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Israel's planning historiography: interrogating spatio-temporal discourse and 'whiteness'

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ABSTRACT

In this study, I aim to critically examine the Israeli planning discourse related to the execution of the first national masterplan for Jewish population dispersion in Israel's history, the 'Sharon Plan'. I argue that the discursive justification of the Population Dispersion Policy, as presented in Israel's planning historiography, provides planning, cultural, moral and economic advantages to the dispersion of Middle-Eastern and North African Jews ('Mizrahi' Jews), used to de-Arabize them as a project of 'whiteness'. Subsequently, I analyze the threedimensional language initiated in the Sharon Plan - Land, People and Time dimensions - through three main motifs: the 'making the desert bloom' motif, the modernistic progress motif, and the urgency motif. On a larger theoretical scale, I suggest reinvestigating how spatial design and national planning historiographies racialize social groups. Methodologically, I apply the Cultural Approach to Critical Discourse Analysis on a case study that engages the built environment, by assembling a corpus that includes the masterplan, Arieh Sharon's lectures and articles collected at the Azrieli Architectural Archive of Tel-Aviv Art Museum, and three planning and architectural exhibitions' catalogues. I analyse the corpus by reading and observing every item to pursue shared motifs within the historical planning discourse.

KEYWORDS

Population dispersion policy; discourse analysis; Israel; whiteness; Mizrahi Jews

Introduction: the masterplan's three-dimensional discourse

In 1951, the 'Sharon Plan' was published as the first masterplan implementing the Jewish population dispersion policy (hereinafter: PDP).² It led to the establishment of 38 New Towns ('development towns'), on Israel's frontier. The Housing Division of the Labour Ministry, and since 1961 the Housing Ministry, built hundreds of thousands of housing units in these towns and 70 marginal neighbourhoods in central cities.4

Although recent work successfully examined the masterplan's historical and ideological origins,⁵ the discourse constructed within the masterplan and transformed along Israel's planning historiography has not received much attention. In this study, I will explore the masterplan's

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¹Named after Arieh Sharon, Head of the Planning Department in the Prime Minister's Office.

²Sharon, "Physical Planning".

³Shadar, "Building Stones".

⁴Gonen, "Urban Geography".

⁵Rego, "Global Ideas"; Wilkof, "The Sharon Plan".

THREE-FOLD BASIS FOR PLANNING LAND, PEOPLE, TIME

Three factors impose a unique character of planning in Israel. They are: land, people, time. Land. Israel, a bridge between three continents, is bordered by the Mediterranean on the west, Lake Tiberias and the Dead Sea on the east, the Mountains of Lebanon to the north, and the Sinai Penninsula, the Gulf of Elath and the Arabian Desert to the south. Its limited area of 20,800,000 dunams includes regions varying widely in their natural characteristics. They range from the level and fertile coastal plains of the Shfelah and the Sharon to the at present desolate Hills of Galilee in the north, and the Judean Hills near Jerusalem;

tive entity.

Time. The third factor, that of time, makes it urgently necessary for the State to treble its population within a few years. This urgency, translated into concrete fact, means the trebling of agricultural and urban settlements, the erection of sufficient dwellings, schools, public buldings and industrial structures, as well as the expansion of communications. The quickened tempo of development, and the resultant pressure, combine to exert a great and sometimes negative influence on planning proper. Planning is by its very nature a slow process, demanding the basic survey of economic causes and careful research into physical and social conditions as a prerequisite condition. Yet the introduction of the time element, i.e., the

Figure 1. 'Sharon Plan', page 3. Israel's State Archives.

historiography, as presented in architectural exhibitions. I aim to demonstrate how it reproduced the masterplan's discourse of the racialization of Middle-Eastern and North African Jews (*Mizrahim* or *Mizrahi* Jews), and reinforced this discourse as part of Israel's socio-political axioms to justify the masterplan. According to the masterplan (Figure 1),⁶ three factors characterize planning in Israel:

- 1. Land Israel's physical borders, climate and topography. The plan highlights the 'desolate Hills of Galilee' and 'the wastes of the Southern Negev'.
- 2. People 'the social structure, character and composition of the population'. Therefore, urban planning's role is to promote 'the acclimatisation of the diverse groups of the population, old and new', and expedite 'their integration into one organic and productive entity'.
- 3. Time which 'makes it urgently necessary for the state to treble its population within a few years' and 'means the trebling of agricultural and urban settlements'.⁷

Although the masterplan's three-dimensional discursive structure does not mention *Mizrahim*, but uses the term 'population', the policy it promoted de facto was the dispersion of mostly Mizrahim through the construction of towns and housing.

The PDP has long-term impacts on Israeli society, creating racial-classed divisions between Mizrahim and *Ashkenazi* (European-origin) Jews. Many Mizrahim were restricted to low-quality public housing without property rights, segregated from Ashkenazi-majority rural settlements ('Kibbutzim'), and affected by 80% of the state land being controlled by rural 'regional councils', where only 8% of the population resides.⁸ Furthermore, the periphery shows higher mortality rates,⁹ income and job quality gaps,¹⁰ and lower homeownership among North African Jewish immigrants, hindering capital accumulation.¹¹

The PDP had no statutory validity.¹² Therefore, it had to be discursively justified to be fully implemented. In this research, I will explore how the discursive justification of PDP in the 'Sharon Plan' and in its following planning historiography racializes Mizrahi identity in Israel. This research's analysis is partially a work in progress, however in order to examine this 'recycled'

⁶Sharon, "Physical Planning," 3.

⁷lbid., 3.

⁸Hananel, "From Sharon Plan," 249; Yiftachel, "Nation-Building".

⁹State Comptroller of Israel, "A Report," 805–47.

¹⁰Bank of Israel, "Bank of Israel," 186–7.

¹¹Elmalekh and Levin-Epstein, "Immigration," 252–65.

¹²Efrat, "Israeli Project," 994.

justification and the various discursive elements arising from the findings, I have decided to analyse each dimension and its discursive evolutions with only one dominant secondary-discursive strategy: the 'making the desert bloom' motif, the modernistic progress motif, and the urgency motif, respectively. The analysis, focused on the first two motifs, will be briefer to elaborate more on the Time dimension, which is under-studied within this context. Concurrently, all three motifs are clearly visible in the masterplan's three stated factors as well as preserved throughout its historiographical representations. Nonetheless, the motifs have played a significant justifying role within the wider Zionist, settler-colonial discourse, which had emerged in earlier periods of the Zionist movement.¹³ I will argue that this justification provides, over time, planning, cultural, moral and economic advantages to the dispersion of Mizrahim, used to de-Arabize them as a project of 'whiteness'. Subsequently, I will suggest reinvestigating the theoretical relations between spatial design, racialization, and national planning historiographies.

Methodologically, I will employ the Cultural Approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (hereinafter CCDA). 14 I have assembled a corpus that includes the following items: 15

- Israel's first masterplan, 'Physical Planning in Israel', 1951.
- Archival documents collected in Arieh Sharon's collection of Azrieli Architectural Archive, Tel Aviv Museum of Art.
- 'Building the Land: Public Housing in the 1950s' Exhibition, curated by Miriam Tuvia and Michael Boneh, 1999.
- 'The Israeli Project 1948-1973' Exhibition, curated by Zvi Efrat and Meira Yagid-Haimovich,
- 'Arieh Sharon: The Nation's Architect' Exhibition, curated by Eran Neuman, 2018.

