the nature of the conflict between Jews and Arabs is played out

on a daily basis; thus, the approach taken in Gehry's proposal is unlikely to be successful in its very claim of tolerance and peace building. The ongoing nature of the conflict makes any symbolization of tolerance or peace irrelevant. It is worth noting that there are some internationally known examples of architectural interventions in political spaces that commemorate political acts after settlements have been reached, such as the Jewish Museum in Berlin designed by Daniel Libeskind. Libeskind's project is dedicated to Germany's Jewish community as an attempt to reform the broken relationship between the German and Jewish cultures after World War I (Matatyaou, 2008). The main difference between Libeskind's project and the process followed for the MOTJ is that Berlin had reached a time when it was ready to discuss and address the anti-Semitism that had plagued its past. It would not have been right for the perception of the memory to be determined by Libeskind only or imposed by him through his selective reading. There was a demand for such articulation to be crafted, and Libeskind's design rose to the high standards of the competition conducted for the project, which demanded such architecture.

However, in Jerusalem, the conflict is ongoing, and the political power of the parties involved does not seem anywhere close to equal; these circumstances make it difficult to see how any museum of tolerance would be a success story. The MOTJ project displays an ignorance of reality through its naive interpretation of the status quo. As mentioned before, the site chosen for the MOTJ is not at all a neutral ground (being a Muslim cemetery) and is a sacred space for one of the parties involved. This fact alone sabotages any kind of positive dialogue between the sides.

Moreover, the "living room" concept of Gehry's transparent Grand Hall is intended to allow 360 degrees of access as envisioned by the architect; however, in reality, it cannot function as intended because some directions are restricted to Arabs due to the erection of a wall dividing Jerusalem from the West Bank.[6] In addition, the symbolic meanings that Gehry attributes to the 16 pillars are a naive metaphor for tolerance between Arabs and Israelis, as they only carry the names of donors to the project. Although the MOTJ is being constructed under the guise of tolerance, there is no active show of tolerance in Gehry's proposed space. Most of the planned exhibition areas await contributions from different artists around selected themes and from different time periods. This problem illustrates Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe's (2010:600) response to Saree Makdisi's criticism of Gehry's plan,[7] "that in occupied Palestine everything is loaded, that it will inevitably be read in terms of the problem of colonialism, but one cannot build things with nothing." The building does not gain significance in Gehry's incarnation because it does not realize the problem of building in a conflicted area, where everything can become politicized. By ignoring the de facto political conflict and any meaning that is recognizable and common to both communities, the building's contribution to discourses of tolerance and multiculturalism is undermined, in spite of the museum's stated mission to

> promote civility, mutual respect, and democratic practices among the diverse peoples of the Middle East ... to bridge divisions and strengthen relationships between neighbors and among faith communities ... [to serve as] a clearinghouse for innovative ideas and [a] nerve center for creative public exchange ... [to] cultivate and promote the values, visions, and voices of the region's multicultural, multi-faith, multi-generational population [and to] champion equal opportunity and human rights ... .
> (Israeli, et al., 2010:591)

The building gains value because it was designed by Gehry and bears his impressive forms, but it does not represent the conflict and tolerance among inhabitants of Jerusalem. For instance, the spaces in the proposed building are configured to turn inward, away from the street and the public, allowing no visual connection between the building and its surroundings. Thus, the building does not invite people from 360 degrees, as claimed by Gehry. Moreover, the Grand Hall is oriented toward the park, where the flow of pedestrians is less frequent. The interior of the Grand Hall is also left empty, with no designated activity; although it is surrounded by the Pillars of Tolerance, it leaves the spaces without objective referents of meaning. Though the Grand Hall is given significance with its architectural features and construction techniques, when it is left empty, it provides

little structure for visitors to reflect on the meaning of the museum and the lack of multicultural tolerance in Jerusalem.

