

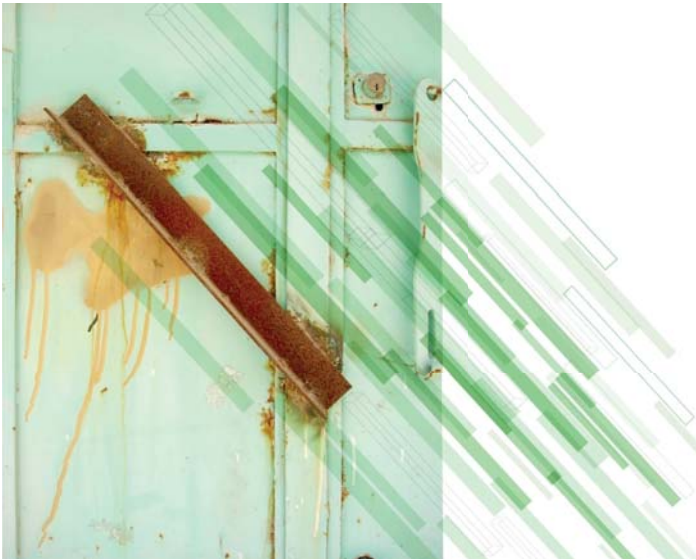
H2

HEBRON is the emblem of occupation upon communities.

The 1997 Protocol of Hebron has divided the city into two parts. The largest part of the city, H1, is under Palestinian Authority control, while H2, which includes the Old City, is under Israeli Military control. The Old City, dating back some 5500 years, used to be the heart of traditional Hebronite life and culture. More than 150, 000 Palestinians live in Hebron. 120, 000 in H1 and 30 000 in H2, alongside a population of 500 Israeli settlers, who are protected by approximately 1500 soldiers.

Within the Old City, 'restricted areas' have resulted in the establishment of the four downtown Israeli settlements and in response to the Second Intifada. This led to the gradual closure of Al Shuhada Street, transforming this lively economic centre into a 'ghost town'.

In their daily lives, Hebronites from the Old City are facing systematic direct and indirect forms of hardships. Daily harassment, verbal insults, stone throwing and dog attacks, the shutting and burning of shops, the closure and inaccessibility of goods and social services have created insecurity, economical pressures and restricted the freedom to practice cultural traditions.



BUILDING SUMUD PROJECT

**SOCIAL AND ARCHITECTURAL CONFLICT
TRANSFORMATION IN THE OLD CITY OF HEBRON**

TEAM

In 2010, Oxford Brookes University, in conjunction with the Universities of Paris Est, Utrecht, Bethlehem and Al Quds Open, launched the Wall Studies initiative to examine issues related to the occupation of land and territories as well as local responses and adaptabilities. The Building Sumud Project derives directly from this initiative.

To initiate the project a multidisciplinary team of students and researchers led by Dr. Brigitte Piquard, Reader at Oxford Brookes University, conducted a pilot study, investigating the interaction between the physical and social components of the occupation in the Old City of Hebron. The team of social scientists and architects worked in partnership with the Palestinian Polytechnic University and Al Quds Open University and the support of the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee and the Temporary International Presence in Hebron (TIPH).

WALL STUDIES

The wall and the occupation of space impact Palestinian life through the destruction of the spatial and social environment. The confiscation of land, the destruction of visual perspective, the closure of enclaves, the denial of privacy, the disregard of landscape, and the systematic control of Palestinian places of memories and social meaning can be described as acts of symbolic and spectacular violence. Conversely, Palestinians through their will to stay on the land have strengthened their Sumud, their resilience and steadfastness.

While addressing sensitive political, human and humanitarian issues, the Building Sumud and the Wall Studies initiatives have been upholding meticulous academic standards as well as the principles of international law.



BSP

The Building Sumud Project aims to strengthen the understanding of the occupation of space and resilience attitudes through a multi-disciplinary perspective and methodology. This aim consists of three strands:

a better practical conceptualization in order to translate research into empowering strategies
a creative conceptualization linking research and design projects and artistic initiatives
the development of interdisciplinary and action-research-led cooperation

The project contributes to a greater understanding of the research areas of home and place attachment, hardship, symbolic violence, coping strategies and adaptabilities. Through monitoring the interaction between social and environmental impacts of occupation it highlights the potential for architectural and social interaction towards conflict transformation.

