



Non-Governmental Public Action Programme

Published on 22nd February 2008
ISBN: 978-0-85328-226-6

www.lse.ac.uk/ngpa/publications

7

Resisting, Ameliorating, or Perpetuating the Dark Side? Non-Governmental Public Action, Communicative Rationalities, and the Struggle for Democratisation in Israel's Planning

Dr Joseph Leibovitz

LSE

www.lse.ac.uk/ngpa
tel +44 (0)20 7955 7205
fax +44 (0)20 7955 6039
email ngpa@lse.ac.uk

E·S·R·C
ECONOMIC
& SOCIAL
RESEARCH
COUNCIL

General introduction to NGPA Working Papers

Editor: Professor Jude Howell

The **NGPA Working Paper (NGPAWP)** series provides a vehicle for disseminating recent and ongoing research of researchers based at, or linked to the Non-Governmental Public Action Programme (NGPA). It aims to reflect the range and diversity of non-governmental public action, and understand the impact of public action.

Researchers on the Non-Governmental Public Action research programme work with advocacy networks, peace groups, campaigns and coalitions, trade unions, peace-building groups, rights-based groups, social movements and faith-based groups to understand the impact of non-governmental public action. They are based in universities, think-tanks, civil society organizations, projects and networks around the world gathering data, building theory, and strengthening co-operation between researchers and practitioners.

For further information of the work of the programme and details of its publications see:

www.lse.ac.uk/ngpa

Non-Governmental Public Action Programme
c/o The Centre for Civil Society
Department of Social Policy
London School of Economics and Political Science
Houghton Street
London WC2A 2AE

Tel: +44 (0)20 7955 7205/6527 Fax: +44 (0)20 7955 6038 Email: ngpa@lse.ac.uk

The London School of Economics and Political Science is a School of the University of London. It is a charity and is incorporated in England as a company limited by guarantee under the companies Acts (registered number 70527)

©2008 Joseph Leibovitz, NGPA, London School of Economics

The text of this publication may be freely used for educational purposes. For other purposes quotations may be used provided the source is credited.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.
ISBN: 978-0-85328-226-6

Contents

Abstract	5
Introduction.....	6
Conceptual framework.....	7
Methods.....	11
Communicative rationalities, non-governmental action, and the struggle for democratisation	12
Conclusion.....	20
References	21

Abstract

'Planning advocacies' represent various forms of non-governmental public action (NGPA) and non-governmental actors (NGAs) that seek to represent, or work on behalf of, marginalised communities vis-à-vis spatial planning and development institutions. This paper discusses the organisational foundations and political strategies of planning NGPA and NGAs working with, or representing, various Israeli-Palestinian communities in Israel. Since Israeli spatial policy has constituted a central element in the process of state and nation building, planning-oriented NGPA represents an important dimension of – and indeed offers a prism into – the contested nature of state – (Israeli-Palestinian) civil society relations in the country. The paper presents a framework for analysis of this type of NGPA, drawing on democratisation, networked governance, and communicative (deliberative) rationalities. It outlines a number of important communicative rationalities that typify civil society organisations in this field, and provides an assessment of their implications for democratisation.

About the author

Dr Joseph Leibovitz is a lecturer in human geography at the University of Edinburgh, with particular research interests in urban politics, spatial planning, and the political geography of citizenship. He has worked on the political economy of urban governance in the USA, Canada, and Scotland; the social-institutional dimensions of technology-intensive industries in various urban contexts; and on ethnic mobilisation and the political geography of claim-making among the Palestinian citizens of Israel.

Acknowledgements

The financial support of ESRC (Grant No. RES-155-25-0018) and the advice and encouragement provided by the NGPA Research Programme's director, Jude Howell, are gratefully acknowledged. Responsibility for any inaccuracies remains solely with the author.

Introduction

This paper aims to analyse the variety of communicative (or deliberative) rationalities – that is, discourses and argumentations undertaken by agents – deployed by a range of non-governmental actors representing, or speaking on behalf of, Arab-Palestinian communities in Israel. What strands of communicative rationalities can be discerned from the actions of civil society actors, and what are the implications of these practices on the process of democratising planning processes? *'Planning advocacies'* include non-governmental actors (NGAs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and various other forms of non-governmental public action (NGPA) that engage with the theory and practice of 'spatial planning'. Spatial planning, in turn, refers to a range of policies and strategies – mostly carried out by the state – that aim to shape the development, scale and location of various land-use (housing, public facilities, commercial development, infrastructure and roads, open spaces, and so on). Spatial planning has the appropriation of land – both as a resource and as a symbolic feature – at its heart, and as such is deeply political.

