



# The Separation Barrier and Jerusalem's Arab Neighborhoods: Integrate or Separate but do not Postpone

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The "Israel and its Arab Neighbors" project explores the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its possible effects on Israel's new map, the Jerusalem dilemma and the future relations between the two communities. The increasing interaction between the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and regional and international politics implies greater involvement of outside forces in the conflict. The project examines the interplay between the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and these regional developments, and explores how they are likely to affect Israel's position among its Arab neighbors.

## Executive Summary

This essay examines the urban impacts of separation measures, and especially the separation barrier, on the Arab communities in and around Jerusalem. A preliminary study of the Arab neighborhoods left within the barrier as currently planned, and their connections to the neighborhoods that have grown just outside municipal boundaries since 1967, shows the likelihood that these communities will be adversely effected in ways that may undermine Israel's benefits from the separation barrier.

What was in functional terms a more-or-less unified Arab metropolitan area will be divided, tearing existing social, economic, and cultural ties, and removing the critical mass of population and activity necessary for Arab urban life. In the absence of any substitutory integration into the social and cultural life of West Jerusalem, the result may be a rim of de-urbanized Arab villages at the city's periphery, up against the separation barrier, under a lot of social stress. With the removal of the outlet of peripheral neighborhoods for residence, and an ingathering of Arab Jerusalem residents from these neighborhoods to inside the barrier, land and housing prices will continue to rise, out of reach of many. This will lead to housing shortages and a class-specific migration from Jerusalem to the Palestinian areas and places within Israel.

In the absence of a significant upgrading of the status, services, and opportunities available to them, the Arab neighborhoods remaining within Jerusalem's municipal boundaries are likely to constitute an alienated and fragmented community.

They will be vulnerable to increased pressures to assume a front role for terror activities within the separation barrier, and contribute to an impression of the tenuousness and artificiality of Israeli authority over East Jerusalem. Thus, in the medium and long run, the barrier may undermine its own declared security and border-stabilizing objectives.

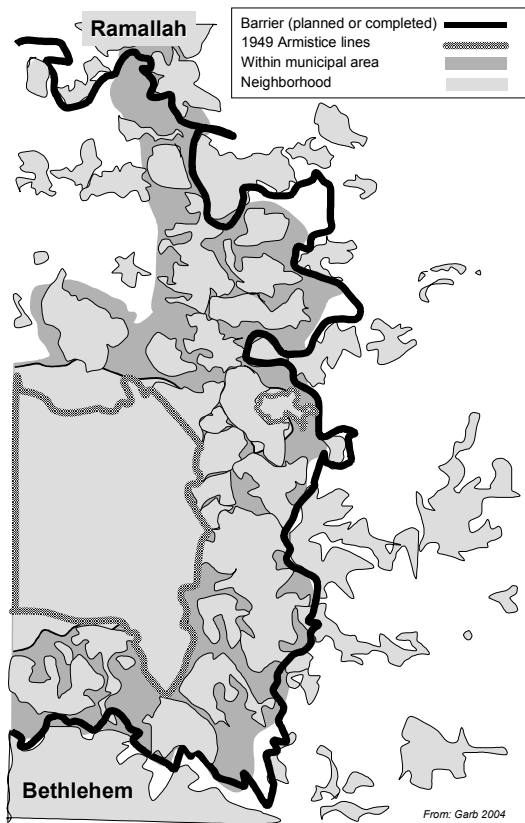
Because of the barrier's profound urban impacts, mere spatial inclusion of Arab neighborhoods will not work. To be effective—in its own terms—for any length of time, the barrier must incorporate only those populations Jerusalem intends to integrate as full (and eventually voting) citizens. A mere change of citizenship status will not suffice: for the barrier to be viable, it must enclose a functionally and spatially integrated city, whose citizens have equality in work and housing opportunities, and participate democratically in urban governance. If it can rise to this challenge, Israel would have a second chance at the "unified Jerusalem" it declared but never achieved after 1967. If it cannot meet this threshold of commitment, Israel should not incorporate these neighborhoods within the barrier.

Thus Israel must choose between two highly challenging scenarios. Integration, with its implication of far greater equality in housing, employment, and the voting rolls, is materially and ideologically demanding for much of the Israeli public. Separation from Jerusalem's Arab neighborhoods, with its taboo of "dividing Jerusalem" and the stigma of "capitulating to terror" is even more ideologically challenging for a smaller but still influential public. What must be avoided is the least desirable scenario of inclusion without integration.

