

**Living in a Mixing Neighborhood:  
Reflexive Coexistence and the Discourse of Separation**

by

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## **DEDICATION**

In memory of Juliano Mer-Khamis (1958–2011), an inspiration that knows no bounds.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I love Anthropology. But loving anthropology is not enough for guaranteeing that one will be able to show their love in the form of a completed research project. It always takes more than that. It is thanks to many people who are mentioned here, and many more that I cannot mention here by name, that I am able to present this dissertation.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Between Mount Carmel and the Mediterranean Sea lies a city that has been called “the mother of strangers” and “a mixed city.” It is also known as “a city of coexistence,” in contrast to the wider social context of ethno-national separation in Israel. The residents of Haifa, however, live mostly in separate, homogenous neighborhoods. Only a minority of its inhabitants live in a heterogeneous social setting among members of other ethno-national groups. Hadar, one of Haifa’s most diverse neighborhoods, is where I conducted four years of ethnographic research for this dissertation.

Surrounded by Hadar's residents, who endeavor to make sense of living with their Other(s), I studied the various practices they use to bridge the gap between their experience of living in a mixing social environment and the deepening discourse of separation in Israel. My main finding is that being subjected to these contradictory social forces induces practices of reflexivity that open a variety of paths to bridge this gap: from working to eliminate social diversity, to legitimizing acceptance of the gap and its virtues, and to imagining an alternative discourse.

The dissertation introduces the concept of “Reflexive Coexistence” to academic and public discussions of mixed cities. This concept is developed by presenting and analyzing the different forms it may take: in practices of representing past experiences of coexistence, in everyday interactions between Hadar's residents, who have diverse senses of belonging to their neighborhood, and in residents’ future-oriented political activism and artistic projects.

Particularly in light of deepening practices of separation between Jews and Arabs in Israel, learning from the social dynamics of mixing social settings can offer public and academic discussions new, counter-hegemonic ideas for a more hopeful future.

## INTRODUCTION

### Haifa's Paradox: Between Discourse of Separation and Reflexive Coexistence

#### *Seven Seconds on Coexistence*

This research analyzes contemporary meanings of living with the Other in a neighborhood of Haifa, the third largest city in Israel, known for its coexistence between Jews and Arabs.<sup>1</sup> Haifa's image of coexistence is presented for seven seconds as "fact number 59" in a video clip titled "68 Facts You Probably Didn't Know About Israel," which was released on Facebook and YouTube for Israel's 68<sup>th</sup> Independence Day in May 2016.<sup>2</sup> Produced for the State of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the clip enthusiastically shows selective information regarding Israel's geography and demography, as well as Israel's scientific, industrial and culinary achievements. Within one day the English version of the clip was widely shared and received about a third of a million views. According to fact number 59 in the clip, Haifa's coexistence cannot be unnoticed. To emphasize its visible dimension, the clip shows seven characters who appear on screen one after the other, and whose appearance is marked as different by their dress and skin color, with the voiceover and subtitles naming their different religious sects (Image 1).

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<sup>1</sup> According to Haifa Municipality data, in 2015 the city had 270,000 residents, it controlled 17,050 acres of land (69,000 dunam), and ran an annual budget of 663 Million USD (2.5 Billion NIS) (see: [www.haifa.muni.il](http://www.haifa.muni.il); accessed: September 18<sup>th</sup> 2016).

<sup>2</sup> [www.youtube.com/watch?v=i3wmT2wH690](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i3wmT2wH690) (Director: Roy Krispel); published: May 9<sup>th</sup> 2016, accessed: May 10<sup>th</sup> 2016.

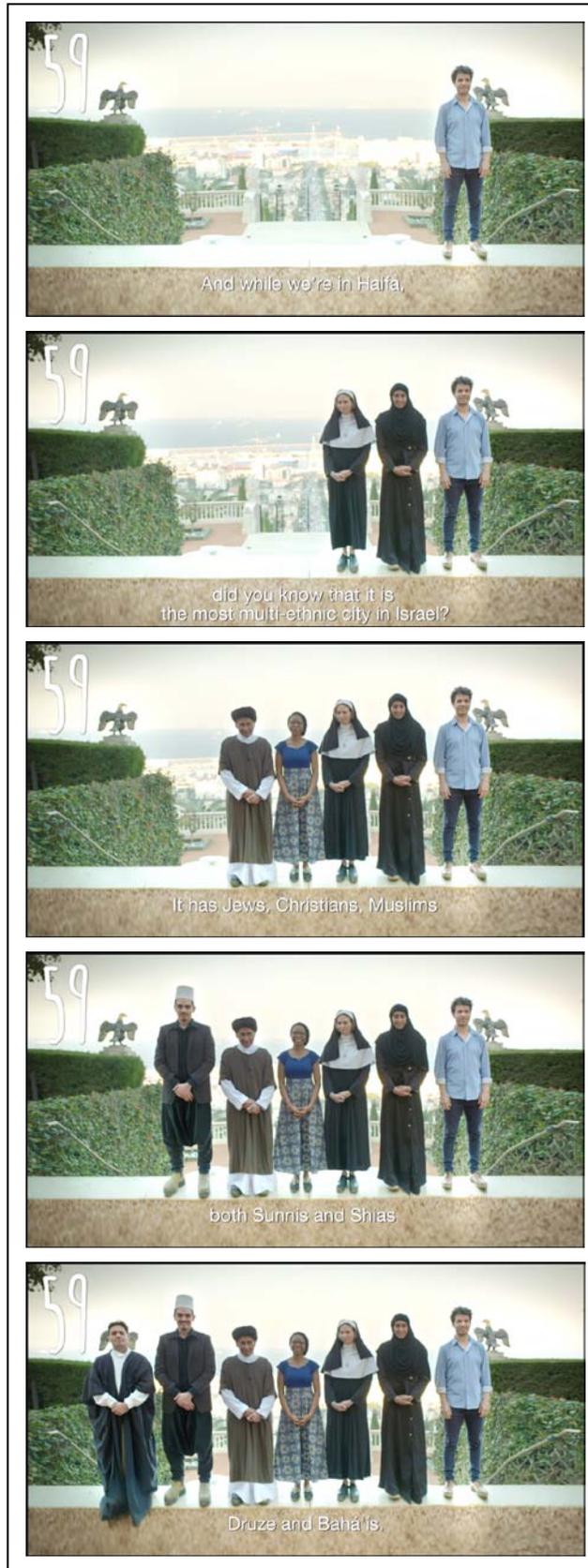


Image 1: Fact Number 59, screenshots from “68 Facts You Probably Didn't Know About Israel” (Director: Roy Krispel)

The appearance of people from different religious sects sharing the same space, is highlighted in the clip as unique in Israel, and is based on an implicit presumption that the identities of these characters are marked as significantly different and that elsewhere in Israel they do not commonly share the same space. However, while their co-existence is celebrated in the clip's text, its visual dimension reveals a layer of separation between them: they are separated temporally – with the person marked as Jewish appearing first, as the person who was always there, followed by all the rest – and all the characters are presented facing the viewers, with no signs of interaction between them. In the contemporary political environment in Israel, this coexistence of contradictory meanings reveals the paradoxical image of Haifa's Arab–Jewish coexistence.

Three years earlier, on February 2013, and prior to President Barack Obama's visit to Israel, Yona Yahav, Mayor of Haifa, invited the President to visit the city. In a letter dispatched to the White House, Yahav explained his decision's rationale for the invitation by noting “Haifa is a shining example of coexistence for the rest of the world to follow due to its coexistence in practice between Jews, Arabs, Muslims, Christians, Druze and Bahá'ís” (Municipality of Haifa 2013; my translation). The mayor explained that Haifa was the third largest city in Israel; a city with an ongoing tradition of peace, good neighborly relations and coexistence of all congregations and religions; a mixed town, where Jews and Arabs lived in harmony; a place whose residents had formed a solid foundation of tolerance, mutual responsibility and common purpose (ibid.). By saying these words, Yahav reproduced the stereotypical description of Haifa, expressed in many of the city's official

releases and tourist projects, portraying a firm image of a city with a long, ongoing tradition of tolerance and coexistence among its Jewish and Arab residents.<sup>3</sup>

Yahav's words, as well as the video clip, show an image of coexistence that is considered unique in Israel, a state that has had majority-minority relations between Jews and Arabs from its very establishment, maintaining them by practices of discrimination and segregation (official or otherwise).<sup>4</sup> Such relations are legitimized by what I call *discourse of separation*, which distinguishes between social groups based on cultural-spatial criteria, and regards this distinction as fixed and stable.

Haifa's image as a city of coexistence became all the more exceptional in the first decades of the 2000s. As I will argue in Part 1, the reason this image could be celebrated despite this apparent paradox is that there is no essential contradiction between Haifa's image as a city of coexistence and the discourse of separation within which it operates. As Salman Natour, the late Palestinian author, who spent much of his life in the city, argued, although the attitude to Arabs in Haifa is better than in any other city in Israel, Haifa's coexistence "is an empty slogan."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The main touristic attraction promoted by the municipality under the "coexistence" title is the "Holiday of Holidays" festival, which has taken place every December since 1994 in the predominantly Arab-Christian neighborhood to mark the Christian, Muslim and Jewish holidays (see Chapter 1). For a critical analysis of the festival, see: Peled Bartal (2001) and Rosen (2011).

<sup>4</sup> See, for example: Abu-Asbah (2013), Bäuml (2006, 2010), Ghanem (2001), Lustick (1980), Peled (1992), Rabinowitz and Abu Baker (2005), Robinson (2013), Saban (2002), Smootha (2004, 2010), Yacobi and Cohen (2007) and Yiftachel (2006).

<sup>5</sup> *Colbo*, November 9<sup>th</sup> 2012, p. 32.

While most of Haifa's residents live in separate, homogenous neighborhoods, a minority of them lives in an ethno-national heterogeneous surrounding. Hadar, one of Haifa's most diverse neighborhoods, is where I conducted my 4 year ethnographic research, and will be the focus of the remainder of this dissertation.



Image 2: Haifa's Hadar Neighborhood (map source: Google)

Part 2 of the dissertation examines everyday life in the neighborhood, and shows it has an agency over its residents, thus I define it as a *mixing neighborhood*. Part 3 examines the role of the discourse of separation within the mixing neighborhood, and argues that the incommensurability between the two calls for its ongoing interrogation, which I define as *reflexive coexistence*. My main finding is that being subjected to these contradictory social forces induces practices of reflexivity that open a variety of, and sometimes contradictory paths to bridge the gap between the discourse of separation and the experience of mixing: from working to eliminate the local social diversity, to imagining an alternative social discourse.

In the next two sections of this Introduction I will introduce the theoretical framework that was explored, shaped and refined simultaneously with the exploration, shaping and refining of my ethnography. The next section presents the concept of *discourse of separation*, and is followed by a section that presents the concepts of *mixing neighborhood* and *reflexive coexistence*. The Introduction ends with a section on Methodology, Ethics and Subjectivity, followed by a section presenting the organization of the dissertation.

### ***Discourse of Separation***

One of my main arguments in this research is that the idea and practice of coexistence is dependent on and reproduces the discourse of separation. Discourse is a contested term in modern humanities and social sciences, generating epistemological debates regarding the kind of relations – causal, dialectic, detached or interfused – between

perceptions, thoughts, meanings, actions and representations. Further discussions focus on the totality of discourses and their source(s) of meaning: human subjects and/or social institutions. The more prominent theories of discourse range from the structural-formalist perspective inspired by Ferdinand de Saussure, through the post-structuralist approach in Roland Barthes's later work and the psychoanalysis inspired by Jacques Lacan, to deconstructivism that was initiated by Jacques Derrida (Laclau 2007).

Searching for discourses' "rule of formation," Michel Foucault introduced in his *Archaeology of Knowledge* (2002[1969]) an inquiry into what constitutes unities, coherences and heterogeneities within them. Foucault regarded knowledge as deeply rooted in power relations, thus argued that language embodied régimes of thought (1980), and grounded his analytical oeuvre on the premise that discourse and practice are inseparable (2002[1969]:49–51). In linguistic anthropology this approach is reflected in Charles Briggs's (1996) notion that language and discourse are a form of social action, that discourse is practice. Building on Foucault's approach, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (2001:107) argue that "every object is constituted as an object of discourse, insofar as no object is given outside every discursive condition of emergence." They reject the classical dichotomy between the objective field constituted outside of any discursive intervention, and a discourse consisting on the pure expression of thought (ibid:108). Against the *mental* character of discourse, they affirm the *material* character of every discursive structure (ibid:108). While Laclau and Moeffe (ibid:110) argue that social relations are discursively constructed, Judith Butler (1988) argues that social structures don't have such coercive powers in imbuing the individual agents with a set of dispositions. Distinguishing between discourse and practice, she argues that the dialectic between them and between structure

and agency allows transgressive performative acts, including speech-acts to emerge and transform the social structures, which are always vulnerable to such subversions.

For the purpose of my analytic argumentation in this research I follow the common thread in Foucault, Briggs, Laclau & Mouffe, and Butler's approaches and regard discourse as knowledge and categories of thought which constitute and are constituted by bodily and institutional practices, norms and ways of assessing truths about the world. Embedded in the everyday life of social agents and institutions, *Discourse of separation*, therefore, is a knowledge regime of dividing populations into distinct social categories and of legitimizing their separation from each other. Throughout the dissertation I will examine both the working of the discourse of separation as well as the possibilities for the emergence of subversive discourses.

While marking differences between social groups is an expression of modernity's perfection of a previous ethos of division and separation (see Bauman 1991; Douglas 1984[1966]), it does not necessarily include moral-hierarchical perceptions.<sup>6</sup> When hierarchy enters the discourse of separation, the discourse is reconfigured as Orientalism (Said 2003[1978]), which builds on the pattern of Othering and legitimizes power relations between the separated parties, as exemplified in the history of colonialism.

The more recent phases of such hierarchical attributes within the discourse of separation are reflected in what Étienne Balibar (1991, 2002:71) calls *New Racism*, defined by him as a phenomenon *internal* to the current history of nationalisms (alongside the older, biological racism). These recent discourses take advantage of multicultural

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<sup>6</sup> Based on her ethnographic work among a tiny-scale South Indian forager group, anthropologist Nurit Bird-David (2017) highlights the kinship-based notions of "being many," of pluripresence and plurirelating beings (including nonhumans), and of diversity as alternative notions to modernity's idea of "the nation."

assumptions regarding differences between different cultural communities, which bear the right to practice and preserve their cultures according to how they see fit.<sup>7</sup> Differences in worldviews and traditions are used for racial practices of neoliberal separation between citizen-subjects (Ong 2003), and for various technologies of exclusion (Partridge 2012). However, as the postcolonial literature shows, when separation is the dominant discourse, various forms of boundary crossing, of transgression, and of problematizing the practice of separation emerge as unintended consequences (see Bhabha 1984, 1990, 1998).

Throughout the next chapter (Chapter 1) I will show how the discourse of separation is deeply implanted in the region's cultural history over the last century. It is infused in the everyday life of various agents: among ordinary people in the region, decision-makers and researchers. In academic research, it is manifested, for example, in *methodological nationalism*, a prevalent approach in social sciences and the humanities that assumes "national societies as the natural unit of analysis" (Wimmer and Glick-Schiller 2002:327). In studying the local Israel/Palestine context, this approach is implemented, for example, in the *dual society* model, which analyzes Jews and Arabs as separate national communities. In his criticism of the dual society model in historiography, historian Zachary Lockman (1996) argues that it portrays Jewish and Palestinian societies as primordial, self-contained and monolithic, thereby ignoring how they shape one another and are constituted through their mutual relations.<sup>8</sup> According to anthropologist Daniel Monterescu (2015:37), methodological nationalism conflates space and ethno-national groups, overlooks social practice, reduces social actors to predetermined ethno-national roles, downplays cross-communal coalitions and mixed sociality, and "essentializes cities

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<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Hall (2007).

<sup>8</sup> See also Gribetz (2014).

as metonymic cultural representations of the nation, thus dismissing the internal complexity and potential change of urban imaginaries.”

In the next chapter I will present a genealogy of discourse of separation, indicating several elements that shaped the discourse, highlighting its relations to notions of coexistence, and focusing on how knowledge about separation in modern Palestine/Israel was constructed and reconstructed. Following Laclau and Mouffe (2001:109), who argue that discourses have no unity and that “diverse *subject positions* appear dispersed within a discursive formation,” the next section will show the variation within the discourse of separation: from Empires through Nation States, to the Israeli case and the city of Haifa, with an emphasis on the neighborhood of Hadar, where most of my fieldwork was conducted.

While the next chapter will show the impact of the discourse of separation in constructing social separations, the subsequent chapters of the dissertation will reveal cracks of incommensurability between the hegemonic discourse of separation and local social relations in the mixing neighborhood. According to Foucault (1980:80–81), an insurrection of subjugated knowledge can emerge locally, in semi-autonomous places and events where the established régimes of thoughts become vulnerable. The mixing neighborhood could be the place where such incommensurability between the discourse of separation and the social interaction is noticed. As I discuss in the next section, what emerges from this incommensurability in the mixing neighborhood is social practices of reflexive coexistence.

### ***Reflexive Coexistence in a Mixing Neighborhood***

In his 2011 lecture at the Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI), anthropologist Johannes Fabian noted that according to his observation, in the past two decades anthropology had become more interested in “what we know about how they know what they know.” Without intentionally aiming at that epistemic endeavor, my ethnographic fieldwork in Haifa’s Hadar neighborhood emerged as a project in that direction, trying to understand how people who live coexistence reflect on their experiences. This research direction emerged as I noticed the various ways people of Hadar struggle to make sense of the incommensurability between the hegemonic discourse of separation and their social experiences in the neighborhood. As an Arab–Jewish neighborhood, and particularly in its more heterogeneous areas, I found that social diversity has its own social agency over those who live it, maintain it, change it, or just visit it. Arriving at contemporary Hadar neighborhood, Jews and Arabs enter what Homi K. Bhabha calls a “third space” within which new subjectivities, new politics, and new identities emerge and are being articulated (Rutherford 1990).

In his essay, “The End of Westernization is Mixing,” Itamar Taharlev (2013) discusses “mixing” as a revolutionary political strategy that expresses an intentional removal of existing identities and an openness to cultural queerness, constantly wearing new identities.<sup>9</sup> For him, such a practice can negate the separatist notion perpetuated by the concepts of “coexistence” and “shared space.” However, as I will show in the next

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<sup>9</sup> The essay was published in the December 2013 issue of *Erev Rav*, a magazine of arts and culture critique, which was dedicated that month to Haifa’s cultural scene and was published bilingually (in Hebrew and Arabic).

chapters, what I found in Hadar is different: instead of mixing as a political strategy, I found mixing to be a neighborhood sociality. Willingly or otherwise, people in Hadar are being subjected to a social practice of mixing.

I therefore propose here to define Hadar as a *mixing* neighborhood. As opposed to the widespread concept of *mixed* neighborhood, which highlights a pre-given and fixed condition, the concept of *mixing* neighborhood reflects the ongoing and active process of the neighborhood's sociality. In regarding the neighborhood as an active non-human agent I follow the anthropological insights concerning distribution of agency, such as Bruno Latour's conceptualization of Actor–Network Theory (2005). Under that approach, social agency can be attributed for example to art over its viewers (Gell 1998), as well as to people's surroundings and material devices (Navaro–Yashin 2012; Strathern 1999).<sup>10</sup> In the case of the mixing neighborhood, its agency is radiated from the humans that embody its marked diversity as well as from their surrounding and the material world they produce: from sidewalks, to street art and soundscapes to rooftops. In various ways and degrees, all participate in changing how people realize their subjectivity and sense of belonging vis-à-vis their Other(s).<sup>11</sup>

One of my main findings in the dissertation is that living in a mixing neighborhood under the hegemonic discourse of separation creates an incommensurability that prompts

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<sup>10</sup> See Blaser (2013) for contemporary discussion on posthumanism, in what became to be known as the *ontological turn* in anthropology, which further dissolves the Cartesian distinctions between subjects and objects, society and nature, human and non-human, and marks the predicament of the Anthropocene.

<sup>11</sup> I follow here Navaro–Yashin's (2012:163) criticism on Latour's perception of horizontal network of assemblages between human and non-human entities, which assume symmetry between different modes of agency.

social practices of reflexivity as a mechanism for confronting it, thereby creating what I call *Reflexive Coexistence*.

As anthropologist Amalia Sa'ar (2007) shows, social reflexivity is practiced in Jaffa, too. Meetings of residents of different ethno-national and class backgrounds, in an urban-social setting which is relatively autonomous of the state and its ethno-national agenda, necessitated discussing neighborhood life, with particular focus on the encounter between Arabs and Jews (ibid:269). As Sa'ar notes (ibid:ibid), "When the discussion seemed to be politically neutral, the moderators would usually bring politics back in, through reflecting the group dynamic and linking it to the Arab-Jewish setting."

The Haifa and Jaffa cases invite a discussion on the social circumstances that induce reflexivity as well as on how reflexivity plays out. According to anthropologist Webb Keane (2016:133): "Interaction works most smoothly when people are more or less unself-conscious about the patterns, habits, and expectations it involves." Therefore, when patterns and habits are different than what people are familiar with, they become more conscious and more reflexive regarding the social interactions they are involved in. As if referring to a mixing neighborhood under the discourse of separation, Keane (ibid:183) writes that "sometimes people are brought to awareness of some contradiction between competing values within a single social world. Sometimes the change arises because coexisting values come to be juxtaposed in new ways, making their incongruities apparent."

According to Anthony Giddens (1991), in modernity reflexivity becomes the naturalized response in such circumstances, thus it can be intentional or unintentional (see Keane 2014). However, while Giddens highlights reflexivity as a project of the self (ibid:32),

who becomes accustomed to asking, “how can I use this moment to change?” (ibid:76), and while Bourdieu (1992) regards reflexivity as a systematic reflection on the unconscious presuppositions of our knowledge, my concern here is with the more collective practices of reflexivity.<sup>12</sup>

Bryant Alexander (2011:105) notes that the anthropologist’s own reflexive work can set an example for others and have an empowering and transformative force. However, my own experience was different. As I will show, in several interactions throughout my fieldwork I was surprised to be asked by participants to share my reflections on an interaction that just occurred. I soon realized that to ignore the extent to which reflexivity is present in the practice of everyday life would be to ignore an elementary component of the phenomenon I wished to study.

The kind of reflexivity I found dominant in the mixing neighborhood is similar to what Scott Lash (Beck, Giddens and Lash 1994:115) defines as *structural* reflexivity “in which agency, set free from the constraints of social structure, then reflects on the ‘rules’ and ‘resources’ of such structure; reflects on agency’s social conditions of existence.” Contrary to the *self* reflexivity, which is mostly perceived as a practice of self-monitoring, *structural* reflexivity, according to Ulrich Beck, relates to efforts of individuals and groups to change the social conditions of their existence (see Beck, Giddens and Lash 1994:32, 174). As my ethnographic data shows, people in the mixing neighborhood are constantly

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<sup>12</sup> Contrary to Giddens, for Bourdieu, as Loïc Wacquant argues, reflexivity’s concern is not primarily for the individual, but for “the *social and intellectual unconscious* embedded in analytic tools and operations” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:36; author’s emphasis). Much like Bourdieu’s reflexivity, which turns toward scientific practice, reflexivity within anthropology is still mostly attributed to researchers sharing with their readers their own physical and political predispositions and presuppositions toward the research topic. Such practice of reflexivity is regarded as one of the responses to the crisis of representation that shook anthropology in the 1980s. See, for example, Alexander (2011) and Clifford (1988).

engaged in political self-awareness (Alexander 2011:105), the discursive practices of which are analyzed in Part 3 of the dissertation.

Since structural reflexivity can refer to a wide range of meanings, let me highlight those I find most relevant to the analysis of my ethnography. The concept of structural reflexivity gained accelerated use in the social sciences since the 1980s as an attempt to both describe and confront noticeable socio-economic and cultural changes in Western modernization, which were both characterized and generated by the rise of knowledge in the post-industrial society. While most scholars refer to structural reflexivity as an interrogation of social forms, which can produce an active critique, other scholars focus on different theoretical, analytical, or political characteristic of the reflexive practice.

Beck (Beck, Giddens and Lash 1994:6), highlighting the rise of different and contradictory global and personal risks in the post-industrial society, argues that reflexivity in this context means “self-confrontation with the effects of risk society that cannot be dealt with and assimilated in the system of industrial society.” According to him (ibid:16), under the risk society, individuals are put into dilemmas, and forced to reflect and make decisions, including undecidable decisions. “The individualized individuals, the thinkerers with themselves and their world,” Beck argues (ibid:16), “are no longer the ‘role players’ of simple, classical industrial society, as assumed by functionalism. Individuals are constructed through a complex discursive interplay which is much more open-ended than the functionalist role model would assume.” This, according to him (ibid:17), leads to “a non-institutional renaissance of the political,” forming sub-politics, in which society is shaped from below (ibid:22–23).

What prompts structural reflexivity in Hadar is the question of how to make the hegemonic discourse of separation in Israel and the social interactions in the mixing neighborhood commensurate again. However, assuming that reflexivity means de-naturalization of experiences and their consequences, and not accepting things the way they are, does not necessarily mean a determinist outcome for the practice of reflexivity. The assumption that more self awareness and self criticism is an empowering and emancipatory project that leads to a better world is routinely challenged by the routinization of reflexivity as a social mechanism of positivism and conservatism. As my ethnography shows, when practiced by those with privilege, it can serve as just another available tool for maintaining existing power relations.<sup>13</sup> Ultimately, reflexivity can lead to a variety of paths to confront the incommensurability between the hegemonic discourse of separation and the experience of living in a mixing neighborhood: from working to eliminate the social mixing and restore the separation, to imagining an alternative discourse.

### ***Methodology, Ethics and Subjectivity***

#### ***(Or: How I Know What I Know About How They Know What They Know<sup>14</sup>)***

Whenever I was asked the classic question in the hallways of the anthropology department “so, where do you conduct your fieldwork research,” I would reply “in the

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<sup>13</sup> I follow Beck's (Beck, Giddens and Lash 1994:177) ambivalent approach towards reflexivity of modernity, which “can lead to reflection on the self-dissolution and self-endangerment of industrial society, but it need not do so.” See also Keane (2014:7) on indeterminacy of ethical affordance.

<sup>14</sup> See: Fabian (2011).

neighborhood of Hadar in Haifa.” This, however, is a misleading answer. Although I lived in the neighborhood for more than 6 years while conducting research and writing, one can never conduct a holistic fieldwork in a neighborhood the size of Hadar, which is virtually the size of a city. Focusing only on one aspect of the neighborhood’s social life – on concepts and practices of coexistence – didn’t make it any easier.

When I first headed to Haifa for my anthropological fieldwork I wanted to follow Laura Nader’s (1972) call for anthropologists to “study up” in their own society – in my case: Israeli society – in order to better understand the workings of power and responsibility. However, ethnography of coexistence in a mixed city can take many forms. It can study “up” and focus on decision makers at the municipal-commercial level, who change the configuration of neighborhoods in order to engineer social interactions within and between groups of residents; or it can study “down” and focus on those who are being exploited and manipulated by the discourse and practice of coexistence under contemporary power relations. In Haifa, studying down would mean focusing on the predominantly Palestinian neighborhoods, where underdevelopment is the norm, and where coexistence is artificially celebrated in the annual festival. Research on coexistence can also study “sideways” and follow the people who live coexistence, who are being subjected to top-down policies while creatively inventing it with their own everyday practices at the same time.

Studying sideways was what I ended up doing during most of my fieldwork. Quite at the beginning I realized that studying sideways reveals the multi-sited-ness of

coexistence.<sup>15</sup> While much is taking place within the neighborhood, coexistence is not confined by the neighborhood's unmarked borders. Borrowing George Marcus's words (1995:105), following the "chains, paths, threads, conjunctions, or juxtapositions of locations" of coexistence led me to public and private spaces, to offline and online social interactions, and also to partly exit the here and now of the ethnographic present. Thinking about social relations as constitutive of what coexistence means I looked at the everyday life of living-with-the Other, as well as at the ways the history of coexistence is presented in the contemporary context, and at how contemporary experiences of living with the Other create imaginations for future social relations.

During my research, I gradually became friends with several individuals, both Jewish and Arab residents of the neighborhood. Some of them are the neighborhood's dominant figures, positioned in the mainstream of activities, while others are more on the margins. A few of them invited me, as a friend and ethnographer, to enter their homes in the neighborhood as well as to their family's homes outside the neighborhood or the city, and allowed me to learn about the less observed aspects of life in a mixed neighborhood.

Studying sideways in Haifa was quickly revealed to me also as studying people who are much like me, as the following interaction from spring 2011 shows:

*Meital is celebrating her birthday today and invited all her friends to celebrate with her in one of the local bars. She plays the guitar and sings a couple of her songs, then a local*

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<sup>15</sup> It is several decades that Anthropology is no longer considered to be restricted to the methodology of a participant observation conducted in a single-site location for the sake of learning a single culture. For elaborations on multi-sited fieldwork in Anthropology (regarding spatio-temporal aspects, types of data and ethical considerations), see, for example: Falzon (2009), Gupta and Ferguson (1997), Hannerz (2003) and Marcus (1986, 1995).

*DJ takes over and the party begins. Yael, one of Meital's friends, sits next to me and asks how I write about what I find here. She wants to know to what degree my own subjectivity guides the way I reach my conclusions. She talks about construction and de-construction. After both of us have a few drinks the conversation seems to make sense to both of us. Then, after a brief moment of silence, I ask her why she asked all these questions. "Because I'm also an anthropologist," she replies. "We're all anthropologists here."*

And indeed, as the next chapters will show, one of the things I realized at the beginning of my fieldwork was that most of the questions that interested me were not only a matter of my own intellectual-political concern, but were constantly being asked and debated by those who live in the neighborhood.

Among the neighborhood's fellow resident-anthropologists, amateurs and professionals (some of them with academic degrees in anthropology) I still had an advantage over most of them: I arrived there to write ethnography of the place. Like many of them, I was busy thinking about what coexistence means, but I was also there to document and analyze social interactions in the neighborhood, including those concerning others' reflections on the meaning of coexistence.

In my ethnography, I tried to use all my senses to gather and describe social interactions as thickly as I could. Even if the information is not directly analyzed here, I tried to include details that could provide a general sense of the experience of living in contemporary Hadar. The form and content of my ethnography developed during writing, and were influenced by my fieldwork, too. During my first year in Hadar I joined a three-month long class of caricature drawing at the local community center. Having this tendency

to clumsily sketch faces in my notebooks, I thought it was time to learn a few professional tools. It didn't take a minute to realize that "The Wisdom of the Face" class was, in fact, a class on how to write ethnography.

*"The first thing you need to do," the teacher told us after introducing himself, "is to get acquainted with the contours of the character you wish to portray. You need to find what is most visible in the character and put it at the center of your representation in drawing, trying to have it represent their overall personality." The teacher then explained that in caricature drawing one of the main ideas is stressing one bodily element that captures the character's personality, making it the dominant object in the drawing. I cannot escape from thinking about ethnography during his explanations. In ethnography we usually do it without necessarily being aware of it. In caricature drawing one needs to stress a specific trait by changing proportions. Isn't it inevitable in writing ethnography?*

*"One-fifth of the time should be devoted to observing the characters," the teacher keeps reminding us although it's already the fourth class, "and only then," he adds, "a composition should be thought of, and the drawing should be with the whole arm, from the shoulder, not only with the hand." I keep hearing him teaching me how to do ethnography, with my whole body, until he cuts my line of thought again: "The first lines should be very general, like a sketch. It shouldn't be precise." Each of us was asked to choose a figure to draw, someone that touches us, and I chose Nawal El Saadawi, the Egyptian feminist writer, activist and medical doctor, who during those days was taking an active part in the mass protests in Cairo's Tahrir Square. The teacher approaches to see how I'm doing and comments: "it's too scientific. The precision should come only later." I try to free up my hand.*

Trying to sketch people and events in this ethnography as precisely as I could, and with all the training, experience and awareness, my observations and descriptions cannot be fully objective or lacking distortions. My own background, the way I see and write, and how I'm being seen by others allow for certain kinds of interactions, descriptions and analysis, and limit others. I belong to the ruling ethnic minority in Israel/Palestine: the Ashkenazi-Jews, and I am easily recognized as such in the Israeli scene because of my light skin color and my Hebrew accent. Being a male in this category allowed me access to certain research venues, people and interactions, and blocked access to others. However, while the people I met throughout my research kept using ethno-national and gender categories as markers in their everyday interactions, these categories occasionally fail them, particularly in Hadar. As time went by and some of them got to know me better, they realized that I, too, do not fall neatly into the Ashkenazi-Jew rubric. The dialectics between these cultural categories and how people challenge them in their everyday social interactions came up quite often in my fieldwork. A key informant told me at the beginning of my research "Just don't divide us into Jews and Arabs... There are many other divisions: Zionists and non-Zionists, Feminists and non-feminists." This advice encouraged me to adopt a transactional approach, which, according to Mustafa Emirbayer (1997:289), "sees relations between terms or units as preeminently dynamic in nature, as unfolding, ongoing processes rather than as static ties among inert substances."

I kept this advice in mind during my fieldwork and writing years, trying to see beyond the banal categories. One of the mechanisms that allowed me to put aside some of

these categories was using pseudonyms for most of the people that are mentioned here.<sup>16</sup> This allowed me to vaguely sketch each character when first presented in the text, using only the identifications I saw as relevant for understanding the social situations, letting the characters be revealed through their interactions. The zooming-in into a person's subjectivities takes time, patience, and listening-based relationships that are also at the core of the anthropological endeavor. I try to convey here this gradual process of getting to know someone beyond the heavy burden of the categorical masks. Whenever new characters will appear, they are introduced according to how I first got to know them and how they were presented in the interactions.

Although some people in Hadar live there only temporarily, and not all the people with whom I interacted throughout my fieldwork still live there, I still needed to protect their privacy and minimize any potential harm or discomfort to them. This is what I promised them when I first introduced myself and asked for their permission to write about interactions they would otherwise prefer to keep private. This was also part of my research protocol to which I was obliged by the Institution Review Board (IRB) of my university. However, for political, historical and topographical-geographical reasons, I couldn't also disguise the name of the city and neighborhood where I was conducting this research. Although some features are similar to other neighborhoods in Israel, there are several singularities that would immediately identify Haifa's Hadar.

Besides national, ethnic, class and gender categories which play a significant role in the dynamics of social interactions, there is also one's worldviews, with the derived

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<sup>16</sup> I used real names only in cases where a particular individual was a recognized public figure who said or did something publicly.

political positions, which may influence interactions, too. Throughout my fieldwork I neither hid my worldview, nor did I let my political positions guide my interactions with people. In some cases it allowed me to gain more trust with people, while in other cases it may have blocked interactions. Since doing ethnography is a process of mutual learning, the sense of trust can be dynamic and can also change according to what is learned about the other. For example, I was slowly excluded from the meetings of one of the groups who worked in the neighborhood as they learned more about my critical position regarding the politics of their activities. At the same time, with another group, being openly critical put me in a position of being invited to share my criticism with the group and take a more active role in the group's activities.

Once in a while there were also suspicions about my intentions. Living in a dynamic urban neighborhood, where a common practice is of people moving in, staying for a number of years, then moving elsewhere, not many people know many intimate biographical details about their neighbors and neighborhood acquaintances. When a place is highly political, and when certain groups are more at risk of being targeted by state and municipal institutions, and when an anthropologist arrives and shows interest in what people do – the suspicion that the anthropologist is, in fact, an undercover agent of the state security services can never be fully rebutted.<sup>17</sup>

It didn't take much time after my first entry to the field until such suspicion was shared with me directly, by Jews and Arabs alike. It was always framed as a friendly joke,

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<sup>17</sup> Conducting fieldwork in a setting where power relations create high tensions and intense competition invites such suspicion. In his Nazareth Illit fieldwork, Dan Rabinowitz (1997) was questioned about being a Shin Bet agent, and Zeynep Gürsel (2016:34) in her fieldwork among image brokers in a large corporation was suspected of being a corporate spy.

but it showed that it preoccupied those who shared it with me. Gaining people's trust throughout the months and years of fieldwork led me to think that I had been accepted without further suspicion. I was wrong. In the summer of 2016, after living continuously in Hadar for 6 years, I attended a fundraising party in support of a local anti-fascist group. Such groups are under police scrutiny in Israel, so it could be that people there were on high alert to begin with. After a couple of hours there, as I was making my way out, I approached the person who hosted the fundraiser and who was from the wider circle of my long-term acquaintances. He was already a little drunk by then. I thanked him while giving him a friendly hug, and then he suddenly tightened his hold and started pinching me while half-jokingly asking: "You are not working for the Mossad, eh?" and pinched me once more. I tried to smile back, while twisting from the pinches and shock, saying: "Are you nuts?" He laughed, releasing me from his grip, and I walked back home thinking there was no way his suspicion could ever be quelled.

### ***The Organization of the Dissertation***

This dissertation is divided into three parts. The first part discusses the discourse of separation, the second part describes the mixing neighborhood of Hadar, and the third part analyzes various aspects of reflexive coexistence in the neighborhood.

In discussing how the discourse of separation works, Part 1 is divided into two chapters. Chapter 1 presents a genealogy of the discourse of separation, reviewing various manifestations of the discourse from around the world and from different political contexts, but focusing mainly on early 20<sup>th</sup> century Palestine, on Israel and then

particularly on the city of Haifa and Hadar neighborhood. Chapter 2 analyzes how the discourse of separation works in contemporary descriptions of Haifa's history of coexistence. Focusing on walking tours in Haifa, this chapter describes and analyzes how past practices of living with the other are reframed according to the present-day hegemonic discourse of separation.

By focusing on everyday practices of living with the Other, the two chapters of Part 2 describe how the mixing neighborhood of Hadar works. Chapter 3 travels through the neighborhood's various locations (mainly coffee shops), the people that occupy them, the kinds of interactions they have with each other, and the various meanings they give to their experiences of living in a mixing environment. Chapter 4 focuses on several foundations for and manifestations of people's senses of belonging in Hadar: from the various dimensions of belonging (to a place and its history, to a group of people, to a set of practices), through its various expressions – in street and body art, in politics, and in senses of entitlement. Both chapters of Part 2 show how the everyday life is more diverse than the representations presented in Part 1.

The two chapters of Part 3 analyze how reflexivity emerges in the mixing neighborhood and how it works. Chapter 5 discusses four projects that took place in the neighborhood and compares how reflexivity was used in their internal dynamic, and how it was related to their different views regarding the mixing neighborhood: from disregarding it, through trying to cultivate it, to trying to minimize it. Chapter 6, the last empirical chapter, is an analysis of an extended case study featuring a mixed group of neighborhood residents who tried to produce a film on their experiences of living in Hadar. By following

the group's work for several years I ended up documenting the incommensurability between the social interactions within the group to the content of the film's script. While the group dynamic reflected the mixing, the script was surrendered to the discourse of separation and to steering away from ambiguities.

Although the main rationale for this organization of chapters is thematic, with each part mainly discussing a segment of my larger argument (discourse of separation, mixing neighborhood, reflexive coexistence), this organization also reflects two other rationales: methodological and temporal. Methodologically, the chapters reflect a change in my position as a participant-observer. While in the first chapters I am mainly positioned as an observer, in the last chapters I am gradually intensifying my participation. Temporally, Part 1 focuses more on the past and history, Part 2 on everyday practices in the present, and Part 3 on future-oriented interactions. Nonetheless, what is argued throughout this research applies to these three ordering rationales of the dissertation, as well: the separation can never be sterile. Despite the various logics for the separation into parts and chapters, these are never hermetic, and readers will find that the main concepts, methodology or temporal orientation of any one of the chapters appearing in others as well.

## PART I

### Discourse of Separation



Image 3: "This is My Land," Wadi Salib, Haifa

## CHAPTER 1

### A Brief Genealogy of the Discourse of Separation

I began my research on coexistence (*Du-Kiyum*, in Hebrew) at a time when it was already widely perceived as a zombie term in Israel.<sup>18</sup> Although coexistence is still used in the Hebrew public discourse in Israel to describe Jews and Arabs living, working, or spending their leisure time in the same location, there is nevertheless growing recognition that the term fails to represent the reality of deepening inequality and widening discourse of separation in Israel in general.

By presenting a genealogy of the discourse of separation in this chapter I do not seek to show a neat history with a moment of origin and a coherent, singular development.<sup>19</sup> Rather, in what follows I mainly present an assemblage of various descriptions of moments of beginning and development, of possible alternatives for the discourse to develop or dissolve, and of examples of its various resurrections. I begin with a review of signs of discourse of separation under empires and nation states, and then move to Palestine/Israel in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, gradually zooming-in on Haifa's moments of coexistence and separation.

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<sup>18</sup> I borrow the concept of “zombie term” from sociologist Ulrich Beck, who argued that some contemporary terms, such as “nuclear family,” although considered dead in the real world are still alive in academic settings (Weitman and Rutherford 2000).

<sup>19</sup> See Stoler (2016:23).

## *Coexistence and Separation under Empires and Nation States*

In the scholarly literature the term “coexistence” refers to an accommodation between members of different communities who live together without one collectively trying to destroy or severely harm the other (Weiner 1998). As sociologist Louis Kriesberg (2001) notes, coexistence can also be understood as including a sense of mutual tolerance, respect, and sometimes also a relative equality in economic conditions and political power. Coexistence, therefore, is both a top–down policy and a bottom–up experience. As such, it is an interdisciplinary theme of inquiry studied by political scientists, sociologists, historians, geographers, political philosophers and anthropologists.

Based on his research on relations between Arabs and Jews in Israel, sociologist Sami Smooha (2010:15) defines coexistence as “two communities in conflict agreeing on the state’s borders and political system, having loyalty to the state, regarding life together as desirable, and maintaining voluntary relations in addition to necessary contacts.” Although it describes different social groups living in spatio-temporal proximity, in social anthropology the term “coexistence” is hardly used outside of the Israeli context.<sup>20</sup>

In non-Israeli contexts, besides the rare use of the term “coexistence,” more common terms are “tolerance,” “diversity” and “multiculturalism.” Despite the differences between them, these terms mostly refer to notions of different social groups living together in the same time and space. This social condition is regarded as made possible by various

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<sup>20</sup> It is interesting to note that the term is more extensively used in physical anthropology, mainly to describe the living together of different primates. In his critique of social anthropology, Johannes Fabian refers to another aspect of coexistence, which will not be dealt with in this dissertation: the coexistence of the Knower and the Known, namely, the ethnographers and the people they study (2002[1983]:109). According to Fabian, “anthropology has managed to maintain distance, mostly by manipulating temporal coexistence through the denial of coevalness” (ibid:121).

political forces in history around the globe: from empires to nation-states, from Asia, through Europe and Africa, to the Americas. Studying the various cases of coexistence, tolerance and multiculturalism is based on diverse types of sources: archival documents, interviews, oral histories, and fieldworks. The various analyses show that the social interactions in the various cases range from extreme tension (to the degree of physical violence and even genocide), through peaceful relations of mutual respect, to instances of cross-passing, assimilation and conversion, which lead to the dissolution of original social categories, and are not always non-violent themselves.

For example, in imperial states, as sociologist and historian Karen Barkey (2008) notes, politics of tolerance, intolerance, and assimilation, are also the various forms of maintaining rule over multi-religious and multi-ethnic diversity. Barkey describes how the early centuries of the Ottoman Empire had a form of government that was considered more tolerant than the persecuting society of the medieval West (ibid:109). Based on the Ottoman case, Barkey argues that toleration as a form of relations among different religions and ethnic communities is more or less the absence of persecution of a people, but not necessarily their acceptance into society as full and welcomed members or communities. Moreover, she notes, toleration under the Ottoman Empire was implemented as long as it helped maintain peace and order for imperial welfare (ibid:110).

In Western states, the philosophical and political notion of toleration for ethno-cultural diversity emerged and developed as a result of colonialism and the European encounter with the New World, which raised the issue of rights of peoples. With the emergence of nationalism within post-revolutionary Europe, it became an issue related to

internal politics, mainly around granting protection to ethnic, religious and national minority groups. After World War II, and following social movements for racial and gender equality, the political struggles by indigenous peoples, national minorities, and immigrants provided the background for re-emergence and development of engagement with the topic of culturally diverse people within the modern state (Laden and Owen 2007:2-7).

According to anthropologist Ralph Grillo (2007:979-980), there have been three phases in the governance of ethno-cultural diversity in Europe: from abolishing difference, mainly by means of assimilation, in the late nineteenth century until the mid-twentieth; through integration and relative accommodation into a multicultural framework in the second half of the twentieth century; to a "European-wide moral panic" about difference which leads to practices of separation and rejection of difference in the contemporary early years of the twenty-first century. The Australian case is not significantly different from the European one. Anthropologist Ghassan Hage argues in his *White Nation* (1998) that practices of tolerance are popularly perceived in Australia as examples of "good nationalism" but are grounded in what he calls "White nation fantasy," a conception led both by White multiculturalists and White racists alike. According to Hage, both see the nation as a space structured around a White culture, where Aboriginal people and non-White ethnics are merely national objects that should be separated, moved or removed according to White national will (ibid:18-23).

Philosopher Étienne Balibar (2002:x) reminds us that "'community' and 'citizenship' have had a problematic relationship since the origins of political thoughts." Indeed, in all of these places, the challenges of ethno-cultural diversity have stimulated political and social

theorists to rethink liberalism, democracy and citizenship, hoping to offer better theories of democratic accommodation.<sup>21</sup> As political scientist Bashir Bashir notes (2008:49), there are many approaches in contemporary political theory to developing a more inclusive idea of democratic citizenship, including theories of liberal egalitarianism, theories of deliberative democracy, theories of multicultural recognition, and theories of agonistic democracy. However, one of the problems that Grillo (2007:993) identifies is that speaking and writing about multiculturalism is often based on an imagined multiculturalism rather than on its reality, partly because actually existing multiculturalism is poorly documented, and there is ignorance about what is actually happening on the ground.

In her *Empire of Difference*, Barkey (2008:114) tries to show how toleration in the first three centuries of the Ottoman rule emerged both from the top down by the state, and from the bottom up by communities, and each shared an interest in the maintenance of inter-communal peace and order. However, historian Marc Baer (Baer et al. 2009:930) argues that “coexistence” might not be the right term to describe inter-group relations in the early days of the Ottoman Empire. According to him, coexistence suggests equality between groups, and in the Ottoman Empire certain groups (women, Christians and Jews, and commoners) were largely subordinated to others (men, Muslims, the military class). According to historian Michelle Campos (2011:11), inter-communal relations in the Ottoman Empire can neither be described as “peaceful coexistence” nor as “intractable violence,” although they exhibited elements of both.

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<sup>21</sup> See Bhabha (1988) on his distinction between cultural *diversity* in Western liberalism and cultural *difference*. According to him, the universalism that paradoxically permits diversity masks ethnocentric norms, values and interests.

At a more micro level of social interaction, Barkey (2008:147) describes the Ottoman form of tolerance, which was mostly expressed in relationships between communities in the marketplace. Jews, Christians, and Muslims bought and sold from each other, formed business associations, and even testified for one another in courts. Along with these interactions, the boundaries between Muslims and non-Muslims, as well as among non-Muslims, were maintained not only as a state goal but also as the goal of the religious and ethnic groups themselves. Based on her archival work and her analysis of secondary sources on mixed places, Barkey describes inter-communal life that was not ideal, but not violent either. Discomfort could be felt in cases where dwellings of the Jews were a little too close to the local mosque, or when the Greeks (Christians) could catch a glimpse of the courtyard of a Muslim house. In the marketplace, however, merchants tried to attract their customers in Turkish, Greek, or Armenian, and in cases when Jews and Christians wanted to hide various body features they used Muslim dress, thereby transgressing strict social boundaries and codes of conduct that were regulated to secure physical markers of distinction (ibid:116–117).

In fact, Barkey argues that many of the rules designed to mark communities' boundaries, to separate them, and to maintain the hierarchical ordering between them, were constantly reassessed, or routinely broken, and quite often were deemed unenforceable. Such were cases of wearing white turbans (otherwise special to Muslims) as well as contravening other markers of differences based on clothing, colors, height of residence, and ownership of slaves (ibid:121). The relationship between top down and bottom up coexistence is summed up in Barkey's argument that "There would have been

no negotiation, no bargaining about rules and regulations of ethno-religious coexistence, had there been no formal boundaries established by the Ottoman authorities" (ibid:121).

Another mechanism that maintained connections and networks between groups and worked against separation was conversion. Under Islam, conversion is unidirectional, allowing others (such as Jews and Christians) to become Muslims. In the Ottoman Empire, there were multiple religious, economic, social, and political motives for groups or individuals to convert (Barkey 2008:125). In fact, when conversion was not forced, it was made very easy, and there is evidence that even just wearing Muslim clothing and saying that one wanted to become a Muslim was enough to make it so and allow upward mobility (ibid:128). In fact, conversion, according to historian Marc Baer (2010:18), was at the heart of being Ottoman, and for much of Ottoman history, the elite members of the military, administration, and even royalty all were converted Christians.<sup>22</sup> In his research on the Dönme – who were the descendants of Jews who resided in the Ottoman Empire and converted to Islam along with their messiah, Rabbi Shabbatai Tzevi, in the seventeenth century – Baer shows how for two centuries following their conversion, they were accepted as Muslims, and even rose to the top of Salonikan society by the end of the nineteenth century. According to Baer, the Dönme's religion syncretized elements of the Islam and Judaism, merging or combining them to form new ritual and paramount values in the process. However, as Baer argues, with the introduction of the idea of racial difference in the later years of the empire, the possibility of cultural conversion became far more difficult for groups now considered racially different from the core group that was to constitute the nation in the republic. In the new republic, the state was opposed to

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<sup>22</sup> See also Massot 2016.

precisely the kind of intellectual borrowing, exchange, and trade that the Dönme represented (ibid:188). The problem the Dönme faced with the emergence of the nation state was that:

pluralism based upon acceptance and maintaining cultural difference, religious identity, corporate autonomy, and non-ethnically homogenous communities was replaced by an attempt to create a nation based upon ideas of race that excluded formerly integral components of the whole. [...] The end of empire spelled the end of tolerance of difference (ibid:239).

Against the perception of the Ottoman Empire regarding population diversity as “a product of, and a powerful statement to, successful empire building” (Campos 2011:8), there were the efforts of the European great powers (Austria-Hungary, Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and Russia) to promote ethno-religious separatism embodied in the idea of the nation state as a modernizing and standardizing mechanism, intolerant of difference and pushing for separation. Such is the story of the Ukrainian-Polish-Jewish-German borderland area once called “kresy” and now more generally known as the Chernobyl zone. In her *A Biography of No Place* (2004), Kate Brown describes how the area that was once multiethnic, and a place of synthesis and fusion, where unlikely partners have come together in explosive creativity, became a subject of annihilation and the death or exile of large segments of the area's population. The multiethnic border zone of the kresy became a largely homogenous Ukrainian heartland in the course of three decades from 1923 to 1953. According to Brown, this ethnic purification was carried out by various political regimes: imperial Russia, the socialist Soviet Union, fascist Nazi Germany, parliamentary Poland, and nationalist Ukrainian parties. All wanted to dismantle the confusing mosaic of cultures in the contested borderland of the kresy, to alter it radically and make it comprehensible as an ethnically pure nation space (ibid:2).

Still in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, colonial Algeria knew its own form of coexistence, such as the Jewish–Muslim multi-family house called Dar-Refayil, located in Sétif. Joëlle Bahloul's ethnography *The Architecture of Memory* (1996) is a close examination of coexistence in Dar-Refayil, where her maternal grandfather's family had lived from 1937 to 1962. Through interviews with past and present house residents on their shared past coexistence, Bahloul describes how in their memories the house is like a family, and how the domestic space serves as a metaphor for the human entity that inhabits it. According to the descriptions collected by Bahloul, there was a spatial separation between Muslim and Jewish families representing a symbolic hierarchy in which Jews had only a slightly higher status than Muslims (ibid:24). Other distinctions were also at play in the house. For example, the mentioning of three types of heating and cooking constituted a narrative strategy for distinguishing between Jews and Muslims. While the basic lightweight and unsophisticated appliance placed on the ground (the *kanoun*) usually used by Muslim families represented slow cooking, simmering dishes, and the socioeconomic status of colonized native people, kerosene and gas used by the Jews represented easy, quick, modern cooking and a modern lifestyle. As Bahloul notes, the curtain separating the cooking pots appears in her informants' memory as a symbolic sign of distinction, which also underlines how fragile this difference really was (ibid:38).

Alongside the various distinctions and separations in Dar-Refayil, one of the themes mentioned by Bahloul's interlocutors is fusion. "We were all mixed up together" and "we lived on top of each other" were alternative ways of expressing both the spirit of fraternity and the crowdedness of the encumbered space (ibid:39). Nevertheless, Bahloul argues that in fact things and people were not blended in this house, even though memories seem to

present them as such: "People made an effort to distinguish themselves from each other without thereby separating. [...] Differences in status overlapped with ethnic and religious differences" (ibid:40). Moreover, since the end of World War I, Jews and Muslims had no longer spoken the same language even though the Jews would occasionally communicate in Arabic. But the strongest evidence of maintaining distinction was the fact that intermarriage between Jews and Muslims was never even thought of, and a total religious endogamy was kept in the house, as in most families of both faiths in Algeria (ibid:83).

While past residents of Dar-Refayil remember a Jewish–Muslim harmony in the house, for example in Marcel and Rosette's recollection (ibid:91): "You have to remember that we had the same customs, the *youyous* [ululations], Arabic music, Arabic dress," they also contrast it with the hostility between Christians and both Jews and Muslims. In addition, a contrast is made between the harmony within the house and the violent conflicts occurring outside (ibid:82).

Unlike this contrast between public and semi-domestic life, and much like in the case of the Ottoman rule where the interactions in the marketplace sustained mechanisms for prolonged intergroup non-violent coexistence, so is the case of post-riots shanty town of Dharavi in Mumbai, as described by Deepak Mehta and Roma Chatterji (2001). The riots, which followed the demolition of the Babri mosque in 1992, led to communal violence in large parts of India, and critically affected Hindu–Muslim relations in Dharavi, where 40 percent of the population was Muslim. During their 1994–5 fieldwork in Dharavi, Mehta and Chatterji collected first-hand testimony from informants who had lived in areas ravaged by violence, and then directly engaged in relief and rehabilitation. They found that

for the Hindu and Muslim communities in Dharavi healing is described as the ability to unite sufficiently closely to allow everyday commerce between peoples to resume after violence has broken relationships. In their case, reparation cannot guarantee justice, and “coexistence is possible only if the past is deliberately set aside” (ibid:238).

Another study of coexistence and separation worth mentioning is Gred Baumann’s (1996) ethnography of the everyday life of the place he calls *Southall*, a multi-ethnic suburb of London. Baumann follows the mutual influences, crossovers, and cultural fusion among young Southallians of diverse backgrounds: South Asian, Afro-Caribbean, Irish, English, and various other ethnic or national backgrounds. Throughout his research on discourse, language, and ways people talk and describe their lives, Baumann realizes that in Southall there are communities within communities, as well as cultures across communities, and notes that social groups should be distinguished from social categories. Baumann shows how terms such as tribes, communities, races, generations, or castes, might or might not be used in one context or another. Moreover, in some contexts Southallians find it useful and plausible to reify *culture* at the same time as making, remaking, and thus changing it (ibid:13). Baumann also warns against attributing informants to a pre-defined community instead of listening to them, the result of which may be studying communities of the researcher's own making (ibid:7–8).

### **Coexistence and Separation in Palestine in the First Half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Palestine knew several dramatic changes. Following World War I it shifted from being a province under the Ottoman Empire, which

ruled the area since 1517, to being a territory under British rule (with a mandate from the League of Nations). Three decades later, after the 1948 war, most of Palestine's territory became recognized as the Israeli State, and the rest was subjected to Jordan (West Bank) and Egypt's (Gaza) rule, and later occupied by Israel in the 1967 war, with segments of that land now being governed by the Palestinian Authority.

The genealogy of the discourse of separation in the region in the past century shows how it spread and became naturalized while at the same time, as Jonathan Gribetz (2014) shows, the way people saw each other in Israel/Palestine has changed and evolved over time: from religious and racial modes of classification in the late Ottoman period, to unifying national categories. These divisions allowed different practices of separation and contact, by various social actors: from policymakers, through individuals in their communities, to those who documented and analyzed the social history of that period.

Throughout most of the Ottoman period, Christians and Jews were treated as protected non-Muslim minorities. They were granted some level of autonomy (in religious and family matters) but were assigned a status of second-class citizens, being deprived of some of the rights Muslims enjoyed.<sup>23</sup> However, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, during the last years of the Ottoman rule, the top-down strategy of the empire was to create "civic Ottomanism" (Campos 2011) that promoted a unified sociopolitical civil identity of all Ottoman people, Muslims, Christians, Jews, and others. According to Campos (*ibid*:5):

The revolutionary slogans of "equality and brotherhood" were premised on an ideology of belonging to a unified Ottoman people-nation. In Palestine as elsewhere throughout the empire, Muslims, Christians, and Jews adopted the viewpoint that the Ottoman nation was comprised of all the ethnic, religious, and linguistic

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<sup>23</sup> See: Rabinowitz and Monterescu (2007:6-8).

elements of the empire bound together in a civic, territorial, and contractual terms. They proclaimed and performed their Ottoman-ness in the streets in public celebrations and on the pages of newspapers in all the languages of the empire.

However, some of the leaders of the Zionist Organization saw the expressions of pro-Ottomanism among the indigenous Sepharadi Jews as a problem. Dr. Arthur Ruppin, who headed the Organization's Palestine Office in Jaffa, was disappointed that they were acting more as "Ottoman citizens of the Mosaic faith" than as active supporters of Zionism (quoted in Campos 2011:201). Nevertheless, Campos notes that Ottomanism was supported also by Ashkenazi Zionist immigrants. For example, Eli'ezer Ben-Yehuda, an influential Russian Jew who had immigrated to Palestine in the early 1880s, and who later became known as the "father of modern Hebrew" for his linguistic contributions, called in his newspapers: "Jews, be Ottomans!" and welcomed multiethnic overarching civic bonds (ibid:203).<sup>24</sup>

World War I and the end of the Ottoman Empire brought to an end these heterogeneous, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious practices, which were replaced by practices of separation between peoples and by a plan to establish a homogenous nation-state. It was a period of transition from assigning communities with undefined and fluid categories to harder categories with the spread of nationalism (Gribetz 2014; see also Rabinowitz and Monterescu 2007:8–14). In Palestine, as elsewhere, the practices and discourse of separation gained dominance with the spread of ideas of self-determination, nationalism and the nation-state. As Gribetz (2014:4) shows, before the rise of nationalism, the categories used in the region were "more expansive than a single-minded focus on nationalism would permit." The British conquest of Palestine, followed by the Balfour

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<sup>24</sup> See also Klein (2014:21).

Declaration of November 1917, which promised British support of a “Jewish National Home,” was the most salient expression for this process and turned the national conflict between Jews and Arabs in Palestine from a local affair into an international one (Klein 2014:111).

In Jerusalem and Jaffa protests of Palestinian Arabs began against Zionist land purchasing and immigration as well as against Britain’s continuous commitment to the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine while ignoring the national aspirations of Palestinian Arabs. The Palestinian Arabs’ protest culminated in 1936 to a three year revolt, known as the Great Revolt (*al-thawra al-kubra*), during which acts of terror were committed by both sides. According to Klein (ibid:126–127), “the escalation of the conflict honed collective national identities, which were gradually adopted even by those who had not previously toed the hegemonic national line. [...] Nevertheless, segregation between Jews and Arabs was not absolute until the 1948 war. Jews returned to Jaffa after the suppression of the Arab Revolt.”