The politicised nature of planning is particularly pronounced in deeply divided societies, where space and territory form the backbone of identity politics, nationalism, self-determination, and development. Israel and Palestine fall clearly within the category of deeply divided polities, alongside other historical and contemporary examples such as Macedonia, Sri Lanka, Estonia, Northern Ireland, Apartheid-era South Africa and so on. The regimes governing such societies have been typified by some as 'ethnocracies', a concept that refers to the systemic exclusion and marginalisation of non-dominant groups from power structures, resource distribution, the public sphere, and the symbolic features of state and nation building (Yiftachel and Ghanem, 2004).

For the sake of clarity, this research project has been carried in Israel 'proper', that is *within* the so-called 'Green Line' which roughly separates Israel from the occupied West Bank and from the Gaza Strip. The project has thus focused on NGPA related to public campaigns and territorial justice claims made by, and on behalf of, the Palestinians Citizens of Israel (PCIs) as a distinctive ethno-national minority (around 1.2 million people, 18 percent of the country's population).

Conceptual framework

In his seminal contribution to the field of planning theory, Yiftachel (1998) – drawing partially on Foucault's work (1980 and 1977) – has exposed planning as a form of territorial, administrative, socioeconomic, and cultural control. Dominant groups and powerful elites often use the tools of spatial planning as vehicles for perpetuating the oppression and coercion of excluded, underprivileged communities and minorities. Yiftachel has thus highlighted the 'Dark Side' of planning theory and practice, shifting the focus away from its mainstream conception as progressive and benign (see also Yiftachel and Huxley, 2000). Other scholars have not been so pessimistic. They have pointed to the potentially empowering, emancipatory, democratic, and developmental aspects of planning, drawing in particular on the theory and practice of collaborative and communicative policy-making (Fischer, 2003; Healey, 1997 and 2000; Innes and Booher, 2003). One important contribution of this research has been to intervene in this debate, and to highlight the limitation of binary positions (that is, the dark side of planning versus its empowering facet) by developing a dynamic prism from which to assess continuity and change. The focus on NGPA in this regard is revealing of broad and deep-seated political contestation that incorporates democratisation, networked governance, and deliberative (communicative) rationalities.

Advocacy planning as a form of NGPA is understood analytically to constitute a sub-set of territorial justice networks (TJNs): networks of institutions and activists whose main action frame relates to questions of land rights and territorial development. Such networks would be typically preoccupied with the territorial and land dimensions of ethnic, national, indigenous and/or marginalised groups' campaigns in various local, national and international contexts. The politics of land rights has been particularly publicised in the cases of South Africa, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and Mexico, but has also been significant in many other contexts (see Gilbert, 2007)¹. In order to highlight and explain the diversity of NGPA mobilisation around planning and land in a volatile context, the research has developed an analytical prism that is capable of capturing dynamism in the deployment of discourses and action of non-governmental actors. This prism consists of three elements:

¹ For the international dimensions of land rights issues pertaining to indigenous communities, see also the chapter on 'Land', subsumed in Como, J.R.M. (1983), *Study of the Problem of Discrimination Against Indigenous Populations*, United Nations Economic and Social Council: Commission on Human Rights, available on: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/spdaip.html>

i. Democratisation and spatial planning. Traditional perspectives on democratisation have tended to adopt a linear view on the process by which nation-states increasingly adopt democratic values, norms, processes and institutions (Huntington, 1991). Adhering to the principles of representative democracy and the forging of competitive political systems are but two of the main common features of democratisation. The dominance of linear and macro-level perspectives has come at the expense of a more refined view of democratisation, which sees it as a process fraught with difficulties, tensions, possible reversals, and internal differentiation. In the case of Israel, it is useful to adopt a perspective which stresses the internal differentiation of democratisation within which policy-specific arenas are subject to more or less democratic principles. The practice of spatial planning is one such crucial policy arena in states – such as Israel – where territorial consolidation and domination form the kernel of state and nation building (Yiftachel, 2006). It follows that processes, struggles, and debates around the democratisation of planning in Israel touch on central concerns related to citizenship and participation, identity and belonging, and the accommodation of minority and marginalised groups within existing state structures.

