

“Housing as strategy: whose ideal city?”

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Forward

This paper is part of an ongoing work that asks how global processes of urbanization may be informed by particular spatial politics in the Middle East, specifically in face of housing debates that refer to a global ‘housing crisis’ and focus on affordability as a solution.¹ The paper was devised as a suggestion for future research that examines how the right to housing – understood as integral to Henri Lefebvre’s *Right to the city* (1968) – is influenced by local politics and global processes of urbanization simultaneously.

Introduction

In November 2014, the Israeli national planning authority approved the construction of a new city in the Western Galilee region in the northern part of the country: *Tantour*. The city is meant to provide housing to Israeli-Arab citizens, as a response to an acute housing distress within Israel’s most marginalized population.² In this paper, I ask how the local housing crisis itself (defined and ostensibly solved by the state) is used by the state as a strategy for re-producing existing socio-spatial relations, and how it may be used by urban citizens for undermining the process of production of ‘ethnocratic’ space. Using the framework of radical geography (Aalbers and Christophers 2014; Kipfer and Goonewardena 2013; Marcuse 2012; and others) that follows Henri Lefebvre’s concept of *The production of space* (1974), I argue that despite the framing of the new development in liberal terms as a solution to the local housing crisis, Tantour – conceived by the state as an ‘Arab city’ – is in fact manifesting a continuous spatial practice of Judaization of space, which is the urbanization of Israel-Palestine as a whole according to ‘ethnocratic’ ideology (Tzfadia and Yacobi 2011; Yiftachel 2006). Thus, the new city reproduces sociospatial relations that sustain Jewish hegemony over ethnically contested national territory and strengthens practices that have contributed to the particular housing crisis to begin with.

Tantour (in Arabic: a kind of a pointed *hat*, alluding to the local hilltop landscape) provides a useful case study for the right to housing, as it elucidates explicit links

¹ This ongoing work includes, among other examples: ENV53800A *The politics of housing* – an undergraduate course taught in the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University.

² See: *Bourgeois-ing: the new Arab city in the Galilee will look like any Jewish city*. Xnet. Web. 11 Nov 2014 [in Hebrew]. <xnet.ynet.co.il>

between current suburban developments, state strategy for coping with a housing crisis, and a long history of colonial urbanization. Once built, the new city will include approximately 10,000 housing units for about 40,000 people, who the state refers to as the Israeli-Arab middle-class.³ The city is conceived as an exclusively-Arab urban space, and it is presented in popular discourse as a benevolent gesture from the state to its Arab citizens, who have been systematically marginalized and discriminated against through various spatial strategies by the state since its inception. While Arab communities as well as ‘mixed’ Jewish and Arab (of various religions) spaces have existed in Palestine long before Israel was established, politicians refer to Tantour over the media as ‘the first Arab city’ in the country. Indeed, it is the first Arab city constructed by the *state* of Israel.

The definition of an ‘Arab city’ that would serve Arab citizens stems from an existing differentiation of an ‘Arab sector’ in Israel’s economy, which is bifurcated along ethnic divides to two unequal parts (Nitzan and Bichler 2002: 117). $\frac{2}{3}$ of Israeli-Arabs are employed by the Jewish sector and commuting from Arab to Jewish localities for work. Despite formal full equality in citizenship, Israeli-Arabs are usually excluded from high-status occupations, especially in the private sector, experience various levels of discrimination (despite progressive anti-discrimination laws) and are considered to be a cheap and un- or semi-skilled labour force. Highly educated people often end up settling for jobs in the Jewish sector for which they are overqualified (p.124). This unequal occupational distribution is an ethnicized articulation of uneven development, which is essential in capitalist economy, and it is sustained by Israel’s ethnicized spatiality of exclusively-Arab localities, exclusively-Jewish ones, and ‘mixed’ cities that are spaces of extreme social inequalities. It seems unlikely that an exclusively-Arab city such as Tantour that is intentionally planned as a sleeping suburb with no intensive industrial or commercial activity, a city whose residents are expected to be ethnically homogenous and employed elsewhere, would enable a change in this pattern – although it is expected to improve material housing conditions for a population in need.

The ethnic logic of capital and the ethnic logic of space

³ See: Xnet. Web. 11 Nov 2014 [in Hebrew].

The establishment of Tantour should be examined within the context of ongoing practices of displacement and dispossession in the Galilee region, an area with a significant concentration of Arab population. In the 1970's, some of the Arab residents of the ancient ('mixed') city of Acre, on the shore of the Mediterranean, were offered public housing units in the nearby exclusively-Arab town of Judeida-Makr. As some Arab families left, Acre became relatively more Jewish. In 1979, an explicit plan for Judaizing the Galilee established numerous village-like suburbs (*mitzpim*; in Hebrew: 'outlooks') with admission committees that enabled the exclusion of Arab residents.⁴ At the same time, Arab towns and villages in the area have been prevented from growing, as they are repeatedly denied plans for urban development and lands were reappropriate by the state.⁵ Most recently, the state allocated agricultural land from Judeida-Makr to the purpose of building Tantour, thus limiting development in the existing Arab urban space. The ongoing saga of Judaizing the Galilee through various spatial practices is embedded in the broader Israeli 'ethnocratic' regime.⁶

Yiftachel (2006) defines 'ethnocracy' as an "*expansion of the dominant group in contested territory and its domination of power structures while maintaining a democratic façade*" (p.3), and points at links between an apartheid regime in the Occupied Territories and strategies of segregation within Israeli borders. In ethnocratic regimes, ethnic divisions underlie political citizenship and determine the distribution of power and resources (Yiftachel and Yacobi 2003: 689). Class structure, contested territory and the appearance of democracy are all essential parts in maintaining control by the dominant ethnic group, whose power produces ethnicized space (Yiftachel 2006:

⁴ These frontier settlements that were all built on hilltops were designed to block the development of nearby Palestinian towns. While Israeli-Arabs are neither formally segregated, nor is their mobility restricted, the spatial strategy of the *mitzpim* is very similar to that of the Jewish illegal settlements in the Occupied Territories: they are gated communities that were founded for the purpose of pulverizing a predominantly Arab space. See: Piterberg, Gabriel (2010). Settlers and their states: a reply to Zeev Sternhell. *New Left Review*, 62, 115-124 (p.122). The *Mitzpim* consist almost entirely of middle-class Ashkenazi Jews. Their sorting committees, while being subjected to anti-discrimination law, generally bypass legal impediments in excluding Arabs and Mizrahi Jews.

⁵ Arab citizens in Israel are systematically and institutionally discriminated against in the legal land system. For example, until 2005 non-Jewish citizens in Israel were unable to purchase lands from the Jewish National Fund (JNF), which held over 90% of Israeli land. Now, the JNF is compensated by the state for Lands sold to non-Jews, thus structural inequality remains.

⁶ This description focuses on the period after the founding of Israel in 1948. Importantly, during the 1948 Nakba/War of Independence, many Palestinian Arabs throughout the newly declared Israeli national territory were forced to leave their homes.

12).⁷ In Israel-Palestine, Judaization of space follows the specific interpretation of Jewish identity that is legitimized by the Israeli state: a combined Jewish nationality, ethnicity and religion. This affects not only Jewish-Arab relations, but also relations between Ashkenazi and Mizrahi; orthodox and secular; and indigenous, settler and immigrant Jews in Israel.

The ethnocratic regime stands on three pillars: ethnonationalism, the ‘ethnic logic of capital’ and a settler-colonial society.⁸ *Ethnonationalism* is a political aspiration for a nation-state based on ethnic self-determination, and for Jews – Zionism (Yiftachel 2006: 12). However, nations and states rarely overlap, and when they do, they are inherently exclusionary of other nations. The gap between nation and state therefore implies a process of production of ‘national territory’.⁹ In ethnocracy, this process is shaped by an *ethnic logic of space* that sustains control by the hegemonic settler group. *The ethnic logic of capital* refers to capital flow, development and class formation along ethnic divides, and it operates on all levels of the settler-colonial political economy: from an ethnicized segmentation of the national labour market (as in the Arab sector) to the reinforcement of such segmentation by global capitalist economy and neoliberal policies of privatization. In Israel, the capitalist system is organized around an ‘ethnoclass’ structure, which sustains ethnic divisions in an economy with seemingly withdrawn state power (p.15). For Yiftachel, the concept of ‘ethnoclass’ extends the meaning of domination beyond class categories to include three levels of belonging to the ethnonation (Tzfadia and Yacobi 2011: 14). The dominant, ruling ethnoclass is the founding group of the settler-colonial society that establishes state institutions according to its own vision. This group creates an ‘incorporation regime’, which determines the levels and forms of simultaneous assimilation and exclusion of indigenous peoples and later immigrants in the nation-state. The second, middle ethnoclass is that of later immigrants. This ethnoclass is homogenized into the nation yet differentiated from the founding group (p.35). Lastly, the inferior group, the third ethnoclass, is the

⁷ In fact, some ethnocracies are outwardly committed to an ‘open’ regime and develop extensive democratic mechanisms along with an undemocratic expansion of the dominant ethnonation. This is apparent in 19th century Australia and in contemporary Malaysia, Estonia, Latvia, Serbia and Israel (Yiftachel 2006: 12).

⁸ In defining Israel as a settler-colonial society I rely on: Rodinson, Maxime (1973 [1967]). *Israel: A Colonial-Settler state*. New York, NY: Monad Press.

⁹ See: Jessop, Bob (2007). *State power*. Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA: Polity.

dispossessed indigenous peoples (in global capitalist economy, migrant workers also experience qualified incorporation in the national market). Later immigrants and indigenous peoples are excluded in different degrees and in different times from access to capital, national politics and social arenas. In Israel, the founding group is made of mainly Ashkenazi Jews (of European descent) who arrived in Palestine during the British Mandate, escaping persecution in Europe. Indigenous (Palestinian) Arabs make the third ethnoclass.¹⁰ The middle ethnoclass, that of later immigrants, mainly consists of Mizrahi Jews (from the Middle East and North Africa) who came to Israel in the 1950's, most of them as refugees from Arab nations, and of Jews from the former Soviet Union, most of whom immigrated in the 1990's.¹¹

Hegemony of the dominant ethnoclass is reproduced through a series of state strategies for Judaization of space: 'demographic engineering' achieves a specific ethnic composition through control over immigration, citizenship and population dispersion in space; legal land system and planning policies are shaped by the ethnonational objective; armed forces are used for maintaining control over contested territory and acts of resistance, and while representing the entire state they are affiliated with the hegemonic ethnonation; free-market policies counter resistance to the ethnic logic of capital; and public culture is formulated around symbols, representations and practices that reinforce the ethnonational master narrative (Yiftachel 2006: 36). Some of these are a continuation of practices from the pre-state Jewish settlement in Palestine. All of them are facilitated by democratic features of a liberal citizenship discourse that depoliticizes ethnic conflicts and, most importantly, legitimizes exclusion, thus exacerbating oppression and marginalization (p.100). An undemocratic ethnic logic of space therefore remains unchallenged, as in the case of conceiving Tantour as an 'Arab city' in the contested Galilee region. The process of the production of space – re-production

¹⁰ A Jewish minority has been living continuously in Palestine for many generations. However, since this history of 'Palestinian Jews' is included by the ethnocratic regime into the national narrative (and used as proof of Jewish indigeneity), it does not undermine the ethnoclass formation.