Theoretical framework: de-Arabization as a project of 'whiteness'

According to Shenhav, the PDP is one of the main mechanisms of the de-Arabization process of Mizrahim.¹⁶ Shenhav argues that Israel forced Mizrahi immigrants through de-Arabization, namely the denial of Arabness and the Arab past of Arab-Jews/Mizrahim, to include them into the Israeli-Jewish nation-building project and to remove the threat of their Arabness. 17 Both Shohat and Shenhav maintain that de-Arabization was justified by a modernist approach, that claimed the 'primitive' Mizrahim needed to be developed to be included in the modern-Israeli project.¹⁸ This approach was even applied to 'diasporic' Eastern European Jews to construct a modern national identity. 19

Through this postcolonial ethnic lens, Yacobi argues that modernist architecture and planning play a crucial role in the de-Arabization of Mizrahim and the construction of their spatial identity, purified from the influences of the historical Arab space.²⁰ Kallus and Law-Yone claim that by housing provision for hundreds of thousands of Jewish immigrants, Israel exploited Mizrahi

¹³Zerubavel, "Desert"; Ophir, "On Space"; Shohat, "The Narrative".

¹⁴The approach has been explained in-depth in Gavriely-Nuri, "Normalization of War"; and in Gavriely-Nuri, "Israeli Peace Discourse". 15The corpus does not include two exhibitions that are beyond the scope of this study, although their focus is on Arieh Sharon's work: "Who Are You, Arieh Sharon? Selected Work, 1926-1956" Exhibition, curated by Nethanel Alfasi and Kerem Helbrecht, 2008; and "Sharon" Exhibition, curated by Yehoshua Simon, 2004.

¹⁶ Shenhav, "The Arab-Jews," 152. The de-Arabization of Palestinian spaces in Israel during the 1950s is beyond this study's scope. Please see: Yacobi, "The Jewish-Arab City"; Leshem, "Life After Ruin".

¹⁷Shenhav, "Arab-Jews: A Postcolonial Reading," 140-1.

¹⁸Shohat, "The Narrative".

¹⁹Khazzoom, "The Great Chain"; Schwake, "Settle and Rule," 4-5.

²⁰Yacobi, "Architecture, Orientalism, and Identity".

Jews by dispersing and settling them in housing blocks mainly in Israel's social-geographical periphery. Tzfadia and Yiftachel show that the dispersion policy prevents the construction of a distinct identity separate from the Israeli-Ashkenazi hegemony, and simultaneously blocks opportunities for egalitarian integration into the power centres. 22

Although there is a considerable amount of literature on PDP and its links to ethnic power relations, it appears PDP has not been analyzed using 'race' and 'whiteness' as analytical lenses. 'Race' has been coded within ethnicity and the use of 'whiteness' to carefully understand the broader historiography of Israeli planning is uncommon. Nevertheless, placing the de-Arabization of Mizrahim as a project of 'whiteness' will enable to decode de-Arabization as part of a wider Western racial formation project.²³ It offers a novel, repoliticized approach to uncovering racist discursive hierarchies within Western and Israeli planning historiographies, and for advancing the role of Mizrahi scholarship in the critique of broader urban settler-colonial history.

Some work in Critical Whiteness Studies examines the self-racialization process of the 'white' American working-class in a slaveholding society, and how Jews, Travellers and Irish people were racialized as 'white' or 'in-between' groups in the United States, the United Kingdom and Ireland. These studies illustrate that 'whiteness' is a flexible category that can be applied within wide-ranging socio-political trends to realign racial hierarchies.

To briefly explain the meaning of 'whiteness', I wish to adopt Frankenberg's linked definitions of 'whiteness': 26

a location of structural advantage, of race privilege. Second it is a 'standpoint', a place from which white people look at ourselves, at others, and at society. Third, 'whiteness' refers to a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed.

These definitions are highly relevant to Sasson-Levy and Shoshana's research on the Ashkenazi-whitening process among Mizrahim.²⁷ They argue that transforming from a racialized identity to a 'normative' 'white' identity requires erasing one's cultural history. Building on that, I suggest that 'whiteness', unlike ethnicity, reveals the normalization of Europeanness, resulting from the colonial erasure of non-European histories. This case study highlights the relations between modernism and identity-whitening, exposing how Israel's modernist 'colourblind' planning model maintains a racialized social order and causes residents to forget their Mizrahi/Arab past. Investigating 'whiteness' in Israeli planning offers a new perspective on how 'white' modernism discursively erases Mizrahi history, while providing a path to deconstruct the modernist space–time language of the masterplan within Israel's planning historiography.