Even before the establishment of the State of Israel, when Jews were still a minority in Palestine, leaders of the Zionist movement, who were mostly Ashkenazi Jews, promoted separation between Arabs and Jews because they feared an assimilation of Jews among the local Arabs that will lead to their "Levantinization" (Eliachar 1997:20). Whether their fear was imagined or based on close encounter with reality on the ground, ties between Jews and Arabs were the norm wherever they shared the same space. As historian Menachem Klein argues (2014:43), “the more integrated life was, the better the personal relations.”

The close ties also led to the development of a Jewish-Arab identity, which was mostly common among Mizrahi Jews (ibid:40).<sup>25</sup> In Jerusalem, Klein notes (ibid:45), “there was no mental boundary separating Muslim and Jew. The walls of language and culture were low ones, and Jews and Arabs who entered the physical or linguistic zone of the Other felt no sense of being alien.”<sup>26</sup> The Arab-Jewish identity was not only a local identity in Palestine. According to Klein (ibid:20–21), by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was “a self-conscious identity in the major cities of the East, such as Cairo, Beirut, and Baghdad,” and until the 1930s it evolved without reference to the Zionist–Palestinian national conflict.<sup>27</sup>

Campos (2011:18–19) notes that according to memoirs focusing on Jerusalem of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century

‘native’ Sepharadi and Maghrebi Jews shared cultural, spatial, and everyday practices with their Muslim neighbors that sharply differentiated them from ‘newcomer’ Ashkenazi Jewish co-religionists. [...] Likewise, the Christian community in Palestine was fragmented into sixteen different religious denominations, many of which had their own religious, educational, and legal institutions.<sup>28</sup>

In his historiography of relations between Jews and Arabs in Jerusalem, Jaffa and Hebron, Klein (2014:20) focuses on the shared Arab-Jewish identity in these cities, which was a local identity in Palestine that meant “more than coexistence and residing one beside the other. Lifestyles, language, and culture created a common identity that centered on a sense of belonging to a place and to the people who lived there.” Klein (ibid:19) notes that in the pre-1948 days,

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<sup>25</sup> Throughout the dissertation I use a soft hyphen (-) when writing about Jewish-Arab (and Arab-Jewish) personal identity, and the longer, en dash (–) when writing about Arabs and Jews as separate national identities, such as in Arab–Jewish coexistence.

<sup>26</sup> See also Wallach (2016).

<sup>27</sup> See also Shenhav (2006) and Gribetz (2014:37–38).

<sup>28</sup> See also Tamari (2009).

Arab-Jewish identity was a fact of life, something encountered daily by the country's natives. Ideologues did not codify it in a clear-cut way in articles and books, poets did not write of it, and no conferences and fundraising drives were held to promote it or bring it about. Members of some social strata simply lived it.

At the same time, in their attempt to create their own indigeneity in Palestine, the Eastern European Zionists invented the Hebrew-speaking Sabra (*Tzabar*). It was a mélange of local Palestinian and East European cultural features, while at the same time it marked a cultural distance from both. The children of the Jewish immigrants were born to be Sabras, and saw themselves as natives in Palestine (see Klein 2014:33).

Other practices of separation had economic aspects, protecting Jewish labor (Shafir 1989) and consumption (Shoham 2013), as well as material ones, such as the physical deployment of electricity wires which “participated in the assembly of a political separation” (Shamir 2013:148).

According to historian Hillel Cohen (2013), the crucial stage in separation between Jews and Arabs took place in the 1929 series of violent events. One of the results of these events was that the common distinction between the Zionist pioneers and the indigenous Jews lost its validity, and was being replaced by the broader distinction between the Jewish and the Arab national collectives. Until then, as argued also by sociologist Baruch Kimmerling (2004), a zero-sum national conflict took place mostly between the local Arab population and the Jewish immigrants, without the indigenous Jews taking part in it. The crystallization of the Arab and Jew as two rival identities shunted the Arab-Jewish identity into the margins until it was forgotten or suppressed from collective Israeli memory (Shenhav 2006:136). Ultimately, Klein argues (2014:ix), it was the Zionist–Palestinian conflict of 1948 that defeated the local Arab-Jewish identity, which was shared by

indigenous Jews and Arabs and thrived in different ways in Jaffa, Jerusalem and Hebron.<sup>29</sup> According to Klein (ibid:19), nationalism "brutally separated the two words 'Arab' and 'Jew' and required the inhabitants of Palestine to count themselves as one or the other."<sup>30</sup> The Arab-Jewish identity, which could have shaped Palestine's society "gave way to separate national-ethnic identities" (ibid:115).

The separation between Jews and Arabs in Palestine was not only a result of growing national sentiments that crystallized their rivalry. It was also stirred by outside agents, such as the Ottoman and then the British empires. According to Campos (2011: 198), the perceived failures of Ottomanism at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and its incomplete universalism, increased the appeal of Zionism in the eyes of Palestine's Sepharadi Jews. Tim Sontheimer (2016) argues that a decade later it was the British rule in Palestine that promoted unity among all rival Jewish communities, while simultaneously separating between Jews and Arabs in order to better distinguish between them and thus ease its governance.<sup>31</sup>

The separation between Jews and Arabs in Palestine culminated on November 29<sup>th</sup> 1947 with the passing of the UN Resolution 181 calling to partition Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state. A civil war between Jews and Palestinian Arabs in Palestine erupted immediately. Historian Benny Morris (2010:95–96) notes that during the first stage of the battles the only front lines were located along the seam lines between Jews and Arabs in the mixed cities. Inter-communal violent acts began in Jerusalem the day after the UN Resolution, with torching Jewish stores by Arabs in Jerusalem's Mamilla commercial area.

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<sup>29</sup> See also Tamari (2009).

<sup>30</sup> See also Campos (2011:19).

<sup>31</sup> See also Smith (1993).

In Jaffa, Jews of one of the paramilitary groups shot Arabs, and members of another group blew up a barrel full of explosives downtown. According to Klein (2014:128), following the escalation the British established security zones in the mixed cities, and “the web of Jewish–Arab life unraveled not only as a matter of consciousness and identity – the very physical fabric of the cities also came apart.” The outbreaks of violence between neighbors who lived in coexistence were surprising, and were not carried out only by marginal groups of extremists. Much like in other conflicts, in Palestine, too, it was the broad population, Klein argues (ibid:131), who took part at different levels “and at certain points was swept deeper and deeper into involvement in the civil war.”

The phase of inter-communal violence lasted until late March 1948, and was followed by campaign battles, land conquer and the formation of definite front lines. These two stages of the civil war period were concluded by May 14 with “the total destruction of the Arab-Palestinian force and the ruin of Palestinian society; by then, hundreds of thousands residents of Arab cities and villages had fled their homes, or been evicted from them by force” (Morris 2010:112–113).

The civil war turned into a conventional war following the British withdrawal and Israel’s Declaration of Independence on May 14, 1948. The next day, the inter-state war phase commenced with the entry of the Egyptian, Syrian, Jordanian and Iraqi armies to the campaign against the newly established Israeli army.

After a few months of fighting, known in the Zionist terminology as “The War of Independence,” the war ended in 1949 with what is known in the Palestinian terminology as “The Nakba” (disaster, in Arabic). Around 750,000 Palestinian Arabs became refugees,

more than 400 Palestinian villages were destroyed, and 22 per cent of the territory that was designated for the Arab State (in the 1947 UN Partition Resolution) was occupied by the Israeli military, and was officially recognized in the 1949 ceasefire agreements as belonging to Israel.<sup>32</sup> About 160,000 Palestinian Arabs, the majority of them villagers, remained in the territory that was internationally recognized as the State of Israel and most of them were granted Israeli Citizenship. Thus, similar to other cases of self-determination and a desire to conflate the political unit with a national unit (Gellner 1983), the implementation of the national idea in the form of the Israeli statehood is characterized by *misframing* (Dayan 2009) as it results in having an Arab minority and thus did not fully materialize the main ideas of separation between national units.<sup>33</sup>

Separation, however, was not only a matter of policy, facts on the ground, and a legitimizing discourse. It is also attested in descriptions of events and even in contemporary historiography, to the degree of creating anachronistic descriptions. One example is in the historiography of northern Jaffa. In a recently published article, Or Aleksandrowicz (2013a) shows how from the early 1890s until the late 1920s northern Jaffa was perceived among Hebrew speakers as consisting of two suburbs, distinguished by class, with Jews and Arabs living in both, side by side. However, from the mid 1930s, and

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<sup>32</sup> See also Rabinowitz and Monterescu (2007:14–16). The internationally recognized border of Israel is known since the 1949 ceasefire agreement between Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Syria and Lebanon as “The Green Line.” It includes the territory that in the 1947 UN Partition Resolution was designated for the Jewish State, plus the 22 percent of the territory that was designated for the Arab State but was occupied by the Israeli military during the war. 18 years later, in the 1967 War, Israel occupied the whole territory plus the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights. While the Sinai Peninsula was returned to Egypt in 1982 (as part of the 1979 peace treaty between Israel and Egypt), Israel still controls the West Bank by direct military occupation, the Gaza Strip by controlling its borders, airspace and sea, and in 1981 Israel imposed its law, jurisdiction and administration throughout the Golan Heights.

<sup>33</sup> Scholars from different disciplines have critically examined the supposedly obvious connection between “nation” and “nation state.” See, for example: Appadurai (2006), Balibar (2002), Gans (2003), and Kymlicka (1995). For a critical examination of the Zionist case, see, for example: Loeffler (2010).

regardless of any demographic transformations, the public image of the same area changed radically. Instead of the distinction based on socio-economic differences, the new perception among Hebrew speakers was primarily based on mutually exclusive national categories, which became hegemonic in the public discourse primarily since the 1929 events and the growing national divide (ibid:179). According to Aleksandrowicz (ibid:174), this new categorization came in lieu of the former perception of the space also retrospectively, leading the majority of researchers of recent years to adopt the hegemonic discourse of separation and create anachronistic descriptions of the history of social relations in the area.<sup>34</sup> As I will show in Chapter 2, a similar mechanism was at work in the Haifa walking tours that I studied.

### ***Coexistence and Separation in the State of Israel***

Despite its definition as a Jewish State, the data of the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (ICBS) shows that the percentage of the Jewish population within Israel's recognized borders (the Green Line) was mostly in a state of decline since 1948 (see Image 2). In 2011 it was 75.4% of the general populations, the remaining are Arabs and "Others."<sup>35</sup> According to ICBS's estimation (2013:16), in 2035, the Jewish population is expected to be 73% of the general population within Israel's recognized borders.

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<sup>34</sup> See also Monterescu (2015:202–203) on the discourse of separation between North and South Jaffa, which reproduces the ethno-class dichotomy to allow for real-estate and touristic projects to prosper in the North of Jaffa.

<sup>35</sup> Israeli authorities divide the Arab citizens according to their religious affiliation, privileging Druze and Christians over the Muslim majority.

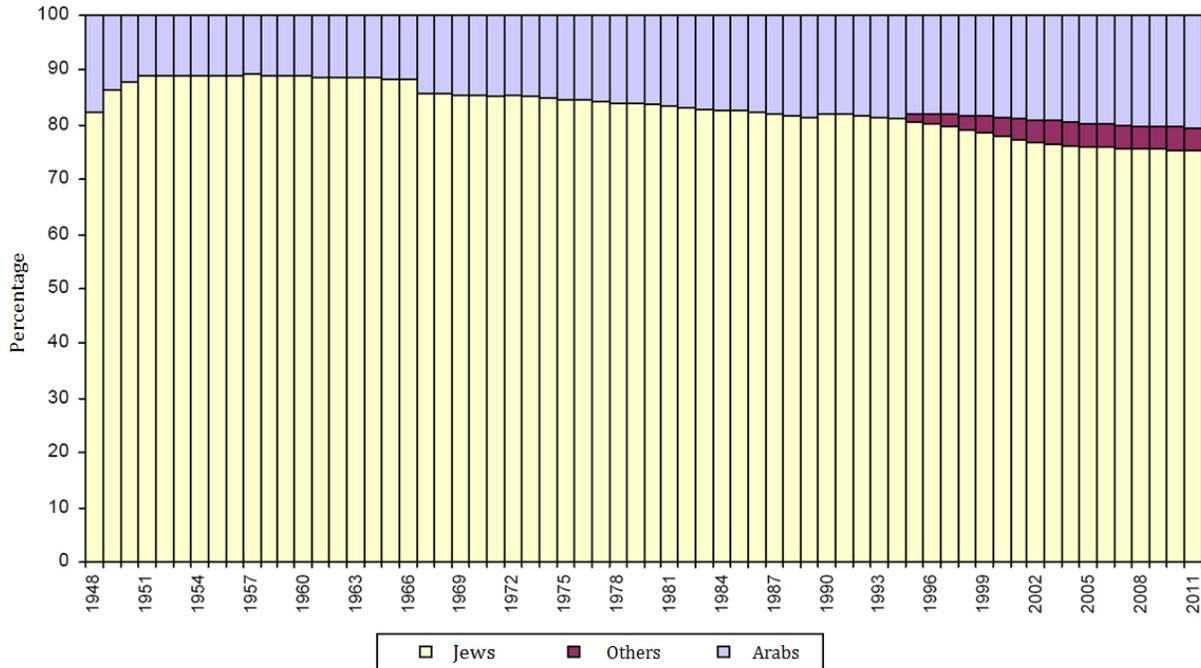


Image 4: Population in Israel, 1948–2011 (source: ICBS 2013:2)

According to Israeli demographer Sergio DellaPergola, when examining the whole territory under Israel’s control (i.e. including the Occupied Palestinian Territories), Jews comprise only around half of the population.<sup>36</sup> Thus, Israel continues to misframe its out-groups as its *raison d’état* (Dayan 2009:286), and the discourse of separation continues to legitimize this misframing by dominating the Israeli public sphere.

Practically, since 1948 onwards, and although citizenship was granted to most Palestinian Arabs who remained in the recognized borders of Israel, official and unofficial state practices have showed unwillingness to treat them as equals. Discrimination took many forms: from the Military Rule that was imposed on most of the Arab population since the 1948 war for a period of one year in the mixed cities of Haifa, Jaffa, Lydda and Ramle,

<sup>36</sup> See DellaPergola’s article in Mida website, “Yes, a Minority” (in Hebrew) of January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015 (URL: [mida.org.il/2015/01/07/כך-מיעוט-תגובה-למאמרו-של-יעקב-פייטלסון](http://mida.org.il/2015/01/07/כך-מיעוט-תגובה-למאמרו-של-יעקב-פייטלסון); accessed: May 5<sup>th</sup> 2016).

and until 1966 in the Negev and in the Galilee;<sup>37</sup> through control of Shin-Bet security forces,<sup>38</sup> land confiscations; to systematic killing, wounding and arresting of Palestinian citizens of Israel by the police and army. All this took place before, in between, and after the more memorable events of the 1957 Kufir Qasim massacre, and the March 1976 and October 2000 demonstrations – both resulted in demonstrators being shot to death by police.<sup>39</sup>

In the years since 1948, the discourse of separation between Jews and Arabs both reflected and generated also the distinction between Palestinians who obtained Israeli citizenship, and those who became refugees in 1948, to those who in 1967 became subjects of the Israeli Occupation, to other Arabs. Following the first Palestinian Intifada (uprising), which broke out in December 1987, the discourse of separation intensified and crystallized as the need to politically divide between Israeli Jews and Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. This eventually led to a "peaceful separation" (Dayan 2009:293) with the signing of the Oslo Accords between the Israeli and the Palestinian leaderships in 1993.

In her ethnography of the period between the signing of the Oslo Accords and the Second Intifada, which broke out in October 2000, anthropologist Rebecca Stein focuses on Israel's reformulation of its *national intelligibility* – a concept that designates that which is recognizable according to the dominant national script and is also an engine for subject

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<sup>37</sup> A research by Himmat Zu'bi of Ben-Gurion University reveals that in Haifa, unlike other mixed cities, the Military Rule, which was imposed on the Arab population for one year, was not made official by the State. It nevertheless had the same practices as elsewhere, with regular curfews, searches, prevention of freedom of movement etc. The reason for Haifa's exception could be related to the UN Partition Resolution, according to which Haifa was the only mixed city of that time that was designated to be within the territory of the Jewish State. I thank Himmat Zu'bi for sharing with me her research findings (personal communication, October 2016).

<sup>38</sup> General Security Services.

<sup>39</sup> See also Rabinowitz and Monterescu (2007:16–22).

formation (2008:2–3). Stein’s ethnography elaborates on the changing perceptions of Israeli Ashkenazi Jews towards Arabness, particularly with regards to desire for Arab places, culinary traditions, cultural practices, and histories. According to her, contrary to previous forms of desire for Arabness, these desires could have been enjoyed and consumed during the 1990s in what she calls *consumer coexistence*: coexistence that was pursued in a denationalized form (ibid:6–8). At work, she argues, was something akin to a discourse of multiculturalism, whereby the state and the private sector were inviting Jews not merely to tolerate but to enjoy Arab cultural difference, and for Jewish Israeli tourists Arab authenticity was palatable only in the absence of Palestinian-inflected politics (ibid:47–59).

The second Palestinian Intifada broke out in October 2000 partly as a result of Oslo's ongoing failures and the collapse of the Camp David talks that summer.<sup>40</sup> Israeli reactions to the Intifada led to the mainstreaming of the slogan "We're Here, They're There," turning it to government official policy that was implemented in 2002 with the erection of the separation wall, separating the majority of Palestinians in the West Bank from the majority of Jews (see Weizman 2007).<sup>41</sup> The Intifada began with demonstrations

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<sup>40</sup> In his summary of the arguments that were raised against the Oslo Accords, Bashir Bashir (2016:574) writes that they “have not provided a fully satisfactory answer to historical injustices and grievances, asymmetrical power relations, demographic and economic intertwinements, and political violence experienced by both sides of the conflict.”

<sup>41</sup> Such ideas were raised already prior to the establishment of the State of Israel by various leaders in the Zionist movement, from Theodor Herzl (1967[1896]) to Vladimir (Ze’ev) Jabotinsky (1923). The contemporary calls for physical separation gained dominance in the 1990s, at the peak of the first Intifada. Following a 1994 suicide bomb at the center of Tel-Aviv, Knesset Members Haggai Meir and Avraham Burg, both from the Labor Party, demanded from Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to build a wall separating between Israel and the Territories (“Meir and Burg Demand to Build a Fence between Israel and the Territories,” *Haaretz*, October 23, 1994, p. 5A). Shortly thereafter the Gaza strip was surrounded by wall, and a government committee was established to plan the separation from the West Bank. The plan was halted after Rabin’s assassination in 1995 and was removed from the agenda during Netanyahu’s first term as Prime Minister. In 1999 it was re-introduced by Ehud Barak who got elected to Prime Minister’s office

within Israel, and resulted in 13 Palestinians being killed by the Israeli Police. What followed was an unprecedented exacerbation in racism among Israeli Jews toward their Palestinian compatriots, accompanied by entrenchments of mechanisms of segregation between Jews and Arabs within Israel, too.<sup>42</sup> At the same time, Palestinian discourse within Israel shifted from the liberal plea for equality and coexistence to a more assertive claim for their collective national rights and recognition (Monterescu 2015:125).<sup>43</sup>

It was around the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Intifada in 2000 that the term *Duki* became widespread as mocking for the term *Du-Kiyum* (coexistence). Among left wing Jewish activists *Duki* was meant to ridicule the efforts by the establishment or by various NGOs to bring Jews and Arabs for various dialogue groups in order to meet, to get to know each other, and to avoid dealing with the roots of the historical-political issues.<sup>44</sup> Most of these projects proved to create only a thin layer of friendship, the fragility of which was exposed with every new clash between the State and its Palestinian citizens or between the State and Palestinians in the Occupied Territories.

In 2010 a report by “Sikkuy” (2010:7), an NGO working for the advancement of civic equality, marked the year 2010 as “one of the most difficult in the history of Israeli society, and in particular the history of the Arab-Palestinian minority, because it was characterized by an increase in belligerence, racism, and exclusion by the establishment and public, of

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with the election slogan: “We’re Here; They’re There.” The plan was finally implemented in 2002 by his successor in office, Ariel Sharon.

<sup>42</sup> See Monterescu (2015:177–207) on the increasing demand for gated communities in Israel as a new and radical marker of ethno-gentrification.

<sup>43</sup> See also Rabinowitz and Abu Baker (2005).

<sup>44</sup> As Maya Kahanoff (2016:43) shows, what emerges in the post-Oslo Arab–Jewish dialogue groups is a binary discourse structure that “splits into two separate discourses that express and construct two worlds of meaning; the two discourses confront each other in the encounter, with the dialogue between the participants being locked into that division without being able to break out of it.” According to her, in such dialogue groups the conflict pattern subdues the aspired dialogue.

Arab citizens." A few years later, a survey conducted by Pew Research Center (2016:151–156) between October 2014 and May 2015 showed that 48% of the Israeli Jewish citizens agree or strongly agree with the statement that "Arabs should be expelled or transferred from Israel," while 46% disagree or strongly disagree with that statement. The survey further shows that 79% of Israel's Jewish citizens support preferential treatment to Jews in Israel (ibid: 151–156), and that 79% of the Arabs in Israel say there is already great deal of discrimination against Muslims in Israel, in contrast to the 21% of Israeli Jews who share this view (ibid:31). According to Pew, roughly one-third of Muslims in Israel reported that in the year prior to the survey they experienced at least one incident of discrimination due to their religious identity (ibid:ibid).<sup>45</sup>

Recently, in September 2016, the Israeli State Comptroller published a severe report after it audited the activities of the Ministry of Education regarding the promotion of the subject of education for a shared society and prevention of racism since the early 2000s. According to the State Comptroller (2016:11),

The report's findings sketch a picture of limited action by the headquarters of the Ministry of Education regarding the subject of education for a shared society and prevention of racism, despite the complexity of Israel's divided society, and notwithstanding the expressions of stereotypical and antidemocratic opinions and worrisome racist expressions repeatedly heard among youth. This picture appears even though the guiding principles of education for democratic values and the battle against racism in the education system were drawn up twenty years ago and endorsed in recent years by the Ministry of Education. This situation raises the suspicion that the Ministry's administration during this time, and also recently [...] avoided taking action on the range of steps necessary for creating an appropriate organizational, budgetary, operative and pedagogical infrastructure for dealing systematically, effectively and over the long term with prevention of racism among students.

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<sup>45</sup> See also: Bar-Tal and Teichman (2005) and Smooha (2013). On young Israelis' perception of spatial separation between Arabs and Jews, see: Ben-Ze'ev (2015).

While the majority of Jews and Arabs in Israel live in separate cities and towns, a minority of Jews and Arabs live in mixed cities, where it could be imagined that the situation is less discriminatory.<sup>46</sup> However, critics of the Israeli oppression of the Arab communities find practices of discrimination in these cities, too, and regard the term “mixed cities” as liberal, preferring to replace it with “targeted towns” (Rabinowitz and Monterescu 2007:5).

### *Discourse of Separation and “Mixed Cities” in Israel*

The classic literature on the modern city maintains that it is a sphere where social relations between a variety of populations are regularly practiced. The distinction between these populations can be rigid, fluid or totally meaningless, according to the time, place or specific social context. Based on his study on changes occurring in the neighborhoods around downtown Chicago, urban sociologist Luis Wirth defines the modern city as a “large, dense, permanent settlement of socially heterogeneous individuals” (1938:8), and as a “melting pot of races, peoples and cultures” (ibid:10). Urban heterogeneity, he argues, can defy the rigid nature of social categories and promote the development of the urban personality as cosmopolitan (ibid:16). It was based on this generalizing definition, among other things, that roughly seventy years later the term *urbicide* was discussed not only in the context of physical damage to the modern city’s fabric (as a result of military and economic actions), but also in regards to the destruction of the conditions allowing the existence of heterogeneous communities (Coward 2006).

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<sup>46</sup> According to Monterescu (2015:2), about 10% (some 130,000) of the Palestinians in Israel live today in mixed cities, and they comprise up to one-third of the population in these cities.

Based on the historical events since 1948, it could be argued that partial urbicide is happening also in Israel. It was already during the years of the British Mandate in Palestine that the rate of Jews living in “purely Jewish” municipalities more than doubled: from 22 percent in 1922 to over 50 percent in 1946 (Krämer 2008:187). The mixed (Arab–Jewish) cities of that time were Jaffa, Haifa, Safed, Tiberias, and Jerusalem.<sup>47</sup> Historian Tamir Goren (2008:11) notes that the British Mandate labeled cities as “mixed” had their population included “two dominant population groups [...], mutually differing in culture and religion and engaged in a national struggle.” Rabinowitz and Monterescu (2007:3) expand that definition and argue that mixed cities are defined not only by their socio-demographic reality, but also discursively, by the subjectivity of individuals and groups on both sides, who “share elements of identity, symbolic traits and cultural markers which signify the mixed town as a shared locus of memory, affiliation and self identification.” Based on his study in Jaffa, Monterescu (2011:501) argues that contrary to the ethno-national logic of the state, mixed cities are home to “urban dynamics, rejecting the single-valued territorial logic, which poses defined and permanent cultural and national units in such a way as makes them mutually-exclusive,” referring to it as “spatial heteronomy.” According to Monterescu (2015:6), in mixed cities, “the coupling between space and identity collapses,” and he (ibid:38) characterizes them as

1. Ramified spatial configurations composed of diverging urban logics (*spatial heteronomy*) that dialectically
2. Instantiate and reproduce simultaneous patterns of proximity and distance vis-à-vis self and Other (*stranger sociality*), which in turn

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<sup>47</sup> Other cities, such as Gaza, Acre, Nazareth, Baisan, Jenin, Nablus, Hebron, Bethlehem and Beersheva were predominantly Arab with a Jewish minority.

3. Further perpetuates in the urban imagination a collective pattern of semiotic ambivalence and unsettled contestation over space and identity (*cultural indeterminacy*).

Following the Nakbah and the establishment of the State of Israel these cities became Jewish cities with a Palestinian minority living in what Monterescu (2015:7) calls “contrived coexistence.” In contemporary Israel, the following cities are commonly regarded as “mixed”: Jerusalem,<sup>48</sup> Jaffa, Acre, Haifa, Lydda, Ramle, Nazareth Illit, Beersheba and Carmiel.<sup>49</sup> Monterescu (2011:494) proposes to characterize these cities according to three dimensions: how mixed their residential patterns are, the historic development course of the mixture in town, and whether the city is perceived as “mixed” in the public discourse and in the collective Palestinian and Jewish memory.<sup>50</sup>

Monterescu (2015:64) further argues that Jewish–Arab mixed towns are understudied. In the past two decades contemporary Israeli mixed cities were the main topic of only a few monographs in socio-cultural anthropology. Among these are Dan Rabinowitz’s work on Nazareth Illit (1997), Rebecca Torstrick’s work on Acre (2000) and Monterescu’s own work on Jaffa (2011, 2015).

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<sup>48</sup> Jerusalem is mostly referred to as a “divided” city because of its official division to East and West. According to Yacoby (2016), the political form of division in Jerusalem changed in the past two decades and was transformed from an ethnocracy to a city that practices urban apartheid.

<sup>49</sup> According to Monterescu (2015:16), “Throughout the British Mandate period and five decades into Israeli rule, the Palestinian public discourse in Arabic yielded no mention of the term ‘mixed towns.’ A systematic reading of the Arabic daily *Al-Ittihad* from 1944 finds Jaffa, Haifa, Ramle, Lydda, and Acre referred to as ‘Arab’ towns. It seems that Palestinian recognition of the existence of mixed towns as a discursive category did not evolve until the 1990s.” Nevertheless, Monterescu notes (ibid:17) that there are certain Palestinian nationalists and scholars that in light of the marginality of Arab communities in these cities reject the characterization of such towns as mixed, “Maintaining that they are nothing but figments of the Zionist imagination.”

<sup>50</sup> See also Monterescu (2015:12–13). For further aspects of these cities’ social history in the Israeli context, see Falah (1996), Hasan (2005), Monterescu and Rabinowitz (2007), Nuriely (2005), Rabinowitz and Monterescu (2008), Yacobi (2009).

Focusing mostly on an anthropological account of Palestinian citizens of Israel, Rabinowitz's monograph was the first on the topic to be published in English after almost thirty years. Rabinowitz embarked on his study in Nazareth Illit (Upper Nazareth) in 1988, when almost an eighth of the town's population was Palestinians, the rest being mostly Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe. As Rabinowitz (1997:8) notes, the geo-political history of Nazareth Illit in Lower Galilee could be regarded as analogous to that of Israel in the Middle East: "an Israeli Island in an Arab ocean, reluctantly hosting a Palestinian contingent it perceives as a potentially disloyal, even dangerous fifth column."

The geo-political context of the 1980s was that of Judaization of the Galilee, a governmental policy initiated already in 1949 and in effect to this date. By focusing on various scenes, from conflicting historical narratives of the Zionist–Palestinian conflict to the split real-estate market, Rabinowitz studied its effects on both Jews and Arabs in the region at large and in Nazareth Illit in particular. According to Rabinowitz, the failure of mainstream liberalism in Israel to engender fair and rational action to match its principles does not stop at indifference and does not only reproduce inaction. In the case of Nazareth Illit, Rabinowitz shows how mainstream liberalism can, in fact, produce predatory discrimination. Suppressing the mixed character of their town, local leaders apply a double standard: Palestinian *individuals* are often treated leniently, in accord with the ethos of personal equality and meritocracy; but when it comes to *The Palestinians* as a collective, the application of these values is arrested, thus intensifying discrimination and abuse (ibid:10–

11).<sup>51</sup> Palestinians, for their part, are forced to devise *ad hoc* strategies to deal with such exclusion.

During almost the same years, from the mid-1980s to the late 1990s, and a few kilometers to the north-west of Nazareth Illit, Rebecca Torstrick (2000) conducted her research in Acre, another mixed city with a Jewish majority. The socio political context of those years – of waves of Jewish immigration to Israel, Israel's first war with Lebanon, and the first Palestinian Intifada – is described as influencing social relationships in Acre: in schools, in public rituals and community events, and in a mixed residential neighborhood.

Torstrick (ibid:10–11) argues that through routine interactions of everyday life, Acre's residents construct their own local categories of identity and social behavior, but this does not mean that national categories of identity and narratives about them are resisted and subverted at the local level. Torstrick shows how life in the mixed neighborhood exposes the dilemma of the Mizrahi Jews in Israel, according to which in order to be fully accepted as Israelis they must leave their Arab culture behind and adopt Western values and behaviors. The promised reward for making this transition is full participation in the political and economic system. In the neighborhood where Torstrick conducted her research very few of the Mizrahi residents reported being able to speak Arabic, and they complained bitterly about the lack of culture and education among their Arab neighbors. Nevertheless, they were not being rewarded, and when looking around

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<sup>51</sup> Among the many examples Rabinowitz analyzes is the swimming pool in Nazareth Illit, where about a dozen of Palestinians from the nearby city of Nazareth used to go for an early morning swim until the management of the swimming pool decided to curb the number of Palestinian swimmers, first by asking them to pay higher admission fees, then by spreading rumors that the entry of Palestinians would be banned altogether. As Rabinowitz argues, both stipulations were not expressed in terms of keeping Palestinians out. Rather, they were presented as differentiated treatments of residents versus non-residents. Conveniently, as Rabinowitz notes (1997:49), at that time all non-resident swimmers were Palestinians, and virtually all Palestinian swimmers were non-residents.

them they perceived their Arab neighbors as benefiting more from the state than they did (ibid:157–158). This serves as only one example to Torstrick's main argument that through neighborly relations (as well as through lessons in school, and local political struggles) Acre's residents have been constructing, modifying, and rejecting various components of the national logic (ibid:210–211).

Both Rabinowitz (1997:184) and Torstrick (2000:211) argue that peaceful coexistence between Palestinians and Israelis cannot be achieved as long as Israeli Jews experience themselves as social agents of a “Jewish State.”

About a decade later, Daniel Monterescu conducted anthropological research in Jaffa (2011, 2015). As a theory-driven scholar, who is also a native of the city, Monterescu presents an ethnography that undermines methodological nationalism with its dual society model (see previous chapter) and shows how Jaffa residents, Jews and Arabs, do not surrender to strict ethno-national spatial segregations. Reviewing the history of social relations in the city, as well as contemporary processes of gentrification, personal accounts of Jaffa elders (Jews and Arabs) and various scenes of local activism, Monterescu (2015:21) shows how the city changed

from a site of ethnic violence and social marginality [...] to a symbol of urban desire for liberal gentrifiers in search of Oriental authenticity and spatial capital. Paradoxically, however, in the process of resistance to neoliberal restructuring and gentrification the mixed town came to produce scopes of agency for activists, artists, and residents seeking a viable shared future often framed in cosmopolitan, transregional, and postnational terms.

While Palestinians in Jaffa struggle to retain their collective Arab presence, they also find themselves in unexpected coalitions with Israeli Jews – “all promoting particularistic interests which further disrupt an inclusive definition of the urban situation” (ibid:52).

With Jaffa's spatial heteronomy, communal fragmentation, and sectarian identity politics, Monterescu (ibid:285) argues that the city challenges the dichotomies that reproduce the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a zero-sum game.

### *Coexistence and Separation in Haifa's Historiography*

Much like other mixed cities in Israel, and contrary to its mainstream image, contemporary Haifa is mostly a non-mixed city, with the majority of its neighborhoods ethnically segregated.<sup>52</sup> Only a handful of residential areas are markedly mixed today, chief among these is the center of Hadar neighborhood, which is the focus of my research. In addition to these residential areas, there are a few other sites in the city where Jews and Arabs share the same space, although on a temporary basis, without necessarily having any interactions between them. This includes Haifa's beaches, markets, courtrooms, unemployment office, and hospitals – all of them serve the diverse populations of the city and its surrounding. While some of these sites have been mixed throughout Haifa's modern history, others have changed along the years, becoming more mixed or more segregated, as I will show in the next section.

### **Haifa, "New" and "Old"**

"Modern Haifa," or "New Haifa," was built in 1761 by Daher Al-Omar, the Bedouin ruler of the area at that time, who decided to raze "Old Haifa" and to move it to its new

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<sup>52</sup> See Ben-Artzi (1996, 2004).

location, about two kilometers to the south-east, for security reasons. Like Old Haifa, New Haifa was located by the Mediterranean shore but it was closer to Mount Carmel, where Daher Al-Omar's fortress was built. In order to protect New Haifa from attacks, walls were built around it and two gates were opened: the western one leading to Jaffa, and the eastern one – to Nazareth.<sup>53</sup> Historian Alex Carmel (2002:54–55) describes the walled city as: “a stretch of land that [Daher Al-Omar] surrounded by a wall, no more than 400 paces in length and less than 300 paces across. [...] The wall-surrounded land comprises, all in all, no more than 20,000 square meters.”<sup>54</sup> Along the years, as the city developed, with new neighborhoods built outside its walls at its east, west and along the Carmel mountainside, New Haifa inherited its predecessor's name and became “The Old City” in popular and professional discourse alike.

According to Carmel's description (2002:140–141), residents of the Old City were Muslims, who mostly lived in the east; Christians, who mostly lived in the west; and Jews, who mostly lived in Haret El-Yahud (the Jewish street or neighborhood) within the Muslims' area.<sup>55</sup> Similarly to Haifa, at the same period the old city of Jerusalem was surrounded by a wall as well. Within its walls, as Abu El-Haj notes (2001:196), Jerusalem was divided in quarters with no clear boundaries between them, and Wallach (2016:229) adds that “In contrast to the common image of Jerusalem as a ‘mosaic city,’ in which confessional groups resided in segregated enclaves, it is clear that residential patterns of

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<sup>53</sup> See Safran (2015), Yazbak (1998:14–15).

<sup>54</sup> In the introduction to the third edition of his book, Carmel (2002:x) notes that new findings suggested the city's area was in fact larger, yet its exact dimensions could not be determined. According to Yair Safran (2015:455), the size of the wall surrounded area was about 31 acres.

<sup>55</sup> See also Safran (2015) and Yazbak (1998).

late Ottoman Jerusalem involved high levels of mixing.” Therefore, it may well be assumed that a similar blurry of boundaries might have occurred within Haifa’s walls as well.

According to Carmel (2002:182), Haifa’s Muslims and Mizrahi Jews shared a strikingly normal neighborliness, same as in other cities in Palestine at that time. Historian Tamir Goren (2008:23) notes, for example, that Mustafa Pasha al-Khalil, the Muslim mayor of Haifa from 1885 to 1903, owned a few houses in the Old City and some of these were rented out to Jews, who regarded him as "generous and graceful." Goren writes (ibid:ibid) that "al-Khalil's proximity to the Jewish quarter deepened his ties with them. On holidays, for example, Mustafa visited his Jewish neighbors, and also improved their condition in his role as mayor." As Carmel (2002:141) notes, it is the good relations between Muslims and Jews “that to a large degree prevented Haifa’s Muslims from being swayed by the instigations of ‘*Al-Karmil*’, Najib Nasser’s anti-Jewish newspaper.” Carmel argues (ibid:178) that *Al-Karmil* newspaper described the Jews’ achievements in commerce, industry, culture, and above all in a massive land purchase (outside the walls), as a scheme born out of “far-reaching plans to usurp the Arabs.”<sup>56</sup> Carmel (ibid:179) adds that “Nasser’s preaching to boycott the Jews – neither buy from nor sell anything to them or lease them houses – had no real consequences.”

In his response to a prosecution filed by the Chief Rabbi to the Ottoman Ministry of Interior against his newspaper, Nejib Nassar argued that *Al Karmil* "was founded to protect human rights, Ottoman unity and assimilation of its peoples, and to warn the government of the ambitions of foreign residents" (Campos 2011:161). Campos (ibid:161) notes that

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<sup>56</sup> On Najib Nasser’s *Al Karmil* and the anti-Jewish and anti-Zionism accusations, see also Gribetz (2014:190, 231–232) and Yazbak (1998).

the general prosecutor agreed that Al-Karmil "was anti-Zionist, but maintained that this was a legitimate political position that was Ottomanist in sentiment, rather than anti-Jewish, as the chief rabbi and The Carmel [Al-Karmil] critics maintained."

At the same time, economic gaps between Muslims and Christians grew, as well as religious animosities between them, which led to constant tension that sometime escalated to acts of violence (ibid:181).<sup>57</sup> Carmel notes, for example, that "arguments regarding right of way in a narrow alley etc. would end up with hundreds of youngsters from both sides summoned, and with dozens of casualties" (ibid:181). Given this animosity, Carmel argues (ibid:182), the good relations between Muslims and Mizrahi Jews were all the more striking, so much so that

the Muslim, refusing to accept a Christian neighbor's invitation (fearing lest pork was served on his table), was a frequent and welcome guest in his Jewish neighbors' houses. Muslim villagers from across the area preferred to buy their garments at the Jewish 'Abu Kalma', as their faith in his integrity was deeper than that reserved for any Christian in town.

Other disputes in Haifa were between the French Carmelites and the German Templers. Founding the Carmelite monastery on Mount Carmel by the late 1820s constitutes the first institutionalized settlement in Haifa outside the town's walls. There were already other old villages on Mount Carmel, but these were remote from Haifa and held a more tenuous geographic, economic and political affinity to the city than the Carmelites.<sup>58</sup> The second significant settlement outside the walls was by the Templers, German Protestants who immigrated to Palestine in 1868. They established their Haifa

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<sup>57</sup> See also Bernstein (2000:57).

<sup>58</sup> For background on the Carmelites settlement in Haifa, their affinity to France and their impact on the city, see Carmel (2002:40-47, 66-67, 101-109).

colony at the mountain's foot, a few hundred meters outside the city walls.<sup>59</sup> Two decades later they built a quarter that was later known as Carmelheim on the Carmel, having settled their land disputes with the Carmelites. According to historian Mahmoud Yazbak (1999), the Templers attempted to exercise social and spatial separatism, but failed to do so. Documentation of conflicts between them and their neighbors and the authorities attests to multiple interactions, even if those mostly exposed the Templers' patronizing attitude to the local population and local rules alike, as well as the animosity they generated. In the 1930s about a third of the Templers in Palestine joined the Nazi Party, thus during World War II they were considered enemy subjects, imprisoned, and then expelled by the British authorities (Natour & Giladi 2011:154).

### **Haifa's Growth**

Statistics offered by Carmel (2002) show a general trend of population growth, starting already in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1868 it is estimated that the city numbered 3,500–4,000 people, of which roughly 40% were Muslims, with around 40% Christians and over 10% were Jewish (ibid:99). Over the next two decades the number of residents was doubled, standing, in 1886, at 7,500. Over the next decade the number of residents was again doubled, standing in 1905 at 15,000 residents and about a decade later, in 1914, at 22,000–23,000.

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<sup>59</sup> The Templers established several other settlements in Palestine at that time, too. For background on the Templers' settlement in Haifa, their affinity to Germany, their relationship with the local population and their impact on the city, see Ben Artzi (1996), Carmel (2002:111–140), Yazbak (1999) and Seikaly (1995:23).

The port of Haifa and the Hejaz Railway were of the main engines for Haifa's growth. From the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the port of Haifa saw a growing influx of merchant ships arriving from around the world, and the city became cosmopolitan. According to Carmel (ibid:99–100)

Roughly twelve consular agents from different countries permanently resided in the city. An eastern, international atmosphere prevailed in its streets, in a mix unlike any other. Alongside the Arab population, both Muslim and Christian, as well as among the Jewish population, lived permanently Greeks, Turks, Italian, Armenians, European merchants, delegates of foreign companies and Christian clergy, monks and missionaries. All made this city their permanent abode.

Alongside Haifa port, the launch of the Hejaz Railway in 1905, which connected Haifa to Syria and the Arabian Peninsula, contributed significantly to making Haifa the gateway to Palestine.<sup>60</sup> Immigration of Jews and Arabs into Haifa intensified, comprising wealthy people and laborers alike, from Palestine and beyond (Bernstein 2000:49–51).<sup>61</sup> The Jewish population in Haifa grew during the 19<sup>th</sup> century from around hundred people (roughly 3% of the town's population) to 1,200–1,500 people (around 12% of the town's population) by the end of the century. Most Jews immigrating to the city were of Mizrahi descent, arriving from Safed and Tiberias within Palestine, as well as from Constantinople, Izmir, Tétouan and Tangier. These were joined by some Ashkenazi Jews from Europe (Carmel 2002:97–98).

During the last four years of the Ottoman rule, from 1914 to 1918, the number of residents in the city dropped by about a third, due to fleeing and deportation of foreign nationals, battle fatalities, starvation and epidemics, as well as due to economic depression (ibid:172). However, by the end of the first four years of the British rule population growth

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<sup>60</sup> For further information about the Hejaz Railway, see Mansour (2008) and Norris (2013).

<sup>61</sup> See also Ben Artzi (1996), Carmel (2002), Vashitz (1983) and Yazbak (1998).

resumed. With the occupation of Haifa by the British forces in 1918, the city became the geopolitical center of the British Empire (Norris 2013).<sup>62</sup> After establishing their rule in the area they developed a deep water port in Haifa as well as heavy industry (Herbert 1989; Norris 2013).<sup>63</sup>

A general census that was held in the city on October 23<sup>rd</sup> 1922 showed that out of Haifa's 24,634 residents, the most significant growth was that of Jews, who by then constituted roughly one fourth of the town's population (Carmel 2002:173).<sup>64</sup> The Jewish population growth at the time was due to Zionist Jews' immigration, mainly from Eastern Europe, who soon became a majority in the city's Jewish community (Bernstein 2000:52). According to statistics provided by Palestine's government, between 1931 and 1944, while the Arab population in town grew by about 80% (to 62,000 people), the Jewish population grew by roughly 300% (to 66,000 people) (Yazbak 1988:146).<sup>65</sup> By the end of 1947 there were already 150,000 residents in Haifa, with almost equal numbers of Jews and Arabs.

## **Haifa and the Winds of Nationalism**

Haifa's demographic growth, as well as the growth in local economy, widened the scope of business relations between Arabs and Jews in the city. According to historian

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<sup>62</sup> Already in the 1916 secret agreement between Britain and France ("The Sykes-Picot Agreement"), the importance of Haifa to the British Empire was expressed in their wish to have Haifa under a special legal status in order to secure their control over the Hejaz Railway as their gateway to the Middle East and access to Iraqi oilfields (see Biger 2004:43-46; Norris 2013).

<sup>63</sup> Haifa was under British military rule since its occupation in 1918 and until the implementation of a civil administration in 1920. On 11 September 1922 the League of Nations officially gave Britain a mandate for control over the region.

<sup>64</sup> For further demographic statistics, see Gilbar (1988:52) and Yazbak (1998:89-111).

<sup>65</sup> For the city's Arab population growth in Mandatory Palestine times see also Vashitz (1988:113-118).

Yossef Vashitz (1987:25), such relations tightened in years of economic prosperity (1925–1926, 1933–1935), and decreased in years of violent clashes (1929, 1936–1939; see next section). During the 1936–1939 Arab Revolt, which mainly expressed rage at the increasing Jewish immigration to Palestine, the Arab leadership viewed the Jewish neighborhoods built in town as an attempt to besiege the local Arab population (Seikaly 1995:51). At the same time, the Jewish community treated the Arab neighborhoods, as well as the houses and properties of Arabs located in strategic ways, as a security threat (Vashitz 1987). According to sociologist Deborah Bernstein (2000), this should be understood in light of processes stemming from the national conflict. Nevertheless, Bernstein notes that Haifa’s uniqueness is evident, for example, in the fact that its Arab public did not fully participate in the general strike despite pressures from the national leadership in Jerusalem (ibid:60–62).<sup>66</sup> According to Vashitz (1987: 21), Haifa’s case shows that in non-violent periods financial interests were very much distinct from political interests and that in practice, some of the Palestinians in Haifa were those engaging in selling land to Jews, while at the same time objecting to Zionism and even expressing concerns about a Jewish takeover of the land. Meanwhile, some Jewish businessmen also disapproved of the outward, exclusionary talk among the Jewish organizations about “Hebrew work” and Hebrew products, which might be “offensive to Arab clients” (Bernstein 2000:23).

Overall, Bernstein notes (ibid:67–69), financial cooperation between Jews and Arabs in Mandatory Palestine Haifa was limited, found mainly among the bourgeoisie and the new middle class, which also voiced their reservation about the national segregation. She argues that while in times of prosperity business men could benefit from mutual

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<sup>66</sup> For more on Haifa’s Arab population during the Arab Revolt, see Seikaly (1995).

cooperation, in the labor market Jewish and Arab workers maintained direct competition, with every group fearing being ousted from work places. Generally speaking, among the working class no cooperation developed, with the exception of a handful of cases. Some workplaces in Haifa, especially those run by the British regime, had many Jewish workers working alongside Arab ones. Nevertheless, in Bernstein's study of the reciprocal relations in the city's work market, she found, for example, that in the port of Haifa, owned by the governmental sector and employing Jews and Arabs shoulder-to-shoulder in the very same jobs, the option of joint action only rarely became concrete (ibid:161). Bernstein also found that it was only in the Palestine Railway, where the British would not allow any side to have monopoly over work and work conditions, that joint Arab-Jewish action was made possible, though not without a constant tension between class interests and national priorities, elements forever at play (ibid:186-187).

Unlike historian Zachary Lockman's (1996) approach, which focused on analyzing co-operation in the labor market, Bernstein argues that we cannot ignore the dominant trend of segregation in both societies, Jewish and Arab, particularly after World War I, when the national identities of both communities became the strongest driving force. The national conflict, she argues, pervaded all aspects of life and involved lands, the population, sovereignty and employment, and therefore it cannot be concluded that reciprocal relations between the two societies invariably led to direct interaction and co-operation. The general picture emerging from her study is that of a work market marked by increasing segregation and borderline structuring between Jews and Arabs, mainly initiated by organized Hebrew labor, with segregation designed to protect Jewish workers

from competition (Bernstein 2000:207).<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, Bernstein also mentions that Jews and Arabs met outside the workplace, in the public transportation, for example, as well as in the market. However, unlike her Jaffa study (2007, 2008), in her Haifa research she does not look into these social arenas.<sup>68</sup>

### **Haifa in 1947-8**

The contemporary image of Arab-Jewish coexistence in Haifa covers a history of bloodshed that started a few decades before the dramatic events of 1947-8. Among the peaks of violence between Haifa's communities are the three days of attacks in 1929, which resulted in the killing of 17 Arabs and 7 Jews, wounding of dozens, flight of many others, and increased separation between Haifa's Jews and Arabs.<sup>69</sup> Nevertheless, most dramatic in Haifa's history of violence are the events of 1947-8.

The six months between November 1947 and April 1948 saw Haifa, a city of about 150,000 people, half of whom were Arab-Palestinians and the other half Jews, become a city with a Jewish majority ruling over an Arab-Palestinian minority of about 3,000 people. Of all the events leading to this dramatic shift, the one attributed decisive weight is the UN Partition Resolution of November 1947, which led to the escalation of Jewish-Arab hostilities across Mandatory Palestine, including Haifa.

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<sup>67</sup> See also De Vries (1994, 1999).

<sup>68</sup> For further reading about the common leisure spaces, see Hasan and Ayalon (2011) and Lev-Tov (forthcoming). For an instance of co-operation and competition in the business sector, see Abbasi and De Vries (2011), who analyze the production, distribution and consumption activity of oil and soap in Haifa. For a history of the cooperation between Jews and Arabs in Haifa's City Council, see Goren (2007, 2008).

<sup>69</sup> See Cohen (2013:18-20), Eshel (1978:36-91) and Kidron (2014).

The rising tension and violence were followed by a gradual departure mainly of Arabs from the city, which took place over several months and comprising several waves. With the end of the British Mandate and the withdrawal of the British forces from Haifa, on April 21<sup>st</sup> 1948, the city was conquered within 24 hours by the Haganah organization, one of the Zionist paramilitary forces. During the Haganah operation in the city, the departure of Arabs from the city accelerated, turning into a mass flight to the port, where runaways embarked on boats and headed north, to the direction of Acre, a voyage some of them did not survive.

There is general agreement among scholars on this sequence of events, except for the reasons that led to the exodus of Haifa's Arabs. While historian Ilan Pappé (2006) argues that there was an ethnic cleansing plan for Haifa (although it failed to achieve its goal in full), Goren (1996) argues that there was no deliberate process designed to expel Arabs, and that efforts were even made on the parts of different Jewish officials to prevent the mass departure of the city's Arabs during battles. Nevertheless, the evidence brought by Goren does not contradict the execution of *Operation Hametz*, a military operation that attested to intentions to break the Arab resistance and to instigate a flight from the Arab neighborhoods, channeling it to a single direction – the port.<sup>70</sup>

On these few days of April 1948 historian Yfaat Weiss writes (2011:11–12):

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<sup>70</sup> For more detailed accounts of events in Haifa, see Eshel (1978:300–379), Golani (2009:56–57, 71–75), Goren (1996), Khalidi (2008), Morris (2010:114–128, 140–141, 162–169), Pappé (2006:58–61, 92), Rabinowitz and Abu Baker (2005:30–35), Vashitz (1987:30–33) and Weiss (2011:9–36). For a recent discussion on the main trends, characteristics and consequences of Israeli and Palestinian memory and historiography of the 1948 War, see Aburabia (forthcoming), Hasan (forthcoming), Pessah (forthcoming), Sabbagh-Khoury (forthcoming) and Sela and Kadish (2016). For an analysis of the local Historians' Debate between local neo-nationalists and global post-nationalists, see Beinun (2005) and Ram (2005:139–164). For an analysis of the gaps between the Israeli and the Palestinian genres of Nakba discourses, see Jamal (2015).

Arab Haifa faded in an instant, in the blink of an eye [...]. The rapid, fleeting nature of events may perhaps explain the disturbing disparity between Haifa as a Palestinian symbol of the *nakba* (disaster) on the one hand, and its conventional image among Jewish Israelis as a shining example of Jewish–Arab coexistence, on the other.

The overwhelming majority of the Arabs that remained in the city were separated from the Jews, and concentrated in the neighborhood of Wadi Nisnas, some after having lost their properties. For a period of a year the Israeli police put them under strict supervision, which restricted their freedom of movement, imposed curfews, and issued routine searches and arrests. The rest of Haifa's Arabs became refugees – a minority of them within Israel, as domestic refugees, while the majority outside the state, prevented from returning and dispossessed of their assets. Palestinian refugees from Haifa and their offspring can be found today in refugee camps around the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Jordan and Lebanon, as well as in the USA, Canada and Europe, where they managed to obtain citizenship. The overall number of Haifa's refugees and their offspring is unofficially estimated today at about half a million.

While prior to the war Haifa's Palestinians had been socially relevant to their Jewish neighbors, the disappearance of their majority from the physical and social landscape was reflected also in their disappearance from their Jewish neighbors' memory and consciousness (Rabinowitz 2007:52). According to Rabinowitz (ibid:62), the memories of Haifa's Jews "is a clear case of national imperative that overrides whatever local ecumenical sensibilities that may have existed in Haifa, prior to 1948 or since." Rabinowitz (ibid:63) further argues that such amnesia and misrecognition should be interpreted as an early, almost instinctive attempt to negate the return of Palestinian refugees to Haifa.

Negation of Palestinians' return was not only a private mnemonic project. Shortly after the battles in town drew to an end and the Israeli state was established, the then Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion ordered the demolition of the Old City. His order was supposedly for development purposes, but historian Gilad Margalit (2014:233) suggests that the real reason was Ben-Gurion's desire to prevent the return of the Palestinian refugees to their properties. Due to mayor Shabtai Levi's refusal to execute the demolition plan (probably for the fear of compensation claims by the property owners), Ben-Gurion ordered the military to carry out his orders. Thus, between June and October 1948, *Operation Shikmona* was under way, resulting in the near total destruction of the Old City, with the exception of several churches and mosques and a few other buildings that remained standing.<sup>71</sup>

Some 15 years later, in 1963, when life in Haifa as a city with an Arab minority stabilized, the nonprofit Jewish–Arab center of Beit Hagefen was founded as a collaboration of Haifa municipality with the Israeli Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, and other funds and donators.<sup>72</sup> Since 1994, one of Beit Hagefen's key coexistence projects is the Holiday of Holidays festival, held in the city each December to mark the Muslim, Jewish and Christian holidays (see Beit Hagefen 2014). According to anthropologist Rolly Rosen (2011), on the one hand this festival can be seen as disregard for the problematic Jewish–Arab relationship in the city. As such it may be perceived as manifestation of the ongoing relations of domination, generating a false picture of brotherhood and amicability and

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<sup>71</sup> For further reading on the demolition of Haifa's old city, see Goren (1994), Kolodny (2012), Margalit (2014) and Pappé (2006:16). To compare with other demolitions of urban spaces in 1948, see Aleksandrowics (2013b, 2016) on the case of Manshiya neighbourhood in Jaffa, as well as Paz (1998) and Abbasi (2009) on the case of the old city of Tiberias.

<sup>72</sup> See [www.beit-hagefen.com](http://www.beit-hagefen.com).

cultivating these ties on a consumerist basis. On the other hand, she argues, the festival can be seen as manifesting acknowledgment, intercultural consciousness in the making and a “possible power base for the Arab community in Haifa” (ibid:43).<sup>73</sup>

At the same time, silencing the consequences of the 1947–8 events on Haifa's Arabs became a common practice among establishment bodies in the city. It was manifest, for example, in how city officials reacted to the prospect of running a series of exhibitions at the City Museum, dealing with these events with the intent to deviate from presenting them from the exclusively Zionist angle. This prospect, broached in 2007 by Dr. Rona Sela, the museum’s chief curator, yielded one exhibition, “Crossed Histories,” which was taken off the institute’s walls only four months after it opened, while Sela’s contract was not renewed at the end of her first year. According to Natour and Giladi (2011), this conduct shows that museum officials took great pains to ensure the museum’s programs reflected the Zionist narrative, and excluded the Palestinian alternative. Haifa, Natour and Giladi (ibid:157) write, “is a city whose leadership boasts of ‘co-existence’ among the different segments of the local population but at the same time ignores the tragedy that befell the city’s Palestinian inhabitants, and the city as a whole, in 1948.”<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> See also Peled Bartal 2001.

<sup>74</sup> See also Sela (2013). For more on Haifa’s institutional disregard of the city’s Arab past, see Margalit (2014); On how Haifa's cityscape serves as a site of struggle over memory of 1947-8 events in Haifa see Kolodney (2016); For a wider aspect of silencing the Palestinian experience of 1948, see Kadman (2015); For an analysis of activist groups working to preserve the Palestinian experience, see Gutman (2016).

## Haifa's Hadar Neighborhood

As early as before World War I, some of the land on which Hadar neighborhood was built was purchased by Zionist Jews from Arabs. Arthur Ruppin, a leader in the Zionist Movement, coordinated between Zionist bodies in order to purchase the lands (Aharonowitz 1958:29). In 1921, after construction had already begun, members of Hadar HaCarmel's provisional board wrote a letter to the *Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael* (Jewish National Fund) stating that Hadar was designed to be a Hebrew neighborhood that would bring together all the Jews scattered around the Arab neighborhoods in Haifa, forming a stronghold that might guarantee their steady standing in the city (quoted in Aharonowitz 1958:44). About a decade before, in 1909, the first neighborhood of the city of Tel-Aviv was established with a similar ideology, as a "European style, Hebrew, modern urban neighborhood near the city of Jaffa" (Katz 1984:161).<sup>75</sup> By the end of the 1930s, when the ethno-national separation became commonplace, only a small percentage of Haifa Jews, most of them Mizrahi, remained in the mixed neighborhoods (Bernstein 2000:65).

In 1921, according to Aharonowitz (1958:278), of about 25,000 residents in Haifa about 200 lived in Hadar. A decade later, in 1931, Hadar was home to about 6,500 residents, which a year later, grew to roughly 9,000. By 1938 the neighborhood's population reached 33,000 residents, and in 1939 these grew to 36,000 out of 100,000 residents in the entire city.

Not only did the neighborhood of Hadar epitomize the separatist aspirations of its founders, in residential segregation as well as in enforcing the employment of exclusively

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<sup>75</sup> See also Hart 2014.

Jewish workers (Bernstein 2000:95), it also possessed an authority almost independent of Haifa's municipality. With the exclusion of granting construction permits – a power that remained in the hands of the central municipality – the Hadar Board was sovereign to collect taxes from local residents, money that served to fund, for example, water supply from the water tower built in the neighborhood, as well as pavement of roads, installing benches, building schools and maintaining them. Vashitz (1987:25) notes that as part of the debate in the Jewish leadership between the “autonomist” trend of independence from the municipality and a “statist” trend of integrating in it, Haifa had an intermediate model of a shared framework alongside autonomous ones, the likes of Hadar Board. At one point, as Vashitz writes, Ben Gurion interfered in the dispute and supported integration, saying: “The national interest calls for Haifa to have a single municipality, acknowledging the key importance of the city and the need to politically occupy it” (quoted in Vashitz 1987:25). Nonetheless, Goren (2008) describes the series of pressures put on Haifa municipality by the Hadar Board in order to receive various benefits, budgets, and special permits that established Hadar's status as something more than a neighborhood and a bit less than an autonomous municipal authority.

Despite these intentions and efforts, Hadar neighborhood was never exclusively Jewish. Since its establishment, the lower parts of the neighborhood were inhabited by Arabs, too, and throughout the years, their population in the neighborhood as property owners and renters grew steadily. As Ben-Artzi (1996:289) shows, in 1972, 1.8% of Hadar's residents were Arabs, and their presence grew to 4.9% in 1983, and 8.4% in 1992.

