

# Belonging, memory and the politics of planning in Israel

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*This paper focuses on contradictory expressions of memory and belonging of Jews and Palestinians in Israel. It examines the conflicts over planning procedures, which engage such contradictory memories, and belonging at the national and local scales of planning. It explores how the dynamics of power relations can operate differently at each level and can result in planning resolutions, which link in different ways to the constructions of memory and belonging of Jews and Palestinians. The paper begins with an overview of the expressions of belonging and commemoration at the national scale of planning; in the agenda of the Council for the Restoration and Preservation of Historic Sites (CRPHS) in Israel and the rhetoric of the government National Master Plan of Israel (TAMA/35). It challenges this rhetoric in two local planning events: 'the road and the graveyard' and 'new Jewish neighbourhood and the old Palestinian village'.*

**Key words:** belonging, memory, planning, Palestinians, Jews, power relations.

## Introduction

Memory locates us, as part of a family history, as part of a tribe or community, as a part of a city-building and nation-making. Loss of memory is, basically, loss of identity. (Sandercock 1998: 207–208)

The past decades have witnessed a growing interest in exploring and understanding the substance and multiple expressions of memory, belonging and commemoration not only in their historical or political implications but also in their sociological connotations, citizenship expressions and cultural affiliations (Crang 1998; Fullilove 1996; Kinsman 1995; Mitchell 2000; Yuval Davis 2003). In urban planning

these notions are associated with the power to construct urban spaces and to dictate whose memory is being commemorated or ignored (Healey 1997; Hillier 1998; Jacobs 1996; Sandercock 1998). Another growing field of research acknowledges belonging and territorialization as part of everyday life in the city, emphasizing its daily nature, which in a way trivializes its sacred and holy connotations (de Certeau 1984; Fenster 2004; Leach 2002).

In the light of current research, the objective of this paper is to contribute another perspective to the links between memory, belonging and planning, and to examine the conflicts over planning procedures in Israel which engage contradictory memories and belonging of two communities over one land; the Jews and

Palestinians.<sup>1</sup> The analysis focuses on the different expressions of such disputes at the national and local scales of planning. It explores how the dynamics of power relations can operate differently at each level and can result in planning resolutions, which link in a different way the constructions of memory and belonging of Jews and Palestinians.

The motivation to work on these complicated issues comes from my own self-positioning, identity and sense of belonging. As a Jew born in Israel to parents who became refugees from Eastern Europe after the Second World War, my identity and sense of belonging were constructed by both the recent traumatic experiences that my parents had undergone and the ancient-biblical sense of belonging to the holy land that was part of my formal educational identity construction. But none of these identity constructions dealt properly with the fact that refugees like my parents, who were brought here in 1948, came to a land which was not empty but has been populated by the Palestinians who lived in this area for hundred of years. At this point in time, my parents and other refugees became citizens in a Jewish state while the Palestinians had become refugees, either in their own state<sup>2</sup> or in other states. These individual contradictory and traumatic experiences of the Palestinians living in Israel yielded complicated expressions of memories and belonging both on personal and national levels. Perhaps the best expressions of these contradictions are the two events that are celebrated simultaneously; ‘the Day of Independence’ that the Jewish citizens of Israel celebrate every year and the ‘El Nakba’ (Arabic for the disaster)—a day which commemorates the trauma that the Palestinian citizens of Israel experienced as a consequence of the establishment of the state of Israel. Their disaster occurred because most of them were expelled, evacuated or ran away as a result of the war. These two events symbolize

more than anything else the conflict of identity and the construction of belonging in Israel today. This is perhaps why I was so interested and curious to read for the first time about the connection that was made in the text of the National Master Plan of Israel (TAMA/35) between notions of memory, belonging and spatial planning. As an official government planning document that usually articulates the hegemonic national goals and targets of the state of Israel, it has been a surprise for me to find any reference to such notions which are so disputed in Israeli society and space, as we see later in the paper. My first goal then was to deepen the analysis about the rhetoric of the National Master Plan and to find out whether it is indeed a change in official politics or mere lip service. Also, I wanted to learn how the discussion on belonging at the national level infiltrates to local planning events. As it happens while revising this paper, several events took place in Israel, which engaged with these notions. In some of these cases my work on this subject has been used to substantiate planning objections that individuals and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have submitted to challenge municipalities and government planning projects, which were blind to these sentiments.

The paper begins with an in-depth analysis of the expressions of belonging and commemoration at the national scale of planning: in the agenda of the Council for the Restoration and Preservation of Historic Sites (CRPHS) in Israel and the rhetoric of the government National Master Plan of Israel (TAMA/35). Both documents in fact show that the official government policy still works on the commemoration of the Jewish Israelis, ignoring the sense of belonging and memory of the Palestinian Israelis. I then challenge this rhetoric as it is expressed in local planning events: the first is the dispute over ‘the road and the graveyard’

which connects the conflict over the expansion of a road leading to the Nesher local council near Haifa on parts of a Muslim graveyard in which Izz al-Din al-Qassam, a Palestinian hero, is buried. The second local event looks at the disagreements over the 'new Jewish neighbourhood and the old Palestinian village' which takes place in one of the Jewish villages in the Galilee. There, the local planning committee initiated a plan to build a new neighbourhood on the site of the ruined 1948 Palestinian village. The paper ends with a comparative analysis of cases from different parts of the world.

