

Urban Planning: Tool and Weapon

The power of urban planning in Israel as a warning for the Western
Multicultural State

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Ethnic conflict is a worldwide phenomenon. Donald Horowitz defines the main goals of ethnic conflict as follows: control of the state, control of *a* state, and exemption from control by others.¹ It is not a new phenomenon; however, the processes of globalization appear to be exacerbating the prevalence, the intensity and the knowledge of ethnic-based conflict. While globalization is a contested term, it is generally associated with an increase in the movement and interconnectedness of goods and people. It is associated with the spread of markets and widespread migration. These changes have resulted in two major challenges relevant to the scope of this paper. First, the nation-state, defined as a single nation within a state's borders, no longer exists. States no longer boast an ethnically homogeneous population but are ethnically diverse as a result of immigration. Second, economic disparities are manifesting themselves in certain areas of the world along ethnic lines. Outside the West, "free markets do not spread wealth evenly and enrich entire developing societies. Instead, they tend to concentrate glaring wealth in the hands of an 'outsider' minority, generating ethnic envy and hatred among frustrated impoverished majorities."² The potential for conflict in the multiethnic state wrought by economic disparities is furthered by "the spread of norms of equality [that] has made ethnic subordination illegitimate and spurred ethnic groups everywhere to compare their standing in society against that of groups in close proximity."³ In short, globalization is undermining the traditional configuration of the nation-state and is creating economic disparity which mirror ethnic divisions.

These changes resulting from increased ethnic diversity and associated socio-economic levels are challenging many state-centered conceptions such as citizenship,

¹ Horowitz, Donald. L. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. 1985: 5.

² Chua, Amy. *World on Fire*. 2003: 16.

³ Horowitz, Donald. L. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. 1985: 5.

human rights, and social justice. Urban planning must not be exempt from this reexamination. Instead, urban planning must be at the centre of this discussion because it is within the goals of urban planning to influence the territory and space which people occupy. People have an impact on the spaces they occupy and in turn the space has an impact on them. But people must not merely occupy a space; people must *live* in a space. Urban planning carries the toolset to foster belonging and acceptance of people within a given space or territory. Additionally, urban planning has the responsibility of dividing and distributing state resources. Will the state make these resources available to all inhabitants, thereby extending belonging to all people within its borders? Or will urban planning create and/or exacerbate divisions?

While planning has in the past concealed itself as a neutral, logical, rational and non-political process, as characterized by the Chicago model; it is crucial to reject this façade and instead adopt the realistic view of planning as a means of promoting the goals and vision of decision-makers with power.⁴ In this way, conflict can result when decisions are made by the dominant ethnic group without taking into account the wellbeing of ethnically diverse segments of a population. Such decision-making can result from unintentional neglect but can also result from deliberate policies. Urban planning can thus serve as a tool or a weapon. Recent years have brought increasing attention to the subject of planning within the context of challenges raised by the globalization process; however, very few have investigated the relationship between urban planning and ethnonationalism in the multiethnic state. This paper seeks to underline the importance of urban planning in addressing conflict in multiethnic societies, underlining its ability to serve both as a tool for consolidating national identity and

⁴ Sandercock, Leonie. *Cosmopolis II*. 2003: 31.

integration; and as a weapon fostering segregation of ethnic minorities and promoting conflict. The paper will highlight the case of Israel as it offers a unique case study on the effects of urban planning carrying important lessons for the multiethnic state which is increasingly becoming the global norm. Founded in 1948, Israel has relied heavily on urban planning to consolidate its national group, and to segregate ethnic outsiders. In this regard, this paper will illustrate how urban planning has exacerbated conflict in Israel based on its use as a tool to foster Jewish national unity; and as a weapon to marginalize and alienate its Arab population.

