17. Compulsory social mix, micro-scale segregation and gentrification: the case of Gan HaHashmal neighbourhood, Tel Aviv

Tal Shamur and Haim Yacobi

17.1 INTRODUCTION

> Join our fascinating tours of Gan HaHashmal neighborhood! A unique experience in which we will focus on the stories and the designers that make the Gan HaHashmal neighborhood the most fashionable and special place in the city.[1]

This quotation, taken from the Tel Aviv Municipality website, is an invitation to join a walking tour of Gan HaHashmal which is undergoing a process of gentrification. Media coverage and real estate discourses contribute to the social construction of gentrification by attracting both investors and gentrifiers. This chapter explores the Gan HaHashmal neighbourhood in downtown Tel Aviv during this process. High-end real estate projects, well-known fashion designer boutiques, restaurants and cafés are fuelling its gentrification process. At the same time, it is also home to a vulnerable population including poor people, drug and alcohol users, the homeless, and African asylum seekers.

The ongoing transformation of Gan HaHashmal is described in the *Calcalist* newspaper:

> In those days [the 1920s], the neighborhood was inhabited by the wealthy of Tel Aviv, and it was they who gave it its special look, when they built magnificent stone houses … Over the years, the character of the neighborhood deteriorated, and the wealthy tenants were replaced by offices and workshops. Gan HaHashmal has become a dubious place inhabited by prostitutes and drug addicts at night. A revival began a few years ago when, with the renovation of Gan HaHashmal, the prices of apartments and rents in the Rothschild area and its surroundings began to rise, as artists and young people began to migrate south and settle in the area. At the same time, special designer stores and trendy cafes began to open in the area.[2]

The above presents a one-dimensional picture, highlighting specific characteristics of the neighbourhood, overlooking much of its history and many of the various groups drawn to the area. It brands the neighbourhood as the most innovative district in Tel Aviv, presenting a neutral perspective of this production of space.

Yet, gentrification is neither a natural nor a neutral process. Rather, it is the outcome of political decisions that leads to social, economic and demographic change (Atkinson and Bridge, 2005). Gentrification is characterized as an exclusionary social process whereby the white upper middle-class move to a disadvantaged neighbourhood, excluding the original residents. Planning has a central role in producing gentrification by restricting the construction of small apartments, which will dictate who can live in the area, or by developing regulations around sanitation which will significantly impact the gentrification of "neglected" neighbourhoods. Atkinson and Bridge (2005) emphasize the effect of real estate companies in initiating gentrification where middle-class and old residents lack the necessary capital to renew their property. While in many cases real estate companies are the free market agents of gentrification, their efforts are often accompanied by municipal funding.

We propose that there is an institutional intention to bring about gentrification, created through deliberate policies and the implementation of planning processes such as strategic master plans; the "beautification" of buildings, streets and public spaces; and the renovation of infrastructure. These operations are usually carried out without any tools made available to curb the process and preserve the current population. Gentrification in Gan HaHashmal brings together people from diverse social backgrounds enabling a critical examination of the concept of 'social mix' as a desirable urban planning. Since gentrification is an ongoing, multi-layered process, it allows, across certain time frames, the tracing of different forms of embedded social hierarchies within the transforming locality.

Based on ethnographic research conducted between September 2019 and August 2020, this chapter will critically discuss the struggle between different actors over the neighbourhood's character and sense of belonging. It will pinpoint the gap between the discourse and practices among the gentrifiers, who are producing what they perceive as safer place designed for people of their own class; and homeless people and drug users pursuing 'on the ground' insurgent practices.[3]We argue that this compulsory social mix is constructed vis-à-vis the area's character as an urban frontier lying between Tel Aviv's affluent northern districts and the deprived south. This gentrification process also enables encounters between distinct social groups that rarely otherwise encounter in city life. From the gentrifiers' perspective, compulsory social mix is twofold and it captures gentrifiers' ambivalence towards the social mix which they experience as part of the gentrification process. This social mix

is forcing them to deal with contested urban spaces they rarely encountered before. Additionally, their use of economic resources and symbolic power to change the area based on their interests vis-à-vis claiming ownership of the transformative locality while excluding the city's other. While our analysis discloses the humanistic approach of gentrifiers towards the homeless and drug addicts, acknowledging their vulnerability, their daily interactions and discourse reveal small-scale segregation, reproducing social hierarchies.