PDP and the land dimension

The masterplan warns that, with Israel's sovereignty over the land, 'arose the problem of the development of abandoned regions, and the direction of population thither'. ²⁸ It continues that without the PDP, 'the masses of the population will apathetically follow the line of least resistance, drifting

²¹Kallus and Law-Yone, "National Home".

²²Yiftachel and Tzfadia, "Political Mobilization".

²³Omi and Winant, "Racial Formation".

²⁴Roediger, "Wages of Whiteness".

²⁵Brodkin, "How Jews"; Garner, "Whiteness"; Ignatiev, "How the Irish".

²⁶Frankenberg, "White Women," 1.

²⁷Sasson-Levy and Shoshana, "Hishtaknezut".

²⁸Sharon, "Physical Planning," 4.

towards the existing conurbations, so that large stretches of the country will be left void of population and human enterprise'. ²⁹

This is highlighted in Sharon's lecture regarding Israel's Pavilion at EXPO 1967, Montreal, where he explains that Israel's narrative

had to cover the land and the people of Israel – from antiquity to modern times, encompassing both the biblical past and the pioneering present, the grim fate of the people in exile, the redemption of the neglected land ... The manner in which Israel developed from a swampy and desert-like land ... and the integration of many Jewish tribes ... into one cultural and economic entity.³⁰

However, it is also possible to find a critical narrative, as in the Israeli Project Exhibition's catalogue, which argues that the Israeli towns and dwellings of the 1950s 'sanctified innovation for its own sake'; were 'allegedly "featureless" and 'indifferent to the "place's spirit", while 'assuming the land was empty and free of signs and traces'; and 'joined a quick project of mass expulsion and absorption, of unprecedented destruction and development'.³¹

The above 'making the desert bloom' motif shows that PDP 'blooms' Israel's desolated regions. The justifying message reduces the aggressiveness in creating Israel's frontier through the dispersion. Gaining control over an empty land is dissimilar to taking over a bustling country. The designated residents will only benefit from the dispersion. It will distinguish them from their 'backwardness', and include them with other 'white'-Ashkenazi Jews into the normal Israeli settler-pioneer group. Therefore, it will purify their 'primitive' history with a modern mission, and 'naturally' elevate them up the social hierarchy as part of their 'whitening'.

PDP and the people dimension

The 'Nation's Architect' Exhibition catalogue explains Arieh Sharon's architectural and planning perspectives: 'Sharon believed that architecture should lead society, to take a few steps ahead of it, and promote it to the right extent'.³² Furthermore, 'Sharon had a philosophy of action and execution, not for the sake of self-glorification but as a means of understanding and advancing the world'.³³ And on page 241: 'The disregard for particular identities ... of the people for whom he [Sharon] planned is typical of the modernist worldview prevalent in Bauhaus'.

In different texts, this motif justifies the PDP through comparisons of Israel's planning and housing to those of Europe. The masterplan highlights that 'in small Central and West European countries, which are economically, physically and sociologically similar to Israel, the urban population is well balanced and distributed, and a large proportion of them (55%–75%) can be found in medium-sized and small towns'. Additionally, in Sharon's article, 'The Planning of Israel: Blueprint for New Israel, National Master Plan', published at the special issue 'Preview of Progress: 1952–1957' (Figure 2): 1952–1952 (Figure 2): 1952–1952

The basic premise adopted in planning the distribution of the population is that Israel will develop along the lines of intensive rural and urban settlement characteristic of some of the smaller progressive

²⁹lbid, 5.

³⁰Sharon, "Israeli Pavilion – Expo 67 – Montreal,"1.