### **Split spaces—split identities**

The state of Israel was established as a Jewish state, as a sanctuary for the Jews, a place for 'the gathering of the exiles' from all over the world. One of its first national goals was to construct its collective Jewish national identity. Collective identity is usually based on symbolic myths and sites of commemoration, which have a very specific and basic function in a construction of a culture, society and nation (Ohana and Wistrich 1996). Myths internalize collective memory and they are usually spatial. The possibility of identifying a specific geographical site for myths makes them more accessible emotionally. Therefore, nations do their best to commemorate and memorialize sites of myths because they serve as a strong mechanism to construct belonging and collective identity. Sites of Jewish myths are located all over Israel. Some are associated with early historical periods such as the Messada.<sup>3</sup> Some of the myths and sites of commemoration are more recent, relating to the times of early Zionism and early Jewish settlements in Palestine during the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>4</sup>

The construction and commemoration of the Jewish national collective identity has become a formal project. Several government and semi-government agencies have been established to identify sites of significance from Biblical times to recent historical events. One of the leading organizations is the Council for the Preservation of Historic Sites (CPHS), which has been established according to amendment 31 in the 1965 Law of Planning and Construction. Its declared goals are to: 'identify, restore and protect heritage buildings and locales associated with the country's rebirth, Zionism, settlement and security' ([www.shimur.co.il](http://www.shimur.co.il)).

The wars against Arab countries since 1948 have added myths and sites of commemoration all over Israel, memorializing army battles and soldiers killed in wars. However, such massive constructions of Israeli Jewish identity totally ignore and exclude Arab Palestinian landscapes and their wartime traumas (Golan 2002).<sup>5</sup>

This is a very complicated situation precisely because 20 per cent of the total population in Israel, the Palestinian citizens of Israel, cannot identify with the myths and sites of commemoration of the Israeli Jewish people, especially since some of these myths are based on their own people presented as 'the enemy'. Their association with 'the enemy' is based on the conflicts between the Jewish people who emigrated to Ottoman Palestine in the mid-nineteenth century to a land that was already populated with some 700,000–900,000 Palestinians. The Jewish myths of those early days of settlement are based on the fights against the Palestinians who lived in the country, the ancestors of those who live in the country today. As in many other settler societies, such as the USA, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and South Africa, both settlers and indigenous people see themselves as native, with a strong sense of attachment and historical roots, either because of mythical sentiments

or historical experiences (Stasiulis and Yuval Davis 1995; Yiftachel 2001).

Being excluded from the sense of nation as constructed by the Jewish population, the Palestinians construct their own identity and sense of belonging based on their own symbols and representations of memories. Their sense of exclusion and inability to identify with Zionist national symbols and ideology is what in a way pushed them to commemorate and internalize their own agenda of memory and commemoration. This is expressed in the commemoration of El Nakba day and also in the naming of streets in Arab towns after Muslim figures, a political act that expresses power and authority (Palonen 1993). Another expression of their sense of exclusion is the establishment of some tens of NGOs which aim literally to look after Palestinian rights and their sites of memory, myth and belonging.<sup>6</sup>

During its fifty-five years of existence, the planning system has failed to acknowledge Palestinian history in the landscape of Israel. From 1965, the government of Israel took a more active role in ‘cleaning’ the land of the ruins of the abandoned Palestinian villages by destroying existing buildings and structures and ‘flattening’ the area (Shai 2002). It is interesting to read the reasons for this action—none of them deals directly with the destruction of memory and belonging. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs claimed that those ruins which are located near main roads cause ‘unnecessary questions’ among tourists. Other government organizations thought that the ruins negatively affect the beauty of the landscape and the Israeli Land Authority thought that the ‘cleaning’ of an area of Palestinian villages would help to avoid the sense of distress felt by Palestinian citizens of Israel, having seen their home villages being destroyed (Shai 2002).

These actions reflect a deep-seated desire to dominate space through ethnic segregation.

