Dismembered Geographies: The Politics of Segregation in Three Mixed Cities in Israel

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This essay looks at aspects of the urban growth of three “mixed” cities in Israel — Acco, Ramle and Jaffa — from the period of the British Mandate in the early twentieth century to the present. It provides a critique of the deeply contested nature of these cities, home to both Palestinian and Jewish Israelis, and it examines how the fields of urban design and city planning have been complicit in processes of ethnic segregation and racialization of space. From a historical perspective, the essay attempts to map how an originally colonial discourse of segregation and exclusion has survived and flourished well into the postcolonial era. In the ongoing reconfiguration of the urban space of these mixed cities, a dominant Jewish population has been able to implement and make use of changes in planning ideology to continually reposition itself with respect to a minority Palestinian population. This has led to the further marginalization of Palestinian Israelis, most certainly within the city, but also within the larger national context.

It is the day before Yom Kippur, and we are in Ramle at about three in the afternoon, heading toward Tel Aviv. Shops are beginning to close, and those of us who are not intending to fast the next day are desperate to find a grocery store where we can stock up on provisions. The local supermarket has just pulled down its shutters, and another little store is open but offers nothing in the way of food. The one Israeli in our group suggests that we try the “Arab” part of Ramle, where stores will stay open a little longer, trying to do some extra business before they close for the Jewish holiday. Since we have no idea how to get to this part of town, we ask two men sitting by the side of the road where we can find something to eat. One of them, who is Israeli and Jewish, answers matter-of-factly, “Go to the ‘ghetto.’” He then gives us instructions how to get there.
The “ghetto,” of course, is the part of Ramle that is home to Israelis who are also Palestinian. Ramle is what is commonly known in Israel as a “mixed city,” a place where Jews and Palestinians live together. As Peter Marcuse has written, such places reveal the complex character of the postmodern city.

To summarize the city as it has been in part for some time, and is increasingly becoming entirely, it appears chaotic and is fragmented, but underneath the chaos there are orders; the fragmentation is not random. It is divided, but not dual, or limitlessly plural. Quartered, or five-parted, better captures reality. Its quarters are both walled in and walled out, but walls do not play equal roles for all quarters. Each quarter is thus separated from all others, but each is nevertheless intimately related to all others; they are mutually dependent. While the quarters are hierarchical in the power and wealth of their residents, all are dependent on forces beyond their separate control.

Throughout history, cities have been built on complex webs of personal life, economic exchange, transportation, and cultural display. But they have also served as landscapes of exclusion, segregation, and disenfranchisement. Thus, as Marcuse suggests, to look beyond a city’s thin veneer of chaos and inscrutability is to begin to uncover patterns of power. Walls that separate one quarter from another also etch deep lines between “us” and “them,” the “haves” and the “have-nots,” those who belong and those who don’t. This article explores the ethnically fragmented and segregated geographies of three mixed cities in the nation-state of Israel, and charts the changing nature of this urban segregation through time.

THE CONTESTED NATION AND THE MIXED CITY

Scholars such as Partha Chatterjee have written extensively on the exclusionary sense of “nation-ness” that emerged as a legacy of colonialism. However, as with all monolithic and hegemonic definitions, the idea of the nation continues to be challenged by its “fragments,” particularly those minority populations that stand in opposition to the imagined idea of an either ethnically or racially “pure” nation-state. In this regard, Israel defines itself as a Jewish nation — the homeland for Jewish people all over the world. However, it also continues to have within its physical boundaries and political geography, groups of non-Jewish people — fragments that challenge the dominant narrative of a Jewish nation. In fact, the very validity of the term nation-state is questionable when used in relation to Israel, because Israel defines itself first and foremost as Jewish, rather than simply sovereign and independent. The Israeli ideology of nationhood is further problematized by the fact that its borders remain contested, and that there are differing definitions of citizenship for its Palestinian and Jewish citizens.

Above all, it is the dominant national desire of Israel to define and sustain itself as an ethnically pure Jewish state that is central to this article. This desire has very definite spatial and geographical manifestations, and in this sense, this article resonates with previous research carried out on mixed cities in Israel, especially the work of Ghazi Falah, who has maintained that national, social and religious ideologies play crucial roles in fostering the segregation of urban space in Israel. About 90 percent of the population, both Jewish and Palestinian, live in ethnically distinct spaces in Israel; only 10 percent live in what are known as mixed cities. According to Falah, “There is a fear in Israeli society of mixing with the ‘other’ community in the country: purified localities are preferred as a bulwark against erosion of the state’s special character.” In light of this argument, the mixed cities of Israel at first present themselves as hopeful anomalies of ethnic integration and coexistence. But, in fact, as this article will reveal, these cities simply present micro-geographies of segregation and exclusion.

Although the discourse of segregation may take various starting points — such as class struggle, gender, or racial conflict — in Israel segregation can best be understood as involving an ethnic minority, the Palestinians, “trapped” within an ethnocratic nation-state. According to this model, Israel’s “mixed cities” are microcosms of a national condition. At a micro-level, as landscapes, they reveal larger processes of segregation, exclusion, and power relations. In these cities, it is possible to see who lives where, how they perceive themselves within the urban sphere, and how they perceive others. Cities, in general, are also a main stage for the display of the idea of the nation-state, and a place where this idea may be challenged by its fragments. This paper studies the evolving condition within three mixed cities — Ramle, Jaffa and Acco — to understand the changing nature of urban segregation in Israel (Fig. 1).