¹¹ For a critical discussion on the ethnocratic framework vs. 'race', see, for example: Shenhav, Yehuda (2003). *The Arab-Jews: nationalism, religion and ethnicity*. Tel Aviv: Am Oved [Hebrew]; Shohat Ella (2003). Rupture and return: Zionist discourse and the study of Arab Jews. *Social Text* 21(2). 49-74 For a discussion on the limits of the ethnocratic framework, in terms of its political conclusions, see: Waxman, Dov and Peleg, Ilan (2008). Neither ethnocracy nor bi-nationalism: in search of the middle ground. *Israel studies forum* 23(2), 55-73; Ben-Dor, Oren (2007). Debating Israeli ethnocracy and the challenge of secular democracy: 1. A critique of Oren Yiftachel. *Holy Land studies* 6(2), 177-195.

of capitalist social relations through space – is manipulated by the ethnonational project. Urbanization under capitalism is ethnicized, as state power manipulates contested territory in favour of the dominant ethnoclass (Yiftachel and Yacobi 2003: 677).

One of the ethnocratic spatial strategies for Judaization of space is the establishment of new cities. After Israel declared independence in 1948, new cities were built in peripheral areas in order to disperse Jewish population across the national territory and to stake a Jewish claim to the land.¹² Jewish immigrants were sent to areas that had a majority of Arab population in order to create a new demographic ‘balance’. Since the 1967 occupation, a significant spatial strategy has been the establishment of Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories, entrenching Jewish presence in contested land. In the Occupied Territories, spatial separation between Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs who are not Israeli citizens has been taking the form of spatial apartheid (among other forms of systematic ethnic separation), with exclusively-Jewish gated communities and Jewish-only roads. Yiftachel (2006) and Tzfadia and Yacobi (2011) have identified a ‘creeping apartheid’ in the decades since the occupation: spatial strategies from the Occupied Territories have also become explicit within Israel’s national territory; for example, as evident in the Judaization of the Galilee. Angotti (2013) describes it as an ‘apartheid urbanization’ (p.77): separate communities for Arab and Jews; marginalization of Arab localities and of Arab citizens in ‘mixed’ cities; denying Arab citizens access to land ownership; and the existence of gated communities based on ethnicity (Rosen and Grant 2011: 781), as in the abovementioned 1979 plan for Judaizing the Galilee. Tantour therefore fits into the framework of ‘creeping apartheid’ precisely because of its purpose to benefit specifically-Arab population.

Moreover, the acute housing crisis in the Arab sector in Israel is the combined result of the ethnic logic of space and the ethnic logic of capital. Land is not being allocated to Arab municipalities, new projects are not being approved, and this brings housing distress and proliferation of illegal construction that faces threat of demolition. Tantour, which is set out to alleviate a housing problem that is defined along ethnicized sectors of the market, is meant to attract middle-class Israeli-Arabs both from ‘mixed’ cities in

¹² See: Yiftachel, Oren and Tzfadia, Erez (2004). Between periphery and ‘third space’: identity of Mizrahim in Israel’s development towns. *Israelis in conflict*. 203-235.

the Galilee, such as Acre, as well as from exclusively-Arab cities, such as Judeida-Makr, from which land was appropriated for the building of Tantour. 'Mixed' cities will then become more Jewish, or more accurately, the Jewish population in them will become relatively stronger; and Arab cities will become even further marginalized and economically weak. Given various forms of existing institutional discrimination in access to housing that is entrenched in deep social discrimination; in the rental market, in lending, in approving plans, etc.; housing will become less attainable for the Arab population in general, except for the 10,000 lucky families who will be able to afford homeownership in Tantour. The ethnic logic of space thus prevails, as Judaization of the Galilee region will not be undermined but rather strengthened by the establishment of the new city, especially if it fulfills its purpose of providing – indeed a much needed – housing for Israeli-Arabs.

Housing as a tool for constructing national identity in Israel

Kallus and Yone (2002) claim that public housing is an outcome of formal representation of space by the state, concrete spatial practice and perception of space by its users (p.773). This formulation follows Lefebvre's theorisation of the production of space (1974) that reveals how space is produced by all of these components simultaneously. *Representations of space* are ideas and conceptions about how space should be ordered and controlled according to a particular ideology, articulated in state policy and official planning. *Representational space* is the 'lived space' we experience as users, or in this case, as public housing dwellers. *Spatial practice* – in Kallus and Yone's analysis – mainly refers to professional expertise and material intervention in space. In the ongoing process of Judaization of space, the production of housing (and specifically public housing) has facilitated the continuing dominance of Ashkenazi-Jewish culture from the socialist aspirations of the Zionist settlement in Palestine through the ethnic nationalism of the Israeli state. Therefore, a crisis in housing would imply a crisis in ethnonational identity.

