

# Urban Violence and Commemorating Spatial Memories in the Old Town of Nablus, Palestine

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*Anti-forgetfulness wars; anti-oblivion stones. No one wants to forget. More accurately, no one wants to be forgotten. Or, more peacefully, people bring children into the world to carry their name, or to bear for them the weight of the name and its glory. It has had a long history, this double operation of searching for a place or a time on which to put a signature and untie the knot of the name facing the long caravans of oblivion*  
(Memory for Forgetfulness, 1982 Mahmoud Darwish  
Translated by Ibrahim Muhawi, 1995)

The climax of the second Palestinian Intifada began in September 2000, during which the Israeli military conducted several massive military invasions Edjeyah and consecutively reoccupied most of the main Palestinian cities including the city of Nablus in March 29th, 2002. The whole society, as well as the city itself, was brought under a new status of resistance cycle. Therefore, negotiating opportunities of survival becomes implicitly a unique life pattern of everyday life. The old town of Nablus nurtured, and continued to nurture, the narrative of the city and people's hope and anxiety. Memories are scrawled on the old town walls with graffiti that represents different patterns of everyday life, political slogans and posters of those who had been martyred during the several Israeli attacks in 2002, and after. Likewise, public space has been altered to incorporate spatial memories in forms of monumental sculptures, murals, little paradises and engraved names of those who sacrificed their lives. It is quite challenging for people to survive and to maintain the future and their now is unsecured "[p]eople have to make do with what they have" (de Certeau, 1984: 18). The phenomenon of commemorating the Palestinian martyrs has created a new pattern of spatial memories within the vernacular urban fabric of the old town of Nablus. Such a phenomenon becomes a method to communicate stories of those who are not present to share them. It has its implications not only on the vernacular urban space of the old town of Nablus, but also on the inhabitants' living experiences. Following an ethnographic research approach carried out in the old town of Nablus in the summers of 2009 and 2012, this paper attempts to bring people's stories and memories to shed light on this emerging phenomenon and the ways in which it becomes part of the spatial fabric in a contradictory yet remarkable manner. It also discusses that the notion of bringing memories to the "everydayness," the Palestinians embedded enormous momentum of resilience supporting their survival and ongoing resistance.

**Key words:** Palestine, Edjteyah, everyday life, memory, and resilience.

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