In Israeli parlance, mixed cities are those with sizeable resident Palestinian populations; they are generally identified as three different types. The first are Palestinian cities that existed before the establishment of the state of Israel, but which received a population of Jewish settlers as part of the Judaizing project of the Israeli government after 1948. The three cities studied here fall into this first category. The second type of mixed city are those that existed pre-1948 as mixed Palestinian-Jewish cities (for example, Haifa and Jerusalem). The third category includes cities established after 1948 as Israeli-Jewish cities but which have since experienced an influx of Palestinians (for example, Upper Nazareth and Beer-Sheva).

In all three types of cities the marginalization of Palestinian communities — through separation or exclusion, but also through calculated, strategic inclusion — is evident in the daily contestation of urban space. Such a phenomenon of ethnic segregation is actually a legacy of colonial urban planning (both British and Zionist). But it has persisted and evolved according to more recent discourses of moderniza-
tion, postmodern complexity, and the city as tourist spectacle. Once established, the “project” of segregation in these mixed cities has therefore not been static, but has become a “process.” And, as with all processes, its strength has lain in its constant renewal and modification.

In the following sections I will present this process of urban segregation between the Palestinian and Jewish communities of Ramle, Jaffa and Acco according to a framework of three loosely arranged time periods. With regard to the first (1917 to 1948), I will trace the growth of these cities from the establishment of the British Mandate to the conclusion of the Israeli War of Independence — or al-Nakba (The Catastrophe), as it is known by Palestinians. With regard to the second (1948 to 1973), I will examine the pattern of increasing urbanization between the establishment of the state of Israel and the Yom Kippur War between Israel and neighboring Arab countries. This includes discussion of the events of 1967, a year that saw the end of 29 years of military rule over Israeli Palestinians, but also Israeli military occupation of the West Bank, Golan Heights, and Gaza Strip. My discussion of the last period (1973 to the present) charts the discourse of urbanization as it has reflected both the first and second intifadas and the optimism that surrounded the Oslo Peace Process before its collapse.

Although this work will be presented according to the above three time periods, it does not make the claim that each of these represents a distinct set of processes with neat ruptures between them. Rather, it proposes that ethnic segregation in the cities of Ramle, Jaffa and Acco can be seen as an instrument of more fundamental guiding ideologies, and that the processes of urban segregation have been deeply complicit with and continuously integrated within the political project of the Israeli nation-state.

1917–1948: FROM CITY TO GHETTO

... we will endeavour to do in Asia minor what the British did in India — I am referring to our cultural work and not rule by force. We intend to come to Palestine as the emissaries of culture and to expand the moral boundaries of Europe to the Euphrates.

— Max Nordau, Chief Public Orator of the Zionist Movement

The colonizing project in Palestine cannot be seen either as an exclusively British or Zionist enterprise, but needs to be studied as mutually beneficial to both powers. Scott Atran has titled the process by which the British Mandate paved the way for the Zionist takeover of Palestine “the surrogate colonization of Palestine.” In the 1920s and 30s, he claimed, it was thought “the civilizing mission in Palestine might function better by a division of labor, with Britain providing the force and Zionism providing the kultur...” Thus, Zionists equated their own mission civilatrice in Palestine to the “cultural work” that the British had carried out in India, and they strove to bring first culture and by extension morality to the region. This ideology of a cultural and moral recovery presupposed two things: that the existing or indigenous culture in Palestine was retrograde or inferior; and that the Zionist culture that would replace it would be its complete antithesis.

Although Palestine’s status as a British Mandate territory spanned only 31 years, urbanization received a huge impetus during this time. With the establishment of the Mandate government, British town planners went to work with absolute urgency redeveloping existing Palestinian cities such as Jaffa, Haifa and Acco, or designing extensions to them. The Zionist goals of building a Jewish homeland and encouraging Jewish immigration to Palestine from Eastern Europe worked in tandem with the activities of British planners. As a result, several housing and town-planning schemes were set in motion and quickly realized.

The colonial reaction to existing Palestinian urban centers can be analyzed through two complementary and related...
frameworks. The first involved the segregation of the indigenous city, by which its further growth could be contained on grounds of security or hygiene, and by which older indigenous areas could be excluded from the newer colonial areas around them. The second involved the use of the indigenous city as a referent for ethnic and racial stereotyping, a process that had its roots in Orientalist imaginations of the Other. The first framework of segregation has been well described by Anthony King. In Urbanism, Colonialism and the World Economy, King argued that planning was used as a strategy of control within the larger project of colonial domination.

The central social fact of colonial planning was segregation, principally, though not only on racial lines. The segregated city not only resulted from but in many cases created the segregated society.

