

Abstract

## **Democratising Planning Amidst Ethnic Conflict? Planning Advocacies and Communicative Politics in Israel/Palestine**

### **Principal Investigator**

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### **Aims and objectives of the research**

Set within the context of the ethno-national conflict in Israel/Palestine, this research will investigate the impact of non-governmental public action on spatial planning policies and outcomes. The aim of the research is to examine the capacity of advocacy planning organizations to democratise planning processes, and to promote community development and socio-economic transformation among disadvantaged Palestinian communities. In particular, the research aims to (i) evaluate the ability of advocacy planning organisations to negotiate the contours of ethno-politics Israel in order to legitimate the claims of ethnic minorities and to achieve influence over state planning policy; and (ii) assess the extent to which communicative politics and Collaborative Planning practices facilitate the embeddedness of advocacy planning organisations in local, marginalised Palestinian communities in Israel. The research will therefore provide an analysis of the effectiveness of civil society organisations in situating themselves in-between affected communities and the state.

### **Key research questions and methods**

The key research questions addressed in this project are therefore:

- How do advocacy planning organisations in Israel establish their core values and ideologies with respect to spatial planning in the context of ethno-national polarisation?
- How successful are such organisations in establishing themselves as 'intermediaries' of knowledge and action – in-between local Palestinian communities on the one hand, and formal state institutions on the other hand?
- What is the extent to which existing theories of communicative politics and civil society mobilisation capture the nuances and complexities of advocacy planning activities in relation to state policy and community development in deeply fragmented societies?

The research will make use of contextual quantitative and documentary evidence, but will mostly be carried through qualitative research techniques, including interviews with a range of actors and community activists, ethnographic research, and textual analysis.

### **Relation to the programme**

The project will support the Programme's objectives of providing essential empirical evidence as to the ability of non-governmental public action to support objectives of

social inclusion, community empowerment, and socio-economic development. Importantly, the research will also contribute to the Programme's objective of transcending the crude dichotomies between the North and South. Theory-building will also constitute an important element in this project, seeking to assess the contribution of theories of communicative politics and collaborative planning to contexts of highly polarised identity politics.

### **Relevance of this research to user groups**

The research will be of relevance to a wide range of non-academic users, including non-governmental organisations working in areas of social and economic development, and the advancement of civic rights in Palestinian and Arab communities in Israel. International aid organisations will also find this research of interest.

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