17.2 THEORETICAL NOTES

Segregation is often related to the city's deprived areas, where lower income people are concentrated in poor urban settings. These sites are home to vulnerable citizens, who are repressed to living at the margins with very few social and environmental opportunities to thrive. These segregated urban environments are both an outcome and a cause of their residents' poor life chances (Van Kempen, 1994). However, their marginality is not a result of static 'pockets of poverty', and their situation worsens over time due to the cumulative effects of marginal neighbourhoods' decay (Andersen, 2002).

Segregation itself indicates that the separation of different social groups occurs, at least to some extent, in most large cities around the world (Feitosa et al., 2007). Such divides are common to ethnic communities confined to neglected localities. For example, in the USA, racial and ethnic enclaves are a common challenge for many cities (Johnston et al., 2007; Massey and Denton, 1989). Black minority ethnic segregation was also documented in UK cities as well as more recent inner city ethnic clusters of British Muslims (Phillips, 1998, 2006). Similar processes creating an uneven allocation of urban amenities – such as housing, infrastructure and transportation – are also evident in Europe (Tammaru et al., 2015), Latin America (Glebbeek and Koonings, 2016) and in the Middle East (Khazzoom, 2005; Offer, 2007).

Although segregation is a global phenomenon, its manifestations in the urban sphere vary. Whereas, for example, studies of segregation focused on socio-spatial realities and specific characteristics of the process relevant to the USA, in Europe a nuanced process occurs. In these societies there are less distinctive ethno-racial differences supported by egalitarian approaches towards constructing social space. Thus, as opposed to large-scale segregation encompassing US districts, small-scale segregation of homogeneous apartments and neighbourhoods is more common in European cities (Maloutas, 2004), including vertical segregation within the same apartment building (Maloutas and Karadimitriou, 2001) or barriers to neighbourly relations developed along racial lines (Gruner, 2010).

Class segregation is also linked to the gentrification process. For example, by focusing on field surveys and mortgage lending in 23 large US cities,

Wyly and Hammel (2004) showed that the class selectivity of gentrification is evidence of racial and ethnic discrimination. Through increased investment in inner cities, class segregation was magnified, which led to gentrified neighbourhoods that excluded racial and ethnic groups (Wyly and Hammel, 2004). The link between class divisions and gentrification is produced through aggressive neoliberal ideology designed to allow the middle classes to retake control of the inner city (Atkinson, 2000; Lees, 2008; Slater, 2009; Smith, 1996).

Gentrification is a site of class struggle led by the neoliberal ‘revanchist city’ which conspires against minorities, the poor and homeless people (Smith, 1996; Zukin, 2016). Gentrification is constructed through the image of the frontier myth: new residents are often perceived as “urban pioneers” when they go to live where “no (white man) man has ever gone before”. At the same time, the poor and working class are commonly defined as uncivil and savages (Smith, 1996: 11–16), thus the ones to be excluded.

We emphasize the temporal aspects of gentrification, focusing on encounters between different groups that might share space at certain points during the gentrification process. Although gentrification is often associated with displacement, in many cases it involves slow residential turnover (Freeman and Braconi, 2004) that can be stalled. Thus, long-term residents and newcomers are obliged to live together although they have different resources, visions of place, expectations and patterns of interaction. These differences create challenges and present the ‘uneasy cohabitation’ of gentrification and social mix (Rose, 2004).

Uneasy cohabitation becomes apparent when the new middle-classes’ desire for diversity and difference doesn’t fit with their self-segregation, and they show little tolerance towards existing long-term residents (Lees, 2008). Although gentrifiers identify with the values of equality and diversity, in practice they employ various small-scale segregation behaviours. These include ‘bubbles’ of separation in everyday life and the education system (Butler, 2003), art festivals which are common in gentrifying neighbourhoods in which black long-term residents are excluded (Shaw and Sullivan, 2011) and family-related consumption of space. These measures re-invent cities but at the same time sustain unequal class relations (Karsten, 2014).