This would defer a genuine solution, eroding Israel's bargaining position and destabilizing the region in the interim.

### The growth and end of a unified Arab metropolitan area around Jerusalem

When the wall demarcating Jewish and Arab Jerusalem came down in 1967, Israel declared and has since continued to declare that the city had been “unified.” Municipal boundaries were expanded to include many East Jerusalem neighborhoods, whose inhabitants were granted Jerusalem residency, and, initially, offered citizenship—declaratively, if not effectively. Municipal services were nominally extended to the entire municipal area. And architectural gestures were made to “erase” the seam line between the two parts of the city.

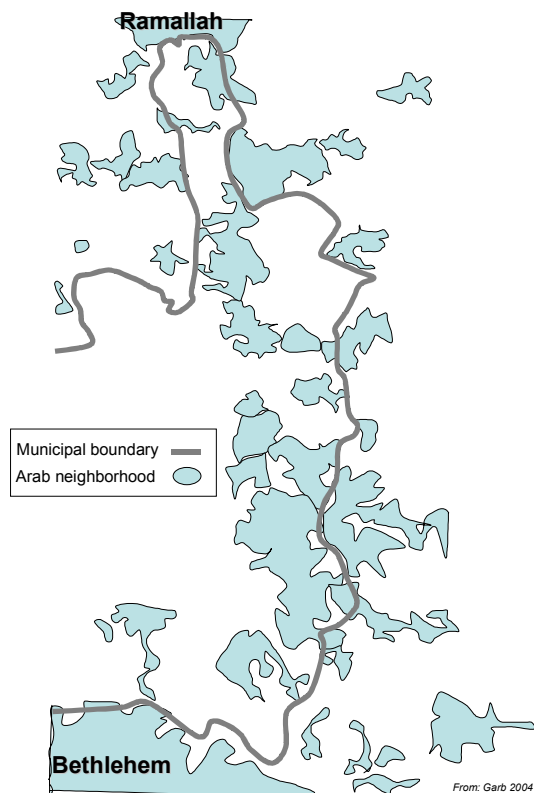


**Map 1.** Approximate (schematic) relation of Armistice Line, Jerusalem municipal boundary, and separation barrier. Neighborhood outlines in maps derived from a Pal-Map (2004) base map.

These attempts at unification notwithstanding, the list of ways in which Jerusalem remained starkly unintegrated after 1967 is familiar. East Jerusalem Arabs refused (and were later more or less administratively blocked from) becoming citizens, and overwhelmingly boycotted municipal elections. There was a staggering gap in levels of investment and services and, thus, well-being, between the two parts of the city. Planning was largely restrictive of Arab growth, and facilita-

tive of Jewish expansion. And the seam line remained distinctive, and subtly barriered. Now, after two Intifadas have heightened fears and restricted mobility on both sides, political slogans about an eternally unified Jerusalem do not ring true, even to the Israeli majority, who are not familiar with, will not set foot in, and do not really care about what goes on in that blurry *terra incognita* of “Arab East Jerusalem”—except for the Western Wall and the new Jewish neighborhoods that Israel has established beyond the Green Line.

At the same time, however, East Jerusalem continued to function as a more-or-less unified metropolitan area for the region's Arab population, even after the West Bank and Jerusalem's Eastern neighborhoods were occupied in 1967, and the Jerusalem neighborhoods annexed to Jerusalem in 1981. Employment, social life, religious life, and, to some degree, residential decisions all took place within a functionally and spatially unified area, which straddled the Arab neighborhoods annexed to the Jerusalem municipal area and the Palestinian areas beyond (see Map 2).



**Map 2.** The functionally unified Arab metropolitan area, 1968-1991

During these years, many Arab residents of East Jerusalem moved to the swelling neighborhoods just outside the municipal boundaries, to escape the restrictions on building within Jerusalem and enjoy the benefits of cheaper more readily available residence—while still maintaining their former workplaces, social ties, and social benefits within the city. With income derived from a more or less first world context, and

spent in a more or less third world one, they flourished. At the same time, Palestinians, barred from living permanently within the Jerusalem municipal area itself, began moving to these same Jerusalem-edge neighborhoods, to be closer to Jerusalem's superior work and economic opportunities. For them, Israel's poorest city was the West Bank's most prosperous.