The growth of Arabs' presence in Hadar took place simultaneously with the neighborhood's loss of status as Haifa's city center with flourishing businesses and culture life. In the 1970s and 1980s several processes had their effect on the neighborhood: infrastructure was not regularly maintained and suffered from neglect; shopping malls were built outside the neighborhood, damaging business life in Hadar; The Technion moved its faculties out of Hadar, and with it both students and faculty members moved to its new location in Neve Sha'anani; and residents who wished to upgrade their living standards, moved to neighborhoods further uphill. The result was a deepening process of underdevelopment, growing sense of neglect and insecurity, and decline in real-estate value. During the 1990s, with the wave of 1 million immigrants from the former Soviet Union, many of them settled in Hadar upon their arrival, and those who could afford it – moved out several years later. With around 50% of the neighborhood residents living there as renters,<sup>76</sup> the neighborhood came to be known as a transit neighborhood.



Image 5: Hadar Neighborhood, Downtown Haifa, and Haifa Port

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<sup>76</sup> Haifa Municipality's Statistical Year Book (2010).

In a survey conducted in 2005 with about 140 residents of Hadar – Hebrew, Arabic and Russian speakers – most respondents indicated that their neighborhood was in a process of decline.<sup>77</sup> For many respondents, the advantages of the neighborhood were cheap and accessible shopping (even if of low quality), and good transportation to destinations outside the neighborhood (for work, studies and leisure). The neighborhood's downsides were the noticeable neglect, deteriorating infrastructure (dirty streets, broken sidewalks and roads, lack of services and activities for a variety of ages), lack of jobs, and crime rates (break-ins, drugs, violence, prostitution) generating a general sense of insecurity. Regarding social relations in their neighborhood, replies ranged from “excellent” and “harmonious relations” (sometimes with indication of the ethno-national identity of neighbors, thereby highlighting the level of mutual tolerance), through indicating instrumental relations or even indifference to one's neighbors, to fear of various criminals without indicating a particular ethno-national identity. Several respondents indicated a specific group with which they do not get along. When asked directly about their feelings regarding multiculturalism in the neighborhood, responses ranged from noting indifference to diversity, to indicating how despite the diversity the members of different groups do not really intermingle, to either being enchanted by living in a multicultural surrounding, or being disturbed by it (usually noting the group that the speaker dislikes). Some respondents indicated they wished things would be like they used to be 50 years before, when the neighborhood was more homogenous.

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<sup>77</sup> The survey was conducted by anthropology students at Haifa University. I thank Dr Amalia Sa'ar and her students for giving me access to the data they collected and for allowing me to use it here.

Following the processes which deteriorated Hadar's image from its perceived glory days in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century to a slum in recent decades, there has been a growing talk since the early 2000s about the need to "renew" and "revitalize" the neighborhood. Several plans were presented, either by the municipality or by private planners, all aiming to renovate and revitalize the public sphere in order to attract "young population," while disregarding current residents, not taking into account their needs and desires. Examining some of these plans reveals that by "young population," the planners – all Jews – imagine middle class Ashkenazi Jews, their age being irrelevant. The plans which were adopted by the municipality were never fully implemented.

Although Hadar's plans for renewal were never fully translated into investment in infrastructure and renovation of the public sphere, they did contribute to changes in population. Since the mid-2000s several organized groups of predominantly young Ashkenazi Jews moved to the neighborhood, whether as a result of subsidies sponsored collaboratively by the state, the municipality, and NPOs, or independently.<sup>78</sup> Some of these groups became active in the neighborhood (in some cases in return for the subsidies they received), and managed to push for several minor-scale projects of renovating a single street or a street corner.<sup>79</sup>

Concurrently with the growth of organized groups being introduced to Hadar, the number of Arab residents (arriving independently), kept growing. Nine decades after its

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<sup>78</sup> Among these groups are the communes of several youth movements and their graduates, the Student Village, the Jewish Religious Community, and others. Overall they comprise around 300 residents in contemporary Hadar, mostly orchestrated by "Hadar Community," a nonprofit municipal corporation that was established by Haifa Municipality in 2000, mainly to lead the various renewal initiatives in the neighborhood (see Chapters 3 and 6).

<sup>79</sup> In 2014, for example a petition was presented to the municipality calling to renovate infrastructure in the neighborhood (*Colbo*, April 25<sup>th</sup> 2014, p. 20), following which renovations of a single street and several other minor projects took place (*Colbo*, January 2<sup>nd</sup> 2015, p. 16; *Colbo*, March 27<sup>th</sup> 2015, p. 28).

establishment, during the time when this research was conducted in the neighborhood, the Haifa Municipality Statistical Year Book (2012) showed that 30% of Haifa's Arabs lived in Hadar, constituting 23% of the neighborhood's total population of 37,600, and marking a 4% growth from their slice in the neighborhood's residents as a whole about a decade before.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> During that time Arabs in the whole of Haifa constituted 10.3% of the city's population of 270 thousand, compared to 8.8% by the end of 2001 (a roughly 1.4% rise per annum) (Haifa Municipality Statistical Year Book 2012). Among Hadar's Arabs there is almost identical proportion of Christians and Muslims, and a Druze minority.

## CHAPTER 2

### **Narrating Coexistence History:**

#### **Discourse of Separation in Haifa Walking Tours**

##### ***Introduction: Coexistence as Discourse of Separation***

This chapter presents a series of walking tours in the city of Haifa and analyzes how most descriptions of past coexistence are outlined in them under the contemporary hegemonic discourse of separation in order to maintain the social-moral bond among their audience. As I will show, most of the tour guides exclude from the description of social relations in Haifa's history two social situations that are not commensurate with the prevailing discourse of separation: inter-communal violence on the one hand, and the dissolution of perceived distinctions between communities on the other hand. Ultimately, analysis of the city tours shows that participants not only learn about the city's history of social relations between Jews and Arabs, but also on contemporary discourse of separation with its widespread taboos in the Jewish society in Israel regarding these relations.

This chapter is based on my participation in a variety of walking tours in Haifa – institutional and non-institutional, guided by professionals and amateurs, Jews and Arabs – all describing the history of social relations in the city. In the next section I will present the tours I participated in as well as the methodological foundations for my

analysis. The following sections will analyze the narrative techniques used by the tour guides to portray social relations in the city's history. This shows that the discursive context within which the tours take place guides their narrative, and that describing the past by using present day terminology positions the tour guides as knowledge mediators who seek to maintain social and moral cohesion among their audiences.



Image 6: A Walking Tour in Haifa, Wadi Nisnas

### ***Haifa Walking Tours, 2007-2012***

Between 2007 and 2012 I joined 12 tours from which I learned both about the city's history of social relations and about the practice of presenting this history. I recorded most tours using a home video camera, shooting almost incessantly from my position as a tour participant. Analyzing the videos alongside my written field-notes,

where I mostly described interactions that had not been filmed, allowed me to examine the link between things said, sights presented and the interaction between guides and the audience. In two of the tours I wasn't granted permission to film and therefore documented them in writing only.<sup>81</sup>

The guides in these tours, some leading more than one tour, were Shadi, Talli, Gideon, Wiam, Ali, Baruch, Sami and Alon – four Arabs and four Jews, with just one woman.<sup>82</sup> Only in the case of Baruch, who works for the local Tourist Bureau, guiding is a primary source of livelihood. For the rest of the guides, leading tours is an occasional activity. Some of them do it for wages, others as volunteers. Several of them are also involved in conducting independent research on the city's history, publishing their findings and giving lectures.<sup>83</sup> While all the tour guides have over the years gained substantial knowledge about the city's history, two of them – Shadi and Talli, a Palestinian man and a Jewish woman – are also trained in architecture; therefore, in the tours they led they mainly focused on architectural developments in Haifa. Only two of the tour guides – Shadi and Ali – are natives of Haifa. Both of them were born to Arab-Palestinian families who have their roots in the city. Their families, one Christian and the other Muslim, were part of the Haifa bourgeoisie until the 1948 war, during which they were dispossessed, with many of their members becoming refugees. In the tours they guided, they occasionally shared some of their family stories.

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<sup>81</sup> For methodological background and historic analysis of the use of motion picture recording as an anthropological study tool, see, for example, Collier and Collier (1986), Pink (2013) and Ruby (2000).

<sup>82</sup> In her research on tour guides in Genoa, Italy, anthropologist Emanuela Guano (2015:170) argues that the field of local history there is predominantly masculine. This, she argues, may negatively impact the legitimacy of women tour guides, which nevertheless dominate the profession there. In Haifa, the field of local history is dominated by men, too, but so does the tour-guiding field. Nevertheless, in this research I did not examine how gender works in the relation between the two fields.

<sup>83</sup> For other cases of tour guides, who are also involved in conducting independent research, see Wynn (2011) on guides in New-York City, and Guano (2015) on guides in Genoa.

Nine of the tours I participated in were held as satellite activities of two exhibitions running in Haifa City Museum.<sup>84</sup> The first exhibit dealt with the history of Haifa during the British Mandate period,<sup>85</sup> and the other revolved around the language war waged in the early 1900s among members of the Jewish public in Palestine.<sup>86</sup> The tours held by the museum were paid tours, attracting 20–30 Jewish Israeli participants, men and women of all ages, typically middle-aged and of European descent. Some participants arrived with notebooks, which they filled with their handwriting during the tours, and others recorded the tour guides using tape recorders or cameras, taking photos of the different sites. From casual conversations I held with participants during the tours I learned that it was curiosity and interest regarding Haifa’s history that brought them to participate in these tours, partly because some of them resided in the city or had lived there in the past. On several occasions, some of the participants who were raised in Haifa spontaneously intervened in the tour guides’ explanations to share their personal stories with the rest of the audience.

In this chapter I will mainly focus on the nine tours that were the more institutional ones, i.e., those organized by the museum as well as the tour led by Baruch from the Tourist Bureau. Throughout the chapter I will also compare these tours with three others that were not held under the auspices of establishment bodies. Two of the latter tours were held in front of a mixed Jewish and Arab crowd: one organized by "Zochrot,"<sup>87</sup> to mark the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of modern Haifa, and guided by Sami and Alon (Arab and Jewish respectively), and the other one, guided by Wiam, was held as

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<sup>84</sup> The museum works under "Haifa Museums," one of Haifa Municipality’s Community Interest Companies (CIC).

<sup>85</sup> The exhibition ran in the Haifa City Museum between October 2010 and July 2011, under the title "On His Majesty’s Service" (Curator: Inbar Dror Lax).

<sup>86</sup> This exhibition ran in Haifa City Museum between March and July 2011 (Curator: Svetlana Reingold).

<sup>87</sup> "Zochrot" is an Israeli NGO established in 2002, working mostly to promote "Israeli Jewish society's acknowledgement of and accountability for the ongoing injustices of the Nakba and the re-conceptualization of Return as the imperative redress of the Nakba" (zochrot.org).

part of a conference that took place in Haifa and dealt with the Right of Return of Palestinian refugees and the establishment of a “secular-democratic state in Palestine.” Of all of the tours I observed, this was the only one presented in Arabic (and translated to English). The rest were held in Hebrew. Even though these two tours can be defined as having an explicit political content, and surely perceived as such by their participants, I will show how all tours I participated in reflected a political agenda, whether explicitly or implicitly. The third non-establishment tour I participated in was a private one, led for me and another participant, and guided by Ali.

The tours analyzed here lasted between 2 to 4 hours, and some of them visited the same locations, mostly downtown and in the neighborhood of Hadar. Nevertheless, each tour had its own theme: from delving deep into the history of modern Haifa, through a narrower focus on subjects such as the Zionist undergrounds during Mandatory Palestine, the tale of Hebraic Haifa, or the Nakba of the city’s Arab residents. Although only a few tours focused explicitly on Jewish–Arab relations in the city, social relations in the city featured in all of them.

Some of the guides arrived to the tours carrying a backpack with books, booklets or ring binders, from which photographs, paintings or sketches were presented for the audience, contributing visual images (historical photos or architectural plans) about the place we visited, or otherwise with texts featuring paragraphs from a poem or a novel read out in an effort to get participants into the spirit of the historic period under discussion. As will become evident throughout the chapter, the contents of the tours attest to the ample knowledge possessed by the guides and their familiarity with literature about the city’s history, to which some had even made a contribution. Moreover, from the guides’ explanations about Ottoman Haifa it was evident that many

of them were assisted by historian Alex Carmel's *Ottoman Haifa* (2002), first published in 1969, which has been translated into three languages and printed in four editions to date. Carmel's book is based on a ground-breaking, in-depth study on Haifa in that period (see Chapter 1). Due to the common use of Carmel's book during tours, evident in the almost identically worded descriptions borrowed from it, I shall also examine how it was used and analyze several instances where information from the book was not mentioned in the tours.

### ***Present-ing Haifa's History of Coexistence***

We are confined to ways of describing whatever is described. Our universe, so to speak, consists of these ways rather than of a world or of worlds (Goodman 1978:3).

No history writing takes place in a void, let alone in Israel/Palestine (Bernstein, 2000:xv).

In his "Theses on the Philosophy of History," Walter Benjamin (2007:255) states that "Every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably." He also wrote: "History is the subject of a structure whose site is not homogenous, empty time, but time filled by the presence of the now" (ibid:261). The affect of the present on the configuration of History is echoed in the form and content of the tours analyzed in this chapter.

Formulating Haifa's social history according to present day hegemonic discourse of separation in Israel had two main mechanisms in the tours: in terms of form, they focused on what can be seen: on architecture styles and what remained of the wider built environment; with regards to content, they focused on mutually-exclusive religious, ethno-national and class categories. Regarding the latter mechanism, as social

agents of the contemporary discourse of separation, the tour guides outlined their narratives based on (1) segregation between Jews and Arabs; (2) blurring religious, ethno-national, and class differences among them; and (3) describing social relations that failed to abide by religious and ethno-national segregation only when it was possible to frame them as the outcome of business interests. The few situations when cross-sectional interpersonal relations were presented independently of business interests were either presented as anecdotes, or spontaneously shared by tour participants. This allowed to voice narratives that revealed alternative forms of sociality, which contradicts both historical and contemporary mechanisms of segregation between communities and of unification within them.<sup>88</sup>

In examining how the discourse of separation works through the tour guides as its social agents, I rely on a prevalent constructivist approach, which argues that history does not exist prior to an intervention of a human hand in revealing, filtering, formulating and forming the narrative. It is always as an outcome of power relations. Nevertheless, this perspective does not undermine the foundations of the positivist approach to history. In analyzing the construction of the historic narrative, my intention is not to challenge the factuality of details featuring therein, but rather to explore the narratives process of creation by those who formulate them post factum.

This research agenda derives from anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot's approach to historical study (1995). According to Trouillot, between the mechanical realistic extreme and the naïve constructivist one, lies the more important task, of

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<sup>88</sup> The relation between the type of empirical materials and the nature of arguments deducible from them has been discussed extensively in the academic literature, mainly in social history and historical anthropology (see, for example, Burke 1992; Cohn 1980; Comaroff & Comaroff 1992; Eley 2005; Trouillot 1995; White 1985). In the local context, Fatma Kassem (2011), for example, shows how thanks to conducting interviews with Palestinian women in their personal sphere, she could successfully present both an alternative narrative to the hegemonic discourse, as well as the Palestinian women as possessing an active agency that manifests resistance.

attempting to figure out how history works, rather than determining what it is (ibid:28). Trouillot argues that it is only through focusing on the creation process of the historical narrative that we can reveal how both sides of historicity work together in a certain context and through various players that participate in the process, tour guides among them (ibid:25, 52). Trouillot's approach is based on his analysis of the historiography of the Haitian Revolution (1791–1804), the only slave revolution that succeeded in the New World. His analysis shows how this revolution has been silenced in Western historiography because it was unthinkable when it occurred and thus became a non-event and a story that could not be told. "Silences," Trouillot argues,

enter the process of historical production at four crucial moments: the moment of fact creation (the making of *sources*); the moment of fact assembly (the making of *archives*); the moment of fact retrieval (the making of *narratives*); and the moment of retrospective significance (the making of *history* in the final instance) (ibid:26; italics in source).

In contrast to Trouillot, what I examine here is not the sources, or modes of collection. Rather, I focus my inquiry on how sources are being retrieved, presented and acceptance in a social context that is different from that of their creation. As I will show, while the intensification of the discourse of separation (see Chapter 1) can explain discrepancies between the existing historiography and the modes of its presentation during the tours, the differences between the tours themselves depend on the context of the tours – whether they were institutional or non-institutional. In the discussion section of this chapter I will further elaborate on Trouillot's analysis, and argue that since the social context keeps changing – and with it, the moments of historical production change, too – it should also be assumed that historical narratives are also in a constant flux.

In order to demonstrate this social mechanism I shall start where all of the tours began: with a discussion of Haifa's history of spatial demography. More specifically, I examine how modern Haifa is portrayed as a segregated city from its inception.

### ***"High Fences Make Good Neighbors"***

*Winter 2007: the Israeli Sociology Society is holding its annual conference at the Haifa University, and one of its satellite events is a city tour led by Baruch, a qualified tour guide with the Ministry of Tourism. Roughly twenty of the conference attendants arrive at the tour's departure point in the university parking lot. The bus is already waiting here, not far from one of Mount Carmel's peaks, to take us through the upper Carmel neighborhoods, then downtown and back to the university.*

*This is my first visit to Haifa in years. As the bus drives outside the university's gates, and as Baruch – a Jewish man in his fifties – monotonously recounts the tale of Haifa, I realize this is my first encounter with the histories and populations of the city. I am fascinated from the first moment, and although I still have no idea where my research would take me – I start documenting Baruch's explanations.*

*He starts by explaining that modern Haifa had been built in 1761 by the Bedouin ruler Daher Al-Omar. Daher Al-Omar, he says, erected his government building at a spot that "formed a borderline of sorts between the different populations and religious sects that have made up Haifa from its very inception."*

With this general statement, which re-emerged in different forms along most of the city tours to which I joined in subsequent years, Baruch presented a historical

narrative that entangles the establishment of modern Haifa with the spatial separation between its communities.

*As the bus descends further down the road, heading to the Carmel center on its way to the neighborhoods of Hadar and Wadi Nisnas, Baruch attempts to continue the general historical account of the city. However, one of the tour participants, a sociologist from Haifa, keeps interrupting him, asking him to describe the area the bus was traveling through. When Baruch fails to provide an impromptu explanation that meets her approval, she walks to the front of the bus, insisting on providing the account herself. Baruch hands her the microphone and so she becomes our tour guide for a few moments.*

*Following a brief introduction into her Haifa biography, which featured a childhood in Hadar neighborhood, then across the Carmel, she assumes a didactic tone for a more general explanation of the town's social stratification, spicing her accounts with sociological terminology: "Given the climate differences, we can see population groups and economic status groups clearly advancing uphill." Her statements suggests that Haifa's demography shows a correlation between class and topography, and that more financial means allowed living higher up the mountain and away from the seafront, where the climate is milder.*

*As the bus draws near Hadar, she goes on to refer to her childhood neighborhood:*

*The main Jewish area was developed here. It was a very good neighborhood, built as a garden-city in the 1920s. It had a strong population, which over time moved to the Carmel. When describing Hadar over the last few years, people have been saying that on the one hand – from [the direction of] Ge'ula neighborhood – you have orthodox Jews coming in, while on the other – from [the direction of] Abbas neighborhood – you have Arabs coming, with elderly people passing away; and then came the Russian Aliya [immigration] and assumed a strong spot in the middle, inside Hadar.*

Pursuing a similar line offered by Baruch, the sociologist described the history of the town's populations as being ethno-nationally and religiously segregated, with Hadar becoming mixed in recent years. Interestingly, she used "strength" as another distinguishing social variable. Presumably, strength indicates a combination of economic class, status (as far as education and social affinity to the hegemony, for example), and political power. In practice, such combination was characteristic of the Ashkenazi-secular-Jewish population that established Hadar, dominated the neighborhood for several decades, and managed over the years to upgrade its status and move elsewhere as the neighborhood started to decline. At the time of the tour, the term "strong populations" was commonly employed in discussions on how to bring back Hadar's glory days after the neighborhood declined following the arrival of "weak populations." In the various plans for the neighborhood's renewal, the introduction of "strong populations" was a main mechanism, implicitly referring to middle class Ashkenazi Jews again (see chapter 5).

*Having concluded her account, the sociologist returns to her seat while Baruch asks the driver to stop for a moment at a lookout point over Haifa Bay, so as to resume the historic account he had prepared in advance. As he points to the place where modern Haifa had been founded, he returns to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, explaining how the city had been divided, from that time to the mid 1900s. According to his account, the west part was inhabited by Christians, the east by Muslims, and "over time," he says, "as the Jewish community develops, it moves south, to the mountain."*

Baruch gave no clue about where the Jews lived in the city before their community developed. In a tour led by Gideon, some more information was shared. Gideon noted, too, that the old city was a casbah divided into a Christian area and a

Muslim area, but he also mentioned a tiny Jewish area to boot. He noted that around 10,000 residents had lived within the walls, "including roughly a thousand Jews, almost all of them Mizrahi at the time." Despite the fact that most Jews were culturally close to the rest of the Arab residents in the city (see Chapter 1), Gideon and the other guides' accounts mark the religious differentiation as more significant than the ethnic-cultural one.

For Baruch, for example, a significant moment in the city took place when the Jews moved out and up the mountain because it created "three clearly-marked residential areas." According to him,

Until '48 it is very, very clear; how shall I put it? It seems high fences make good neighbors. All in all, this segregation proves helpful, generating a really good neighborliness. And there's also the economical insight: this city hasn't got that much to offer as far as holy places, and to maintain a functioning economy you need industrial peace, so this is another factor in this town's coexistence.

According to Baruch, the separation between Haifa's populations is not only the source for the city's coexistence, but also a condition for its economic success. Although he overlooked the stratifying aspects pointed to by the sociologist only minutes before, when referring to the city's "industrial peace" his narrative implied that the economy would have been compromised without the segregation between different populations. Nevertheless, Baruch's generalizations were incompatible with studies and testimonies attesting to the existence of a mixed labor market in Mandatory Palestine times, alongside a mixed layer of wealthy people, acting to promote the business interests of its members, as well as shared spheres of mundane life, leisure and culture consumption (see Chapter 1). All these offered opportunities for cross-sector interactions and joint activities, even as they declined with the rising national conflict that reached its peak in 1948.

It was almost self evident to use such generalizations from that lookout point, with the topographical and temporal distancing it offered.<sup>89</sup> However, as the tour continued, and as the distancing decreased, the generalizations in Baruch's description remained the same, and separation between communities was presented as relevant to street-level interactions of contemporary Haifa.

*From the lookout point Baruch leads us to Beit Hagefen, the Jewish–Arab center founded in 1963 in an area perceived to be on the “seam line” [Kav HaTefer, in Hebrew] between Arabs and Jews, between the neighborhoods of Wadi Nisnas and Wadi Salib in the lower parts of the city, and the neighborhood of Hadar in the upper part. As we gather outside Beit Hagefen's building, Baruch explains:*

*The east-west axis passing through here, from Hagefen Street, on to Shabtai Levi Street, via what is now known as Hassan Shukri Street, is the seam line between the Arab settlement, including Muslims and Christians, at the lower part, and the Jews, at the upper part. It is along this seam, as Mandatory Palestine started ruling Haifa, that the British built the lion's share of their institutions. [...] And so it becomes a sort of neutral ground between the Arabs, generally situated below, and the Jews, who sit above.*

With this description, which draws the seam line as an imagined line of separation between Jews and Arabs, and which marks Haifa's coexistence as a status quo of absence of affinity or animosity, Baruch concluded addressing the relationships between Haifa's populations.

About one kilometer east of Beit Hagefen, at a spot located on the same seam line, is where one of the tours guided by Shadi started. Explaining about the gathering spot, Shadi, a Haifa-born Palestinian guide in his fifties, employed a similar terminology, noting, as his hands pointed in the directions he described:

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<sup>89</sup>Outlook points, according to Feldman (2007:362) are preferred in the Israeli hiking scene since they depict "desire toward domination through distancing and visual superiority."

We are standing at a highly historic point in Haifa, known as the Seam Line. We are actually at the seam line between the neighborhood of Hadar HaCarmel, to our south, which is the main historic Jewish neighborhood in Haifa, and a physical, non-virtual line is drawn between east and west, separating Hadar HaCarmel from the Arab neighborhoods.

According to Shadi and the other guides, the seam line is an outcome of the expansion beyond the old city walls, with new, separate neighborhoods built outside it. Their accounts paint a process where the seam line inside the wall-surrounded city was shifted to the residential areas that materialized outside of it: from a line separating between the old city's quarters to a line separating between the new neighborhoods.

Despite the detailed information offered in Alex Carmel's book about close ties between Mizrahi Jews and Muslims on the one hand, and animosity between Christian and Muslim Arabs on the other (see Chapter 1), both were absent from the narrative offered during the tours I participated in. This helped to establish accounts of Jewish-Arab division, while implying similarity between Christian and Muslim Arabs.

It was only during the non-establishment tour guided by Wiam that the description of segregated social life in the wall-surrounded city was disrupted, hinting at the difficulty of portraying the social relations there as conforming to any sort of boundaries raised by spatial divisions within them.

*With thirty people in tow, Wiam lead the group under his guidance from the seam line area to the place where the old city stood, in order to describe its fate. Wiam explains how after 1948 fights in the city were over, Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion ordered to demolish the old city and leave only the churches and mosques untouched. Throughout the following decades, on the ruins of the residential and regime buildings, some office buildings, including government offices, were built, a main road was paved and a parking lot was opened.*

*A few meters walk from there, near the parking lot, Wiam asks the participants to note how they had just unheedingly travelled across from what had used to be the Christian area to the former Muslim area. This proximity, he notes, attested that the social ties must have been very close, but he doesn't elaborate any further.*

### ***Expanding outside the Walls: From Religious to Class Distinctions***

The discourse of separation also guided much of the descriptions of settling outside the city walls. The first settlement is attributed in the guided tours to the Templars, the members of a German Protestant sect who arrived in Haifa on October 1868 and founded the German Colony a few hundred meters west of the city walls. According to Carmel (2002:111), "A ten-minute walk from the western gate of the city, the Templars built a model colony. [...] In no time, they stimulated the imitating urge of many locals with their European methods." As described in the tours, it was a few decades later, as the walls started falling apart, that Arab residents started building outside the walls as well. Here is how Gideon described it:

The local Arabs, Haifa's people, saw there was a colony, prospering in peace, with no harm done to its residents. That is: neither bandits nor beasts of prey attacked them. In short, living outside the walls was possible. And then a construction process commenced, a process known as "expanding outside the walls," which took place in Jerusalem as well as in other cities around the country and in Haifa too. The Arabs started building at the axis along Jaffa Street, as it was the main road leading out of the wall-surrounded city towards Jaffa.

In the tour guided by Tali, she emphasized, too, socio-cultural differentiation in the process of expanding outside the walls. "As soon as they expanded outside the walls," she explained, "they started ascending: the Muslims climbed up to Wadi Salib, while the Jews climbed up to Hadar HaCarmel, among other places." In Gideon's account, religious distinctions dating back to life inside the walls were added with class-

distinctions with the expansion outside the walls. In Jaffa Street, he recounted, it was the Christians who were building, as they

were always more educated, and more business-minded, than the Muslim population. [...] As the process of expansion outside the walls began, it was this direction [west] that the Christians took, building their neighborhoods and churches, while the Muslims built eastward. Over there, there were more slums, while over here there were more affluent neighborhoods.

Among those who pulled their weight in founding neighborhoods outside the walls were Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, who arrived to Palestine between 1904 and 1914 with the immigration wave known as *The Second Aliyah*. This is how Gideon described those of them arriving to Haifa, and forced, temporarily, to defy the logic of the city's spatial demography:

First they settled in the German Colony, as well as downtown; over at the downtown – it was those who had no choice, among the crowded conditions and the Arabs. Anyone who had money, and could find a flat to rent from the Germans, out of town – had luck on their side, and lived among the Germans. Then they wanted to build their own Jewish neighborhood [...]. They were secular by that time, but culturally they wanted [to cultivate] the Hebrew.

Gideon's version is somewhat different from the following account, found in Carmel's book, which, as mentioned before, was one of Gideon's sources of information:

Back then, those among the Jews who had means, including some well-to-do Sephardi families, lived as tenants in the Templar houses at the German Colony, while the remaining Ashkenazi dwelled in the superb, western quarter in town. Many of them never set foot in the "Jews Street" alleys – the poor abode of most Sephardis.<sup>90</sup> Even the few members of the intelligentsia among the latter, those two or three senior officials from the Hejaz Railway management and the head of the Ottoman Bank branch, were descended from European Turkey, and had no stake in the cause of the local Mizrahi Jews (Carmel, 2002:144).

This account is yet another opportunity to see how the Mizrahi–Ashkenazi divide is described differently by Gideon differently from Carmel's account. In Carmel's account,

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<sup>90</sup> Sepharadis (or: Sepharadim) was the term used for Mizrahi Jews (or: Mizrahim). In today's colloquial Hebrew the two terms may be interchangeable, however they differ politically: while Sepharadim marks a cultural difference from Ashkenazim (originally based on different religious traditions within Judaism), Mizrahim marks a social distance (mostly in terms of institutional discrimination) from Ashkenazim (thereby returning the term Sepharadim as apolitical).

the Jews are divided according to ethno-class distinctions (Ashkenazi Jews are described as well-to-do while most Mizrahis are poor), resulting in a spatial separation between Ashkenazi and Mizrahi Jews. In Gideon's account, the ethno-class distinction within the Jewish community is replaced by national-class distinctions between Jews and Arabs. Moreover, marker of impurity is shifted from the Mizrahi area of residence to the Arabs' settlement area.

According to Gideon's account, when economic means presented no obstacle for Jewish immigrants, their settlement pattern expressed a spatial order marked by segregation from local Arabs and European Christians alike. This, he argued, served as the background to the establishment of Herzliya, Haifa's first Hebrew neighborhood, in 1907. Two of Herzliya's entrepreneurs were Jewish immigrants, one from Turkey, the other from Syria. According to Gideon, the first of whom, Shabtai Levi (who later became Haifa's mayor), "came to live in Haifa, realized that the Jews were renting from the Arabs or the Germans [...] and so he came up with a proposal to some Haifa folks he was in touch with: let's build a neighborhood for Jews, outside the Arab and German ones." The other one, Raphael Hakim, described by Gideon as a "Mizrahi Jew," heard Levi's proposal and suggested to have the neighborhood built on the land he had purchased.

In one of the tours led by Shadi, he, too, introduced class distinction as a key factor in the process of expanding outside the walls and the growing-apart of populations. According to his account, even as early as 1908, before the well-to-do Arab-Christian population left the walled city to settle in the nearby Jaffa Street, Salim Khouri, one of the wealthiest members of the community, purchased a lot of land farther uphill on Mount Carmel, laying there the foundation stone to the Al-Burj neighborhood,

not far from the castle built by Daher Al-Omar, in the area that later came to mark the seam line. Other Christian-Arab investors followed Khouri and came to the area, including brothers Gabriel and Michael Touma, two merchants who had purchased a piece of land close to Khouri's, where they built their large mansions.

From Shadi's account it emerges that the process of expanding outside the walls was the outcome of an ethno-class turn taking place in the city; a turn facilitated mainly by the Hejaz Railway launch in the early 1900s, by the end of the Ottoman rule. Soon thereafter, in the early days of the British rule, it was decided to develop industry in Haifa, as well as a deep water port. According to Shadi, following these developments Haifa experienced massive economic prosperity, manifested, among other things, in demographic growth. "All in all", Shadi noted, "everyone in Haifa enjoyed this prosperity, Jews and Arabs alike, and the real estate entrepreneurships thrived like never before in the entire country."

A prominent manifestation of the real estate entrepreneurship during the British rule was described during the tours when we reached the downtown area. There, it was explained, land was purchased by Jewish entrepreneurs, first in 1923, in order to build a commercial center, and about a decade later, with the deep-water port's inauguration in 1933, in order to build another commercial center. These commercial centers were described as standing in the eye of the storm during times of Jewish-Arab tensions (particularly in 1929, in 1936-39 and in 1947-48), but no further information was shared about these tensions, and no description was provided on the everyday life in these commercial centers in times of calm.

The establishment of new neighborhoods in Haifa made it easier for the guides to avoid direct engagement with conflicts and cross-community interactions, as their

founding had always been marked by imagined separatist ethno-national and class features. The striking example of that is the founding of Hadar as a Jewish, Ashkenazi neighborhood of the middle and higher classes. According to Shadi, the building and developing of Hadar is the most impressive story of “Haifa’s Jewish side,” from the founding of Hadar Board in 1921 to the immigration of leading architects, who generated a significant construction momentum in the neighborhood, particularly between 1931 and 1939. According to Talli, in 1921 forty residents lived in Hadar (of about 25,000 in the entire city). A decade later, in 1931, Hadar was home to about 6,500 residents, which a year later, grew to roughly 9,000. By 1938 the neighborhood’s population reached 33,000 residents, and in 1939 these grew to 36,000 out of 100,000 residents in the city as a whole. Within a decade, Talli noted, “the city becomes a metropolis,” and as such Hadar was being shaped as a neighborhood of clear ethno-national characteristics: “Here was the *crème de la crème* of society... from the Zionist leadership and the intellectual bourgeoisie.”

The description of how Hadar neighborhood was established fits in well with the general narrative presented by the tour guides: alongside Haifa’s transformation from a town enclosed within walls to a cosmopolitan city that forms an intercontinental bridge, a process of spatial separation was under way between the city’s different communities – from life in segregated areas within the walls, to life in segregated neighborhoods outside the walls. Nevertheless, when tours’ narrative is compared with the available historiography, it appears that just as the segregation between quarters was more firm in the narrative than in practice, the same was true in the newly established and segregated neighborhoods. In both areas only some of the cross-community

interactions and conflicts managed to infiltrate through the discourse of separation and into the tours' narrative, directly or otherwise.

### ***Haifa's Nakba and the Discourse of Separation***

*It is one of these hot autumn Fridays, and another tour, guided by Shadi and organized by the museum, is set out. This tour is focused on the history and architecture of Hadar neighborhood, and the meeting point is in Bar-Giora Street, situated in a relatively high point of the neighborhood. Across the balconies and roofs of the street, the bay of Haifa outstretches in all its glory, and from here Shadi plans to lead us downhill to the seam line. Before setting off to explore the depth of the street's unique buildings and stairways, Shadi takes about half an hour to explain about the history of the neighborhood's planning and building, touching on the social relationships between its residents as he does.*

*Shadi's accounts, describing the decline of the neighborhood from the 1960s onward for economic reasons, apparently stirs one participant, who in turn uses a moment of pause to interrupt and offer his own interpretation for the neighborhood's decline: "It's turning into an Arab neighborhood," he says. The man, Jewish-Ashkenazi in his 60s, a cap covering his short grey hair, his eyes shaded by dark sunglasses, petulantly pauses for a long second, and as no comment is registered, he repeats himself, raising his voice: "It's becoming an Arab neighborhood!" Shadi, by then familiar to the whole tour party as an Arab guide (if only by his name, featured in the tour program), shakes his head, replying, "No, no, that's not true." He accompanies his words with a "stop" gesture of his right hand, yet the man maintains his confident assertion, nodding his head up and down, as if to state*

*exclamation marks, and remarks: "As someone who lives there, working there, I can tell you it's an Arab neighborhood per se." The rest of the tour party stayed out of the exchange, only turning their heads from one to the other. Trying to answer the man matter-of-factly, Shadi explains about the demographic changes in the neighborhood, and attempting to recap, says, "I wouldn't define Hadar as becoming an Arab neighborhood, although I don't find it to be...", but the man doesn't hear him out, stating out loud: "Time will tell, time will tell," and sneaks a smug smile, signifying his belief that the introduction of Arab residents to the neighborhood is related to the neighborhood's decline.*

Shadi's tours were occasionally marked by political tension like this example suggests. When I discussed it with him in private, he noted to me that he was trying to "walk between the raindrops." This statement shows how Shadi's awareness of current prevailing political discourse framed the narrative he delivered to audiences.

Anthropologist Jackie Feldman, in his research on tour guides of Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land, shows similar awareness in the practices of narrative construction (2007:359). According to Feldman, knowing that participants in their groups wish to strengthen their religious beliefs, their tour guides avoid sharing information that might undermine their beliefs. One stark example of this practice, which recurred several times throughout Shadi's tours, demonstrates his aversion to political disputes while at the same time making this aversion explicit, thereby challenging the hegemonic discourse. It happened more than once that Shadi briefly mentioned in his tours the 1947-8 events in Haifa and used different terms related to what happened to the city's Palestinian population. In one such tour, having finished telling the story of two houses built for Arab-Palestinian families in the 1930s, he said:

You're probably going to ask me... whether they still belong to their original owners, to which my answer is: no, because in '48, as you know, most of the Arab

population... eh... eh... departed. I wouldn't use the term 'fled'. They departed from Haifa, were made to depart, were made to leave Haifa.

In another tour he guided, when referring to a different house, Shadi said:

As for the fate of this house... Well, these houses, like most Arab houses in Haifa of 1948, as the Arab population deserted the city, departed, expelled... anyone can adopt whatever term they want, but the fact remains that these houses became abandoned property overnight.

By this, Shadi alluded to the dramatic change taking place in the city between November 1947 and April 1948, termed "Haifa's Nakba," in the Palestinian narrative, and "Haifa's Liberation" in the Zionist one (see Chapter 1).

Shadi's "walking between raindrops" can be explained by an assumption regarding a link between the interpretations regarding 1948 events and contemporary political controversies. The alternative Hebrew verbs he used to describe the responsibility for the Arabs' experience of 1948 events – "*Natshu*" (they deserted), "*Yatz'u*" (they departed), "*Gurshu*" (they were expelled) – can be linked to the various political positions at the base of contemporary controversy regarding Palestinians' citizenship rights within Israel as well as the Palestinians' Right of Return. By "walking between the raindrops," Shadi opted to omit the larger context of events, so he will not need to explicitly engage with historic and contemporary controversies. Rather, he portrayed events as something that passively "happened" to the city's Arabs, without addressing any agency or responsibility, thereby protecting Haifa's mainstream image as a city of peaceful coexistence. Nevertheless, Shadi's statements stand out in establishment-sponsored tours, because the very mention of the controversy, explicitly though it is avoided, does not indicate an act of erasure, but suggests the existence of a taboo preventing discussion.

As opposed to the manner in which these events and their consequences rarely appeared in Shadi's accounts during museum-sponsored tours he held, other establishment tours produced total avoidance. As these are the most significant events in the history of the Jewish–Arab relations in Haifa, this avoidance attests to a prevailing taboo against anything that can undermine the hegemonic Zionist narrative; chief of which is Palestinians experiences in 1948.

In contrast to the guided tours sponsored by the museum, the 1947–8 events were presented in the explicitly political and non-establishment tour as having ultimate significance in the history of social relations in the city. “Zochrot” organization's tour, for instance, held on the occasion of 250 years to the establishment of modern Haifa for an audience of several dozen Jews and Arabs, opened with a reading (in Arabic and Hebrew) of the following excerpt from Ghassan Kanafani's “Return to Haifa”<sup>91</sup>

On Wednesday morning, April 21 1948, Haifa was not expecting anything, though shrouded by pent-up tension. Suddenly a bombing came from the east, the Carmel's upper ridge. The artillery shells flew over the city center, hitting the Arab neighborhoods. Chaos took over the streets of Haifa and fear conquered the town, who shut her shops and the windows of her homes. Sa'id, who was at the city center as the sounds of gunshots and blasts started filling Haifa's skies until noon, could never have told this would prove the overall attack, and it was only then that he first attempted to go drive his car back home, but it was impossible. He moved along back streets, trying to work his way to his home in the neighborhood of Al-Khalisa, but the fighting spread and he could see armed men leaping from the back streets to the main ones and the other way around. Few moments passed and Sa'id felt himself pushed blindly to one direction by the alleys blockaded by barricades or bullets or soldiers, and whenever he tried to resume his main trend, choosing an alley for this purpose, he would find himself forcefully tossed by an invisible power toward one way, the one leading to the seashore.

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<sup>91</sup> Ghassan Kanafani was born in Acre in 1936, and following the 1948 war became a refugee along with his family, who moved to Lebanon and then to Syria. Over the years, Kanafani stood out as a writer and political activist in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). On July 8<sup>th</sup> 1972, Kanafani was assassinated by Israeli Mossad agents, who planted a bomb in his car in Beirut. The explosion killed his niece, Lamees, as well. His story, *Return to Haifa* (Kanafani 2004), first published in 1969, was translated into several languages, among them English (Kanafani 2000) and Hebrew (in: Elad-Bouskila, 2001). The story was also adapted to a Hebrew play by Boaz Gaon (directed by Sinai Peter), which ran in Tel Aviv, Washington, and in Haifa Theater, too, in 2008.

Following these words, accompanied by further explanations on events of that day, the tour guide passed the microphone to Umm-Rami, a Palestinian resident of Haifa, who was a young girl at the time of the 1947–8 events, and had been invited to the tour to share her memories of the violence events in town. Later on, Shadi, who attended the tour as participant, was asked by the guides to contribute from his own experience, as well. In his brief comments he addressed both a general observation about the demolition of the Old City (“this place remains a bloody wound at the heart of the city”) and a personal account about how his own family was affected by events:

My grandfather had a house in the Old City [...]. In 1926 [he] left the Old City and built a new, more spacious house. There was a certain economic prosperity at the time and he built his home on the historic seam line between the Arab neighborhoods and the historic Jewish one, Hadar HaCarmel. That area in '48 was probably the hottest frontline. There was actual shooting there, and shelling, and my grandmother's family, my uncles and my mother, had to leave their home to find shelter at relatives' place.

Of all the references to the seam line in the tours I attended, including Shadi's tours and other museum-sponsored tours, this was the only time that the violence taking place along it was addressed. The alternative approach taken by Shadi to these events indicates that the difference stems not from the speaker's identity, but rather from the tour's context: as long as the historical narrative was delivered under the auspices of the municipal establishment, obliged as it was to uphold the image of coexistence, and as long as the tour audience was seen to be a loyal consumer of this image, the violent chapter in the city's history was not mentioned, presumably because it contrasted with that image. While Natour and Giladi (2011) argue that there is a contradiction between Haifa's coexistence and the tragedy of the city's Palestinian residents, this example indicates that in fact there is co-dependence between the two: the tragedy must be ignored if the image of coexistence is to be maintained.

Another mentioning of the 1947–8 events, in a different non-establishment tour, revealed a stratified ethno-national system that was based on relations of economic exploitation. During the tour guided by Wiam, having told about Haifa's Nakba, he added an anecdote, telling how back in the day, the question had been raised as to why in April 1948 the remaining 3,000 Palestinians had not been expelled as well, to which the answer was, "And who exactly was going to do the cleaning and baking?" Whether the tale has a grain of truth in it or not, this statement attests to a commonly-held notion regarding relations of economic exploitation that was based on national division of labor, and which shades a different light on the "industrial peace" mentioned in Baruch's guided tour. According to this assumption, the inferior labors are performed by Arabs for the welfare of Jews, and the maintenance of this economic order justifies adjusting the goal of creating a homogenous national space.

Wiam's statement prompted a burst of laughter from parts of the audience, quickly interrupted by one participant, who declared out loud: "But they brought Mizrahi Jews to do the cleaning and baking. They lived here and rebelled against the Zionist racism, which didn't spare Jews as well."<sup>92</sup> Wiam meanwhile had already moved on and did not hear this comment, but another tour participant answered with a half-amused face expression that "This policy has more to do with money than with race." This last comment reveals an attempt to portray the class aspect as the critical line of separation in Haifa's social relations, while blurring the ethnic and national ones. In fact, the swift exchange between the three speakers reflects different logics of separation: Wiam, the guide, offered an explanation that the economic exploitation relationship was based on the national division. In contrast, the first responder argued that the economic

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<sup>92</sup> The speaker alluded to the Mizrahi Wadi Salib uprising, which broke out in July 1959 after a decade of institutional neglect (see: Cohen 2009; Dahan-Caleb 1999; Roby 2015:137–170; Shalom-Chetrit 2004:99-118; Weiss 2011).

exploitation relationship was based on a division that was not only national or ethnic, but also – perhaps mainly – racial. The second responder dismissed both the national and the racial logics, replacing them with the logic of sheer economic exploitation. What differs between them is the priority of one system of classification over the other.

More than simply illustrating different logics, this exchange shows how the discourse of separation is common to all speakers. Moreover, they all take pains to hide or underplay the importance of signs that defy the division according to the social categories they use. Yet these signs keep surfacing, and any attempt to explain social reality by focusing on the conflict to the exclusion of all else, or by blatantly ignoring it – fails time and again during tours.

Moreover, the crude colors of the division into distinct categories grow gradually subtler, the closer the gaze over the social relationship becomes, sometimes to the point of blurring. For example, in the tour held by Zochrot, Alon, who led most of the tour, casually made mention of the following, in regard to the conquest of Haifa in April 1948: “[due to] the inefficiency of [operation] *Hametz*, we’ve still got the occasional man here and there; those hidden by their friends, those hiding somewhere and those who stood still and were spared the shots.” This casual remark reveals the option of deviating from the prevailing social logic as well as the option of describing the events not according to the hegemonic narrative. It is particularly the mutual rescue stories of 1948 that attest to the power of social connections entwined over generations to overcome trends of segregation.<sup>93</sup> Nevertheless, these stories still fail to feature in the hegemonic narrative

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<sup>93</sup> A complex picture of events, indicating the prospect of inter-personal relationships that transcend broader social trends of violent segregation to the extent of mutual rescue attempts, also emerged from in-depth interviews I conducted with residents who had experienced the events firsthand (see Nathansohn and Shiblak 2011).

as they demonstrate a coexistence of two taboos underlying the coexistence image: both the intergroup violence and the crossing of collective norms.

### ***The Seam Line Unraveled***

In Jerusalem, as Shadi noted in one of the tours he led, one could put a finger on a real seam line, as opposed to Haifa, where the seam line between Jewish and Arab neighborhoods is a “rather winding” one, while its “Jews and Arabs’ houses were mutually interwoven.” This statements draws Haifa’s seam line as a unique heterogeneous sphere that has mutually and decidedly distinct homogenous populations living at both its ends, outside of it: below it – an Arab population; above it – a Jewish one. By presenting the area of the seam line as confined, this portrayal suggests an attempt to disrupt the dominant logic. Epistemologically, this move is facilitated when it is the home owners’ identity that allegedly determines which neighborhood is “Jewish” or “Arab,” or which area is “mixed.” When such bureaucratic knowledge of property ownership determines the ways of describing an area, it overlooks social patterns of life inside and outside houses, and limits recognizing dynamic social interactions, which may highlight the mixing feature of the area. Conversely, when personal accounts take center stage in narrative constructions, such as in the following description of the tour led by Ali, both violent conflicts between Jews and Arabs as well as close relationships between them can coexist in the description of Haifa’s history of social relations.

A few months after I joined the winter 2007 tour, I started working as a research assistant for Anat, an Ashkenazi-Jewish woman from Tel-Aviv area, who was busy at the

time producing an art project on the 1947–8 events in Haifa.<sup>94</sup> As part of the preparations for the project, Anat had an educational tour organized for the two of us in Wadi Salib and downtown Haifa, guided by Ali. She had been told that he was one of the key figures to learn from about the city’s Palestinian history. Anat talked to him several times before he agreed to serve as our guide, and she was under the impression that he was scrutinizing her views on the Zionist–Palestinian conflict. At some point, his suspicions were laid to rest – maybe because he was impressed by her use of terminology that was not derived from the Zionist establishment, or perhaps because he learned that in her previous projects, she had already critically analyzed the Zionist perspective.<sup>95</sup>

And so, on one particularly hot Friday in June, as spring made way for heat and humidity, with fierce winds from the sea having little to no cooling effect on the laden air, Ali agreed to guide us and led us for a few hours long tour of the city. With his low and intimate voice, Ali interweaved in his narrative personal accounts of past residents, thereby creating a richer narrative than the one shared in the museum-sponsored tours.

*The first stop in this tour is along the seam line, at a point overlooking from Hadar over Wadi Salib below. Ali opens with a short introduction about the Wadi, then pointing at a spacious house, standing in disrepair, like many of the houses still left in the neighborhood. Its roof bred weeds and among the thorn bushes growing wild around it a staircase could be seen, bare, leading up to its broken open doorway. During the British Rule, Ali tells us, his mother spent half her childhood in this house, which boasted of stores, workshops and a coffee house with a radio set, where everybody flocked to hear the most*

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<sup>94</sup> Part of my job was to collect life stories of Jews and Arabs who had experienced the 1947-8 events in the city.

<sup>95</sup> About the poetics of politics in the context of the local conflict see Rabinowitz (1993).

*famous Arab singers of the time: 'Abd al-Wahhab and Umm Kulthum. "She remembers sitting on these stairs, darbuka in hand, and playing with the girls," Ali says. Turning his gaze from the house, he points to the nearby streets, explaining how their original names had been replaced by Hebrew ones after Arab residents were evicted from the Wadi in 1948, with some of its houses destroyed. Surviving member of Al-Afghani Street families, he notes, still use the old address even though the street had since been renamed Harav Markus [Rabbi Markus].<sup>96</sup> "Jamal ad-Din Al-Afghani," Ali explains, "was one of the great interpreters of Islamic law, so they named the street after him, but for some reason the name was changed." Ali then mentions that other houses in the Wadi were destroyed during the 1970s, after having been vacated once again, this time of their Jewish residents, mainly immigrants from Morocco, who had entered the emptied houses after 1948 only to be evicted following their 1959 uprising.*

*Proceeding from the lookout point over the Wadi, we follow Ali on foot in the narrow path winding toward the main street linking the Downtown to Hadar. At the top of the path, Ali stops, wipes the sweat off his forehead, and starts explaining about the spot where we stood at: it had once been called Mawaka Al-Burj [The Tower Yard, in Arabic], while the street at its feet, nowadays called "Ma'ale Hashichrur [Liberation Street, in Hebrew]," had formerly been called "Al-Burj." "It was the downtown's upper border," Ali says, then points up to Hadar neighborhood, "and this was the Denia of those days," referring to one of most affluent neighborhoods in today's Haifa.*

Up to this point Ali followed the line presented in all the other tours I was to join in the following years, portraying a split space where populations were organized according to ethno-national and class logics. However, contrary to the guides of the

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<sup>96</sup> Baruch Markus (1870–1961) was Haifa's first Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi and served in this position for 55 years.

institutional tours, Ali did not abstain from mentioning the violent clashes between the populations, as well as the close relationships between them.

*As we start walking down Ma'ale Hashichrur heading downtown, we pass some spacious stone houses along the way. There, between two houses – their openings sealed by blocks to prevent entry, the walls around them decorated with barbed wires – Ali turns right to an alley with a magnificent view over the Bay of Haifa and the port. We follow him down the alley's stone stairs, stopping in the shade of a tree growing from the yard of one of the houses, its branches encroaching on the alley, uninterrupted. "I'm going to talk about two houses," Ali says. "This one, to your right, is the Kanafani family home, relatives of writer Ghassan Kanafani. One of the family members, now living in America, wrote a book, titled '15 Al-Burj Street'."<sup>97</sup> The book, Ali explains, is a first-person testimony about the life of the rich Arab-Palestinian family who had inhabited the house until 1948. Ali then takes a pair of reading glasses out of his bag, as well as some pages filled with handwritten Hebrew – his own translation from the book, originally published in Arabic. He first reads out some descriptions of the trees and bushes that had been growing in the yard: the cypresses, the eucalyptus, the pomegranate tree, the jasmine and the imported cactus. He then takes his eyes off the pages, explaining that the book also described the stones used for the construction of this house, and the phonograph they used to have, as well as the cat Ambra, the dog Stella and the parrot that had inhabited the home. All these, Ali notes, attest to the family's high status in 1930s terms. He then turns back to the text and resumes his reading:*

*High-ranking public officials joined social gatherings at our home, from every city in Palestine and Lebanon, people involved in politics, economics and ideology. Most discussions revolved around one single issue: the danger lurking for Palestine [...]*

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<sup>97</sup> "15 Shari' alburj- Haifa, dhikrayat wa-'ibar," by 'Abd al-Latif Kanafani, published in 1996 with Bisan press, Beirut.

*Haifa was a lighthouse of the Middle East; a far-reaching lighthouse; a beam in both the literature and art worlds. When Britain declared its intent to withdraw from Palestine, it was like a pre-established secret code with the Zionists. The British became onlookers.*

*Ali takes his eyes off the page for a second, and as he is taking a breath, about to make another comment, Anat asks: "Does he refer to '48 in his book?" It seems that Ali was going to address the excerpt he just read to us, yet his abrupt retort takes all the air he accumulated in his lungs: "in a minute." "Really?" Anat inquired, adding: "Where?" Ali, his train of thought interrupted, pursues a different direction: "Coexistence, for example." Taking his eyes from the text yet again, he stares at the two of us over the frame of his glasses, saying: "You have to describe how they went about their life back then." We get closer to him as he turns back to reading the text: "Some settlers built themselves a network of settlements on the road leading to Acre and Jaffa. Some of our cous..." Ali stops abruptly, furrowing his eyebrows in an attempt to work out his handwriting. "What's that?" He whispers to himself. Anat approaches him, looks at the text, and remarks confidently: "Our cousins." "Ah..." Ali says, keeping his eyes on the text and continues:*

*Some of our cousins living in the neighborhood known as Harat al-Yahud [the neighborhood of the Jews], within the Arab neighborhoods, formed an organic part thereof. Harat al-Yahud was no western-like Jewish ghetto [...]. They, the Jews, had lived there for generations with no one thinking of harassing them. It was impossible to tell Jews from Arabs, not least by their names, as they took the very same names as us: Sliman, Yousef, Nissim, Musa, Daud, Yaakov etc. They named their sons after our own and vice versa.*

*Suddenly Anat baffles: "But that's... You're talking about a very-very early period." It seems that Ali is eager to continue reading, and thus ignores Anat's historical mistake. "Now he's getting to the Nakba," he says. "Ah, right," Anat comments, growing alert. Bothering flies start encircling us, relentlessly drawn to the sweat beads pooling on our faces. Ali waves his hand, trying to brush off yet another fly, and carries on. "He writes:*

*In the early hours of 22 April 1948, Zionist forces started firing at the Arab fighters. On 23 April 1948, the Arab neighborhood was crushed, while Zionist forces started attacking every plot, bombing each house that showed resistance. The Zionists waged a campaign of terror, destruction and murder as they were overtaking the city. They scattered bodies on sidewalks so as to spread fear and terror among the city's remaining Arabs, and so, roughly 70,000 Arabs left Haifa, dispersing around the neighboring countries.*

*Ali takes his eyes off the page yet again, and after a long, silent second, Anat asks:*

*"Can he remember how they were evacuated? By boats? By..."*

*"Yes, that comes later..." he replies.*

*"Where to? Syria? Lebanon? Acre?"*

*"It was a route, see. From here to Acre, and some were left [in Acre], families from Haifa living in Acre to this day, while some proceeded to Sidon, Tyre, Beirut, with some moving to Damascus or Halab later on. This was their diaspora."*

And thus, at the foot of an abandoned house, with all of its openings blocked, a facet of reality was revealed, a reality of complex past social relations – of affinity and animosity – taking place inside its walls and around it, and a glimpse was offered into the ongoing attempts to organize this reality, to purify it of any nagging complexities, as well as to purge the social sphere into mutually-exclusive categories. Unlike the descriptions in the establishment-sponsored tours, Ali delivered a personal account, attesting to the social relations among the city's residents. This account, pointing though it did to the significance that was attributed to national and class differences, featured these categories in a supple form, not fully subjected to the discourse of separation. Social ties and cultural semblance could allow relationships between people belonging to different categories, and even some confusion between them. In Anat's ears it seemed like taken from a different period, with a different political order that had existed before

division by nationality took center stage. Without Ali putting her right, Anat sought to solidify the dividing categories and even picture another historic order for this purpose.

### ***Discourse of Separation between the Visual and the Social***

Personal accounts, attesting as they could to the social relations in the mixed city, were brushed aside by most tour guides. Nevertheless, the guides did not omit social mixing from the narrative altogether, but rather offered a kind of mixing devoid of any potential to undermine the segregating social categories. It was a mixing deflected from unmediated social relations, reduced to its visual reflection in an eclectic architecture that merged Eastern and Western styles, or otherwise in the juxtaposition of such styles. Demonstrating the mix through emphasis on the visual aspects of the built environment was a common practice during tours, mainly because it relied on that which still existed, on what remained for the eye to see (Waterson 2011). As I shall show here, focusing on the aesthetic aspects of mixing belies, meanwhile, its political aspects.

In a tour led by Tali she explained at length on artist Hermann Struck's home, built in 1924 in Hadar, and planned by architect Alexander Baerwald, who immigrated to Haifa from Germany. It is an Eclectic style building, so she argued, which reflects the fierce influence that Benjamin Ze'ev (Theodor) Herzl's had on Struck. The two had met when Struck served as a delegate in the Zionist Congress chaired by Herzl. To establish her argument, Tali read the following quote from *Altneuland*, Herzl's novel, published in 1902, where he described his vision of future Haifa through the story of the main characters:

They were now in a residential section of the city, upon Mount Carmel, where there were many elegant mansions surrounded by fragrant gardens. Several

houses of Moorish design had close wooden lattices over some of their windows (Herzl 1987[1902]:68)<sup>98</sup>

Herzl, according to Talli, formulated in this account the Eclectic style vision, which Struck asked Baerwald to realize as he settled in Haifa. Showing the tour party a photograph of Struck's home, taken near its completion, Talli referred to the image presented as a "real Arab village. Something that grows from the local ground, rather than imposed upon it from Europe; something local."

In a tour led by Shadi, he referred to Baerwald's work, too, and explained that it was actually due to Baerwald's impression of the local landscape and terrain that he developed the Eclectic style. Thus, according to Shadi, and contrary to Talli's explanation, there was no necessary link between Baerwald's architectural work and Herzl's ideological writing. Shadi further explained that Baerwald originally arrived at Haifa in 1910 in a special invitation to plan the Technikum's building in Hadar, the first academic institution in Palestine, later renamed as Technion. During a tour around this spot, standing with his back to the Technion's building, Shadi looked left and right and while reaching out his hand, he said:

Baerwald arrived to find a nowhere. There was nothing around. [...] As he arrives to Haifa, he comes across the architecture here and is definitely influenced by it. Inspired, he wishes to offer, or form, some kind of architectural style unique to the Land of Israel, and suggests working on the planning concept, gradually getting to what you can see here. And what you can see here is really very interesting, unlike anything before. It's the kind of style where you can distinctly see the Oriental, Eastern influences behind the architect, but at the same time, it's not exactly an Eastern building. It's got many Western features. All sorts of influences. Note, for example, the serrated roof, which is actually an Assyrian element.

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<sup>98</sup> In his analysis of Herzl's utopian vision of Haifa, Bar-Yosef (2013) compares Herzl's vision to Violet Guttenberg's dystopian one, written in regards to Haifa around the same period. Bar-Yosef shows that Guttenberg offers a similar portrayal ("almost an exact replica", he argues) of a smart villa, situated on Mount Carmel and designed after an eastern fashion. Nevertheless, while for Herzl this beautiful villa signals the Zionist story's success, for Guttenberg it marks the failure of the Jewish character, as it was never completed, remaining bare (ibid:174).

Standing in front of another Eclectic style building in Hadar, Shadi shared the following explanation:

It has modern characteristics, such as the stairwell, but we can still see the gate inside, which has a very traditional design. It's a gate that reminds me a lot of... It's probably taken from Mustafa Pasha al-Halil's house in the downtown [...] it's quite similar. [...] We can see some very interesting elements of urban Arab architecture here. These elements gradually blur in as the International style spreads, gaining greater hold in the area, and particularly in Haifa. And then you can tell the houses are definitely under this influence, yet retain their stone, which is the traditional raw material.