Kimmerling (1977, 1983), for example, analysed three components of the ongoing Israeli–Palestinian conflict over territory: presence, ownership and sovereignty. The desire for a Zionist presence explains why it was so crucial to use such dramatic actions to ‘clear’ the landscape of Palestinian ‘evidence’. Falah’s research (1996), which uses Sibley’s terminology (1998) of ‘purification of space’, can provide another explanation for this action, which is also expressed in residential segregation in mixed Arab–Jewish cities in Israel. In more recent work, Yacobi (2002) explores the meanings of the built environment in Israel’s mixed cities and claims that they are shaped by the logic of ethno-nationalism. This is expressed in spatial patterns of segregation between the Jewish dominant majority and the Arab subordinate minority. Rabinowitz (1997) describes similar processes in Haifa and Jaffa where Jewish immigrants were settled in Palestinian properties in 1948. Other research such as Tamar Berger’s (1998) analysis of the three periods of changing ownership at the Dizengoff Center, located in the heart of Tel Aviv, emphasizes the different layers of belonging in Israel. Kallus and Law-Yone (2000) note in their research how public housing has been targeted not only to provide housing for the Jewish immigrants in the 1950s but also to substantiate Jewish national hegemony in its territories. A different perspective is presented in the work of Benvenisti (1998) who advocates housing segregation in planning schemes especially when such separation meets the needs of ethnic and cultural groups to maintain their unique traditions (such as the ultra-orthodox). He mentions several cases which were brought to the Supreme Court when either Palestinians or Jews asked to settle in Jewish only<sup>7</sup> or Arab only<sup>8</sup> areas but were refused by the Supreme Court which maintained this principle of segregation. Finally, Yiftachel (1998, 2000) analyses

the links between state mechanisms of social control and oppression of the Arab Palestinian citizens of Israel as they are reflected in urban and regional planning. He mentions the pattern of land control that is influenced by land ownership, the location of settlements, urban expansion, and land zoning and its use as a mechanism to shape and re-shape the Zionist character of the landscape.

In the light of these practices, the articulation of 'a sense of belonging' in the National Master Plan becomes even more surprising and interesting. Does this reflect a change in official attitudes towards belonging and memory of the 'other'? And how do these changes infiltrate local planning politics?

### **The dynamics of belonging and memory at the national level of planning**

It is agreed that memories and sense of belonging are sentiments that either exist or do not exist, with no direct connection to the role of planning in its construction and commemoration. Planning, however, does have the power to legitimize and to make sites of commemoration visible and explicit or to transform them into abandoned and neglected sites (Jacobs 1996). This connection between the role of planning, memory and belonging has been challenged and criticized in recent planning literature (see e.g. Healey 1997; Forester 1999; Sandercock 1998). Sandercock (1998) is quite certain about the dominant role planners play in this process. Paradigms beyond modernist planning have essential roles, she argues, in acquiring and recognizing the importance of memory, desire and the spirit of the city in creating healthy human settlements. She makes a clear connection between planning and belonging by using the notion of memory. 'Rational planners' she argues,

have been obsessed with controlling how and when and which people use public as well as private space. Meanwhile, ordinary people continue to find creative ways of appropriating spaces and creating places, in spite of planning, to fulfill their desire as well as their needs, to tend the spirit as well as take care of the rent. (Sandercock 1998: 213–214)

The same line of thought is presented by Hillier (1998) who analyses planners' roles in a development process in the Swan Valley, Perth, Australia that is claimed and used by Aboriginal people. These two perceptions, the local which embodies memory and belonging, and the 'professional', the modernist, which serves as an 'evacuator' of the local, illustrate the ways and means by which planning can serve as a vehicle for respecting and honouring a sense of belonging or as a means of smashing it (Fenster 2002).

How do these complicated mechanisms work at the national level of planning in Israel? Two main actions took place in the last three decades, which signify these complex relations. The first is the establishment of the Council for the Restoration and Preservation of Historic Sites in Israel in 1984 and the second is the formulation of the National Master Plan of Israel (TAMA/35).

### *The Council for Restoration of Historic Sites (CRHS)*

The clear agenda of the CRHS (see previous section) to conserve the built heritage of Jewish-Zionist sites only, is carried out in public actions aimed to protect Jewish historical buildings and sites of memory. This is expressed in the council's 'site survey' project carried out in early 1990s of some 8,000 sites which were identified as places of historical significance; most of them are part of Jewish historical heritage and not of the Palestinian

heritage.<sup>9</sup> The CRHS works also on initiating legislation such as amendment 31 of the 1965 Planning and Building Law entitled: 'a plan for site preservation'.<sup>10</sup> This is the first legal action that transforms the process of memory and belonging into a by-law planning procedure. According to this amendment, local councils are the parties responsible for preparing plans for site preservation although other 'interested bodies' can also prepare such plans. In reality, not all local councils take the responsibility to prepare such plans. Most Arab Palestinian local councils, for example, have not prepared these plans and according to the CRHS spokesperson they have not even cooperated with the site survey preparations. This is how the CRHS explains why there are not many Palestinian sites included in this survey. Currently, the CRHS initiates another amendment to the Planning and Building Law, which will provide the CRHS with the authorization to prepare plans for site preservation if local councils fail to do so. In addition, the CRHS has initiated a 'site preservation convention', which is based on international conventions such as the 1964 Venice convention.<sup>11</sup>

So far, these actions reflect very clearly the official policy in Israel of ignoring representations of memory and belonging of the Palestinians. This is why it is interesting to explore how the National Master Plan does deal with these issues.