While by no means a normal metropolitan area, this ragtag "suburbanization" meant that from the perspective of a generation of Arabs living under Israeli authority, Jerusalem remained and even intensified its function as a unified metropolitan area, only partly overlapping with the functional Jewish metropolitan area.

The functional unity of the Arab metropolitan area, however, was predicated on two things. The first was easy mobility across the municipal boundary (and, to some extent, on freedom of movement between the peripheral neighborhoods and remoter Palestinian areas, from which people relocated, and with which social and other ties remained). The second was the possibility of maintaining Jerusalem residency while living outside this boundary.

The nineties saw an erosion of these freedoms. Israeli restrictions on Palestinian movement into the city (and in general) became more stringent, with the cancellation of "general exit permits" and a complete month-long closure during the Gulf war in 1991. East Jerusalem was incorporated into the areas of restricted movement for Palestinians in March 1993, and after the 1995 Oslo II agreement's division of the Palestinian areas into zones, passage between "Area C" (Israeli control) and Areas B (joint control) and A (full Palestinian control) were tightened. Beginning in December of 1995, residency requirements for those who wanted to maintain Jerusalem residence and social benefits were more strongly enforced. Policies hardened toward unification of families in which a Jerusalem resident is married to a non-resident, and these unification procedures were recently frozen entirely. Further long closures were enforced after a pair of suicide bombings in 1996. Through these kinds of measures, Jerusalem began to re-divide, functionally and spatially, as it had in 1948, but this time more slowly, and along new lines of the Jerusalem municipal border.

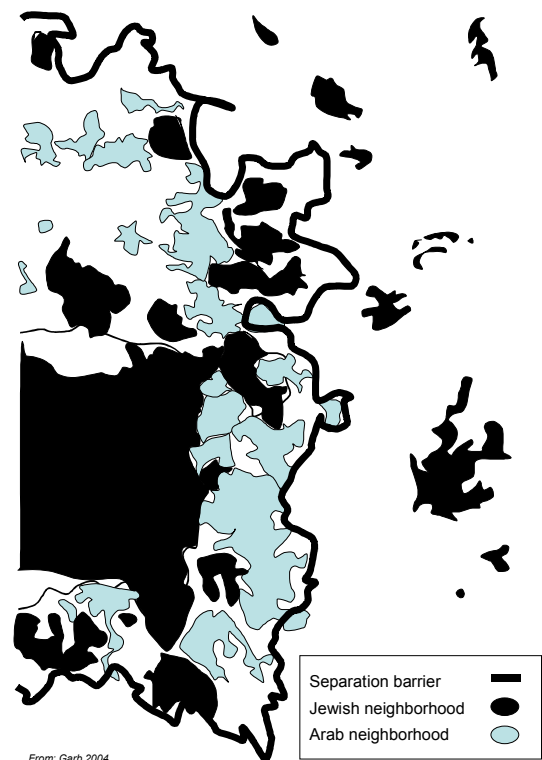
This administrative and behavioral re-walling of Jerusalem became more concrete, quite literally, from 2000 onwards. After the beginning of the second Intifadah and a barrage of suicide attacks, the notion of a physical separation barrier moved into planning and then construction. While there is still considerable uncertainty about the final routing of this barrier, it seems likely that the metropolitan area will once again become firmly divided from the perspective of the area's Arab inhabitants. Already, from the Arab point of view, greater Jerusalem has ceased to function as a large unified metropolitan area. From a Jewish perspective it continues to, with good connectivity between Jerusalem's center, its Western suburbs, the Jewish neighborhoods within East Jerusa-

lem, and, if passage arrangements are simple, even with the Jewish satellite neighborhoods outside the municipal area and separation barrier (Maaleh Adumim, Kokhav Yaakov, Teqo'a, and Gush Etzion, for example).

### The urban effects of the end of a unified Arab metropolitan area

As a result of this separation process, Arab neighborhoods within and without the barrier, seem likely to become de-urbanized, in the sense of lacking integrated functional attachment to an urban core.

Arab neighborhoods remaining **within** the barrier are not a full part of the city of Jerusalem, yet will now also be separated from the broader hinterland outside the municipal area that provided the critical mass of activity and opportunity that makes urban life possible: the shops, clients, marriage partners, friends, and family, which now lie outside the barrier. Under current trends, these internal neighborhoods are likely to become a series of fragmented villages, spread against a peripheral wall, linked to Western Jerusalem by work ties, but little else. (See Map 3.)