The examination will focus on the impact of planning on the inhabitants of cities. The planner Le Corbusier declared that the city “commands everything: peace, war, work.”⁵ Indeed, this opinion has been reiterated by scholars who point to the ability of the city to both mediate and exacerbate conflict. Scott Bollens suggests that the city is not merely a mirror of conflict but a prism: the city does not reflect or replicate conflict as it appears in the state setting; instead, the city acts as a prism creating and casting new dimensions or interpretations of the conflict not necessarily present at the state level.⁶ Planning, he asserts, impacts the form and shape that conflict will take within the boundaries of the city, providing possibilities ranging from urban stability to urban volatility.⁷ The special status of cities in multiethnic states is further highlighted by Yiftachel who suggests that these cities never fully replicate the dynamics of wider conflicts because “the urban arena is governed by a different combination of powers,

⁵ Scott, James C. “The High Modernist City: An Experiment and a Critique.”1998: 113.

⁶ Bollens, Scott A. “Urban Policy in Ethnically Polarized Societies.”(1998): 3.

⁷ Ibid. 194.

regulations, and forces to the ones prevailing in non-urban regions.”⁸ In this way, the city with its ‘urban regime,’ is “a key actor in the determination of local conflicts and of resource allocation.”⁹ Therefore, the city and its effects on its inhabitants serves as a focal point for examining urban planning in the multiethnic state.

Israel is unique because it is a state created with the intended purpose of providing a national homeland to members of the Jewish ethnic group. In this way, the Israeli state does not mirror other settler states such as Australia, Canada, or the United States. While the population of all settler states is sustained by continuous waves of immigration, Israel has limited both its immigration and its citizenship to members of its ethnic group. Such ethnic-centered policies have led Oren Yiftachel to conclude that Israel is an ethnocracy. Moreover, Israel was settled in a relatively short time period under extreme domestic and international pressure. As a result, the country’s “new cities and neighborhoods were planned on state land without the usual constraints of economic forces, land values or subdivision economies.”¹⁰ Arie Schachar concludes that, “Israel can be regarded as a country that was spatially planned and designed to a greater extent than most other Western democracies.”¹¹ Israel, thus, provides an excellent case to examine the effects of urban planning within a multiethnic state.

As previously mentioned, Israel is a highly planned state in which *state* planning has played a central role since the country’s founding. Indeed, it must be noted that local social forces were restricted from direct influence on the development of the city because

⁸ Yiftachel, Oren and Haim Yacobi. “Urban Ethnocracy: Ethnicization and the Production of Space in an Israeli ‘Mixed City.’”(2003): 678.

⁹ Ibid. 678.

¹⁰ Shadar, Hadas and Robert Oxman. “Of Village and City: Ideology in Israeli Public Planning.”(October 2003): 246.

¹¹ Schachar, Arie. “Reshaping the Map of Israel: A New National Planning Doctrine.” (1998): 210.

“local forces were weak and had little impact on planning, whereas state forces and central planning agencies left a powerful imprint on the final plans and population policies.”¹² Arie Schachar echoes this sentiment and asserts that it is clear throughout the history of Israeli planning practice that ‘space matters,’ and stresses the degree to which planning in Israel is a centralized, state-run phenomenon.¹³ This centrality of planning is related to the Israeli state’s feeling that its very existence was threatened.¹⁴ A great importance was, therefore, placed on securitizing borders and asserting territorial sovereignty. In addition, the massive waves of Jewish immigration required intense planning.¹⁵ It is within the dual framework of the threatened state and the settler state that Israel has placed such an emphasis on state-centered planning. This centrality is exposed in Shadar’s division of historical periods in Israeli planning. While this paper does not afford the space to provide a detailed account, certain shifts in planning ideology and planning contexts are important to note, in order to understand the saliency of land and space to the Israeli state and how planning has played a role both in consolidating its national group and in alienating ‘ethnic others.’

This first phase from 1948 to 1959 revolved around the concept of conquering the land. The State Planning Department was created a year following the founding of Israel and issued its first comprehensive plan, the Sharon Plan named after head architect Arie Sharon, in 1951. This plan was steeped in Zionist ideology and was concerned with developing agriculture-based villages with a two-fold purpose: first, the primarily agricultural vision was intended to develop a “healthy society of workers attached to the

¹² Shadar and Oxman. “Of Village and City: Ideology in Israeli Public Planning.”(October 2003): 2.

¹³ Schachar, Arie. “Reshaping the Map of Israel: A New National Planning Doctrine.” (1998): 210.