As the next example shows, describing the material and stylistic mix can come in lieu of describing social interactions, thereby defusing the political charge such interactions may carry. During a tour led by Shadi along the seam line, he noted: "Seeing the community that vanished from this world, I can really say that there used to be a life here... not a coexistence [of] one living next to the other, but a true shared life." When seeking to demonstrate it, Shadi remarked that "there were real-estate business partnerships; buildings built by Jews and Arabs," and in order to further illustrate it, he pointed to the mixing of local and Western origins in raw materials.

Another example for the gap between descriptions of Eclectic styles and social mix was given during one of Tali's tours. As she took a couple of minutes to stop in front of a formidable stone building, once owned by a wealthy Arab man, she explained at length about the elements that made it a further example of the mixed style. She then started telling the story of the building's residents – Arabs who were replaced by Jews. With this brief introduction to what came later, Tali pointed that inside the walls of the mixed-styled building, one population could be replaced by another without any mixing of populations ensuing, meaning that style and population were not inextricably linked.

As Talli started recounting the tale of the building's residents, several questions arose among the tour party about missing details in her account. The ensuing exchange went as follows: according to Talli, "the story of this building is tragic whichever way you look at it. The place was built in the mid 1940's, right? Then in 1948 [Jewish] evacuees from the Kibbutz of Sha'ar HaGolan arrived here [a few days before their Kibbutz had been captured by the Syrian army]." A woman in the audience struggled to get her head around the chronology of this story, inquiring: "Was it an abandoned house?"

"No, it wasn't," Talli replied, promptly adding a question: "What constitutes 'abandoned'?" To which another person in the audience responded, asking: "Who lived here? Who used to live here?"

"So then they ran away to Lebanon, right?" inquired another participant, referring to the Arab residents of the house.

"Yes, they did, they fled away," Talli said, adding that:

So many houses here... with the same tragic story. I'm not taking a stand or anything, but if I sit and read building files, historical, archival records, then see this architecture, the meticulous detailing. Look at the blinds, the wooden blinds. Everything about it... just look at the blinds. The thought put into it. You can see the yard, with stubs of pine trees still standing around, for example. Look at this beauty, this richness. And the man had to flee before he even had the chance to live here. And then other unfortunates moved in, the kids from Sha'ar HaGolan, who stayed here with their care-givers, while their parents were busy fighting, and for all I know, some of them were orphaned. [...] Most of them were Holocaust survivors, after all. So these stories... it's terrible. There you have it, one tragedy after the other... all in the same building. The same innocent-looking building.

In this exchange, Talli tried to transcend beyond the frozen appearance of the house and vitalize it with social life that took place within and around it. Nevertheless, she presented only the kind of interactions that did not undermine the common sense

prevalent at the time of the tour. In her narrative, as in the narratives of most of the other guides, mixing was reserved to the architectural style alone. This practice generated de-politicization of the social mix, removing attempts to uncover the denaturalization of the social separation in both the history portrayed and the present of its portrayal.

An alternative description of social relations appears, for example in Mahmoud Yazbak and Yifat Weiss's article (2011) on Shiblak and Swidan Houses in Haifa. Yazbak and Weiss offer another channel of engaging with the link between social relations and the built-up environments. In their description of the Shiblak House, built in the 1930's on the seam line between Wadi Salib and Hadar, they dwell on the relations between the Arab-Palestinian landlords and their tenants, who were Arab-Jews, European Jews and Arabs from Gaza, among others – all renting rooms in their building, sharing lavatories, kitchen rooms and showers.

As I will show in the next section, in the handful of cases where the social component was included in the mixing narrative, economic motives were presented as a mediating factor, thereby legitimizing the inclusion of Jewish–Arab social relations into contemporary narrative.

### ***Discourse of Separation between Business and Pleasure***

The meeting point of one of Gideon's tours was set at the square outside Haifa Museum of Art, in Shabtai Levi Street. From there he led us across the road, to the spot where the neighborhood of Herzliya was founded in 1907. Gideon explained that this neighborhood was originally Jewish, yet over the years it attracted wealthy "housing

upgraders” from the Arab population: “The Arabs,” he said, “having realized the neighborhood was starting to take shape and thrive... we’re talking about Arab lands here, so [they] started building right next to them.” From Gideon’s description it was clear that the area became a shared Jewish–Arab space as an unintentional outcome of business relations of Arabs selling lands to Jews (and to Zionist organizations).<sup>99</sup>

Other business relations were brought up in other tours as well. When the tours guided by Gideon and Shadi passed by the site of the “New Commercial Center,” completed in the downtown in 1936, both men explained about the history of the place, adding an extra touch in the form of the tale behind the name “Sara,” one of the compound’s street names. The story, as recounted by Shadi, goes as follows:

There’s a fascinating story about the purchase of this compound. It was once owned by a Syrian Arab, and Shabtai Levi and Shmuel Pevsner came up to him, saying: listen, we are very interested in purchasing this lot, but we haven’t got enough money.<sup>100</sup> If you trust us, we can give you guarantees and once the project is completed, and as soon as it yields financial gains, we shall pay you back. The man had faith in the two and he sold them the ground. This man was called Amin Sara, and therefore, as a tribute to this gesture he paid them, they named the compound’s main street “Sara.” And today nobody realizes, nobody knows this street is named after Amin Sara. Everybody thinks it’s a street named after Matriarch Sarah. It’s a very nice story [smiling], one of the very interesting stories of Haifa’s Jewish–Arab mutual relationship.

On several other instances during his tours, Shadi emphasized similar business relationships, focusing mainly on wealthy Arab families who hired an in-house Jewish architect. According to Shadi, the fact of the architect being Jewish “didn’t stop them

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<sup>99</sup> Selling and acquisition of lands takes only limited space in Haifa’s hegemonic narratives of coexistence mainly because it is related to exacerbation of social relations due to assassinations of a number of the Arab land sellers who were marked as traitors in the eyes of the Palestinian nationalist opposition (see Bernstein 2000:56).

<sup>100</sup> Levy and Pevsner were two Jewish business men involved in land trades in Haifa (on land trades in Jaffa area at the same period, see Hart 2014). Shabtai Levi (1876–1956) was born in Constantinople (Istanbul) and immigrated to Palestine in 1894. With the establishment of Haifa Municipality by the British rule in 1920 he was appointed member of council, and in 1934 he was appointed Deputy Mayor under Hassan Shukri. With Shukri’s death in 1940 Levy became Haifa’s Mayor until 1951. Shmuel Pevsner (1878–1930) was born in Propoysk (Slawharad), studied engineering in Berlin, was an activist in the Zionist Congress, and immigrated to Palestine in 1905. He was of the founders of the “Atid” factory in Haifa, and of the Board of Hadar neighbourhood in 1921.

from maintaining business ties,” and often, he added, these ties took on a personal nature.

As an example of this kind of tie, Shadi offered the business partnership between Hajj Tahir Qaraman, a wealthy Arab business man, and Moshe Gerstel, a Jewish architect who ran a prospering office in Bucharest, yet had to flee the city with the spread of Nazism, and arrived at Haifa in 1933.<sup>101</sup> Once there, Gerstel formed connections with members of the Arab elite and started planning their houses. This is also how his tie with Qaraman was formed, first as business ties, then, according to Shadi, these ties grew over the years into a close friendship. This was evident, according to Shadi, in the help Qaraman offered to Gerstel during World War 2, when his business came to a halt due to the crisis in construction industry. Qaraman rushed to his aid, allotting him and his family an apartment in one of the buildings Gerstel had planned for him.

When Shadi presented the social ties between Gerstel and Qaraman as originating in business interests it may have made it easier for him to portray their morphing into a close friendship and present them during the tour. Under contemporary discourse of separation, when it is business partnership that features at the core of relations between Arabs and Jews, such ties are perceived to be less dangerous since they do not threaten the rigidity of the dividing national categories. The practice of narrating the development of such business ties into friendship reflects a process of translation of the described phenomenon to the cultural vocabulary of the audience (see Cohen 1985:13). While in this case the past is framed according to contemporary discourse, in the tours for pilgrims, analyzed by Feldman (2007:361–362), contemporary phenomena are described by using the biblical discourse. The

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<sup>101</sup> For an in-depth description of the Gerstel–Qaraman relationship see Karkabi and Roitenberg (2011, 2013).

result of these two opposing practices could be regarded as "tourism imaginaries" (Salazar 2012), both based on translated, even anachronistic descriptions.

Cracks in such anachronistic descriptions could have been noticed when the narratives of the tour guides was interrupted by someone from the audience sharing a personal experience. For example, after Shadi presented the Qaraman–Gerstel relations, tour participants spontaneously mentioned other relations with Qaraman, which were free of business interests. The tour where Shadi described the Gerstel–Qaraman relationship took place on a Friday winter afternoon, and was occasionally interrupted by light showers.

*It started raining again and we find shelter under the shed of a closed business along the seam line. One participant, approximately 70 years old, Jewish man of European descent, uses a moment pause in Shadi's explanations, points his finger to the nearby street, and says: "There used to be a seam line here during the war. They built a wall in HaChalutz Street..." Shadi listens attentively, nodding in approval, and hands him the microphone, saying: "Speak up." The man grabs the microphone and carries on: "My father used to work here, and when people talk about the seam line, I recall how they built a wall in HaChalutz Street because of the sniping. My mother used to send me in the afternoons to get sandwiches, and I would duck and run along the wall." He demonstrates his ducking as he speaks. "Which year was that?" someone asks him. "It was '48", the man replies, "before the War of Independence." Shadi approves his account, noting that he himself can remember the wall, which had been around until the 1980s, when it had been finally removed. Just before handing the microphone back to Shadi, the man manages to add that, "by the way, one of Qaraman's children went to school with me, I think."*

Although he did not elaborate, this offhanded statement unfolded a variety of prospects for encounters and personal relations to develop even beyond the realm of business interests, such as in mixed schools.

*With the pause in the intermittent rains, Shadi leads the tour party to the next destination, around the Talpiot Market area. As it starts drizzling again, the group converges under an awning next to a pickle stand. One participant suddenly straightens up, points at the nearby Syrkin Street, and says out loud: "And over there is where I was born, in a flat that Mr. Qaraman invited us to stay in during the war of independence, because [we] had no shelter." Shadi seems taken aback by the further testimony and hands the woman his microphone. Pointing to the apartment where she had lived, the woman notes that as the Jewish owner of the room rented by her parents had been an acquaintance of Qaraman, they would stay at his shelter every time the sirens had gone off.*

In another tour held by Shadi along the seam line, he gathered the group outside one of the formidable, Eclectic style houses of the Touma family, another wealthy Christian-Palestinian family. Implicit in his explanation was a further aspect of the mixing that stemmed from neither business nor aesthetic interests, but he did not elaborate. The house, so he told us, built in 1912, was confiscated from the family following the 1948 war, and in the early 2000's was designated for demolition, to make way for a new road. One of the family members, Shadi noted, was Emile Touma, a Palestinian writer and historian, and one of the Communist Party leaders, who died in 1985. Thanks to a public struggle, Shadi explained, the plan was eventually adjusted and the building was designated in turn for conservation. The struggle was headed by Emile's wife, Shadi said, and added: "Chaya, who was Jewish, Chaya Touma née Berger,

spent almost 25 years in great efforts to commemorate Emile.” Without dwelling on the significance of Chaya and Emile being a “mixed” couple, Shadi went immediately on to explain about Emile’s endeavors as a historian. According to historian Mustafa Kabha (2013), in Mandatory Haifa a fertile ground was created for encounters that led to mixed marriages, particularly during times of recession in the national tension, and where borderlines between neighborhoods blurred and mixed living spaces for residents of different religions emerged.<sup>102</sup> However, in the 2010s, during the tour led by Shadi, with the inter-population seam line as its theme, the most possibly intimate aspect in the contact between populations was played down. In the prevailing discourse of separation at the time of the tour, such contacts evoked moral panic (Hakak 2016).<sup>103</sup> Nevertheless, the information about the mixed couple evoked no particular attention among the tour party, perhaps because it was made to blend in with the rest of Shadi’s account, and contrary to his description of the Qaraman–Gerstel relations – was treated as an insignificant anecdote.

### ***Social Categories and Social Imagination***

At the outskirts of downtown Haifa stands Hammam Al-Pasha, a Turkish bath built during the Ottoman rule that survived the destruction of 1948. Some of its spaces were converted into a theater over the years, then abandoned, while others turned into

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<sup>102</sup> Kabha’s research into documents of the Haifa Shari’a court shows that between 1920 and 1931 the annual average was 31 marriages between Muslim men with Druz, Baha’i, Christian, or Jewish women (Kabha 2013). Elsewhere in Palestine, according to Menachem Klein (2014:47), sexual relations and marriage between Jews and Arabs, both Muslim and Christian, were not unheard of, but they were considered illegitimate. [...] The number of marriages between Jewish women and Palestinian men of high social status increased during the 1930s, when many European Jewish women came to Palestine. But Jewish men rarely married Palestinian women. [...] When the national conflict intensified in the 1940s, the number of intermarriages plunged and many mixed families separated.”

<sup>103</sup> See Chapter 4.

a dance club hosting parties featuring a variety of music styles that attract Haifa's mixed populations. During the private tour Anat and I took with Ali, he brought us to this spot as soon as we left the bottom margins of nearby Wadi Salib.

*"This hammam gave birth to many stories," Ali says as we walk from the hammam towards the mosque of Al-Istiklal, and starts recounting the tale of Margharush, the hammam's jinn. The story takes twists and turns as we keep walking under the blistering sun. Thrill and humor interweave in the accounts of Margharush and the hammam's characters, as well as in accounts of their relationships, which defied the conventional class/gender-based power relations. In complicated moments of the plot, Ali stops, so as not to neglect any detail along the way, and as the plot twist passes, Anat and I resume walking by his side.*

For Ali, the stories of Margharush were part of Haifa's everyday life, before it was dramatically altered by the Nakba, and he tries to weave the jinn's tales in his tours. Margharush, whether real or otherwise, reared its head along our tour only when we departed from a certain site; only when we did not face an actual building that a solid historical narrative, as though etched in its walls, could be spun around. It was only in between such locations, on the way from one site to the next, between their corresponding narratives, that Ali could entice us by way of imagination to the realms of fables, where conventional social divisions were shattered.

Half the art of storytelling, argues Walter Benjamin (2007[1936]:89) is to "keep a story free from explanation as one reproduces it." Thus, no interpretation is imposed along the story, while listening allows forming contexts and explanations freely and independently. Unlike the other guides, when Ali morphed into a storyteller it was as if he had no concerns about loosening the restraints confining the listeners'

interpretations. The tour he guided demonstrated how personal fables and stories can serve as depositories of alternative options to the familiar reality, which became institutionalized; it is within them that the collapse of partitions becomes concrete; this is where the discourse of separation dissolves and social categories relent.<sup>104</sup>

*From Al-Istiklal Mosque, Ali leads us a few minutes' walk to Paris Square, otherwise known as the Carriage Square or Hamra Square.<sup>105</sup> Once there, we hear Ali recounting the square's history, including the surrounding buildings now gone (hotels, a hammam, restaurants), remarking that the square was "the central nerve of life in Haifa." During the 1930's, Ali says, the city became cosmopolitan, a veritable Mediterranean port town, like its counterparts in Greece and Italy. As such, he adds, it also witnessed the emergence of prostitution services, for Jews and Arabs alike. And so we are introduced to another detail of the city's life which attests to a shared space. But Anat is not impressed. She is already tired from touring in the exhausting heat, and the shared culture of Jews and Arabs in downtown Haifa escapes the focus of the art project taking shape in her mind.*

*All the way down to the downtown area we covered by foot, and when it is time to walk back up to the starting point Anat suggests we take a taxi, as her legs are aching. Ali, in turn, amusedly remarks that he actually cut the visit short. "Cut it short?" Anat asks, exhaustion in her voice. "Sure," Ali responds, "we didn't go inside the abandoned houses." Anat regains her energy at once, and with sudden enthusiasm she says: "I wouldn't mind that!"*

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<sup>104</sup> A similar goal with different means was Jaffa's "The Bus Tour," a project by filmmaker Scandar Copti and artist Yochai Avrahami. In their project, Copti and Avrahami created an artistic and fictitious tour in Jaffa that challenges the hegemonic narrative of the city's history and its landmarks. According to Monterescu (2015:93), this project uses cynical inversion and representational play in order to target the political confusion and historical ignorance of the audience vis-à-vis the image of the city, and "juggles nationalist mythologies and reconstructs an imagined world which is truly postnationalist." For videos of the tour visit [www.yochaiavrahami.com/the-jaffa-bus-tour](http://www.yochaiavrahami.com/the-jaffa-bus-tour) (accessed: October 5, 2016).

<sup>105</sup> Today's official name of the square is Paris Square. Nevertheless, its previous names, given to it as it was established in Ottoman times, are still in common use among some veteran city residents.

*"Ahhh..." Ali says, smiling.*

*"I wouldn't mind that," she repeats, in a hopeful tone.*

*"Oh, yeah?" Ali taunts her.*

*"Sure," she says, confidently. A few minutes pass by and we are back in Wadi Salib, this time in the house where Ali's mother had spent her childhood; a formidable, spacious place, forsaken, partly in ruins, with vegetation, including tall thistles growing in and around it. As he leads us up the decrepit stone stairs, Ali warns that over the years the place had become a shelter for drug addicts. The stairs lead to a roofless entrance hall, its floors covered with a layer of debris, soiled fabrics and leftover food and beverage bottles. Some walls in the building are less than intact, while it is only in few parts that one can find what had been left of the plaster coat. The other walls stand bare, peeling off and crumbling. Treading carefully among the ruins Ali walks in first, followed by me. Several times Ali stops, his foot brushing off fragments on the floor in search for the original tiles. I look back and realize that Anat still stands at the doorway, looking around. "Wow, what's going on here?" she muses, grabbing her camera and recording what she sees. Ali steps into one of the rooms, and after a few seconds, as he walks out, Anat turns to him from the doorway: "hang on, hang on," signaling him that he's about to enter her photographic composition of the home's hallway with the arched roof in the background, and light emanating from the back stairway. Ali stops for a moment, complying. Having taken the photograph and a couple of steps inside the building, Anat asks him to turn to her for a moment, so that she could take another picture, this time of him with the building in the background, and Ali complies again.*

*Throughout the tour Anat hardly took any pictures, while here she wouldn't let go of her camera. One only had to look at the sight unfolding to realize the dispossession and expulsion, which had come to symbolize the Palestinian disaster. It was like a window to the past, and Anat wants to freeze the scene.*

In her elaboration on the political life of imperial debris, anthropologist Ann Stoler (2013) distinguishes between *ruin* and *ruination*. According to her, while "ruins provide a favored image of a vanished past, what is beyond repair and in decay, thrown into aesthetic relief by nature's tangled growth," ruination is the "ongoing corrosive process that weighs on the future" (ibid:9). Seemingly, the scene at that house in the Wadi shows how for Anat the place was conceived as ruin, whereas for Ali – as ruination. In taking these photos the way she did, Anat documented the debris as remnants of the past in the present. For her, the place was static and she focused on commemorating it, documenting the results of a tragic event, photographing Ali as he was standing in the rubble, fixating him as an emblem of the dispossessed Palestinian. At the same time, Ali continued a practice he mentioned to us conducting several times in the past, of searching for items that could revitalize the history of his family. For him, the place was dynamic – seeing it in its deterioration-ruination from visit to visit, trying to rescue whichever piece of original tile he can find, whether it is directly related to his mother's past in the house or not – creatively giving it new life and meanings by using it as decorations on his apartment's walls and as covers for his publications.

However, ruins, as Stoler (ibid:14) further notes, can also be sites for "unexpected collaborative political projects," and indeed, Ali's collaboration with Anat in converting him from a tour guide who skillfully shares a rich history of the place and its residents, into a passive, helpless victim, was surprising to me particularly in light of

the distrust he showed prior to the tour, and his scrutinizing conduct throughout. It showed that he didn't mind being subjected to Anat's political and aesthetic framing, and that for him there might not be an essential contradiction between ruin and ruination, between commemoration and continuity. After all, the social life of Anat's photos – if released – could take parallel paths of presentation, interpretation and politicization.

Ali's collaboration with Anat was surprising also retrospectively in light of how my meeting with him the following week evolved. When I met him to hear more about his family's history in Haifa, Ali laid out the many records he had collected over the years, including the interview with his mother, published in the local newspaper in Arabic. In the interview, she recounts how she herself grew up among a Jewish family, noting that Jews she knew were referred to as Jews of Arab descent (*Yahud awlad Arab*). Ali showed me many other records he had gathered over the years (such as property registration of relatives, donator list for a mosque, birth certificates, family correspondence and a family tree). Among these records a studio photograph from the 1940s suddenly cropped up, featuring a relative of his with his Jewish friend. "They reversed roles, look-wise," said Ali, pointing to the tarbush donned by the Jew, yet refused my request to take a picture of the photograph.

What stood behind his refusal? How can it be reconciled with Ali's submission to Anat's request and with the purpose of affording room for personal interpretation of listeners in the tour he guided? It seems that in his refusal Ali attempted to keep the game of identities under the confidentiality of the private archives. In our meeting, Ali did not conceal from me – a stranger-researcher – the photo, but perhaps my request suggested the possibility of making this visual evidence of non-separation – public and

political, and as such – was refused. Thus, with this refusal, the reasons of which remain unknown to me, the photographed evidence of a practice that does not abide by regime of separation was kept in the private space and outside of public imagination.

### ***Becoming a Tour Guide***

In the spring of 2016 I was invited by a colleague from the University of Haifa to guide a tour around the city for a group of about twenty historians from Israel and abroad. In previous years, whenever friends and colleagues visited me in Haifa I took them for an improvised tour around Hadar and the lower neighborhoods of Haifa, and shared with them what I had learned about the places, as well as my ethnographic observations. This invitation was different. I didn't know the participants, and I was asked to focus the tour around the general theme of the conference that brought them together in Haifa that day: "The Self and Other."

While preparing for the tour I revisited the transcripts of the tours analyzed here, and re-read a draft of this chapter, which by then was almost completed. I then sketched an itinerary for a 3 hour tour that included the Old City, the German Colony, Wadi Nisnas and Hadar. My plan was to begin by introducing my disciplinary position – not a tour guide by profession, but an anthropologist who analyzed historical tours. Then, along the tour, I planned to gradually share information I gathered from the tours I had attended and from the variety of other academic and non-academic sources I had collected throughout the years, intertwined with my own observations. It was important for me to make it clear that I critically analyze the institutional manner of narrating Haifa's history of relations between Self and Other.

As we gathered in a shaded corner of the German Colony I began by clarifying my position as planned, and presented a brief history of the neighborhood, from its establishment in 1868 until today. I then showed the group the flaws in the narrative printed on the formal information plaque nearby. I sought to establish an alternative narrative, which would differ from the ones I encountered in the tours I analyzed.

However, as we were moving from one location to the next, each with its own significance in the history of the city and the relations between its communities, I suddenly realized that I withdrew to the hegemonic narrative, implementing the discourse of separation in my own manner of showing & telling. It was easy to explain and to grasp, it made sense to participants, and it was as if the built environment invited it, making it difficult to talk about what hardly leaves any visible traces: the multiplicity of social interactions. I did mention a number of critical remarks (about the difficulty to talk about the old city as an area divided into firmly distinct quarters, about Hadar never being purely Jewish as its founders had wished), but throughout the tour I used the contemporary hegemonic categories, never questioning them or contextualizing them historically. Not even once did I mention my argument regarding the discourse of separation, which by then had already been formulated in my writing. It was only when walking from one location to another that I could informally, even if very generally, learn about the positions of my interlocutors and share a more critical analysis, when I felt comfortable.

As far as the participants were concerned, the tour was a great success, and I was delighted to receive their enthusiastic feedback. One of them even acknowledged that she learned a lot even though she's a Haifa native, daughter to an active member of the Haifa History Society. However, back home that evening, thinking retrospectively about

the tour that just ended, I realized how gradually and unintentionally I became very much like most of the tour guides I analyzed in my work. "Hahaha... That's because you're a Mensch," said a good friend of mine when I shared with him my frustrations the next day. Coming from him, this was no compliment. "Mensch" was his way of criticizing me for steering away from a potential conflict, to the degree of de-politicization, just like most of the tour guides I criticize here.

### *Discussion*

Touring the field of Anthropology of Tourism reveals a number of ethnographies focusing on tour guiding, analyzing their practices and subject positions.<sup>106</sup> Following his anthropological research among tour guides in New York, Jonathan Wynn (2011:6–12) argues that the guides are unconventional intellectuals, who tie together anecdotes and fragments of history, thereby turning abstract concepts – tangible, and subjective meanings – to a coherent narrative of a community, a neighborhood and a city. Based on his ethnography among guides of tours for pilgrims in Israel, Feldman (2007:355) argues against Michel de Certeau in showing how the practice of walking in the public sphere could be an expression of the guides' hegemonic strategies, rather than tactics of resistance as de Certeau proposes. This chapter draws similar conclusions in relation to guiding tours as an expression of hegemonic strategies that create a coherent narrative.

My analysis further suggests that the tour guides' narrative is not determined according to the national identity of the guides, as suggested, for example, by Glenn Bowman's (1992) comparison between Jewish and Palestinian guides, and the different

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<sup>106</sup> See, for example: Bowman (1992), Feldman (2007, 2016), Guano (2015), Salazar (2005) and Wynn (2011).

touristic images of the Holy Land they construct. Not working independently from the hegemonic discourse of separation, as well as from the wider systems of economic power and political dominance, the national identity of guides becomes less significant in determining their narrative.

Regardless of their national identity, the guides of the establishment-sponsored tours describe Haifa's history of coexistence as being confined to a tale of a city whose residents are constantly being segregated according to different ethno-national and class categories, simultaneously with downplaying the story of violence in the city. Despite the variety of spaces that serve as grounds for encounters and for social interactions between the city dwellers, and despite a long history of violence in the city, the analysis of the tours shows how the discourse of separation masks the history of boundary-transcending social relations (both friendly and violent), excluding them in favor of a narrative that stresses inter-community segregation, or otherwise subjects them to business interests.

This analysis also suggests that testimonies about social interactions that do not conform to segregation mechanisms and cannot be linked to business interests, which are considered legitimate, usually emerge from personal experiences as well as from arguably imaginary stories (such as the jinn stories), rather than from official records and hegemonic narratives. Contrary to what residential patterns and real estate ownership records may show, when personal accounts assume center stage, the hegemonic narrative of a social-spatial order can be disturbed. Nevertheless, because of political, disciplinary as well as technological reasons, there are only a handful of

descriptions such as these in the mainstream historical study into the local sphere.<sup>107</sup> Such testimonies mainly took the stage in the non-institutional tours. When the lion's share of research is channeled to top-down engagement with history, when means for recording and preserving local, familial, personal and private information are poor, and when this knowledge mainly contains information that fails to correspond to the collective, hegemonic narrative, the outcome is that knowledge treasured in biographies of those that embody the disobedience to the practice of social separation fails to be included in our collective ways of knowing the past and the present. The discourse of separation molds the tours' narratives to marginalizing testimonies concerning social relations that are perceived as unwelcome, or even threatening, at the time of the tours. The underlying logic is that if Haifa's image of coexistence is to be maintained – both the violence and the possibilities of crossing, passing and blurring social categories must be ignored.

The ethnography presented here shows how the guides in the establishment tours serve as creative social agents of the discourse of separation. In their attempts to maintain social-moral cohesion they narrowed the epistemic boundaries of the historical narrative in manners that keep it within what they perceived as the shared perceptions among their audience. The result is de-politicization of Haifa's social relations, both past and present.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> For the Israeli context, see for example: Bernstein (2008), Hazan and Monterescu (2011), Kemp (2002), Lev Tov (2010), Monterescu (2011, 2015), Nathansohn and Shiblak (2011), Nuriely (2005), Razi (2011), Wallach (2016) and Yacobi (2009).

<sup>108</sup> According to anthropologist Rebecca Stein (2009), tourism played a political role in the Zionist project since its inception in the late nineteenth century, and it legitimized Zionism's colonial practices in Palestine in its early years. Right after the 1967 war and the military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza "Israeli tourist practices functioned as cultural companions to, and alibis for, the more repressive work of military rule" (Stein 2016:546).

While Trouillot (1995) argues that historical narrative is created in a unique context, my analysis shows that the political context of narrative creation can change over time. Therefore, it should be further argued that since the socio-cultural context constantly changes – and with it the condition of possibility for narratives’ creation also changes, and so does their epistemic boundaries – it should be assumed that narratives are in constant flux, too. What I showed here is that the unthinkable is in dialectical relationship with the hegemonic political discourse that exists during the making of the historical narrative, and is not bounded to the moment of “fact creation” (ibid:26). What is tellable (and the way it is tellable) at a certain time, in a certain context, to a certain audience can be untellable (or tellable in an alternative way) at a different time, in a different context, or for a different audience. What Alex Carmel wrote in his book on Ottoman Haifa in 1969 was adjusted according to the narrative that became hegemonic throughout the following decades (see Chapter 1). Past social interactions were thus portrayed in ways that would make sense in the time of the tour.

The Discourse of Separation is revealed in this chapter as a production of the ongoing dialectic relations between structure and agency. It is both a hegemonic discourse which draws the form and content of the historical narrative concerning social relations of Jews and Arabs (and their internal divisions) in the region, while at the same time it is being reproduced, reworked, and reshaped by the social agents – guides of all affiliations, as well as their audiences – who creatively blend it with historical data, personal experiences and fiction.

## PART II

### The Mixing Neighborhood



Image 7: "Map of Hadar," Drawing by Gera Davidi and Efrat Levin

## CHAPTER 3

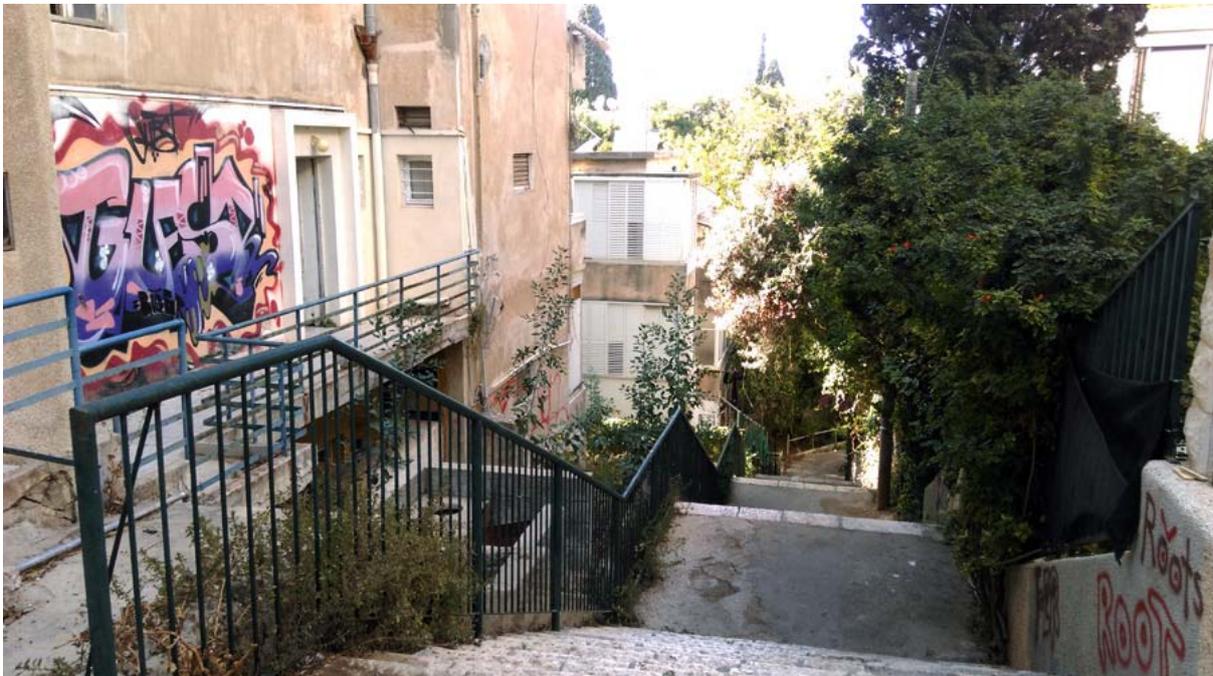
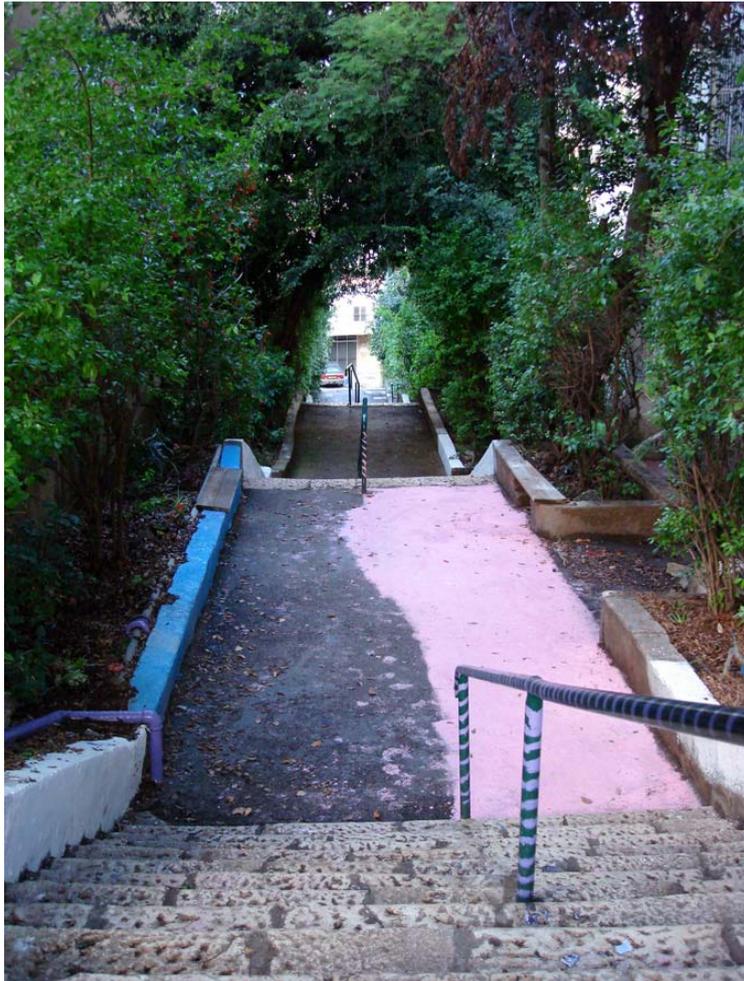
### **Hadar's Street-Level Coexistence**

*December 2009: Enchanted, Tamar tells me of her encounter with a new guy who just moved in to the neighborhood. "How do you feel here?" she asked him. "The neighborhood cures me," he replied.*

#### ***Between Glory and Neglect: Hadar's Masada Scene***

Hadar's *Masada Scene* is mostly known around the city and elsewhere, too, for its diverse population, particularly Jews and Arabs, who share the public sphere and live as neighbors – on the same street, in the same apartment building, and sometimes even in the same flat. The Masada Scene revolves around Masada Street, a narrow, one-way street that runs along Mount Carmel's latitude, about mid-height between Downtown and the Carmel neighborhoods. Masada Street is relatively flat, although curving, and it connects Balfour and Hatziyonut Streets, both of which climb Mount Carmel quite steeply on some parts. Like other streets in Hadar, Masada is connected to lower and upper parts of the city with several public stairways that allow pedestrians to climb between Downtown and the Carmel Center in a route totaling about 1,000 stairs (see Images 8 and 9). Built on a mountain slope, some of the buildings on the lower side along Masada Street have street-level entrances that lead directly to the second floor.

Along the street are trees of several kinds – ficus, cypress, and palm trees among others – which cast shade on small corners of the sidewalk, and make the built environment seem more integrated with the nature within which the first houses of the neighborhood were built in the 1930s.



Images 8-9: Stairways in Hadar

In 1941 the street won the name “Masada” by Haifa Municipality, which was then led by Shabtai Levy, the first Jewish Mayor of the city (see Chapter 2). According to the records of the Haifa Municipality, “Masada” refer to the ancient fortress situated on top of an isolated plateau on the Judean Desert, overlooking the Dead Sea.<sup>109</sup> As the myth goes, in the 1<sup>st</sup> century the fortress was occupied by a group of about 1,000 Jews who rebelled against the Romans and were put under heavy siege. In 73 CE, the pressure from the Romans became so heavy that the defeat was obvious and the Jews had to choose between surrender (and being forced into slavery) and collective suicide. Choosing the latter assisted the Zionist movement, more than 18 centuries later, in mythologizing their story, portraying it as a heroic example of their people’s bravery, and of their readiness to fight for their freedom to the bitter end.<sup>110</sup>

Following the 1926 publication of “Masada,” a Hebrew poem by Yitzhak Lamdan, the poem’s line “Masada will not fall again!” became a national slogan used in soldiers’ oaths as an imperative. The choice of Haifa municipality to name the street Masada, using transliteration of the English spelling (and pronunciation) Masada (מַסָּדָה), instead of the Hebrew spelling “Metzada” (מֵצָדָה), probably follows the title of Lamdan’s poem. However, throughout the years the poem has become unknown to the majority of the population, and the phrase borrowed from it has taken an independent presence in Jewish-Israeli collective consciousness. This cultural-linguistic separation from the original reference of the street’s name creates a looser sense when pronouncing it today, without the national myth being immediately connoted, to the extent that the only place where the Hebrew spelling (*Metzada*) is shown – at one of the local underground stations – looks like a mistake.

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<sup>109</sup> [www.haifa-strets.co.il/Lists/List1/DispForm.aspx?ID=5735](http://www.haifa-strets.co.il/Lists/List1/DispForm.aspx?ID=5735) (accessed: September 26, 2015).

<sup>110</sup> See Zerubavel (1994) for an analysis of how the narrative of Masada events, written by Josephus Flavius close to their occurrence, was resurrected in the 1920s by the Zionist movement.

Visitors to contemporary Masada Street cannot ignore its mixed Arab–Jewish character, evident in the spoken languages, in business signs, and in the types of businesses located on the ground floor of many apartment buildings along the street: from pizza, sushi and falafel restaurants, through second-hand clothes and book stores, to a hookah [water-pipe] place – all located a few steps away from each other. However, Masada is best known for its coffee shops, most of which were opened during the 2000s, some of them having changed ownership throughout the years. Along the street there is also an underground station, a community center, and four bus stops of line number 4, driving to and from the local Talpiyot Market. Almost always there are cars parked on both sides of the street, sometimes with two wheels on the sidewalk, making it difficult to walk on the narrow sidewalks. Only three minutes walking from where Masada branches out of Balfour Street there is a wider sidewalk, near building number 20. This is where many of the neighborhood gatherings are held.

The buildings along the street are mostly apartment buildings, three to four stories high. Only one single story house still stands here, after most others had been replaced by taller ones. This house, on Masada number 13, is scheduled to be demolished, too, and a modern one, four or five stories high will be built in its stead. The entrepreneurs of this project, who identified the spatial capital (Monterescu 2015:136) of the Masada Scene, are Joseph and Ronen Sionov, founders of “Joseph & Bros,” a real-estate company based in Tel-Aviv. Their company has become very visible across Haifa in the areas that are undergoing official or unofficial urban renewal processes. In 2015, along the fence of Masada 13 “Joseph & Bros” hung a long banner, announcing the planned construction of the new apartment building. The banner showed a sketch of the planned Bauhaus building, and declared it as a condominium and arts project with galleries on the ground level (see Image 10).



Image 10: 13 Masada Street

The local weekly magazine reported that "Joseph & Bros" bought the 322 square meter property for 1.7 million NIS (less than half a million USD), which at that time was the price of an average 3 bedroom apartment in Tel-Aviv (*Colbo*, October 11<sup>th</sup> 2013, p. 34). The report ends with the following description (*ibid*:34):

Masada Street, as well as Hillel Street right above it, are considered "Haifa's Sheinkin Street,"<sup>111</sup> thanks to the moving in of many young residents. The property on Masada is located opposite the coffee shops. "The reason we purchased the property is its part in the young, vibrant character of the area," said Sionov."

Through the trees that grow wild in the yard of 13 Masada Street, one can see the small, yellow house, with its architectural singularity, and cannot overlook how the modern straight contours of the planned apartment building stand in sharp contrast to it. Besides a handful of little businesses that sprung up during the 2000s, this was the most visible sign, unashamed of its profit-oriented motives, of the area's gentrification.

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<sup>111</sup> "Sheinkin Street" refers to a street at the old center of Tel Aviv that a few decades before was considered to be the hub of the city's young, free and creative scene.

Much like other examples of gentrification around the world, such entrepreneurship takes place in an urban landscape where signs of neglect and decay are visible – both in private property as well as in the urban infrastructure, including holes in the road and sidewalks, floods with every heavy rainfall, and poor street lights. During the years of my fieldwork, signs of gentrification became increasingly visible: by rising real estate value and rent prices, and by changes of demographic characteristics to more homogenous in aspects of class, ethnicity and nationality, namely – more middle class Ashkenazi Jews – such as myself – moving in, thereby pushing out people of lower classes.

In the spring of 2015, new tenants moved into 13 Masada Street, replacing the Jewish religious family who, for a few years, tried to make the place a center for social gatherings around religious themes. Before them, the place was empty and deserted for several years until a French investor bought it. The new tenants, three Jewish students, turned their yard into a concert space, hosting artists for pay-as-you-wish concerts.<sup>112</sup> Not too long after they moved in, the new building plan was officially submitted to authorities, stirring opposition from local activists, who organized official petitions that were filed with the local planning committee, and then the district committee. The petitioners sought to reduce the number of apartments in the project, to increase the apartment sizes, and to find parking solutions within the property. In August 2015 their petition was accepted by the district planning committee, and "Joseph & Bros" were requested to re-design the project accordingly.<sup>113</sup>

Given its diverse population and its vibrant cultural scene and social activism, there is little wonder that Haifa's Hadar neighborhood, and particularly the social scene

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<sup>112</sup> See report in *Colbo*, May 1, 2015, p. 38.

<sup>113</sup> See report in *Colbo*, August 28, 2015, p. 36; for the petition document visit:

[www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.492445134256131.1073741837.385742561593056](http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.492445134256131.1073741837.385742561593056).

around Masada Street, attracts the curiosity of researchers. At any given moment you can find a social scientist, culture studies researcher, or a filmmaker wandering around searching for the keys to understand the vibes of Masada's social scene.

Recently, Noa Lewin (2015), a resident of the neighborhood and an Israeli graduate student of Culture Studies at Tel Aviv University, who is looking into Hadar's shared space, published a short essay, titled "That which is forbidden to speak of," in which she describes Masada's scene as follows:

You have probably heard that something is happening around Masada Street in Haifa. Sometimes you need to corner people so they would admit that what happens is that Jews and Arabs mix there. To be precise, some Jews are trying to be accepted by some Arabs, and vice versa. They all sit in a coffee shop that looks as if it is located in Alexandria and listen to American Rock music from the 1990s. From time to time there is a mixed couple, in secret or in public. At the parties they all dance together and it's impossible to know who is who. A number of businesses with joint ownership of Arabs and Jews were established (and closed down) in the neighborhood. When a cultural event is organized, Jews and Arabs alike will be on stage. [...]

The rareness of friendships between Jews and Arabs in Israel turns the neighborhood's social fabric to almost a strange episode. Together with that new Haifa ripple, criticism was also spread. Critics argue that Masada's idealistic atmosphere is a bubble full of smoke and nothing more. No big political statements were declared in the neighborhood. The artistic projects don't bring any revolutionary enunciation. Overall, it is only a number of people sitting in coffee shops getting drunk together (Lewin 2015:60; my translation from Hebrew).

According to Lewin, despite the wider mechanisms that separate between Jews and Arabs, people in Masada continue to live side by side. Nevertheless, they also "find it hard to talk about it." "What is going on in this neighborhood?" she asks. Her essay concludes with the following statement:

None of us believes that it is possible to expand this shared space beyond the borders of the neighborhood. We are not trying to spread the idea. However, the fact that most of us stay [here] and keep going proves that we also share the hope that refuses to be extinguished, the will to be part of something decent (ibid:62; my translation from Hebrew).

Shifting her tone of writing from descriptive and analytical to the personal, hopeful and political, her text seems to reflect both the difficulties of living together, and of describing such an experience.

### ***Masada Scene from Outside***

One summer afternoon of 2009 I climbed up to one of the most stunning streets of Haifa overlooking the bay in its fullness, with a view far north, deep into the Lebanese coastline. I went to meet Geula, a mother of a friend, who lives there in a spacious house, to hear about Hadar of the 1920s, the years she used to live there. At the end of her description, in one sentence, Geula summed up the common Jewish perspective on Hadar's history and present day: "Those days Hadar was like today's upper Carmel neighborhoods, but it became a slum."

Describing Hadar as a slum refers to its current state as a squalid, untreated, broken and poor residential area. Comparing its past state to contemporary upper Carmel neighborhoods implies that Hadar used to be clean, developed, and inhabited by the upper middle class. As in other urban settings around the world, class connotations also carry ethnic, racial and national connotations. While they were not explicitly mentioned in Geula's description, they could be derived from Haifa's well established (and statistically-based) relation between topography and demography: the higher the neighborhood is – the higher the class of its residents, with larger percentages of Ashkenazi Jews among the upper classes (see Chapters 1 and 2).

What was only implicit in Geula's description of Hadar became explicit in a description by Tamar, a long-time resident of the neighborhood. Tamar mentioned two

interactions with people from outside the neighborhood. The first of these took place only a few days before my meeting with Geula:

*Tamar calls me and her voice reveals that she is very upset. She just ended a conversation with a real-estate agent in her search for a new apartment to purchase in Hadar. She told the agent that she was interested in the Masada Street area, and the agent immediately replied: "But you know that Arabs live there, right?" Shocked, Tamar replied: "It bothers me that you ask this question." Tamar pauses her description of that dialogue for a moment, takes a deep breath, and says: "Then the agent said 'I'm not a racist, I only need to know...'. Tamar pauses again, then remarks "this is so depressing... The agent asked me 'It doesn't bother you that there are more and more Arabs there?' ... this is so depressing, so depressing... I told her exactly what streets I'm interested in... and she just didn't get it! She couldn't realize that I actually want to live there." After another pause, Tamar says, sarcastically: "It's so fun to be an Arab in this country. Just think about it: She doesn't know who I am, and yet she has no problem talking like that. She got me really angry." Are you going to go back to her? I ask her. "How can I boycott her? If you boycott all the racists here, you will have no one to do business with. All the people around us are racists. Probably we're a bit racist, too."*

About a year later, Tamar returned from her work in one of the upper Carmel neighborhoods, and told me of a similar experience. Before heading down to Hadar, she entered the mobile blood donation station. As she stepped outside, after donating blood, she called me, with anger growing in her voice as she was recounting:

*"The person there looked at the form that I just filled out," she said, "and told me: 'oh, you live on Masada Street. I have a relative there, but she argues that the neighborhood is deteriorating.' Why deteriorating? I asked him, and he whispered: 'Because of the Arabs and the Russians'. So I said: 'Oy, oy, oy,' and raised my voice:*

*'Russians and Arabs! What's your problem with Russians and Arabs?' 'I have no problem,' he said. 'So why did you whisper?' Then, while their needle is still stuck in my vein, a discussion on chauvinism broke out. Someone asked 'the girls' – the next donors in line – to come in, so I said 'It's women, not girls!' Another person working there, an Arab by his name, joined the conversation saying that had he been a member of the government he would have taken the women's status fifty years back in time.'*

In the mobile blood donation station, Jews and Arab professionals work side by side, but from the perspective of the Jewish staff member there, the parallel scene, which takes place on Masada Street, bears negative connotations, because of "the Arabs and the Russians," who are regarded as responsible for the deterioration of the neighborhood. Whispering this position signaled that the person probably wished not to offend his Arab colleague. I interpret his whisper as a signifier of a class distinction that the speaker draws between his Arab colleague, who is a professional, and the Arabs from Hadar, who are regarded as uneducated villagers (see Chapter 5). When Tamar loudly repeated his observation with a sarcastic manner, his response signaled shame, maybe because he feared being interpreted by his colleagues as a racist. On the one hand, shaming forced him to renounce any racism on his side; on the other hand, his Arab colleague followed suit with a non-politically correct position of his own. Under the umbrella of a shared higher class position, it was acceptable by them to express discriminatory positions as long as it was not their own Arab–Jewish coexistence that was marked as squalid, or their clinic as a slum.

In the previous chapter I described how in one of the tours, cases of cross ethno-national relations in the past were described in the present as originating from business interests. Similarly, here, too, the outsiders' descriptions of the mixed ethno-national social environment in Hadar assume that such a mix is economically mediated, only this

time by misfortune. Under the discourse of separation, between these two mixophobic options there is no room for a sociality of mixing that is independent from direct economic factors.<sup>114</sup>

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As people get closer to the social interactions in Hadar, and as they let themselves experience what it has to offer, they might leave the neighborhood feeling confused.

*Spring 2011: M., a friend of mine from high-school, visits Haifa and I decide to show him around. After wandering around the neighborhood, we end up at one of the local bars, for a concert of a local Palestinian rock singer. As we enter the place M feels a little disoriented by the mix of Hebrew and Arabic, yet relaxed, probably because he slowly realizes I know many of the people around us. We order beer and sit at one of the corners, waiting for the concert to start, and chatting with people around us, Jews and Arabs. As the concert begins, M looks at me, surprised. The singer begins with a few words in Arabic, and then sings in Arabic and English, without a word in Hebrew. The few songs in English, which M can understand, are highly political, stating views against state discrimination. M gradually gets the beat and joins everyone in clapping. On our way out, M confesses that in his own everyday life he is exposed to all these stereotypes that portray all Arabs as intimidating, "But these people here weren't intimidating at all," he says, "this whole neighborhood seems to be like a place out of time."*

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<sup>114</sup> Sociologist Uri Ben Eliezer (2008: 134) notes that unlike the phenotype-based racism, the new racism, which is culture-based, is not heterophobic (fear of the Other, the different), but heterophilic (love for difference) and mixophobic.

### ***Moving In: Home in the City, Apartments and Neighbors***

As much as the neighborhood appears different based on the position from which people observe at it, it also looks different from its various street corners. During the years of my fieldwork in Hadar, I lived in three different apartments, all of which were located a couple of minutes' walk from Masada Street. I lived on Bar-Giora Street, three streets above Masada, in the first floor of a Bauhaus-style building, then I moved four streets below, to a relatively new building on Ben-Yehouda Street, and finally, for the bulk of my fieldwork and writing up, I lived close to the entrance of Masada, on Yossef Street, in a top-floor, one bedroom apartment overlooking the Haifa bay.

All this, as in many anthropological adventures, was a result of luck and coincidence.<sup>115</sup> In July 2008, I first moved to Haifa for several months of fieldwork. I already had basic familiarity with the city after my daily visits there on the summer before while I was conducting oral history interviews.<sup>116</sup>

Back then, I still had no intention to focus on a particular neighborhood. I wanted to live in the city, to continue conducting interviews, to start digging in archives, and to occasionally meet with Tamar, who lived in Hadar, and whom I befriended about a decade before through political activism. When I started looking for a place to rent for that summer, a friend told me about an apartment available right on Haifa's seashore. The apartment was in one of the oldest neighborhoods of the city, established about one hundred years before, when there were no regulations prohibiting building so close to the shoreline. The place had one bedroom and a small balcony with a great view to the open sea, only a meter away. I love the sea, and when I first visited the apartment, breathing in the fresh sea breeze, I immediately imagined how happy I could be there.

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<sup>115</sup> See, for example, Ortner (2013: 1-2).

<sup>116</sup> See Nathansohn and Shiblak (2011).

At the end of that summer, thinking about that first – and last – visit to the beach apartment, I realized how lucky I was that the landlord cancelled the contract at the very last minute because a friend of his suddenly needed it urgently. How different would it have been to wake up and go to sleep every day by the sea? How different would my fieldwork have been had I been based in that seaside neighborhood, with its fishermen and surfers, with its nearby church and the oceanographic research institute?

When Tamar heard the disappointment in my voice, she immediately said “come to Hadar then! This would fit both your research and your politics,” and so I did. It only took a few days to find a charming one bedroom apartment, newly renovated, with two balconies, on Bar-Giora Street. It only took another day to experience my second disappointment.

*My small flat smells of sewage.<sup>117</sup> I live on the first floor, and there is some kind of a problem in the building's main sewers right below one of my balconies. My landlady, who lives in Tel Aviv, an hour away, doesn't take care of it, so there's not much I can do but shut all the windows whenever any of the neighbors uses their taps (it takes only a few seconds until a sewage puddle is created in the back yard, and a few seconds more until the smell occupies my flat). Talking with a few friends from the neighborhood I realize it's not an exceptional problem around. The infrastructure is a few decades old, and it wasn't planned for the number of residents now using it. People here say that since Hadar is not on the municipality's top priority list, no one cares there about maintaining it properly.*

Because of the smell of sewage I rarely invited visitors, so I was quite curious when one evening I heard a knock on my door, and went to see who it was. An

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<sup>117</sup> See Schwenkel (2015) on how infrastructure “often evokes a multiplicity of embodied sensations across the human sensorium”.

unfamiliar person was standing there, in the hallway, holding a piece of paper. Speaking Hebrew with a heavy Russian accent the person introduced himself as a neighbor from the nearby street. He showed me the document, and explained that he was collecting signatures from all the neighbors in support for a petition to Haifa mayor to renovate their squalid street, located right next to the building where I lived. Although the language revealed that the writers' were not fluent in Hebrew, the message of the letter was clear: a determined call for correcting injustice. I added my signature, wished him luck, and watched him move on to the neighbors next door.

In the following years, various organized groups entered the neighborhood, supposedly "to do good," to empower the residents, to help them formulate their various demands and make their voice heard, as though they lack any kind of agency (see Chapter 1). Looking back at that incident, and at the municipality's indifference to my neighbors' petition, it became clear that local residents were not lacking agency. They were not even lacking the symbolic and cultural capital. They were mainly lacking a belonging to the hegemonic ethno-national and class group that could have compelled someone at the municipal level to pay attention to their demands.

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Opposite one of the balconies of that apartment, there was another Bauhaus-style building (see Image 11). Whenever I was sitting there to write, I couldn't keep my eyes from constantly looking up at one of the apartments that was blocked-out. I was fascinated by the pigeons that were moving in and out of the cracks between the blocks that seal off one of its windows. I imagined a kingdom of pigeons inside the otherwise uninhabited apartment. The cooing, the fighting, the courting, the pecking, and the hustle and bustle that took place at their kingdom's doorstep was so noisy that it

sometimes overshadowed the barking of the dogs and meowing of stray cats. I could watch them for hours, thinking how the coexistence among them (and the little that I could see of it) corresponds with the human coexistence in the neighborhood scene (and the little that I was exposed to).



Image 11: The view from my balcony

One day, when I was sitting on that balcony, I heard someone shout: “Hey, anthropologist!” I saw my friend Khader waving at me from a window at an apartment next to the pigeons'. Back then, Khader was also a graduate student of anthropology. I met him some time before, at the annual meeting of the Israeli Anthropological Association, and was happy to find out we had become neighbors. Shouting from his window, Khader invited me over for coffee.

*Khader lives in a nice flat. He shows me around and I ask to see the window through which he waved at me. It's strange to see my balcony from outside. From here my apartment looks deserted, too, as most of my windows are closed to block the odor of sewage, and prevent the cockroaches from flying in. We sit to chat in his living room, and*

*he tells me about the writing up of his research. He then wants to hear about my own research, and says that studying “coexistence” is important.*

*Khader was born in Haifa in the 1980s and identifies as a Palestinian. His father’s family belongs to the minority of Christian Palestinians who lived in the city for several generations, and managed to stay in the city throughout the 1948 War. Khader’s family now owns the flat opposite my balcony, where he lives. He mentions that a few years ago, someone bought most of the apartments in that building, some of which are now empty (one of them is where the pigeons’ commune is). Knowing the neighborhood pretty well, Khader agrees that the term “coexistence” is problematic, and worthy of critical investigation. Indeed, he says, there is diversity here, but it is also very much segregated, with the lower parts of the neighborhood – the areas of poverty and crime – populated mostly by Palestinians.*

With close to 40,000 residents, Hadar is one of the biggest neighborhoods in Haifa, and almost the size of a city in itself. Such conversations with local people quickly made me think that there was no way one can cover it ethnographically. That summer I decided to re-focus my ethnographic research and look at the interactions between the neighborhood’s diverse populations. In the later phases of my research, I noticed that a lot of effort is put in the neighborhood into reflexive thinking about Arab–Jewish interactions. These efforts, with their political attributes, have gradually become the main focus of my ethnographic inquiry.

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During my next summer in Haifa I was renting an apartment on Ben-Yehouda Street, four streets below Bar Giora, and one street below Masada. The Ben-Yehouda

apartment had windows facing the building across the street, and this time it was me overlooking others' balconies.

*In the middle of the balcony opposite my window stands a hookah, and three young women (or maybe two women and one man?) pass the pipe between them. When the wind changes direction it brings the cloud of apple flavored tobacco into my living room.*

The wind brought other smells, too, to that apartment. Almost every night, at around 4AM, I had to close the bedroom window facing Haifa's industrial area. I soon realized that the wave of sweet smell entering my room was the reason that I woke up with a sore throat every day. Haifa is notorious for the heavily polluted air originating from its industrial zone, exposing its diverse population to higher than normal rates of various types of cancer and other chronic diseases, especially affecting those who live in the lower neighborhoods.<sup>118</sup>

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The next summer I looked for an apartment for my longer stay in Hadar, and devoted more time for searching. After one long day of visiting potential apartments, I entered one of the coffee shops on Masada Street, and saw Omar there. He was one of the Palestinian students studying at Haifa's medical school. Although we had only basic acquaintance from my previous stays in the neighborhood, when he heard that I was looking for an apartment to rent, he immediately suggested that I stayed with him until I find one. I was moved by his gesture, which showed me how the place I was studying could sometimes be called "a community."

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<sup>118</sup> See Eco-Wiki on the Haifa Bay air pollution: [https://ecowiki.org.il/wiki/זיהום\\_האוויר\\_במפרץ\\_חיפה](https://ecowiki.org.il/wiki/זיהום_האוויר_במפרץ_חיפה) (accessed: December 18<sup>th</sup> 2016).

A couple of days later I found an apartment that fit my needs, on Yossef Street. I signed a lease for a year, and have renewed it seven more times since then, ending up staying in the same apartment until after I completed writing this dissertation.

My two landlords are Jewish sisters. They inherited the apartment building from their parents, who immigrated to Palestine from Eastern Europe in the 1930s, and were of the first settlers in Yossef Street. The sister with whom I mostly negotiated is Ultra-Orthodox and lives in Jerusalem. When I asked her about Internet connection in the apartment she immediately replied saying that "Internet is the worst! Everything attacks you from there!" I did not want to open a discussion about how Kosher the Internet is, so I did not dwell on it, knowing I would find a way to connect.

After moving in, I went outside to become acquainted with my new surroundings. I gained the impression that Russian is the most spoken language in that area of Hadar. A few streets below Yossef Street I saw migrants from the Philippines, and a few streets further toward the downtown – Ethiopians and Arabs. On my way back, I stopped at the Romanian restaurant, closer to the business center of Hadar, and heard customers there speaking Yiddish with the owner. On returning to the apartment I visited the neighbor from downstairs, "the Arab woman from the ground level," as the landlady called her.