ii. Civil society organisation and network governance. A second element in the conceptual triangle of this research project has built on recent debates on the changing nature of governance in liberal democracies. While Israel does not, strictly speaking, correspond to the liberal democracy ideal type, it has nevertheless experienced neo-liberalisation processes such pro-market reforms, privatisation, and contracting out of government services that make it akin to a discussion of governance. Furthermore, disillusionment with mainstream politics and the rise of organised civil society (NGOs, voluntary associations, human rights groups, faith-based organisation, ex-parliamentary groups, and so on) have been affected by, and in turn affected, a wider change in the relationship between state and civil society (Kaufman and Gidron, 2006).

The rise of organised civil society has been inexorably linked to the generalised transition from government to governance, in which the increasing limitations on public institutions within the context of hyper-competitive market economies is at least partially redressed by the rise of networked governing arrangements between public institutions, private sector actors, and civil society organisations, in different policy spheres (Hajer and Wagenaar, 2003). Of course, such changes have often been initiated and brought about by the state (as in the case of wholesale privatisation and contracting-out of public

services), and compounded by the challenges of globalisation and technological change. The point is, however, that such spaces of network governance seem to be pervasive in most democracies, and involve a variety of opportunities for civil society organisations.

Within this context, some scholars have been more optimistic about the spaces created for greater civic participation in governance (hence democratisation), while others have highlighted the closing-off of policy arenas through diminished public control and accountability that are integral to the transition to governance (Hajer and Wagenaar, 2003). What forms of NGPA reasoning would we expect to observe in such contexts, and what are their implications for expanding or limiting the opportunity for marginalised 'voices' to be heard in governance?

iii. Deliberative (communicative) rationalities and governance. The network governance paradigm seems appropriate even for traditionally centralised states such as Israel's. The expansion of civil society actors and the voluntary sectors in conjunction with rather aggressive programmes of privatisation in the country (Kaufman and Gidron, 2006), and an ever going quest for state legitimacy, provide the context for scrutiny of NGPA within a changing policy environment. Such scrutiny can be helped with reference to the deliberative, or communicative, turn in policy studies. In Dryzek's (1990) classic discussion of deliberative practices, the crucial normative facet of deliberative rationalities consist of interactions that are "egalitarian, uncoerced, competent, and free from delusion, deception, power, and strategy" (Dryzek, 1990: 202). While this is understandably an ideal type representation, the essence of communicative rationalities confers deepening citizen engagement and participation in the political and policy process, securing a voice for hitherto excluded individuals, groups and communities, and ultimately solidifying the legitimacy of democratic rule (Dryzek, 2000; Fischer, 2003). Value pluralism, social diversity, and fragmented publics should be reflected in competing communicative rationalities, rather than privileging one discourse over others (Wagenaar and Cook, 2003; Young, 1996).

If we connect these presumptions to the dynamic view of democratisation alluded to above, it is evident that communicative politics is part of an on-going process that may contribute to change, but that it is subject to distortions, unequal power relations, historical legacies, resource limitations, and other constraints. For this reason, we can

hypothesise that communicative dynamics in democratising and deeply divided societies are likely to be subject to excessive gradualism.

Methods

The research was carried through a combination of in-depth, semi-structured interviews; observation of policy and planning forums; group discussions; organisational biographies and ethnographies; and textual analysis of a rich and extensive collection of background documents from a wide range of sources (civil society organisational and strategy documents, activist and campaigner leaflets, published and unpublished government reports and policy papers, research documents and statistical information, and newspaper coverage). The fieldwork was carried-out in two phases in Israel, each lasting 3 months to allow for the complex organisation of the various research instruments (which were often subject to short-notice changes and re-organisation that are endemic to such research).

In total, 56 interviews were conducted with a range of respondents representing the spectrum of the relevant actors in this type of NGPA; 15 additional interviews were carried-out with senior Israeli planning officials; four observations of policy and civil society actors deliberations were undertaken ; 3 focus groups were arranged with civil society actors and state officials, and two ethnographic studies were carried out on two prominent non-governmental organisations through a series of observations, interviews and groups discussions. The main categories of research questions informed the gathering of data in interviews, focus groups, policy deliberations and institutional ethnographies, in order to ensure consistency. The qualitative analysis of the material followed a grounded theory approach, reflecting, modifying and augmenting the analytical framework when necessary.