### *The National Master Plan (TAMA/35)*

The National Master Plan of Israel (TAMA/35) is formulated according to the 1965 Planning and Building Law. Its two main goals are:

To develop spaces in Israel in a way which allows the realizations of the goals of Israeli society and its varied components, the realization of its Jewish

character, the absorption of Jewish immigrants and maintaining its democratic character.

To develop spaces in Israel in a way which allow maximum economic development and social fairness and promotion of quality of life. (Ministry of Interior in Israel 1999: 10)

The architect of the plan, Shamai Assif, identified the term 'quality of life' as consisting of three main components:

The somehow overused term 'quality of life' means a combination of *comfort, belonging and commitment* to the society in Israel with the ties to *the place* ... this is the vision of our landscape. (Ministry of Interior in Israel 1999: 2–3, original emphasis)

His definition applied quality of life of the 'general public' with no particular reference to any national group. I asked him what is the meaning of the term: 'sense of belonging' and what are the implications of belonging to the plan-making process:

You identify yourself with and become attached to a place that has a clear order, [an order] that embodies and reflects certain norms and values ... One can have a sense of belonging to such planning concepts as green boulevards, the metropolis, transportation. These symbols are contradictory to the spatial chaos caused by a built environment, which is constructed under the pressures of private entrepreneurs and depends on the decisions of the Israeli Land Authority. This chaos produces entirely different feelings, certainly not a sense of belonging. (Shamai Assif, interview, March 2001)

A sense of belonging here has not been perceived as a matter of a specific national identity but as a universal concept. The 'order of space' or the 'arrangement' of space is what makes one feel belonging to a place. Here the architect refers to everyday practices of a sense of be

longing and not to its connection with specific sites of belonging and commemoration (Fenster 2004). I further asked him about the meanings of belonging to the specific sites of commemoration of the Palestinian citizens of Israel. He said:

There is a need to create a situation in which the Arab population feels it belongs to this country, maybe there is a need to tell the Arabs that the state respects and is going to restore some of their abandoned villages and make them into memorial sites but we did not suggest it in the National Master Plan ... We live in a complicated situation of a constant threat, it is a matter of survival ... the two nations and the two communities should become more mature and more integrated with a wide agreement on the meaning of quality of life, but to suggest to restore their villages?! ... and the second stage is [throwing us to] the sea?! ... it becomes very popular to say that we are strong enough and we can allow ourselves [to let Palestinians restore their sites of memory] but we are not so strong and we cannot allow ourselves ... there is a need to respect and honour the memory of the others but between that and solutions of [restoring villages] there is a big gap. For example, the tomb of Izz al-Din al-Qassam who is a Palestinian hero ... there are situations in which a proposal to commemorate his tomb will be rejected so I told my team not to include this site (as a site of historical preservation) but we did suggest restoring other sites such as Kafar Kana or Karnei Hittin where Salah-ad-Din fought the crusaders and this in itself is a 'revolution' that is to include such sites into the National Master Plan. I told the planning team that if we include the tomb of Izz al-Din al-Qassam as one of the sites for preservation, the plan would not be approved—we have to be practical. There is a plan, there is politics, and there is reality. (Shamai Assif, interview, March 2001)

The architect's narrative reflects some of the deep traumas and anxieties which exist among

the Jewish Israelis. The narrative of 'throwing the Jews to the sea' has its origin in Arab propaganda since 1948. Since then, the threat has deepened the sense of Jewish Israeli national identity. It also has been used as a mechanism to justify a large range of actions against the Palestinian citizens of Israel in the name of Jewish survival. Here the Palestinian and the Jewish sense of belonging are presented as contradictory and clashing. The continuing Holocaust memory serves as a tool to justify lack of justice and equality towards 'the enemy'—the Palestinian citizens of Israel. This illustrates the difficulty of formulating the National Master Plan. On the one hand, the plan should be acceptable and approved by the authorities. On the other hand, there is the vision of the plan as pluralistic and as one which refers not only to Jewish needs. These tensions are also highlighted in the introduction to Forster, Fischler and Shmueli's book (2001) on Israeli planners and designers. They note the tension between democratic principles and Jewish identity in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious state. The conflict between these two visions resonates in the National Master Plan and perhaps marks the sharp contrast between the rhetoric of belonging at the national level and its practical solutions at the local level.