Map 3. Jerusalem's Arab neighborhoods inside the separation barrier

In addition, these neighborhoods will be severely stressed by lack of housing. Until now, housing availability was limited by a variety of planning restrictions (land appropriation and "green area" designations, incomplete or absent planning schemes, low building percentages), so that new housing within the municipal area was scarce and mostly illegal. How-

ever, the possibility of living outside municipal boundaries, where there were fewer planning restrictions and housing is much cheaper, was an important “outlet”. In other words, the tight lid on expansion within Jerusalem’s boundaries was possible, in part, because of the availability of construction just outside them.

This outlet is now gone. Indeed, populations within the municipal area are growing rapidly with the influx of the tens of thousands of Jerusalem residence holders living outside the municipal boundaries, now increasingly motivated to move back “inside” to preserve their residency permits and access to the city. Thousands who could afford to have done so in the last year or two. Thousands more, now waiting a bit longer to see how things resolve, will join them as the sealing of the city becomes undeniable. As a result, housing purchase and rental prices have already begun to rise, by 25-30% in some areas, out of reach of many families. As the population in East Jerusalem grows, we can expect stressful overcrowding: already the average number of people per room in Arab homes in Jerusalem is twice that of Jewish homes, with almost 30% of homes experiencing extreme crowding, as opposed to 3% among Jews.

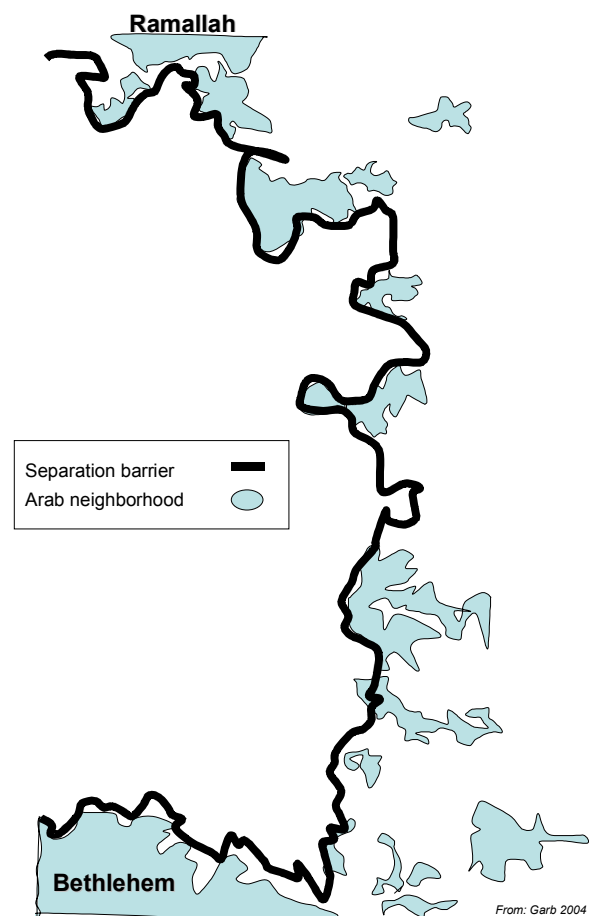
This ingathering within the barrier of the more capable levels of society, is accompanied by a growing exodus of the less able, and of renters in particular. Already, people are moving from higher- to lower-priced neighborhoods within East Jerusalem. And, with Jerusalem’s truncated Arab population now less of a magnet for residence, and its neighborhoods increasingly stressed in terms of the availability and price of housing, we can also expect several kinds of exodus from Arab East Jerusalem.

Some of this will be of a familiar kind, the move of less well off people, especially those not owning houses, to Palestinian areas outside the barrier (with consequent loss of Jerusalem residency). Under the extension of current conditions, we can also expect and have started to see an increase in more novel kinds of migration. As housing pressures rise, differentials lessen between rental costs in East Jerusalem and other places within Jerusalem and Israel, the daily hassle of being Arab in Jerusalem remains large, and the truncated metropolitan area’s gravitational pull wanes, we can expect to see more Arab relocation out of East Jerusalem, especially of younger people. These changed circumstances have already started to overcome social barriers that, until now, have largely prevented East Jerusalemites from moving to Jewish areas in Jerusalem and to Arab communities in the Triangle and Galilee. While the scope of these phenomena is still small, it may indicate a trend on the rise.