King went on to describe how colonial planning strategies not only did not question basic divisions of society, as seen through the perspective of the colonizer, but worked to reinforce them. Thus, colonial cities subsumed the social cleavages of “European-native, Black and White, rich and poor . . . ,” and spatially animated them within the urban arena. King further proposed six general spatial models by which colonial cities were related to existing indigenous settlements. With regard to his system of classification, the formal arrangements of Jaffa and Acco would seem to follow his model of a new colonial settlement built separate from, but close to, an existing city. Meanwhile, Ramle would seem to follow the model where “the site and accommodation is occupied but modified and enlarged” (figs. 2, 3).

The colonial project of segregation, however, did not rest merely on the absolute ideology of the above-mentioned social divisions, but rather on specific attributes ascribed to less favorable “Others” — i.e., those who were black, native or poor. For example, it has been well documented that European colonizers were preoccupied with hygiene, and that the Oriental city was seen as polluted and contaminated. In fact, Europeans perceived disease, squalor, and lack of sanitation as a racial distinction, and colonial town planners often saw their Garden City additions as antidotes to the sanitary problems of the indigenous or traditional city.

A similar rhetoric of cultural salvation through colonization was evident in the rationale proposed by the Israeli geographer Elisha Efrat in his description of Tel Aviv.

The city of Tel Aviv began with the founding of the neighborhood of Ahuzat Bayit in 1909 on the sand dunes just northeast of Jaffa . . . . Jews from European countries established Ahuzat Bayit to escape from the conditions of high density and low sanitation found in the oriental town of Jaffa. Their objective was the creation of a Garden City suburb, a concept then popular in Europe and the United States as a response to the polluted, dirty and noisy cities of the industrial revolution. The idea entailed the construction of quiet residential areas on the outskirts of the cities where urban dwellers could reside surrounded by well-tended vegetation. It was on this model that Ahuzat Bayit appears to have been created. It was built according to a grid system of parallel streets, forming rectangular land parcels on which small, generally single-storey houses were constructed.

As these comments indicate, the cultural mission of Zionist colonization entailed, first, the escape from the retrograde, indigenous city, and second, the establishment of a Jewish city that was physically, formally and conceptually the

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**Figure 2.** The walled city of Acco, pre-1948. Courtesy of W. Khalidi, ed., All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948 (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992).

**Figure 3.** Aerial view of Jaffa, 1936. Courtesy of W. Khalidi, ed., All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948 (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992).
antithesis of its “Oriental” predecessor (fig. 4). Scholars such as Rebecca Torstrick, who has studied the mixed town of Acco, have also spoken of the disjuncture in form and ethos between the traditional core and its colonial extension. With reference to Acco, Torstrick has written that the general perception of the Old City was of “a traditional Middle Eastern city, with narrow streets and alleyways, a covered market . . . , houses that face inward to courtyards, and several caravanserais in an area of four hundred dunams.”

By contrast, Mandate Acco, built by the British between 1919 and 1948 just north of the old city, was based on a gridiron scheme developed by town planner Gottlieb Schumacher. The first framework for understanding the mechanisms of colonial planning thus involves disengagement with the traditional core and its colonial extension. With reference to Acco, Torstrick has written that the general perception of the Old City was of “a traditional Middle Eastern city, with narrow streets and alleyways, a covered market . . . , houses that face inward to courtyards, and several caravanserais in an area of four hundred dunams.”

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The second framework involved seeing the indigenous city as an important Other. Edward Said’s explanation of the project of classification within the context of colonialism is useful here. Said proposed that, beyond the basic human need to classify vast amounts of information, Orientalism took on the project of classification in an intricate and painstaking manner. The goal of colonial officials was thus to assign a definite value to each element within the system. Said has termed this project the making of “imaginative geographies,” where the emotional and cultural attributes of a given geography were mapped onto the body of the native Other.

Bearing Said’s analysis in mind, one can return to Efrat’s comments, and see how the “Oriental” attributes of Jaffa, such as low sanitation, were ascribed to the Palestinian bodies that occupied the “Oriental” city. Segregation, when seen in this context, thus went beyond simply shunning or excluding the native city. It also involved inventing a labeling system, an ideological containment of sorts, and ultimately a way of knowing the Other. In Said’s words,

“It is enough for “us” to set up these boundaries in our own minds; “they” become “they” accordingly, and both their territory and their mentality are designated as different from “ours”. . . . The geographic boundaries accompany the social, ethnic, and cultural ones in unexpected ways.”

Such a project of classification and the drawing of geographical boundaries to denote social, ethnic and cultural attributes can be better understood when the colonial urbanization of Palestine is placed within a global context. The investigation of colonial urbanization during the period often stresses the link between the core (i.e., the home metropolis) and the periphery (i.e., the colony), and the flow of ideas from former to latter. But as King has rightly indicated, where town planning was concerned, the colonies were more likely to be the location of experiments in the latest town-planning ideas. “In some places, the colonies were seen as virgin fields on which the new profession of architect-planners could fulfill their imperial dreams. . . .” In such a situation, colonial connections could extend as easily between different peripheries as they could between core and periphery. Most importantly, ideas of classification and segregation developed in one colony could sometimes be carried without much change to other colonies.