In a particular moment in history, modernist avant-garde, Zionist national aspirations and British political interests coincided to shape the physical and political space of Jewish settlement in Palestine, which later evolved into the Israeli national territory. From 1920 to 1948, Palestine was ruled by the British Mandate, which was supportive

of Zionist national goals only when they aligned with British internal and colonial interests, as was the case in 1917 – the year of Balfour Declaration – and onward.¹³ After 1917, the Zionist movement, in itself variegated, moved towards synthesis between secular-cultural Judaism and political pragmatism (Nitzan-Shiftan 1996: 152). Its political goal then became clearly defined: establishing a nation-state for the Jewish people; a space of/for Jewish self-determination in Palestine – the historic Land of Israel as it has been preserved and reinvented in the Jewish people’s collective memory. In face of nationalist atmosphere and persecutions in Europe, Jewish leaders conceived the image of the ‘new Jew’ by relying on modernist ideals of a healthy, progressive, liberated society (p.155). It replaced the image of the uprooted, transient Jew in Europe, and found expression in the modernist movement of post-WWI. Especially in Eastern and Central Europe, where most Jewish immigrants to Palestine came from in those years, the modernist movement signified a break from local traditions (although in some cases traditional practices were still used) and from vernacular architecture that became identified with nationalist politics.¹⁴ In the 1920’s-1930’s, Modernism and Zionism became directly linked by architecture that originated in the Bauhaus School in Germany. Bauhaus (‘house of building’ in German; ‘building’ meaning both an object and the labour of constructing it) was a German modernist movement that combined arts and crafts with a revolutionary pedagogy of Masters and students working together in multi-disciplinary studios to create a holistic work of art. The Bauhaus manifesto called for making a better society through design:¹⁵ the works incorporated new materials, mass production technology and an ideology of being true to the material, which, in the context of the modernist movement, signified transparency and manifested

¹³ The modernist values of the Zionist leadership were better aligned, relatively to Arab Palestinian nationalism, with British Orientalist politics in the colonies. At that time, the British government was looking for legitimization to diminish Jewish immigration from Europe to the UK, and a Jewish nation-state was a practical solution. See: Rodinson, Maxime (1973 [1967]). *Israel: A Colonial-Settler state*. New York, NY: Monad Press. (p.55).

On November 2, 1917, an official statement from British Foreign Secretary, Arthur James Balfour, expressed the support of British government in the establishment of a Jewish nation-state in Palestine.

¹⁴ Some currents in planning and architecture linked industrial progress with universal socialist values as a basis for opposition to European nationalism and bourgeois culture; for example, Le Corbusier’s (later) work *unité d’habitation* (1947-1952) in Marseille, France.

¹⁵ Gropius, Walter (1919). *Bauhaus manifesto*. Bauhaus online. Web. 3 Mar 2015. <<http://bauhaus-online.de/en/atlas/das-bauhaus/idee/manifest>>. Gropius was the head of the Bauhaus School in Weimar and later in Dessau, 1919-1928.

resistance to the ornamental embellishments that reflected a morally deteriorated society. Architecture, as a form of useful art, was one of the central practices studied in the School, and some of the main figures in Bauhaus advocated the social role of housing design in providing the minimal necessary living conditions for everyone. This socialist aspect in some of the works of the Bauhaus fit the socialist aspect in the Zionist movement of the 1930's that attempted to create a new collective Jewish identity in face of European nationalism, as well as to accommodate massive waves of immigration to Palestine. Providing housing to immigrants was a significant task for the Zionist leadership, and helped to reinforce its governance over Jewish society and to shape physical space in Palestine before a sovereign state was established. That is why the concept of Bauhaus was translated, in language and in culture, to *binyan* (in Hebrew: 'building'; *obj., verb*): building a new nation by constructing buildings/homes (p.152). *Binyan* combined labour, housing for Jewish immigrants and refugees and a modern space for the new society. Importantly, there was a direct personal connection between Bauhaus and Zionism. Some students in the Bauhaus School were Jewish architects who immigrated to Palestine from Eastern Europe. These architects were granted by Zionist leaders (such as the mayor of Tel Aviv, Meir Dizengoff) the opportunity to plan and build Bauhaus-influenced projects (mostly residential, but not only), mainly in Tel Aviv.¹⁶ Thus, Jews who arrived in Palestine in the 1920's-1930's learned to identify Bauhaus as *their* architectural style in a fraught land.¹⁷ Thus, Tel Aviv became the White City, as it was recognized decades later due to the largest concentration of Bauhaus buildings in the world. In particular, workers' cooperative-housing projects manifesting socialist ideology through minimalist aesthetics have been some of the formative spaces of modern Jewish spatiality in Palestine, providing a model for a modern, modest, Jewish society – an antithesis to decadent European bourgeoisie. Today, they are studied and researched as important assets of Israeli-Jewish urban history.

¹⁶ Tel Aviv 'Chug' (circle) was formed in 1932 by Jewish architects who arrived in Palestine from Eastern Europe and integrated into Labour Zionism. Arie Sharon was its head architect (Nitzan-Shifan 1996: 149).

¹⁷ Although Bauhaus was anti- ornamentation, it did have distinctive local stylistic features, such as: 'thermometer'-shaped stairwell windows; concrete 'aprons' for shading balconies; and other elements.

Since UNESCO's recognition in Tel Aviv as a World Heritage Site in 2003, the city has been branded the city of Bauhaus-style. Bauhaus has been reproduced as popular merchandise, while the city has been experiencing a conservation craze. Through architectural conservation, the capitalist state's planning institutions commonly advance the erasure of Palestinian spatial history and identity in favour of Bauhaus or Bauhaus-inspired architecture. Thus, the non-vernacularism of the Bauhaus has been transformed into a 'Bauhaus-vernacular' (p.148) – and conservation, mainly of residential buildings, has become yet another strategy in Judaization of space.