Arab neighborhoods **outside** the barrier will also be de-urbanized, becoming a series of fragmented and marginalized villages, lying just outside the rim of a metropolis to which they no longer have access (see Map 4). They have been hit with a loss of clients and social connections to Jerusalem, and a double exodus: a movement back to Jerusalem

of the more wealthy fragment of the population that joined them in recent decades, and of Palestinians back to their original West Bank villages. A preliminary survey shows that, as a result, property values have dropped massively (50%), and unemployment is high.

The capacity of these external villages to form a contiguous whole, and to realign their orientation to the larger towns of Ramallah and Bethlehem (to which they might serve as outlying suburbs), is hampered by severe restrictions on Palestinian movement and lack of connecting infrastructure. While the urban masses of Ramallah and Bethlehem areas might function independently, their development would be enhanced by a reliable connection between them, currently absent.



Map 4. Jerusalem's peripheral Arab neighborhoods (outside the separation barrier)

## Implications for Israel: today's urban welfare is tomorrow's geopolitics

The barrier's security and political effects have been considered by Israeli decision-makers; but its urban and economic consequences on both sides of the barrier far less so. Yet in the medium and longer term, these urban trends described may forcefully shape the geopolitical and security futures of a post-barrier Jerusalem.

Under *status quo* policies, the analysis above suggests that the separation barrier will divide a functional Arab metropolitan area into one string of de-urbanized and socially strained Arab villages within the barrier, and another string of such villages, even more severely hit, immediately adjacent to the barrier, on the outside. What are the security and political implications of this kind of post-barrier urban landscape?

The barrier may boost security in the short term by physical separation from Palestinians, with the terror threat posed by Jerusalem's Arab population within the barrier of manageable proportions. However, Jerusalem's Arab residents—a large population that has had decades of continuous social continuity with its Palestinian neighbors—are likely to be under tremendous pressure to become the front line of terror activities. The head of Israel's General Security Services already reports a sharp increase in the number participating in the last two years, and this before the increased pressures of a post-separation political reality. We can imagine that a population under duress and alienated from the general life of the city will be more fertile ground for participation in terror activities, and that the migration of people from this kind of disenfranchised East Jerusalem community to other locations in Israel may further undermine the barrier's declared purpose of separating Israel from sources of terror.

Additionally, to the extent that the barrier's purpose is to establish geopolitical facts on the ground, and mark the border of the state, then Israel's case will hardly be strengthened by a rim of alienated neighborhoods that clearly do not belong "inside." In the minds of people in these neighborhoods and in international opinion, the boundary will seem—indeed, will remain—artificial, in the wrong place. Thus, the demarcation will continue to be fragile and destabilizing.

While the necessity for, efficacy, and location of the barrier are all hotly debated, its urban consequences seems to point clearly to a straight-forward logic. **It is short-sighted for Israel to incorporate within the barrier neighborhoods it cannot absorb properly.** Whether its goal is terror-reduction or border-making, Israel must take its declaration of "us here and them there" seriously, by treating the people that are "here"—that is inside the barrier—as an "us," in substantial ways. If a large Arab population is to be included inside the metropolitan area, it must not be as an impoverished socially marginalized labor pool, separated from the city in every other way.

Specifically, the separation barrier is an opportunity for—indeed demands—(re)offering East Jerusalem's inhabitants citizenship, and full participation in a multi-ethnic metropolitan life. Times have changed since East Jerusalemites rejected citizenship and participation in municipal elections after 1967; many would now accept citizenship, shyly but gladly, though administrative blockages prevent the large majority of them from doing so.

But a change of status will not suffice. To be meaningful citizenship must be reflected in participation in city governance, a continuity of urban form and infrastructure, equal availability and development of affordable planned housing, municipal services, as well as the "softer" cultural and social amenities. If the barrier is the effective answer against terror it is claimed to be, there should be less need for the kind of mobility management and barriering of Arabs, both spatial and behavioral, that now prevail; these neighborhoods and their people can become part of the urban fabric.