Another point which came out of the discussions with the architect concerns the decisions on which sites of memory to include for preservation. Such a choice depends to a large extent in their historical meanings or, as the architect put it, that they must be part of 'the consensus'. It usually means that the earlier the historical period the easier it is for the Jews to accept. This is true both to the planning process of the National Master Plan and the process of street naming in Arab towns in Israel. For example, the site of Hittim, which commemorates the Islamic victory against the Christians by Salah-ad-Din, is less contro-

versial and more acceptable for the Jewish majority than recent sites of Islamic commemoration, such as the tomb of Izz al-Din al-Qassam. Streets in Arab towns are mostly named after figures from the early history of Islam (Azaryahu and Kook 2002). Perhaps the leaders of Arab towns want to stay on the ‘safe side’ in establishing such spatial commemoration. The architect refers to this point:

Yes the plan excluded sites like the grave of Izz al-Din al-Qassam whose name is used as the name of one of the most aggressive and active Palestinian terrorist groups directly responsible for cruel murders of innocent civilians. Actually no one seriously suggested its inclusion. Even Arab members of the team and steering committee well understood its negative effect and limited value. This is like including the grave of the Jewish extremist Baruch Goldstein who cruelly murdered a whole group of Muslim Palestinians while praying in Hebron.<sup>12</sup> There is a group of extremists that would even to this day support such an idea. It is not just a matter of mere viability (the ability to get the plan to be approved by the authorities). It is a matter of whether the plan really contributes to the CBC (comfort, belonging and commitment) or just promotes more conflict and less security. (Shamai Assif, interview, 22 December 2002)

We can see that such disputed sites as the grave of Izz al-Din al-Qassam are not included formally as sites of preservation in the National Master Plan but what happens in daily practices? How do local authorities deal with such controversies?

### **The dynamics of memory and belonging in local planning**

#### *The case of the road and the graveyard*

The interview with the architect of the Master

Plan and his strong objection to declaring the tomb of Izz al-Din al-Qassam as a site of preservation made me wonder what are the local dynamics in the area where his grave is located—in Nesher Jewish local council near Haifa. The tomb of Izz al-Din al-Qassam is located in the graveyard of one of the villages, Balad-A-Sheik, which was abandoned after 1948, where Nesher is located today. Izz al-Din al-Qassam was originally a Syrian who fought against the French occupation in Syria and escaped to Palestine in 1921 where he started his fight against the British because he claimed they helped the Zionist movement in its struggle against the Palestinians. He was killed in 1935 by the British and was buried in the Balad-A-Sheik graveyard. After his death he became ‘a symbol of radical response’ (Seikaly 1995). But it was only in the 1990s that his canonization became widely recognized among the Palestinians and Jews in Israel and in the Palestinian Authority area. This was because one of the sections of the Islamic Hamas movement active in the Palestinian Authority adopted his name ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam Troops’. These squads are responsible for the many killings of Israelis in terrorist attacks in Israel in the last decade and therefore his name has the negative associations expressed earlier by the architect.

An expression of the importance of his memory and symbolism to the Arab Palestinian identity formation is the streets named after him in several Arab towns. The expression of how disputed his memory is among Jewish Israelis can be found in the work of some Israeli Jewish researchers such as Azaryahu and Kook (2002) who see: ‘the commemoration of Izz al-Din al-Qassam in an Israeli town as problematic’ as it reflects the contradictory sentiments of Jewish people when facing such an independent, not formally regulated decision to name a street after such a disputed hero.<sup>13</sup> They



claim that the Jewish Israeli people see such an act as legitimating political terrorism because of his representation of Muslim radicalism.

If street naming after Izz al-Din al-Qassam causes such a dispute, the activities of the Islamic Movement in Israel to transform his tomb into a site of commemoration is more contentious. During the 1990s the Islamic Movement took responsibility for his tomb by fencing it and regularly maintaining it. They also organized regular rituals and prayers on Fridays by the Islamic Movement believers.

No wonder that the plan of the local Jewish council of Nesher to expand the road and expropriate some of the area of the graveyard caused strong objections and demonstrations amongst the Palestinian citizens of Israel, especially the Islamic Movement. The conflict became more aggressive when the life of the Jewish head of the local council was threatened mainly because of the declarations on the Jewish side that Izz al-Din al-Qassam is actually not buried in this tomb. An official committee was set up in the early 1990s to negotiate between the two sides. The committee members included Muslim public figures, government representatives and the Nesher local council representatives. A compromise has been suggested to move the route of the road so that only one tomb at the corner of the graveyard would be removed. The Muslims rejected this proposition and applied to the District Court. The District Court rejected the Muslims' appeal (Berkowitz 2000). Eventually, a bridge was built over the graveyard so that there was no need to destroy any tombs. This compromise satisfied both sides. The local planning apparatus has honoured the disputed site of commemoration while at the national level this site is not considered as a site for preservation.