Different colonies might also share the services of the same town planners. Thus, Patrick Geddes, who spent the major part of his career working in British India, also enjoyed a brief stint as consultant to the Tel Aviv City Council in 1925, designing the city’s first comprehensive town plan. It was Geddes, speaking in the context of India, who said: “The Muhammedan should not be isolated from his mosque nor the Brahmin from his temple, tank, or river, nor should we cease to plan spacious bungalow compounds for the Europeans, approached by wide avenues and surrounded by the gardens they love.” Having thus claimed that each ethnic and religious community in India needed its own place within the colonial city, Geddes wasted no time in expressing his enthusiasm at the chance of designing Tel Aviv, which he described as “the real live Jewish city. . . .” And just as Geddes envisioned that the “Mohammedans” and “Brahmins” of India must be assigned appropriate and distinct spaces within cities there, so he imagined that the Jewish residents of Tel Aviv would live separate from the Palestinians of Jaffa.
The year 1948 is today remembered by Jewish Israelis as the year of Israel’s War of Independence; however, Palestinian Israelis remember it as the year of al-Nakba, The Catastrophe. 1948 was also a watershed year for the three cities under discussion here, the year during which their geographies were irrevocably changed in social, cultural and political terms. Before the events of 1948, Jaffa, Acco and Ramle had majority Palestinian populations, and the 1947 U.N. partition plan called for them to be integrated into a proposed Palestinian state (fig. 5). However, by the end of the summer of 1948 all three cities had fallen to Israeli forces.

Armed struggle first broke out in Jaffa in December 1947, and it continued until the conquest of the city by Israeli forces in May 1948. Jaffa’s population in 1947 had numbered around 110,000, of whom some 35,000 were Jews. By the end of the hostilities, some 35,000 Palestinians had either been forced out or had voluntarily fled from the city proper or the neighboring village of Salama. Some 18,000 Jewish residents had also left Jaffa, but most were eventually resettled in Tel Aviv. Most significantly for the future of the city, after Jaffa was conquered by Jewish forces in 1948, 2,800 vacant or “abandoned” buildings, which had once belonged to Palestinians, were quickly allotted to new Jewish immigrants through a resettlement program that began just one week after the conquest of the city.

The situation was much the same to the north. After Haifa was conquered by Jewish forces in April 1948, thousands of Palestinian refugees crossed the bay to Acco. However, only a month after Haifa was taken, Acco too was captured by the Jewish Hagganah in Operation Ben-Ami. In early 1948 Acco had been a thriving, almost completely Palestinian city, with a negligible Jewish population. But following a mass exodus, its population, numbering 13,000 in 1947, fell to about 5,000 by November 1948, when the first Israeli census was carried out.

Inland, the city of Ramle was also taken by Jewish forces in Operation Dani in July 1948. And it was subsequently to suffer the worst population expulsion of any city in Palestine. The combined native Arab population of Ramle and its sister city Lydda, which numbered 50,000 on the eve of their conquest, fell to only 500 people thereafter.

Thus, by July 1948, all three cities, which had only a year previously been proposed for inclusion in a new Palestinian state, had now been annexed to the new state of Israel. The few Palestinians who remained in Jaffa, Acco and Ramle were placed under Israeli military rule. Furthermore, under the Absentee Property Regulations of 1948, the thousands of Palestinians who had either fled or been forced out were deemed ineligible to reclaim their houses and other property. Instead, these houses passed into the hands of the Custodian for Absentee Property, who then used them to settle new Jewish immigrants. The process of Judaizing the cities of Jaffa, Acco and Ramle had begun.


My husband and I moved here [to Jaffa] in the seventies because it was cheap to live here. We thought it would become a small, nice city, but they built these extravagant palaces on small pieces of land and the prices went up. . . . We’ve never had good schools in Jaffa. Those who can afford it still send their kids to school in Tel Aviv. I did too, but we could afford it. We were privileged.

— Jewish-Israeli artist and photographer who has lived in Jaffa since the 1970s

If the Mandate period had been marked by an attempt to contain and isolate the indigenous city through urban planning policies, the period that followed saw the settler-colonial city attempt to re-engage the indigenous city in an attempt to fragment its social and spatial fabric. With the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, official planning strategies changed drastically in relation to conquered cities such as Jaffa, Acco and Ramle. Specifically, the former ideology of
exclusion and segregation between Arab and Jewish areas was replaced almost overnight with a feverish urgency not only to reclaim these cities for Israel, but to subject them to an intense process of Judaization.

The reversal was particularly evident in the case of Tel Aviv and Jaffa. From its founding, Tel Aviv had been conceived of as autonomous from “Oriental” Jaffa. Thus, in 1921 Tel Aviv succeeded in declaring itself an independent municipality, and in 1934 an ordinance was passed declaring it independent, and “no longer in any relation of subordination to the municipality of Jaffa.” It was most curious then, when in 1950 Tel Aviv’s leaders sought to include Jaffa within Tel Aviv’s greater metropolitan region. Arnon Golan, an Israeli geographer, has presented the situation as follows.

