

**ISRAEL'S STRATEGIC PLAN THROUGH ARCHAEOLOGY TO CLAIM
SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE TEMPLE MOUNT/HARAM AL-SHARIF IN
JERUSALEM: THE CASE OF THE MUGHRABI GATE BRIDGE PLAN**

(2004-2014)

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ABSTRACT

Archaeology has been an effective instrument in Israel's national interest to claim legitimacy and sovereignty over Eastern Jerusalem since 1967. Israeli archaeology has been capable of altering the current *status quo* arrangement at the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif (TMH). In Israel, archaeology is recognized as a nationalistic and patriotic project. Nationalistic and biblical archaeology in the Holy Basin of Jerusalem is playing an important role to fulfil Israel's national interest against international law. Israeli excavations have been gradually strengthening Jewish cultural and heritage security in Jerusalem vis-à-vis Palestinian and Arabic cultural and heritage security in the bitter competition for sovereignty.

Process of Judaizing and de-Islamization have been taking place vigorously in Jerusalem violating United Nations resolutions and international law. Archaeological excavations together with Judaizing projects in Jerusalem have been focusing in the Jerusalem Inner Belt or the Holy Basin. After the 2nd Intifada, Israel intensified national level territorial plan to transform Jerusalem under the Jerusalem Master Plan (JMP). This plan is carried out at three levels; the Outer Belt of Jerusalem, the Middle Belt of Jerusalem and the Inner Belt of Jerusalem. The JMP is an ambitious plan to achieve Israel's territorial and demographic ambition in Jerusalem; to consolidate Jerusalem within Israel's 1967 border vis-à-vis Palestinians legitimate claim over the city. In Jerusalem Inner Belt plans, Israel has been implementing territorial policy over the holy sites to accomplish its national agenda. In this context, military security and Jewish cultural and heritage security at the West Wall Flank are short term objective in Israel's national interest.

In this regard, the Mughrabi Gate Bridge plan (MGB, 2004-2014), is a municipal level territorial plan to Judaize the site vis-à-vis Arabic and Islamic identity in order to claim sovereignty over the TMH in future, which is Israel's long term objective. In the Inner Belt of Jerusalem, Israel has been trying to establish Jewish cultural and heritage security and military security to ensure Israel's survival in the Middle East region. Thus, the MGB plan at the Western Wall or the Al-Buraq Wall was planned to Judaize the whole West Wall flank. Through this policy, the IAA erased and destroyed Arabic and Islamic identity to claim sovereignty over the TMH in future.

In the MGB plan role of the non-state actors are significant as Israel's national instruments. The IAA carried out archaeological excavations at the MGP site for Israel's national interest. The Western Wall Foundation (WWHF) planned to build the new bridge to connect the Mughrabi Gate with the Dung Gate. The Jerusalem Municipality (JM) launched the plan for Greater Jerusalem under the Jerusalem Master Plan. All agencies involved in the MGB plan were government agencies except for the settler groups. Settlers have been creating Jewish topography in the Holy Basin to increase Jewish historical tourism. Meanwhile, the temple activists planned to revive temple culture, worship and building of 3rd Jewish temple on the mount. Therefore, we can observe that the temple activists, rabbis, and settlers can gain considerable advantages if the MGB plan materialized. Israel as the state actor has been taking opportunity over the domestic elements to achieve its national interest. Israel has been supportive of domestic actors because domestic actors

function within the parameter of Israel's aspiration. Domestic elements only can succeed if their demands are within Israel's national interest. In the case of the MGB plan, domestic actors can function and place their demands without hesitation because Israel's national interest to claim sovereignty over the mount fulfil their objectives. This is one of the strategic plan Israel used to make territorial claim and establish sovereignty over the TMH.

ABSTRAK

Sejak 1967, arkeologi merupakan salah satu alat yang berkesan dalam kepentingan nasional Israel untuk menuntut kedaulatan dan pengiktirafan di Timur Jerusalem. Usaha arkeologi yang dijalankan oleh Israel di bawah Pihak Berkuasa Antikuiti Israel (IAA) mempunyai kapasiti untuk mengubahkan kontemporari *status quo* di Haram al-Sharif (TMH). Di Israel, arkeologi diiktiraf sebagai projek nasionalistik dan patriotik. Arkeologi daripada aliran nasionalistik dan biblikal memainkan peranan penting dalam memenuhi aspirasi kepentingan nasional Israel di “Lembah Suci” (Holy Basin) di Jerusalem. Usaha arkeologi yang dijalankan oleh mereka mengasaskan identiti Yahudi secara gradual di Jerusalem, yakni memperteguhkan sekuriti warisan bangsa Yahudi bertentangan dengan tuntutan bangsa Palestin. Menerusi arkeologi, Israel menjalankan proses “Judaizing” ataupun proses “penyahudiaan” di Jerusalem secara drastik. Ekskavasi arkeologi berserta dengan proses “penyahudiaan” di Jerusalem bertumpu di Lingkaran Dalam Jerusalem (Jerusalem Inner Belt).