There are many examples in other parts of the world of cases of split identities and mem-

ories which find their expressions in multiple clashes over representations, images and symbols, all related to the politics of planning and the power to design and shape the built environment. For example, in the American South, memorial landscapes are constructed not only as a result of racial conflicts but also as an expression of class-power relations, especially as related to the cotton textile industry (Moore 2000). Another example is the memorial landscapes of the Civil Rights Movement in the USA, which are represented, in historical markers, monuments, parks, registered buildings and museums. These sites present a challenge to 'an elite, white American past'. They also present a gendered challenge as 'the role of women in organizing and leading the movement is obscured' (Dwyer 2000: 660). Finally, such clashes find their expressions not only in the battle over representations in memorial landscapes but also in street naming. As previously mentioned, street naming can be perceived as an act of protest in Arab towns in Israel as much as in America where street naming after Martin Luther King, Jr, for example, can be seen as a significant component of African American landscape shaping and as an act of protest against White domination (Alderman 2000). Such clashes take place in many places around the world and they are usually accompanied by conflicts over landscape representations.

### *The new Jewish neighbourhood and the old Palestinian village*

This is a very recent story of conflicting memories and planning, which happened while I was writing this paper. I came across this event when I read<sup>14</sup> an objection to a plan to build a new neighbourhood in one of the community villages in the Galilee, Yozma.<sup>15</sup> This objection

has been submitted by one of its female residents (let us call her Ruth). This new neighbourhood, which is planned on the south-east of the Jewish village, consists of 136 housing plots, most of them planned within the existing boundaries of the village to which Ruth does not object. She only objects to the construction of thirty-four plots which are planned on the hill outside the existing boundaries of the village because they are located on the ruins of the Palestinian village, which was destroyed during the 1950s after its residents were evacuated and expelled from the area. This objection shows that, unlike the official government policy, which 'clears' areas of such Palestinian ruins, for some local residents this action is unacceptable.<sup>16</sup> This objection, which has been submitted according to the 1965 Planning and Building Law, was the last step in a chain of events that preceded this action. This was not the only objection to this plan; three more were submitted for the same reasons.<sup>17</sup>

The protest of the Jewish residents in Yozma to develop the new neighbourhood on the ruins of the old Palestinian village in Israel in fact represents similar objections to the national Israeli Jewish project of the Judaization of the Galilee. This is a government initiative that was designed to create a more balanced demographic ratio between Jews and Arabs in a region that had a majority Arab population who had lived there for centuries (Efrat 1984). This Arab demographic advantage continued after 1948 in spite of the fact that most of its 190 villages were destroyed—only sixty-six still exist today (Efrat 1984). One of the Palestinian villages which were abandoned was Amal (pseudonym), which included some 1,000 people divided into four Hamulas (extended families) that owned some 10,000 dumans<sup>18</sup> (Central Zionist Archives, 7 January 1943). After the 1948 war, most of its residents were forced to leave the village. Some escaped to Lebanon and

those who remained moved to live in nearby Arab villages where they still live today.<sup>19</sup> Most of them still commemorate their sense of belonging and memory to their original village site and practice pilgrimage visits to the village site and graveyard three or four times a year (Ibrahim, interview, 28 August 2003). For the elders the village remains are not ruins but living memories of their homes. They can indicate with details the village structure as it used to be before 1948 (Ibrahim, interview, 28 August 2003).

The government initiative to Judaize the Galilee included the formulation of massive settlement plans in the 1980s. The region was divided into three parts and for each of them a special settlement programme was prepared (Efrat 1984). A new type of settlement was formulated, *Mitzpe* (Hebrew for watchtower). Indeed their location was always on the top of hills so that the people can watch whether there is a change in land use on the side of the Arabs (especially if the Arabs invade state lands) (Efrat 1984). Eventually these settlements became community villages, each of which has between 100 and 200 residents (considered to be the optimum size) but most of them started with not more than a few families who received a large area of land.<sup>20</sup> Altogether sixty-six such villages were planned and most of them were built.

This massive Jewish development, which accompanied a considerable Palestinian land expropriation, caused strong objections from the Palestinians living in the region and this eventually led to demonstrations and riots in March 1976 in which several Palestinian citizens were killed. This tragic event has been named: The Land Day<sup>21</sup> and it is commemorated very year in March to symbolize the oppression of the Palestinian citizens of Israel.

Yozma is one of the villages established in 1974 in the early stage of these massive pro-

grammes.<sup>22</sup> Its residents were Jewish, middle-class, educated professionals. The founders made sure that the village would not be located on the ruins of the housing area of the Palestinian village but on its agricultural land because they felt that to build on agricultural lands was somehow more acceptable for them than to build on ruined houses (X, founder, interview, 27 August 2003).