¹⁴ Ibid. 210.

¹⁵ Alterman, Rachelle. “Can Planning Help in Time of Crisis? Planners’ Response to Israel’s Recent Wave of Mass Immigration.” 1995: 156.

land;” second, as “a means to establish ownership and presence in the land.”¹⁶ The Sharon Plan ignored conditions of national diversity and applied a uniform plan to all new towns and neighborhoods centered on low-density cities.¹⁷ During this period twenty-five cities were planned and built on state lands by the Public Housing Department.¹⁸

The second period ranging from 1960-1966 is characterized by increasing density and a failure of the homogenous plan. The Housing Department assumed greater control of the planning process and “gradually became more sensitive to the needs of people rather than abstract ideals,” despite the continued acknowledgement of the importance of the agriculture-based settlements.¹⁹ The linear plan devised in the UK was adopted as it provided a means to build cities in stages and to allow for higher density by building vertically. It provided a new vision for the city one in which perceived the city “as a united totality; this in contrast to the previous model in which the city was perceived as an assemblage of neighborhoods.”²⁰ Despite the change in urban planning and the appearance of cities, the ideology which placed the neighborhood as the “means for creating a strong social unit of community” remained and was institutionalized in 1962 with the erection of the Program Section in the Ministry of the Housing Department, charged with distributing houses and resources for healthy communities.²¹

The third period in urban planning ranging from 1967-1979 further embraced the neighborhood as central and sought to protect, securitize and socially integrate the

¹⁶ Shadar and Oxman. “Of Village and City: Ideology in Israeli Public Planning.”(October 2003): 247.

¹⁷ Ibid. 247.

¹⁸ Ibid. 250.

¹⁹ Ibid. 253.

²⁰ Ibid. 255.

²¹ Ibid. 255.

neighborhood. The neighborhood was turned inward. Motorized traffic was separated from pedestrian traffic with vehicles only allowed around the neighborhoods' peripheries; and high volume roadways separated neighborhoods from one another.²² Planning ideology embraced the popular notion of the city totaling the sum of its neighborhoods – a departure from the view of the city as a unit.²³

The fourth period, Schadar, identifies as beginning in 1980 and ranging to the present and is characterized by the rise of individualism and the neo-traditional city. A major change in Israeli planning occurred: the former importance given to the introversion of neighborhoods as a space to create national unity was eroded.²⁴ For the first time, the city was viewed as an entity onto its own rather than an assemblage of detached neighborhoods. This shift in ideology paralleled the growth in personal freedom because it recognized that the quality of a city contained a variety of possibilities for individual development.²⁵ Urban design reflected this new paradigm in the form of market squares, mixed traffic, exteriorized public institutions and linking rather than segregating roadways.²⁶ The city was to become a unified unit which would respond to nuances unaddressed by the former restrictive and homogenous approach.

During the 1990s, two important planning documents were devised. The first, the National Master Plan (NMP 31), was published and approved by the Israeli government in 1992 and is a short-range statutory plan that provides a new framework for national planning decisions.²⁷ The second document, the Israel 2020, approved in 1997, offers a

²² Shadar and Oxman. "Of Village and City: Ideology in Israeli Public Planning." (October 2003): 256.

²³ Ibid. 257.

²⁴ Ibid. 261.

²⁵ Ibid. 262.

²⁶ Ibid. 262.

²⁷ Schachar, Arie. "Reshaping the Map of Israel: A New National Planning Doctrine." (1998): 212.

strategic rather than a statutory approach to planning. Rather than providing a blueprint, it offers guidelines to achieve long term goals which range in topics including economy, human welfare, land policies, public services and transportation; all regarded as “essential in defining the prospective map of Israel.”²⁸ While the ideology behind state planning has shifted, the scope of Israeli state planning remains one which is inclusive, encompassing a wide range of essential goods and services.