*Yara works not far from here as a nurse, and has lived here for several years. She is extremely friendly, and invites me in to have dinner with her. When I ask her about Internet connection she immediately offers to share her Wi-Fi with me, and we agree on sharing the costs. I pass by her place the next day, and find her door wide open. She notices me from inside, and calls: "come, come, my door is always open." We start to get to know each other. I tell her about my research, and she tells me about the nursing home where*

*she works. She notes that she feels no racism there, and in any case, she says, "I'm not into politics. There are only about ten elders there from the 'Migzar' [sector]. Usually they take care of their elders at home," she explains, and I note to myself that she is using the establishment term "Migzar" to indicate the Arab minority. Not too long thereafter I learned that she has no less radical political views than those activists who use other, more radical terms, such as "Palestinians" – a term she never used when talking in Hebrew in our conversations. She then tells me I should visit this and that place for my research, and drops several names of people I must meet with. I feel lucky!*

I was fortunate to have her as a neighbor; we always cared for each other, as well as for the cat she adopted. I liked my little apartment, too. Although only about 40 square meters, the place had windows facing all directions, and from the larger ones there was an open view to Haifa Bay and to the Galilee Mountains. On days with clear visibility one could see Mount Hermon from there, the highest mountain in the region, shared by Israel, Syria and Lebanon. From the other windows, a portion of Mount Carmel was seen.



Image 12: The view from my window (direction north-east)

*Friday, December 24th 2010: It's almost 4PM. I look out through my wide windows overlooking Haifa Bay direction North-East. Ships enter Haifa Port and blow their horns, sounds of containers being unloaded, and then – the calls of the downtown muezzin. It's getting dark. On a nearby roof someone is in a hurry to finish proofing the surface before the next rain comes. He is still working in the sunlight while my window is already covered with the mountain's shadow. Looking further to the North-East I see the Kishon River pouring to the Mediterranean next to Haifa Port, and a little further North – the nearby town of Kiryat Yam. All that area is still enjoying the sunlight.*

*Two minutes after 4PM I hear the sirens from the nearby Haredi [Ultra Orthodox] neighborhood, announcing the Shabbat. The three port cranes that I can see from here now stand still. The other cranes, hidden by a number of trees, are probably still, too. I hear no sounds arriving from there. Containers are no longer being unloaded. There are also no further sounds from the downtown mosques. The visibility is slowly improving as the haze that separated between here and the Galilee Mountains in the past few days has disappeared. Behind me, from the windows facing the other side, I hear a car driving by on Yossef Street. It takes a long minute until another car drives through. One can tell that the weekend is almost here by the traffic slowing down.*

*Yesterday, before midnight, there was a party on one of the rooftops nearby. The Arabic music from the party was followed by techno music from a car that parked on the sidewalk. When both parties ended, the stray cats started a fight. In the moments of their quiet maneuvering, a neighbor coughing could be heard.*

*A raven just landed on the water container on top of the nearby building. A songbird land there, too, and disturbs the raven's attention. In the bay behind them I see a freighter doing its way outside of Haifa Port, probably a moment before the Port closes*

*down for the weekend. Suddenly, seemingly without any coordination, the raven tweets, a dog barks, and one of the neighbors shouts something in Russian. And then – a military chopper is lowering, probably returning to the marine base, next to the port. A little later – church bells from downtown occupy the soundscape. So far it sounded just like any other Friday afternoon, but there’s something unusual in the church bells’ insistence. Oh, I suddenly remember: today is Christmas Eve. Someone from the nearby building steps outside to his balcony, curiously searching for the source of sounds. And soon thereafter – sounds of firework explosions. Celebrations begin!*

### ***Masada’s People and Sites***

Tamar grew up in a Jewish family in a northern town and moved to Hadar in the late 1990s, mostly to get closer to *Isha L’Isha*, the feminist center that was established there the decade before.<sup>119</sup> Identifying herself as a radical feminist, Tamar felt at home there and joined their activities, gradually becoming one of their key figures. She is outspoken on political matters, and as the encounters above show, she does not shy away from confrontations. “I have a feeling that wherever I go people think that I’m a weirdo,” she told me one day. “I think that the only exception is here, in this neighborhood”. On a different occasion, she told me: “I can’t see myself living anywhere else.”

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<sup>119</sup> [www.isha.org.il](http://www.isha.org.il)



Image 13: "Welcome to Massada"

However, even in the Masada Scene not all sites are the same and not everyone feels comfortable everywhere. Locals will most commonly mention the coffee shops scene as Masada's most differentiated in that respect. In summer 2008, at the beginning of my first fieldwork period in Hadar, Tamar introduced the neighborhood to me by giving an overview of Masada's coffee shops scene. According to her explanation, Café Cube was a Zionist and LGBTQ-friendly coffee shop, Café Terez was where mostly Arabs hang out, and Café Carmel, where we were sitting during that conversation, was the one with the more mixed Arab–Jewish clientele. In subsequent years, some coffee shops changed owners, some closed down, and others were opened. Nevertheless, trying to make sense of the distinctions between them was common to many, and interpretations ranged from differences in the quality of the coffee they serve, through the atmosphere they maintain, to the political affiliation of their regular customers.

When talking about it with Meital, a student of comparative literature, and a co-editor of one of the Scene's arts and poetry magazines, she classified the coffee shops according to the political party affiliations of their regular customers. In her description, those associated with *AlJabha*, the party that grew out of the Communist Party, and has mostly Palestinian voters and representatives, go mostly to Café Carmel; those associated with *ALTajamu'*, the party that is mostly associated with Palestinian nationalism as well as with liberal ideas, and has only Palestinian representatives and predominantly Palestinian supporters, go mostly to Café Terez; and those who are associated with *Meretz*, the political party that presents itself as Zionist-Left, and has mostly Jewish voters and representatives, go mostly to Café Cube.<sup>120</sup>

Meital said that her own preference is Café Carmel. Moreover, she said that she feels that there is an invisible border that prevents her from crossing the street to visit Café Cube. When I check Meital's observations with a third person, I found that for him these distinctions were again different. "Not so many people sit in Café Cube," he told me, "because prices there are a little bit more expensive than those in the other coffee shops, so it's also a class thing. Moreover," he noted, "since Café Terez changed owners in 2009 it's not so much associated with *ALTajamu'* anymore."

Distinguishing between the coffee shops kept troubling Tamar, and although she felt comfortable visiting both Café Carmel and Café Terez, but never Café Cube, she couldn't put her finger on the reason for the difference in the sense of belonging she felt

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<sup>120</sup> *AlJabha* (الجبهة, חד"יש) is a political party that serves as a coalition of groups (the Communist party is only one of these). *ALTajamu'* (التجمع الوطني الديمقراطي, בל"ד) was established in 1995 by Dr. Azmi Bishara, and became recognized for promoting his idea of making Israel a State for all its Citizens (as opposed to its current practices as a Jewish State). *Meretz* (מרצ) was established in 1992 as a coalition of three political parties: Ratz (mostly associated with promoting civil rights issues), Mapam (the United Workers' Party), and Shinui (mostly promoting liberal economy). The latter party withdrew from the coalition a few years later.

in the two places. Once, when I was sitting with her at Café Carmel, she asked Matan, one of the Café's barmen for his explanation of the mystery:

*"There's something I still don't understand about this place," Tamar tells Matan when she succeeds to grab his attention for a minute, "what is the difference between Café Carmel and Café Terez?" Without reflecting on the question, Matan replies that the difference between the coffee shops lies in the attitude of the owners to both their customers and their employees. Tamar is still not fully satisfied, and when Erez, the owner of Café Carmel arrives, she asks him the same question. His first answer is that people go to the café they were used to. After giving it a little more thought, he adds that the people who come to his coffee shop are people with political awareness (leaning to the left, I assume), "but not extremists," he notes. Tamar gives him examples of a few people who are identified as radical leftist and nevertheless do spend time in his coffee shop. "Yes," he replies, and adds*

*but they don't come here that often. Those who want to sit among Palestinians go to [Café] Terez. They also organize political events there, which is something I stay away from. Here is where you come for the ordinary things in life. There, for example, they organized two events to commemorate the death of Mahmoud Darwish, and on both occasions they earned money holding these events. They also screen political films, which I refrain from doing. I don't want people to say that I earn money from these kinds of events. Last week I screened a film for the first time. It was a film documenting a Guns N' Roses concert, and it came after long hesitations. When I do [political] things, I do it below the surface."<sup>121</sup>*

The longer that conversation kept going, my recognition that Tamar was right in saying that the coffee shops could serve as a great ethnographic field-site grew stronger. Nonetheless, in the following years I came to realize that no matter how much the different coffee shops reveal about human interactions in Hadar's mixed environment, much of it takes place elsewhere as well, and one can never cover it all. Moreover, as

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<sup>121</sup> Mahmoud Darwish is regarded as the Palestinian national poet. He passed away in 2008, the year before that conversation was held.

Tamar noted one day, no matter how much people here interact in coffee shops, it is important to keep in mind that they don't really know much about each other:

*"I'm not a good example," Tamar said, "because I'm talkative, so I ask people a lot of questions, but how many of them know about my mother's story, for example? And what do I know about this or that person's background? Don't forget that most people here came from elsewhere. It's only Gil, Na'ama, Loren, Charlie and Vivi who have a history here."*

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Let me take you for a tour across Masada Scene's sites, a place that gradually became the center of my ethnographic curiosity. We'll visit a number of places along Masada Street and its periphery, meet some of the main characters of the Scene, and get familiarized with the atmosphere and the daily routines and interactions. Walking along Masada Street without stepping into any of these locales takes no more than ten minutes. However, visiting any of these means opening the door for potential surprises.

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*Café Carmel* is one of the first places I visited, and where I spent most the time. It has two indoor spaces, one at the entrance, where the bar stands, and attached to it is a small, square space with a few tables. One of them is round, and the rest are square. Around each of the square tables there are two to three wooden chairs, and next to the round table there are two couches. All of these look as if they were bought at the flea market, or picked up from the street after being thrown away by someone. The tables are so close to each other that from most positions you can see and hear everyone. There is also a big plant with green leaves, standing at the corner of the room. One of the walls has a window facing Masada Street. At night, the two ceiling lamps throw dimmed

yellow-orange light on the room. Two additional lamps, with red lampshades are standing near two of the tables, spoiling them with extra light. From ground to waist height the walls are painted yellow, then there's a pattern-strip of palm trees drawn across the room, and above it the wall is painted sky blue. The pictures on the walls show movie stars that played in Egyptian films. These were very popular in the sole TV station that broadcasted in Israel of the 1970s and 1980s. I remember these faces from the films that I watched as a kid on Fridays. The wooden ceiling here is low, and serves as a gallery for storing.

Most regular customers come to Café Carmel for their coffee, but as in the other coffee shops on Masada, there is also beer on tap (one local, one imported), as well as other types of alcoholic drinks. There is also a limited variety of food that they serve: mainly sandwiches, salads, Shakshuka, and soups in wintertime.

Café Carmel was opened in summer of 2007 by Erez, a Jewish man in his thirties, who moved to Haifa from a nearby town. In the years that followed the opening, he mentioned several times that he wished to sell the place, but he always managed to survive another year, and then another one, becoming the most veteran coffee shop owner of the Masada Scene. He is known to be a fair (although sometimes stubborn) employer, and along the years, most of his staff was local Palestinians, men and women. For several years he studied Arabic, but then he quit. "When I realized I was doing it only to get accepted, I quit" he told me one day, "I think I opened the café for the same reason," he added.

As in the other coffee shops, there is always music here in the background, the style of which depends on the preferences of the person who is on shift behind the bar: from Hard Rock, to classical Arabic, such as Umm Kulthum, or a combination of both, played by the local Khalas band. The music is played from a little laptop that stands at

the entrance to the bar, and is connected to loudspeakers. Sometimes the music will stop, and it will take a couple of minutes for whoever is on shift to bend over the laptop and search for a new playlist.

While most of the Scene's famous dramas take place during the afternoon or evening hours, when most coffee shops are packed, creating multifarious interactions, no less dramatic events take place also during the morning hours when residents pass through on their way to work, business owners open their shops, kids hurry to school, and some regular customers hurry up to read their favorite section of their favorite daily newspaper in their favorite coffee shop before going on with their other daily routines.

Tamar is one of Café Carmel's morning people. She wakes up at around 7AM, and within less than fifteen minutes she's sitting at Café Carmel with her favorite coffee and one of the newspaper sections. Slowly entering into a state of wakefulness, she doesn't like people to push her into discussions at this time of day. This, however, is a heavy task, because most of the regulars already know her as an opinionated woman. She nevertheless has no mercy on people who push her too strongly into discussions, and she informs them she is not a partner for conversation, or just ignores these attempts altogether.

Very common, and certainly not unique to Café Carmel, is this sense of freedom people have there to chat with everyone, to intervene in others' conversations, and to join each others' tables even if not invited.

*Summer 2008: It's hot and humid, and I'm sitting indoors at Café Carmel, enjoying the air conditioning. When I entered, the air was fresh, but now a cigarette was just lit behind me. Officially, it is illegal to smoke indoors in such places. Tamar once told me that this is one of the reasons she likes this place. "They openly do what's illegal," she said.*

*Souad Massi's album is playing at the background. The two men smoking cigarettes are talking in Arabic mixed with Hebrew: "Yesh Matzav" [Possibly, colloquial Hebrew], "Shalav Alef" [Stage A, colloquial-militaristic Hebrew] and "Shalav Bet" [Stage B] are Hebrew terms integrated seamlessly in their Arabic conversation. This Hebraization of colloquial Palestinian Arabic creates what is known as Arabrew that became quite common here as elsewhere among local Palestinians.<sup>122</sup>*

*Yoram, the second-hand furniture dealer, parks his truck outside, enters the café, and greets everyone: "Shalom to all the Jews and Arabs." Some people respond with a smile, others ignore him. This is probably his daily routine here. He then sees Ayelet sitting in the inner room, so he approaches her and tries to interest her with one of his new acquisitions (an old French wooden library). She is not interested. A few minutes later Einav enters the Café, notices me, comes to say hello, and a conversation begins. She tells me that earlier that day there was one of these dramas again. She was sitting inside the café, near the bar, working, when a woman she didn't see before entered the place, sat a meter away from her, and a second afterwards asked Elias, who was on shift behind the bar, to lower the music's volume because it was too loud for her, and in Arabic, too. Einav approached her saying that it is Chutzpa to go into a place like this and ask what she asked. Elias, probably shocked as well, thought he might have misheard her, then she repeated her request. He told her that this place plays music in Arabic, but he is willing to lower the volume if it's too loud for her. When he realized that it was, in fact, the Arabic that disturbed her, he asked her to leave the place. Are you kicking me out? She asked, and when she realized that this was indeed the case, she got up and left.*

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<sup>122</sup> See, for example Yoav Stern's report in the daily Ha'aretz, "The 'B'seder' Arabs", April 30<sup>th</sup> 2008; URL: [www.haaretz.com/print-edition/features/the-b-seder-arabs-1.244919](http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/features/the-b-seder-arabs-1.244919) (accessed: November 14<sup>th</sup> 2015).

Café Carmel had been the scene of several similar incidents, and Erez, the owner, tried to both back up his staff as well as to prevent further such interactions by making sure that new visitors would learn at the outset what kind of coffee shop they are about to patronize. One of the indicators that the place has a mixed Arab–Jewish clientele, and is left-wing leaning, was the posters and stickers covering the doors of the Café. Most of these are either in Arabic, or have radical slogans in Hebrew. Moreover, upon his return from a vacation in Berlin in summer 2009, Erez decided to install a lamppost in German next to the entrance to the Café. He told me that for him, the Israeli-Jewish public is divided into those who maintain their reservations regarding whatever is German, and to those who notice that there is another Germany, too. “And the Palestinians,” he said, “admire the Germans’ work ethics, as well as other good things they have.” For him, the signpost at the entrance to his café serves as a filter: “Whoever is deterred by the German sign is unwelcome and will not enter anyway. And those who do enter are either Palestinians or pro-Palestinian.” Erez seemed very pleased with these observations, but it was difficult to tell whether they have proved to be correct. Clearly, there was no way Erez could have prevented all other possible misunderstandings.

*Winter 2010: I'm packing my stuff and heading out of Café Carmel. On my way out I see Meital, whom I got to know a few months before, and who just stepped into the Café. She's a little disturbed, and when she sees me, she says: "Oh, here's an anecdote for your research." She points at someone who is sitting at the bar, less than a meter from her, and says: "That person just accused me of being racist because when I entered I said 'Hi' to Erez but 'Ahlan' to him." When the person sitting by the bar starts laughing, it takes Meital half a second to shed her serious face, and wear a more amused one. For a moment she probably wasn't sure whether he was joking or not.*

There are various racisms and racism radars here, I noted to myself. There is the brutal racism, such as in the cases of asking not to play Arabic music, and there is also the lighter racism, such as the one detected by the guy sitting by the bar. But there's also racism as a coin of cynicism, self-awareness and reflexivity, of the kind that Meital used when I showed up. "This will be good for your research," she told me, realizing that such interactions are good to further reflect about.

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Outside of Café Carmel, on the curving sidewalk, there is a small area that is occasionally being occupied for concerts organized by Café Carmel's owner, or for various temporary improvised activities organized by others. One spring night, I passed by on my way home, and saw a group of friends watching a film there. One of them brought a laptop, and another one borrowed a projector and screen from the nearby community center. They used electricity and Wi-Fi from Café Carmel, and screened John Cameron Mitchell's film "Shortbus" (2006) directly from YouTube. The film's plot takes place in New York City, focuses on a group of colorful characters, who meet at an underground salon infamous for its blend of art, music, politics, and carnality, and contains unsimulated sex scenes. Although I missed the beginning of that ad-hoc screening, I joined the handful of friends, and leaned with them on one of the parked cars, trying to watch the film. The Wi-Fi connection was constantly interrupted, and there were no loudspeakers, so it was difficult to follow. However, it seemed that the actual gathering was more important than the film itself. Several scenes ignited side discussions, and people were not fully focused on the film. Next to us, on the same sidewalk, and a little further away from Café Carmel, another group of people gathered near the Falafel place for outdoor jamming. It was already around midnight, and suddenly we heard a strange noise coming from the second floor of the building next to

us. We looked up and saw a hand, holding a transistor radio, emerging out of a crack in a window. The radio, playing full volume an out-of-tune Arabic song, was put on the window sill, next to an Israeli flag (Israel's Independence Day was approaching). Then the window was shut again. We looked at each other, puzzled, then continued watching the film. A few minutes passed, and the window opened again. This time, the face of an old woman emerged, shouting at us to be quiet, in a heavy Russian accent. She probably thought that playing an Arabic radio station would scare away the nuisance. Someone tried to convince her that the sounds that disturbed her didn't come from us, but rather from the jamming group, who apparently stopped playing because of the out-of-tune radio station. A few minutes later, the two groups dispersed, leaving behind them no mark they had ever gathered there, except for at least one neighbor who experienced yet another sleepless night. This was a reminder of the other, unspoken scene of coexistence taking place in the Masada Scene: coexistence between different age groups. The younger generations, Jews and Arabs, feel more at home in the public sphere, but when their activities enter the private sphere of the older generations, it is a reminder for them that there are other Others there, too.

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*Masada's Falafel* place was opened in summer 2009 by two Jewish partners, some thirty years apart in age. The younger, in his late twenties, identified himself as a radical-left Mizrahi activist, and the older presented himself in conversations as holding left-wing views, with experience in leading Arab–Jewish dialogue groups. He was also the one in charge of the shop's secret falafel recipe, which was quite tasty. While the younger partner usually seemed nervous and always criticized everything, the older had a calmer, more resilient attitude. On the day of the opening, however, both were excited and happy, and when "Sweet Home, Alabama" played in the background, the

younger partner joined in, singing “Sweet Home, Masada.” On the opening day, he also gave free half servings of falafel to everyone he was familiar with (others were asked to pay), and there was free homemade juice and chocolate balls for everyone.

No more than two weeks later, the place was at the center of a drama. When the younger owner was on shift, an Israeli soldier came in asking for falafel. The owner told him that he was not serving soldiers in uniform, and that he was welcome to return without his uniform. The soldier refused, and called the police. I was not present at the time, and heard about it the following day from Erez, the owner of Café Carmel. Soon it became the main topic people talked about, with some of them feeling they need to take a side. It was not long before that the owner of the nearby shop for party accessories prepared helium balloons with the slogan “Hurrah IDF Soldiers” [*Heidad LeChayaley Tzahal*, in Hebrew], and soon thereafter a bundle of these was displayed at the entrance of the nearby grocery store as well as outside of Café Cube, across the street.

For Erez, these kinds of events could be harmful for Masada Scene’s atmosphere. There were times, he said, that he would participate in such a dynamic, and hang a Palestinian flag outside his own coffee shop in reaction, but he does not do that anymore. He also noted that only rarely does he kick someone out of his Café. People know where they’re entering, he said, repeating what he told me only a few days before.

A few days after the incident with the soldier, a local weekly magazine in Hebrew reported on it, and included an interview with the older partner. In the interview, he presented himself as the sole owner, and indicated that the person who was involved in the incident was, in fact, one of his employees. To play down the drama, he also portrayed himself as a good Zionist, whose own son was about to join the army.

A few days before the publication of the magazine interview, he told me and some other friends that he was torn from within about his son’s upcoming military

service. He lives in one of the Jewish collective settlements in the Galilee, but wishes to leave it. He was sick of their hidden fascism, he said. A few days after the event, he said: "It wasn't smart. We didn't open a dialogue group here, but rather a business. We serve food, we don't educate people."

About one month later, when I was sitting there enjoying a falafel with friends around one of the tables on the sidewalk, another soldier wearing uniform entered the place. The younger partner was there again, behind the counter. We noticed that they were having a conversation, but we couldn't hear it. A minute later, the soldier left the place with the owner shouting after him "and I didn't tell you not to eat here!"

"What was that all about?" I asked him. "He just came in to say that he did not come here to order Falafel," he replied. I then confirmed with him what I heard a couple of days before, that someone had broken the windows of their business after the previous incident. He confirmed the story, adding that "these cowards came at night," and indicated that he had no idea who they were. He then added that he heard a group of people who just moved in to the neighborhood called for boycott of the place, and that at the same time there were others who insisted on keeping coming here. A few months later, he sold his part in the business, left the country, and embarked on a new career in Europe.

The incident at the falafel place was not exceptional, and repeated itself several times, in different forms, in other businesses, too. The same year, a similar incident took place in a nearby coffee shop, which was owned by a Palestinian woman. The incident was again reported in the local magazine, and soon thereafter demonstrations were held, with people from the neighborhood participating in both the con and the pro demonstrations. In that case, too, stones were thrown at the windows of the place, breaking them. Contrary to the falafel place, that coffee shop didn't survive long, mainly

because the municipality found various reasons not to grant the place the required permits. It took more than a year until someone else took over the place, and opened a new bar-restaurant there. During all that time the broken windows remained as a testimony of the incident (see Image 14).



Image 14: Broken windows

Like other incidents of that kind, these cases show that businesses in the Masada Scene do not always shy away from various levels of political engagements, even at the price of their profits. While some incidents repeat themselves, there is also a learning process. About a year after these two incidents, I saw three soldiers entering Café Carmel, sitting down around one of the tables. The Palestinian barman, who was on shift, approached them to take their orders, and by the way asked them whether they do their military service at any of the checkpoints Israel keeps in the West Bank. Before they even managed to reply, the barman told them: “Beers are on the house for you if you become pacifists!”

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**Ori's Gallery** is located right across the street from Café Carmel. Once, when I was having coffee with one of my local Jewish friends at Café Carmel, he was curious to hear how my research was going, and asked if I do anything but sit in coffee shops all day. "You need to see what's going on in the open balconies, and in people's homes," he said. "Take Ori's balcony, for example," and he points across the street on Ori's balcony-turned-into-gallery, where once in a while people gather for jamming and sing-along. I remember going there once, noticing it's mostly Jews who attend these gatherings. Not having any musical or singing talents myself, I did not go back there. "Amazing things happen there," my friend said, and added

people talk about it as "Masada State." Although it's only talks, it's also a kind of action. When Ori and his wife came here, they immediately announced their house an open house. And besides, there is something here, in this street, that allows everyone to be as they are. Difference is acceptable and people also learn from each other.

Yara, my neighbor, told me about Ori's place, too, in our first conversation, after I told her I had come to do research on the neighborhood. According to her, Jews and Arabs used to sit there together, but gradually it had become even more Jewish dominated, and Arabs like herself stopped showing up, although they always felt welcome there.

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**The Hookah place** is still a mystery to me. It is located only a couple of meters away from the falafel place, but I never visited it. During most of the day, the place is closed, looking from the outside like an abandoned store. At the late afternoon hours, the Palestinian owner opens the place, and starts preparing the coals for the hookahs. Soon thereafter, people arrive to spend their time there, mostly young men, smoking

hookah together, and playing backgammon. Numerous times I walked by the place, enjoying the sweet smell, but never recognizing the faces of the people who spent time there. Most of the time it was Arabic that they spoke, and only rarely did I hear people speaking Hebrew there. Together with some other sites of the Masada Scene this would become my terra incognita.

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**Café Buzz** is another place where one can find hookahs, but it mostly serves as a coffee shop. It is located quite at the middle of the Masada Scene, yet it attracts less attention, maybe because it takes smaller space on the ground level. I did not explore that place in depth either, and once, when I visited it, my attention was shifted from the place itself to its neighboring coffee shops: Café Carmel on one side, and Café Terez on the other. I was sitting with friends around a table that was placed outside, on the narrow sidewalk, and most attention was focused on passersby.

*It's a summer evening, and I'm having drinks with Tamar and Nadav at Café Buzz, where we only rarely sit. Issam suddenly passes by, walking quickly, but can't escape us because of the narrow sidewalk. He probably just finished his shift as a barman at Café Carmel, and heading to Café Terez to sit with friends, as he often does. He pauses for a second to say hello, but refused to join us. When he realizes that Tamar and I are sitting there with a person he is not familiar with, he takes this as an opportunity to give his usual sarcastic show. He leans at me, and asks in a loud voice so Nadav would hear: "Is he Jewish?" The breath of alcohol from his mouth indicates that he's in a mood for a witty conversation. None of us reply to his question. Instead, Tamar builds on the conversation we were just having, and asks Issam whether he would set any borders to his children. Issam quickly replies that he draws the line at serving in the military. All other things will be permitted, he says, and stresses: "I will kill my kids should they go serve in the military."*

*The conversation continues, but Issam keeps standing, refusing to sit with us. He notes that his political views are very clear. Nadav breaks his silence, and says that his own political views are not so clear. "Do you know how to swim?" Issam throws at him his clichéd question that ends with "I will throw all of you to the sea". He then accepts our repeated offer to join us, and sits with us for a couple of minutes. When a group of Palestinian friends of his passes by, heading in the direction of Café Terez, he takes this opportunity to join them, and leaves.*

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*Café Terez* is where I tried to regularly meet with Tamar on Thursday evenings – the busiest evenings there – to celebrate the end of the week. The Palestinian-owned coffee shop, with its Palestinian-only staff, and with its focus on the local Palestinian culture, as expressed in the posters covering one of its walls and the changing art exhibitions on the other – attracts Palestinians from Haifa and the region. Among Café Terez's regulars are students, artists, and people who are related to the Palestinian culture industry, both mainstream and alternative. Besides the opening events for each of the art exhibitions, the place also screens films once in a while, and live, big football matches from one of the Arab TV channels. Almost every year, Café Terez also organizes a concert on the sidewalk next to it, which quickly turns into a street party. The exhibitions, the concerts, the decoration, and the Café's staff express political views that could be regarded radical in the mainstream public discourse in Israel. When read closely, however, these views can be quite varied, and represent a wide spectrum of positions.

*Winter evening of 2010: I meet with Tamar at Café Terez, and we order the usual Ramallah Arak, mixed with water and ice. Smiling Nimer is on shift, smiling at us, although it is impossible to know how genuine his smile is. The other Nimer is usually wearing an*

angrier face when he's on shift behind the bar, seemingly contradicting his love for Reggae. Today, Smiling Nimer is wearing a T-shirt with Handala cartoon on it. Handala is a drawing of a young person from the back, with his hands behind his back, sometimes holding a stone. This character, drawn by the Palestinian cartoonist Naji al Ali, who was assassinated in 1987, became a well known icon of the Palestinian resistance. When Tamar notices his T-Shirt, she cynically comments: "Nimer arrived with his uniform today."

Tamar and I recognize that something is going on at a nearby table. A man and a woman sit there, and all signs show that it's either their first or second date. The woman arrived here a minute before the man, took a spray bottle out of her purse, and used it to fix something in her hair. A minute later the man arrived, wearing a shirt with bright colors. Tamar comes up with the following script: "She is a woman who knew many men. She got hurt quite a lot, and he is the first one who makes her feel secure." At first, we couldn't figure out whether they were Jews or Arabs, as happens here quite often. Now, as their meeting ended, and they approach the bar to pay, they speak in Hebrew, and at least some of the mystery is resolved.

When Hajar joins us, Smiling Nimer approaches to take our orders. Hajar is a Palestinian woman in her late thirties, and one of the regular customers of Terez. She orders in Arabic her regular Laffa with Labaneh, Za'atar, tomato, olive oil, red onion "and no lettuce!" When Smiling Nimer turns to me, I say in Hebrew: "for me – the same, but no onion." Smiling Nimer's expression turns doubtful, and asks: "did you really understand what she just ordered?" Hajar looks at me, and starts explaining that he did the same to another Jewish friend of hers who knows Arabic. Before I think of a reply, Tamar jumps in saying (in Hebrew): "we noticed you have this thing with Jews talking in Arabic," and she laughs, probably not to embarrass him too much.

"Yes, I have this thing," he confirms, "I'm curious about it."

*“But do you appreciate it or snub it?” Hajar wonders.*

*“It depends on the person. There are those who try to speak Arabic, but their views couldn’t be further remote from the people speaking the language.”*

*“So you’re searching for hypocrisy?” Tamar asks, “Do you have a hypocrisy detector?”*

*“It’s like in ‘Arab Labor,’” he says, referring to the TV sitcom by Sayed Kashua, “there’s this Jewish character there, Timna’, who tells someone ‘Shukran, ya zalameh,’ and it’s clear that she uses this ‘zalameh’ to show she knows another word in Arabic.”*

*Tamar doesn’t let go, and asks: “so how can you tell that I’m not Timna’?”*

*To that, Smiling Nimer has no answer, and he remains speechless for a second.*

*“In short,” Tamar breaks the embarrassment, and says with a smile, “we noticed it. We pay attention to you.”*

*“Thanks for paying attention...,” Smiling Nimer says, leaves our table, and Hajar makes a sound of relief.*

Trying to identify who is an Arab and who is Jewish, and examining the authenticity of the person’s identity, is something that is quite common in the Masada Scene, and particularly in the more mixed areas. Once, when I was sitting at Café Terez, it occurred to me that I passed as Palestinian, probably only because of the circumstances of sitting in a Palestinian coffee shop, and identifying myself with a Hebrew-Arab name:

*I enter Café Terez, and see that Tamar is sitting there with someone. I approach to say hello, and she introduces him to me as a cousin of a mutual Palestinian friend of ours. While we shake hands, I introduce myself as “Regev-Rajab.” Rajab was a name given to me by Palestinian colleague-activists in the past, because it sounds close to my Hebrew name, although the meaning is unrelated (Regev in Hebrew is a lump of earth, whereas Rajab in*

*Arabic is the seventh month in the Islamic calendar). Not many words are exchanged, so he can't really figure out my accent. I leave to let them continue their own business, and later Tamar tells me that the person was sure I was Palestinian.*

The simplest mechanism for identifying who is an Arab at Café Terez – although never with a 100% success rate – is listening whether the person speaks Arabic, or reads any of the Arabic newspapers the café subscribes to. Of all of Masada's coffee shops, Café Terez is the only place where there are newspapers in Arabic, besides the daily *Ha'aretz* in Hebrew, and where regional politics of the Arab world is being discussed. In February 2011, when winds of revolution in Cairo became more and more dramatic, Café Terez was the place for those who wanted to be with others who were glued to the news coming from Cairo.

*February 10<sup>th</sup> 2011: According to news from Cairo, the protest there is gaining strength, despite several hundred demonstrators killed by the Egyptian police. Hosni Mubarak, the Egyptian President, is about to give a dramatic speech. There's a build-up for this speech in the media, and commentators argue that he is about to announce his resignation. Most people on Masada Street are indifferent. On my way to meet with Tamar at Café Terez I pass by people who chat with each other as if the Middle East is not about to change in the next minutes. In Café Carmel I see a few people gathering around the small laptop, watching the live broadcast, but most people are indifferent to the news from Cairo, sitting around their tables, just like on any other evening. As I approach Café Terez I hear the voice of Mubarak from one of the open balconies facing the street. When I'm a few steps from the Cafe I see something strange. The sidewalk is empty, and no one sits around the usually crowded tables outside. A few more steps and the picture becomes clear. Indoors the place is packed, with everyone looking at the small computer screen behind the bar. Usually, that computer plays background music, but now it's Mubarak's face that*

*occupies the small screen, broadcast live through Al Jazeera Online in Arabic. People listen silently to what he says in his speech, but I find it hard to follow. I give Omar a question-mark expression, and he responds with "Nothing dramatic yet." People here keep listening to his speech, silently, and some of them check their social media feeds. The air inside becomes heavier by the tense atmosphere and the cigarette smoke. I look at Omar again. "He's not stepping down," he says, disappointedly. Tamar arrives a minute later, and we decide to see what is happening elsewhere. We go outside for a two minute walk along the street and back. At Café Carmel – still the same scene. At Café Cube – people mind their own business, too. We return to Café Terez, and find a less tense, yet gloomier atmosphere. Mubarak is still talking, but people had already lost their patience when they realized he is not stepping down. At around 11PM the speech ends, and the only person still watching him inside Café Terez curses him repeatedly in Arabic.*

*February 11<sup>th</sup> 2011: It's Friday, and I'm attending a Jewish Reformist Shabbat Service at the Community Center. It's the second time I'm attending such a service at the Center, and as opposed to the previous time, today I don't recognize anyone from the neighborhood here. Today's service is dominated by people who arrived from elsewhere. Almost all of them know the tunes of the songs that the person leading the service instructs us to sing, and they sing with that self-satisfaction expression reserved especially for these kinds of collective events. Half an hour before the service ends my phone vibrates in my pocket. Tamar sends me a text message updating me that Mubarak stepped down. I want to shout in joy, but find no partners here. The service leader says that it's time for each of us to close our eyes, meditate, and thank someone or something, silently or loudly. I can't connect. I'm silently shouting praises to the Egyptian people for teaching the whole world a lesson in democracy and in a determined, nonviolent protest against tyranny and oppression. All I want is to leave the place as soon as possible.*

*At 7 PM, as the service ends, I run the 300 meters that separate between the Community Center and Café Terez. People start gathering there and everyone's faces are beaming with joy. Smiling Nimer is on shift, and he puts on Egyptian music. The Café owner arrives, and greets everyone with a smile from ear to ear. A few minutes later, a group of teenagers enter the place. One of them is covered with the Palestinian flag on his shoulders and a keffiyeh on his head, another one's left cheek is covered with a drawing of the peace sign. They enter, greet everyone inside, and then go outside to continue with their journey. I go outside to check the atmosphere in the other places, but see no difference from the day before. From there I go to visit Tamar and watch the TV news. Not surprisingly, the mainstream media in Hebrew shows careful skepticism, with endless discussions on how Mubarak's resignation will affect Israel's interests. Suddenly, we see flash news at the bottom of the screen, saying that there are celebrations on the streets of Haifa. We put on our coats, and go outside to search for the celebrations. We head downtown towards the Arab neighborhoods of Wadi Nisnass and the German Colony, and sure enough we find a group of some thirty people, singing slogans in support of the Egyptian and the Tunisian revolutions, waving Egyptian, Tunisian and Palestinian flags. Some of them are familiar to us from pro-Palestinian demonstrations, and it's the first time we see them joyful. We march with them through the streets of the Wadi, to the German Colony, and once in every few seconds there's a celebratory ululation that is being echoed by someone – either from the group, or from one of the balconies. The two hour march of joy ends at the bottom of the Bahá'í gardens by opening of a bottle of champagne. When I arrive back home I send a short email with a couple of photos to colleagues at my university. One of them replies "This is a whole new Middle East," and I start thinking how this could affect the neighborhood.*

It took only several months to realize that the optimism we felt that night was premature.

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**Café Cube** was the only coffee shop located on the other side of the street, next to the pizza place, the Sushi bar and the laundromat. Once, when I used the laundromat, Tamar passed by to say hello, and we decided to cross the street and have coffee at Café Carmel while the washing machine was working.

*There are first signs of springtime in the air, and we both have a springy mood. A moment before crossing the street to Café Carmel, I ask Tamar: "Why won't we go sit at Café Cube, instead?" Tamar tilts her head with a questioning expression on her face.*

*"What?"*

*"Let's sit at Cube"*

*Tamar is taking a long second to digest my transgressive suggestion, then saying: "Yallah, let's sit at Cube." Café Cube is twenty steps away from the laundromat, on the same sidewalk. After five steps in the direction of Café Cube, Tamar stops. "No, I can't," she says. Then she is amazed by her own reactions: "Look at that. It's as if there is this invisible barrier here." We cross the street and enter Café Carmel, instead. Marked as the street's Zionist Café, Tamar neither wanted to spend time there, nor wanted to be seen sitting there.*

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**The Little Grocery Store** is one of several grocery stores in the Masada Street area. Only a few of these are open 24 hours a day, and all the rest, like this one, close at

around 9PM. Basic produce can be found there, and most people use it to buy cigarettes or other necessities, doing their more extensive grocery shopping elsewhere. Spending no more than a couple of minutes there some of them converse with the owner in Arabic, others – in Hebrew.

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**Café Amigo** was located outside of Masada Street and closer to the area where the Bahá'í premises are. It opened in the summer of 2008, had an international touch, probably to attract the Bahá'í international community, and didn't survive more than a year.

*Summer 2008: Two men enter the place and sit around the table next to me. According to their dress and formal interaction it looks as if they're here for a business meeting. When they just arrived, one of them (probably the local host) told the other that it's a new and impressive place, much better than the café that operated there before.*

*A waitress comes by, handing me the menu (something that rarely happens in other coffee shops around), and to my inquiry about the place she explains that the owners are a Jewish couple that spent some time traveling around the world. Upon their return, she tells me, they decided to open a place where they can serve dishes they liked from the various places they travelled in. She also asks me to pay attention to the interior design and to look at the photos that hang right above the bar, photos that were taken from different locations around the world by the owners during their travels.*

*On the menu, each of the dishes is featured by a national flag (supposedly to represent the origin of the dish). The menu also includes an introduction text by the owners, which reads:*

*Our place is a story about our magical and fascinating travels in Europe, Asia and America. Our journeys brought to life the idea to share with you scenes, stories and tastes that are presented and served for you with personal love throughout all day and until the night. A special and varied complex of authentic food and drinks is served for you in order to get you familiar [with the places]. You are welcome to relax and enjoy a short journey of taste, smell and sound.*

*The dishes, as presented in the menu, are a food mix of Shakshuka (Israel), Muesli (Switzerland), Parisian Continental (France), Green Salad (Israel), Gehakte' Leybe' (Poland), Fattoush Salad (Lebanon), Chicken Salad (Indonesia), Cheese Sandwich (France), Roast-beef Tortilla (Mexico), Souvlaki (Greece), Pad-Thai (Thailand), Mongolian Goulash, Lasagna (Italy), and various desserts. To sounds of Indian music, I order their Greek Souvlaki for lunch, and find it to be disappointing.*

*Summer 2009: I'm having drinks with friends in one of the coffee shops on Masada Street. During the conversation one of them says that after a period of dying, Café Amigo was finally closed. He then adds: "There's no place for a yuppie coffee shop here."*

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**The Cursed Corner**, a little off of Masada Street, used to fail every business that was opened there. None of the businesses there survived long, and in between such failures there were long periods that the place was shut down. All this changed in 2012 when Café Toot opened there, with a magic touch that will not be discussed here.

One of the failed businesses there was a fast-food place, serving both falafel and Sabikh. Sabikh is a serving of pita bread, filled with salad, boiled egg and slices of fried eggplant. For their falafel, it was argued that they were regularly buying the dough from one of the most famous places in the Wadi. This should have granted them local success in Hadar.

As much as I love falafel, I love Sabikh more, so when this new place opened, I soon tried to establish rapport with it, mostly by visiting the place quite often, and by chatting with Ofira, the owner, about the various components of the serving, about their combination, and about the thickness of the eggplant slices.

The first Sabikh place was established in the 1970s not far from my home in Ramat Gan, by a Jewish immigrant from Iraq, and I grew up on this dish. It took several decades until this Ramat-Gan neighborhood street-food became popular throughout the larger Tel-Aviv metropolis, and beyond. It took maybe one or two visits to this new Sabikh-Falafel place in Hadar until I could no longer hold my Sabikho-centrism, and told Ofira that I was a Ramat-Gan native. She immediately understood, and from that moment on she always tried to satisfy my taste. After becoming a regular customer, she told me once that she got offended when I did not show up on a particular day when she made a special effort to cut the eggplant the way she thought would make me happy.

*Today a significant improvement was noted, and Ofira is happy that I'm finally satisfied. It is probably the thinner slices of eggplant, she said, that make the difference. After eating it all, she offers cooked coffee for everyone, and serves it at the outdoor area, so people could sit, relax, and smoke. There are three other people here having their lunch: Danny, Nuri and someone else whom I haven't met before.*

*Suddenly a car stops nearby, someone opens the window, calls for Ofira, and shouts from within the car that he wants to order 2 falafel servings. Danny tells Ofira that she needs a "Falafel Runner," and laughs. Nuri and I don't understand the joke, and Nuri asks for the meaning of the phrase. Danny explains that it's like in the military prison, where you have someone running between the cells with a bottle of water for everyone. As conversation develops, it becomes clear that Danny and the third person served time*

*together in a military prison. As a Palestinian, Nuri neither served in the military nor spent time in its prisons, and he is curious to hear about the circumstances. "I was there on drugs," Danny says, and his friend says he was in prison on absenteeism. "What is absenteeism?" Nuri wants to know. "I took a longer vacation..." the friend responds jokingly. After a second of silence, he adds: "we served in Hebron. A crazy place." Bringing up Hebron's craziness shifts the conversation to Danny and his friend's sharing their experiences of serving there, protecting a group of Jewish settlers within the Palestinian city. "I guess people from both sides spat on you there," Nuri comments. "Yes," the friend confirms, "the kids of Baruch Marzel [one of the settlers' leaders] threw stones at us." Then he talks about the blockades they maintained in the city, and Danny talks about the demolition charges that were installed by Palestinians to target them. Seven times he faced explosions from such demolition charges when being inside a tank in Hebron. Nuri shows interest. His only contribution to the conversation besides posing questions is talking about the beautiful scenery around the city of Hebron.*

About a year later, the drama at the other falafel place, where a soldier in uniform was refused service, took place. What this interaction shows is that regardless of what they wear, most Jews (men and women) in the Masada Scene have a mainstream background of serving in the Israeli Military (even if part of it is spent in jail), some of them still regularly serve on reserve duty, and are called up with every military mass mobilization. This interaction also shows that regardless of their politics, some Palestinians are curious to learn more about an experience from which they are excluded (or self-excluding) for political reasons. The close proximity with Israeli Jews in Hadar allows them to learn about it directly and informally.

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*The Community Center* is a magnificent mansion, three stories high, surrounded by a garden, and located close to the end of Masada Street. It was run for several years by Gil, who also took part in turning the place from an emptied, then deserted property – to a Community Center. In one of my visits to the place, Gil briefly mentioned its history: “It was built in the 1930s for a Palestinian family that now lives in Lebanon.” The fact that the property became public property indicates that the fate of the Palestinian family was similar to that of the majority of the Palestinians who became refugees as a result of the 1948 War and were dispossessed from their property (see Chapter 1). Neither elaborating on the fate of the family, nor on the significance of this case as an emblem of Zionist colonization, Gil dwelled on what happened a few decades later, in the early 2000s, when the municipality decided to demolish the building in order to make room for a 20 story tower of social housing. Residents from the neighborhood got organized under the title “Hadar Forum,” and led a strong opposition against this plan. Following their protest the plan was cancelled. The municipality’s plan, Gil told me, was not suitable for this place, “where there is no social infrastructure for yet another weak population.” The residents’ struggle was so successful that not only did the municipality cancel the plan to build the tower, it also embraced the alternative proposal and turned the house into a community center.

The residents’ protest was covered by local media, and after the place was renovated and opened a collage of the news reports was framed and hung on the wall next to the staircase that leads from the first to the second floor. A few years later, when Gil was no longer running the center, that documentation was removed.

One of the founding members of “Hadar Forum” told me that although they had only a minor success in attracting Arab activists and Ultra Orthodox Jews, people from

the municipality became alarmed by that grassroots organization. According to him, from the perspective of the municipality, in order to minimize the scenario of things going out of control again, soon after the success of that struggle, it established “Hadar Community,” a nonprofit municipal corporation that is led by a person appointed by the mayor, and runs the budget and activities of the neighborhood’s community centers (see Chapter 1 and 6). The newly established community center was annexed to it, and Gil was appointed to be its first director.

To everyone around, Gil was the best person for the job. In his forties, with several years of living in the USA, and being exposed to a multicultural scene there, Gil returned to Hadar, the neighborhood where he grew up, to invest himself in social activism, entrepreneurship, and public service. In all these, he tried to implement his own understanding of multiculturalism, and to adapt it to the local scene. “He should be one of your key figures,” Tamar told me at the beginning of my fieldwork.

Gil could always be found involved in running street festivals, maintaining good relations with local business owners, and in taking care of the needs of several individual residents. Before being appointed the Center’s director, he had his own coffee shop not far from there, running it for ten years. Gil’s coffee shop was one of the first in the area that had mixed Arab–Jewish staff and customers, and marked the beginning of today’s Masada Scene.

According to his description, in 2000, when the second Palestinian Intifada broke out, the neighborhood’s idyll changed. Tensions between Jews and Arabs grew, and local businesses were affected. Even outside of the neighborhood, Gil explained, leisure areas that used to be mixed became segregated: the German Colony became mostly Palestinian, while the Moriah Road, higher on the Carmel, became mostly Jewish. The

Intifada, he concluded, exposed the fake in the use of the term “coexistence” for the situation in Haifa.

“After five good years, the bad five years started,” Gil said, “so I decided to close my business.” From running his own coffee shop, and from taking an active part in establishing the “Forum Hadar” activists group, he chose to join the public sector and accept the offer to run the Community Center, even though it was for an unattractive salary. As a manager, he devoted days and nights to running the Center, with a deep sense of commitment, investing his body and soul maneuvering between different interests, stakeholders, and attitudes towards the Center as an institution that on the one hand was supposed to serve the diverse local residents, and on the other hand was part of a municipal (and state) mechanism that operated in diverse discriminatory practices. Gil soon learned that the place was supposed to conform with Zionism and run a balanced budget, supported by donations.

To navigate between some of the conflicting demands, Gil established several activities at the center, among them were a series of courses, exhibitions, and summer open-air concerts on the Center’s roof. The concerts’ program reflected Gil’s ideas of multiculturalism, both in content (hosting both Jewish and Arab musicians) and in form (being printed in three languages: Hebrew, Arabic and Russian). The entrance fee for each concert was 25 NIS (around US\$ 6), and people could also enjoy it for free from the Center’s garden, watching it live on a big video screen.<sup>123</sup>

For the neighborhood residents, these concerts served as yet another site for ad-hoc interactions.

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<sup>123</sup> During the years of my fieldwork, the entrance fee almost doubled, particularly under the new directorship of the Center.

*Summer 2008: A group of guitar players from Shfa'amr's Music Conservatory give an excellent show tonight, including some Spanish pieces with clear Arab influences. I listen to the first part of the concert on the roof, and then climb down to the front yard for the second part, to enjoy it there with friends. On my way down I see Gil, and manage to chat with him briefly before he runs back to the roof to make sure everything works smoothly. I'm surprised to hear that he is deeply disappointed by both the conservatorium's manager, as well as by the local community. The conservatorium's manager decided not to come here with his Arab guitarists, only with the Jewish ones, and at the same time, the audience here is mostly Jewish, too, with most people arriving from the upper Carmel neighborhoods, and only a minority are from here, all Jews. It suddenly occurred to me that I couldn't really tell who the guitarists were, but indeed I didn't recognize familiar faces among the audience on the roof.*

The next summer, another series of concerts was organized by Gil at the Center.

*During a break in the concert I climb down to the improvised cafeteria, located between the Center's kitchen and the entrance hall, to buy a slice of watermelon. During this series of concerts, Issam is operating the cafeteria. I approach him and ask for a slice of the watermelon, he takes a wide and sharp knife, cuts a few slices, and the last of which is threatening to fall off. He catches it with the knife just in time and recommends that I take it fast before it falls again. Instead of taking it by the hand (not to get sticky) I approach with my mouth, and take it with one bite. "Really?!" Issam says, surprised, "directly from the knife? And from an Arab?" We both laugh.*

*I step outside into the yard, and join Tamar, who sits there with a few friends from the neighborhood under one of the olive trees. Someone there is talking very emotionally, and Tamar whispers in my ear that they are in the middle of a conversation on Israel's*

*formal definition as a Jewish State. In my other ear I hear Zehava, a Jewish woman in her sixties, saying "I'm against Apartheid and against discrimination. I'm a socialist and I want equality and to give everyone a lot of rights. But I'm not giving up my country and my flag." While speaking, she raised both of her hands, drawing big circles in the air. Then her right hand stopped its circles and pointed at the Israeli flag that hangs above the entrance to the Community Center. This same flag was one of the reasons mentioned by local Palestinians for not joining any of the Center's activities, including the concerts.*

*Suddenly another friend gets up, and upon leaving the table says, "This is our state; not much to do about it," and with her statement, the discussion ends. When I later ask Tamar what was the trigger for the whole conversation, she says that it started because of the small number of people that attended the concert that night. Contrary to previous weeks, the evening's was a concert of Arabic music. When the concert ends I briefly meet Gil, who notes: "Such an evening only shows what challenges we need to cope with here."*

A few years later, when Gil was replaced by two directors from one of the organized Jewish communities that were introduced in the neighborhood, the Center became even more excluding, attracting fewer and fewer of the neighborhood's diverse residents.

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***Outside of the Masada Scene***, the Ethiopian Club, and a Carmel Coffee shop are two of the other sites I visited throughout the years, to develop a sense of comparison.

*Spring 2009: Tamar suggests that we explore the Ethiopian Club, located a few streets below Masada Street. I gladly agree, not knowing what to expect, and within less than ten minutes – we're there. As we enter, we order beer, and start absorbing the*

*atmosphere – particularly the music and dancing. Legs stable on the floor, hands on hips, and shoulders quickly moving forward and backward. I will never be able to dance like that. About twenty young men dance here to Ethiopian pop music, and having fun under the neon light. A little later, the lights shut off and the light blue walls, the orange and yellow chairs, and the colored cloth hanging from the ceiling – all lost their colors. Then, the dancers really started rocking the dance floor. It's mostly men dancing together, but there are also two women that join them. Two other women are working behind the bar. One of them, we learned, is the owner.*

*It's hard to tell whether all of the people here are from Ethiopia. At least one of them is wearing a cross on his necklace, so he might not have arrived here with one of the State-sponsored operations to transfer Ethiopian Jews to Israel. When the music stops, the owner's brother takes a microphone and starts singing while someone else accompanies him on the synthesizer. Everyone is clapping. When we go to the bar to order another beer I notice that on the shelf, behind the alcoholic bottles, there's a small Israeli flag, almost hidden. On the window facing the street there is a big Ethiopian flag, proudly presented right next to the front door.*

*Tamar and I are the only white people around, and we know we're being looked at. We nevertheless feel welcomed. The owner approaches us, smiling and asking if we're having fun. "Feel free, and enjoy," she says. A few minutes later someone else approaches us, asking for my permission to dance with Tamar. I look at him puzzled, then at Tamar, who decides to reject the offer. Someone else leaves the place, and on his way out leans over our table and asks to shake our hands.*

I returned to the place several times with Tamar, once also with another friend from the neighborhood, but we never found people there whom we recognized from the

Masada Scene, or vice versa. Besides the Ethiopians, who were only rarely seen at the Masada Scene, there were also the Ultra-Orthodox Jews, who live at the outskirts of the Masada Scene, as well as other populations who were not of the regulars of the Scene.

### ***Discussion***

One of the salient features of the Masada Scene is its dynamic. It looks different from day to day, and many of its human faces change often, too. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify several features that have a slower dynamic, and may capture the coexistence of the general, hegemonic discourse of separation with the local, mixing environment. While there is a different characterization to each of the Masada Scene locales, with different regulars in each, mostly divided by their ethno-national identity along with other features, there is no strict separation, and unlike in most other places around Israel, at every given moment there is an opportunity for interactions with one's Other. Such interactions usually involve a social mechanism of mutual cross-examination, to identify the ethno-national identity, as well as the political position of the people involved. Sometimes, such interactions are also an opportunity for being mistaken, or for remaining in the undefined zone. Most significant in what this simultaneity of separation and mixing brings is the constant self awareness to this simultaneity.

While Chapter 2 focused on the power of the hegemonic Discourse of Separation in the narration of past social interactions, this chapter gives a street level view into the moments and locations where the Discourse of Separation weakens in light of social interactions that are subjected to mixing. While the Discourse of Separation remains relevant in residents' categories of thought and practices of everyday life, its weakening

in light of the mixing social environment exposes a gap, the widths and depth of which changes from one location to the other, from one moment to the next. Since the Discourse of Separation acquires a strong hegemonic status, its incommensurability with the lived experience cannot remain unnoticed by the people of the Masada Scene. Such awareness creates the various dialogues and interactions described in this chapter, and pushes people to think reflexively on their experiences of living in a mixing social environment. The next chapter will show how reflexivity serves as an available social tool for confronting the incommensurability, and it will describe the variety of effects that such reflexivity generates.

## CHAPTER 4

### Senses of Belonging in Hadar



Image 15: Hadar's scenery

#### *Reflecting as Belonging*

Yael is a Jewish woman in her thirties, who moved to Hadar in the mid 2000s from one of the cities in the larger Tel-Aviv metropolis. In one of our early conversations she suddenly asked me, “So, what do you think about the neighborhood?” At first, I was embarrassed. I could never tell when I knew enough to actually say something coherent about the place. I nevertheless shared with her the thoughts I had at that moment. I told her that I had arrived to the neighborhood almost by accident,

and had quickly become enthusiastic. I told her that I thought it could serve as a utopia, and as a model of alternative reality for the entire country, mainly regarding Arab–Jewish relations. It took some more experience of living in the neighborhood, I told her, to realize that it was far from being an ideal place. There were problems and complexities I hadn't noticed at first, which revealed that the place was not immune from the various forms of discrimination so widespread in Israel. As I spoke, Yael nodded her head in agreement, and I felt relieved. "No," she commented, "things are absolutely not ideal here. There are so many groups here, but still – there's something special here, too, and I hope I can stay here, because it's important for me to live in a place that has self awareness, that is active, that is doing things."

Self awareness, or being reflexive toward social life in the neighborhood, was something that also Hajar appreciated and practiced. She always tries to make sense of what is going on in Hadar, translating her reflexive thoughts to political language. While taking an active part in many of the Scene's diverse activities, she also keeps a critical distance, a result of being active in the neighborhood life for two decades. Once, when we happened to meet at Café Terez during lunchtime, she shared with me some of her observations:

*Today's special dish is Shishbark: meatballs in yogurt sauce. Hajar tells me that it is very difficult to make. "It takes so much work to make Shishbark, so fewer and fewer people actually take the time and effort to cook it. I come from a Druz family, and my mother quit cooking Shishbark because it's such a hassle." The conversation with her quickly shifts to talking about the neighborhood, during which she shares with me the historic-reflexive perspective she had developed throughout the years of living in the Masada area. Hajar says that the Masada Scene has seen many phases. "I've been living*

*here for about twenty years," she says, "and every few years there's a different wave. I don't really like the current wave of young people arriving here for a short time with all kinds of crazy ideas that they try to impose on the neighborhood. I don't have patience for this. I would prefer people to stay here instead of regarding the place as a transit station."*

*When she moved to the neighborhood the main issue people were talking about was ecology, and she got interested in it, too. However, she said, many of those who promoted that idea had already left the neighborhood.*

*"Why do people leave the neighborhood?" I ask her.*

*"Some of them want to become bourgeois, to move to a better place, cleaner, tidier; some move out because they complete their higher education. For Palestinian women, for example, it is not so easy to stay here after they complete their academic studies. Some of them get married and leave."*

*"And why do you stay here?"*

*"I cannot live anywhere else. I must live in a mixed place. I cannot go up to the Carmel neighborhoods and live in a predominantly Jewish area. I cannot live in an Arab neighborhood, either. Here, there is a relative balance."*

*Another thing that Hajar mentions is the atmosphere here, which is very open, in the sense that people enter each other's lives, and there's nowhere to run to. "Not everyone has the ability and patience to live like that for a long time," she says.*

*On our way out of Café Terez, and before parting in different directions, Hajar asks me how much time I intend to stay in the neighborhood. "Overall about a year," I reply (not yet knowing this year will be extended over and over again). "Yes," she says, "it*

*takes time to crack the code of this neighborhood. But things also change here quite quickly. Things change here all the time."*

### ***Neighborhood Indigeneity and Senses of Entitlement***

At the end of one of the concerts held on the Community Center's roof I climbed down to the front yard to join Tamar and Hajar who were sitting around a table between two old olive trees. The mixing neighborhood of Hadar allowed Tamar and Hajar to become close friends during years of neighborliness and local feminist activism. After chatting for a while with them, Na'ama, a Jewish woman who went to school with Hajar, joined our table and introduced her boyfriend to us.

*Tamar and Hajar seem eager to interrogate Na'ama's boyfriend, but he is not submissive, and their achievements are poor. His name reveals that he is Jewish, and he only says that he is originally from a nearby town. When asked about his impressions of Hadar, he admits that he doesn't really feel connected to what he sees here. Apparently, it's too noisy for him. Hajar comments jokingly that even if he doesn't feel connected to the neighborhood, the community here embraces him anyway. She is doing her best to explain to him what she regards as the neighborhood's merits. When she indicates that it attracts a lot of activists for social change, his expressions show that this does not speak to him. There's a strong sense of community here, she adds, and points at all the people who sit around us at the yard of the Community Center enjoying the company of each other. This doesn't make any impression on him either. Still determined to extract some sign of approval from him, Hajar moves on to describe the local coffee shops scene, with its "mixed coffee shop" (Café Carmel), "the Palestinian coffee shop" (Café Terez), and "the LGBTQ-chic coffee shop" (Café Cube). Hajar uses all her available vocabulary and descriptive abilities to deliver the sense of community here, and to persuade him that it is a good place*

*to live in, but all in vain. He does not find it attractive. "Write, write," Tamar tells me, intervening in Hajar's failing attempts, and reminding everyone that I'm there for my ethnographic research on that local community that Hajar just described with great pride and sense of belonging.*

In contrast to her boyfriend, and much like Hajar, Na'ama has a strong sense of belonging to the neighborhood. She was raised there and is very involved in the Masada Scene. A few months after that meeting at the Community Center, and after she broke up with her boyfriend, she participated in auditions for one of the reality TV shows that became popular nation-wide. Auditions for that show included making a short video in which candidates need to present themselves and persuade the production company that they should be included in the show. In the video she sent (and later uploaded onto a public social media platform), Na'ama is seen in her Hadar apartment, talking about her own personal qualities, and about her unique social surrounding. According to her, Haifa's Hadar neighborhood

is a neighborhood that... there is no such thing in the whole country, I think. This is a neighborhood with Arabs and Russians, and Jews, and there are coffee shops, and gays, and Orthodox Jews. [...]. The amazing thing is that all, this way or the other, live together, and there is no doubt that all the questions are expressed in this microcosm. But the neighborhood is a neglected neighborhood, with bad public relations, which serves as a filter so only the cool people, like me, come here. In the street where I live, Masada Street in Haifa, there are coffee shops that allow us to sit together and discuss, so I expect interesting conversations.