In a more critical reading of the spaces in Gehry's proposal for the MOTJ, the museum section itself (the educational center) occupies the smallest portion of the project area. The corridor-like space is narrow in comparison with its height. Although it is located on the facade facing the street, the service areas are left to overlook the main street instead. From the inside, the organizational plan gives central weight to a conference room rather than to the Grand Hall or museum. This part of the building is the most exaggerated in terms of form and color (being covered in a titanium skin resembling a blue ribbon), but the same form is also used to emphasize the cafeteria. This repetition puts the cafeteria, which should have a subsidiary function, into a primary position. These decisions make the aesthetic and spatial choices relating the project's content to tolerance appear arbitrary. The museum's center of gravity can no longer be defined as receptive or as materializing symbolic meaning and experience. Similar decisions were made considering the location of the gift shop, which is placed at the intersection of two major streets, giving it a higher value than the museum space. These examples show that Gehry does not impose meaning or symbolic representation through space, form, and order, thereby diminishing the horizon of understanding essential to reconciliation and tolerance. As a result, the museum does not achieve a critical distance from the popular culture, as the theoretical principles guiding the geometric configurations it deploys make repeated and explicit references to obsession with forms, which leads to arbitrary configurations of spaces and functions.

At the same time, the building's importance for the cause of tolerance is further undermined by the museum's role in an urban-renewal project between the city's old and new parts. The master plan that includes the MOTJ was designed to develop the city center into a cultural and spiritual area with commercial attractions for locals and visitors. This attempt to regenerate the city center, including the development of the MOTJ, will have a special significance, as claimed by the Israeli Supreme Court in its ruling on the museum's proposed site, returning "life and excitement to the streets of the city centre, not only in the fields of commerce and business, but also in the fields of culture, entertainment, tourism and housing" (Israeli, *et al.*, 2010:568).[8] Therefore, if the MOTJ is considered part of a broader vision for the city's regeneration and adds an entertainment function to the existing commercial core of the city, then the museum appears to be a mere insertion of a sculptural architectural work into the existing urban fabric. This occurs because the museum has an iconic meaning due to not only what it adds to the city center but also the entire conflict that defines the area. Therefore, a museum of tolerance could help transcend multinational and cultural differences, with architecture acting as a tool to facilitate this goal, but such a museum should not be simply a form of cultural entertainment or an alternative to the commercial core; it must address the conflict that defines Jerusalem. The lack of an ontological framework and the fact that the building's importance results from its aesthetic appearance make the museum vulnerable to criticism. Gehry's MOTJ is not the Guggenheim or a place to exhibit modern art. Being an extension of the original Los Angeles MOT, the MOTJ cannot be expected to have the same appearance and carry a similar symbolic importance and discourse in Jerusalem. Although Los Angeles may also lack common ground among the multicultural and multinational ethnicities in the city (Davis, 1990),[9] this diversity does not ignite conflicts to the same extent that they occur in Jerusalem. Therefore, the museum in Jerusalem should adopt a different appearance and discourse to address the local context of conflict.

Gehry's proposal can be criticized for more than its approach to the local context. After all, some have defended Gehry's proposal and its interaction with the existing environment. For instance, Israeli, *et al.* (2010:568) claimed that "Gehry's design is sculptural in nature, integrating various geometric forms and complex spaces … each a separate building in its own right — integrated into a harmonious whole. … Gehry's design incorporates Jerusalem stone and other traditional materials that tie it to its site and nearby structures." However, it should be emphasized here that determining what is harmonious is subjective, as it must be judged against what occurs at a

specific site at the same time. Those who defend Gehry's approach to the location state that the SWC proposed several innovative methods for resolving the issues related to the burial site, such as removing the remains and relocating them to a new site; removing a portion of the museum that would interfere with the cemetery; or creating a suspended floor, which would eliminate the need to excavate the area where the graves were located. Human remains are buried 3.3-6.6 ft. (1-2 m) below the ground, and building a horizontal slab would make the building technically float. Regardless, the building would need to connect to the ground to connect with the infrastructure and structural support system.

It is important to state that, although the MOTJ is used here as a case study to explore architectural interventions in conflicted historic cities, every context (and conflict) is different. Thus, every work of architecture needs to be evaluated on an independent basis. What makes the MOTJ an important case is that it was intentionally designed to address conflict from the beginning of the design stage, right next to Jerusalem's historic city walls, as part of a top-down approach. Here, it is argued that the main problem is not just the building proposal itself, but the approach. As Lefebvre (1991) argued, critical human acts typically need to occur before symbolic spaces are created. However, presently, Muslim Palestinians and Jewish Israelis have too much political animosity and conflict to work together, so there is no "bottom-up" reality or civil initiative supporting this kind of peace formation or project.