Communicative rationalities, non-governmental action, and the struggle for democratisation

The argument of this paper, in light of its findings (see below) can be summarised briefly as follows: Democratisation in contested states does not represent an end-point, but is best viewed as a fragile and incremental process, subject to conflicting visions and campaigns. The type of NGPA documented here is but one component in the complex context of Israeli civil society. Its embeddedness in various (often competing, and at times incompatible) networks and communicative spaces is one way through which PCI civil society actors attempt to evade the structurally marginalised position of PCIs in Israel. Furthermore, land rights and planning-oriented NGPA represents a highly professionalized facet of civil society, adhering to – while incrementally challenging – the rules, regulations, and procedures placed by state (planning) institutions in Israel. In doing so, NGPA helps to open up, or takes advantage of, opportunities to create deliberative spaces in the public domain. While constrained, incremental, and problematic (not least due to the limited claim for legitimacy and representation that this form of NGPA can assert), it helps to establish precedents, affect norms, and expand the boundaries of democratisation.

In what follows I discuss the significant networked configurations and communicative rationalities underpinning planning advocacies in Israel, and consider their various implication for democratisation and development strategies .

i. Planning advocacies and human rights discourse frames. In this mode of rationality, planning non-governmental actors and NGPA have worked to create a legal, discursive, and normative connection between the practice and theory of planning, and its human rights dimensions. This connection has uncovered a novel exposition of planning in Israel (indeed in any context) as deeply political. The articulation of 'Planning Rights' as a key concept connecting planning to various facets of democratising practices has been particularly associated with an increasingly influential NGO called '*BIMKOM*' (meaning, in Hebrew, "in place"). The organisation was established in 1999 by a group of Israeli planners, architects and academics, who have sought to highlight the relationship between planning and social (in)justice in the context of Israel's territorial development policy. Defining 'Planning Rights' as a range of participatory, knowledge, implementation, and transparency rights connected to the process of spatial planning, *BIMKOM*'s work

has highlighted the inherently contested nature of the practice of planning (*BIMKOM*, 2005).

Professional rationalities have been a key component of *BIMKOM*'s practices. While not explicitly established to advocate on behalf of PCI communities (most of *BIMKOM*'s activists and staff are Jewish Israelis), in practice many of its activities have tended to focus on marginalised Bedouin and Arab communities throughout Israel. Its actions have taken primarily an advocate role vis-à-vis the formal planning system and the courts, providing professional planning support to underprivileged communities, initiating a range of education activities aimed at deepening the understanding of the various human rights dimensions of planning to both professional planners and to community organisations, and publishing position papers of contentious planning issues.

One of *BIMKOM*'s initial and constitutive activities focused on empowerment and rights, in the context of planning, in relation to one of the most deprived and formally unrecognised Bedouin settlement of *Kassr-Al-Serr* in southern Israel. Bedouin communities have been historically nomadic, and thus resisted forms of formal settlements initiated by Israel since the 1950s. Their villages had been deemed 'illegal' by the Israeli planning system, as they do not conform to regional and national outline plans. The process, while aiming to educate the settlement's residents as to the planning process, also helped to establish *BIMKOM*'s professional credentials, and to articulate both a normative and practical philosophy of the intricate relationship between planning and universal human rights.

Some activists saw this as a major stepping stone in expanding the democratic boundaries of planning in Israel. Others have expressed concerns as to the limitations that the process of engaging with 'the establishment' (Israeli planning institutions) and its professional rationalities have entailed. These differences have highlighted an important dilemma as to whether professionalisation – and the connections made between planning and certain elements of universal human rights – has bound NGPA to the overall ethos of planning as a form of territorial and institutional domination.

Yet bounded rationalities cannot be assumed to chart a deterministic course of action. Actions that, at times, 'deviate' from routinised rationalities of universal human rights and sterile planning professionalism can be observed periodically. An example of such

deviation occurred in '*BIMKOM*'s engagement with the planning process aimed formally (by the state) at the 'historical preservation' of the Palestinian village of *Lifta*, near Jerusalem. The village was completely abandoned by a combination of forced and voluntary evacuation in the wake of the 1948 Israeli-Arab war that followed the establishment of Israel. In their formal submission of objection to the state's planning agenda of 'preservation', *BIMKOM*'s planners combined a rationality of professionalized planning practice with one that stressed the '*right to memory*'. In its submission, *BIMKOM* effectively exposed the prevailing land management and planning system in Israel as one which vehemently produces the construction and preservation of collective identity and memory as the dominant practice of Jewish (Zionist) nationalism. The discourse articulated in *BIMKOM*'s objection essentially called into question the right of a dominant expression of heritage to obliterate other collective memories and alternative senses of national belonging, namely Palestinian (*BIMKOM*, 2002).