17.3 ETHNO-CLASS DISPARITIES, SMALL-SCALE SEGREGATION AND GENTRIFICATION IN ISRAEL

Similar to the global process discussed, ethnic segregation in Israel has long been documented indicating that ethnicity is an important variable in the process of social stratification in the urban locality. It is particularly common

among disadvantaged communities such as Ethiopian Jews (Offer, 2007), Israeli Palestinians (Falah, 1996; Yacobi, 2009) and Mizrahi Jews (Tzfadia and Yacobi, 2011) in that their marginality in society overall is apparent in the poor state of their immediate environments. The Israeli urban sphere is a mirror for the wider inequalities stemming from its ethnocratic context (Yiftachel, 2006) which can become even more apparent in larger cities such as Jerusalem (Yacobi, 2016), Haifa (Kallus and Shamur, 2015) and Tel Aviv-Jaffa (Marom, 2014; Shamur and Marom, 2021).

"Fragile middle-class identity" (Shtern and Yacobi, 2019) is a key point for moderating social hierarchies and allowing areas of encounter between ethnic communities in Israel. However, it is evident that class can serve as a mechanism for sustaining inequalities (Zaban, 2016) and serving ethnocratic national agendas (Shmaryahu-Yeshurun and Ben-Porat, 2020). Gentrification research in Israel has provided accounts which illuminate the different stages of the process (Kaddar, 2020). In some cases, deploying this perspective has provided detailed historical accounts of neighbourhood transformation (Zaban, 2016). Although some attention is given to the temporal dimensions of gentrification, there is a dearth of research regarding the potential struggle over space between newcomers and long-term residents, or the people who used to occupy the place before it was transformed.

To fill the above lacuna we propose to examine the uneasy cohabitation of gentrification and social mix on the ground, particularly with regard to two interlinked dimensions that unfold in the gentrification process. First, its temporality: by emphasizing a particular historical point of a gentrifying neighbourhood in inner Tel Aviv which brings together people from various, sometimes contradictive social locations. Second, its spatial dimensions: by illuminating the changing environment throughout this process (housing complexes, businesses), particularly the multiple formations of place attachment experienced in residents' lives.

17.4 GAN HAHASHMAL NEIGHBOURHOOD

Gan HaHashmal is located within walking distance of Rothschild Boulevard, the vibrant rich area of central Tel Aviv, and within short walking distance of Tel Aviv's southern districts, where non-Jewish migrant workers and lower income Israeli residents are living. The liminality of this area, situated between north and south Tel Aviv, has deep historical roots. Until the 1920s the area was considered to be part of the wealthy Ramat HaSharon neighbourhood. Over the years, residents left, leaving behind houses that were neglected. Later it blended with the nearby streets and became a hub of offices and small-scale industries and home to drug users and a gay underground scene at night, mainly at HaHashmal Garden (Figure 17.1). Since the early 2000s, the

neighbourhood has been undergoing yet another transformation, with fashion designer boutiques and restaurants opening; as well as high-end real estate projects fuelling the gentrification process.