These two cities that were separated by a colonial regime, were reunited due to the outcome of a rapid political, economic and demographic transformation, occurring in a post-colonial situation. The colonial Arab city was incorporated into the Jewish settler city, becoming an impoverished urban suburb of the newly formed post-colonial Israeli metropolis [emphasis my own].

“Reunification” would seem an inappropriate word to describe the joining of two cities that had not only never been united, but which had struggled until very recently to establish themselves as separate entities. Thus, from a previous goal of ideological, formal and physical segregation, town planning in many mixed cities now emphasized the “inclusion” Palestinian enclaves within the larger metropolitan boundaries of Jewish cities — even if these enclaves continued to be segregated as urban ghettoes. Inclusion, in this context, was simply a strategic move, one that allowed Israeli town-planning commissions and municipal boards to use the laws of city planning and urban governance to exercise control over those Palestinians still living in Israel. As Golan himself has mentioned, the desire to “reunite” Jaffa and Tel Aviv was partly justified on grounds that the annexation of Jaffa in 1948 had elicited anger from Arab states and authorities, and “the eradication of the separate existence of Jaffa was considered essential for defusing the protest.”

Acco, on the other hand, was Judaized by the settling of a Jewish population within its city limits. Thus, by August 1949, 4,200 new Jewish immigrants had been settled in the uninhabited houses of the New City, and an additional 100–150 families — mostly those of soldiers discharged from the Israeli army — had been settled within the walls of the Old City for “security reasons.” It was thought the Israeli soldiers and their families would serve as a means of controlling the Palestinian residents who remained there. But even as Jaffa and Acco were opening their doors to a new Jewish population, they were being turned into something of a prison for their remaining Palestinian residents. Under military rule Palestinian citizens of Israel were prohibited from purchasing or selling land, and severe restrictions were placed on their freedom. In Acco this meant that longtime residents were restricted in their movements within the city, and prohibited from leaving the city limits. Thus, while the shift from British Mandate to Israeli statehood had been marked by a shift from exclusion to “reunification,” the new rhetoric was driven by an old desire to contain and control what was seen as the dangerous and incendiary Palestinian city and its residents. There would be no real reconciliation either in terms of space or society.

In terms of the working apparatus of city planning and architecture as well, little change was experienced between the colonial and postcolonial context in Israel. Until 1966 the foundation of town planning continued to be the basic Mandatory Town Planning Ordinance, with only a minimal amendment. In 1966, however, city planning laws were changed drastically in Israel. And at about the same time military rule over Palestinian Israelis was finally lifted. Such changes did not reflect change in sentiment toward Palestinian Israelis, however. They were still seen as a potential “fifth column,” a “security problem” that needed to be contained in the interests of the state. In fact, the “coincidence” that national planning laws should receive a major overhaul in the same year that military rule was lifted is telling. It was certainly no accident that one year later the Agricultural Settlement Law was also established, which prohibited non-Jews from leasing state lands (which now comprise 93 percent of the total land in Israel). Thus, planning laws stepped in as a new system of control, replacing military rule.

The planning apparatus that continued to operate in the mixed cities and its similarity to a colonial model of domination can be analyzed through a theoretical framework proposed by Iris Marion Young:

. . . theorists often treat power as a dyadic relation on the model of ruler and subject. This dyadic modeling of power misses the larger structure of agents and actions that mediates between two agents in a power relation. . . . One agent can have institutionalized power over another only if the actions of many third agents support and execute the will of the powerful.

This notion of institutional agency is helpful in understanding how laws of planning and land distribution became key implements of segregation. Furthermore, although military rule was lifted in 1966 (and Palestinians began to form coalitions and activist groups to demand land rights), the Six Day War in 1967, ending in the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, resulted in increased political tension within mixed cities. Eventually, anti-Palestinian sentiment in cities like Acco even caused an “inward” migration of Palestinians back to “Arab” parts of the Old City. And over the next several years these Arab parts evolved into centers of anti-Israeli sentiment. Segregation could thus no longer produce the formerly clean exclusion of the Other that had once allowed the discursive erasure of the colonized. It was also no longer either useful or practical to believe that Palestinians would continue to live contentedly in their ghettos.
ed by colonial designs was, in fact, turning out to be a site of armed struggle, the crucible in which Palestinian-Israeli identity was being forged. In this sense, segregation at its most absolute had backfired, and something had to be done to reinstate it in a more effective manner.

In 1969, after several Palestinian residents of Acco had been arrested and charged with terrorism, Jewish residents of the city demonstrated in its streets demanding that military rule be reimposed over Palestinian citizens. Military government was not brought back to contain the Palestinians, but another and perhaps equally powerful strategy was set in motion to achieve the same ends. In 1970 Acco’s Mayor Israel Doron published a report which concluded that “. . . without assistance, Acre could turn into a city with a large Arab population and a weak and poor Jewish one.” It recommended immediate action to prevent this from happening; among the steps it proposed were “preferential development status, increased private construction, special grants to young couples for housing, and construction of better quality housing,” mostly aimed toward the Jewish residents of Acco. Such fear and suspicion continued to worsen after the Yom Kippur War in 1973. And within Acco, a concentrated effort was made to disperse the Palestinian population by establishing an “Arab development town” — Makr — four kilometers outside the city to house 5,000 Palestinian families.