While connecting to the discourse of universal human rights, and the planning rights derived of these, this discourse and action explicitly recognised the historical process of spatial transformation and domination promoted by Israel's planning and development policy, exposed their link to deep-seated institutions, and highlighted their systemic undermining of Palestinian history and heritage. The document thus questioned both the procedural and culturally substantive facets of Israeli planning. It challenged both the perceived neutrality of planning institutions and the supposedly benign nature of concepts such as 'conservation'. Moreover, this action has exposed the spatial and historical exclusion of 'the other', namely Palestinian heritage, identity, and belonging. In the final analysis, the action aimed to highlight the *Lifta* case as a window to the consequences of systematic political and cultural exclusion of Palestinian identity from Israeli spaces, and as a prism into the considerable democratic limitations of the Israeli planning system.

ii. Territorialised ethno-national rationalities. NGAs employing this communicative rationality engage in a process of institution and capacity-building with a salient territorial dimension. Territorialised ethno-national rationalities emphasise the distinctive identity of PCIs as a national minority in Israel. NGAs engaging with the Israeli planning system, and with the politics of land rights more generally, employ such rationalities in order to emphasise and pursue the collective cultural rights of PCIs within a broader global framework of indigenous group rights. As such, planning advocacies and NGPA that deploy this rationality should be seen analytically as the professionalised and

institutionalised 'branch' of a wider form of political mobilisation among PCIs. This political mobilisation has increasingly questioned the democratic credentials of the Israeli state, given the inherently and exclusively ethno-national character that has typified the Jewish national movement and the process of state-building.

Furthermore, in the past three years, a range of PCI civil society and political actors have published a number of important constitutional documents that have proposed a reworking of the relationships between the Jewish majority and the Israeli-Palestinian minority (see, for example, Jabareen, 2007). In an essence, these documents have called for a constitutional recognition of PCIs as a national minority and for protection of their collective cultural rights, thus challenging the prevailing notion of defining Israel as a 'Jewish-Democratic State'.

Thus, an important segment of planning-oriented NGPA has been part and parcel of this process, where NGAs have sought to build shadow institutions of governance. Although weak in capacity, resources, and legitimacy, such institution-building represents a growing tendency among PCI civil society to attempt to compensate for the structural weakness of PCIs within the Israeli political system. An important example in this regard was the establishment of the Arab Centre for Alternative Planning (ACAP), in 2000. Created as a planning 'wing' of the 'Higher Commission of Israeli Arabs' (an organisation that unites the political leadership among PCIs, drawn mainly from the ranks of elected mayors of Israeli-Palestinian towns and villages), ACAP seeks to empower and represent PCI communities vis-à-vis the Israeli planning system. It mostly deploys argumentations based on principles of universal justice, rather than collective ethno-national rights, but in a deeper sense it aims to provide territorialised sense of land rights and empowerment to political elites (mainly elected officials in local authorities) among PCIs. It aims to expose some of the main historical and contemporary injustices in the Israeli planning system and its crucial role in the process of territorial consolidation.

iii. Environmental justice rationalities. Here, NGPA identifies a non-traditional political enclave to further issues of territorial, environmental, and ethnic justice. Israel's environmental movement has grown significantly in the past decade, and is now established through a range of actors and organisations, including a Green Party that has managed to pick up seats in city councils across the country, and a wide range of NGOs. This movement, while a young presence within the context of Israeli civil society, has

gathered growing influence and salience in public debates as questions of sustainability, natural preservation, and climate change occupy an increasingly large space in political discourse. As such, it has provided an important mobilising resource for PCI non-governmental actors.

One of the key social movement organisations in this context is the Israeli Union for Environmental Defence (IUED). IUED is an umbrella, Israeli-wide, organisation, established in the early 1990s, bringing together a range of environmental campaigners and activists. Links with this movement have landed planning-oriented NGAs with important intellectual and philosophical credulity. In addition, these connections have facilitated access to legal and organisational resources. One of the key members of this environmental movement is Dr Dov Hanin, an Israeli academic and environmental activist, who is now a member of the Israeli parliament (*The Knesset*) for the left-wing Arab-Jewish party *HADASH* (The Democratic Front for Peace and Equality, which incorporates the Israeli Communist Party). The influence of his actions and intellectual contributions on a range of non-governmental actors has been significant.