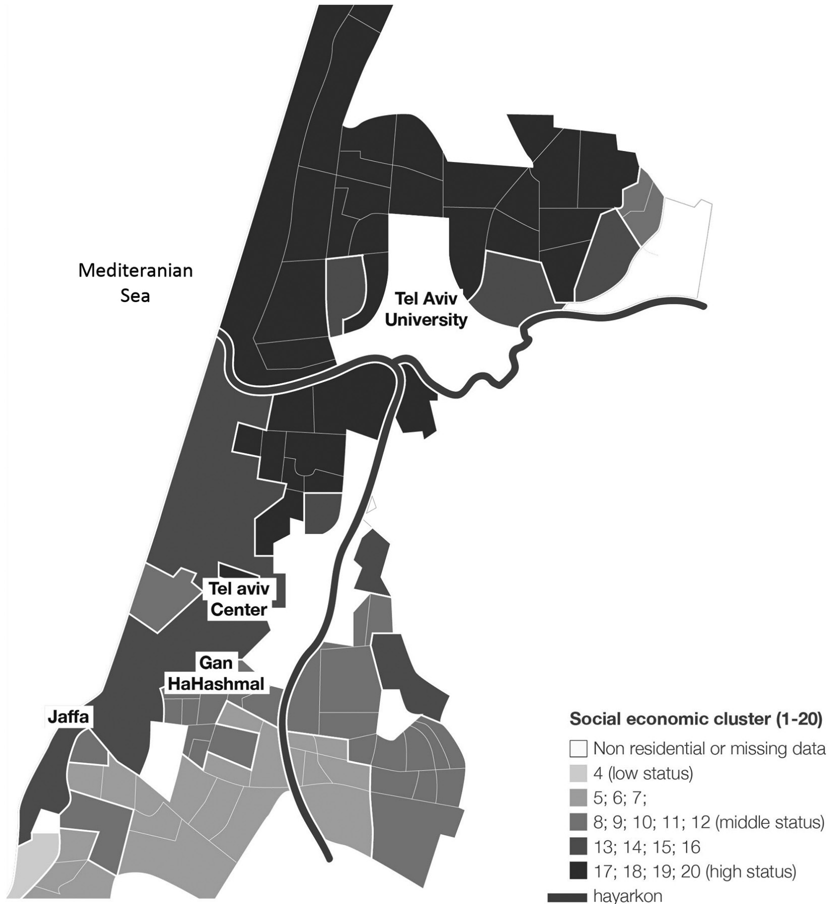

Figure 17.1 Socioeconomic division in the metropolitan area of Tel Aviv

According to the Israeli Bureau of Statistics (2019), there are about 2,000 residents living in this fairly small space confined between Yehuda Halevi and the train streets in the north, the Menahem Begin streets in the south and east, and Albany Street in the west. Young adults (aged 20–30) make up 25 per cent of the neighbourhood, older residents (50+) represent 15 per cent, and young children (0–10) constitute 6 per cent. According to the municipal

research authorities, the neighbourhood is not yet recognized as a distinctive geographical quarter with clear boundaries. This is not just anecdotal, but a useful indication that the neighbourhood is in a process of becoming and is not yet established as a quarter according to local measurements.

While the statistical data remain limited, our ethnography trace how socio-class variants are enacted on the ground. They reveal that although 'newcomers' to the neighbourhood are generally of high class, their family status and resources vary by age. Older people tend to live in the neighbourhood on their own as their grown-up children have left home, and tend to have sufficient resources to buy their flats, whereas younger residents in their 20s and 30s, singles or couples, have fewer resources and normally rent their apartments. They also tend to be childless or parents to one child. The number of larger families who reside in the area is considerably lower due to limited availability of urban services. The presence of homeless people in the neighbourhood, who are usually concentrated at the neighbourhood's only playground, the close proximity to major roads and various construction works make the area unsuitable for child-rearing.

Gan HaHashmal is characterized by a social mix as well as economic and cultural forces which reinforce the area's liminality in terms of space and time. It is in the midst of an ongoing historical and temporary process of transforming into a wealthy district. The neighbourhood's ambivalent location is still attracting marginal agents, especially homeless people and the drug addicts. Under these two contractive forces, the newcomers reveal their ambivalence between their humanistic approach towards the 'other' and their desire to sustain a local community that will echo their identity. Although there is a tentative approach to vulnerable 'others' in the urban sphere, we will next illustrate that the compulsory social mix created through gentrification is in fact reinforcing social hierarchies.

The gentrification of the area should be understood in relation to the social division between northern and southern Tel Aviv, the 'white' and the 'black' areas (Rotbard, 2015) that mark social, class and ethnic disparities. In general, the northern parts of the city are inhabited by wealthier, often Jews of European descent, and the southern districts are associated with lower income Jews of Middle Eastern background (Rotbard, 2015; Shamur, 2018, 2019). These differences were widely influenced by planning process; Tel Aviv development was based upon European ideas aiming to produce a modern space echoing the values of the city's 'original' secular, white middle-class residents. At the same time, the conservative Mizrahi Jews were suppressed to live in poverty enclaves and were perceived as the city 'others' who did not engender its aspired character (Marom, 2014; Rotbard, 2015).