At the end of the clip, which had not succeeded in getting her a place in the show, Na'ama describes the neighborhood as "cosmopolitan, multicultural, and intergalactic." However, Na'ama's sympathy for diversity was soon revealed as limited. Considering herself indigenous to the neighborhood, whenever Na'ama felt that her sense of belonging, her deepest attachment to the neighborhood, was threatened by others – who had different reasons to feel at home there – she felt entitled to make her voice

heard, and even to act. These sentiments were in no way unique to Na'ama. Others in the neighborhood expressed similar reactions with every case of real, anticipated, or imagined change in the population of the neighborhood.

In 2007, for example, one of the heated discussions in Masada revolved around the recent establishment of Hadar's Students' Village, a program that offered stipends for students who moved in to Hadar, but admitted mostly Jewish students.<sup>124</sup> Some residents saw this program as a first attempt to push in Jewish groups, in order to strengthen the Jewish dominance of the neighborhood as a reaction to several years of more and more individual Arabs moving in (see Chapter 1). In 2009, discussions revolved around signs of yet another Jewish group that was about to be introduced to the neighborhood.

One summer day in 2009 Tamar told me how such a discussion unfolded that morning at Café Carmel. While she was reading the newspaper, a conversation developed with one of her acquaintances about rumors that the new group, this time of religious Jews, was about to settle in Hadar. During their conversation about the growing phenomenon of organized groups of Jews settling in Hadar, Na'ama, who was also around, overheard them and decided to intervene, saying that there's also the "Arab Kibbutz" in Hadar. When asked to explain what she meant, she replied that in the evenings, for example, you can come to Café Carmel and see only Arabs, and they speak only in Arabic, and it creates an unpleasant feeling. "It freaked me out," Tamar told me with growing anger in her voice as she continued recounting. At the end of their

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<sup>124</sup> In its first years of operating in Hadar, the Students' Village was sponsored by the Jewish Agency, the Haifa University and Haifa Municipality. According to one of the leading figures of the Students' Village, it was established in 2007 as a result of the 2006 war, when senior citizens and new immigrants in the neighborhood remained without a supporting community in times of emergency. The Village, therefore, was supposed to take over the roles of the state and municipal welfare offices and give such support. As years passed, the Village's activities expanded to fill in for other municipal responsibilities, as well as to their own initiated activities.

discussion Tamar accused Na'ama of being a racist, and added that no one needs to speak in Hebrew so she could feel more comfortable there. Because this exchange took place in the presence of others, Na'ama felt deeply offended.

During the following days Tamar thought it over and concluded that she did the right thing. It didn't take long for Na'ama to call Tamar, tell her that she was deeply offended by what she had said at the café, and ask that Tamar apologize. Tamar tried to confront Na'ama with what she said, but Na'ama refused to talk about the incident, only about the public shaming she experienced, so Tamar refused to apologize. "So what if she was born here?" Tamar said in our conversation, "The neighborhood's changed!" Regarding Na'ama's expectation from her to be respected regardless of the positions she expresses, Tamar added: "I'm not a great follower of pluralism if it gives space for racism."

Soon enough other people in the neighborhood heard about the incident, and Na'ama felt uncomfortable to return to Café Carmel. By then I was already recognized by Na'ama and others as one of Tamar's closest friends, and did not hide my views, which were close to hers. I nevertheless tried to keep rapport even with those with whom I had disagreements. Whenever the three of us happened to meet on the street, Tamar and Na'ama ignored each other, but exchanged friendly greetings with me.

And then came an invitation for dinner at Na'ama's place.

*Friday afternoon of winter 2010: Danielle, one of Na'ama's closest friends, sends me a text message inviting me for a Friday dinner within a couple of hours at Na'ama's with a few other friends of theirs. I'm happy with the invitation, and curious to spend an evening with people with whom I don't hang out much. I buy wine and bread at the grocery store,*

*and head to Na'ama's place. I arrive on time but find that other guests haven't arrived yet. Until other guests arrive, Na'ama takes me for a tour around her rented apartment. I'm impressed both by the careful interior design and by the magnificent view that opens from her 3<sup>rd</sup> floor balcony: Haifa bay on one side, and one of Masada Street's curves on the other side, with four tall palm trees growing from the garden of the nearby property. A knock on the door interrupts my gaze at the view. Danielle and Hadas arrive, each of them bringing something they cooked for our joint dinner. A few minutes later, Sarit and another friend arrive. Hadas prepared Khreime (fish cooked in North African style), Danielle brought two kinds of salad and soup, and Na'ama made a meat-filled pastry and baked potatoes. Before we leave the balcony and go sit around the dinner table, Danielle mentions a few names of people who were also invited but cancelled at the very last minute. I'm not familiar with the people she mentions but one of the names sounds Arabic. Hadas is asked about her son, who was also invited, and she says that he just got back home from the army, dead tired from another military action, and after several nights of no sleep, she said, the last thing he needed was to spend Friday evening with his mother's friends. People laugh, and I'm imagining what this dinner could be like if all invitees were present, including their Arab friend and Hadas's soldier son.*

*Having kids sent to the military to fight against Palestinians is commonplace among Israeli Jews, with refusal to do so still a marginal phenomenon. Even here, on the balcony of an apartment overlooking the most mixed street in the country, serving in the military that fights against the people (sometimes actual relatives) of other residents – is unquestioned. I think about asking about it, but I can't find the words and courage to do so. I only manage to say how beautiful the view is. They all agree, looking outside, letting their eyes absorb the view for another moment, and then Na'ama says: "the only thing that*

*breaks this pastoral atmosphere is the Arab weddings with their music and fireworks until 3 AM. With all the respect to cultural differences, this is too much. Not so long ago, they had a wedding on the roof right across the street, and it lasted for a whole week. There was nothing I could do about it because the bride's father is a police officer." We look at the roof where the wedding party took place, searching for the wedding decorations, then we suddenly hear sounds of shouting from the street level right below, and all of us look down to search for its source. We spot a group of six teenagers who gather around a bench located on the sidewalk, at the street curve's end, arguing very loudly in Arabic. With the same furious manner she talked about the weddings, Na'ama says: "This is so disturbing. They can sit like that on the bench all through the night and make the area filthy with their sunflower seeds." This bench is quite new there, and located in a relatively wide space along the sidewalk, so people could comfortably sit and rest without disturbing the passersby. On several occasions I saw people using it for resting and socializing, and I sat there myself a couple of times, too. "I will call the municipality and demand that they take this bench away," Na'ama says, determined. (Soon thereafter the bench was gone.)*

*We go inside, sit around Na'ama's dinner table and start eating. I sit in front of Sarit, and although we met in the past, she asks me to remind her who I am and what I do. I later note to myself that my presence in Hadar as an ethnographer should be reminded over and over again. "I'm doing ethnographic research on Haifa as a mixed city, and particularly on Hadar neighborhood." Sarit suddenly shifts to a heavy German accent when she asks: "And where are you from?" I laugh, reply in the same accent "from Ramat-Gan, then Givatayim, und then – from Michigan." The conversation then shifts to focus on Sarit and the different Hebrew accents she uses: German, Moroccan, and Palestinian. She explains that she was born to Moroccan Jewish parents. When she was one years old, she*

*was put up for adoption, and was adopted by Jews of German origin who lived in one of the Carmel neighborhoods. At a certain point they hired a Moroccan cleaning lady from whom she adopted, or rather regained her Moroccan accent. Sarit then adds that here, in the Masada Scene, whenever she talks politics with Palestinians, she dismisses their cry for sympathy by telling them that it's not only them who live under occupation, but her, too – under German occupation! Luckily, Sarit's wit and the red wine that kept pouring allow for bursts of laughter from everyone, and I gradually feel more at ease with them.*

*After dinner we clear the dishes from the table, and go back to Na'ama's balcony. An unusual knock on the door signals to Na'ama that Amnon is finally here. Amnon is a tall man, around forty years old, always dressed in worn out clothes. I saw him several times before in the neighborhood fixing this, doing that. Always busy with something or having a street-philosophy conversation with someone. He is a kind of a handyman, talented and creative. Danielle later tells me that she thinks he has some kind of a combat fatigue that prevents him from getting a permanent job, so he is getting by doing all these little projects, whether for money or voluntarily. "And there is something messianic in his being," she adds with a glimpse of admiration.*

*Na'ama's balcony is too narrow for all of us, but Amnon squeezes himself in, and while still standing he asks: "So, assuming there was an article in Yediot-Ahronon's weekly magazine [Israel's most widespread newspaper in Hebrew] focusing on the [Masada] street, what do you think it should say?" His question comes out of the blue, and everyone's faces show perplexity by the sudden push to think reflexively and come up with their desired representation. Not knowing how to respond to his question, Danielle throws it back at him, and a dialogue begins:*

*"What do YOU think it should say?"*

*"I think that it should show how it might be that there is a model here that could work elsewhere, too. In [Haifa's] Bat-Galim neighborhood, for example."*

*"It's not that there is prosperity here. There's high rates of school dropouts etc., etc...," Danielle responds.*

*"But in comparison to what used to be here, there's change. And this change is thanks to those students that entered the neighborhood with fresh and creative way of thinking, with both desire and ability to create change, and this includes opening new businesses..."*

*The discussion doesn't gain momentum, and since it's starting to get cold, we leave the balcony, close the sliding door behind us, and gather in front of Na'ama's TV screen to watch "The Social Network" (2010), a Hollywood drama on the establishment of Facebook. A few minutes into the screening Na'ama and others fall asleep. At around midnight, when the film is over, we go home.*

### ***Love, Sex, and Politics of Belonging***

In January 2011, Haifa Museum of Art, located in the lower part of Hadar, opened its winter season with a new exhibition, named "Gatekeepers." The text accompanying the exhibition began with the following statement:

*It seems that no other milieu is capable of examining itself quite as ironically and as self-reflexively as the art world. Artists, curators and writers have a remarkable capacity to study themselves from the outside and to analyze, with a good measure of sarcasm, the system they operate within and the mechanisms of power that they themselves produce. This ability for self-examination requires a*

significant amount of self-awareness, self-irony and sophistication - qualities that aptly describe the artists included in this small exhibition.<sup>125</sup>

The text ends by arguing that each of the works in the exhibition "attempts to question and undermine existing institutional conventions."

The first work at the exhibition was a video screened on a white wall right in front of the museum's entrance. The video, by Israeli artist Einat Amir, shows a man wearing a keffiyeh kissing a white, uncovered woman (see Image 16).



Image 16: Video installation by artist Einat Amir, "Gatekeepers," Haifa Museum of Art

Is it a mixed Arab–Jewish couple? This would be a reasonable interpretation in the larger Israeli context. Such interpretation in that context would indeed "undermine existing institutional conventions," which delegitimize such relationships and regard them as causes of moral and sexual panic (Hakak 2016:985). For example, at the end of

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<sup>125</sup> "Gatekeepers" was exhibited at Haifa Museum of Art from January 29<sup>th</sup> to May 22<sup>nd</sup> 2011. Curators: Ruth Direktor, Yeala Hazut, Natalie Smith and Ilana Tenenbaum. For the curators' full text, visit: <http://old.tmja.org.il/Museum/Templates/showpage.asp?DBID=1&LNGID=1&TMID=841&FID=1620> (accessed: 2 October 2015).

December 2015, the Israeli Ministry of Education decided to exclude from the high-school literature curriculum the book “Borderlife” by author Dorit Rabinyan because it describes intimate relations between a Jewish woman and a Palestinian man, thereby threatening the Ministry’s ideology of “separate identities.”<sup>126</sup> In reaction to the Minister’s order, a short video clip depicting couples of Arabs and Jews kissing was produced by *TimeOut Israel*, and became viral in social media.<sup>127</sup> This clip, however, was criticized, too, and was even removed from Facebook for a while, either because users found it offensive, or because hackers took it down.<sup>128</sup> Others criticized it for highlighting the separate nationalities of the participants, thereby contributing to the break between populations.<sup>129</sup>

In the wider context of Israeli films, Sharot (2015:123–124) argues that in almost all of the 15 Israeli feature films in which a romance between Palestinians and Jews is the major plot, or an important part of the narrative, there is no happy ending, and “the couple must separate, or one of the lovers is killed.” According to Sharot (ibid:ibid), these sad or tragic endings “were represented as a consequence of the separation and antagonism between the two ethno-religious populations.” Sharot contrasts these films to those depicting relationships between Mizrahi and Ashkenazi Jews, “which invariably include a happy ending with the union of a young couple” as an expression of the Zionist “melting pot” ideology (ibid:123–124 ).

Based on a survey conducted between 2014 and 2015, the Pew Research Center (2016:210–11) argues that nearly all Israelis who were married or living with a partner

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<sup>126</sup> See: [haaretz.co.il/news/education/1.2810789](http://haaretz.co.il/news/education/1.2810789) (accessed: December 30<sup>th</sup> 2015).

<sup>127</sup> [youtu.be/N8DMGaeDXE4](https://youtu.be/N8DMGaeDXE4) (accessed: January 6<sup>th</sup> 2016).

<sup>128</sup> See: [haaretz.com/israel-news/1.696197](http://haaretz.com/israel-news/1.696197) (accessed: January 7<sup>th</sup> 2016).

<sup>129</sup> See Janan Bsoul’s op-ed, “There’s Nothing Progressive about Jews and Arabs Kissing,” published in the daily Ha’aretz on January 14<sup>th</sup> 2016 ([haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-1.697239](http://haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-1.697239); accessed: January 14<sup>th</sup> 2016).

said their spouse or partner shared their religion. Moreover, the survey shows that nearly all Israeli Jews and Arabs said they would prefer their children to marry within their own religious circles.<sup>130</sup>

In the local context of Hadar, although mixed couples are uncommon, they are not delegitimized. In fact, the realistic possibility of having a mixed relationship in Hadar is what attracts mixed couples from outside, knowing that in Hadar they can feel like they they belong. Moreover, as the following story of Orly shows, such relationships can give rise to no less self-awareness, self-irony and sophistication than Amir's video-art at the "Gatekeepers" exhibition.

Orly is a Jewish woman in her fifties, who moved to the neighborhood from Tel-Aviv area right when Masada's mixed scene started forming. She has critical political observations and she politicizes almost everything. Nonetheless, for her, politicization ends at the doorstep of her romantic and sexual relationships. "I'm sorry, I don't want people to politicize my vagina," she told me in one of our conversations after a long period of examining whether I should be trusted. "It's true that all my partners in the past years were not Jews, but I don't want to give it too much thought, and I don't want others to use it for their political statements."

Orly's political stance of de-politicizing her intimate relationships stands in sharp contrast to both extreme positions among Israeli Jews: to some of the extreme right wingers who regard mixed couples as the greatest threat to the Jewish People, as well as to some radical left wingers who see these relations as the ultimate mechanism for

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<sup>130</sup> It is important to note that according to Israeli law, marriages are recognized only if they are performed by religious officials. Since there is no officially recognized civil alternative in Israel, institutionalizing mixed relationships by means of marriage should be conducted abroad to be legally recognized in Israel. For how U.S. and Australia were challenged by marriages across colonizing boundaries in their early national periods, see McGrath (2015).

resolving the Arab–Israeli conflict. While both positions attribute socio-cultural and political value to the mix of genes, the subjectivities produced in these relationships (of the couples involved and of their offsprings) usually become aligned with one of the original social categories. To date, no new category of mixed genes-genres is strong enough to enter the existing array of identities.<sup>131</sup>

In the Masada Scene, too, while not a widespread phenomenon, mixed couples and their offsprings have not presented a viable political option, and they usually ended up choosing one side to be identified with, depending on the social context.

*Summer 2008: I join a number of friends in trying to keep a few kids from the neighborhood entertained during their summer vacation. I try to meet with one of them once every few days at Café Carmel to read an adventure story in order to practice his reading before going back to school. Every meeting of ours is an adventure in itself, and today he arrives with two other friends of his, whom he presents to me as brothers. They are introduced to me by their names, and we play together for a while, until they move on for more exciting adventures. When I ask around about these two brothers I learn that they have a third, older brother who is running one of the businesses further down the street. This information confuses me. These two brothers were introduced to me by their names, genuine Hebrew names, and yet – I know their brother is an Arab. It takes me a moment to realize that their names are of the kind that can easily be shifted from Hebrew*

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<sup>131</sup> In the context of intra-Jewish Mizrahi/Ashkenazi ethnicities, a similar discussion resurfaced recently with the publication of sociologist Talia Sagiv's book "On the Fault Line: Israelis of Mixed Ethnicity" (2014). In her book, Sagiv shows that skin color, last name, and place of residency are of the main components in how children to mixed parents construct their subjective positions. The salience of these features works against one of the ideological positions in mainstream Zionism that regard mixed marriages as one of the means to reach the utopia of a Jewish "melting pot," which supposedly should erase all differences between Jews of different origins. Neither Sagiv's research nor other researches focusing on social mobility of children to mixed parents show that the original ethnic categories disappear or become irrelevant for them (see, for example, Okun and Khait-Marely 2008, 2010; on the history of the eugenic thought among Zionist physicians, see Hirsch 2008).

*to Arabic names (much like I switch from Regev to Rajab with some of my Palestinian friends), so I imagine they used their Hebrewised names to play with their Jewish friend as equals. Some more asking around and I gain more information that further confuses me: their real names are indeed Arabic names, but their parents are mixed: their father is an Arab, and their mother is Jewish.<sup>132</sup>*

From Danielle, who was running the neighborhood's youth club, I learned that there are a quite a few children of mixed parents in the neighborhood. Presenting themselves using one identity or the other, Danielle could not tell whose parents were mixed, and whose not. Despite the lack of clarity, there were a few couples in the Masada Scene that became publicly known as mixed. One couple, a Jewish man and an Arab woman, maintained their relationship for several years, then they broke up and the woman married an Arab man with whom she now raises children. Meanwhile, her Jewish ex-boyfriend got involved in a new romantic relation with another Arab woman. This relationship lasted a couple of years, and shortly after they broke up, I found him broken hearted. He told me that it was too difficult for them to keep their relationship with her family not accepting him. This was also the case of another mixed couple from the neighborhood, of an Arab man and a Jewish woman, who had to break up after several years of relationship because her family did not accept him.

And there are also Charlie and Vivi, two familiar figures in the Masada Scene. While they share the same Arab father, Charlie's mother is an Arab, and Vivi's mother is Jewish. Charlie himself, a Christian Palestinian, married a Russian woman of a different Christian congregation. Another mixed relationship I learned about only after its tragic end. A key Jewish figure in one of Masada's first activist groups passed away before I

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<sup>132</sup> See Monterescu (2015:56) on dual-identities among Jaffa Arab teenagers, who change their names ad-hoc, for example when they feel they have to hide their Arab identity in romantic encounters with Jews.

met him. In an evening organized in his memory I learned he had an Arab partner whose family neither knew that he had a Jewish partner nor that he was gay. While they felt comfortable in the neighborhood, they also had to keep their relationship discreet elsewhere. Once, when I asked Tamar about mixed couples in the neighborhood, she mentioned the few that she was aware of. Her impression was that these are people who are not really into politics, and implied that their relationships are an outcome of living in the mixing neighborhood: "They end up being together out of the everyday life in the neighborhood. There's no ideology here."

In one of the mornings that Tamar was sitting at the outdoor area of Café Carmel, she suddenly noticed me passing by, raised her hand, and waived at me with a piece of paper.

*"Look at what I'm reading," she says as I approach, and hands me a two-page text. "This is exactly for you," she adds, and explains that Meital, the editor of one of the local arts and poetry magazines, gave her the text as she saw her entering the café, and asked for her opinion. Meital explained that it's a draft of a new piece she wrote for the forthcoming issue of the magazine. I quickly read the text and realize it deals with Arab-Jewish mixed couples as a solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A minute later Meital joins our table in anticipation for Tamar's comments. Tamar is not sparing her criticism: "There's a problem in the way the romantic partnership is described," she says, "mainly because one of the directions you propose is the creation of a new generation. You know, parenting is not always an option that people choose, and furthermore, you still use the basic national categories both in the relationships and in the 'new' identities that are imagined there, such as the 'Arab-Jew'." Tamar's criticism triggers a conversation about how our language and vocabulary limits the way we think, to the extent that it is difficult*

*for us to imagine an alternative reality outside of the familiar terminology. Discussion revolves around whether reality creates language or is created by it. I add to the discussion that the Arab–Jewish option in the text ignores the intra-Jewish ethnic division, which already proposed the Arab-Jewish category for the Mizrahi Jews. Meital immediately responds saying “Yeah, as if not all other texts dealing with the conflict also ignore it.” “Sure,” I respond, “but if you try to imagine an alternative, why keep reproducing the same frames of thought?” The conversation doesn’t develop much further, and after Meital leaves, Tamar tells me that “With all her good intentions, Meital’s views are still racist after all. In order for Jews and Arabs to make peace they need to copulate.”*

Despite the views Tamar expressed in this conversation, a few weeks later she joined a political action that promoted Meital’s ideas. As a reaction to racist groups gaining more public attention in Israel, it was Orly and Tamar who found political value in publicly legitimizing the option of mixed couples. On December 28<sup>th</sup> 2010 the “Rabbis’ Wives’ letter” took the mainstream media headlines.<sup>133</sup> In their letter, a number of Rabbis’ wives announced that it was prohibited to rent out apartments to Arabs and to have mixed Arab–Jewish relationships. As the subject touched an exposed nerve of many people in the neighborhood, it quickly became a topic for discussion in which Tamar couldn’t stay silent. She decided to join Orly and take action. The following evening she called me, saying “Orly just came over to prepare a stencil for a slogan that we want to spray in the neighborhood. You’re welcome to join, if you want.”

*At around 11 PM, half an hour after Tamar called me, she drives by my place to pick me up with Orly. As I enter the car they inform me that they prepared a stencil in both Hebrew and Arabic which reads: “Jews [feminine] and Arabs [masculine] refuse [feminine]*

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<sup>133</sup> See report on Channel 2 News: <http://tinyurl.com/jtrh5hl> (accessed: December 28th 2010).

*to be enemies [masculine].” Since both languages are gendered, they decided to highlight relations between Jewish women and Arab men. Such a slogan argues against the Rabbis’ wives’ letter, while at the same time subverts the popular slogan among Israeli left activists that uses only masculine language. I hop into the car, and accompany them as they drive around the neighborhood. I take photos of them spraying in different locations in Hadar, making sure their faces won’t be recognizable in my photos (Image 17). They spray in several areas, and then Orly says that it’s time to spray at the heart of the neighborhood, along Masada Street, “to make the activists there happy”. I tell her that she sounds like the “aunts” who hand out sandwiches to Israeli soldiers on their way to and from their military bases as an appreciation for what they do. They laugh at the comparison. Tamar wants to drive up to the Carmel neighborhoods and spray there, too, but they’re out of paint even before they cover all the strategic locations within Hadar.*



Image 17: "Jews and Arabs refuse to be enemies"

*The next day, in a conversation with Samira, a Palestinian woman who was my Arabic teacher, she tells me how much she loved seeing the graffiti first thing on the morning that day. It made her happy. I later met someone else from the neighborhood,*

who showed me that out of excitement she took a photo of the graffiti with her cellular and made it her wallpaper photo (Image 18).

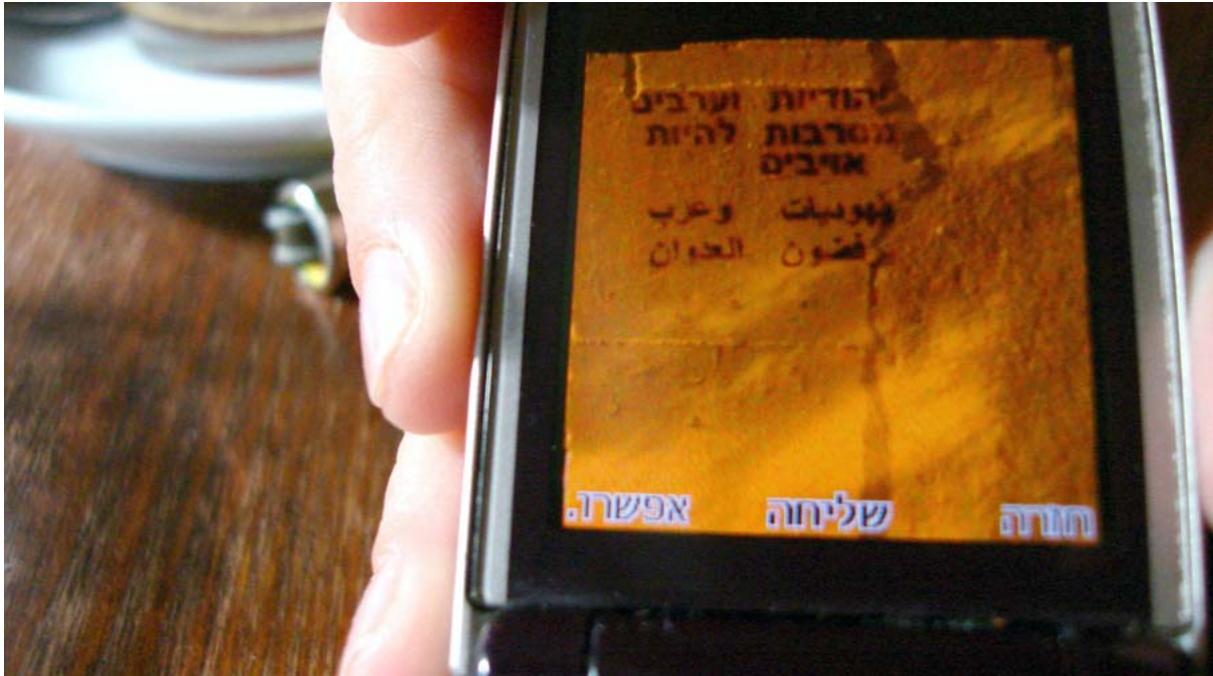


Image 18: "Jews and Arabs refuse to be enemies"

Tamar and Orly's main intention was to have their slogan accepted as a critical political statement. However, spraying it at the heart of the Masada Scene could be interpreted as a gesture that expresses their sense of belonging to a community of people who think likewise. Moreover, the reactions to the slogan showed that it could also serve as a visual stimulation for a sense of belonging, with those seeing it feeling more at home.

### ***Visually-Based Sense of Belonging***

The Masada Scene has a density of street arts, graffiti and other visuals presented publicly, particularly on Masada Street and its surrounding area. These only rarely stay long, constantly being painted over, whited-out, and then new works appear

in their stead. Some of the works are done by groups of street artists, the most famous of which is the Masada-based and internationally acclaimed Broken Fingaz Crew.<sup>134</sup> Other works are done by individuals, not necessarily with any artistic background or aspirations, sometimes just expressing their political or philosophical ideas, and yet other works are done by ad-hoc groups, with the authorization of local institutions.



Image 19: "When you grow up, you will not understand"

*I slowly climb back home carrying groceries from the market. On my way up through Ha'im Stairway, I see a bunch of people with name tags climbing down in my direction. I pause and watch where they're going. They turn to Yerushalayim Street, then hop on a bus that was waiting for them there. The rear of the bus is covered with a banner that reads "Taglit" (the Hebrew name for Birthright expeditions). The Taglit projects are intended to cultivate and strengthen the Zionist identity of young Jews, particularly from the USA, and I am surprised to find out that the mixing neighborhood of Hadar is on their*

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<sup>134</sup> In the mid 2010s Broken Fingaz Crew moved from Masada Street to Haifa's Downtown area. Broken Fingaz webpage: [www.brokenfingaz.com](http://www.brokenfingaz.com).

*itinerary. I keep climbing on Ha'im Stairway, and as I cross Yossef Street I hear someone calling me. I turn around and see Gil, the director of the local Community Center, smiling at me, inviting me to see a new wall painting that was just created on one of the walls in a small park nearby, next to a public shelter.*

*"These guys from Boston made it," he explains, "they are from the Jewish community there, which is the biggest donor for social projects in the neighborhood. They came here for a visit under Haifa–Boston cooperation." The wall is freshly painted with colorful squares, some with a variety of symbols, such as love, the Star of David, and others – none of which is related to Islam or Christianity. I put the groceries down on the ground and take a few photos of the wall (Image 20).*



Image 20: The Haifa-Boston wall painting, Yossef Street

Like many other ephemeral wall paintings in the Masada Scene, this one did not survive long, too. One evening, a few weeks after its creation, most of the painting turned black because someone set a mattress on fire next to (for a reason unknown to me). A few weeks later the municipality workers painted it all gray.

Although it is difficult to ignore Masada's visual scene, some of its hidden codes are meaningful only to a few, thereby creating a sense of belonging to a closed community, some of its features are local-specific. On one sunny winter day I had an opportunity to learn more about that community and the informal visual scene it creates in the Masada Scene.

I was sitting with Tamar at Café Carmel as we suddenly recognized two artists of the Broken Fingaz Crew sitting at the table next to us. As in other occasions, Tamar volunteered to serve as an icebreaker on my behalf, started a conversation with them. She asked them about some of the artworks that they had made along the street, and then, after seeing their enthusiasm, we proposed: “Hey, why won’t you take us on a tour?” One of them, T., agreed, and off we went for a twenty minute guided tour along Masada Street artworks – starting at the wall next to the laundromat and ending near a wall a couple of hundred meters away from there.

T. introduced himself by his first name, but refused to be recorded. He nevertheless didn't mind me writing and taking pictures as long as his face was not shown. While walking with him, a whole new scene was revealed: not only the social scene behind Masada Street art, but street art in general, too. T. started his explanations by focusing on the *Signatures* scene, as he called it. He knows how to read all the visual signs that others mostly ignore. He knows in person most of the *Writers* (that’s how he calls them), knows who did what, what their story is, and when they painted their signatures (Image 21).



Image 21: Signatures

*“The signatures should have style and should be original,” T. says. “When I look at a signature I know who that is and when the person was here, according to the signature’s style, because people also change their styles. How and where you paint your signature is like a game within the community. Although it takes place in the public sphere, it talks only to a particular audience.” We approach a particular wall, and T. says, “TANT was here and KIP, too. I know both of them in person, they’re brothers. Since KIP doesn’t write anymore, this one is pretty old.”*

*“This is something that TANT made a long time ago” (Image 22).*



Image 22: Street art by TANT

*"And this is from 2007. The artist got the approval of the property's owner to paint it, and he did it for free" (Image 23).*



Image 23: Street art

*"And this is by 'Know Hope', the most successful artist in Israel at the moment. We invited him to paint it for an event that we organized here. The artwork next to it is also by a famous artist, 'Zero Cents,' a friend from Tel Aviv" (Image 24)*



Image 24: Street art by Know Hope and Zero Cents

*When we reach the corner of Shmuel Street, T. explains us that what we see there is, in fact, a combination of two signatures (Image 25). “The classical graffiti is to take a certain name and paint it in as many and at most visible places as possible in town, and in a crazy style. The basic idea is to take a certain name and paint it. The goal is that it will be seen many times.”*



Image 25: Signatures

*Tamar wants to know what is the statement in this kind of artistic work. “There’s a statement,” T. says, “the fact that graffiti is so accessible makes people, like kids for example, believe that they can also make art, and not fear from it. It’s cool. Also, in the world we live in today, the fact that you climb up to a high place, and do something like this, without doing it for the money, without advertising anything, even if it’s to write your*

*own name...” Tamar then jumps in, impatiently “but if you already climb, and do all this, don’t you want to say something?”*

*“There IS a statement in this, there IS a social statement.”*

*“A minor statement.”*

*“No, a social statement, arguing that everyone can climb to these places and do whatever they want. They don’t have to be a cellular company and buy the property in order to do that.”*

*“The statement of overtaking the public sphere is important, no doubt. But you take the public sphere and – what do you do with it?”*

*“Everyone is doing whatever they want with it, this is what’s beautiful in it. One person wants to write their name, someone else wants to make political art, and yet another person wants to do something that only has an aesthetic value, with a style that hadn’t been seen before. For me this is interesting enough. In fact this gives me more inspiration than a sophisticated slogan that has no visual language. For me, graffiti is not art. It’s like punk rock. You play because this is what you do, because this is what you like. You make your noise knowing you will never make it to the radio playlist, and will never sell millions of records. This is what you love, and this is what makes it so great. It’s a great platform to create things because it lacks pretense, because it’s considered trash art and marginal. Precisely from these places much more interesting things emerge. You don’t think about ‘what I’m supposed to express,’ you do something that makes sense to you. It comes from a much more genuine place. I say all this while we stand in front of something really ugly, so it really doesn’t fit. Let’s move on.”*

*While walking, Tamar is interested to know whether there are any women in the scene, and I'm asking about Arabs. T says that the scene is mostly dominated by men, and that he's not familiar with any Arab writers. To both he doesn't have explanations.*

*Along the street we see a number of two-word texts starting with "Slightly" (Image 26). The writer of these is the only one T. is not familiar with.*



Image 26: "Slightly Advertised"

*We then pass by the Carmelit underground station, and T. notes that the station's door, seen when the station is closed, was painted by Keos, "the first Writer in Haifa."*

*T. explains that "at a certain point there was a division between street art and graffiti. Graffiti is everything I showed you so far. It's not art; it's letters and writing your name, etc. And there is what is called Street Art. It is painted with pre-made patterns, with stickers; this is all kinds of works that are less of the kind of letters."*

*He then shows us one of his own works, not yet finished, and says that on a nearby street there's the same figure only with a body.*

*When we reach one of Masada Street's curves T mentions that every week there is a new work, on one of the walls, and every week the municipality erases it (Image 27). However, he says, "Masada Street is somehow the only street in Haifa where the municipality erases some but not everything. About two years ago," he explains, "we organized an event here, and invited a lot of artists to make their artworks. Somehow, because it was so popular and in daylight, there was an impression that it's legal, and since then it remained as a status-quo. The municipality has a Graffiti Team, and they have their daily morning routine around the whole city. If something stays for more than a week on a wall – it's an achievement. There is no other city in Israel that works like that."*



Image 27: Haifa Municipality's Graffiti Cleaning Team

*Tamar asks T. about any conventions regarding where it is OK and where it is not OK to paint. T. says that there are no conventions besides not spraying on graveyards, synagogues, churches, etc. He, himself, won't spray on businesses, or on someone's shop window. "I will also not spray on a building for conservation or on a building that looks nice to me. If I see a gray wall – I'll do it there," he says.*

*As we reach the end of Masada's street art scene, T. says that some Writers have local pride so when they sign they also indicate the name of the city, like in some of the Masada works (Image 28).*



Image 28: Local pride

*T. unfolds his sleeves and says "I, for example, made a tattoo of Hadar," he adds, and reveals the back of his arm, showing his tattoo of a typical urban scene of the neighborhood. Later I find out that one of my neighbors has his own Haifa tattoo: the city symbol on his right shoulder.*

*As we go back to Café Carmel, still impressed by the embodiment of Haifa pride and sense of belonging, Tamar breaks my enchantment, commenting: “after all they are quite conservative.”*

During the rest of my fieldwork in Hadar I tried to decode the changing artworks that I saw according to T’s explanation. What also became more apparent is that Masada’s visual scene includes a lot of works that expresses impromptu reactions to local and political issues, in Hebrew, Arabic, and other languages, too. But with all that visual coexistence it also seemed to me that slogans in Arabic got erased much quicker.



Image 29: Street artist

### ***Challenging Belonging***

*Strong and manful, he is looking ahead, identifying the source of provocation, pointing at it with his finger, calling the others and showing them the direction, lifting a stone while keeping his eyes focused on the target, then stretching his right arm for what is going to be a powerful throw of a stone. Four bullets hit him before the stone is thrown. He is bleeding yet getting stiffer, again getting prepared for the throw of the stone, then getting hit by five more bullets. With a remaining power of resistance, he is trying to throw the stone for the third time, but another series of gunshots is directed at him. He is falling down, trying to rise up, getting hit by another bullet, collapsing, and bleeding to death.*

Inspired by the first Palestinian Intifada, actor Juliano Mer-Khamis performed this scene at a central Tel Aviv square. It was filmed by documentarian Simcha Jacobovici and included in his film "Deadly Currents" (1991) (Image 30).



Image 30: Juliano Mer-Khamis, screenshot from "Deadly Currents"

In a later scene, Mer-Khamis is talking to the filmmaker, saying (in English):

I'm a narcissist. You know, in psychology, a narcissist must be human. I don't know why, but that's what they say. I support the people, I support the pain. I cannot ignore it. But I cannot identify totally with national fighting, with a national target. Because I cannot support a new state coming. Any state is the same. It's red, white, or blue. But those poor people, they don't know it. They think that if they replace the Israeli occupation with Arafat's occupation it's going to be better. I say: no. Fight both of them. Anarchy. Not communism, anarchy. [...] I was Jewish. I joined the parachutes. I was a killer. [Then, for] three years I was a Palestinian. I tried to get to the PLO [Palestinian Liberation Organization] in Germany. Then I had two years in the Philippines with magic mushrooms in the jungle. I lost my all identities. Then I came back. I said: OK, you have a gift. You are not only consciously un-nationalized, you are inside of yourself divided. Use it.

[...]

I joined the army because I was totally identified with the Jews. And why? I was a kid, and the psychology of a kid is that he sees the world through his parents [...] and my father is a very corrupted Arab (I'm sorry to say that, papa, but that's true). So I saw Arabs through him. He's corrupted, he hits my mama, he hits us, he drinks, he laughs at everybody, he's a careerist and wants only power. And I had a mother, Jewish, freak, she smokes hash, she's bare feet, she's freedom. So I identified with her, and she was the Jewish part, so I said: hey, mentally, not politically, I'm with Jews. I went to the army and I saw what the fuck they're doing. I said: hey, it's not my mama. It's Fascism.

Juliano Mer-Khamis was friends with Guy, a veteran left-wing Jewish activist, whom I knew from political activism, and both lived in Haifa. One Friday afternoon of November 2010 I was sitting with Guy and Liora, a friend of ours from Tel-Aviv, at Café Carmel, when Guy received a call from Juliano, inviting him for barbecue. When Guy proposed that he would bring Liora and me along, Juliano had no objections.

I first saw Juliano about two decades before, in Tel-Aviv, when he gave another such performance in a flea market. I remembered it quite well because of how provocative it was. A circle of people gathered around him, and with his loud voice he threatened to take off all his clothes. It wasn't clear to me whether he was an actor or just a mad person with a lot of charisma. I remember nothing of the contents of what he said just that he somehow disappeared only with his underpants on.

About a decade later, in the early 2000s, I saw him again when we participated together in a number of political protests in solidarity with Palestinians during the second Palestinian Intifada. These activities were organized by Ta'ayush, an Arab-Jewish grassroots partnership. While I was involved in the Tel Aviv branch, he was one of the key figures of the Haifa branch. Then, too, his presence was always salient.

A couple of years later he released his film, "Arna's Children" (2004), focusing on the theater his mother established at the Jenin Refugee Camp in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. From that film I learned more about him and his background, having a Jewish mother, who took part in the 1948 war as one of the Zionist fighters, and a Communist father, a Palestinian Arab.

When I moved to Haifa he was mostly involved in running The Freedom Theater in Jenin, following his late mother's tradition of resisting through theater. At the same time, he was also involved in productions at Haifa's Al-Midan Arab Theater, located at the lower part of Hadar. Dividing his time between Jenin and Haifa, he promoted his idea of Cultural Intifada on both stages, inspiring everyone who worked with him. When in Haifa, he spent many hours sitting in Masada's coffee shops, always surrounded by people, always at the center of attention, always having the Israeli Occupation as the topic of yet another heated discussion. Apart from saying hello, we never exchanged words until that Friday evening in November 2010. And even on that occasion I barely talked.

Juliano's house is located only a few minutes' drive west of Hadar, on Allenby Street, in an area mostly populated by Arabs. Allenby is quite a busy road, but Juliano's house stands on the second row of houses, away from the street, with its back to the Carmel Mountain. In the property next to his house Juliano kept a sheep and a lamb,

creating a village scene. It was around 9PM when we arrived at his place and we found another friend of Juliano's already there, immersed in a heated conversation with him. The exchange between them – on the Palestinian struggle for freedom, on what is moral and immoral in such struggles, on modernism and post-modernism, on Slavoj Žižek and Judith Butler, and so forth – was only rarely interrupted by Guy's less vocal contributions or by Jenny, Juliano's partner, walking between them, carrying more meat for the grill in one hand, and their few months old baby in her other hand. At times, Juliano replaced her in these duties. In the middle of one of his monologues, given while holding the baby against his shoulder, he over-dramatically argued in favor of suicide bombing, even at the cost of women and children being killed. Raising his voice even louder, and performing his support for such acts as if on stage, made it clear to me that it was said in an ironic manner. Juliano was a strong supporter of non-violent fight for freedom, and in recent years he was one of the clearer voices calling for a cultural Intifada that should take over the failed violent practices that preceded it. Liora and I were mostly fascinated by that show, which was conducted in English so Jenny could understand. More than once they got carried away in the heat of their exchange and shifted to Hebrew. Liora soon felt the urge to intervene with a minor question in English, mainly to alert them to shift back to English so that Jenny would not be excluded. The discussions there could have lasted for hours, but at around midnight we headed back to Hadar, and I was still digesting the experience of that evening.

Five months later, on April 4<sup>th</sup> 2011, I got a phone call from Liora.

"Did you hear?" she asked in a trembling voice.

"Hear what?"

"Juliano was assassinated in Jenin!"

A few minutes later it was announced on the radio that Juliano bled to death.<sup>135</sup>

At that moment I was an hour away from Haifa, visiting family. I rushed saying goodbye, got into my car and drove back to the neighborhood, talking with Tamar during the ride. I knew she spent hours, if not days, of activism shoulder-to-shoulder with him at Haifa's Ta'ayush branch, and I assumed she was devastated. We decided to meet within an hour at Café Terez, where most of his local friends and colleagues from the Al-Midan Theater would probably gather.

*I drive into the city, and from the seaside road I turn right to Allenby Street on my way to Hadar. I pass by Juliano's house and I get a lump in my throat. I see no special occurrence here, so I keep driving to Hadar. As I arrive, I park the car near Masada Street and start walking toward Café Terez. On my way I pass by Café Carmel, and see Erez standing outside, working to fix a black flag at the entrance to his Café. Juliano was one of the regulars there whenever he was in Haifa. We talk for a minute, but Erez looks disturbed, speechless, digesting the loss. Inside, customers are having fun, laughing. I keep walking to Café Terez and pass by Café Buzz, where music is playing as usual. Across the street, at Café Cube – the same. Just another regular Monday. As I reach Café Terez I see that the windows are already covered with posters of Juliano's portrait. A corner with candles was also improvised at the entrance to the Café (Image 31).*

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<sup>135</sup> To this date, both Israeli and Palestinian formal investigations failed to find Juliano's assassinator(s). For the most recent in-depth account of events and their aftermath, see Shatz (2013).



Image 31: Memorial corner for Juliano Mer-Khamis

*What strikes me as unusual – more than the posters, the candles, and people’s watery eyes – is the silence. No music is playing in a place where the volume is usually too loud. The place starts to fill with more and more people who want to be together. Those who are among the circle of Al-Midan Theater update everyone that there’s still no information about the funeral, the details of which are currently being discussed between Juliano’s family and the theater.*

*Among those who enter the café are also two participants of the informal group of people who gathered every Monday in the past weeks in one of Masada’s coffee shops for jamming and sing-along. Today is Monday, and they wanted to play music. After hearing the news they decided to check whether it was OK to hold their regular jam session, and were told that under current circumstances it was inappropriate. Someone tells me that they went to other coffee shops as well, asking the same question. At Café Carmel they were totally ignored, and at Ori’s gallery their question was rejected altogether, with*

*people arguing that there is a variety of ways to mourn, that every day a woman is being murdered, so it doesn't make playing music inappropriate. In the end they decide to settle outside of Café Cube, across the street, and play there, with their sing-along heard in the quiet, stunned space of Café Terez.*

*Hajar, Tamar, and others slowly gather here, and we pack a number of chairs around a little table on the sidewalk outside the Café. Tamar mentions that she couldn't go home when she heard about the assassination, and wanted to be together with friends. With tears in her eyes Hajar nods in agreement. She then comments, disappointedly, that the jam session gang should show sensitivity and acknowledge that there is a community that mourns here. Dorian, who is friends with people who sit in both coffee shops, passes by, asking whether the music disturbs us. Tamar replies that there was clear resentment here to them playing today. He proposes to go to Café Cube and talk with them. He turns around, about to cross the street, but then turns back, saying that stronger powers prevent him from going there, and he joins our already-crowded table.*

*In the distance, I see Yael walking in our direction from Café Carmel, stopping on the way for a short chat with someone who tried to sort things out earlier with the musicians jamming group. She then continues walking towards Café Terez, accelerating her steps as she comes closer to us, her head hanging low. In the narrow sidewalk of Café Terez, with its crowded tables, she is forced to slow down, and I manage to catch her eye. Like others, she looks distressed. I ask her how she is, and while passing by me she quickly replies: "I don't know. I only know I need to be alone". Then she re-accelerates her steps, heading toward her apartment, which is located a couple of minutes' walk behind us.*

This incident with Yael got stuck in my head for a while, until I realized it was these ethnographic moments that capture a wider meaning. Yael's reactions at that

moment showed she was aware of the rupture that was revealed in the Masada Scene. She knew that choosing which side of the street to walk on was more meaningful than ever. It was a public statement regarding her sense of belonging, and she knew she had to make a choice. Being recognized as a Jewish woman, walking that evening on the side of Café Terez means that she accepts the Scene's mixing agency. Walking on the other side of the street means that she rejects it. With what seemed to be a heavy sense of uncertainty, she accepted, but preferred not to confront it further at the moment. She wished for the situation to dissolve as soon as possible so that no social-political or even personal responsibilities would be attached to her choice. In wishing to be alone, she intentionally rejected the social reflexivity that was so forcefully induced by the situation of extreme incommensurability between the hegemonic Discourse of Separation and the mixing neighborhood. Despite her previous statement of appreciation to reflexivity and despite her sense of belonging to a community that nurtures practices of self-awareness (see Chapter 3), in a moment when the width and depth of the gap between separation and mixing were at their peak, she preferred avoidance over reflexivity.

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*Sitting that evening at Café Terez gradually becomes onerous when people start imagining different scenarios of the assassination, with the identity of the assassins changing from Israeli agents, through Palestinians working in their service, to Hamas radicals (maybe working in the service of the Israelis, too). I decide to go for a walk with Tamar. In one of Masada Street's corners we find fresh graffiti with the word "Love" in Arabic, bleeding (Image 32).*



Image 32: "Love"

*April 5<sup>th</sup> 2011: The day after Juliano's assassination Masada Street is mourning. Or maybe just one side of it. Or maybe just a segment of that side. It's raining, and the black flag at Café Carmel is getting wet. Café Terez is still quiet, candles are burning at the entrance, and inside Sada Coffee – bitter dark coffee – is served in small glasses to everyone who enters, as is the custom during days of mourning. A number of Juliano's closest friends are here, one of them already feels overwhelmed by the hugs he receives from everyone who enters to comfort him, and he leaves.*

*The lady with the ragged clothes, who everyday walks along Masada Street asking for cigarettes, passes by the Café's entrance. Her eyes suddenly meet Juliano's face, looking at her from the poster, right above the burning candles. She is asking someone for a cigarette, and quietly adds: "how old was this man when he died?"*

*"Fifty-something," the person says while handing her a cigarette.*

*"Was he sick?"*

*"No, he was murdered in Jenin."*

*After a long moment, the hand holding her unlit cigarette suddenly starts trembling and her face falls. Watching her reactions, the person who just talked with her enters the café in another burst of tears.*

*Down at Al-Midan Theater, people gather, cry together and talk about Juliano. Some of them do it on the theater stage, and then a number of films featuring Juliano are screened. Details on the funeral procession are now being released. It's going to start tomorrow morning here, at the theater, followed by a procession through the nearby streets of Hadar and Wadi Nisnas, then by a caravan to Jalameh Checkpoint, so members of the Jenin Freedom Theater could pay their tribute on the Palestinian side, and from there – to Kibbutz Ramot Menashe for a secular burial next to the grave of Arna, Juliano's mother.*

*April 6<sup>th</sup> 2011: .*

*April 7<sup>th</sup> 2011: Yesterday morning, on my way to Al-Midan Theater for the beginning of Juliano's funeral procession, I saw that a new slogan in English was sprayed in three different locations along Masada Street: "Juliano – R.I.P. we love you!" with a stencil of his image, with the caption "Arna's Son" (Image 33).*



Image 33: "Juliano – R.I.P we love you!"

*Café Terez was closed yesterday with all the staff taking part in organizing the funeral procession. Outside of Al-Midan Theater Arabs and Jews gathered, trying to comfort each other. Inside the theater, in the bigger hall, Juliano's coffin was placed on the stage, surrounded with flowers. People climbed on stage, one after the other, slowly passing by the coffin and Juliano's poster, some of them placing more flowers on, or near the coffin. The hall itself was packed, and all the chairs were occupied with people silently watching the scene on stage, some of them had taken part in it themselves only a moment before.*

*At around 12 PM, a team of Al-Midan and Café Terez people lifted the coffin and carried it through the side staircase across the audience seats to the rear doors of the hall. As the coffin was passing through the crowd, people stood up and spontaneously started clapping in appreciation of the actor, the activist, the friend and colleague. Under the eulogy of everyone's clapping even those who managed to hold their tears up to that moment, let go.*

*From the theater's rear doors the procession through the seam-line between Wadi Nisnass and Hadar's streets began, with a crowd of hundreds following the coffin.*

*As the procession returned back to the theater, people gathered in cars for a caravan to the Jalameh Checkpoint, where people of the Jenin Freedom Theater were already waiting.*

*At the Checkpoint, for some of those who passed to the Palestinian side this was their first experience facing Israeli soldiers, security contractor workers, and a set of barriers leading into and out of various metal and concrete cages. Expressions of confusion and shock were added to the sadness on their faces.*

*With the arrival of Juliano's coffin to the Palestinian side of the checkpoint, an improvised and heartbreaking ceremony took place there, at the parking lot of a gas station. From there, the coffin was placed back in the leading car, and as it passed back through the checkpoint, another uncontrolled burst of clapping took over the silence, growing stronger and stronger. During the burial ceremony at Ramot Menashe cemetery this scene of clapping reoccurred for the third time, leaving no one indifferent.*

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A few days after the funeral I met with Tamar. We talked about how difficult the event was for both of us. Sharing the same sense of belonging to a group, in which Juliano was a charismatic figure, felt as if they killed one of us.

In April 2012, a year after Juliano's assassination, in an evening organized in his memory at the Al-Midan Theater, excerpts from the Jacobovici film were screened. In one of the scenes, where Juliano ridicules the Israeli strategy of Divide and Rule, many in the audience clapped their hands and laughed in agreement. A few minutes later, when Juliano was heard talking about being an anarchist, not supporting the idea of states, people in the audience were more reserved, with only a handful of them clapping their hands in agreement.

In many of the news and magazine articles that featured Juliano since the day of his assassination, and throughout the following months, writers kept describing him as "half Jewish, half Arab," although he fully rejected such descriptions and used to present himself as 100% both. Even when expressing appreciation to Juliano's politics and various activities, these writers kept falling over and over again into the traps of the

discourse of separation, missing the alternative to the hegemonic discourse, embodied in Juliano's life.

### *Discussion*

"Belonging," Nira Yuval-Davis argues (2011:10), "is about an emotional (or even ontological) attachment, about feeling 'at home'." According to Yuval-Davis (ibid:12) – and as this chapter shows – people can 'belong' to many and interrelated different objects of attachment: to social locations, to various collectives and groupings, and to ethical and political value systems. In all of its manifestations, belonging in Hadar, as this chapter shows, involves a practice of reflexivity. Not only that belonging in modernity is a result of being reflexive (Giddens 1991), for some residents of Hadar there can also be a sense of belonging to the practice of reflexivity itself, a practice that has become a learned and integral part in the formation of neoliberal subjectivity (Sa'ar 2016).

Under the hegemonic Discourse of Separation, the various ethnographic moments described in this chapter show that senses of belonging in the mixing social environment of the Masada Scene have several objects of attachment and different manifestations. A sense of belonging in Hadar can be related to **space**: to Masada Scene's different locales with the different degrees of mixing they generate and tolerate, and with the widespread notion that the coffee shop in which you sit is a statement of where and with whom you feel you belong. A sense of belonging in Hadar can be related to its **population**: to one segment of it, to its diversity, or even to the possibility it offers to surpass hegemonic categories. It can bring people together to the most intimate of relations, and it can be articulated in practices of exclusion (see Yuval-Davis 2011:18)

and in negating others' expressions of their own sense of belonging. A sense of belonging in Hadar can be supported by claims of **indigeneity** to the neighborhood, which strengthens the **sense of entitlement** to act, to re-define the space, and to present political claims in light of threats to one's perceived ownership rights of space, resources and culture (see Escobar 2001:184; Kirsch 2001:193; Yuval-Davis 2011:10). In the context of Hadar's indigeneity, the social boundaries of who can identify as indigenous have not yet been subjected to political debates (see Giles-Vernick 2001:185; Gonzales 1998). A sense of belonging in Hadar can have **visual expressions** in the neighborhood's public sphere, as well as on people's bodies. These visual expressions can, in turn, stimulate others' sense of belonging. A sense of belonging in Hadar can be **practice-based**, as in the case of living in a community that practices reflexivity, constantly negotiating between living in a mixing social environment and the hegemonic Discourse of Separation. A sense of belonging in Hadar can serve as people's **self-justification** for living there and feeling good about it. At the same time, it can be the result of living there, a feeling that **develops over time**. Subjectivities and senses of belonging in Hadar can be some kind of a combination of all of these, and they can also be undefined, in a constant process of production, dynamic and never complete (see Hall 1990:222; Yuval-Davis 2011:12). As a social process, the reflexive belonging in Hadar is neither individual nor collective (see Yuval-Davis 2011:16). In that sense, the Masada Scene can also be regarded as a "third space," in which, according to Homi Bhabha (Rutherford 1990), new subjectivities, new politics, and new identities emerge. Such a space also calls for the emergence of a sense of belonging of the kind embodied by Juliano, which symbolizes that which is still beyond the power of words and imagination to deliver.

### PART III

#### Reflexive Coexistence



Image 34: "In Haifa, this will not happen"

## CHAPTER 5

### Unearthing Incommensurabilities: Sub-Politics of Reflexive Coexistence

#### *The Culture Producers: Trying to Work Together*

*Summer 2008: I climb up the stairways from the lower part of Hadar to Masada Street. A woman wearing a traditional Muslim dress and a head cover is climbing down in the opposite direction holding a cellular phone. As she gets closer I hear Arab music played through her cellular's speaker. It stops for a second, and she stops too, moving her finger on the touch-screen. The music starts playing again, and she continues walking down the stairs. On Ben Yehouda Street, one street below Masada, I pass by an old man, a yarmulke on his head, sitting on the staircase of one of the Arab houses. As I continue climbing to Masada Street I see a poster for an event titled "Lighting Haifa for Tibet," planned for the following day. At the same time the opening of the Olympic Games in China will take place, there is going to be a street festival in solidarity with the people of Tibet. Later that day I also receive an email from the Community Center to which the following invitation for the event was attached:*

*The day before the opening of the Olympic Games in China, we'll meet at Masada's coffee shops area to make our voice heard loud and clear calling: Freedom for Tibet. Bring candles, music instruments, cameras, a lot of love, and most importantly: fire! Together we'll create a vivid and dynamic evening in which we will stand with the people of Tibet while celebrating our own freedom to do such things. Whoever is interested is also invited to light a candle at home with family and friends.*

*A separate text in the body of the email, written by the administrator of the community center, notifies: "We remind everyone that this is a non-political gathering. We'll light candles tonight for human rights, for freedom and for showing concern for others".*

The next day I attended the solidarity festival and met Tamar there. We both noticed that it was mostly Ashkenazi Jews who arrived at the festival, and there were also a few people there wearing Israeli military uniform. When Tamar spotted them, she approached them and started a conversation. She asked them about their views regarding the oppression of the Tibetan people. One of the soldiers said that he only knew that the Chinese government harasses the Falun Gong. The soldier next to him didn't know much either, and rejected Tamar's provocation to make connections to local issues. Both of them were preparing for a Jazz concert in one of the street corners, where an improvised stage was set. Opposite that corner someone juggled balls and fire torches. Next to the juggler, a few people were trying to light candles, but the wind was stronger than their efforts. A creative solution was soon improvised by pulling plastic bottles out of the public recycling container, cutting them to half, and using them as wind shields.

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Once in every few months, a festival or a street party takes place along Masada Street. These events are organized by an ad hoc group of residents, by some of the business owners, by the municipality, or by a combination of these. Most of these street activities are initiated, formed and planned in coffee shop conversations, in community center meetings, and even online, on neighborhood Facebook pages.

In the more improvised street parties it is mostly residents of the Masada Scene who attend, whereas in the festivals co-organized with the municipality, and when nation-wide popular artists perform, it is also people from the Carmel neighborhoods, and even from outside of Haifa, who attend. Throughout the years, and as more attendees joined social media platforms, it became regular practice that shortly after an event, galleries of photos taken during the event are shared online.

In her classification of the various forms of social relations between Haifa's communities, anthropologist Rolly Rosen (2012: 171–183) identifies four kinds of interactions, each of which takes place in a different location in Haifa: (1) The contrasting demonstrations at Hatsionut Street that emerge whenever the Zionist–Palestinian conflict produces another dramatic event, turning the road into a buffer zone between left and right wing demonstrators on the opposite sidewalks; (2) The Holiday of Holidays Festivals at Wadi Nisnas, where cultural difference is celebrated on December weekends to mark the season's holidays of Christians, Muslims and Jews, with the religious audiovisual symbols taking the front stage, mainly allowing Jewish visitors to mix with Arab residents and enjoy a celebration of culture and consumption; (3) The beach-side Hecht Park, where people of all sectors arrive to enjoy the large lawn area and playground, but do not mix, a model, which, according to Rosen, represents Haifa's dominant form of interaction; (4) The Masada Street Festivals, in which young celebrators drink, smoke and dance together, all looking the same, making it difficult to tell them apart.

While Rosen regards these different interactions as separate models, a close examination of how festivals at the Masada Street are organized reveals not only the gaps

between goals, processes and outcomes of such interactions, but also that there are features of more than one model in every such moment.

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Ortal is an artist who was born in the early 1970s in a town next to Haifa to Jewish parents who immigrated to Israel from Morocco right after the 1967 war. After she moved to Haifa she got involved in organizing the Holiday of Holidays festival. At the same time, she was also involved in organizing an independent art festival on Masada Street, where a more bottom-up art-based experience was sought, and where goals were more openly political. Both aspects were lacking in the Holiday of Holidays festival. I learned about her role in the Masada festival during a conversation with her on the Holiday of Holidays (I was curious to hear about her role there, and she was curious to learn about published criticism of the event. Noting my interest in the other festival as well, she invited me to attend the meeting of the organizing committee scheduled for the following day at the Community Center.