³¹Efrat, "Israeli Project," 25.

³²Neuman, "Nation's Architect," 13.

³³lbid., 16.

³⁴Sharon, "Physical Planning," 4.

³⁵Sharon, "Planning of Israel," 1.

nations of the West, e.g. Switzerland, Holland and Denmark, which show similarities with Israel in area, limited natural resources and aspirations to a high standard of civilised living.

In the 'Building the Land' Exhibition's catalogue, this comparison is significant. Tuvia and Boneh mention that 'the housing blocks built in Israel during the 1950s' stand in line with the best European housing blocks'. 36 And in a reprinted article from 1959 by Arthur Glickson, who is proud that 'during ten years we have made a crucial progress towards normalization in the urban settlement's distribution', and mentions the aspiration is to 'create an urban environment of moderate European standard', although he recognizes Israel had the means of 'backward countries'.37

The modernist progress motif reveals how the racialization of inhabitants assembled around sociological signifiers, e.g. modernity, replaces phenotypes.³⁸ The motif is constructed by descriptions that present an imagined harmonious society that embodies the best of the planning innovations of European progress, although it is located in the Middle-East and situated in a violent

THE PLANNING OF ISRAEL

BLUEPRINT FOR NEW ISRAEL . NATIONAL MASTER PLAN

BY ARIEH SHARON, Architect DIRECTOR, PLANNING DIVISION GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL

One of the principal objectives of the Plan is to promote harmonious growth and a balanced spread of the population in various parts of the country in accordance with local resources, climatic and physical conditions and economic factors. The basic premise adopted in planning the distribution of the population is that Israel will develop along the lines of intensive rural and urban settlement characteristic of some of the smaller progressive nations of the West, e g. Switzerland, Holland and Denmark, which show similarities with Israel in area, limited natural resources and aspirations to a high standard of civilised living. An indispensable condition for the achievement of this goal is the intensive development of all regions of the country and a properly balanced occupational division of the population as between agriculture, producing primary commodities, and the cities, providing the necessary services and essential industries.

Figure 2. 'The Planning of Israel: Blueprint for New Israel, National Master Plan', published at the special issue 'Preview of Progress: 1952-1957', page 1. Arieh Sharon's collection of Azrieli Architectural Archive, Tel Aviv Museum of Art.

³⁶Tuvia and Boneh, "Building the Land," 15.

³⁷lbid., 54.

³⁸Balibar, "New Racism".

geopolitical reality. This reality is beautified by factual 'objective' discourse and repetitive nonchalant comparisons of Israel with European states ('Europeanization'). Modernity is associated spatially with Europe, as a 'racial homeland' of the population with 'white' skin colour.³⁹ Thus, modernity is naturalized as 'white', and 'European' is conflated with 'whiteness' as well as progress. Drawing on Bonnett, 40 I argue that PDP, as a modernist planning policy, carries on this conflation in the Israeli case, while this motif blurs the injustice of imposing it on Mizrahim and idealizes it.

PDP and the time dimension

An indication of the importance of the Time dimension in the masterplan can be seen in an earlier lecture by Sharon (Figure 3),41 'The housing block and the housing architecturally (the past analysis and a lesson for the future)', where he describes that the architect's role is to bring for a 'mutual balance' between building areas, create an 'organic ratio' between buildings, and added by his own handwriting: 'additional role: to go ahead of time'. Sharon also mentions that the architect has to plan a 'healthy, rational and logical plan', which has to be pleasant, and then he adds again by his handwriting: 'and maybe that is not enough. An architect should go ahead of time'.

In Sharon's 'Kibbutz + Bauhaus', ⁴² he used references to time while presenting the explanations of posters that were shown in the 1950 Planning Exhibition of the Tel-Aviv Museum. In one poster, there is a photo of a clock pasted on Israel's map, and the explanation is: '1,000 immigrants arrive each day - one dwelling unit has to be erected every two minutes. Should the new houses be built in the existing, already densely populated cities - or should housing and development be directed into new towns?' (Figure 4). And in another: 'Thousands of new immigrants had to be accommodated at first in tents. As soon as possible they were moved to permanent homes' (Figure 5).