Let us return to Ruth's story as it emphasizes the very essence of the conflicts of memory and belonging in Jewish and Palestinian identity construction. Ruth started her story by positioning herself: 'I am a second generation holocaust survivor and as such I can't approve what is being done here...' (interview, 27 August 2003). She arrived at Yozma with her family in 1983. She worked in her profession in the village itself and was full of enthusiasm for the options that existed in living a village lifestyle. Still she loves the sense of community that she feels there and the modest lifestyle that is a quality of this place. She was not aware at all of the political and historical past of this region and the more concrete past of her village. 'Awareness', she says, 'is what we miss, the education system that I was raised on didn't relate to these events'. She became aware of the region's history only when she met Arab residents who live in neighbouring Arab villages<sup>23</sup> and then she became aware of the complicated situation of Jews and Arabs in the region. In 1997 there was the first initiative to expand the village. The architect suggested several options and there was a vote in the village's communal assembly on this intention. The option which the majority voted for was to build the new neighbourhood on the hill where the ruins of the Palestinian village are located. Ruth and some five more members objected to this option, arguing that this site could cause objections and worsen the delicate relationship between Jews and Arabs in the region but their

opinion did not convince the majority.<sup>24</sup> Ruth had a serious dilemma—whether to accept the majority's opinion or to submit an objection to the plan and to risk strong resentment from the village members. She decided to submit the objection and caused a strong reaction—one of them called her a traitor in a letter distributed to the village members. In the meantime, this initiative did make more and more members re-think their initial support for the plan. This led to an almost 'historical' decision of the village committee to meet the former Palestinian residents of the village for the first time and to learn what was the exact boundary of the old village and what their attitude towards the intended plan was. Two meetings were held between the village committee members and the Palestinian former residents of the village in which, for the first time, the residents of the Jewish village learnt about the recent history of their home. It seems that this story will end with a compromise; the plan to build the thirty-four units on the site of the Palestinian ruins will be changed so that the *status quo* will be maintained.

Thus, while the government plans to Judaize the Galilee continue, local initiatives make sure that the fragile balance between belonging and commemoration will be maintained. The relatively satisfactory ending of the two local events reflect perhaps the fact that politics of planning do not necessarily contradict honour and memorializing of sites of belonging and attachment, and that in everyday life, there are ways of commemorating sites of belonging despite the fact that these sites are not officially recognized at the national level of planning.

If we return to the different cases analysed in the paper we can see that all cases highlight power from 'below' which plays a role and influences such spatial outcomes. The power from below derives from daily practices of belonging and memory which somehow man-

age to bridge gaps that national sentiments of belonging and memory fail to do. The power from below can make conflicts visible and public. Such clashes do not always end with the 'other' realizing their sense of belonging and memory in the built environment but it surely helps to construct their identities and sense of rootedness to such landscapes. All cases involve planning or the design of the built environment, either urban or regional, and they all illustrate how the politics of planning serves as a channel for commemorating or confirming representations, symbols and images of memory and belonging. All cases also emphasize how the struggle to formulate landscapes of memory and belonging constitutes an act of protest against the hegemonic ideology and landscapes. In the long run, these struggles may help to foster the distinctive identities of those communities who contest the dominant views of memorialization.

## Notes

- 1 The non-Jewish citizens of Israel, especially the 'Arabs' have several labels, each derives from a different ideological perspective. The most common is 'Arabs', but in the last few years some of them started labelling themselves as 'Palestinian citizens of Israel' to establish the national Palestinian identity and contact with the Palestinians living in the Palestinian Authority. In this paper I will use this latter terminology (see elaborated discussion in Rabinowitz 1993).
- 2 The Palestinians define themselves as 'internal refugees' to signify the situation of their expulsion from their native villages to other villages (see, for elaboration, Cohen 2000).
- 3 This is the famous site located in the Judea Desert which commemorates the myth of courage and heroism of the 'few' Jewish people in their fights against the 'many' Romans in 73 AD.
- 4 One such important site is the battle in Tel Hai in the north of Israel which emphasizes the courage and heroism of Joseph Trumpeldor, the leader of a few Jewish settlers who said, just before his death: 'It's good to die for our land'.
- 5 Even academic research and books such as *Myths and Memory: Transfigurations of Israeli Consciousness*, published in 1996 (Ohana and Wistrich 1996), did not include any work on Palestinian myths and memory but only of those of the Jews.
- 6 The NGOs working on these themes are: The National Committee for the Defense of the Internal Refugees, Zochrot (Hebrew for remember), Badil—Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, Al Awda—The Palestinian Right to Return Coalition-UK, Shamal, CBU—Committee for the Uprooted of Kafar Bir'em, The Association of the Forty, and many more.
- 7 This is the case of Burkan—a Palestinian who appealed against the Ministry of Finance decision to allow Jews only to live in the Jewish Quarter in the Old City, Jerusalem. His appeal has been rejected (Benvenisti 1998).
- 8 This is the case of Avitan—a Jewish resident who appealed against the Land Authority's decision to allow Arab Bedouin only to live in their towns in the Negev, south Israel. His appeal has been rejected (Benvenisti 1998).
- 9 Although this list does include buildings from the Templar period and some Palestinian buildings in Haifa, their proportion, as compared to Jewish heritage sites, is very small.
- 10 This amendment defines 'site' as: 'a building or a group of buildings ... which a planning authority considers as historically, nationally, architecturally or archeologically important'.
- 11 This convention defines sites for preservation and criteria for preservation. The criteria are: 'sites which indicate some primordial importance, a site which shows evidence of historical importance, a site which is connected to the life of an important figure, a site which has an important architectural character, a site which indicates culture and way of life, a site which has historical landscape importance and a site with significant use of building materials' ([www.shimur.co.il](http://www.shimur.co.il)).
- 12 Baruch Goldstein was a Jewish Israeli medical doctor who shot twenty-nine Palestinians in 1994 in Hebron. His act raised a tremendous amount of condemnation among the majority of Jewish people in Israel, especially around the intentions of some Jewish groups to turn his grave into a site of memory and as a symbol of the fight against the Palestinians.
- 13 Azaryahu and Kook (2002) identify such street naming as an implied message of historical continuity between