Similarly, years after Jaffa’s “incorporation” into the greater municipal boundaries of Tel Aviv, an aggressive development project called Jaffa Slopes was started in the mid-1960s. To create more valuable coastal land for sale, the project aimed to reclaim land from the sea. The rubble needed to create the new coastal areas, however, came from the demolition of several thousand houses in an area of southern Jaffa called Ajami, a part of the city that was largely Palestinian. Jaffa Slopes continued for the next twenty years without much success, after which it was halted by the authorities in the mid-1980s (Fig. 6).

During the period 1948–1973 the strategic inclusion of Palestinian populations into larger metropolitan schemes and town-planning boundaries of Israeli cities actively aided the fragmentation and dispersal of Palestinian Israelis. Indeed, the double-edged rhetoric of modernism and development popular at the time was reminiscent of Napoleon III’s decision in the mid-nineteenth century to blast boulevards through the center of Paris — an act of modernization that simultaneously broke up the slums that housed thousands of the city’s poorest denizens. In the cases of Acco and Jaffa, the Palestinian presence was similarly eroded under the guise of development.

1973–PRESENT: RECONSTRUCTING THE GHETTO AS SPECTACLE

There is a huge move to redevelop the Old City of Jaffa, but it doesn’t affect the everyday life of people here. I mean look at the infrastructure around you. It looks like India.

— Former Jewish-Israeli resident of Jaffa who now lives in Tel Aviv but continues to work in the tourist industry in Jaffa

In the last section I indicated how town planning was used in the decades following the establishment of the state of Israel to manage the social and geographical fragmentation of Palestinian Israelis. To understand how such processes of segregation have continued from the mid-1970s to the present one must reference other important influences, among which are globalization and the urban effects of the world system of capitalism. Thus, even as colonial and post-colonial methods of social control have persisted in the mixed cities, they have also intersected with such new phenomena as gated communities, gentrification and tourism. In particular, both Jaffa and Acco demonstrate how the

**Figure 6.** View of Ajami from Old Jaffa Hill. The piece of land to the left jutting into the sea is part of the incomplete reclamation of the Jaffa Slopes project.
processes of gentrification and tourism have been used as a means of control in the contemporary mixed Israeli city.

Of the three cities under study here, Jaffa has seen the most aggressive process of gentrification, partly due to its aesthetic value as a historic port, but mostly because of its proximity to Tel Aviv, Israel’s commercial hub. Jaffa’s biggest, most exclusive and expensive urban addition in recent times is a luxury housing project on Yefet Street called Givat Andromeda (Andromeda Hill) (Figs. 7, 8). A visit to the project’s Website describes it as “the new old Jaffa,” with all the picturesque virtues of the old Jaffa served up in a conveniently modern residential environment. The project is named after Jaffa’s most famous myth — that of the beautiful Andromeda, who was chained to a rock off the coast as a sacrifice to a vicious sea monster, but who was conveniently rescued by Perseus, who then married her. But even as Andromeda Hill implores prospective customers to “come live in a legend,” it reassures them on other grounds:

Andromeda Hill is a virtual “city within a city” surrounded by a wall and secured 24 hours a day. The open spaces and alleys are paved in natural stone, dappled in authentic Israeli vegetation and ornamented with elements of water and authentic, original lighting. . . . Andromeda Hill has been planned for you to sit at home, view the sea, enjoy the beauty and hear . . . only the waves.41

As far as prices go, the cost of living in a housing project that is at once a gated community and a habitable legend is not cheap. In 1998 and 1999 prices in Andromeda Hill ranged from US$720,000 for a 140-sq.m. apartment to US$500,000 for a 120-sq.m. apartment. Most of the units within the project were purchased by Israeli citizens from outside Jaffa, or by foreign residents as summer or vacation homes.42 The historian Mark LeVine has compared the extravagance of Andromeda Hill, and the surrounding poverty of Ajami, with the image of Disneyland.

Like Disneyland for most of the world’s poor, the virtual reality that increasingly cohabits the space of contemporary Jaffa can only be viewed from beyond a “secured gate” by most residents of Ajami. In Isra-Disney, Jaffa, as symbolized by Andromeda Hill, becomes an “urban masterpiece,” a site of “artistic renaissance,” and “a museum of magnificent architecturally designed buildings” — a carnival of sites, sights, and sounds that excludes those who cannot afford the entrance fee.43

Andromeda’s coastal neighbor and partner in gentrification is Old Jaffa Hill, which has been developed and managed by the Old Jaffa Development Company, a partnership of the Israeli Lands Authority, the Government Tourism Company, the State of Israel, and the Tel Aviv-Jaffa municipality (Fig. 9). Once the main residential quarter for the Palestinians of Jaffa, Old Jaffa Hill was first taken over as an archaeological reserve; then, under the pretext of preservation, its indigenous Palestinian population was replaced by an artists colony. Today Old Jaffa Hill is the epicenter of tourist traffic to Jaffa, revamped with designer boutiques, art galleries and museums (Figs. 10, 11). Its population is now mostly Jewish, and the Old Jaffa Development Company restricts the sale or leasing of property there to artists or writers. Unlike Andromeda Hill, Old Jaffa Hill is not fenced off or guarded as a gated community. But in more ways than one it signals itself as an enclave of exclusivity from the rest of Jaffa, one that welcomes only tourists or wealthy shoppers.