In the period following Israel's Declaration of Independence in 1948, the concept of *binyan* – building homes as way of building the nation – became an explicit state strategy, and public housing in particular had a major role in forging national identity. Under the Labour government, from 1948 to 1977, massive public housing projects were built especially in the new cities that were built in peripheral areas. These 'development towns' were expected to develop the allegedly barren land as well as the allegedly backward (Mizrahi) immigrants, as they were perceived by the Ashkenazi-Jewish elite. At the time, the central role of public housing in Judaization of space was not only in maintaining control over land, but also in defining Jewish citizenship. The ethnic logic of space in the forced peripheralization of the middle ethnoclass was mainly aimed at shaping their everyday experiences (representational spaces). It created spaces from which citizens draw lifestyle and identity, through symbolic meaning and daily practices that are embedded in space. In terms of design, the housing projects were homogenous and thrifty in space and materials. All necessary activities were concentrated into small spaces to avoid 'conflicts' and each function received its 'proper' space (Kallus and Yone 2002: 773). Furthermore, a combined sense of urgency and optimism for future growth led to the use of 'open' and flexible design that was meant to be finalized at a later stage. This created faceless non-places where (mostly Mizrahi) residents did not, and could not, feel at home. The fragmented and disoriented immigrants that were placed into "*bureaucratically-planned, produced and managed housing had to get used to public spaces that made it very difficult to carve out private spaces, and that were impossible to identify with or attach meaning and history to*" (p.774). The state took upon itself not only to provide housing, but to shape the personal home for educating and socializing immigrants into the new nation. Through the design

of public housing, the state was able to penetrate into the personal space of the family and control the most intimate spaces. Similarly to other settler-colonial regimes, the goal was to liberate the immigrant family unit from its (in this case, Oriental) traditions.¹⁸ The intention was to educate people regarding a 'right' way of life, moral use of the private home and proper citizenship. The purpose of homogenous design was to forge a uniform 'Israeli' way of life, in a society that was composed of settlers and immigrants. Public housing was an important source of collective sense of identity and belonging (Yacobi 2008: 105). Since the state controlled 93% of the land, it could disperse immigrants to new areas, excluding them from centres of power while using them for Judaizing the land (Kallus and Yone 2002: 774).¹⁹ Thus, along with shaping the 'lived space' of immigrants, public housing had a role in Israeli relations with the outside world: establishing Israeli ownership, sovereignty and control over territory. This is an example of spatialized assimilation-exclusion of the middle ethnoclass: it was used for including the immigrant group (Mizrahi Jews) in the national home (unlike indigenous Arabs), while keeping it marginalized and inferior to the settler group (Ashkenazi Jews). The public housing blocks materialized a particular Israeli-Jewish identity both visually, through a state-initiated ordered landscape, and formally, through plans and regulations (Kallus and Yone 2002: 775). Mainly in peripheral 'development towns' they reproduced the ethnoclass hierarchy by transforming indigenous space. In this period originates the state's perception of housing provision as a 'gift' from the sovereign power to its subjects, as manifested again in Tantour; improving housing conditions, creating jobs and granting personal well-being.

After almost 30 years in power, the Labour government was replaced for the first time with the right-wing Likud government in 1977, and the Israeli housing market began to be significantly privatized. New financing and land policies enabled the participation of more Mizrahi Jews in the housing market through the construction of private homes. The Israeli landscape soon became scattered with suburban communities, mainly near

¹⁸ For the case of Canada as an example, see : Purdy, Sean (2002). Scaffolding citizenship: housing reform and nation formation in Canada, 1900–1950, in: Adamoski, Robert; Chunn, Dorothy and Menzies Robert (eds.). *Contesting Canadian Citizenship* (pp. 129-154). Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press.

¹⁹ Tzfadia and Yacobi (2011) discuss the dialectical production of periphery/frontier in Israel: space that is marginalized and at the same time central for promoting state interests of control over territory and shaping national identity.

development towns, which became an architectural antithesis to the modernist public housing blocks. Professional planners from the ruling ethnoclass criticized these new residential spaces for being cluttered, disorderly and unplanned.²⁰ Moreover, the residents themselves (at the beginning of this transition they were mainly Mizrahi Jews) were dissatisfied by the random assemblages of private design (Yacobi 2008: 106). In popular discourse, these ‘build-your-own-home’ projects were equated to the ‘Arab village’ landscape: a spatial term that referred to unplanned, messy urban space, and especially after the 1967 occupation signified a backward, hostile Palestinian identity (p.108). The ‘Arab village’ landscape thus became associated with Mizrahi Jews who were seen by the ruling ethnoclass as not (yet) properly civilized. However, in later postmodern suburbs of the 1990’s that were built mainly by the Ashkenazi elites, architectural features of the ‘Arab village’ were integrated into the norm, as means for manifesting an ‘authentic’ sense of place (ibid). Vernacular elements (such as the *mashrabiya*) infiltrated mainstream private house design. Indigenous presence was finally legitimized, but only in so far as it is was used according to the ethnic logic of space: while local architecture was appropriated into the nation, this was characteristic of spaces that continued to exclude Arab residents, such as the gated communities of the Galilee. In fact, the inclusion of the Palestinian vernacular in Israeli architecture was used as a tool for symbolic indigenization of the ruling ethnoclass, rendering its built environment local and materializing its belonging to the land – rather than legitimizing alternative spatialities to Judaization of space. Indigenous landscape (of the lower ethnoclass) was depoliticized and transformed into a style (used by the ruling ethnoclass), much like what happened with the Bauhaus in an earlier period. Therefore, simultaneous assimilation-exclusion persisted through privatization of the housing market: first, Mizrahi Jews were able to participate more in the housing market, while other forms of inequality remained (p.109); second, with time, Palestinian spatial identity has become accepted, while Arab citizens remained discriminated against.