Within this north–south divide, the neighbourhood cannot be easily sorted. It is located just five minutes' walk from Rothschild Boulevard, Tel Aviv's

bustling centre and leisure hub, where house prices are extremely high. At the same time, it is as close to the central bus station – a symbol of the city's most degraded and neglected area. In terms of space the neighbourhood is caught in a liminal position constructing its ambivalent character as a gentrifying neighbourhood which is becoming Tel Aviv's new urban frontier, lying between the southern and northern districts.

The gentrification process does not call for spatial positionality exploration solely, but also invites research into aspects regarding temporality. The gentrification process of Gan HaHashmal began a few decades ago when a group of artists moved to the area when housing vacancies were very limited. Back then, small businesses were active in the neighbourhood during the day. However, at night the neighbourhood was deserted and served as a hub for various subversive activities, including prostitution and drug distribution. Over the years the gentrification process gained momentum with more affluent residents moving to the area. As the current gentrification wave occurring in its advance stage, it is dominated by investors who market luxury apartments designed for upper middle-class inhabitants.

Alongside the neighbourhood is also a site of ongoing clashes, particularly between newcomers and homeless people and drug addicts – the latter do not own properties in the neighbourhood, but they have long been drawn to this space, precisely due to its ambivalent character.

17.5 METHODOLOGY: STUDYING A MICRO-SCALE GENTRIFICATION

In the following section we present our findings, based on anthropological field work conducted in Gan HaHashmal from September 2019 to August 2020. This included participant observation in the neighbourhood sphere as well as in accommodation in one of its new apartment blocks. We focus on how gentrifiers perceive their life in the neighbourhood and act upon small-scale encounters with the vulnerable people they hadn't previously met in the city. In addition, we collected and analysed dozens of casual conversations and interactions with people who attended the neighbourhood day and night, including residents, business owners, homeless people and drug addicts. We also conducted 14 semi-structured interviews with people attending the neighbourhood, mainly with new and long-term residents as well as business proprietors.

The emphasis on gentrifiers' lived experience with drug addicts and homeless people in this urban frontier will reveal new segregation patterns that are small in scale and mundane. The evolving social mix in this gentrifying neighbourhood provides an opportunity to examine a unique moment of local space production. This compulsory social mix, constructed through gentrification,

might provide an occasional platform for shared life across socio-class divides, albeit we will show that in practice it often reproduces social hierarchies.

In more detail, our findings indicate that although newcomers express empathy towards vulnerable drug addicts and homeless people, and even occasionally assist them, in practice they create micro-scale segregation. This separation is made through daily encounters with people like 'their own' while excluding the city's others. Moreover, gentrifiers' views expose their aspiration to create homogeneous space and what is considered by them as a safer place that meets their needs and overcomes an undesirable social mix.

17.5.1 Across Space and Time: Life Trajectories and the North–South Spatial Divide

Debbra, a woman in her 70s, moved to the neighbourhood in 2016 to live in a new luxury housing project: "We (the newcomers) all like the same things, dress the same and share the same language and manners". Debbra moved to the area from one of the northern, wealthier districts, a decision she made after she fell down the stairs in her 2.5 storey private house, also following her divorce and the loneliness she felt in her previous large home. Debbra hesitated about where she wanted to live in Tel Aviv. When she made up her mind to buy an apartment in Gan HaHashmal, many of her close family and friends "lifted their eyebrows" since it was "considered to be part of south Tel Aviv". There was not even proper street lighting in the area. It was her biographical connection to the neighbourhood which influenced her final decision as she was born in the neighbourhood and often took the bus to visit her grandparents who lived there in a ground floor apartment after she had left with her parents to live in a different neighbourhood. "I had great childhood over here", she recalls, "I admired the place".