To stress the degree of centrality of Israeli planning, one has only to look at the distribution of land. The government has retained rights to 93% of the country’s land and has placed it under the control of the National Land Authority. Under this arrangement, citizens may lease the land from the state and may own the houses they build on the land; however ownership of the land on which the houses are built remain in state control. Land in Israel is said to be collectively owned by the Jewish people, further highlighting the ethnic component to state planning in Israel which views land as a precious national asset.²⁹ To prevent unnecessary development and urban sprawl, the state implemented zoned all unused land as agricultural land including land that was uncultivated. It is only in the last decade that the Israeli state has unfrozen some of this land for development.³⁰ The state’s control over territory gives the state power to determine both the quality of the land holdings allocated to its inhabitants, each ranging in agricultural and redevelopment value; as well as the legal status that is imparted. Renewable leases, granting legal rights to inhabitants of the land, range from 21, 49 or 98 years; in other cases, inhabitants are only granted a license agreement, a lesser form of legal

²⁸ Schachar, Arie. “Reshaping the Map of Israel: A New National Planning Doctrine.” (1998): 212.

²⁹ Ibid. 215.

³⁰ Ibid. 215.

recognition.³¹ The state therefore retains tight control of land, and discretion over both its use and the period of time.

Public housing is another area of urban planning where the degree of state control is evident. In fact, it has been argued that public housing was the main method utilized by the state to both territorialize and spatialize the new state. Public housing territorialized the state as it established state sovereignty characterized by control, power, and authority over its territories that it acquired, both to the domestic and foreign observer.³² The provision of housing to citizens, and the accompanying infrastructure illustrate state capacity and legitimate state power. More importantly, in Israel, the provision of public housing granted the state control over where its immigrants would settle. Israel's stated planning goal was "to establish public housing in the correct location and to make use of those in need of housing for purposes of populating undeveloped regions."³³ It is only since the last wave of immigration in the early 1990s, that the Israeli state repealed their policy of settling immigrants in the country's periphery and adopted instead a policy of rental assistance allowing immigrants free-choice regarding the location of their residence.³⁴

In addition to territorializing, public housing spatialized the territory as it contributed to the construction and gave form to the physical landscape of the state.³⁵ In this vein, public housing was employed as a tool of homogenization. By providing the same form of housing to all immigrants regardless of their cultural backgrounds, planners

³¹ Kedar, S. and O. Yiftachel (2006). "Land Regime and Social Relations in Israel." 2006: 135.

³² Kalus, Rachel and Hubert Law Yone. "National Home/Personal Home: Public Housing and the Shaping of National Space in Israel."(2002): 767.

³³ Ibid. 772.

³⁴ Schachar, Arie. "Reshaping the Map of Israel: A New National Planning Doctrine." (1998): 213.

³⁵ Kalus and Yone. "National Home/Personal Home: Public Housing and the Shaping of National Space in Israel."(2002): 767.

inserted the state's purported norms into the private lives of its citizens. The apartments were planned along Western standards of efficiency and functionality and operated along the following guideline: "the ethnicity of the immigrants must not be taken into consideration, as the tendencies of both the immigrants and the host society are to forge a uniform Israeli style of life."³⁶ Public housing thus carried out three goals: it served as means of asserting state control to domestic and international audiences, of settling immigrants in desirable areas central to state goals and in integrating immigrants from various cultural backgrounds under a national identity.

The degree of control that urban planning extends to states is highlighted by Oren Yiftachel's who stresses that planning has a dark underside that promotes state social control, through four dimensions.³⁷ The territorial dimension which encompasses state control of land through zoning, building regulations and ownership, furthers and entrenches the state's ability to contain its minority population, to conduct surveillance and to segregate the minority from the majority. The procedural dimension encompasses the formulation and implementation processes of plans and regulations. The structure of these processes can promote the exclusion of certain segments of the population which lead to their marginalization. The socioeconomic dimension develops as a long-term impact of planning externalities flowing from the 'quiet redistributive mechanism of land use planning' which can deprive subordinate groups of infrastructure and resources placing them in a position of dependence on the dominant group. The cultural dimension acknowledges that planning has an impact on the various identities within a given space. The homogenizing goal central to the creation of a state's national identities privileges

³⁶ Kalus and Yone. "National Home/Personal Home: Public Housing and the Shaping of National Space in Israel."(2002): 773.