The spatial history of Zionism in Palestine, before and after the establishment of the state of Israel, has always treated indigenous space as primitive and backwards, in need of being ‘saved’ from its indigenous population and modernized into order and

²⁰ See: Shadar, Hadas; Orr, Zvika; Maizel, Yael (2011). Contested homes: professionalism, hegemony, and architecture in times of change. *Space and culture*, 14(3), 269-290.

efficiency by the Jewish society.²¹ This Orientalist perspective rejected the Oriental landscape as the proper environment for cultivating a Jewish national identity. In each period, modernization of the people was intertwined in Judaization of space. In the case of Tantour, the ‘Arab village’ discourse reveals how the city was conceived within the existing ethnic logic of space for producing national territory. The Jewish architects of the city wanted to break the ‘Arab village’ myth as unplanned and backwards. Yet rather than empowering existing Arab localities, they looked for a new way to build Arab urban space. Contemporary cities in some Arab nations were rejected as inspiration, for being too Westernized.²² Instead, predominantly Jewish towns in the Galilee were chosen as a model. The same spatiality that was used for explicit Judaization of the Galilee in the 1970’s-1980’s was now used for creating a new Arab local: suburban homogenous spaces, based on separation of uses and reliance on cars. The architects then had to superficially incorporate vernacular features (such as arches), to legitimize the ‘Arab city’ as local. Indigenous landscape was depoliticized: included in a state-initiated development that excludes any subversion of ethnocentric spatiality. Strengthening existing Arab localities or learning from Arab nations might have been an opportunity to undermine the ‘Arab village’ discourse and by that to offer an alternative to the ethnic logic of space. However, as an ethnoclass-based solution to an ethnoclass-based housing crisis, this was never the purpose of Tantour.

Situating housing in (ethnocratic) political economy

The local housing market is not disconnected from the global forces of the capitalist production of space. Aalbers and Christophers (2014) argue that different capitalist regimes are manifested in different housing systems, which have a central role in sustaining the capitalist state (p.374). The circulation of capital, capital as a social relation and capitalist ideology are all maintained and reproduced by the production of housing. At the same time, the specific regime determines how a housing crisis is defined and therefore what strategy would attempt to solve it.

²¹ The interrelated tropes *conquest of labour* and *conquest of land* signify the sense of redemption with which Zionist leadership treated the Palestinian landscape and the Jewish right for it as a modern, advanced, hard-working and superior society. See: Peled, Yoav and Shafir, Gershon (2002). *The frontier within: Palestinians as third-class citizens*. In *Being Israeli – the dynamics of multiple citizenship* (pp. 110-137). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

²² See: Xnet. Web. 11 Nov 2014 [in Hebrew].

The central role of housing in sustaining capitalist ideology is manifested in the myth of homeownership (Marcuse 2012: 219). Certain rights in capitalist society are perceived as inherent to ownership – such as the right to exclude from space and the right to pass on the investment to heirs – while in fact they could be exercised regardless to ownership, and at the same time, homeownership does not guarantee these rights. In contemporary housing debates, many local governments strive to increase the rate of homeownership as means to alleviate social inequalities. This implies a Weberian perspective on asset-based class structure, in a society where the right to housing is understood as property right and as such determines citizenship (Aalbers and Christophers 2014: 375; Aalbers and Gibb 2014: 210; Somerville 2005: 104). Since housing tenure serves as a surrogate of (asset-based) class, and since social inequalities that are generated by capital are expressed in the housing market, the assumption is that homeownership would decrease inequality. When the working class has no assets, they cannot participate in the market. A housing crisis is therefore defined by lack of affordable homeownership, and what follows is that extending ownership can solve the crisis. However, from a Marxist perspective that considers class as part of the broader relations of production, homeownership cannot solve a housing crisis since it does not change the capitalist social relations of production. In fact, increased homeownership may only exacerbate inequalities, as it makes the working class more vulnerable; through predatory lending, debt, etc. (Marcuse 2012: 222). Housing is also an important site for the intersection of class with race, ethnicity, gender, ableism etc., as evident in the history of ethnicized housing policy in Israel.²³ And as Engels argued in his famous *The housing question* (1970[1872]), housing is simply a commodity being sold (or rented) by the capitalist to the worker; changing the terms of this exchange does not change the relations between them. In fact, Engels explained that expending homeownership to the working class (or in our case, the indigenous, lower ethnoclass) would only delay a revolution in the social relations of production, since it would make the working class further dependent on exchanging labour for housing (Aalbers and Christophers 2014: 385).

²³ For example, local municipal initiatives for public housing raise heated debates about military service as one of the criteria for eligibility and for deserving housing. Most non-Jewish and Jewish-Orthodox citizens are exempt from the mandatory military service in Israel, and therefore are potentially ineligible for public housing.