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למעשה תפקידו של הארכיסקס והארכיסקסורה הם שונים מן הנ"ל. הארכיסקסורה
    הבריאה והאורגנית צריכה ליצור מסגרת בנינית נכונה והגיונית לחיי חברה בכל
     השטחים. לחיי הפרט ומשפחתו. בתא הדירתי שלו בביתו (HoME) לחיי הילד בבית
חבוכר. לחיי צבור בבניניו הצבוריים, בבתי חברה שלו. ועיקר תפקידו של הארכישקש
   להביא לשווי משקל הדדי את כל שטחי הבניה הנ"ל, ליצור יחס אורגני בין בניני
  פרט, בניני חנוך, בניני חברה, בניני ססחר ותעשיה שמתבסא בבנין ערים אורגני.
   ענין של צורה הוא רק הופעת לווי ותוצאה מפתרון נכון, מתכנית נכובה,
למהלך מחשבה הגיוני, הקשורים מובן גם עם כשרון אינטואיסיבי-אסטטי של הארכיסקם
       אבל עיקר כשרונו ותפקלדו של הארכיקקט הוא עיוני, ארגוני, תכונתי. עליו
   להקיף את הבעיה ההברותית, לעיין ולחקור את כל פרטי אבעית הבנינים הגדונה,
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Figure 3. 'The housing block and the housing architecturally (the past analysis and a lesson for the future)' – Sharon's handwriting in red, page 1. Arieh Sharon's collection of Azrieli Architectural Archive, Tel Aviv Museum of Art.

³⁹Bonnett, "White Identities," 46–77.

⁴¹Sharon, "The Housing Block".

⁴²Sharon, "Kibbutz + Bauhaus," 82.



Figure 4. A poster from the 1950 Planning Exhibition of Tel-Aviv Museum. Arieh Sharon's collection of Azrieli Architectural Archive, Tel Aviv Museum of Art.

This emergency logic is described throughout the texts in various approaches. In Tuvia and Boneh's catalogue, Giora Rosen⁴³ maintains that 'in the conditions of those times, these housing blocks and towns were the exhaustion of the possible. In circumstances of "no choice", what

⁴³Tuvia and Boneh, "Building the Land," 5.

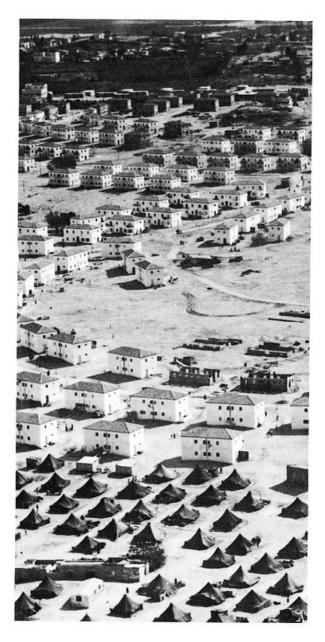


Figure 5. A poster from the 1950 Planning Exhibition of Tel-Aviv Museum. Arieh Sharon's collection of Azrieli Architectural Archive, Tel Aviv Museum of Art.

was proposed and executed was the possible good and not the lesser evil'. Galia Bar-Or⁴⁴ insists that the construction project 'dealt with the immediate necessity to provide housing' beautifully as a 'miracle', while the planners recognized 'the price of urgency'. Tuvia and Boneh that

⁴⁴Ibid., 7. ⁴⁵Ibid., 15.

Today it seems that the existential problems of the state in its early years did not leave room and time for many different solutions without harming the main task of providing shelter to the masses of new and veteran immigrants in a short time.

Moreover, Ronit Davidovich-Marton⁴⁶ explains that 'development towns in Israel were established as a forced solution, as a response to a "state of emergency".