Paving the Way to Success

In this paper, the discussion of architectural interventions in conflicted historic cities is based on the decision-making process at both the planning and urban-design level and the architectural-design level. The main argument of this paper is not just how to "fit" contemporary interventions into historic architectural environments. Instead, the main argument revolves around understanding the relationship between the trilogy of conflict, historic cities, and architectural intervention. Architectural space can be a strong tool if it is created within a context pledged to the empirical world, ethically incorporating all of the parties involved. With this goal in mind, all of the processes involved in its creation should be considered.

For this purpose, the paper critically evaluated the MOTJ project in relation to the conflicted context of Jerusalem, arguing that, like any intervention of its kind in a conflicted historic city, the MOTJ project was bound to be unsuccessful due to the approach taken. The whole process of the project disregarded the conflicted nature of the historic city, the product of a top-down approach that ignored the reality of the context. The project never achieved a critical relation that truthfully represented all of the people living in Jerusalem, nor did it architecturally create a birth site for peace in general. The site chosen for the project is conflicted; the architect chosen for the project is conflicted; and furthermore, the approach — the whole process — is conflicted. On the one hand, for Arabs in the area, the ideas occupying the space do not symbolize peace. On the other hand, Jews in the city do not trust Arabs. These circumstances, where a neutral ground has not been established, make a successful intervention very difficult to achieve.

Although the nature of their conflicts may differ from the conflict in Jerusalem, lessons regarding architectural interventions in the historic fabric may be learned from the experiences of a number of historic cities that have been or are still in conflict or affected by the negative effects of it, such as Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina; Belfast, Ireland; Dubrovnik, Croatia; and Nicosia, Cyprus. For example, in Nicosia, where division is still visible, with barbed-wire barriers and a buffer zone right at the center of the historic city, a different approach has been taken. First, in 1979, through a civil initiative, representatives of the two communities in Nicosia (Greek and Turkish Cypriots) agreed that "there should be close co-operation between the two sides for the purpose of examining and finally reaching conclusions for a master plan of Nicosia" (UNDP, 2012). Accordingly, a bicommunal project was carried out to achieve the Nicosia Master Plan. The bicommunal project was placed under the umbrella of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the plan aims to

rehabilitate the historic city center to create comprehensive cultural and social continuity through-out both parts of the divided city. Any intervention regarding the historic city has to be considered via the master plan for both sides of the city. Here, where ongoing conflict continues to dominate the city, an inclusive and participatory approach has provided an opportunity for reducing the negative effects of the conflict.

As a more "bottom-up" approach, in 2005, two years after the opening of borders by both sides in Nicosia, the idea of establishing a shared space in the buffer zone was raised by a civil initiative, the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research (AHDR).[10] In 2007, the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus granted support for this unprecedented civil-led effort to transform the buffer zone. The project, named "Home for Cooperation," was designed by a team of designers from both ethnic backgrounds (Turkish and Greek Cypriots). In 2011, the Home for Cooperation opened its doors to the public as the first-ever shared space for Cypriots from all over the island. It houses a multifunctional research and education center; a center for young people, educators, historians, and researchers; a space for exhibitions and archives; a library; and a work space for nongovernmental organizations (Özersay, 2014). In 2014, the project received a European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Award in the conservation category.

Unlike the process in Jerusalem, the driving force in Nicosia has been civil initiatives by a bicom-munal group that was able to create an award-winning architectural product, even within a divided historic city. It is also worth noting that, following the preparation of Nicosia's master plan, there has been an increase in the organization of architectural competition projects on both the north and south sides of the divided city. This is perceived as a positive outcome of the bicommunal plan. Although there have been some controversial projects whose impact on the conflicted nature of the city is arguable, such as the intervention project at the center of the historic city by architect Zaha Hadid, if the limitations of competitions are set according to the realities of the historic city by a neutral, bicommunal team or jury, the proposals for interventions can contribute positively to addressing and healing conflict.