However, the production of housing is not merely a reflection of capitalist ideology, but also essential for sustaining capitalist economy and overcoming its inherent crises through the circulation of capital. Housing is exchangeable goods, produced by labour and commodified in the social process of exchange, thus generating surplus value. Harvey (2009) explains that housing is a special kind of commodity, since while it provides shelter and needs for the renter, at the same time it generates value for the owner (p.160).²⁴ In other words, housing is produced, consumed and capitalized-upon not by the same people. Housing production is also a significant industry sector, generating jobs and economic growth, and many other industries depend on it (Aalbers and Christophers 2014: 376). Moreover, as a speculative market, housing acts as value storage: surplus capital from other markets can be invested in the housing market, which may be an outlet for over-accumulation; housing production and debts for homeownership can fuel the economy and fund increased demand; and thus, the housing market can provide a fix to crises in other markets (p.381).²⁵

Indeed, the development of Tantor is not unique in its attempt to alleviate housing distress by increasing housing supply for middle-class homeownership. This is a typical solution for a housing crisis defined in capitalist terms: increasing homeownership and the participation of marginalized population in the market guarantees growth. This solution to a housing crisis does not include, however, providing public housing for the most needy, as this is not a 'normal' form of tenure in the consumption-based citizenship in capitalist regimes (Somerville 2005: 111). It is therefore clear that both the definition of the housing crisis and the strategy for its solution are hinged on capitalist ideology. Breaking the homeownership myth (for example, by alternative forms of tenure such as co-ops) would imply undermining the ideology. In ethnocracy, it would mean undermining the ethnic logic of capital.

²⁴ This point relates to the *use value* and *exchange value* of commodities. In capitalist society, the social process of exchange assigns relative value to all human labour, thus commodifying it; the time, effort and skills that go into production are given an abstract exchange value that makes products of various labours interchangeable in the market. However, all commodities also have a use value, which is derived from their inherent properties and fulfills certain needs. In fact, use value is necessary in commodification, since a thing that has no use value for anyone would not be exchanged in the market. A house, as any commodity, has both use value (for example: a shelter) and exchange value (its price in the housing market). See: Lefebvre (1991[1974]); Harvey (2009).

²⁵ In other words, a crisis in the *first circuit of capital* can be 'fixed' by investing in the *second circuit of capital* (Aalbers and Christophers 2014: 376). See also: Harvey (2009).

In capitalist settler-colonial states such as Israel, circulation of capital is articulated in racialized segregation, meaning that the ethnic logic of capital and the ethnic logic of space are mutually constituted. Segregation is an inherent phenomenon in the production of space by the capitalist state, which manifests social hierarchy through spatial hierarchy (Lefebvre 2009[1978]: 245): the production of unequal space is essential for the commodification of land; for opening new markets for investment and for sustaining a growing economy. Although colonial practices assimilate subaltern classes, or in the case of Israel the middle and the lower, indigenous, ethnoclasses, into the universalized social relations of commodity production in a global market, at the same time they objectify and bound particular groups into demarcated territorial and social spaces (the ethnic logic of space). Colonial relations thus involve racialized spatial strategies for producing territorial hierarchy (Kipfer and Goonewardena 2013: 108). Differentiation and unevenness are therefore intrinsic to the production of homogenous national territory, as evident in the Judaization of the Galilee region.²⁶ The differentiated Arab sector in Israel is essential in sustaining uneven development, a condition for capital circulation, along ethnic divides – a condition for materializing Zionist ethnonational goals.

Importantly, inherent contradictions in the capitalist production of space may undermine the ethnocentric spatiality. The liberalizing market system and the need for cheap labour in proximity to industrial centres make urban areas relatively open and accessible, and a need for a formal free flow of commerce and population opens up ‘cracks’ in the ethnic logic of space. The democratic façade integral to the ethnocentric regime does create an alleged openness, and certain democratic features may be used politically by ethnic minorities to challenge substantive discrimination. Therefore, ethnocentric urbanization, which includes some democratization of planning procedures, creates inherent spaces for minorities who draw on liberal possibilities in the framework of modern urban governance.²⁷ Indeed, Arab citizens in the Galilee demonstrated against the

²⁶ This point relates to the dialectics of the production of space, specifically: simultaneous homogenization and differentiation (Lefebvre 1991[1974]: 355).

²⁷ Governance refers to the linkages between public authorities and private actors such as developers. It usually includes public-private partnerships. Moving some authority from local government to private developers may potentially ameliorate segregation. However, inequalities such as ethnicized segregation still arise. See: Van Kempen, Ronald (2002). The academic formulations: Explanations for

establishment of Tantour and for increased investment in the existing housing stock of the existing surrounding communities, which came as a surprise to the planners of the project who perceived the new city as a sign of acknowledgment in the housing needs of Israeli-Arabs.²⁸ Recently, the Israeli government has announced its intention to make significant changes in the national planning mechanism, granting more planning power to Arab local authorities in order to rectify some of the neglect and marginalization that have been operating since 1948.²⁹ A discrepancy between the promise of openness and a reality of segregation makes practices of resistance and counter-resistance inherent to ethnocratic urban space, which is why state power and its strategy of segregation are always fragile and have limited ability to control the nation (Poulantzas 2003: 120). In response, the nation-state employs a structural selectivity: a specific class preference that excludes the masses from political power, by practices of selective filtering of information, uneven implementation of policies and sometimes lack of action on certain issues in order to have different effects on different sections of the nation (p.127). What follows is that the concrete configuration of any state ideology depends on class struggle (p.82); and political resistance that hinges on class formation is inherent to the state. De-politicization of the specifically-Arab middle-class in Israel thus becomes essential for preventing a crisis in the ethnocratic regime.

Therefore, in urbanization that is shaped by the ethnic logic of capital, the state – following the interest of the dominant ethnoclass – attempts to sustain ethnocratic hegemony with the help of subtle forms of segregation that is culturally based, seemingly voluntary, and performed by market-led strategies. It resolves to a structural selectivity that is the ‘dark side of planning’: using the same practices designed to promote social reforms and provision of amenities for containing and oppressing marginalized communities (Yiftachel 2006: 143). This may result in ‘mixed’ cities that are ethnically diverse but dominated by the ruling ethnoclass, or in ostensibly benevolent acts such as providing housing to specific sectors of the ethnoclass-structured society. Urban government is represented as open and democratic, but

the partitioned city. In Marcuse, Peter and Van Kempen, Ronald (eds.), *Of State and cities: The partitioning of urban space* (pp. 35-56). New York: Oxford University Press (p.45).