## The demands of the proper integration proposed are high

In these circumstances, we could expect increasing and eventually substantial participation of Arab voters in Jerusalem municipal elections; the consequent alteration of the face of Jerusalem politics and governance is potentially one of the most far-reaching consequences of the kind of full-fledged integration necessary if Arab neighborhoods are to be included inside the separation barrier. Opening up affordable housing within the metropolitan area for the Arab population will also be a difficult move, especially with much of the more appropriately located areas already committed to Jewish neighborhoods (Pisgat Zeev and Gilo, for example). Relinquishing Jewish monopolies in more job sectors will also be a demanding change.

Less directly critical for Israel's well-being, perhaps, but still vitally important, Israel must allow the villages outside the wall, to reform themselves as a new urban constellation, linked between themselves and with the towns of Ramallah and Bethlehem. Here too, "us here and them there" must be taken seriously, with Israel removing itself from interference in the continuity of the Palestinian areas, and the mobility of their inhabitants.

If Israel fails to take the steps that will allow the re-formation of Jerusalem's Arab neighborhoods on both sides of the barrier into satisfying new urban constellations, the barrier will not lessen the motivations for terror, nor effectively separate Israel from it. Nor will it draw a stable national boundary. Under such circumstances, Israel may find itself, in the short term, maintaining further kinds of security barriers within its new barrier, and in the longer term, redrawing Jerusalem's boundaries inward, again, under terms it finds less favorable.

### The choices: unification, separation, or a mess

There is a clear warning in this analysis of the barrier's urban impacts: mere incorporation without integration of Arab neighborhoods by the barrier may undermine the separation barrier's declared goals. Up till now, the lack of inward integration of these neighborhoods was compensated for by their vibrant outward regional links to the Arab villages and towns around Jerusalem. With these links now being severed, Israel can no longer get away with continuing its less than half-hearted integration of Jerusalem's Arab inhabitants. It must wholeheartedly unify with or else wholeheartedly separate from the Arab neighborhoods of Jerusalem.

Each of these options—integration or separation—offers different opportunities and challenges.

**Integration** would irrevocably deepen Israel's unilateral incorporation of Arab East Jerusalem. It would demand considerable material resources and ideological reform to loosen Jewish monopolies in the labor and housing spheres. And it would alter the political landscape as Arabs begin to participate in municipal elections. It offers a second chance at unification that was declared but never accomplished after 1967.

It would be a mistake to think that integration would worsen Israel's position. In *Separate and Unequal*, an insider's review of Israel's policies on Jerusalem during the decades after the 1967 unification, the authors Chesin, Hutman and Melamed (two of whom served as advisors on Arab affairs within the Mayor's office during these years), come to the conclusion that Israel made a large and tragic error of judgment in not making a more honest and effective attempt to integrate Jerusalem's Arabs into the city. To do so would not have harmed Israel, they claim, indeed easing the conflict in Jerusalem would have improved Israel's standing in the

longer term negotiations for the city's future. If Israel rises this time to the challenge of an honest integration, Jerusalem might start to become a positive showpiece of peace, rather than the painful hardest step, always deferred to the last.

**Separation** also offers considerable challenges and opportunities. It would be bitterly opposed by an influential segment of the political spectrum, on the grounds of "dividing Jerusalem" and "capitulating to terror," as well as weakening Israel's military stance ("Palestinians in firing range of the heart of the city"). It would, however, lessen Israel's fears about swelling Arab populations within the city, and international opposition to the "occupation of East Jerusalem." It would greatly impact the many people in these neighborhoods who publicly aspire for the "liberation" of East Jerusalem, but are privately terrified by the thought of moving from life at the margin of a First World country, to deprivation and chaos at the edge of a Third World one.

Each of these options is a bitter pill for Israel, with major long-term benefits. Frankly, it is hard to imagine that either can be taken in Israel's current political milieu.

There is, therefore, a danger that a third option would be taken—**incorporation without integration**—whose dangers have been outlined in this essay. This option appears to avoid the wrenching decisions associated with integration and separation. In fact, it will only postpone them. With a barrier in place, and residence in neighborhoods just outside the municipal boundaries not an option, the kind of pressures that led to a "soft transfer" till now, will, instead, bring tensions to a boiling point, and/or force relocation to other places in Israel. Sooner or later, the people included inside the barrier will need to become Israeli, or the barrier will have to be moved again. In either case, the sooner the better. In other words now—at the onset.