An attachment to the neighbourhood is rare among newcomers, as many of them discern the area's potential by considering its urban renewal and central location. Rivka and Amos, a couple in their 70s who recently retired, lived for many years in Mevaseret Zion, a suburb of Jerusalem. Whereas they valued it as an ideal place for child-rearing, as their grown-up children had left home, they felt it wouldn't be suitable for their needs. After they returned from a few years of working abroad and following their retirement, they decided to move to Gan HaHashmal.

Rivka explained: "When the children are small most activities are at home, and you go outside for fresh air. At old age, it is the opposite. The house is completely quiet, and we go outside to feel the pulse of life." They both appreciate that everything they need is within walking distance: "When we lived in Mevaseret we choose our doctor or hairdresser according to availability of parking spots, today it doesn't cross our minds. We walk everywhere or take

the bus. We hardly use our car, unless we go out of town." Although Rivka and Amos feel they made the right decision to move to the neighbourhood and insist it should keep its special character, they criticize the authorities' neglect: "In that sense we still feel that we are considered to be part of south Tel Aviv, as we experience it every day", they say.

Mira moved to the neighbourhood in 2012 with her mother when she was 14 years old. Now in her 20s, she accuses the local authorities of neglecting the area that according to her doesn't allocate sufficient municipal resources and suffers from environmental neglect, when compared to the northern neighbourhoods where "people are of a better class and they can pull some strings […]". She adds: "We always come last. If you will go to north Tel Aviv you will see that everything is clean and neat."

The tension between the northern wealthier districts and the poor southern neighbourhoods runs like threads in the newcomers' narratives. Although many of them comment on neglect and the presence of homeless people as evidence of the area's southern location, they recognize its ambivalent stance as a neighbourhood which is between north and south Tel Aviv.

Eitan, a gay man in his 40s, who moved to the neighbourhood with his partner in 2016 claims that although there are "many improvements to be done" he really likes the neighbourhood. He emphasized that for him "it is nice to be part of a place which is in a process of [transformation] … I think here it is more alive." Still, he calls the municipality every two weeks to complain "about the area's poor environment …".

17.5.2 The Struggle Over Space: Between a Humanistic Approach and Homeless Insurgent Practices

Many of the newcomers mentioned their ambivalence towards homeless people. As some try to be empathetic, some also feel that their actions in the neighbourhood have a detrimental effect. Eitan elaborates: "it is unpleasant to see drug addicts when you go to the local garden. I feel sorry for the homeless people, I do, but they have a negative impact on the environment we live in." The vast number of homeless people and drug addicts that wander around the neighbourhood influences residents' lives.[4]For many it is not only a barrier to using the public spaces, but also a signifier for the area's liminality.

Rivka, for example, when describing her encounter with a homeless standing with his rolled-up pants trying to defecate shared with us that she was in shock. She wasn't afraid of him but saw his behaviour as a hazard. Her husband said that for him it is more than that as he fears catching something from infected used hypodermic needles he sees in the local garden when he comes there to work out using the sport facilities. Rivka concludes that although she is "enjoying the vibrant energies of this place and the sense of intimacy and warmth that

people project" she has her red lines: "Homeless doesn't give me a sense of warmth. On the contrary, he gives me a sense of neglect."

Homeless people and drug addicts are active within the neighbourhood both day and night and meeting them at night can be even more intimidating for the newcomers. Mira elaborates: "in the day you experience the neighbourhood as a communal village where everyone knows everyone but at the night it becomes a different place – cold isolated and dark and unsafe to walk." At night you are "ready to defend yourself if somebody will try [to attack] as you pass by the local garden […]". For her, as well as for other newcomers, especially women, the night is perceived as threatening undeserved encounters close to home, such as with "a drug addict who is in the midst of withdrawal symptoms […] or a prostitute [meeting a client]".

17.5.3 The Neighbourhood as a Grey Zone

Although possible encounters with homeless people could occur anywhere in the neighbourhood, there are certain areas where illegal activity (drug use and sex work) are more common. Our informants reveal that the southern part of the neighbourhood, especially next to Gan HaHashmal garden, is a space which "connects [the wealthy and central] Rothschild Boulevard where the drug addicts often collect alms and the central bus station area where they buy their drugs".