CONCLUSION

This paper has evaluated the practice of contemporary architectural interventions as a solution to the negative effects of conflict in historic cities, considering decision-making processes at both the planning and urban-design level and the architectural-design level. Therefore, the architectural interventions in conflicted historic cities are evaluated together, with the whole process leading to the architectural product and its contribution to the conflicted situation. It should be emphasized again that any architectural intervention affects the urban context physically, economically, social-ly, *and* culturally.

For this evaluation, the case of the MOTJ project was utilized to explore a hypothetical approach to the topic. The MOTJ project has used a top-down approach since the start of the project, with the intention of contributing to peace in Jerusalem. However, when conflict dominates the status quo, architectural works cannot be selective or subjective in the ways in which they are presented, and they cannot act as mere technical outcomes of formal solutions. Introducing works by famous architects can be a means of creating attractions and making "brand" cities, such as the case of Bilbao, but the historic city of Jerusalem does not aim for further advertising due to the considerable architectural heritage already present in the city. Conflict occurs on a daily basis in the city and is a sensitive issue that cannot be dealt with by ignoring its existence. Architecture can make meaning-ful contributions to conflicted historic sites figuratively and literally only if it is truthful to the empirical political reality and based on real and common grounds recognized by all involved in the conflict. Thus, architectural interventions in conflicted historic cities should be based on a bottom-up approach through strategic urban planning and design, where all parties involved are recog-nized, and there is a truthful relation to the political realities that created the conflict.

The discussion has noted a number of ways in which conflicted cities can look at interventions. It has been observed that finding a neutral site with designers and planners from both sides and including all of the parties involved can help to achieve a truthful relation to conflict. In addition, these authors believe that architectural competitions can contribute positively to peace building, provided that they have high standards and critically review all aspects of representation and their relation to architectural tectonics, as was the case with the Jewish Museum in Berlin. It should be emphasized that the limitations of such competitions for historic environments must be well-defined concerning the historical value of the environment.

Therefore, the paper concludes that certain principles could be outlined to help such architectural projects transcend their meaning as sites of tolerance and contribute to developments that reduce the negative effects of conflict. These principles include the following:

(1) avoid selectivity and subjectivity at every stage of the design process, from the preparation of a city master plan to the formation of a design team for the project and decisions regarding the project site;

(2) provide high-standard, well-defined architectural competitions that encourage a participatory approach;

(3) insist on truthfulness to the empirical reality and conflicted context, recognizing all parties involved; and above all,

(4) utilize a bottom-up approach through strategic urban planning and design as a key to success and mutual understanding.

To achieve these principles, one last principle is important and should be emphasized here: to be successful, a project must maintain good faith in the decision-making process. If one party loses faith at any step of the process, it is hard to accomplish a positive outcome. To be successful, it is vital that the multiple political realities of a region or country be acknowledged (Edelman, 1978, 1985). Throughout this paper, the impact of multiple political realities has been extracted at every step of the process. These realities impact perceptions and decisions at every step along the way and, therefore, the eventual success of the project. Politics act symbolically, rather than concretely, in serving certain groups. The meaning and purpose of architectural proposals, which are intended to intervene in the everyday lives of inhabitants and the ongoing conflict that is tearing apart the normality of living, are shaped by the interpretations of various conflicting groups according to such multiple political realities.

This paper argues that, following a correct process of decision making at the planning and urban-design level, the architectural design process for unique architectural interventions should also grasp the realities of the conflicted historic cities in which they are built. This can only be achieved by taking a strategic planning and urban-design approach to conflicted historic cities before any architectural intervention decision is ever made. All planning and urban-design decisions and the architectural design process should be based on a better understanding of the reality of the conflict at the concerned site. Thus, the personal signature of an architect should not dominate the architecture; instead, the internal contextual realities and requirements of the local community, who are most affected by the conflict, should guide the decision making in the architectural design process. This requires a participatory approach, which is also part of strategic planning.

NOTES

1. In general, strategic planning includes six steps: mission, external/internal analysis, key results, strategy, operational plan (objectives, strategic action plan, performance appraisal, and rewards), and evaluation and control (Hunt, 1996). For a discussion of the strategic planning approach model in planning and urban design / revitalization in historic urban environments, see Doratli, *et al.* (2004).