²⁸ *New Arab city – old debates*. Channel 2 news. Web. 8 Nov 2014 [in Hebrew]. <www.mako.co.il>

²⁹ *67 years late – the end of the Judaization of Galilee era*. Ha`aretz. 10 June 2015 [in Hebrew]. <www.haaretz.co.il>

services are allocated according to ethnicity. In this unequal citizenship, ethnoclass division is shaping the formally open housing and employment markets; professional planning adheres to economic development and minimizes minority control over urban resources; and municipal boundaries are manipulated for demographic engineering. Thus, the settler group's hegemony is preserved. The definition of Tantour as an 'Arab city' is situated in this ethnicized political economy of urbanization. An alternative definition to the housing crisis in the Arab sector could potentially mean a change in the Israeli ethnocratic spatiality and in the broader capitalist ethnocratic regime that is articulated in it.

And indeed, at the same time that the government recognizes a need in empowering Arab urban spaces, it is also acting to change the national planning mechanism into a more centralized system, especially in housing provision.³⁰ Treating a national housing crisis as a given situation, the government is using it as an excuse for removing impediments to the construction of massive private housing projects, such as conducting environmental and social implications surveys. A housing crisis defined in capitalist terms (lack of affordable ownership) is thus useful in arguing the need for a solution defined in capitalist terms as well (increasing supply through the private housing market) – and in sustaining capitalist economy. Moreover, while affordable homeownership, seen as implying significant civil and political rights, is extended to ethnonational minorities, their political ethnicization is essentialized, thus naturalizing their uneven (in practice, if not formally) citizenship. The establishment of an 'Arab city' as a solution to a housing crisis in the Arab sector does not manifest a change, but rather reproduces sociospatial relations according to ethnoclass divisions while preventing a definition of the crisis as a crisis in national identity: the Arab middle-class is being depoliticized in a Judaized suburban space; 'mixed' cities are becoming even more unequal spaces (as the better-off Arab population leaves); and Arab localities are further marginalized.

³⁰ Recently, the Israeli government formed National Housing Committees that are meant to approve major housing projects in a process that bypasses the existing planning mechanism. So far, there is no form of social or affordable housing made obligatory in this new system.

Conclusion

Massive protests for affordable housing that swept Israel in 2011 provided strong evidence to the resilience of state strategies. While the protests did engender some Jewish-Arab partnerships, these potentials generally remained marginal within a neoliberal struggle against the high cost of living.³¹ In order to undermine the ethnoclass structure of Israeli society, the struggle must be for re-shaping national territory according to an alternative ideology.

In the case of Tantour, the political, spatial and architectural definitions of an ‘Arab city’ as a solution to a housing crisis in the Arab sector originate in the same ideology and process of the production of space that engendered an ethnoclass-based housing crisis in the first place. By establishing a new ‘Arab city’, the state is reinforcing an ethnically-bifurcated national economy. The Arab sector will be better assimilated in the housing market, yet still generally excluded from Jewish urban space. This solution to the housing crisis echoes a Weberian asset-based class perspective, since while housing conditions will improve (for some), the ethnoclass structure will not be undermined. Importantly, the new city is conceived within an ideological discourse that conditions the right of Arab citizens to (land and) housing in ethnic segregation. In that context, the assumption of rights implied in homeownership enables isolating the housing crisis in the Arab sector from broader politics of the contested territory in Israel-Palestine. In fact, the state uses liberal acknowledgement of the Arab population’s housing needs as grounds for deepening its ethnocratic control over contested territory. Thus, the local housing crisis itself is used as a strategy for overcoming the inherent crises of capitalist economy as well as the inner contradictions of ethnocratic urbanization.

Tantour is an ideal city for the capitalist settler-colonial state: a homogenous space entrenched in the local ethnic logic of space and capital. While reaffirming Jewish ethnonational control over territory, assimilating some parts of the Israeli-Arab middle-class into a new suburban development through the private housing market will not prevent future resistance to ethnoclass-based exclusion. However, it might delay

³¹ See: Allweil, Yael (2013). Surprising alliances for dwelling and citizenship: Palestinian-Israeli participation in the mass housing protests of summer 2011. *International journal of Islamic architecture*, (2)1, 41-75.

uprising, by providing some (if limited) relief to the acute housing distress in the Arab sector. Hence the use value of housing for the state. As a result of this strategy, housing is de-politicized twice: as a product, it increases the participation of a marginalized population in the market and improves its asset-based class position; as social policy, it improves material housing conditions, corrects a historical wrong and makes the government seem attuned to the needs of all its citizens without discrimination. Represented in liberal terms, ethnocentric spatiality prevails.

However, in order to undermine the production of space according to the ethnic logic of space and capital, housing must be re-politicized. Only when acknowledged for its significant role in sustaining an ethnoclass-based market on contested territory, housing may become a site for resistance to the capitalist ethnocentric regime. In this case, the challenge of research is to redefine the housing crisis as a potential crisis in ethnonational identity; and the challenge of the struggle for the right to housing is to shift into an anti-colonial struggle. Then it will become possible to conceive an alternative to the right to housing as property right: a right to housing that is a continuous struggle for equitable access to housing, for all.

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