Selepas Intifada kedua pada tahun 2000, Israel merangsangkan dasar domestik dalam bentuk pelan kebangsaan untuk menjalankan transformasi terhadap Jerusalem melalui “Jerusalem Master Plan” (JMP). Pelan ini dilancarkan dalam tiga peringkat yang dijalankan secara serentak. Peringkat pertama ialah Lingkaran Luar Jerusalem, peringkat kedua ialah Lingkaran Pertengahan Jerusalem dan peringkat ketiga ialah Lingkaran Dalam Jerusalem. JMP adalah pelan berwawasan untuk mencapai cita-cita Israel dari segi wilayah dan populasi di Jerusalem; untuk mengintegrasikan Jerusalem dalam sempadan Israel 1967. Usaha ini adalah bertentangan dengan resolusi Pertubuhan Bangsa-bangsa Bersatu dan undang-undang antarabangsa. Ini adalah salah satu usaha Israel untuk menggagalkan tuntutan bangsa Palestin supaya Jerusalem dibahagikan sebagai ibu kota Israel dan Palestin apabila resolusi dirangka mengenai isu Jerusalem dalam proses kedamaian.

Dalam Lingkaran Dalam Jerusalem, Israel berusaha mencapai target sekuriti nasional iaitu mencapai sekuriti ketenteraan dan sekuriti warisan bangsa Yahudi, yang merupakan unsur penting dalam perjuangan Israel di Timur Tengah. Sehubungan dengan itu, “Mughrabi Gate Bridge Plan” (MGB) [2004-2014] di Tembok Barat atau Tembok al-Buraq merupakan pelan di bawah JMP pada peringkat munisipaliti untuk menyahudikan Tembok Barat sepenuhnya. Dalam proses ini, Pihak Berkuasa Antikuiti Israel (IAA) memusnahkan ataupun menyingkirkan identiti Arab dan Islam untuk menuntut legitimasi dan kedaulatan ke atas TMH pada masa akan datang. Pelan MGB adalah merupakan projek mikro seperti projek-projek lain di kawasan TMH.

Dalam pelan MGB, peranan entiti bukan negara adalah signifikan sebagai alat Israel dalam mengimplementasikan pelan MGB. Pihak Berkuasa Antikuiti Israel (IAA) menjalankan pencaharian arkeologi nasionalistik atas arahan kerajaan Israel. Western Wall Heritage Foundation ataupun “Yayasan Warisan Tembok Barat” bertanggungjawab membina jambatan yang dapat menghubungkan Pintu Mughrabi dengan Pintu Dung (Dung Gate). Munisipaliti Jerusalem pula memastikan pelan MGB berjalan lancar sealiran dengan semangat memartabatkan Jerusalem sebagai bandaraya Yahudi yang moden. Semua entiti yang terlibat dalam pelan MGB adalah entiti di bawah kerajaan Israel. Manakala, kumpulan aktivis kuil Yahudi pula bercita-cita mengasaskan budaya penyembahan kuil Yahudi di TMH. Kumpulan penempatan Yahudi menubuhkan kawasan penempatan dan taman arkeologi Yahudi sejajar dengan aspirasi Israel. Justeru itu, kita boleh memerhatikan bahawa semua pihak tidak kira entiti negara dan bukan negara dapat memanfaatkan pelan MGB jika ia menjadi realiti. Ini adalah salah satu strategi Israel gunakan dalam tuntutan wilayah untuk mengasaskan kedaulatan ke atas TMH.

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APPROVAL

I certify that an Examination Committee has met on 25th April 2018 to conduct the final examination of Nor Aishah binti Hanifa on her degree thesis entitled 'Israel's Strategic Plan through Archaeology to Claim Sovereignty over the Temple Mount/Haram Al-Sharif in Jerusalem: The Case of the Mughrabi Gate Bridge Plan (2004-2014)'. The committee recommends that the student be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy (Strategic and International Relations).

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIAR	Albright Institute of Archaeological Research
APC	Armoured Personnel Carriers
ASOR	American School for Oriental Research
EU	European Union
GA	General Assembly
IAA	Israel Antiquities Authority
IAC	Israel Archaeological Council
ICCROM	International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
IDF	Israel Defence Forces
IM	Islamic Movement
IMFA	Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs
IOA	Israeli Occupying Authority
INS	Israel National Commission
ISESCO	Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
JJA	Jerusalem Jordanian Awqaf
JM	Jerusalem Municipality
JMP	Jerusalem Master Plan
JQDC	Jewish Quarter Development Company
MG	Mughrabi Gate
MGB	Mughrabi Gate Bridge
MGP	Mughrabi Gate Pathway

MK	Member of Knesset
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIS	New Israeli Shekel
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territories
PA	Palestinian Authority
PASSIA	Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs
PBL	Palestinian Basic Law
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
PM	Prime Minister
PMO	Prime Minister Office
PNC	Palestinian National Charter
PNC	Palestinian National Council
RMM	Reinforced Monitoring Mechanism
SC	Security Council
TMH	Temple Mount/Haram Al-Sharif
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
US	United States of America
WHC	World Heritage Centre
WHL	World Heritage List
WWHF	Western Wall Heritage Foundation

CHAPTER 1

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

1.1 Background of Study



Figure 1: Map of Israel and State of Palestine International Crisis Group Report: Extreme Makeover?(1): Israel's Politics of Land and Faith in East Jerusalem, Middle East Report N 134, 20 December 2012, p. 32.