³⁷ Yiftachel, Oren. "Planning and Social Control: Exploring the 'Dark Side.' 1998.

the central core cultural group while subordinating other ethno-cultural groups, seeking to alienate, repress and delegitimize. Planning is, therefore, a key element to “the nation-state's strategy of space production, which is central to the shaping and reshaping of ethnic and cultural identities.”³⁸ Planning is not a neutral process but has the power to both privilege and marginalize.

Planning as a means of social control was employed by the Israeli state on its Jewish population to fortify, consolidate and integrate. As previously mentioned, planning was utilized by the state to forge a national identity through a two-pronged approach: the homogenous application of plans both in the development of neighborhoods, and the homogenous design of public housing was meant to replace cultural differences amongst Jewish immigrants with a unifying and superseding national identity. This homogenization of the fragmented Jewish population, however, did not address other population groups within Israel that contribute to the country's diversity. Arabs make up nineteen percent of the population of the Israeli state.³⁹ In contrast, planning as a means of social control was employed by the Israeli government on its Arab population as a means of segregating, marginalizing and alienating. If it can be said that urban planning was used as a tool to unite the Jewish people under a national identity, then it can also be said that the same process of urban planning was used as a weapon against the Arab population. The larger rate of natural increase among Israeli Arabs was seen as a threat to Jewish demographic superiority and partially accounts for the state's widespread use of urban planning to regulate Arab communities.⁴⁰ The impact

³⁸ Yiftachel, Oren. “Planning and Social Control: Exploring the ‘Dark Side.’ 1998.

³⁹ Kedar, S. and O. Yiftachel (2006). “Land Regime and Social Relations in Israel.” 2006: 135.

⁴⁰ Bollens, Scott A. “Urban Policy in Ethnically Polarized Societies.”(1998): 197.

of Israeli state urban planning on its Arab population, characterized by negligence and intentional planning is devastating.

Land has also been used by the Israeli state as a means of control over its Arab population. The control of land held by the Israeli state has prevented the development and expansion of Arab towns. Though accounting for 19 percent of the population, Arabs have access to only 3.5 percent of the land in the form of private ownership, and another 0.3-0.5% of land in the form of leased land, often seasonal.⁴¹ These figures reflect the mass scale of expropriations of Arab territory by the Israeli state. Jewish immigrants to the state of Israel prior to 1953 were settled in one of the 370 settlements, 350 of which were located on expropriated Arab territory, based on the legalized ‘settlement of title’ which deprived Arabs of their rights to land ownership.⁴² A shift in legal focus from expropriation to land-use limitations occurred when virtually no Arab lands remained.⁴³ Furthermore, the land occupied by Arab communities has been restricted to prohibit expansion despite a population increase. This has been accomplished through planning and zoning laws and also by the construction of major roadways often in combination with the development of Jewish settlements to encase, or fragment an Arab community so as to prohibit any physical possibility of expansion.⁴⁴

As a result, there is a growing population density in Arab communities which is creating a housing shortage in addition to the unavailability of a variety of housing options suitable for different lifestyles and incomes. New communities are being built in response to the loosening of the Israeli state on formerly declared agricultural lands

⁴¹ Kedar, S. and O. Yiftachel (2006). “Land Regime and Social Relations in Israel.” 2006: 135.

⁴² Ibid. 137, 139.

⁴³ Ibid. 140.

⁴⁴ Bollens, Scott A. “Urban Policy in Ethnically Polarized Societies.”(1998): 197.

which is creating a housing market marketed as a means of improving standards of living for people who can afford it; however, these communities employ admissions committees which advance the ethno-class segregation initiated by the state.⁴⁵ As a result it is incredibly difficult for Arabs to leave the Arab communities in search of better-suited housing, despite an overwhelming need.