In 1987, through an urban renewal project called Project Renewal, some parts of Jaffa such as Ajami and Jabaliyya with large resident Palestinian populations were chosen for an urban makeover. However, the Palestinians who lived in these areas were not blind to why what had previously been a white patch on the map of Israel had now been deemed a national historic treasure. Rema Hammami, a Palestinian scholar whose family comes from Jaffa, described the inanity of gentrification thus:

RAJAGOPALAN: DISMEMBERED GEOGRAPHIES

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A few years ago the New Israel Fund had decided to start doing projects in the Arab sector. Jaffa, as the metaphor for Arab communities in need of rehabilitation (read: drug addicts, thieves, prostitutes), was taken on as the showcase project. Money provided largely by the Los Angeles Jewish community went into “urban renewal”... But the people living in the houses selected for rehabilitation were the poor remnants of a community that had been literally destroyed and all of their attempts at civic control over their own lives had been quickly and systematically neutralized. So it was not long before the pink stucco was either soiled or splattered with graffiti, the houses and park now standing as eloquent reminders of the futility of prettifying the environments of fundamentally marginalized and oppressed people — at least when the prettifying is undertaken by the same forces that marginalize and oppress them.

The cycles of production and consumption with respect to tourism in the mixed cities of Israel present a much more complicated scenario. Given the ethnically divided nature of the country, cities such as Jaffa and Acco have now become important tourist destinations and economic resources. But what is to be done when tourism is incumbent upon the manufacture or production of heritage, yet this heritage belongs to the very “fragments” that the nation-state refuses to recognize? Today, the “old” or “traditional” cities of Jaffa and Acco, both of which are Arab, play a strategic role in the historical narrative of Israel — as a nation with a unique heritage and a claim to an antique and glorious past. Yet the Palestinian presence in these cities, and their claim to them, continues to be erased by projects such as Jaffa Slopes and Andromeda Hill.

One could claim that the manufacture of “the Old Arab city” as a tourist attraction is ultimately beneficial to its Arab residents in economic, social and political terms. But there still needs to be a critical examination of what it means for a politically marginalized group such as the Palestinian citizens of Israel to be suddenly drawn into the spectacle of tourism as actors in the historical staging of a country that explicitly excludes them. Does this present an opportunity for social or political emancipation? Certainly, tourism brings jobs and economic growth to the “older,” more traditional areas. But does it also mean that Palestinian Israelis will share equally in the fruits of this growth? Most importantly, what does it mean when Palestinian Israelis are cast as actors in the historical narrative of the nation-state of Israel, yet are denied a role in its present? The strategic positioning of an already-marginalized people as the rightful inhabitants of “Crusader cities” such as Acco, or “Ottoman port cities” such as Jaffa, would only seem to further isolate them in time as well as space. Tourism thus presents a particularly problematic image in a country deeply divided by religious and ethnic conflict. Segregation in this sense would seem related to the very idea of cultural production. As part of the management of cultural difference, the Other has now been set apart as a historical
very quickly became a retrogressive high crime area which earned the nickname, “The Big Wasteland” — an endorsement which brought it no great respect. In 1964 the first rental contracts were signed, which indicated the beginning of the Company’s activities. The sphere of its activities was limited to Old Jaffa Hill — “The Big Wasteland” — and in accordance with the Antiquities Law, the site was declared an archaeological reserve, with the intention of preserving the past for the benefit of the future. The Company set itself the goal of developing Old Jaffa as a center of art, tourism and entertainment, and undertook extensive infrastructure tasks, while at the same time seeing to it that the original construction styles were preserved. In addition, the Company worked toward vacating “The Big Wasteland,” providing its inhabitants, by mutual agreement, with new accommodations in Greater Tel Aviv.

Equally problematic in cities such as Jaffa and Acco is the question of who has the power or authority to determine the official tourist narrative. Take, for example, how the redevelopment of Old Jaffa Hill as an artists colony is presented at the Visitor’s Center of the Old Jaffa Development Company:

With the coming of the massive waves of immigration during the 1950’s, many new immigrant families, most of them from Bulgaria, settled in that part of Jaffa just outside the Old City, while within Old Jaffa, most of the new settlers belonged to the poorer and more primitive socio-economic levels. Because of the squalid conditions of their surroundings and their problematic social fabric, Old Jaffa
In this description, the indigenous population that was displaced to make way for the resident artists of the Old Hill of Jaffa is neither named nor identified. It is enough that tourists be told they were poor and primitive — that they constituted a “problematic social fabric.” Thus, the tourist narrative does not stop with the fabrication of a legendary and glorious history, but it seeks to erase Jaffa’s Palestinian history and replace it with a narrative of recovery or emancipation from decay by the timely intervention of the state (fig. 15).