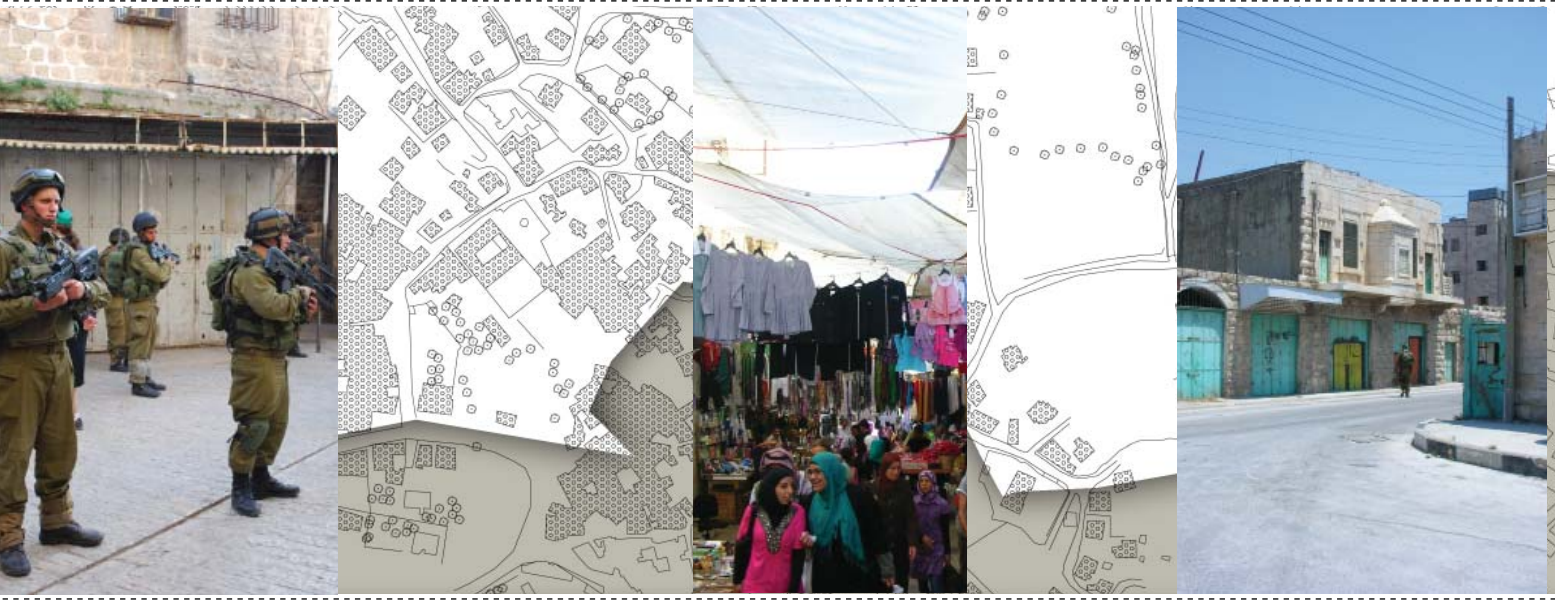
FOCUS

HOME \ PLACE ATTACHMENT

The sense of belonging within the Hebronite community is linked to the land, the built environment, kinship and ancestry which transforms homes and spaces into places of memories. The loss of public life is compensated by a life among neighbours, within houses, particularly rooftops and courtyards. An understanding of urban space, sustainable resource management, environmental issues and conservation of heritage may help in maintaining this form of attachment.

SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE

This form of violence targets values, culture and social norms of a specific community. Destruction or harm to the built environment, cultural practices and the denial of mobility are significant examples. Therefore the recognition of symbolic violence legally and socially is of an increasing importance in order to efficiently challenge it.