In particular, the concern of many PCI NGAs with questions of land, territorial development, and justice, has made the environmental movement and environmental campaigns a growing sphere within which PCI activists could seek alliances and interfaces. This, in turn, could help raise PCI NGPA from its isolated position in Israeli civil society into broader forms and substances of public mobilisation. The downside for an environmental rationality within the context of PCI planning advocacies is that it has necessitated a 'muting' of identity politics in favour of pragmatic search for the common ground.

An interesting case of the evolution of PCI planning-oriented NGPA is represented by the activities undertaken by an NGO called '*Link to the Environment*', which operates in the Galilee region in northern Israel. The region has long been a target for Israeli state planning and territorial development efforts aimed at altering its demographic composition. The realisation of a Jewish demographic majority has been a central focus of state policy, thus exacerbating Jewish-Arab tensions and polarisation in the region (Yiftachel, 1999). Within this volatile context, '*Link*' has evolved since the mid-1990s as a small scale social movement organisation, aiming to highlight alternative political and social development projects as ways of breaking away from traditional ethno-national and

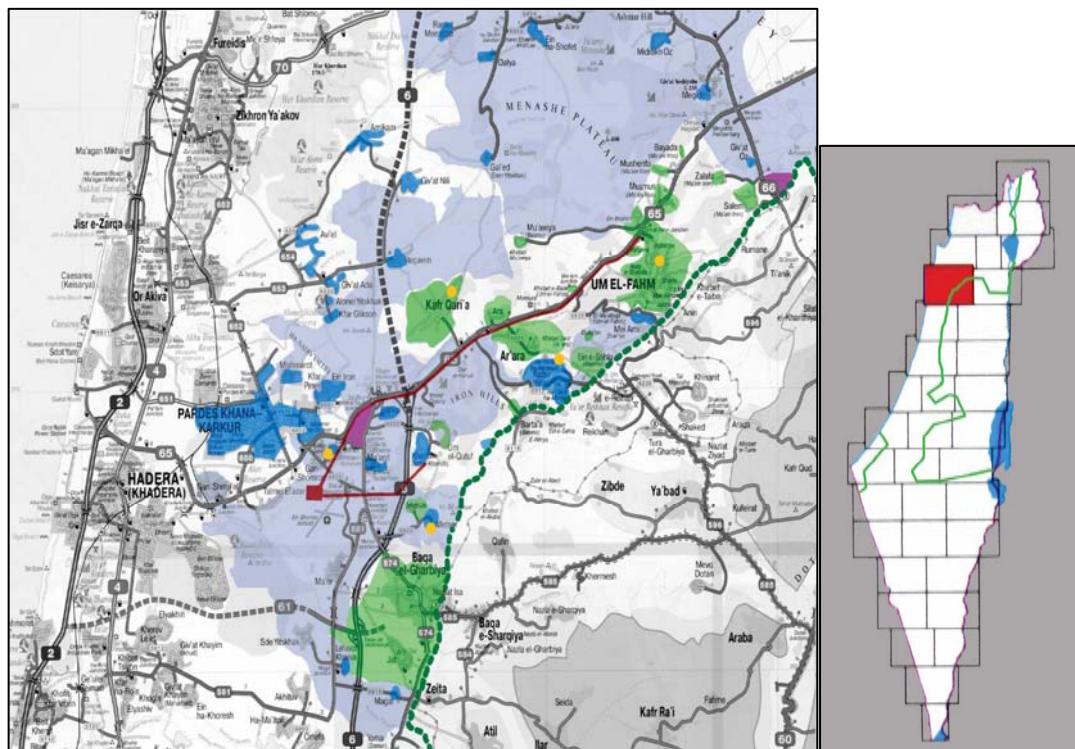
territorial tensions. One focus has been environmentalism as a whole set of practices and discourses bringing together activists from among both PCI and Jewish communities in the Galilee. Here, issues of environmental sustainability have literally 'linked' different elements of a diverse and complex regional civil society. A second focus has been what one of *'Link's'* central players termed 'eco-feminism', which has attempted to destabilise dominant thinking about the role of women in different environmental contexts. Breaking away from traditional ethno-national tensions, such discourses and practices aim to develop an alternative civil society that pursues empowerment for women within the PCI community in the region and beyond.