The examples above show how segregation, in the postmodern sense, exists today at the knotty intersection of global capital, partisan politics, and disempowerment. As cities, the artifacts of Acco and Jaffa — the former with its wealth of museums, the latter with its bustling shouk and cultural warehouses — have been re-created as cosmetic and superficial representations of an imposed ideology. But ultimately their makeovers fail to hide the power disparities at play between the two ethnic groups that inhabit their streets and houses. Peter Marcuse has written eloquently of such postmodern segregation:

\[\ldots\text{ what is happening today maybe considered the attempt to impose chaos on order, an attempt to cover with a cloak of visible (and visual) anarchy an increasingly pervasive and obtrusive order — to be more specific, to cover an increasingly pervasive pattern of hierarchical relationships among people and orderings of city space reflecting and reinforcing that hierarchical pattern with a cloak of calculated randomness.}\]

CONCLUSION

We need cultural conversation not war.
— Palestinian resident of the mixed city of Ramle

After my first visit to Ramle, I returned a couple of months later to interview a young Palestinian-Israeli resident of the “ghetto,” whose family had lived in Ramle at least three generations. She spoke frankly, and during the course of our conversation she said, “the identity of the city is my identity, but we [the Palestinians] are made to feel as if we are not welcome here.” Perhaps there is no more damning testimony than this with regard to the deeply racialized and segregated geography of a city that dares to call itself mixed.

Even a brief examination such as this of the processes of segregation in Israeli mixed cities reveals a clear geography of dominant and peripheral spaces. The Israeli term “mixing” clearly refers only to demographics, rather than to any true interaction or coexistence between Palestinian Israelis and the rest of the city. Thus, while the Jews and Palestinians of Jaffa, Ramle and Acco may be actors within the same urban arena, they have been set in diametrically opposite positions on the stage. Economically, socially, ideologically and politically, they are of the same space, yet they remain worlds apart (fig. 16).
Within this dismembered geography of Jewish Israeli vs. Palestinian Israeli, old city vs. new city, tradition vs. modern, the mixed city is continuously produced as a signifier of the Other. If one returns to Falah’s quote, it is possible to see how the mixed city has become one of the primary sites where “purified localities” have been created specifically to safeguard “against erosion of the state’s special character.”

A study such as this not only implicates the racial policies of the nation-state and their urban spatial manifestations, it also reveals the complicity of the planning and urban-design professions in the process. Indeed, these supposedly neutral activities have served as handmaidens to a nation-state and its xenophobic drive to reclaim and homogenize its existing urban geographies. More than half a century after the Mandate and the departure of the colonizer, the inherited apparatus of city planning continues to draw lines within the city, erasing some parts of it while privileging others, maintaining the walls that keep some in and others out. While the colonial power has officially left, its legacy persists; in fact, it has been strengthened by an intersection with the more recent cultural practices of gentrification and tourism. This essay has attempted to critique, and perhaps replace, the simplistic discursive construction of Acco, Ramle and Jaffa as Israeli mixed cities, choosing instead to rechristen them as dismembered geographies.

REFERENCE NOTES

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1. Yom Kippur is the Jewish holiday of atonement. It entails abstaining from food and drink for one day. In Israel, during the holiday, besides public and government offices, all shops and restaurants remain closed and there is no public transportation. On Yom Kippur most people in the country also refrain from using their own vehicles and eating or smoking in public.

2. He speaks to us in Hebrew, but uses the English word “ghetto” in the conversation.


5. In this article the term Israel, or the nation-state of Israel, refers to the country’s pre-1967 borders. It does not include the occupied territories of Gaza, the West Bank, or the Golan Heights.


8. Ibid., p.827.


10. The process of Judaization also manifests itself in the politics of naming, as the Arabic names of several Palestinian cities and towns have been replaced with Hebrew ones. For a more thorough discussion on this subject, see R. Khalidi, Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); and S. Slyomovics, The Object of Memory: Arab and Jew Narrate the Palestinian Village (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998).

Ramat’s original Arabic name is al-Ramla, and it continues to be called Ramla by its Palestinian inhabitants. Jaffa is the more Anglicized version of the Arabic Yaffa or the Hebrew Yafa. Acco is also known as Acre or Akka. I have chosen to use the most colloquial names in use among Jewish Israelis and Palestinian Israelis at the time of my fieldwork.


12. Although in this essay I have presented the colonization of Palestine only with regard to the British Mandate and the Zionist occupation, I do not mean to disregard the effects of Ottoman colonization. The rural areas and organization of agricultural land in Palestine underwent significant changes during Ottoman times (especially during the second phase of the Tanzimat in 1870). But Palestinian urban areas experienced their most drastic changes with the establishment of the British Mandate and the concurrent escalation of Zionist pressure.


15. Ibid., p.54.

16. Ibid., p.22.


24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
31. Ibid., p.393.
32. Torstrick, Limits of Coexistence, p.59.
35. Torstrick, Limits of Coexistence.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid., p.76.
38. Ibid., p.78.
41. Andromeda’s official Website is http://www.andromeda.co.il/. The site was visited January 16, 2002.
42. Sa’ar, “Girls’ and ‘women.””
45. From a panel hung in the Visitor’s Center of the Old Jaffa Development Company in Kedumim Square, Jaffa.

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