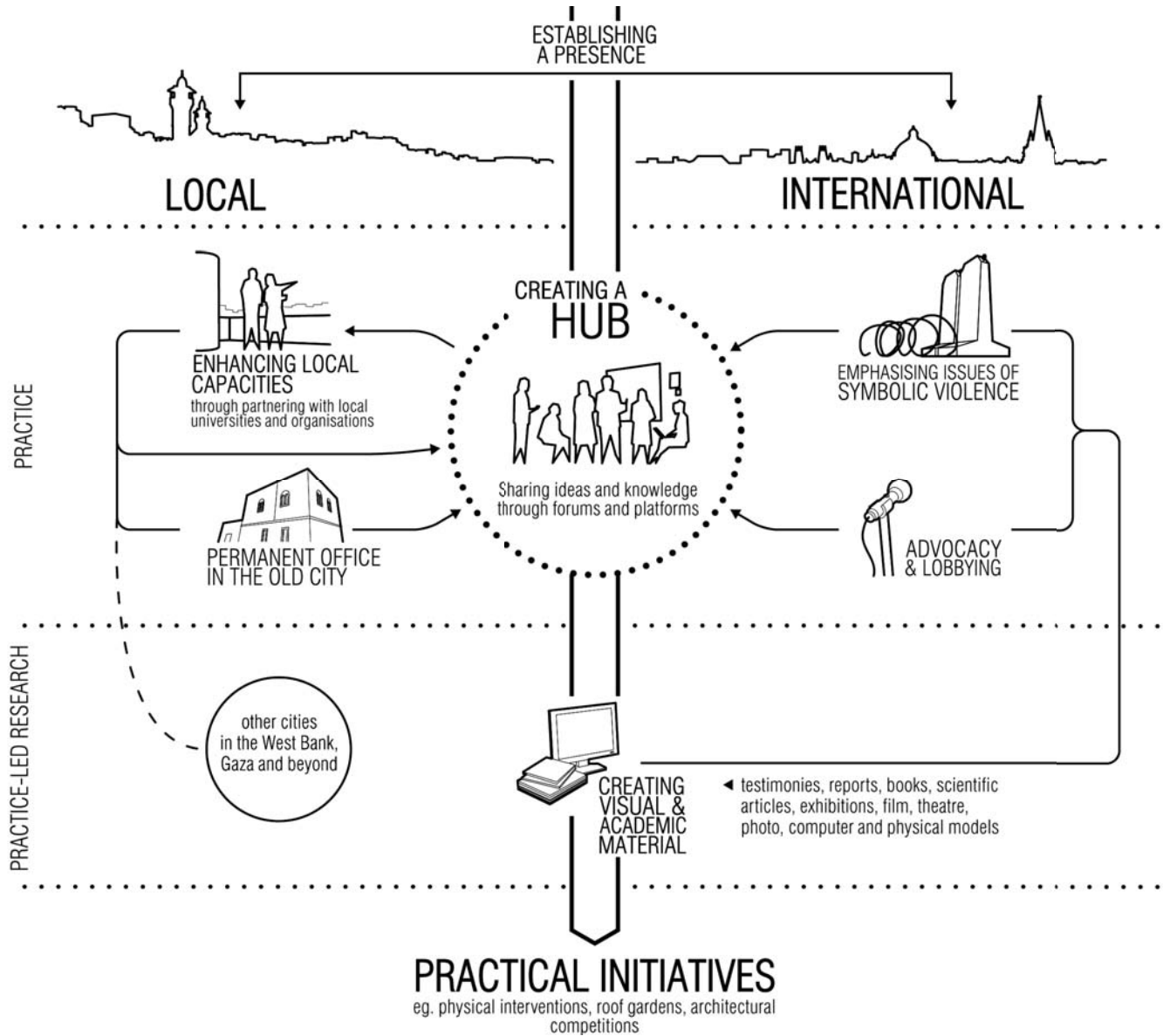
SUMUD: ADAPTABILITIES AND COPING STRATEGIES

Old City Hebronites have developed collective coping strategies: avoidance of confrontation, creation of communication channels (physical and virtual) and alternative use of spaces for livelihoods (eg.rooftop gardens) for example. Sumud is a key way to preserve dignity and maintain a proactive position. Through resilience Palestinians preserve their connection with the land and the community.

SOCIAL AND ARCHITECTURAL CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

Working within a 'laboratory of the extreme' will enable the visualisation of positive interventions on space. Linking architectural and social action with creative conflict transformation methods (art, installation architecture, alternative tourism) will enable scholars and practitioners to understand opportunities for peace.

BUILDING SUMUD



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