As I arrived the next day at the Community Center, I found several familiar people already sitting there in the front yard on plastic chairs, chatting. Ortal was there, and also Meital, David, and Yael, whom I had met before but did not know much about them. All I knew was that Meital was into writing, that David and Yael were local artists, and that David was involved in various other initiatives, too. Besides them, there was another person whom I never met before, and didn't meet again, and also Ayman, a Haifa-born Palestinian artist, who worked with Ortal on the production of the Holiday of Holidays art exhibition. Ayman arrived to the meeting with two guests of his, sister and brother, whom

he later introduced to us as relatives of his who are Palestinian refugees from Haifa, now living in Europe. The woman was born in Haifa before 1948, and her brother was born after the deportation in a Palestinian refugee camp north of Damascus. For him, this was his first visit to Haifa. Shortly after the meeting began, Pnina, another Jewish artist, joined in.

At the beginning of the meeting I introduced myself as an ethnographer, mentioned that I was invited by Ortal, and asked permission to take notes. I noticed a couple of wondering gazes directed at Ortal, probably for not consulting with anyone before she invited me, so I mentioned that I use pseudonyms, and offered to leave if my presence was unwelcome. This, I felt, made them more comfortable, and I was invited to stay and permitted to take notes during the meeting.

*As soon as introductions are over, they go back to where they stopped their conversation in their previous meeting, the week before. I learn that they have a concept in mind for a street art festival, for which they came up with the name "Urbanizing Haifa Art," and that there's still much work to do. Moreover, there are many disagreements to resolve within the group.*

*They start with technical issues, and mention that they still search for sponsorships. So far, one of them reports, of all Masada Street's coffee shops, only the owner of Café Carmel agreed to participate. One of the problems they need to resolve is how to make sure they do no damage to the walls when they hang the artworks there. At Café Terez there won't be any such problem because they plan to use that space for film screenings. I gradually start grasping what kind of event they have in mind: they intend to use local businesses and*

*apartments along Masada Street as exhibition spaces for a display of artworks and performance shows by local artists. Before moving to the next item on their agenda they agree to keep searching for more sponsorships and exhibition spaces, and decide on who will approach which of the business owners.*

*The next item on the agenda is their written statement that they intended to use as their call for participation. Printed copies of the statement's draft are handed out. Currently the text is written only in Hebrew, but they wish to translate it to Arabic and English as well. Since there is no further discussion on the handouts, I figure that in previous meetings they had already agreed on the language of the document, which states the following (my translation):*

*The goal of "Urbanizing Haifa Art" is to promote social interaction between artists and the space where they live – the local and the universal. By exhibiting artworks in alternative spaces, we wish to promote independent initiatives, and to allow artists present their work on the street, close to where the work was created, in a way that will be accessible to a wide audience. We see art as a tool for social, political and educational change.*

*The idea for the event is a result of a joint initiative of artists from Haifa, Jews and Arabs, who live in mixed neighborhoods. Haifa is a unique space of joint existence for Arabs and Jews, which allows an eye-level discourse on core issues of the Palestinian–Israeli conflict.*

*The event will take place in public and private spaces of Masada Street, Hadar neighborhood. The organizers of the event are interested in collaborating with the street's residents. This expresses a perception that art is important and effective as long as it grows from within the community and for the community.*

*The event will take place at the same time with the Haifa International Film Festival at the Carmel Center, and will allow Festival participants to get acquainted with the city's singular urban sphere as well as to be exposed to a rising artistic scene. The movement between the two locations will be facilitated by the two routes typical to Haifa: the stairways and the Carmelit [Haifa's subway].*

*The event will allow presentations of various media: plastic art, video art, constellations, performative art, poetry readings, music concerts, lectures, and film*

*screenings. All will be displayed in alternative spaces: apartment balconies, street corners, deserted shops, buildings' hallways, coffee shops, and in other public and private locations along Masada Street.*

*The organizers of the event are interested in expanding the idea into an Arab–Jewish artistic community that will develop Haifa's cultural life and connect art with the aspiration to live life in a more equal and shared way.*

Reading this document, I realized that the way they presented themselves was more a wishful thinking than an accurate reflection of who they really were. Was having one Arab participant enough for presenting the project as a joint Arab-Jewish project? Authentic or not, such a declaration, so they believed, could have opened doors for other Palestinians to participate.

However, from what followed in the meeting, it soon became clear that the absence of diversity already at the planning stage was crucial for the way the project developed. It was reflected, for example, in ignoring various sensitivities in the call for participation, as well as later in the actual event.

*Ayman translates the gist of the concept of the event to his guests, and then – seemingly with no relation to it – decides to share with the whole group a moving meeting his guests had earlier that day with their relatives in the city of Acre, some 15 Kilometers north of Haifa. After listening attentively to Ayman's description of events, David suggests to have this experience of theirs as part of the exhibition. Another participant comments that David is making it sound too romantic. Why romantic?, David asks, and starts developing ideas on how the experience just shared with us can be adapted to an artistic form that could be exhibited in the event. One of the ideas he suggests is to film the sister sharing the story on screen. The idea, however, soon fades away, partly because of being conducted in Hebrew above the heads*

*of Ayman's guests, who only speak broken Arabic. David's attempt to use his French to communicate with them proves all the more clumsy.*

*Showing signs of getting impatient, Pnina asks to bring the discussion back to practical grounds and to talk about equipment. This sets the tone for all those who so far kept silent to start speaking at the same time. This momentary chaos is resolved by someone finding a raven's feather that is quickly introduced as an ad hoc speaking totem. Pnina takes the feather and while holding it in front of herself she shares her frustration from previous meetings. Her sense is that people do not contribute to the organization of the event in an equal manner. "It should belong to all of us," she says, "and people should put their hearts into it." She then declares that she thinks this might be the last meeting she takes part in, and concludes: "I have a lot of things to say, but there's a problem of ego here." David rejects her observation, and before uttering his thoughts Pnina looks at him and says: "You, too, did almost nothing so far. We have only two months left, and we have done almost nothing." Ortal asks for the feather and talks about how division of labor should be organized. Side talks violate the authority of the feather, until Pnina takes it back. The feather and Pnina's charisma make everyone focus back at her as she argues that we should decide whether we want to go forward with the project or give up on it altogether. Clearly, she argues, we should invest much more efforts. She proposes a different model of running the group, more open and dynamic, but Ortal immediately rejects the idea, saying "We are not a group, nor we will be a group. We came to work together on a specific event. I do hope it will develop further, but I don't want to invest any energy at the moment in establishing a new institution."*

The discussion about procedures and division of labor continued for several more minutes, with only the Jewish participants taking part in it, and with tension getting higher and voices louder. At that point I had to leave the meeting for another obligation.

A few days later I met Yael, who told me that after I left someone took a guitar and started playing. When things calmed down, they ended the meeting with a decision to work in more intimate groups, and meet again with the wider forum the following week. That meeting, David told me a week later, had ended again with disagreements, “Not on issues of content, but on irrelevant ones,” he said, and added: “This is the usual dynamic ... Already 10 or 15 years ago, people here organized various street events, although there were always these disagreements and lack of subsidies from the municipality.”

“Things are stuck,” Ortal told me when I met her again. She was frustrated by the Arab members who were not collaborating, and she couldn’t understand why. “They didn’t even manage to issue a Call for Participation in Arabic,” she said. She then mentioned that an Arab artist who had participated in one of the other meetings refused to take on the task of translation because he was “very sensitive to words.” Meanwhile, and without trying to figure out what he meant, the Hebrew Call was printed and circulated, and I saw several copies hung inside entrances to apartment buildings in the neighborhood. According to Ortal, following the circulation of the Hebrew version they received several proposals from artists, some of them Arabs, but she was still unsatisfied.

*Ortal is asking for my advice, and I feel that I don’t know enough so I just raise several questions: Maybe the whole project, which originated from an idea of a Jewish artist from the neighborhood, simply doesn’t speak to everyone? Or, maybe the release of a Hebrew-only text*

*excludes Arabs, making them understand that implicitly they're unwelcome as equals? And maybe the fact that the organizers approached the municipality for financial assistance, instead of remaining independent, added to preexisting suspicion and mistrust, and to the de-facto marking of the project as part of the Judeo-Zionist institution? Based on reading about other projects elsewhere, I share another assumption with her: Maybe such coexistence projects are not so interesting anymore to Palestinians who no longer see any reason to take part in such collaborations that bring no real change to the deep inequalities in the wider social context. Most of my assumptions lack practical advice that could be immediately implemented, and Ortal seems annoyed.*

Despite all of these problems, the group kept working on producing the month-long festival, and within a short time secured sponsorship from the municipality and other donors, and managed to issue a trilingual (Hebrew–Arabic–Russian) Call for Participation. A close reading of the call shows that the Hebrew version had an additional opening paragraph, which was not translated into the other languages, describing Masada Street (my translation):

*Masada Street is located at the center of Hadar neighborhood, and connects the Carmel with the Downtown and Wadi Nisnas. The neighborhood is an exceptional microcosm of the Israeli society. The composition of its population reflects a wide diversity of groups within the Israeli society, who live as neighbors, in relations of both conflict and mutual inspiration.*

Shortly after my conversation with Ortal I traveled back to Michigan, and returned to Haifa a few months later, arriving on time for the last week of the festival. From what I

learned from Ortal, as well as from several media reports, hundreds of visitors attended the various exhibition spaces, workshops, film screenings and street performances. Overall, the reactions to the festival were very positive. Nevertheless, the Jewish organizers felt that they failed in one of their main goals – producing a collaborative festival that would reflect the Arab–Jewish mix of the cultural production scene, as described in that additional paragraph.

Despite their pluralistic views, and despite their attempts to create an equal partnership in an unequal wider context, out of more than sixty artists who presented their work only a few were Arabs. The organizers' frustration made them doubt whether it was possible at all to materialize such collaborations, thinking that they should keep working separately.

As David noted, his experience showed that the dynamic of the festival was not unusual. In various ways, the same dynamic, of mostly Jewish organizers, who rely on the atmosphere of diversity and plan for the entire population, was similar in the following Masada Street events as well. Under the constraints of limited time and budget, and with the desire of cultural entrepreneurs to express their artistic and political ideas even if these were not shared by others, there was only limited space for thinking reflexively about the process of setting the goals and materializing them. Since conditions did not change much, this practice was institutionalized as the way to produce street events. As the last section in this chapter will show, although a collective learning process was lacking, David, as an individual, decided not to keep taking part in each and every such initiative, and instead

devote some of his energy as a cultural producer to work alone and produce his own events, relying on his own collaborations with Arab artists.

In addition to the sense of failure that the festival's organizers felt after not having achieved their original goals, there was another, unexpected development that overshadowed the festival. During its opening event, at around 11 p.m., after long hours during which hundreds of people attended the various exhibition spaces on Masada Street, the organizers started to close the event for the day. However, in one of the street corners, a party, celebrating the opening of a store devoted to street culture facilities, kept going. Neighbors called the police to complain about the noise, and in a matter of minutes policemen arrived, a violent conflict with a few individuals erupted, and more police were called to handle the situation. The incident ended with nine arrests and several people injured, and with what residents described as use of excessive force by the police, including the use of clubs and teargas.

The festival's organizers felt deeply disappointed with how the opening event had ended, and tried to disassociate it from the festival. Despite their description of the neighborhood in their text, they also knew that the special attention given by the police was already established as one of the features of the Masada Scene.

### ***The Harassed: Fighting for Shared Interests***

On Masada Street one cannot spend more than a few minutes without observing a police or municipal security car passing by. When I first brought it up in a conversation

with Tamar, she said “the relations with the police are tense, but their presence also contributes to the sense of security for women who walk here at night.”

For a period of several years since the mid-2000s, it was sometimes impossible for some of the residents to spend time in the Masada Scene without being stopped and frisked by the police, sometimes more than once a day.

*Spring 2008: I'm sitting at Café Carmel, and suddenly I see Lior and Einav rushing in agitated, getting the attention of everyone. With much excitement in her voice, Einav says that they were just released from the police station after being detained there for several hours. Earlier that day, she said, they were walking on the street and suddenly cops from four police cars jumped at them. When asked by the policemen to show their identity cards, they refused because they knew the law restricts such police practices only when there's concrete suspicion that a crime has been committed. Since they refused to cooperate, they were taken to the police station for identification and investigation. There, she said, they complained that it was not the first time they were being detained by the police with no reason whatsoever. Einav suspected that it was because of Lior's Rastafarian hairstyle. According to her, the investigator told them that the policemen who detained them lacked the required experience, and just harassed those who in their eyes did not look normative.*

The question of who looks normative remained a mystery. Since even those from the Students' Village, who were brought to the neighborhood with the support of mainstream institutions (see Chapter 4), were harassed by the police, the municipality issued special cards for them to use whenever they were stopped by the police. Einav, who was then a member of the Students' Village, refused to take this card, which she understood

as just another practice of distinguishing the Village members from the other residents of the neighborhood.

*Summer 2008: While sitting at Café Carmel, a Jewish man and his Arab girlfriend leave the place, and after a few minutes they return, agitated. The woman excitedly reports that as they walked down the street the police stopped and frisked them, and they even searched her underwear and bra for drugs. Both of them are angry and frustrated, saying that the police are trying to scare people out of the neighborhood.*

A few days later was my birthday, and I decided to go outside for a walk without a specific goal in mind.

*I walk down on Balfour Street, turn right on Jerusalem Street, then I turn left to one of the stairways leading to Nordau Street. As I'm walking a few steps along the street, a little white, unmarked car stops next to me and the driver shouts in my direction: "Police. Stop!" After being exposed to others' experiences I immediately realize this is my turn to enter the neighborhood's informal statistics of police harassments. Two policemen and two policewomen, all in civilian dress, get out of the little car, surrounding me, and one of them shows me his policeman ID card. I read out loud his name, he nods, and then asks for my identity card. "Why did you stop me?" I ask him. "We're just checking details," he answers. Not wanting to spend the rest of my birthday in the police station I show him my ID, and a minute later he returns it to me. Then they all get back to their car and drive off. I take a deep breath, and still with quick pulse I call Tamar. "Congratulations, you just got a birthday present: you've been accepted to the field," she cheered.*

In the following couple of years, I had about ten additional encounters of a similar kind with the police, all within the Masada area, in every case with no justified reason.

*Winter 2010: I'm stopped and frisked again by the police, this time a second before I cross the street to enter the building where I live, on Yossef Street.*

*"What's the problem?" I ask the policemen.*

*"You walked through that little park and there are people who use drugs here."*

*"Do you do the same also on the Carmel neighborhoods?"*

*"Don't interfere with our work."*

*Summer 2011: I'm walking into Masada Street from Balfour, and a few steps later a white, unmarked car break-squeaks next to me with someone from the inside shouting at me: "Police! Show us your ID!" As both policemen step outside of their car, I realize one of them stop-and-frisked me only a few days before. I laugh, asking him whether he missed me, but he ignores my joke and claims not to remember me. As I take out my driver's license to show them, they ask me their routine questions: Have I ever been in a police interrogation? Do I have a criminal record? Do I carry anything illegal on me, such as a knife or drugs? To all their questions I reply negatively. And then they ask to check my backpack and pockets, but I refuse, arguing they have no right to do so.*

*"We have the right to do so," one of them replies, "if we suspect you are involved in a criminal activity."*

*"What criminal activity? I was just walking on the street!"*

*“This is a criminal street!”*

*Everyone here is a criminal, I think to myself, until proven otherwise.*

Already in summer of 2008 residents recognized these harassments were a routine police practice. They organized, got self-educated on the relevant legal aspects, and managed to get the story out to local and national media. Following their efforts, the police practice of stop and frisk faded for a while, then was re-implemented.

The residents' efforts to change the police harassments started in a meeting that was organized at Café Carmel. As participants, Jews and Arabs, shared their experiences, it was made clear that what is most common in their stories is how the police justified their search and frisk practice. Although they didn't always bother to explain why they do it, in the cases that they did – they said they were searching for drugs. Such a justification, however, was rejected by the neighborhood residents. In the meeting, they argued that the police knew exactly where the drug dealers were, and that their search and frisk practices had no other goal but to harass and intimidate Hadar's residents.

After participants shared their experiences, an Arab lawyer who attended the meeting explained the illegality of these police practices, and tied his explanation with his own experience of being harassed by the police. The conversation then shifted to talking about the best practices for dealing with the police in such cases. The meeting ended with a decision to establish a “Committee against Police Harassments.”

Soon thereafter, the committee was established and operated for more than a year. The Committee was divided into action teams, each with its own task: from collecting

statistical data on police harassment, to getting media attention, to producing Hebrew and Arabic guidebooks of best practices for what to do when being stopped by the police or when witnessing someone else being stopped (Image 35).



Image 35: Committee's guidebooks in Arabic and Hebrew

Interestingly, throughout the work of the Committee the mixed character of the neighborhood was neither discussed as a dominant reason for the police harassments, nor as one of the features of the Committee. It was only when I talked about it with Tamar that I heard for the first time an assessment that what made the neighborhood non-normative in the eyes of the police, besides regarding it as a slum (see Chapter 3), was the reality of Jews and Arabs living there together. By this logic, the Masada Scene confused the police, as well as other policy makers in town, to the extent that they wished to create a social order that would be normative and socially legitimate; Namely, less mixed and more comprehensible to them. Tamar's interpretation made sense considering the general Discourse of Separation that regarded Jews and Arabs living together as a threat. Much like in other

cases of moral panic leading to practices of criminalization (Lev and Shenhav 2010), I found the police practices in Hadar doing the same, marking those who do not conform with their sense of order as criminals.

Following residents' resistance, which was accompanied by media coverage that gave bad publicity to the police, the search and frisk practices stopped for a while.

An examination of the role of diversity in the Committee's work is also telling, particularly in comparison with the group of artists described in the previous section. While the artists tried to find partners for materializing their preconceived artistic-political goals, one of which was the cultivation of neighborhood's diversity, the motivation for establishing the Committee was a reaction to an experience of injustice shared by all. While diversity was the goal of the (mostly-) Jewish artists, without being successful in having it also as their practice, diversity emerged as the Committee's practice, without it being one of their goals.

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In October 2015, following a series of stabbing cases, mainly in the streets of Jerusalem, but also in the Haifa area, and in the context of the ongoing Israeli Occupation, the Israeli minister of Public Security promoted a law that would expand the legality of stop and frisk practices. According to his proposal, in areas that a police officer defines as "prone to violence" policemen will not be required to present any reasonable suspicion in order to

justify stop and frisk practices.<sup>136</sup> Such laws can easily make the no-longer widespread practices of the Haifa police in Hadar – legal. The day before it was brought up for first reading in the Knesset (the Israeli parliament), Eldad Levy, one of the activists in Hadar’s “Committee against Police Harassments,” published the following public text on his Facebook page (translated by me from Hebrew):<sup>137</sup>

In 2009 I took part in one of the first institutional activities in my neighborhood. It was a protest against police violence in the neighborhood. The protest was an initiative of many good people in the neighborhood that have had it with the cops – uniform or undercover – that took them to street corners for random searches, followed them to buildings’ hallways, tried to break into their apartments and search them; that were pushed by them, got slapped, elbowed or “just” threatened by them. At that time I learned that the sentence “whoever is not a criminal has nothing to be afraid of” probably belongs to whoever never met a cop in an aggressive situation.

The excuse was always drugs. If you looked Arab, young Russian, or if you had long hair like I used to have back then, a beard or earrings – you were subjected to daily harassments. Once a week, a cop (sometimes the same cop) would stop you: give me your ID, show me your bag, come with me behind the wall and pull up your shirt. There was a feeling that the police takes the easy way when it chases after people for crumbs of grass and ignores the heavy delinquencies that included violence, hard drugs trafficking, and prostitution that took place in some of the buildings in the area. [...]

This was the first time I saw people getting organized from scratch. Hadar’s Committee against Police Violence organized protest events, met high rank police officers, approached the press and even established an emergency team that was available in cases of police violence. But the most important thing that the Committee did was a series of guidance meetings for residents to learn about their rights when they meet a policeman. For example, most of us didn’t know that cops were not allowed to search our bodies without reasonable suspicion of a crime being committed. We also discovered that Rastafarian hair is not a justified excuse for search. But more than everything, the Committee gave us the courage to say “no” to cops, based on the Israeli law. [...]

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<sup>136</sup> The Israeli Parliament approved the law on February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2016, with opposition’s fear that it would increase harassments of police against minorities. See report in the daily Ha’aretz: [www.haaretz.co.il/news/politi/1.2838052](http://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politi/1.2838052) (accessed: February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2016).

<sup>137</sup> The text is shared here with Levy’s permission (personal communication with the author, November 1<sup>st</sup> 2015). URL of original text: [www.facebook.com/ejlg7/posts/10153534479396293:0](https://www.facebook.com/ejlg7/posts/10153534479396293:0) (accessed: October 28<sup>th</sup> 2015).

The cops, by the way, didn't like it at all. They didn't like it that we knew what our rights were, and especially that citizens have the courage to tell them "You are not allowed to." And so it happened that when I climbed down Balfour [Street], for the first time I took the courage to tell a cop "No. You have no reasonable suspicion. You cannot look inside my backpack." To this, the cop replied "This is Hadar, and whoever walks here is a potential suspect." [...]

Step by step, the Committee created a successful movement. The harassments by the police slowly decreased until they disappeared altogether. Many of the organizations that were later established and helped build the community in the neighborhood were the result of the Committee's initiative. In my opinion, this is a pivotal moment in the life of my neighborhood and in improving it.

Why am I telling all of this? Because today the government decided to promote the "Stop and Frisk Law." The legal basis upon which the Committee acted will totally disappear. [...]

Four months later, in March 2016, the police stop and frisk practices returned to the Masada Scene. Dozens of complaints by neighborhood residents were reported in a closed Facebook Group, leading to debates about the reasons for the resurrection of police harassments, and about the means of protesting against it. Several residents who participated in the 2008 Committee joined the discussion, calling to get re-organized, but failed to create a similar political momentum.

A month later it was reported in the local press that Haifa Police reinforced its units in Hadar.<sup>138</sup> The chief of the Hadar police station explained that from a questionnaire they had handed out to 120 residents in Hadar they inferred that the sense of safety among them had decreased. As a result, the three police teams already working in the neighborhood were reinforced by Israeli Border Police that started patrolling the lower parts of Hadar, where poorer people live and the percentage of Arab residents is higher. Only a few streets away from the Masada Scene, but far enough for most of the Masada Scene people to be able not to see, this militarized practice, familiar from some of the other

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<sup>138</sup> *Colbo*, April 8<sup>th</sup> 2016, p. 30.

mixed cities in Israel, passed with no signs of protest besides a couple of two radical comments on Facebook that quickly faded.

### ***The Gatekeepers: Visioning Alone***

*Summer 2008: In the lower part of Haifa's German Colony, at the furthest end from the Bahá'í gardens, and near the gates of the Port of Haifa, about a hundred people gather for a demonstration. A coalition of several organizations, political groups and individuals were protesting against the intention of the Israeli navy to construct a huge submarine hangar that will block the sea view. Among the demonstrators are a few familiar faces of architects from Hadar, whom I had met a few weeks before in a meeting they held at the Community Center to discuss various neighborhood issues. At the demonstration, they stand in a circle, together with a professor of urban planning, talking about "an amazing Arab house in Wadi Salib," the twice depopulated neighborhood, that they are interested in purchasing.<sup>139</sup> The professor seems particularly excited by the idea, and together they brainstorm the various options to materialize their desires. Suddenly, the professor looks at me and asks: "Regev, would you like to join the purchase group?" The only reply I could give was a cynical one, saying "Of course! My research in Haifa is only a cover story for trying to find the best real-estate deal."*

A few days later I met with Itay, a resident of Hadar and one of the architects who participated in that conversation at the demonstration. In our conversation at Café Amigo he mentioned that Arab house in the Wadi again. As he kept talking I realized that of all

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<sup>139</sup> Wadi Salib was depopulated from its Palestinian resident during the 1948 War, and then in the 1960s following the Mizrahi rebellion of July 1959 (see Chapter 2).

those who talked about it he was the most serious, and considered buying a whole floor there. He offered 100 thousand NIS (around 25 thousand USD) for the 160 square meter floor. It is a ridiculously cheap, he said, but the place needed heavy renovations. It was built in the 1930s, and following the 1948 war and the expulsion of the Palestinian residents, it became State property, like many other properties there. Itay showed neither interest in the history of the building, nor in its past residents. He had passed by the property several times so far, during different times of the day, got more and more excited about it, invited some friends to see it, and even started talking with the neighbors there. At the same time, he admitted that the area somewhat scared him, and he wished that his entrepreneurship will generate a change in the area that was known to have high crime rates and a Palestinian majority. He wished for a change that would make him feel more comfortable there. When I asked him whether he would feel more comfortable had that impressive and cheap building been in Hadar, he immediately nodded approvingly. He then added that he is not that connected to “all these social agendas.” Nevertheless, even in Hadar he didn’t feel quite comfortable. That morning, he complained, the Arab students, who live on the first floor in his building, used their hookah, and the sweet cloud of smoke entered his apartment on the fourth floor. He then contextualized it, noting the wave of migration of “young low-quality Palestinians from the villages,” who entered the neighborhood since a few years before, and made him feel uncomfortable. To my direct question about the consequences of him moving to that Arab building in Wadi Salib, and whether it will not directly result in gentrifying the area, he replied that he got the impression that he was quite welcome there by the Jewish neighbors.

That Arab house in Wadi Salib was in Itay's mind also during the meetings of the Hadar group of architects and urban planners working voluntarily in the neighborhood. Itay was an active member of the group and invited me to participate in the meetings they held at the Community Center.

*Summer 2008: I'm about to join the meeting of the architects and planners group for the first time, and don't know what to expect. I arrive early at the Community Center, and find that a few participants are already there, gathered at the front yard of the Community Center for catching up on things that happened since their last meeting a couple of weeks ago. Itay and two other participants talk about that "amazing Arab house." Itay excitingly describes the front arches of the building and draws them on a piece of paper.*

*A few minutes after the hour the participants enter the Community Center and convene in the biggest room on the ground floor. That room also serves as an occasional exhibition space, and at the time of the meeting the walls are covered with portraits of Ethiopian Jews, with attached captions where their names are written in Hebrew, Arabic and English.*

*I count eight participants, all Ashkenazi Jews. When I present myself as an anthropologist one of them jokingly mocks a chimpanzee, and others laugh. Even if they feel uncomfortable being researched, no one expresses any objection for me staying there, taking notes.*

*I quickly learn that in the two years since they started voluntarily working on neighborhood issues they have already managed to get the municipality's attention to some of their ideas. In today's meeting they discuss progress of two projects that have already been*

*adopted and budgeted by the municipality: opening a street gallery, and renovating one of the street corners. There are also a number of new projects they wish to promote, one of them is the renovation of the garden in front of the Science Museum. This garden is described by them both as neglected and as a home for homeless people, drug addicts and hooligans.*

*One of the participants informs the others that the Science Museum wishes to fence off the garden after its renovations, and adds: “why should the garden be open for every hooligan?” Ignoring this comment altogether, Gil, who runs the Community Center and is an active member of the group, comments that the various stakeholders in the Museum garden project don’t always know how to work together. For him, the group’s role here is to start the process: “We are lobbyists and catalysts of processes,” he says. Based on the group’s actions in the past two years, he adds, the group has built its prestige, and people know that they make things happen. One of the other participants notes: “We need to give the conceptual impact, but cannot do the actual work.” Gil offers that the group will organize a workshop in which they’ll brainstorm possible ideas for the garden. “This is not a residents’ workshop,” Gil stresses, “but a workshop for stakeholders, and the residents are only a part of it, alongside the police, etc.” His idea confuses one of the participants: “Which of the residents will you invite? Which groups? It’s unclear whether there’s one group or several focus groups here.” Gil is getting nervous and comments: “we already have a reputation of dissolving projects away.”*

The dilemma of whether and how to open discussions to the wider public was one that the group had already dealt with in the past. Most members saw themselves committed to a professional-political agenda of planning *with* the community, as opposed

to planning *for* the community.<sup>140</sup> However, as was implied in this exchange and exemplified further in what follows, their stated agenda was never fully implemented. Their self-image as liberal planners, who believed in democratizing processes of planning, was highlighted in their critical approach toward the practices of other groups of planners, who worked with different professional tools, such as the *Charrette*.<sup>141</sup> A few weeks before that meeting, a couple of group members attended a *Charrette* planning project in the nearby Wadi Nisnas neighborhood, organized by a national NGO of planners and architects. The group members reported to the larger group on how that project unfolded, and by the reactions from other members, it was evident they attempted to mark themselves as working with a different set of practices, that is grounded in ongoing work both with the local community to which most of them belonged, as well as with decision-makers in the municipal level.

*Miri presents the Charrette process she attended a few weeks ago at Wadi Nisnas neighborhood, and highlights the residents' absence despite the goals stated by the organizers. "They tried to recruit various stakeholders, but failed," she argues. Another participant comments sarcastically: "it's a lot of fun to plan with the community without the community." As an example for the absurdity in such processes, Miri describes an interaction with one of the planners there, who suggested demolishing a certain house because of its appearance. When one of the residents told him that the building was the neighborhood's first bakery, he said: "OK, so we will not demolish it."*

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<sup>140</sup> See, for example, Fenster and Yacobi (2005) and Sandercock (2003).

<sup>141</sup> *Charrette* is derived from the French word for "little cart." In Urban Planning it is used as a title for an intensive planning process for planners, designers and architects to collaborate with residents and other stakeholders on drafting a vision for a small-scale development plan.

Like the Hadar group of architects, the Charrette process was led only by Jewish architects and urban planners. Nonetheless, unlike the Hadar group, none of the Charrette members lived in the neighborhood to which they offered their planning expertise gratis.

A few weeks before that meeting of the Hadar group, and not yet knowing I would join their meeting, I attended the Charrette process myself.

*A report in the Ha'aretz Daily newspaper informs on a public meeting that will take place today in Wadi Nisnas to present the Charrette project that began two days ago. I take a bottle of water, and climb down to the Wadi.*

*The Charrette meeting takes place at Achva School (it's summer vacation and there are no other activities there). As I arrive there for the 6 p.m. public event I find that tables with refreshments were set at the front yard. The school door is now wide open and people start pouring out, wearing name tags and faces of self-importance. They continue their small-talk as they approach the pizzas, the pita bread with za'atar, and the drinks. Slowly more people come in and gather around the refreshments. I don't recognize anyone and guess that some of them must be residents of the Wadi. At a certain point, someone is asking everyone to enter the building, and the audience is directed to one of the classrooms. As people enter the room, one of the organizers, who identifies himself as the person in charge of "community planning," asks everyone to take little stickers and post them on the nearby neighborhood map. The yellow sticker should represent the place where we live, the green one should mark the place where we shop, and the red one - the places where we hang out. Despite the enthusiasm in his voice, no one seems to care for this assignment, and the map remains almost sticker-free.*

*As everyone enters the room, a man presenting himself as the coordinator of the Charrette starts describing the outline of the meeting, beginning with a presentation of the group's achievements. The rest of the program has yet to be described, and someone from the audience speaks up to express his objection to the procedure and asks for more time so residents' voices will be heard. In a surprisingly determined manner, the coordinator rejects the man's suggestion, noting that the procedures were determined in advance, and are nonnegotiable at the moment. With a quiet yet aggressive tone he concludes his remark by saying that everyone can speak up as long as they do it with respect and tolerance. He then immediately moves on to presenting the outcome of the team's work.*

Highly visually-centered, his Power-Point presentation used a lot of images, both of the Wadi and of other places where they conducted similar projects in the past. In all the other projects, whenever a "before-after" dyad was presented, the "before" image was a photograph, and the "after" image was a sketch, a drawing, or a simulation. Surprisingly, even for completed projects there was no photograph to show the actual outcome. The "future" in this presentation was always displayed using images that are considered to be less real.

The team's concept for the Wadi's renewal plan was presented with simulations in which all building fronts were hidden by treetops (of trees that do not exist at the moment as there are almost no trees in the Wadi). Their plan disregarded the cultural-architectural value of these buildings, which were close to one hundred years old. As the presentation continued, the sense of being disconnected from the neighborhood's cultural life grew. From example, in their presentation they stated explicitly that they wished to accomplish a

specific goal: creating a space for interactions between Arabs and Jews. However, according to residents' comments at the meeting, this was not one of their chief concerns.

Why was such a goal set for a neighborhood with a population of 99 percent Arabs? Would they come up with the same vision also for a predominantly Jewish neighborhood in Haifa? A partial answer to these questions was offered in a comment made by one of the leading figures in the neighborhood. According to him, what was crucial for the neighborhood's residents was the issue of informal building. After thanking the planning team for arriving there and taking the time to listen to the residents, he shifted to a more critical tone and argued that the team ignored the most crucial planning aspect in the neighborhood. Since obtaining building permits was an impossible mission in Wadi Nisnas, 95% of the neighborhood residents were treated criminals by the authorities for adding an asbestos roof, or for closing a balcony to add another room.<sup>142</sup> These informal buildings, he argued, should be recognized as legal, and permits should be given for further building additions because of the lack of space for expansion in the already dense neighborhood. To this comment, the Charrette coordinator briefly responded that these issues were beyond their mandate, and he swiftly moved on to the next comment.

The other comments were no less annoying to the coordinator, and he became more and more nervous and impatient, throwing the responsibility back to the residents. One of these comments regarded the language that the planning team used in their public meetings and presentations. Using only Hebrew was exclusionary, someone noted. In response, the coordinator looked at the neighborhood chairperson with a bossy expression,

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<sup>142</sup> Informal building is a well known phenomenon in many Arab neighborhoods in Israeli cities and towns, where there are no development plans. The practice of not issuing permits to residents pushes them to build informally, and in return they are being criminalized by the authorities (see Yacobi 2009).

and said: “We asked that there will be someone here translating to the residents. I can’t speak Arabic.”

Marking the differences between how the Charrette group operated in the Wadi, and how they work in Hadar, the Hadar group of architects and planners focused on them being from the neighborhood and thus more connected to its residents, not outsiders who arrive with their own agendas.

At the end of that summer the group met again, this time to focus on brainstorming their vision for the neighborhood. As the following description reveals, like the Charrette group, their vision for the neighborhood was deeply rooted in their Jewish-centered and middle-class positions; however, while the Charrette members made an effort (which proved futile) to meet with the Arab residents of Wadi Nisnas, the Hadar group had no intention to work with those who were not of their kind.

*It’s eight of us, all Ashkenazi Jews, five women and three men, in that mid-August afternoon at the local Community Center. After the usual small talk in the front yard, we enter the building and turn right to the same room where the previous meeting was held.*

*The meeting opens with a number of updates on the ongoing projects, and then Miri, who is one of the senior members in the group, introduces the main topic on the agenda: “There was a suggestion that we would write down our vision, and I want to propose doing it using the SWOT model. SWOT is a process for discussing Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats,” she explains. Since there are no objections, the model is adopted, and Miri takes out four packages of square post-it stickers, each one in a different color. Architects, so I learn, probably have special love for colored stickers. “Each component of the SWOT will get a*

*different color,” she explains, “and what we need to do is to write on these notes one single sentence according to the color. We will then stick all the notes on the board, and from our thoughts on Hadar we should then extract a key sentence, or a vision for the neighborhood.”*

*Miri hands each one of us four colored post-it notes: pink for strengths, green for weaknesses, blue for opportunities, and yellow for threats. For a few minutes, while thinking and writing, silence dominates the room. I’m starting to write last, while trying to figure out how my observation here suddenly became so participatory. What should I write on these notes? Should it be based on my personal thoughts about the neighborhood? Should it reflect my professional observations? Or maybe I should use this opportunity to bring in new and challenging ideas? It soon flashes in my mind that these options are almost the same anyhow, so I am writing the following:*

*Strengths (pink note): diverse populations; coffee shops.*

*Weaknesses (green note): socio-economically weakened populations.*

*Opportunities (blue note): physical reconstruction of infrastructure and real-estate; socio-economic reconstruction (employment, education).*

*Threats (yellow note): homogenizing processes (Judaisation of Hadar); violence (economic, criminal).*

*When we finish writing, each one of us approaches the improvised board that was set next to our table, and posts the colored stickers under the appropriate title (Image 36).*



Image 36: SWOT process

*Miri instructs us to organize the notes under each category according to common themes. Once this is completed, Miri reads out the results: “Under Strengths we have: diverse architecture of high quality; successful and unique urban design; central location; mixed use of property (housing and commerce); diverse populations, multiculturalism, open and tolerant space; civil and communal engagement (activists, organizations); concentration of culture and public institutions; coffee shops and unique businesses that build a sense of community.” After reading all the themes, Miri realizes that such a combination could also be dangerous, portraying the neighborhood as too attractive, and she asks: “How can we keep the neighborhood as it is and not turn it into the ‘next big thing?’” Miri usually looks serious, but her question is nevertheless accepted as if she was half-joking. No one comments, and she moves to the next item.*

*Under Weaknesses participants mentioned the following themes, which mark the issues that should be corrected or changed: poor public image; low personal safety; attractive for weak populations; deteriorating infrastructure, dirt and neglect; many apartments for rent; lack of planning; parking problems; problematic transportation from the Carmel neighborhoods.*

*As Miri was reading these items, I overheard the following exchange between two other participants:*

*“If prices go up, the Haredim (Ultra-Orthodox Jews) won’t come.”*

*“Not necessarily, there is someone who sponsors them.”*

*“These are non-Zionist Haredim who come from outside.”*

This exchange was one of a number of instances where a correlation between the real estate market and the characteristics of the population was explicitly mentioned in the meeting. It also implied that they were aware of the socio-political-economic reality within which they work, as well as of their capacity to push for demographic changes even by means of indirect interventions in the real estate market.<sup>143</sup> This exchange also shows that while working on the vision of the group, the participants had revealed the interdependence between their professional values and their ideological views. As conversation continued the ideological language took over the professional one. As the rest of the discussion shows, instead of an image of a profession-based interest group that wished to promote their professional values for the benefit of the general public, the group

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<sup>143</sup> Such interventions can be achieved, for example, by pushing for urban renewal plans without controlling for real-estate value or for a mechanism of socio-economic safety-net.

was revealed to be an ethno-nationally based, middle-class group that uses its expertise and privileges to promote their own interest.

*Under “opportunities,” Miri reads the following items: development of the Port Campus; recognition of architectural values; socio-economic reconstruction; the Metronit [an articulated bus that was about to be added to the city’s public transportation system]; regional peace that will bring prosperity to the North; de-suburbanisation, to prevent emigration of young population, and encouraging those who emigrated – to return. When this last issue was mentioned, one of the participants immediately said: “Unfortunately, what happens now is that those from the Arab villages move in.” No one replies to this comment, but it suddenly echoes when Miri reads out the Threats: Demographic changes with arrival of [Arab] villagers and Haredim that will create clashes between populations; homogenization (Judaisation); deliberate deterioration; underdevelopment and neglect; war in the North.*

*When my note on homogenization was read, Itay responded “Well, that’s the other side of the Arab villagers... when they move in they also contribute to the homogenization.” This surreal description of Hadar becoming dominated by Arab villagers remains unchallenged, and I’m a bit confused how to interpret the silence. “OK, so what now?” someone asks. With her confident voice Miri promptly replies: “From the strengths and potentials we need to come up with our vision.”*

Although it sounded pretty easy, at that point the conversation took a different turn. The SWOT process was left behind, and the group began reflecting on some of the topics that surfaced. It started with Gil, who stated that “one of the reasons Hadar is dangerous at night is because the neighborhood is not active at night.” To that, someone else responded:

“I’m not sure whether having the Khmarot [clubs for eating and drinking] of the Russians remain open at night will in fact increase the security. It has to do with the type of population that hangs out there. *This* is the security.” That participant then continued with praising Rudolph Giuliani, former mayor of New York City, for “taking all the homeless and drug addicts, and physically expelling them in trucks. Then came all of those who don’t use the same substance. This seems much calmer, security-wise. Clearly, if it’s going to be too calm and quiet here then it’s not going to be fun anymore.” These words were interrupted by someone passing by the entrance of the room, peeping in. When that person left, Miri broke the short silence and said: “We now want to say something about how we see Hadar neighborhood.” Itay responded: “Are we supposed to define the vision now?” Miri, already with a mix of disappointment and anger in her voice, replied: “We have been going on and on about this neighborhood for two and a half years! [...] When we define a vision we need to say what we want. We may want to say that the population is not one of our interests.” To that, Itay responded: “All I’m saying is that whether the population here is diverse or not, is not...” Cutting in on his words, Miri said: “But it is connected to planning processes. If you only want Jews...” Before she finished her explanation Gil jumped in with an example of how things are related: “There is a Haredi war-room, and there is work done by the Community Center, instructed by the municipality, to Judaize the neighborhood.” After hearing about it unofficially in recent years, this was the first time someone with an official role in the municipal bureaucracy, like Gil in this case, said it out loud. Another participant, who was silent up to that moment moved uncomfortably in her chair, and said: “This is social planning!” In response, Itay tried to contextualize and legitimize what was just being revealed: “They try to balance the situation that changed to our disadvantage.”

Not stating her own position on the matter, Miri tried to bring the discussion back to crafting the vision: “Do we want to argue in our vision that we want a Jewish neighborhood, an Arab one, mixed, or that we don’t care?” Itay, who felt this question was directed at him, cornering him to crystallize his views, took a step back and said: “I think we don’t care.” “I think we care a lot,” Gil jumped in and explained: “For every vacant apartment there are two interested tenants: a Haredi and an Arab. I see this as a threat. The Haredim are like a Petri dish that expands and expands. Our vision should have moral humanistic values, stating that it is a pluralistic city in its history, and that Hadar, by definition, is a pluralistic area that encourages difference, out of respect.” Gil reflected for a moment, probably realizing the contradiction in what he had just said, and then explained what he meant: “Even if Haredim or Arabs come here, there should be this vision, according to which we appreciate difference and respect the homo-lesbian community, and the Haredim, and the Arabs, and the Russians, and this and that. People should know to which area they are moving in. This attracts to people who search for a place to crystallize their identity, for a neighborhood that could contain them.”

The paradox in Gil’s version of pluralism is that the “respect for difference” is defined by him, dictated for others to follow, and serves as a precondition for joining the public sphere he currently dominates.

Itay argued that Gil’s statement was idealistic, then relied on his own perception of reality and said: “I want to go back to the demographic issue. Defining the vision won’t prevent the Haredim from pushing all of the others out.” Echoing Itay’s comment, Gil noted that the same could be said regarding Arabs wanting to push Jews out: “it might be that the

vision of the Arab population is to conquer Haifa, much like the vision of the Haredi war room, with people who go out on the mission.”

Itay: “How do you know that?”

Gil: “This is an organized action. There are Rabbis and real estate agents involved.”

Miri: “Gil, how can this be stopped?”

Gil: “By an organized group and by actions the kind of which we are doing here.”

Miri: “This, by the way, puts the whole state under threat.”

Gil: “Don’t you see the Haredim walking about the streets of Hadar?” Gil then reflected for a second, and added in a politically correct tone: “There is no problem with Haredim. There have been, and there always will be Haredim in Hadar.”

Miri: “They should stay in Haredi-Land.”

Gil: “We can’t talk about pluralism and at the same time about Haredi-Land...”

Miri, shouting: “Yes we can! If they don’t participate in the game, so... at the end Hadar will be Arab villagers and Haredim!”

Trying to translate his vision of pluralism into practice on the ground, Gil suggested organizing activities, such as opening of exhibitions on Saturdays, in order to signal to the Ultra-Orthodox Jews that the area is secular, and to spread the word out through the media, as well as to members of the municipal council. His suggestion was based on his experience as the director of the Community Center: “there are objections to the events we organize on

Saturdays here at the Community Center. And because of those objections we insist on keeping organizing events on Saturday.” “In any case,” Itay commented, “the feeling of an Arab takeover is much more concrete than the Haredim takeover. They [the Arabs] are already here.” Mentioning the drama that took place at the Falafel (see Chapter 3), Gil noted “If more than one business owner says ‘we don’t serve soldiers,’ this is not pluralism.” Taking the conversation to yet a new direction, Gil added: “When they talked about bringing in the religious community here, I told them that I want to have here a community of homosexuals that will receive the same subsidies.” “*This,*” Itay immediately jumped in, “is what could drive the Haredim away.”

Shifting back to his vision and understanding of pluralism, and to the role of the group, Gil concluded: “We should keep the pluralistic character of the neighborhood; we should set the rules of the game, the populations, the space and the vision.” Gil suddenly noticed that Nizar, the only Arab employee at the community center, entered the room for some other business, so he shifted to talking about tactics, not mentioning demography anymore: “Our means of action is communicating with decision making in the municipality and marketing our vision to them.”

Miri: “Why does it have to be with the municipality?”

Gil: “Because they supply services and infrastructures.”

In the meantime, Nizar – a young Arab man from one of the villages in the north, who has more years of academic education than most of the others in the room – has left the room, and Miri tried to bring the conversation back to crafting the vision.

Miri: "Now the question is whether we want multiculturalism or homogeneity."

Gil: "This is first priority to me. I think that the issue of pluralism and multiculturalism is of the basic values of Hadar."

Miri: "And for me, the real-estate [architectural] values are also important."

Gil: "We should concentrate then on assimilating all of the issues we raised."

Miri: "Multiculturalism is something that was mentioned as one of the strengths, so I think it should be included in our vision."

Gil: "We should also remember that there is the model of gentrification that also creates homogeneity. One of the other models is 'mixed income housing' – which is not only a tool, but a vision, too. It creates a mixed community, economically and culturally."

Itay: "The question is whether there is anything wrong in it [in gentrification leading to homogeneity]".

Miri, with a cynical tone: "Is coexistence one of Haifa's advantages?"

Itay: "A lot of people will tell you that they don't want to live here. They will tell you that they don't want to live here because of the Arabs and Russians. There are those who don't see it as strength... those villagers that move in..."

Miri: "The villagers that you mention are exactly like the Haredim. OK, so I don't fancy the way they dress, but what's important to me is their attitude toward their surroundings."

Itay: "I don't think we should define diversity as a goal."

Miri: "The question is whether and how you can create a neighborhood not only for male Ashkenazi Jews of the upper class. The brilliance would be to create a situation in which you don't automatically push out local populations. I think that we have reached an understanding about what disturbs us with populations such as the Haredim and the Arabs, and it is their attitude toward the surroundings."

Gil, realizing this sounds bad again: "There are a lot of populations here: Arab students, Arab intellectuals... "

Miri: "And not with all of them is there a problem."

Gil: "There is a population of [Arab] villagers that wants to come here under the welfare umbrella and other services. There is immigration to Hadar of villagers who want to receive services here. The other side of it is the ghetto, of gentrification processes that push weak populations out."

Miri: "So, can we add diversity to our vision?"

Itay: "I don't think this is the goal."

Maneuvering between Itay's proposal to leave diversity out, and Gil's notion of a more complex reality, within which there are Arabs of several kinds – those that he welcomes (students, intellectuals) and those that he doesn't (villagers) – Miri shifted the discussion to mechanisms that the municipality could implement in order to control local diversity. Based on her knowledge and experience, she noted that the municipality can purchase buildings and then rent these out at a fixed price. "The municipality doesn't need

to be profitable,” she explained, but then warned: “It should be clear, and we cannot be high-minded about it: should weak populations arrive here, Hadar will become a slum. We need to think about how to attract strong populations, and it doesn’t have to be Jews only.” Building on this warning, and using the same code words of “weak” and “strong” populations, which distinguish between ethno-national and religious communities according to their class, Gil implied that the reality in Hadar shows that when “weak populations” arrive, urban renewal becomes impossible: “There is a dual process today: more and more Arabs and more and more Haredim. You lose your ability to renew the neighborhood, and it loses its role as the City Center for all.” For Itay, this was the cue to conclude: “So diversity is not a goal.”

Still ambivalent, Gil added: “beyond all the left-wing agenda of Masada Street, an ability was created there to attract diverse populations.” Miri jumped in, saying “and research shows that in order for a place to be interesting, lively, young and involved, there should be diversity. So, can we sum up saying that multiculturalism is not a bad thing?”

Itay: “No, it’s not a bad thing.”

One of the silent members: “Can we continue next week?”

Miri: “But it won’t be with the same passion!”

Although it had already gone on for two hours, the conversation continued for a few more minutes, until Itay proposed to close the meeting and schedule a follow-up discussion. Everyone agreed, but before they started scheduling their next meeting Gil looked at me and asked for my reflection on the meeting. He used the word “Shikuf” in

Hebrew, which I had not heard before in such a context, so I literally understood it as 'making things transparent,' i.e.: letting them know my impression of the meeting.

*Not yet being able to organize my thoughts even for myself, I find myself thinking while speaking: "This meeting was really interesting for me, but it also reminded me my question when Gil first introduced me to the group. Following the discussion today, I again wonder what the mandate of the group is. You talk about a vision for the neighborhood although this is a very exclusive group..." Miri jumps in: "True, we are all Ashkenazi Jews. There were attempts to invite Arabs to join, but it didn't work out. There is this cultural issue, they are still not there." Gil echoes her comment, and then she adds: "By the way, there are other members in the group, too", and Itay notes: "Yes, but they are also Ashkenazi Jews." Responding to the point I made about the group's mandate, Gil says that it is a group of volunteers who initiate concrete projects and promotes them using their access to decision-makers.*

Following the meeting I learned that like the *SWOT*, so did the practice of *Shikuf* become a new trend for practicing reflexivity in organizations and group dynamics. However, much like other managerial mechanisms, these means of achieving the organization's goals soon become goals in their own right.<sup>144</sup> As the dynamic in this group of architects and planners shows, their implementation of various practices of self-awareness and reflexivity, despite revealing disagreements within the group, neither allowed critical reflection on the group itself, nor did it criticize the hegemonic discourse of separation within which it operates.

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<sup>144</sup> See Shenhav (1999).

Being self-aware of their ethno-national and class positioning (but wishing to maintain their dominance), and being self-aware of their problematic use of generalizations (but finding justifications to keep using them) – allowed the group members to regard themselves as progressive, as well as morally and culturally superiors to others “who are not there yet.” At the same time, the limited practices of reflexivity deepened their conservative views, and refined the means by which they wished to preserve their dominance in the neighborhood.

Having access to decision-makers, and regarding themselves as the neighborhood’s gatekeepers were two aspects that did not receive critical reflexive introspection. For them, there was no parallax between their own interests and the public good.

### ***The Independent Cooperator: One August Evening at David’s***

By August 2015 my fieldwork diary was already sealed, and only on rare occasions, when something exceptional or unexpected happened, did I let myself re-open it and add to the ethnography. Neither of these was the case of that Friday evening at David’s place. There was nothing exceptional in that particular evening. Nonetheless, the following morning, as I started another day of processing the notes I wrote months before, it was suddenly clear to me that before anything else – I need to jot down the events of the previous evening. The ordinary events of that evening became meaningful because they encapsulated yet another manner of working together and apart for a specific goal, and of being reflexive about it.

*Less than a ten-minute walk down from Masada Street is the seam-line between Hadar and the neighboring Wadi Nisnas. That's where David, a Jewish artist in his fifties, lives, in an apartment on the top floor of one of the magnificent Arab apartment buildings, which were built by rich Palestinian families in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. That's where David throws his parties once in a while, that's where he creates most of his artworks, and that's where he presents others' artworks and holds celebratory opening events – in his apartment and roof converted into a gallery.*

The Palestinian family who built and owned that building was quite a wealthy Christian-Palestinian family before the Nakba. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when a number of Jewish and Arab entrepreneurs showed it was safe and worthwhile to buy land in a higher location on the Carmel outside of Wadi Nisnas – this family joined others and bought a block of land there, in the area that soon thereafter became known as the seam-line between the Arab Wadi and Jewish Hadar (see Chapter 1 and 2). Close to the houses of other Palestinian families they built two properties. One of these was an impressive mansion, three floors high, for the family members, and the other was a four story building with smaller flats – for rent. These flats were built with high ceilings, and with each having a balcony overlooking the Haifa bay. The top floor had smaller apartments, but these had access to the roof. In the spring of 1948, when violence in Haifa expanded, the family members decided to travel to Lebanon, like many others, for a period they thought would last no more than a couple of weeks, but from which most of them never returned. The victory of the Zionist forces in April 1948, followed by the establishment of the State of Israel, prevented them from returning to Haifa, as well as from keeping their property and their belongings. Everything they had in Haifa was lost. The two buildings became state

property, and then sold in the private market to Jewish owners. All the belongings they had – disappeared, probably taken by the tenants that invaded the property soon after the Zionist victory was secured. Sixty seven years later, in one August evening, David held an opening of a photo exhibition of contemporary Haifa photos taken by a Jewish photographer, an immigrant from the former Soviet Union. A few weeks later he opened a new exhibition by a Palestinian painter in his rooftop art gallery.

Born in Haifa in the second half of the 1950s, David spent several years in Europe during the 1980s, and returned to Haifa in the early 1990s. Upon his return, he found this apartment, rented it for several years, and then managed to buy it from the owners, with a mortgage that he is still paying. Hosting exhibitions emerged as a private initiative of his after experiencing many disappointments when trying to work collaboratively with the municipality of Haifa. He was critical not only of the municipal bureaucracy and their political agendas, but also of local artist-activists who kept trying to collaborate with the municipality. He took part in numerous efforts of this kind, including the art festival described in the first section of this chapter, but has become less enthusiastic and more skeptical of such collaborations.

*I arrive at David's place with a friend from Tel Aviv. When we enter David's roof-top gallery, a dozen of people are already gathered there, looking at the photos hung in an improvised way on the walls, drinking beer and chatting. Half jokingly, my friend whispers in my ear: "How can we know who is an Arab and who is Jewish here?" I know she couldn't care less, but that question shows that the awareness to the dominance of these categories is nevertheless still powerful. Then a conversation with David starts, with some people gathering*

*around us, and we end up talking about David's love life, with him emphasizing that no matter how open he was in his affairs with Palestinians, and no matter how radical his politics were and how involved he tried to be in what Palestinian Haifa is (and was) – he was again and again suspected to be an agent working for the state security services. "It's offensive, it really is offensive." Amer, a Palestinian friend of his from Hadar, tries to understand what was so offensive, why was he getting so excited about it. In his face I see a mix of a desire to really understand what that feeling might have been, together with a slight sarcasm on being put in a position that he, as a Palestinian, needs to show empathy for a Jew who felt uncomfortable in an interaction with a Palestinian. Marzuk, another Palestinian friend of David, interrupts the conversation, handing out plastic glasses filled with dark cloudy beer. He is making this beer at home together with two of his friends, and he brought it here for us to taste. It's quite good, with a light coffee flavor. David explains that they call it "Margharush Beer," after Haifa's Jinn, from the local Palestinian folklore.<sup>145</sup>*

Later that evening, I asked David about his neighbors. He said that the woman who lived across the hall was a Palestinian who was not very communicative. Right below him lives a group of young Palestinians from the music collective that organizes parties and other productions for the local Palestinian independent music scene. And the first floor, he said, is occupied by religious Jews from a new commune that was pushed into the neighborhood. Or, at least, this is what he suspected. They are not really nice, he said. As for himself, not having children and anyone to bequeath his apartment to, he decided he will try to get in touch with the Palestinian family who owned the building. He wanted to give them back their property once he passes away. With the assistance of a friend, he managed

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<sup>145</sup> See Chapter 2.

to trace the family to France, but they refused to communicate with him. According to what he understood, they managed to gain back their social status, and are wealthy again, living in Paris. However, someone of the younger generations moved back to Haifa, and he managed to meet with her and share his thoughts. His impression from that meeting was that she was not enthusiastic about cooperation. Nevertheless, he mentioned that he keeps searching for ways to make sure the property returns to its dispossessed owners, and moreover – to do it publicly, too, so people would learn about the option. “I keep trying,” he said.

*While the conversation is flowing I suddenly realize that most of the other guests are already gone. Together with another friend, I leave David's place, and we walk down the stairs together. At the entrance to the building we talk for a few more minutes, ignoring the police car that was waiting across the street from us. I look at the few buildings there, which once belonged to rich Palestinian families. “It's amazing to think how instantly these wealthy Palestinian families lost all they had,” I tell my friend. “Yes,” he replies, “but don't forget that their wealth was probably achieved by the labor of others; probably Palestinian farmers from the region.” He then enters his car that parked nearby, and I start walking back home, thinking about how that evening encapsulated so many topics that kept rising throughout the years of my fieldwork here. After a few minutes he calls me. It appears that the police car chased after him as he drove off. Backed with a couple of other police cars, they blocked his way, stopped his car, and wanted to search it, suspecting he was involved in a drug deal down at the seam-line. Checking his records they realized they spotted the wrong person.*

## *Discussion*

The morning after the event at David's roof-top gallery took place I saw that a well-known writer from Tel Aviv, who also visited the event, wrote on his Facebook page the following (public) text (my translation from Hebrew):

It was magical. Had I not seen it with my own eyes I couldn't have guessed where it was. At the bottom of Haifa, a crumbling but most wonderful flat of David, in the Christian-Palestinian house that was built in the 1930s. An evening with a Haifa-Palestinian beer, and a lot of good, active, Haifa Left. And then – coffee at Masada. The innocent North.

For David's guest from Tel Aviv, the scene at the rooftop gallery, and later at one of Masada's coffee shops, seemed exceptional. In his description, the scene symbolized innocence perhaps because of its detachment from the widespread Discourse of Separation and racist practices in Israel. The mixing atmosphere, in which Jews and Arabs spend time together, presented something different that could not go unnoticed in the eyes of a visitor. However, as a guest for an hour, who does not live the incommensurability between the Discourse of Separation and the mixing social environment, his text does not reveal resorting to a practice of reflexivity. For him, such incommensurability was seen as magic.

For those who experience the everyday life of the mixing neighborhood reflexivity serves as an available social practice to make sense of the state of incommensurability they live in. For them, reflecting on the gap between their experiences and the Discourse of Separation serves not only as a mechanism to understand their social surrounding but also to practice their agency in trying to make discourse and experience commensurate. In various ways, the mixing neighborhood pushes some of its residents to be self-aware of their exceptional social experiences and to act in various ways to normalize it.

This chapter presented three different cases of local sub-politics where reflexivity was at work in trying to make the hegemonic discourse of separation and the experience of living in the mixing neighborhood commensurate again: from an attempt to create a joint Jewish–Arab cultural event that will reflect the mixing space, through a joint action to change the shared experience of being subjected to police harassment, to reacting to the agency of the mixing neighborhood by trying to eliminate it and reintroduce practices of separation.

The ways reflexivity was practiced in these cases show that it can be used as a formal tool, with a set of phrases, jargon, and professional prestige (Sa’ar 2016:179), as is the case of the group of planners and architects; and it can also be used as a taken-for-granted method, for which there is no name, when facing experiences of incommensurability, as is the case of the artists’ group, and when wishing to resolve these experiences via political action, as is the case of the committee. Reflexivity, in these cases, was practiced in different manners, served for diverse purposes, and achieved a variety of results.

The artists group used practices of reflexivity, if only in a limited manner, as a *critical* tool, which was meant to assist them in presenting an alternative discourse to the discourse of separation, which did not reflect their experiences of living in a mixing neighborhood. Reflexivity, however, did not grant its practitioners a better understanding of their failure to push for a more collaborative project. Although it assisted the group in identifying the faults in the hegemonic discourse of separation, and expressing them in writing, it did not lead them to a better understanding of their own failures in creating a

more shared project. Nonetheless, group members were reflexive enough to acknowledge their failure and to define it as a deadlock.

In the case of the Committee against Police Harassment, reflexivity was revealed as a tool for sharing personal experiences, which was vital to unearthing the underlying social structure that produced them. Conceiving police harassment as a social phenomenon empowered the participants and politicized their shared struggle against police practices. This politicization, however, led to suggesting a *reformist* agenda, aiming only to improve the experience of those living in the mixing neighborhood, and to make the wider social structures accommodate to them.