- the struggle waged by the Arabs in the 1930s and that of the 1990s.
- 14 This objection has been sent to 'Bimkom'—Planners for Planning Rights in Israel—an NGO working to promote human rights issues in planning.
- 15 I use pseudonyms here as this case is still ongoing. I was asked not to mention specific names.
- 16 This is not the only rationale for the objection. Ruth argues that the hill also has historical and archeological importance both to the Jewish and Muslim living in the area and that it is also a forest reservation with agricultural terraces and some old trees.
- 17 Other objections were submitted by the Jewish National Fund (Keren Kayment Le'Israel), claiming that this is a natural site of conservation, and Zochrot (Hebrew for remember), an NGO which aims to promote the acknowledgement of the right to return of the Palestinians. A third objection has been submitted in the name of the former residents of the village.
- 18 One dunam = 0.1 hectare.
- 19 They became what is titled: 'internal refugees'. See Note 2.
- 20 For example, some of those settlements included ten to fifteen families only but they received tens of dunams (Efrat 1984).
- 21 These events deeply affected the problematic relations between Jews and Arabs in the Galilee. It is no coincidence that the second Intifada, which began in September 2000, affected these delicate Arab–Jewish relations and in October 2000 peaceful demonstrations against the Israeli government policy in the Occupied Territories shifted into violent riots in which thirteen Arab citizens were killed by the police.
- 22 It was established as a co-operative village (Moshav Shitufi) but in the 1980s became a community village.
- 23 She emphasized that she met them in educational activities for her children, in which both Jews and Arabs participated.
- 24 Ruth herself mentioned the fact that she also has a personal interest in objecting to this option as it is located fairly near to her own home but she emphasized to me that this was not the motivation of her objection.

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### Abstract translations

#### *L'appartenance, le souvenir et les politiques relatives à la planification en Israël*

Cet article porte sur les expressions contradictoires du souvenir et de l'appartenance des Juifs et des Palestiniens d'Israël. Il examine les conflits émergents des procédures de planification qui ont fait naître des souvenirs contradictoires, et le sentiment d'appartenance aux échelles nationale et locale de planification. Il explore comment les dynamiques des rapports de force peuvent fonctionner différemment selon le niveau et peuvent résoudre des enjeux de planification qui sont liés à bien des égards aux processus d'édification du souvenir et de l'appartenance des populations juives et palestiniennes. Cet article présente un survol des expressions qui relèvent de l'appartenance et de la commémoration à l'échelle nationale de planification. Nous nous penchons sur l'ordre du jour du Conseil pour la restauration et la sauvegarde de sites historiques d'Israël (CRPHS), et sur la rhétorique dont se sert le gouvernement Israélien dans son Plan d'aménagement national (TAMA/35). L'article met en cause ce discours repris dans deux initiatives en planification locale: 'la route et le cimetière' et 'le nouveau quartier juif et l'ancien

palestinien'. Il se termine par une analyse comparative de cas étrangers.

**Mots-clefs:** appartenance, souvenir, planification, Palestiniens, Juifs, rapports de force.

*Pertenencia, memoria y la política de planeamiento urbano en Israel*

Este papel se centra en las expresiones contradictorias de memoria y pertenencia de los judeos y los palestinos en Israel. Examina los conflictos sobre los procedimientos de urbanismo, los cuales involucran memorias tan contradictorias, y conflictos sobre pertenencia a escalas nacional y local de urbanismo. Explora cómo los dinámicos de relaciones de poder operan de distintas maneras a diferentes niveles

y cómo éstos pueden llevar a resoluciones de urbanismo que conectan de distintas maneras a las contrucciones de memoria y el sentido de pertenecer de los judeos y los palestinos. El papel empieza con una perspectiva general de expresiones de pertenencia y conmemoración a la escala nacional del urbanismo; en la agenda del Consejo para la Restauración y Conservación de Sitios Históricos en Israel y la retórica del Plan General Nacional de Israel del gobierno (TAMA/35). Cuestiona esta retórica en dos acontecimientos locales de urbanismo: 'la calle y el cementerio' y el 'barrio nuevo judeo y el antiguo palestino'. El papel termina con un análisis comparativo de casos de diferentes partes del mundo.

**Palabras claves:** pertenencia, memoria, urbanismo, palestinos, judeos, relaciones de poder.