iv. Place-building communicative action. Seeking to imagine new regional and localised polities of co-operation between PCIs and Jewish Israelis (minority-majority accommodation), the emphasis in this type of NGPA is on a pragmatic, problem-solving rationality, based on the identification of common interests between PCI non-governmental actors, joint PCI-Jewish organisations, and Jewish activists. A central focus of such rationality is to elevate communicative politics into practical policy design and implementation practices. Furthermore, networking and governance arrangements revolving around such practices have geography at their heart, inasmuch as they attempt to both imagine and shape places and regions along alternative policy and political trajectories.

The NGO *SIKKUY's*² 'Municipal Cooperation Programme' represents one of the most advanced experiments in new regional institution-building in the Israeli context. Situated in one of Israel most complex regions, *Wadi Arra*, the programme draws on a number of pragmatic initiatives to achieve cooperation between Israeli-Palestinian and Jewish-Israeli mayors of a range of towns, villages and regional districts (see Figure 1). The *Wadi Arra* region is north-central Israel, and is adjacent to the so-called 'Green Line' that marks the north-western border of the occupied West Bank. The programme opens up deliberative spaces of territorial and policy-specific negotiations between eight PCI mayors representing Arab towns within the Israeli side of the 'Green Line' and three Jewish-dominated local authorities (see Figure 1). It encompasses initiatives for territorial exchanges between the various local authorities in the region, industrial development projects, infrastructural improvement, collaborative tourism, and environmental initiatives.

² Meaning 'Chance' in Hebrew, *SIKKUY* is a collaborative Jewish-Arab NGO aimed at advancing civic equality in Israel.

Here, non-governmental actors, acting in an entrepreneurial fashion, inserted themselves into a gap in formal Israeli spatial planning policy. Furthermore, their practical and seemingly depoliticised discourses and actions have convinced state actors of the merits of such initiatives, resulting in a range of informal and formal alliances between state and non-state actors. Such rationalities therefore aim at transforming communicative politics to what one of the key actors in the region termed, “the building of a sustainable civic fabric, where common citizenship in the State of Israel is the foundation for development” (Dichter, 2007). Or, as he has put it in imaginatively practical terms, “the sign we put up in *Wadi Arra* says: ‘Caution: Construction Work in Progress’” (Dichter, 2007).



- Arab (Palestinian)-Israeli local authorities
- Jewish-Israeli local authorities
- 'Green Line'
- Proposed industrial area
- Joint sewage plant
- Tourist projects

Figure 1. Cross-community collaboration instigated by the NGO *SIKKUY* in the *Wadi Arra* region of Israel (map on the rights shows the location of the region within Israel) source: *SIKKUY* (2006).

Conclusion

The fraught, struggle-laden, trajectories of democratisation have been overlooked in macro-level discussions of nation-states and in traditional democratisation models (Grugel, 2003). Democratising nation-states are often multi-speed polities, with some policy arenas and governance spheres 'slower' than others. Furthermore, some policy arenas are more strongly intertwined with the core of state and nation-building. In Israel, spatial planning strategies are key exponents of nation and state-building, and can therefore be expected to democratise incrementally, if at all. This research has been one of the first to evaluate the role of NGPA in this process, by stressing its communicative foundations.

Yiftachel's (1998) articulation of the dark side of planning is a powerful theoretical critique with which to argue. The findings of this research certainly do not challenge its premises. But they suggest that any static and rigid view of state structure and non-governmental public action is only ever likely to result in a partial perspective on the dynamism of state-society relations. Studying rather marginal forms of NGPA – such as 'planning advocacies' – actually offers a wider window with which to view the gradual transformation of the link between state, society, spatial change, and development. The contribution of this study is in highlighting the gradual and incremental process of change in NGPA and its potential impact on communities. A conceptual framework highlighting democratisation, network governance, and communicative (deliberative) action has provided a rich insight into the often fraught process of opening up and institutionalising new spaces of representation (for an excellent conceptual discussion of this process see Torgerson, 2003).