Hila, who in 2016 opened a small shop in the area, discloses that next to it there are few people walking down the street, which opens up the possibility for drug use and distribution. This has worsened since the police dismantled the temporary gathering places that drug addicts used close by: "These people are a form of energy. They don't vanish and quite surprisingly continue to endure their lives", she asserts. Hila often meets with "people distributing drugs in front of her shop, drug addicts sitting on a bench using a bong or inject[ing] drugs on the floor". For her, this problem "was taken to extremes". She accuses the municipality of deliberately overlooking the matter. "This is unbearable", she determines: "We pay the same city tax as the lady who lives in Rothchild Boulevard."

Although most newcomers, residents and business owners see homelessness as a hazard, many reveal more humanistic approaches, acknowledging their need for assistance. There are serval drug addicts who are familiar to the residents. Some residents will often give them small amounts of money or food. Rivka, for example, revealed that she and her husband "felt sorry when we first came across the homeless people. We were thinking how we can help them, so we 'adopted' two of them – Katia and Jasmine. We used to give them five NIS every time we saw them." Similarly, Mira claims that she knows "all the drug

addicts that wander around this area. I know their names and biographies […] their good days and bad days".

Mira reveals that there is "an actual relationship between the residents and the homeless people […] the neighbours are trying to help them, even if at first glance it seems they don't". However, this relationship also gives rise to ambivalent emotions. When speaking on this matter with newcomers, they hesitate if it is left up to them to tackle this problem. Rivka disclosed that although she and her spouse have good will towards the local homeless people, they question whether it falls under their responsibility. At a certain point they felt they were "pouring money into a bottomless pit". Following an unpleasant encounter with Katia, a local drug addict, they decided to quit this practice completely. Amos said they would prefer that the homeless people "go to a municipal shelter instead of them wandering around the neighbourhood" and claimed that as long they receive money from the local inhabitants, they will see the area as rewarding and will not leave.

The neighbourhood's location and the high numbers of homeless people produce a transitional zone in the neighbourhood. For our informants, it was clear that although the neighbourhood is in the process of becoming and could not be compared to the deprived neighbourhoods of south Tel Aviv, it is not yet a neighbourhood with a sense of community. Within this process, the neighbourhood attracts relatively wealthier people of various social positions. Yet, it is noticeable that there are fewer families with children who live in the neighbourhood. Their absence creates a barrier to it forming a multi-generational community. Hila, who runs her business in the neighbourhood but lives in a wealthier, central district elaborates:

> The neighbourhood I live in is very homogenic in terms of [high] social status, so it is easier to build a community, whereas this neighbourhood here attracts people from various social locations […] there is no kindergarten or school and the public playground is not a place you see children play around all afternoon.

Many of the newcomers criticize the urban planning for prioritizing smaller apartments over larger flats which are suitable for families. Rivka points out that "since most of the new apartments are smaller inhabitants tend to be younger or older people. I feel that this mix of people can't be called a neighbourhood." She compares Gan HaHashmal's character to the suburb where she lived before, where she "had a relationship with my neighbours. We knew and greeted each other every time we met. Sometimes you could knock on someone's door to ask for a favour and chat for a while. Here I feel everyone [is] on their own."

Yet, this transitional neighbourhood also enables a sense of belonging, especially for people who do not normally identify with mainstream culture.

Rina, a woman in her late 40s of Russian descent, has lived here with her daughter since 2011. She explains that there is an accepting atmosphere in the neighbourhood. Previously she had lived in “a bedroom suburb”, a place where she was perceived as a “‘white raven’ – a non-mainstream person […]” and could sense that “people look at her differently” since she was “a young single mother with two children […] In Tel Aviv I am like a fish in water […] Here every person is different, one is more different from another and there is a total atmosphere of acceptance.”