Land for industrial development is also state regulated and the allocation of industrial areas by the Ministry of Industry and Trade clearly reflects an ethnic preference. In 2003, only 13 percent of land in the Galilee, or 921 dunams was allocated for industrial development to Arab local authorities in contrast to the 6,016 dunams of industrial area allocated to Jewish local authorities, despite Arabs accounting for fifty percent of the population of this region.⁴⁶ The situation was even worse in the Negev, where Arabs account for over 14 percent of the population, not including the unrecognized Arab villages in which half of the Arab population lives, but received only 1.7% of the land allocation.⁴⁷ This perpetuates the socio-economic difference between Jews and Arabs, who are unable to secure industrial lands. It has a negative impact on Arab entrepreneurship, employment, and self-reliance because they are unable to foster economic development as industry is relegated and confined to these territories zoned for industrial development. This has a particularly deep impact for Arabs who are systematically discriminated from public service jobs and higher forms of employment. As a result, about half of all working Arabs in Israel are employed in industrial and construction jobs (38.2) or as unskilled labourers (14.7 percent), compared to only a fifth

⁴⁵ Tzfidia, Erez. "The Ethno-Class Trajectory of New Neighborhoods in Israel." 147.

⁴⁶ Salman, Nissim Shlam and Roy Folkman. A Proposal for Equal Development for Jews and Arabs in the Negev and Galilee. Sikkuy Policy Paper. 2005: 21.

⁴⁷ Ibid. 21.

of Jews who find employment in these categories.⁴⁸ These jobs are more abundant in the designated industrial zones. Consequently, the unemployment rate in Arab communities is steadily on the rise, and despite a general rise in unemployment in Israel, there is a definite disparity between the Jewish unemployment rate and the Arab unemployment rate.⁴⁹ This disparity is tied to the inability of Arabs to secure employment due to the state's policy of restricting the amount of industrial land available to Arabs and in allocating industrial lands away from Arab communities.⁵⁰

In addition to housing and land, infrastructure is an important concern for Arabs within Israel. Arab communities face discrimination in the Israeli planning system when they are not officially designated as a town, a complicated process that requires regional recognition. It is only after this process that towns can devise a plan to oversee its infrastructure provision and community development and request assistance funds.⁵¹ For this reason, many Arab communities have been intentionally removed from the planning sphere. As a result of decades of neglect, there is a stark contrast in the infrastructure present in Arab communities in contrast to those provided by the state to Jewish towns.

Water and Sewer systems are but one facet of infrastructure in which this disparity is clearly illustrated. Arab communities are visible by the large black water tanks that are mounted on the rooftops of houses, which hold water should the unreliable piped water supply fail. While the water pipes extend to the entrance of Arab towns, the state has not provided the individual hook-ups that are included in the plans for Jewish towns. Consequently, water is reliably piped directly to the houses in Jewish towns and

⁴⁸ Belikoff, Michal. "Gaps between Jewish and Arab Citizens of Israel in Education, Health, Income, Employment and Poverty." 2004: 59.

⁴⁹ Ibid. 62.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 62.

⁵¹ Bollens, Scott A. "Urban Policy in Ethnically Polarized Societies."(1998): 197.

these water tanks are not present. The black water tanks are a visible symbol both of the inequality and poor infrastructure present in Arab communities and of the segregation between Arab and Jewish communities. Driving through the country, one can clearly distinguish an Arab community from a Jewish community. Sikkuy, a non-governmental organization that promotes the advancement of civic equality in Israel declared that “the infrastructures in Israel are well developed, but Arab localities are often like isolated islands within the national and regional systems.”⁵²

In addition to the poor water system, due to a lack of municipal plans, the roadways within Arab towns are built on dangerous angles and are narrow, causing many car accidents and deaths of children. Sikkuy compiled data and asserts that one is twenty-two percent more likely to be hurt in a road accident in an Arab town than in a Jewish town, and that fifty-eight percent of people killed in Arab towns resulting from road accidents were children.⁵³ The living conditions of Arabs as a result of active planning to restrict growth and planning neglect have resulted in unacceptable infrastructure and have created two classes of citizens. One is receiving provisions from the state, while the other is being kept at subsistent living standards through planning mechanisms. One was welcomed into the state and extended public housing, while the other had his land expropriated. One is encouraged to grow and make use of new real estate market to improve living conditions, while the other is excluded and segregated.