Jerusalem is one of the major issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, separating Israelis and Palestinians in the peace process for decades without final resolution to

create two state solution in the Middle East. Jerusalem has become a very sensitive issue in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict because the Temple Mount or Haram Al-Sharif (TMH) stood in the Holy Basin (Old City of Jerusalem), contested by two major religions, by two people of the land.¹ The TMH is located on the top of the Mount Moriah and the size is estimated around 144,000 square metres or 36 acres.² Mount Moriah is sacred for three Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. This has produced overlapping claims over the TMH for decades between Israelis and Palestinians. Jerusalem issue haunted the Israeli-Palestinian conflict when Israel annexed the East Jerusalem through the Six Day War in 1967 against the international law. For Israel, the Eastern Jerusalem is utterly important because the TMH stand there and made the location the most vulnerable site for conflict in the Middle East.³

In this context, the MGB (Mughrabi Gate Bridge) plan controversy at the TMH occurred under the bigger umbrella of Israeli-Palestinian conflict which is dated back to the declaration of Balfour Declaration in 1917. British administration under Prime Minister (PM) Lloyd George was sympathetic towards the Jewish cause in Palestine.

¹Holy Basin also called as the Historic Basin located in the Old City of Jerusalem, in the Eastern Jerusalem, occupied by Israel in 1967. A former Israeli negotiator pointed out that his government's definition of the Holy Basin in fact includes Mount Zion, which lies west of the Green Line. He also explained that Israel narrowly construes the Basin in order to place as many Palestinians as possible within a future Palestinian state; for instance in the Palestinian neighborhood of Silwan, only a portion of the neighborhood would be included within the Basin. See International Crisis Group Report: Extreme Makeover? (I): Israel's Politics of Land and Faith in East Jerusalem, Middle East Report N 134 – 20 December 2012, p. 16 at [www.crisisgroup.org/~media/files/middle%20east%20north%20africa/israel%20Palestine/134-extreme-makeover-i-israels-politics-of-land-and-faith-in-east-jerusalem.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/files/middle%20east%20north%20africa/israel%20Palestine/134-extreme-makeover-i-israels-politics-of-land-and-faith-in-east-jerusalem.pdf)

²John M. Lundquist, *The Temple of Jerusalem: Past, Present, and Future*, Praeger Publishers, Westport, USA, 2008, p. 103.

³Jerusalem had different names in different time of history. In Jewish scriptures, Jerusalem was mentioned as Salem, Urusalim, Mount Moriah, Adonai, Urah, Jebus, Zim and Ariel. The city is called as 'Yerushalaim in Hebrew means City of Peace. Arabic speakers called it as Bayt al-Maqdis (House of Sanctity) or al-Quds al-Sharif (Noble Holy Place). See Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1997, p.14.

Earlier Jewish cause was advocated by Zionist movement under Theodor Herzl (1860-1904) and Chaim Weizman (1874-1952). Zionist literature like *Autoemancipation* by Leo Pinsker and *The State of the Jews* by Theodor Herzl left significant impact on the British public and British administration. Following memorandum from Jewish groups, a declaration was designed by the British and sent to President Woodrow Wilson, the US president. President Wilson approved the draft on October 17, 1917. Arthur Balfour (Foreign Secretary) of British government then issued the Balfour Declaration on November 2, 1917 to Lord Rothschild. This is the benchmark of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Adelf Safty assert, “*Now with the Balfour Declaration promising imperial power support for the Zionist programme, the confrontation with Palestinian nationalism in its own land became inevitable*”.⁴ British policies and Zionist activities in Palestine had induced rivalries and riots between Arabs and Zionists in Tel Aviv in 1921 and conflict over the Western Wall in 1929. Since then British Mandate Palestine was in turmoil.

Recommendation by the Peel Commission Report 1937 to partition the land of Palestine ignited more violence from Arabs against partition of Palestine. However Zionist movement adopted the Biltmore Program in 1942 and in 1944 the US Congress endorsed the program. The Biltmore program recognized whole Palestine to be a Jewish state. This issue made the British to invite the US administration’s interference. On October 4, 1946 President Truman supported the partition plan. Wahid Khalidi acknowledges Truman’s endorsement was directly responsible for starting the chain of

⁴Adel Safty, *Might Over Right: How the Zionist Took Over Palestine*, Garnet Publishers, U.K., 2009, p. 15.