2. The 1980 Basic Jerusalem Law declared, "Jerusalem, complete and unified, is the capital of Israel" (State of Israel, 1980). However, the law is not currently recognized by other countries or the United Nations.

3. Ben-Gurion attempted to impose a historicized Judaism on the city by suggesting that the Ottoman walls surrounding the Old City should be torn down, as he considered them an obstacle to linking West Jerusalem and its Biblical past. See Nitzan-Shiftan (2002), as well as Creighton (2007).

4. In 2010, Gehry announced his withdrawal from the project, citing funding, time, and design disputes, and a competition was held for new design proposals for a smaller-scale building at the same location. Chyutin Architects, a Tel Aviv-based architectural firm, won the competition (Ng, 2010). However, the project's troubles continued in 2011 when both Chyutin and the company managing the project quit. The project is now being run by the Los Angeles-based firm Aedas and its Jerusalem affiliate, Yigal Levi Architects, with a slated completion date of spring 2018. The current team is using the design proposed by Chyutin, though ownership of the design copyright is still being disputed in arbitration (Hecht, 2016). While Gehry's original design is no longer being used, a discussion of the design on a theoretical basis is still relevant to the larger discussion of architectural interventions in conflicted historic cities. Moreover, the current design proposal does little to address many of the critiques lodged at Gehry's design, especially those related to its location and general disregard for the geopolitical reality of the ongoing conflict in Jerusalem.

5. M'amman Allah or Mamilla was used as a burial site for thousands of Palestinians and Muslims from the time of the Crusades (when it was created to bury the army of the warrior Saladin) until 1927, when Muslim authorities decided to preserve it as a historical site. There was no delineation of the cemetery's boundaries until the middle of the 19th century because of its location outside the city at that time. Israeli officials took control of the cemetery in 1947. Under their guardianship, natural forces began to erode the cemetery, and a parking lot and public park were built over parts of the cemetery in the 1960s. Excavations conducted during construction of the various projects have uncovered countless graves, the majority of which have been destroyed. See Khalidi (2009) and Shamir (2011) for more.

6. Israel began building a new separation wall, called the Israeli-West Bank barrier, in 2002, claiming it was needed for protection against suicide bombers. The controversial wall follows the Green Line at points but is much longer and stretches into Palestinian territory in the West Bank in parts, separating many Arab communities in the West Bank from people and services in Jerusalem and the rest of Israel. Work on the Jerusalem section of the wall began in 2005. The construction of parts of the wall varies from fences to mostly concrete blocks that reach up to 26 ft. (8 m) in height.

7. Gehry's proposal lacked any reference to debates and arguments in architectural circles, except for statements in the media and articles by some newspapers. However, the journal *Critical Inquiry* published an original article by Saree Makdisi (2010) criticizing Gehry's proposal, as well as a series of responses, among them Gilbert-Rolfe's (2010).

8. The plan for the regeneration of the city center involves constructing a railway, renewing and developing streets, erecting new public buildings, encouraging young people to live in the area by providing grants, introducing commercial buildings to the area, and creating a new traffic system to facilitate access.

9. Mike Davis's (1990:223) "post-liberal Los Angeles" is a reflection on security efforts and tendencies of urban design, architecture, and the police. Social relations and the built environment are an image of repression in space and movement. To secure the city against violence, increased crime, and the war on drugs, the police sealed and barricaded the poor neighborhoods of Los Angeles. As a result, the central parts became self-contained against the ethnic and class boundaries of Latinos, blacks, and homeless whites in enclaves and restricted areas. "The defense of luxury lifestyles" has destroyed public spaces (*ibid.*). Mega-structures created by celebrity architects and mega-developers are concentrated in the city center "under the gaze of private police" (Davis, 1990:226) and banned from certain classes.

10. AHDR, a nongovernmental, nonprofit, multicommunal organization in Cyprus, was established by a group of educators and researchers in 2003. Since then, AHDR has organized and developed a range of projects and activities. For more information, see their website, www.ahdr.info.

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