This has created a situation in which one citizen feels a deep sense of belonging while the other feels alienated. This feeling is summed up by an Arab resident who explains: “Lod is not my city; I am just a formal inhabitant here. I physically exist but do

⁵² Dichter, Schuli. Sikkuy’s Report on Equality and Integration of the Arab Citizens in Israel: 2000-2001. Sikkuy (Spring 2001).

⁵³ Dichter, Schuli. Monitoring Civic Equality between Arab and Jewish Citizens of Israel. 2001: 27.

not really live here. Everything here is done only for part of the population; the Arabs are still oppressed in their Ghettos.”⁵⁴ While urban planning was utilized as a tool to homogenize and forge a sense of belonging for the Jewish ethnic group; it was turned around and used as a weapon against the Arabs within the borders of Israel which preserves a low socio-economic standard, and maintains segregation, denying recognition. The damage inflicted by urban planning is thus not merely physical but penetrates deeper, as “a person or a group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves... and can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a .. reduced mode of being.”⁵⁵

Conflict between Arabs and Jews has been exacerbated by the state urban planning system. Instead of fostering the mediating mechanisms existing in Western states that weaken conflict, Israel’s planning goals have entrenched conflict. Horowitz identifies two main mechanisms present in Western multiethnic states. First, he claims that “ethnicity in the West typically does not displace all other forms of group difference” and identifies regional, religious, class, and linguistic differences which cross-cut and are evidence in political party organization and voter behaviour.⁵⁶ In contrast, Yiftachel asserts that in Israel “a clear mental and spatial segregation exists between Arabs and Jews.”⁵⁷ Identities, therefore are constructed and cemented in these ethnic identities, leaving little space for cross-cutting cleavages. Second, an overarching level of identity

⁵⁴ Yiftachel, Oren and Haim Yacobi. “Urban Ethnocracy: Ethnicization and the Production of Space in an Israeli ‘Mixed City.’”(2003): 686.

⁵⁵ Taylor, Charles. Multiculturalism.1994: 25.

⁵⁶ Horowitz, Donald. L. Ethnic Groups in Conflict. 1985: 19.

⁵⁷ Yiftachel, Oren and Haim Yacobi. “Urban Ethnocracy: Ethnicization and the Production of Space in an Israeli ‘Mixed City.’”(2003): 673.

exists whereby members of ethnic groups may identify more readily with the national identity than their ethnic affiliation. Horowitz makes the claim that “supraethnic identities tend to have a salience in the West that they do not generally have in Asia or Africa.”⁵⁸ The Israeli state does not offer this option as it is an ethnic-based state, where state resources are allocated on ethnic lines. The option of a supraethnic identity is not extended to the Arab inhabitants, whose ethnic identity places them in a subordinate position to the dominant ethnic group.

While this paper does not assert that urban planning is the cause for ethnic-based conflict in Israel, it does underline the role that urban planning plays in forging an inclusive or a segregated society. This role cannot be ignored, especially in multi-ethnic states where preferential policies toward the dominant ethnic group risk exacerbating conflict by creating socio-economic divides that mirror ethnic divides.

Israel offers an important case study to all Western democracies that espouse multicultural visions but often fail to incorporate them in the crafting and implementation of state policies. Israel is a democracy which is attempting to cling to the nation-state understanding of the state. Here it is evident how urban planning can be used as a weapon against ‘the other’ and how while it promotes the status of the dominant ethnic group, it is also promotes and exacerbates conflict as it marginalizes and denies recognition of minority ethnic groups. The very tool that is aiding the dominant ethnic group is leading to an unstable socioeconomic division clearly formulated on ethnic lines. While such a policy is not outright in other Western democracies espousing multiculturalism, the outcomes in Israel must serve as a warning to those in multiethnic states who ignore or

⁵⁸ Yiftachel, Oren and Haim Yacobi. “Urban Ethnocracy: Ethnicization and the Production of Space in an Israeli ‘Mixed City.’”(2003): 673.

underplay the power of urban planning and the increasing importance of its role in fostering positive relations between the state and the people within its space. Will people merely inhabit space or will people be invited to *live* in it? There is no better time for multiethnic states to learn this lesson as “the 21st century is indisputably the century of multicultural cities and societies.”⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Sandercock, Leonie. *Cosmopolis II*. 2003: 105.

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