As many of the newcomers wish to establish a local community, they also dissent from the possibility of becoming a suburb. Paradoxically, they object to the gentrification process that they themselves generate. As this process raises rental prices and the general cost of living, the first gentrifiers can’t cope with the increasing expense as an artist in his early 70s said: “If all pensioners will live in a very costly 2.5-bedroom apartment where will all the young people and the students go?”

Rivka describes her mixed emotions towards the neighbourhood’s change as, on the one hand, “this transformation made us feel we [did a good deal] by buying a house in a district which becomes wealthier as we are becoming the centre and not the south”. On the other hand, she expresses her sorrow in seeing this change as old, albeit unique, houses will eventually be demolished, changing the character of the small streets and alleys that she will miss, including “the [weird] characters who walk around the neighbourhood”. For her, “there is something very personal […] Everyway you go in the neighbourhood you get a special treatment, and it will gradually disappear.”

17.6 CONCLUSION

Throughout this chapter we discussed how everyday small-scale segregation practices reproduce the social hierarchies highlighted in the process of gentrification. We documented the tension created between the different forms of space production, everyday practices, and views on place that are manifested by the various social groups drawn to this locality. We emphasized the clashes between (white) middle-class newcomers and the homeless people who wander in the area and whose actions are now closely monitored and challenged by the newcomers as well as other municipal agents.

These clashes raise questions about the different formations of place attachment and the inevitable gaps between the haves and have nots in urban daily life that were further widened during gentrification. Thus, the humanistic approach revealed by the new residents towards the homeless, recognizing their vulnerability, was contradicted by their urban practices of surveillance and their desire to create a safer space for “people of their own”.

Our ethnography reveals the liminality of the neighbourhood in terms of time and space. We have shown that the neighbourhood is in a process of gentrification and is not yet completely gentrified. In fact, the area is still not officially recognized by the municipality as a neighbourhood. Spatially, the neighbourhood is 'caught' between the central wealthier 'white' parts of city and the deprived 'black' neighbourhoods of the south. Such liminality across time and space brings together people from different social locations who do not often live together, and where ongoing negotiations and struggles occur.

This uneasy cohabitation brings to the fore the notion of compulsory social mix. We illustrated how compulsory social mix is an indicator of the current reality of urban lives globally. As cities are in constant flux and class becomes a central factor in enabling a 'right to the city', neighbourhoods which undergo gentrification become mirrors for the duality towards 'others', most commonly the poor, migrants and homeless people. They arouse feelings of empathy, as well as fear and resentment. Through our case study it was apparent that for the newcomers, the homeless people as well as poor infrastructure were symbols of neglect; the newcomers' desire for a clean 'white' space overtakes their romantic authenticity and their views of themselves as urban pioneers that led them to choose the neighbourhood.

Indeed, micro-scale segregation reproduces social hierarchies and demonstrates how the city's 'others' – people who don't obey the city's 'appropriate' social order – are perceived by the gentrifiers who see themselves as multicultural but in practice strive for homogeneity that better suits their desires and needs. In that sense, the compulsory social mix is yet another phase of gentrification, preceding the 'revanchist city' and before its neo-liberal agents take control to construct a 'place of their own'.

NOTES

1. See https://www.tel-aviv.gov.il/Pages/MainItemPage.aspx?WebID=3af57d92-807c-43c5-8d5f-6fd455eb2776&ListID=9dd2da03-5c43-462a-b5b2-d087c179b16c&ItemId=3126.
2. See https://www.calcalist.co.il/real_estate/articles/0,7340,L-3403313,00.html.
3. The homeless and drug addicts' narratives are not part of the ethnographic work conducted, and we are afraid that assuming their views might be ethically and academically problematic. Moreover, the homeless and drug addicts visiting or passing through the neighbourhood change over time and it was hard to reach out to them and to ask for an interview or a conversation. Many of them seemed to be in a severe poor mental state or under the influence of a substance and therefore weren't approachable.
4. According to a tracking report of Tel Aviv Municipality (2018), there are 600 homeless people who inhabit the city. Many of them wander around in the less affluent neighbourhoods of south Tel Aviv, but it is unknown how many of them sleep or pass through Gan HaHashmal.

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