Of course, NGPA is in itself a problematic notion from which to view democratisation, because of the tension between non-governmental actors and 'representation' that is ingrained in this type of civil society mobilisation (Alfasi, 2003). This is acknowledged. NGPA is only part of a wider context of formal and informal politics, social movements, and activism. Linking these threads together and applying them to a variety of national, international, contemporary, and historical contexts constitute a significant empirical and theoretical challenge for further research.

References

- Alfasi N, 2003, Is public participation making urban planning more democratic? The Israeli experience, *Planning Theory and Practice*, 4: 185-202.
- BIMKOM, (2002), *Objection to Outline Plan 6036 – 'Lifta'*, Jerusalem: BIMKOM – Planners for Planning Rights Association, in Hebrew.
- BIMKOM, (2005), *Planning Rights in Israel: A Report*, Jerusalem: BIMKOM – Planners for Planning Rights Association (in Hebrew), available on: http://www.bimkom.org/dynContent/articles/rights_file1.pdf
- Dichter, S. (2007), 'Building Age, not the Stone Age, *Ma'ariv Daily Newspaper*, 14 October, p. 6 (In Hebrew).
- Dryzek, J.S. (1990) Green Reason: communicative ethics and the Biosphere, *Environmental Ethics*, 12: 195-210.
- Dryzek, J.S. (2000), *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fischer, F. (2003), *Reframing Public Policy: Discursive Politics and Deliberative Practices*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Foucault, M. (1977), *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, London: Allen Lane.
- Foucault, M. (1980), *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, Brighton: Harvester Press.
- Gilbert, J. (2007), Historical Indigenous Peoples' Land Claims: A Comparative and International Approach to the Common Law Doctrine on Indigenous Title, *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, 56(3):583-611.
- Grugel, J., (2003), Democratization Studies: Citizenship, Globalization and Governance, *Government and Opposition*, 38 (2), 238–264.
- Hajer, M.A. and Wagenaar, H. (2003), (eds.), *Deliberative Policy Analysis: Understanding Governance in the Network Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Healey, P. (1997), *Collaborative Planning*, Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan.
- Healey, P. (2000), Planning Theory and Urban and Regional Dynamics: A Comment on Yiftachel and Huxley *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 24(4): 917-921.
- Huntington, S. P. (1991) *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, Norman, Okl. (USA):University of Oklahoma Press.

- Innes, J.E. and Booher, D.E. (2003), Collaborative policymaking: governance through dialogue, in Hajer, M.A. and Wagenaar, H. (eds.), *Deliberative Policy Analysis: Understanding Governance in the Network Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jabareen, Y. (2007), *An Equal Constitution for All? On a Constitution and Collective Rights for the Arab Citizens of Israel*, Position Paper, Haifa, Israel: Mossawa Centre.
- Kaufman, R. and Gidron, B. (2006), *The Institutionalization of Protest: Trends in Social Change Organizations in Israel*, Be'er Sheva, Israel: Ben Gurion University of the Negev Press (in Hebrew).
- SIKKUY (2006), Mayors Forum for Municipal Cooperation in the Wadi Arra Region, Jerusalem: SIKKUY, available at: <http://www.sikkuy.org.il/municipal.html>
- Torgerson, D. (2003), Democracy through policy discourse, in Hajer, M.A. and Wagenaar, H. (eds.), *Deliberative Policy Analysis: Understanding Governance in the Network Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wagenaar, D., and Cook, S.D.N. (2003), Understanding policy practice: action, dialectic and deliberation in policy analysis, in Hajer, M.A. and Wagenaar, H. (eds.), *Deliberative Policy Analysis: Understanding Governance in the Network Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Yiftachel, O. (2006), Ethnocracy: Land and Identity Politics in Israel/Palestine, by Oren Yiftachel. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Yiftachel, O. (1998), Planning and social control: exploring the Dark Side, *Journal of Planning Literature*, 12(4): 395-406.
- Yiftachel, O. (1999), Between nation and state: 'fractured' regionalism among Palestinian-Arabs in Israel, *Political Geography*, 18(3): 285-307.
- Yiftachel, O. and Ghanem, A. (2004), Understanding 'ethnocratic' regimes: the politics of seizing contested territories, *Political Geography*, 23(6): 647-676.
- Yiftachel, O. and Huxley, M. (2000), *Debating Dominance and Relevance: Notes on the 'Communicative Turn' in Planning Theory*, International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 24(4): 907-913.
- Young, I.M. (1996), Communication and the Other: beyond deliberative democracy, in Benhabib, S. (ed.), *Democracy and Difference*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.