However, in Efrat's catalogue, 47 he reveals that three fundamental features activate the 'Israeli project' and were developed into 'ideological state mechanisms': immediacy, marginality and borderline (bordering). For this case analysis, the exploration of 'immediacy' enables to better expose the significance of the temporal dimension in Israel's planning and development. Efrat depicts 'immediacy' not 'only as a devious default in light of extreme emergency conditions, but also an indoctrinated pattern that produces a pioneering ethos'. It is a 'brief explanation' of the Israeli project's success, but also a 'mark of shame' and 'the essence of hubris and violence of state blitzarchitecture'.

This urgency motif presents housing construction as an efficient process that cannot be delayed or an efficient project that can be achieved without proper preparation. This haste provides legitimization in retrospect for 'unavoidable mistakes' that happened during the construction, namely the dispersion of mostly Mizrahim in isolated low-quality housing blocks and New Towns, without the chance to own a house and without proper socio-economic infrastructure and services. 48 In a sense, this motif abstracts the spatial-political reality, highlights the top priority of finding shelter to the new immigrants, and manipulates historical accounts to align with the display of time as a limited resource.

As part of a 'white'-modernist time construction, this 'fast-forward' motif serves to erase the history of the Mizrahim even during the PDP's implementation. The emergency is normalized as the modern development model, thus the rapid housing construction, the 'no choice' and urgency logic, justify the dispersion of Mizrahim and support their racialization as 'advanced' 'white'-Israelis. This novel investigation of the urgency motif also provides, I suggest, adequate critical scholarly attention to Sharon Plan's Time Dimension, which has been analyzed insufficiently until now.

Discussion: racialized historiography of Mizrahi jews

In this article, I have examined the dispersion of Mizrahim as represented in the three-dimensional language of the Sharon Plan (Land, People, Time) and its subsequent planning historiography. I analyzed how it is discursively justified by three main motifs (respectively): the 'making the desert bloom' motif, the modernistic progress motif, and the motif of urgency. I argued that this justification serves as another fundamental tool to encourage the racialization of Mizrahim not only spatially but also discursively, using Israel's national historiography.

This study is a novel attempt to link population dispersion, as a planning policy, to the constructed category of 'whiteness', that empowers a critical discourse analysis of the historiographic erasure of Mizrahi inferior position within the Israeli social hierarchy. The usage of 'whiteness' assists in decoding ethnicity embedded in modernist racialization processes, thus exposing historiography as a racializing discourse that justifies the de-Arabization of Mizrahim via dispersion and

⁴⁶lbid., 146.

⁴⁷Efrat, "Israeli Project," 28–29.

⁴⁸Tzfadia and Yacobi, "Rethinking Israeli Space," 11–12.

politically manipulates Israelis to perceive Mizrahi structural inferiority as natural. Through the exploration of the modernistic 'whitening' process, it is possible to showcase the interchangeable temporal meanings within the motifs of this discourse. A racialized observation of a location as 'deserted' leads it to be 'discovered' as 'new'; and additionally, the temporal annihilative character structured within the modernist progress might make locations appear as 'empty' of human history and culture.

Focusing on the PDP allows for a better understanding of the diverse and complex voices in the analyzed exhibitions. On one hand, it uncovers that planning history is a blueprint that the present cannot sweep away. On the other hand, it underscores how much the present planning historiographical discourse constitutes the meanings of the past. This coincides with Hall's⁴⁹ notion of identity as a 'production', which is not already fixated, but constituted within present representations. A notion that, in turn, assists in better comprehending the racialization of Mizrahim through historiographic representations.

In upcoming research, there is still a need to discuss the role of planning and architectural exhibitions in constructing planning history, while further work should also call into question the links between national historiographies, 'racialized time'.50 and 'white time'.51

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⁴⁹Hall, "Cultural Identity", 257.

⁵⁰Jamal, "Tribulations of Racialised Time".

⁵¹Mills, "White Time".



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