The planners and architects' group, in discussing their vision for the neighborhood, used professional practices of reflexivity, which allowed them to crystallize their thoughts and feelings about living in a mixing social environment. It both exposed the deep alienation some of them feel about the mixing neighborhood, and served as a platform for brainstorming *reactionary* ideas for minimizing the mixing agency of the neighborhood over its residents, and for strengthening practices of separation. Contrary to the perception about reflexivity in the late modernity as a critical mechanism, their case shows how reflexivity can strengthen existing power relations and legitimize them.

Lastly, in David's case, reflexivity is practiced as a prolonged personal introspection of his participation in the public sphere, leading him from one collaboration to another, giving up here, succeeding there, continuously trying to examine what works and what does not for materializing his imagination.

## CHAPTER 6

### Scriptwriting Coexistence: The Story of a Film Never Completed

*A woman in her late twenties is slowly walking along Masada Street, on her face a gentle smile of embarrassment mixed with excitement, and her eyes examining her surroundings. She is wearing a light-blue dress, which fits the end-of-winter season, and she is carrying a medium size backpack on her back. She is passing by one of the coffee shops, observing the people sitting there around the tables outside, and then, a few steps further along the street, she is entering into the Falafel place. The person currently on shift, a man in his early thirties, hardly notices her. He is busy serving three customers sitting at the counter facing the street. He is holding pita bread in one hand, and adding salad from the counter with the other; his eyes are focused on his actions. He then turns around to the pot where the falafel balls are swimming in a sea of boiling canola oil. He fishes out a number of them, adding them to the pita, and as he is getting ready to serve the pita to one of the customers, he raises his eyes and notices the young woman standing there, waiting for him.*

*“Shalom,” he is saying, smiling to her, “What can I get you?”*

*“Do you know of any apartments for rent here?”*

*“I’ll be right with you. Meanwhile, take a look at the board behind you.”*

*He then quickly enters the kitchen, with pita bread in one hand, and an empty salad dish in the other. The woman is following his quick movements and sudden disappearance, and then she turns around to examine the packed bulletin board behind her. After a few seconds, the tension on her face is suddenly released, and her mouth shows sign of relief. At the side of the board there is a hand-written piece of paper, titled "For Rent." She is taking out a small notebook from her backpack, and writing down the phone number written at the bottom. She turns her head in the direction of the kitchen, looking for the falafel person, but she cannot see him from there. She takes her notebook, steps outside, and turns right to continue walking down the street. While walking, she is taking out her phone, and carefully starts to dial the number she just wrote down.*

*"Cut!" we hear Issam shouting as Meirav passes by him with the phone in her hand. She turns around, walks back, and enters the falafel place with him while putting the phone back in her backpack. Our smiles and spontaneous applause give notice that this take was the best so far. As he puts down the heavy professional video camera, Elias suggests that it is time for a break before filming the rest of the scene.*

The work on this film project began eighteen months before that morning in March 2012. In the fall of 2010, the intention was to make a film showing the lively social scenes of the Arab-Jewish mixed neighborhood of Hadar. The idea was proposed to Yael and Omer in a meeting they held with Haifa municipality officials. In their early thirties, both Yael and Omer moved to Haifa a few years before for their academic studies: Yael in Arts, and Omer in the social sciences. Yael is a Jewish woman, whose family lived for several generations in Palestine, and Omer is a Jewish man, whose parents are of Moroccan origin. In the early

2010s both of them were already known in the Masada Scene as community activists. In their meeting with the municipality officials they asked for more municipal investments in grassroots initiatives in the neighborhood. In his response, the mayor's assistant suggested that the two produce a short film to highlight the neighborhood, which will help the municipality raise money for the neighborhood's cultural activities. Not so long before that meeting, the mayor's assistant returned enchanted from a visit to Berlin. In his meeting with Yael and Omer he shared with them his excitement, and suggested to brand Hadar's Masada Scene as having the same atmosphere as Berlin's Kreuzberg district, with its coffee shops, galleries and street festivals, and with its mild multicultural vibe that attracts young people. He also offered to sponsor the production of such a film with a modest budget of 4,500 NIS (about \$1,100 USD). A heavy sense of supervision was felt by Omer and Yael when he mentioned that he will first transfer only a third of the amount, and the rest – when the film is completed. It was also clear to them that according to all professional standards, the proposed budget was not enough for a production of such film, and that much like in other projects in the neighborhood – most of the work was expected to be done voluntarily.

Not quite satisfied with what they had achieved, Yael and Omer thought that, all in all, it was a breakthrough, despite the limited budget and the sense of expected censorship. Not too long after that meeting, they invited Issam, Elias and three additional residents of the neighborhood who had experience in either film production or in creative writing, to join the production team. The group they formed, later named "The Masada Film Collective," included five Jews (three men and two women) and two Palestinian men – all residents of Hadar.

### *A Fly on the Wall*

In fall 2010, I was set to arrive in Haifa for my long-term fieldwork In Hadar. After having spent three long summers there during the preceding years, I felt that I gained quite a good sense of the neighborhood. However, I was more troubled than before by what my contribution might be – both to the discipline of anthropology as well as to the people in the neighborhood. I decided to embark on a film project, first. I believed that with the trust I gained in previous summers, and with my background in visual anthropology, I could create a representation that would illustrate the complexity of what it means to live in coexistence. My tentative script included documenting everyday life in the neighborhood (in coffee shops, in street festivals), conversations with residents about their experiences of living in a mixed neighborhood, and excerpts from interviews I held with veteran residents of Haifa about the city's history of coexistence. For the next step, I thought of editing a rough cut, and showing it in the neighborhood, then integrating the reactions and comments into the final cut. With this script in mind, I wanted to highlight the juxtaposition of two gaps: the historic versus current experiences of living with the other, and the experiences of living with the other versus available representations of such experience (in narration and visualization). I thought that such a film could change the public image of the neighborhood (see Chapter 3), could serve in political discussions on practical coexistence under the discourse of separation, and since I thought of making the film in a collaborative fashion, I also thought it could allow me to contribute to theoretical discussions about

participatory methods and engaged research.<sup>146</sup> With these intentions, and with this vague and open-ended script in mind, I arrived back in Haifa.

“You’re going to make a film about us? Relax! Taking out your camera here is a brutal intervention. You’d better take your camera away.” This was Tamar’s scolding reaction when I told her about my plans when we met the day I settled in Hadar again. Then, in a friendlier manner, she added: “first you need to learn some more about the neighborhood, see what people are already engaged with, and only then, when you learn more, let’s talk about it more seriously.” After spending the night digesting my frustration, I woke up the next morning realizing that I had experienced my first and most important lesson in ethnographic modesty. Following this rejection, I let go thinking on an alternative plan, and allowed the interactions to lead me in a new way.

About a week later, on a Friday afternoon, I went to check out a mini-festival in an alley from Herzl Street, a few streets below Masada. From the alley there was a path leading to a small yard, where I found a number of familiar faces, Yael among them, and I joined them for a beer. As discussion developed, I was asked again about my interest in the neighborhood, and said something about my failed attempt to make a film, which brought me to search for a new focus. Showing excitement about my intention to make a film about the neighborhood, Yael mentioned that she just started working with a group of other people from the neighborhood on such a film. “It’s supposed to be a ‘marketing’ film, to help us raise money for future projects, festivals, etc.,” she explained. My heart skipped a beat, and I then asked her to tell me more about that film project. Yael told me that after

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<sup>146</sup> On my other attempt in conducting engaged ethnography, see Nathansohn 2010.

gaining experience in organizing several street festivals with other activists in the neighborhood, it was clear to them that municipal funding was essential, so they asked for a meeting with high officials in the municipal bureaucracy.<sup>147</sup> This is how her and Omer's meeting with the mayor's assistant was initiated. She then told me how the meeting unfolded, and how they decided to accept his offer and make the film.

*"We decided to go for it, so we formed a mixed group of Jews and Arabs," Yael explains, "We do want to do something that has some depth, but we won't be able to express all the radicalism you can find here, because of the supervision by the municipality." As I hear her speak my excitement grows, and I ask her: "Do you think I can join the group? Just as a fly on the wall? I may even be able to offer some feedback along the way, if asked." Yael seems OK with my request and promises to ask the others and let me know.*

*The next day I see Issam at Café Carmel, and I approach him to ask about joining the group. He shows signs of suspicion: "What do you intend to do in the group?" he asks. "From a fly on the wall to taking an active part," I reply, "It's up to you." Issam hesitates for a second, and then he says:*

*"I'm not the one who has the responsibility to decide."*

*"But you can veto my participation, and that would be totally fine."*

*"I don't really know you, and who you are."*

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<sup>147</sup> See chapter 5.

*Issam then mentions that he was not selected to the group because of his scriptwriting talent, but because of being a Palestinian Arab. "I feel that this is my role in the group," he says, pauses for a second, and adds: "You know what? I have no problem with you joining."*

Later that day I sent an email to all the members of the group, presenting myself and my research, and asking for their permission to join the group. None of them replied, but the next day Yael confirms that there is no problem, and that I can join their next meeting. She also filled me in on the group's previous meetings and shared with me the minutes she took.

In their first meeting, that took place at Café Terez, they agreed to work on a realistic film that would deliver multiple points of view on same situations. They agreed on showing Masada's community, and on people's search for identity. At the same time they also talked about the different cultures and languages that separate between people.

The second meeting was devoted to forming more concrete suggestions: focusing on everyday occurrences, on social interactions in the various coffee shops, on the neighborhood's architecture, and on specific characters. It was agreed that the content should be interesting and humorous, and show the multiplicity of cultures, codes, and interactions. It should also be short and focused. One of the participants noted that "We shouldn't be afraid to end up with something we didn't mean to," and another participant added: "Only by looking at our meetings one could get a sense of Masada's human fabric."

Progress seemed to be moving quickly, and on their third meeting they already started brainstorming ideas for scenes, locations and soundtracks. One of the ideas was to have the opening scene be an adaptation of Emir Kusturica's "Time of the Gypsies" (1988),

with a “one-shot,” where a lot unrelated occurrences take place. Technically, “one-shot” means filming a scene with no cuts from beginning to end, with all occurrences orchestrated neatly in front of the camera, one after the other.<sup>148</sup> Another participant suggested adding footage from past festivals that took place on Masada Street, and someone else suggested having the lead character be an outsider to the Masada Scene. For their next meeting, they agreed on having each of them write a one-shot scene that would encapsulate multiple interactions.

The fourth meeting of the group took place on a Sunday evening at Yael’s place.

*We gather at Yael’s living room, around a low tea table that is packed with cheese, vegetables, bread, beer and wine. Once everyone arrives I introduce myself to those who don’t already know me, and again I ask for their permission to document their group meetings. Everyone nods their heads in agreement, so I put my audio recording device between the cheese and the wine, and start recording.*

*Issam opens by asking whether they did their homework for the meeting and write a script for a scene. Since he was the only one who took it seriously, he asks Yael to turn off the music, so he could read out loud the script he wrote. As the room becomes quiet, and before he starts reading the script from his yellow notepad, he says: “I welcome everyone’s feedback. Even though I’m an Arab, I’m still an open minded one.” Issam’s humoristic self-awareness to the dominant stereotypes starts evaporating as he reads the script of the opening scene.*

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<sup>148</sup> The “one-shot” technique became popular since the 1990s mainly in music video clips.

## **Scripting Masada Scene**

*Daylight, outdoors at Café Carmel; The camera focuses on two young men, Arab and Jewish, sitting separately near two tables. The Arab man is a bit dark, the Jewish is white. Each of them is about to finish eating a Greek salad. The Jewish man isn't squeezing his lemon and doesn't touch the olives. As they finish eating, the Arab's plate has only lemon skin on it and olive seeds. Near these two guys, a couple is kissing. From the inside of the café we hear music and people arguing. Then someone from the second floor pours a bucket of water on the kissing couple, while cursing in Russian. The camera moves to the Falafel place and focuses on the bilingual [Hebrew–Arabic] menu on the wall. A young woman enters the place, and hands a bank note to Omer, who stands behind the counter. She is pointing at the laundromat. Omer finishes preparing a falafel serving, and then he gives her coins in return for the bank note. The camera follows the woman, who exits the falafel shop, crosses the street and enters the laundromat. At the background we hear Eyal Golan's "Yafa Sheli."<sup>149</sup> We see someone taking out her clothes from one of the washing machines. And then something weird should happen.*

*Issam finishes reading, and anxiously asks for comments. Omer comments first, delighted to learn that he is mentioned in the script, playing himself behind the falafel counter, and suggests that the camera will focus on a T-shirt that he'll be wearing, with the logo of "The Committee against Police Harassment,"<sup>150</sup> of which he was an active member. Omer's proposal is accepted enthusiastically by everyone, and all eyes travel back to Issam signaling to him anticipation to keep on reading the script, curious to where he'll take the camera next. "We need to make sure," Issam notes before he continues reading the script, "that we won't have an expected scene followed by another expected scene. We should create a passion to see something interesting." Not fully following his own aspirations, he continues reading:*

*The camera moves to the new Argentinean place, with a close up on their menu, then an overview of the place, and then, outside, we see the owner of the Hookah place preparing the hookahs. From there, the camera moves on to Café Cube, and here I have*

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<sup>149</sup> Eyal Golan is one of the most popular and successful singers in Israel. His "Yafa Sheli" [My Beauty] is one of his most popular songs.

<sup>150</sup> See Chapter 5.

*a dilemma, because Café Cube is an alienating place, but cinematographically we must include it.*

*Elias changes his expression from serious to humoristic, and says: "Maybe we can put an Israeli flag there, or focus on the gang of undercover policemen that sits there regularly."*

*We laugh, but the idea is not taken seriously, and Issam continues:*

*The camera moves to Café Buzz, showing the people sitting there, then it moves on to Café Terez where members of a left wing student group sit with their group's T-shirts. At the background we hear a song by Toot Ard.<sup>151</sup> The camera then continues to the hairdresser's shop, and from there to the street-art shop, where I thought to have a dialogue between an Arab and a Jew looking for a spray can to paint graffiti against the occupation.*

*Overall, this is it. I think I included the daily atmosphere on Masada in the most interesting interactions. Cinematographically, what we have in this script is the three circles of conflict, which work on the viewers' subconscious, and create an interest in every scene: the internal conflict, the personal conflict, and the external conflict. All these must exist to have a film.*

*As Issam signals with his hand gestures that there was nothing he wished to add, Yael praises his work, and others suggest additional scenes and interviewees that should be integrated in the film. Feeling that this discussion takes the group one step backwards, Yael becomes restless, and reminds everyone not to forget that there is a game we play with the municipality. She then asks*

*How can we make sure that we do what we want, while also fulfilling others' requests? In this case, these 'others' are the absolute others, with whom I have no relations, no shared agenda, but they still offer to fundraise for me so I could do all sorts of things in the neighborhood. I'm trying to ask myself what should be the right thing to do – for the street, not for them – so we could go on doing things here. I'm asking this because this may guide our choice of people to be interviewed for the film. Maybe it should be more diverse?"*

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<sup>151</sup> *Toot Ard* is an Arabic reggae band from the occupied Golan Heights. The band held a number of street concerts on Masada Street, and some of its members hang out in the Masada's coffee shops.

*“Or more normative?” Meital asks in response. “Exactly!” Omer jumps in and looks at Issam, pushing him to respond. “But I have Gil [the director of the Community Center] at the end, for the balance!” Issam says.*

*Contrary to Issam, who showed his charismatic personality, supported by his loud voice, his sense of humor, and his bold expression of his political views, Elias usually did not take a dominant position in conversations. After half a second of silence he asks to mention what he found to be important for him: “We need to write something feasible, which we’ll be able to produce, something which we’ll be able to shoot. The more we understand what we do - we’ll shoot less and then have fewer materials that need to be edited.”*

*Half an hour into the meeting, when there were no objections to the outline of the script presented by Issam, Yael suggests that Issam and Meital will continue working together on the script and finalize it for the next meeting. “Sure,” Issam says, “I will work with Meital on what is called ‘treatment’ – the bigger picture of the various scenes, without the little details – then, with Aaron and Elias we’ll talk about the ‘shooting script,’ all the little details and camera movements, and then, the next step is going out to shoot the scenes. This is the order of things,” Issam concludes. Then, still in the heat of his excitement, he explains:*

*Why did I choose the olives for the first scene? Because it’s the Palestinian symbol. It is a cinematic expression. I also thought about the colors of the T-Shirts of that group of people that will gather at Café Terez. Their red T-Shirts symbolize love, and with the green background of Café Terez’s walls it creates an Almodóvar-esque scene.”*

*Sharing her thoughts about who to include as interviewees in the film, Yael says:*

*What we basically did was mapping the important issues: businesses, young people, and diversity of the population. So, what we try to show is how diverse activities and people acting in various locations can promote all kinds of things. The question is how we deal with it in the script. It can be, for example, by talking with Oren about the*

*Students' Village, and with Avi about the youth center. What we need to think about is how to combine the monologues or interviews with the film's plot.*

Since Issam's script was considered realistic, integrating interviews in it was not considered as mixing of genres, only an editing challenge. Elias, who was supposed to be responsible for editing the film, added that a few macro shots from buildings' roofs should also be filmed. "We can also shoot Issam swimming in the pool," Meital jumped in, laughing. "You want me to drown?" Issam responded. "We'll shoot you giving swimming lessons to Jews," Meital quickly replied, referring to Issam's notorious joke. Trying to overcome everyone's laughter, Yael raised her voice and asked: "So, by Wednesday you'll have the script?" Issam confirmed, and added: "And then we must start shooting the film!"

To celebrate moving one step forward, without yet knowing that Issam's call to start filming will be repeated at the end of all the following meetings, Elias poured wine to everyone, and greeted: "Yallah, Sakha." "Nazdrovia," Issam responded in one of a few words he knows in Russian, and with his good spirit, added: "Ya'ani, Saha."

After drinking for the success of the project, Yael turned to me, and said: "We would love to hear some of your reflections, if the fly is willing to get off the wall." Hesitatingly, I said that I didn't yet have anything concrete to share. Aaron was not satisfied with my reply and said: "You're an anthropologist. Talk! Analyze!" Then Omer interfered, saying "Give him time, give him time." Having no patience to wait for my comments, Issam positioned himself in my stead, and said, as if sharing ethnographic insights: "Issam is an Arab who is frustrated by the Jews." His comment made everyone laugh, and I felt that thanks to these humoristic interventions, their wish for my instant analysis had evaporated.

It took a few more meetings for me to realize that the group's meetings were much richer than what was presented in Issam's script. Although it was planned to realistically represent the everyday life in the neighborhood, the script failed to represent the kind of neighborhood interactions that went beyond ethno-national boundaries, and those that showed self-awareness to them (see Chapters 3-5).

The following day Yael circulated among the group members the meeting's minutes, with a detailed timeline of five weeks for the completion of the film, and added her personal note: "We took upon ourselves a magical and challenging project. The choice to work together in a broad team, with the responsibility that we share, reflects this magic. I wish us enjoyment and growth working together."

### ***"The Public Sphere is my Studio"***

A few days passed, and a revised script was sent to everyone by Meital and Issam. After a round of comments, Yael integrated them to the following revised version of the script, which now begins a few meters before Café Carmel:

The camera zooms-in on Dorian's balcony. The sound of the original "Do you love me" plays at the background, and Dorian gives a drag show that leads the camera to Masada Street. This gives a sense of Masada's free space for clarifying identities and political practices. The camera then moves to the other side of the street, to show the graphic design studio. The two designers there open the door for the camera, and greet "Good morning and welcome to Masada Street." From there, the camera moves to Café Carmel. The camera focuses on two young women, an Arab and a Jew (Dorit and Rawia?) sitting separately near two tables. Each of them is about to finish eating a Greek salad. The Jewish woman isn't squeezing her lemon and doesn't touch the olives. As they finish eating, the Arab's plate has only lemon skin on it and olive seeds. Near these two women – a couple is kissing, and from the inside of the café we hear music and people arguing (who will these be? Maybe the theater group

arguing about their new show?) Then someone from the second floor pours a bucket of water on the kissing couple, while cursing in Russian. The couple is surprised, and the camera moves to the Falafel place.

Compared with Issam's original script, in the revised version, the Masada Scene is richer with characters, and in the Greek Salad scene female characters replace the male characters. Nonetheless, the scene still delivered a sense of binary oppositions between Arabs and Jews, with their characters being essentialized through their different eating repertoires, and with other stereotypes, too.

"I'm not going to film this opening scene," Elias told me when I met him at Café Terez, a few days later. "Everyone knows it's stereotypical." Discussing the scene with Issam, he agrees that it is problematic, but noted that it's still a draft, and that in preparing the next drafts he will do his best to implement scriptwriting techniques, in order to improve the subtext of the film, and not to feed the viewers with the main idea.

A few days pass without any email, or a text message, or a street encounter or a coffee shop chat about the film. One night, at around 2AM, as I walked back home from spending an evening at Café Terez, I passed by Café Carmel and saw that Issam was still there, closing the place, and making sure all the tables and chairs are piled inside after he had cleaned the floor. As he stepped outside to lock the door behind him, Meital followed him, and I quickly realized that they were in a middle of a discussion about the film.

*Issam tells me he is frustrated that the work on the film had stopped. "I did my part," he says in an angry tone, "and now it's the Jews that stopped the process. I broke the stereotypes when I submitted the script on time, but now the film is stuck." He is angry at Yael for not calling for another meeting to follow up on everyone's assignments. "But you didn't*

*send us the revised script," Meital replies, rejecting his accusations. "Khalas, the script is written," he responds angrily, and exits the little area at the entrance to the Café. I decide to challenge him, as we sit on the hip-high wall near the café to continue the conversation: "So why won't YOU call for a meeting?" Issam is not responding.*

*Alex passes by, walking his dog, saying hello to all of us, and from the opposite direction a man walks with a supermarket cart, approaches us, then stops near the garbage containers next to us, searching inside. Alex's dog is loose, and barks on the man excitedly. The man flinches and Issam jumps at his direction, trying to relax him: "Don't be afraid," he says and stands between the man and the dog, "She's not harmful. Keep working, don't worry..." The man mumbles something in Hebrew, and then, when Alex takes his dog away, Issam approaches Meital, showing his familiarity with the intra-Jewish ethnic stereotypes: "I'm an Arab, and you are Polish; we are warm and you are cold; and you have a small heart that grows even smaller." "Like a peanut," I add my part to Issam's jokes-insults, "Like a peanut's skin," Meital concludes with her indifferent look. It takes a quarter of a second until the three of us burst out laughing.*

During the following days, mainstream media was busy covering the letter of the Rabbis' Wives against renting out apartments to Arabs (see Chapter 4), as well as the protests that took place in the city of Bat-Yam against Arab-Jewish mixed couples. Meanwhile, Yael called for another meeting of the film group, and then cancelled it because Omer got sick. Later that day I met her at Café Carmel.

*A month had passed since the last group meeting. Yael updates me that yesterday she went with Omer to meet with the mayor's assistant. He is still waiting for the film, and willing*

*to pay 1,500 NIS immediately, and will pay the additional 3,000 NIS when the film is completed. "It's a joke," she concludes, "It doesn't make any sense." Checking around with producers, she found that such a film costs between 5,000 to 15,000 NIS to produce."*

*"So what's going on with the production?" I ask her. "I don't know...," she says, "I took a step back to allow other forces to take action." This is how she sees such dynamic in a non-institutional group such as the film group. She explains that*

*There are different energies, working through different people, with different strengths, at different times. I decided not to keep pushing right now, and I believe that this is how things should happen. Maybe the film will materialize, and maybe not – and both options are fine.*

*Her explanation sounds too neat, and I get a feeling that something else might lie underneath her decision to back off. I gently ask about her other projects, and some of the picture becomes clearer. "I'm dealing with a lot of issues at the moment," she says, "and one should know where to invest all the energy. I now decided to back off from coordinating the group, and if the film should happen – it will happen. I'm not used to work in institutionalized formations. I experienced several failures, and today," she concludes, "the public sphere is my studio."*

*As we sit and talk, a beggar approaches us, asking for change. Yael tries to ignore him. I give him a few coins that I find in my pocket. When he leaves, she says that she had thought a lot about what she should do when beggars approach her, and decided she will not give them money she doesn't have. "After all," she says, "only today I had to ask my boss for an advance payment, because I ran out of money and can't pay my bills. I really don't find a lot of differences between that beggar and me".*

Two days later Issam sent an email to the film group, announcing a new date for a meeting at Omer's place, and attached a revised version of the script:

Daylight, outdoors at café Carmel, the camera focuses on two young men, an Arab and a Jew, sitting separately near two tables. Each of them is about to finish eating a Greek salad. The Jewish man isn't squeezing his lemon and doesn't touch the olives. As they finish eating, the Arab's plate has only lemon skin on it and olive seeds. [...]

The original opening scene was re-introduced, and a new, last scene, was added.

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*It's Thursday, and I'm at Café Terez to have their special Thursday's homemade dish. Meital is here, too. She sits on the bar with a friend, and as her friend leaves, she joins me, and both of us order the special dish: stuffed squash in yogurt sauce. As our order arrives, with olives and lemon slices on a side dish, both of us squeeze some lemon on the dish, but Meital doesn't touch the olives.*

*As we eat and chat, I ask Meital about her family background. She tells me that the grandparents from her mother's side arrived to Haifa in the 1940s from a town in today's Ukraine. They met on the immigrants' ship, and two weeks later they got married. The grandparents from her father's side immigrated to Palestine from Germany about a decade before, in the 1930s. They lived in an apartment in Hadar, under a special arrangement, and within a few years they managed to purchase it. This is the apartment in which Meital lives today. After her parents got married, they moved to an apartment on the Carmel, where Meital was born and spent her childhood years. When it was time for her to leave her parents' place, she moved down to her grandparents' apartment in Hadar. "It took me quite some time*

*to adjust to this neighborhood," she says. "You ask me all these questions to thicken my character in your diary? She suddenly asks me. "Sure," I reply, smiling.*

Meital's background positions her as a middle-class Ashkenazi Jewish woman, who is native to Haifa, and a relative newcomer to Hadar neighborhood. This position differs from other group members in one or more of its features – class, ethnicity, nationality or city of origin. In Issam's eyes, she is "Polish," and he uses this labeling whenever he tries to tease her; to others she is a Jewish woman; and in her role within the film group – she is one of the key writers, thus working with Issam on the script. Nonetheless, although the group's diversity echoed much of the neighborhood's diversity, the script still reduced it to focusing on binary stereotypes of Arabs and Jews.

### ***Arts of Citizenship: Shifting Gears, Drifting Sideways***

An email from my University opened an opportunity for me to shift positions from a fly-on-the-wall, to a more participatory role in the group. It was an announcement about a US\$ 7,500 grant by the University's Arts of Citizenship office, calling for students and faculty to propose an artistic project, focusing on practices of citizenship, which will promote collaboration with local communities. I immediately consulted with the members of the film group, and got their consent to apply for the grant, proposing the film project we were already working on. They all agreed that such grant could better facilitate the production of the film than the manipulative assistance from Haifa's mayor office.

I started working on the grant application, keeping group members involved in the process, and budgeting half of the grant money for stipends for the group members. At the same time, the group kept meeting to work on the film, but the sense of standstill only grew. Meanwhile, we kept seeing each other occasionally in coffee shops, and in various events in the Masada Scene.

*I meet Issam and others at Café Terez, in a screening of a Syrian film. The film was banned in Syria for its critical approach regarding religion, patriarchy and nationalism. Following the screening, a conversation develops, and Issam shares his knowledge about symbolism in films, based on his film studies: the grandfather's character, he says, symbolizes death, and the chicken and eggs – causality. He also interprets the various processes the characters go through during the film. Following his analysis, I think about the script he wrote for the group's film and wonder what symbolisms he tried to use there.*

*A few days pass, and I meet Yael at Café Terez in search for additional sources of funding for the film, so as to free the production from the municipality's supervising eye. While browsing the Internet and brainstorming ideas, Yael suddenly suggests: "You know? It could be interesting to make a film on how we made the film..." I like the idea, and immediately take out my video camera to start shooting the first footage – of us looking for funding.*

*We then talk about whether the film should be re-framed and if so –how? At a moment of despair, Yael says "At the end, the film project will be dissolved, just like some of the other projects."*

Following that conversation, I proposed to videotape the group's meetings. The idea was accepted with excitement, and since that moment it gradually became a regular

practice that my video camera is part of the meeting, sometimes put on a tripod, sometimes changing hands, without having known whether and how this footage will be integrated in the film.

*As I talk with Yael at Café Terez we try to tempt Elias to join us. He is here, too, on shift as barman, busy serving customers. His enthusiasm about the film dropped dramatically recently. As he finishes his shift he joins our table and conversation about the film continues. Elias argues that one of the problems with the group is the collective style of work. There is no clear division of labor like in every regular film production. "It's not that we have a director who receives a script and turns it to a shooting-script without others intervening in the content," he says. "In our group," he adds,*

*There are frictions between members, and there are disagreements. Even between me and Issam there are disagreements. It's not that we represent the Arabs. I don't like the stereotypes that still exist in the script. And besides, I'm not that sure I have the time to dive into such a project at this point.*

*He then tells us of other ideas he has in mind for other films, also focusing on the street. "There's so much to focus on here," he says, "but it should be based on a serious research that I intend to do. I really don't like these people that come from the outside to make a film on us," Elias says – and I think about my own motivation at the beginning of my research here –then he adds "I'll break their camera. It's impossible to make a film about the neighborhood without talking about the police harassment, without talking about the undercover police here..." Trying to think about how to move forward with the film, Elias suddenly suggests "maybe each of us should make a short 5 minute film, and we'll weave all these short films together?" Both Yael and I like the idea.*

About a week later, I stepped into Café Terez again, to chat with Elias while he was on shift.

*It's one of the prettiest days this winter. A bit cold, partly cloudy, and there's no rain. People sit outside, enjoying the glimpses of sunlight. I approach the bar to talk with Elias. As soon as he has a free minute, he joins me in between serving customers. He is known to be the less friendly barman here, with his anger growing stronger from day to day, from week to week.*

*"I'm sick of it," he says desperately as he sits next to me.*

*"What happened?"*

*"I'm sick of it. I can't understand how it is possible to live here. I feel like making my own movie and blow it all up."*

*"Do you think that a movie can change anything?"*

*Elias is not answering. Instead, he goes back to deal with another customer. It's always difficult to have a fluent conversation with him, even when he's not on shift. At a certain point he would just get up and leave. A few minutes pass and he returns to sit next to me for another brief moment. He is asking about the Arts of Citizenship grant application, and shares with me his concern that they would probably want to own the film's copyright. "The copyright should be ours," he says. I assure him that the grant is supposed to assist us in the process, and not dependent on a final product. Therefore, I argue, the rights issue is irrelevant. Reading his response, I see that this doesn't pacify him. He then shifts to sharing his criticism on Issam's script, and I gather that finding flaws in the grant could have been an attempt to have the*

*whole project cancelled. "I cannot work on Issam's script," he says. "Everything there is so cool, as if all dramatic events here never happened. The script ignores the detectives that hang around the neighborhood, and nothing about the tougher reality." As conversation develops it appears that he doesn't believe that the group can create something that he would be satisfied with. "I can't even find the time to work on my own project, you see? I'm not going to do something amateurish about the street. This is a complicated street, and I do have the urge to do something, but not under these circumstances." Before he leaves again, he reminds me that neither he nor Issam actually represent the positions of all Arabs in the neighborhood.*

In the following months, nothing came out of Elias's idea to make a collage of short films in our group. In the following years Elias did not find the time to make his own film either. He moved on to working in commercial film production, in a TV station and in wedding photography productions, and then, several years after he completed his B.A. in Film Studies, he returned to the academia to get another degree.

*Another meeting of the film group just ended with everyone's approval to submit the grant application. For the official documents we were supposed to identify the group, and decided to go with "The Masada Film Collective." Within a couple of hours a letterhead was prepared with this title in three languages: Hebrew, Arabic and English. A letter inviting me to participate in the group as part of the Arts of Citizenship project was also prepared and signed, and shortly thereafter the grant application was submitted.*

A few days later I met Elias again at Café Terez:

*It's Thursday, and today's special is Frikeh, a dish of green smoked wheat, served with yogurt and chicken. Elias is on shift, and I sit at the bar, waiting for opportunities to exchange*

*a few words with him. Sometimes, especially when he is already too angry to be sympathetic to customers, he takes out the Jameson bottle and pours two shots Whiskey, one for each of us. It's the end of his shift, he is exhausted, and I can tell that he's about to reach for the bottle.*

That day, it was published in the news that a right-wing Knesset Member called for a police investigation of a case that took place a few months earlier during a Spring Festival, which residents organized on Masada Street with the support of the local Community Center. It was a dramatic event while it happened, then it grew to a story told by many, later it appeared on the weekly magazine of a major newspaper and on news websites. As part of the festival, a local Palestinian band gave a concert in English and Arabic. During one of their songs, someone in the audience interpreted their words as support for terror, and informed one of the organizers. A moment later, electricity on the stage was cut off and the band was forced off the stage.

A few days later, one of the news reports described the concert as “a show of hatred,” and from there the political snowball reached the Knesset, and from there – to the police interrogation rooms.

It took about four years after the band members were interrogated by the police for “terror incitement,” for the case to be closed for “lack of blame.”

*“You understand?” Elias says after we toast, “how can we make a film and show that everything is OK, that there are no interrogations, that everything here is cool. It's taken for granted here that Arabs serve Jews in coffee shops, and that if a coffee shop is owned by an Arab, then Jews won't enter.”*

Every conversation with Elias ended with a sense of despair. On one hand, I agreed with him that the script failed to deliver the nuances of everyday life on Masada, with its interactions that both reflect and transgress ordinary political practices and perceptions. On the other hand, Elias avoided writing an alternative script, and others didn't do it either. Meanwhile, Tomi and Aaron, two other members of the film group, stopped replying to emails and quit showing up to meetings. With their withdrawal the film group shrank from eight members to six. All of us felt that the film project reached a dead end.

And then we were awarded the grant.

### ***The Return of the Supervising Eye***

The news about the grant made everyone happy, and the sense of momentum was reinvigorated. It also removed the sense of institutional supervision. Or that's what we thought.

In the budget proposal, we designated half of the sum for purchase and rental of equipment and services, and the other half – for modest stipends of 500 USD for the project participants, as partial compensation for the time they invest in the process of making the film. Due to bureaucratic procedures concerning transfer of stipends from the USA to individuals who do not have an American Social Security Number, it was agreed with the sponsoring office that the money will be wired to a legal institution in Israel, which will issue the stipends as salaries. In consultation with all group members, we decided to approach Hadar Community (HC), the local nonprofit organization that works under Haifa

Municipality, and runs the local Community Centers in Hadar. We assumed that since we know the people there, and since they know us, and since the film is a community project of sorts, it should align with HC's stated goals and things will go smoothly. Following an email I sent to the director of HC, where I presented the project and our request, a preliminary approval was granted and a meeting with his deputy was set, in order to work out the little details of the legal and bureaucratic matters.

*I arrive a little early, and the deputy director is on the phone. As he notices me he waves his hand in a friendly gesture that invites me to enter his room and sit on the chair in front of his desk. Piles of papers and folders are packed on his desk. There are checkbooks, various invoices, and other papers. My eyes travel around his office, and find Israel's 1948 Declaration of Independence hanging on the wall, as well as a framed photo of former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin (Labor) who was assassinated in 1995 by a right wing activist. Hanging Rabin's photo in a public servant's office, in the context of a right-wing government, is a political statement, but I'm not sure what it means exactly.*

*As he finishes his phone conversation, the door opens, and the HC's Director enters the room. We already met several times in the past in various occasions, and we greet each other politely. After a brief update he receives from his deputy, they turn to me to talk about the film project and the grant money. I repeat the details that I already mentioned by email, and there is no objection to the procedure. The deputy director asks for an official document from the University of Michigan's Arts of Citizenship office, approving the process, and overall they seem supportive of the film and happy to be involved. Moreover, they decide not to charge any overhead expenses for the process beyond what it cost to issue the paychecks.*

*I'm surprised by how smooth it all goes. After the director leaves the room, the conversation shifts to talking about the larger topic of the film. I briefly say that it's about the Masada Scene and about Arabs and Jews living there together. The deputy director leans back, a smile spreads on his round face, and he starts telling me the story of his own family. "My family has been here since 1490!" he says, "And at some point they moved to Haifa. They lived in Wadi Salib and were the only Jewish residents that owned property there. In 1929 they left the Wadi and moved up the mountain." The deputy, a Jewish man in his fifties, claims to speak Arabic. He tells me he used to sit at Café Cube, from which both Café Terez and Café Carmel could be observed, until he heard that people suspect that he sits there because he is working with the Secret Services. He also complained that the Arabs who move in to the neighborhood are those of the nearby villages, and not of a wealthy ("strong") background. He argues that they have become a burden on the welfare system in the neighborhood.*

*As our conversation develops, we move on to talking about various events that took place in Hadar, and I get the impression that he regards himself as the neighborhood's "responsible adult." A moment before I leave his office, the deputy director suddenly says "Oh, you should also make sure that all participants sign a 101 form with the Tax authorities." I assure him that it would be my responsibility to collect the forms from everyone, and I see signs of doubts on his face.*

The tax forms were filled-in in no time by everyone, the letter from the Arts of Citizenship office was sent to HC's Director within a few days, too, and a few weeks thereafter – the money was wired to HC's bank account in Haifa. It took a few more days until I was informed that all of the paychecks were ready. But then – an email from HC's

deputy director informed me that before approving the payment, the director wants to watch the film.

The sense of supervision suddenly reemerged, this time with a much more concrete fashion. In my reply I noted that the director's request contradicted the agreement between HC and the University of Michigan, according to which the payment was designated for participating in the film production, and not for a final product. Moreover, I wrote, there was no guarantee at that moment that the film will ever be completed. HC director and his deputy kept insisting on approving the film before releasing the paychecks, so I went to meet with them to clarify the disagreement.

*As I enter the deputy's office I find him in the middle of his hectic work, managing HC's finances. When he notices me standing there, he invites me in, leaves everything else, quit answering his ringing phone, and dives into a heated (although friendly) conversation with me. Both of us are fixed in our positions. For him, the director has every right to inspect the film for which HC now participates in facilitating, even though it is not with their own money. For me, the money was designated for participating in a process of production, not for a product, and thus HC should stick with what has been agreed upon. As the conversation develops, the deputy reveals his assumptions about the members of the film group. He says that he has a problem with their agenda, that he doesn't trust them, and that the director feels that morally he cannot transfer the money before he sees the product, because he fears of a film defaming the State of Israel. He then reads me a note he received from his boss, saying "Write a letter to the University of Michigan explaining that since we have no control over the*

*results we wish to wire back the money.” You should understand, the deputy notes, that we consulted with our lawyers before taking this decision.*

*A few more minutes of exchanging arguments between us pass, and as we fight over what democracy and public service means, and over objectivity and representation, the director himself enters the room. With less passion and excitement than both his deputy and me, he argues calmly that it is not their problem if the film represents anything or not. For him, a public institution must be accountable for all its activities. “I’ll give you an example,” he says, “let’s say that tomorrow a film slandering all of Haifa’s Arabs will be produced here. I cannot be a partner to that. [...] It doesn’t matter what I think; the question is what the institution can accept or reject, not what I think. This is totally irrelevant.” I respond by asking “According to what criteria are you expected to examine the film?” and he responds, “[According to] the exclusion of this or that group; or offending this or that group.” At that point the deputy intervenes, reminding me the case of the street festival a couple of years before, with the censoring of the Palestinian band. “If someone is being offended – this, for me, is unacceptable.” This, it appears, was his criterion for censoring the show, regardless of the content, and now it serves as a potential censorship of the film.*

*The conversation continues for a little longer without any compromise, so the director says: “The best solution is that I’ll transfer the money to somewhere else, and let them deal with it.”*

Following that conversation, I updated the film group members about the development, and Elias immediately offered to contact *Mossawa Center*, the advocacy NGO for Arab citizens in Israel, and ask them to take over the process. The Center, located in

Wadi Nisnas, a few minutes' walk from Hadar, was famous for promoting equality in Haifa and elsewhere, and it seemed reasonable that they would agree to assist us. Moreover, the Center had good reputation among members of the film group, who were familiar with the Center's projects, and had personal acquaintance with some of their staff members. It took a few of months to get Mossawa's formal agreement to take over the process, as well as to have the Arts of Citizenship office at the University of Michigan issue a formal letter requesting HC to wire the grant money directly to Mossawa's bank account in Haifa. However, HC's director decided not to wire the money to Mossawa, and instead wired it back to the University of Michigan. To my inquiry about his withdrawal from his own suggestion, he replied in a legalistic manner, saying that it was, in fact, illegal to transfer money between associations. Checking with a lawyer who is an expert in Israeli law regarding associations, I learned that the HC's reasoning was prima facie correct, but she also added that with the documentation we had, this could have been resolved. Not confronting the matter further with the HC's director or with his deputy, my assumption was that the reason for their refusal to transfer the grant money to Mossawa Center was disagreement with the Center's political projects, which in several cases targeted Haifa municipality's policies of separation and discrimination against its Arab residents.

The stipends money was therefore wired back to the USA, then back to Haifa, this time to Mossawa's bank account, and from there – paychecks were issued and handed out to members of the film group with no further hassle.

## *Coexisting Genres*

While all this political-bureaucratic drama was taking place, the work on the film continued in meetings of re-thinking the film's concept and re-working the script. Nevertheless, holding one meeting after the other without making any significant progress, created a growing sense of frustration. Even the idea to leverage the frustration to one of the film's themes remained fruitless.

*It's Friday late afternoon, the first day of summer saving time, and we meet at Café Terez by the window. We look outside, amazed that there's still sunlight. Yael, Omer and Meital are here, Elias is on shift at the bar and will join us in a few minutes, and Issam returned to his village to take care of his mother, who fallen ill lately. As in recent meetings, Tomi and Aaron were invited, but did not show up.*

*Yael asks to talk about how we move forward. Recently, she and Omer met with a theater director who told them that for such a production to succeed there's no room for democratic procedures. Someone should serve as director and make the decisions. It seems that both she and Omer were shaken-up by his advice, which undermined the mechanism this group worked with since day one. At first, Yael proposes to consider hiring an external director. Then, conversation moves to talking about the tensions between group members' wish to create something professional, also for their own resume, and the desire to work as a group, which means working collaboratively, with shared responsibility and credit.*

*Yael: "There's a difference between working alone to promote personal goals, and working as a community."*

*Meital: "I want to be part in a creative process. Maybe we should ask people on the street what they think should appear in a film about the neighborhood."*

*Omer (getting nervous): "I'm confused. There are already too many ideas."*

*Yael leaves behind the theater director's advice, goes back to her idea of letting participant's energy lead the creative process, and says: "We're in the middle of an ongoing conversation; we think and doubt together; we need to allow this opportunity to examine things, we need patience to have our own discussion."*

*Omer is getting even more nervous: "I'm impatient when it comes to suggestions, not to actual work. I'm sick of brainstorming. Let's start doing these things. We won't be able to really decide before we go out and start working. We need to go for what puts all of us on fire. We need to flow, just to flow."*

*Meital (getting confused): "What do you mean by 'just to flow'?"*

*Omer: "Start shooting! Since our first meeting there were dozens of ideas. What did we do with them? I agree with the criticism of the theater director that ultimately it is impossible to work as a group. You want to keep working as a group? fine with me, but let's take some decisions."*

*Yael proposes her alternative idea again: "It could be that the film will focus on the process itself."*

*Meital: "And then it'll be a documentary."*

*Yael: "Not necessarily; it could also be a mockumentary. We can also integrate fantasy in the film. It can be a lot of things. What do we want?"*

*Meital: "A documentary that deals with the issue of the film. All the mess that happened to date is 'THE thing,' I think. This is the interesting stuff, and THIS is what should be represented."*

The idea to have the film focus on the process of filmmaking didn't take off, and the conversation shifted to talking about the opportunity to send out a new call for participation in the group. That idea didn't take off as well because Elias just finished his shift and joined the conversation. Yael offered him to sit on the chair next to her, but he, instead, kept standing, put his right leg on the chair, and looking at us from his height, he said: "Are you OK? Did something happen in the last half hour? You look mournful."

The meeting ended with a decision to meet again the following day in order to travel together to Issam's village, to support him while he takes care of his dying mother, and also to have him join the discussion.

*It's about 4 PM as we arrive at Issam's village. We drive through the shaky roads until we reach his family's house. He's happy to see us and invites us in. He introduces us to his mother, who is laying on a couch turned-into-bed in the living room, in front of an open TV set that shows the news in Arabic. She greets us, shakes our hands, and her haggard yellow face shows a frail smile. We are also introduced to Issam's father, to his younger sisters and brothers, and to his aunt. After a short conversation with everyone in the living room, we decide to go outside with Issam, to have him breathe some fresh air, and he proposes to show*

*us the area. Before we leave, we say goodbye to Issam's family. As Omer approaches his mother, he takes her hand, hugs it, then kisses it and whispers something in her ear.*

*We get into the cars and drive a few minutes to the village's agricultural fields. Where the road becomes too muddy, we decide to park the car and take a short walk. Issam show us the surrounding, and points to the nearby Jewish city of Afula, and to the Palestinian city of Jenin. When Jenin was bombed by the Israeli military, Issam says, they heard the explosions there pretty well. We look around us, at all the green fields, we take deep breaths of the fresh air, and it feels as if everyone's hearts are widening. We wander around the field for a while, as if released in nature after being captive for too long in an urban environment. Issam wanders around, too, but he seems to have a goal in mind. He is looking at the ground, collecting dry branches. Within a few minutes he collects enough to set a small fire, and asks for a couple of pages from my notebook to light it.*

*It starts getting dark, a little cold, too, and we crowd around the small fire, hypnotized. As it gets darker we decide to head back to Haifa, and we part from Issam only to meet him there again, the following week, for his mother's funeral.*

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*A note posted on the locked front door of Café Carmel announces the death of Issam's mother. Erez, the owner, decided to close the café for several hours during the funeral, to allow Issam's co-workers to attend. In Issam's village, around his family's house, cars are packed, and many people gather. Among them are several familiar faces from the neighborhood. At the front yard, all of Issam's friends gather around him, his eyes are red from crying, and his face showing his excitement seeing us there. About an hour later the*

*coffin is carried from the women's area inside the house, out to the street, in the direction of the village's mosque. While most women stay in the area of the house, most men follow the coffin's travel through the village's streets. Elias, who is Christian, explains to me that in other places women join part of the ceremony but not the burial itself; they visit the grave only the following morning.*

*As the coffin reaches the mosque some of the men enter for the prayer, and others – Issam and his father among them – wait outside. We stand next to them, listening to the muezzin reading verses of the Koran in honor of the deceased. One of Issam's Jewish acquaintances from the neighborhood stands next to me, curiously looking around him, and then he tells me he suddenly realizes to what extent all of us live in a bubble. "No one sees the other," he says. He rode with Yael and Meital to Issam's village. During the drive from Haifa, he asked them whether they ever attended a Muslim funeral, because he didn't know what to expect. None of them did. Nor did I. "I will never forget that you came to the funeral," Issam kept saying the following months to friends from the neighborhood, always becoming emotional as he speaks.*

The next day I was walking down Masada Street, and suddenly I heard someone shouting from behind me: "Issam, Issam!" I turned around to see if Issam was there, only to realize that Zehava, a Jewish woman in her sixties,<sup>152</sup> had confused me for Issam. From across the street, and from behind, it was possible to confuse between us. She wanted to console him, but hugged me, instead. Issam's mother passed away less than a week after the assassination of Juniano Mer-Khamis, and Zehava was shocked by both deaths.<sup>153</sup> While

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<sup>152</sup> See Chapter 3.

<sup>153</sup> See Chapter 4.

standing on the sidewalk between Masada's coffee shops, she told me how Juliano's assassination affected her, how she broke down, how she crossed personal barriers to participate in his funeral, and how she had cried. She had several conversations with Juliano throughout the years, and although she was older than him, she felt he had always treated her as a little girl. He invited her to his plays, and when she said it was too difficult for her he offered to take her by the hand so they could cross the barriers together. Eventually, she said, she was brave enough to cross the barriers only during his funeral. Particularly staggering for her was crossing the Jalameh checkpoint, on her way to the improvised ceremony on the Palestinian side, with Juliano's friends arriving from Jenin. "I crossed the barriers only after he was gone," she said in tears.

### ***Out of Focus***

It took Issam a few weeks to slowly recover from the difficult time he had spent with his dying mother, and from her passing away. During all that time his eyes revealed his exhaustion. Trying to re-stabilize his life and go back to his previous routine, it wasn't before long that he asked to have another meeting of the film group to reignite the production. Meanwhile, he kept revising the script, but found it hard to work with either Elias or Meital. He was still interested in creating something light, and not a "heavy film," as he defined it, which will deal with the politics of the previous year's festival.

The group resumed its occasional meetings, with each of these being video recorded, with the camera held either by one of us (mostly me), or standing in a room corner, capturing all of us in the frame, recording us talking about light and heavy revisions

to the script, about changing to an alternative genre, and back, about timelines and responsibilities, and about funding. Each of these meetings also ended in the same way – with no substantial progress, and with Issam’s call to start shooting.

In between, random meetings between individual members of the group took place in coffee shops and at neighborhood events. On one occasion I talked with Meital on how Issam, with his charismatic character, should be the main figure in the film; On another occasion Issam asked me to talk with Elias and push him to be more active in the group; When I met Elias a few days later, he told me that Issam’s script was very difficult to produce and that he was trying to work with him to revise it. On yet a different occasion, I met Yael upon her return from a meeting with several neighborhood activists. Feeling exhausted, she told me how people at the meeting didn’t really listen to each other, and repeated the same things – just like us, at the first meetings of the film group. She then thought about it for a moment, and said she suddenly realizes what a process we went through together. Soon thereafter, another group meeting was set.

*Spring 2011, the morning after another film group meeting: I wake up with a light hangover. There was a film meeting yesterday. There were good discussions. We drank. We laughed. There was Arabic music. We danced in the living room. It was hot. It was sweaty. We filmed. The camera changed hands and started losing focus. I think we have a film. A film about how a film is being made here.*

*Afternoon: I walk along Masada Street and see one of the group members there. I’m greeted with a smile, which turns to blushes, then turns away from. I later receive a phone call to clarify the embarrassment. The last scene I remember from yesterday’s meeting is in the*

*host's bedroom. One group member was laying there on the bed. Sleeping, I think. Two others entered the room, drunk and almost naked. I then left and zigzagged my way home. Someone else calls me, hung-over, and says that nothing happened after I left, and just wants to make sure that I'm alright. Another one tells me of throwing up all night.*

The following week, after all embarrassments had disappeared, we met again. We gathered at Omer's place, I plugged my camera into his TV set, and started playing the raw video from the previous meeting. Between bursts of laughter, we discussed integrating footage from our meetings into the film, thereby changing it to a film about our attempts to make a film. The idea gained momentum. Yael said she loves the idea of a film on a work in process, and Meital noted that the film shouldn't be too didactic, and that things should not be too hermetically connected.

There was a sense that watching footage from the group's meeting reaffirmed the bonds between the group members, and strengthened the understanding that the story of the group has broader meanings, beyond the group and beyond Masada.<sup>154</sup> The group kept developing the original script, Issam agreed to remove the controversial salad scene, and we tentatively decided that footage from the party could fit well as the closing scene of the film. Overall, there is a growing sense that we're almost there, ready to start filming. But then, the 2011 Social Protest began, inspired, in part, by the Arab Spring, calling for social justice but focusing mostly on housing issues.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> On reaffirming bonds between family members by watching "family films," see Peixoto (2008:116).

<sup>155</sup> For a background on the protest in Israel see, for example, Leibner (2015) and Monterescu (2015:243-283).

During all the months that the group worked on the film, members were mostly busy with their own businesses, working on their own projects. Issam was involved in a film production in Jaffa, and was also busy applying for jobs in other productions; Yael worked on other artistic projects, on applying for graduate programs in arts, and struggled to make ends meet; Elias kept filming footage for future films he had in mind, and started working in a local TV station; Meital kept writing and editing her poetry magazine; And Omer still searched for ways to change the world while running his small business. Nonetheless, in summer 2011, everyone's focus diverted to what was emerging as the largest social protest in Israel's history. Omer, Yael and Meital took an active part in Haifa's events, organizing neighborhood assemblies in Hadar and mass parades in Haifa, and maintaining the local "occupy" movement. Meanwhile, Elias and Issam looked at it from the margins, either showing curiosity toward it, or heatedly criticizing it for focusing only on problems of Jewish Israelis. At the same time, Elias and Issam were also busy in establishing a local Palestinian Cinematheque in Hadar, which showed new releases from the Arab world.<sup>156</sup>

In group conversations held at that time it was decided that these activities, although mostly taking place outside of the Masada Scene, cannot be ignored because they are led by people from the Scene. Still not knowing how these materials will be integrated into the final film, Elias and I started videotaping Omer, Meital and Yael in the Haifa social protests, and I also videotaped Issam and Elias as they organized events in the local Palestinian Cinematheque.

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<sup>156</sup> The Palestinian Cinematheque existed for about two years, and worked in a collaboration with similar projects in Jaffa and Ramallah.

Group meetings were not renewed before the summer was over and the protests were almost forgotten. Meanwhile, rifts emerged between Meital and Yael, on both political and personal grounds. "It's all connected," Yael told me without revealing the reasons for the disagreements. She only mentioned that she won't feel comfortable being in the same room with Meital, but she didn't mind that the film will reflect this rift. "It's part of life, too," she added. Almost simultaneously, Issam and Elias found it more and more difficult to work together on preparing the script for filming; and Issam and Omer stopped talking to each other after accusing each other of being a racist.

The tensions between group members calmed down during the fall, and the group meetings resumed. Slowly making progress on revising the script of the first scene, by the end of winter 2012 the group was ready to start filming it.

Elias asked Issam to take the role of director for this scene, while he would be the cameraman. Yael assumed the producer's role, Meital was supposed to assist in whatever needed, and Omer was supposed to play himself behind the falafel counter. Omer's girlfriend, who had some experience as an actor, was assigned to play a newcomer to the neighborhood, who enters the Falafel place asking for information on available apartments for rent. My role in the production was to use a second video camera to shoot the making of the scene, for the reflexive part of the film.

On a spring Saturday morning we met for more than three hours at the Falafel place for rehearsing the five minute scene. Issam took several photos, so he could revise the shooting script accordingly. A couple of days later Issam met with Yael and Elias to prepare for the actual filming. Elias told me that in their meeting Issam and Yael had almost got into

a physical fight over Yael's obsession to know all the little details, such as the color of the actress's fingernails. Two days later, the group met to film the first scene.

### ***One Early Morning at the Falafel Place***

It took a year and a half after starting to work on the film to actually shoot one of its staged scenes. We met on a Saturday morning again, and filmed the opening scene several times, from different angles, and with different fine-tunings from one take to the next. We also invited Ya'acov to document the filming with his still camera, as he does for other events in the neighborhood (Image 37).

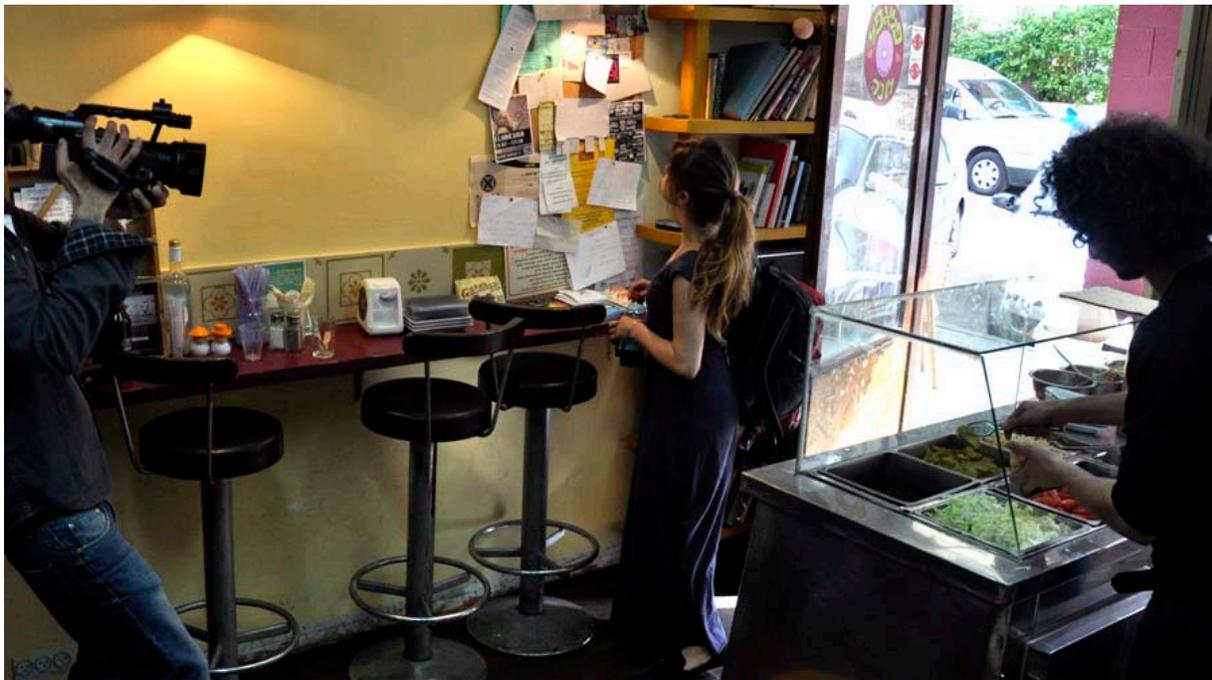


Image 37: Shooting the 1<sup>st</sup> scene (photo by Ya'acov Saban)

During the shooting of the scene, Issam and Elias had a number of arguments about technical issues, and after four hours of working on that scene without a break, Elias finally agreed that the scene was ready and there was no need for further shooting.

There was a consensus among the group members that although the scene itself wasn't perfect, it nevertheless was an important experience for us. We decided that before moving on to filming the next scene we need to meet again, watch the outcome, and consider further revisions. That meeting took place at Omer's apartment, a few meters away from the Falafel place. We watched close to an hour of the raw material, and then another hour of what I had filmed behind the scenes. Examining the quality of the materials it was clear that it was not good enough, both in technical measures (such as lighting, reflections and props), but also in content. It was still unclear where this scene is leading the film to, and how it can be connected to the rest of the script. At the same time, it was clear that the behind-the-scenes footage should somehow be integrated into the film, as it shows the dynamics within the group, thereby exposing more aspects of everyday practices in the mixing neighborhood.

Practicing filming a scene, and then watching and analyzing it, created a sense of momentum, and no more than a couple of days later we met again, this time at Omer's Falafel place, to rework the scene's dialogue. We met at around 8 p.m., and everyone arrived from their various daily activities exhausted and devoid of inspiration.

*It takes a few moments until a discussion on the scene's text is ignites. We begin by refining the opening dialogue of the scene, between the young woman and the person behind the falafel counter. Omer is asked to think about the instinctive behavior he developed in his*

*work, in order to make this dialogue as close as possible to the everyday reality he is familiar with. Omer insists that his line should be “Shalom, what can I get for you?” and for almost an hour we struggle with the rest of the dialogue. Meital suggests making it clear that the main character is not just looking for an apartment, but looking for an apartment in a particular street. Everyone agrees, and it is assumed that the dialogue should include a superlative, to make clear that there is something special about this street. However, no one manages to come up with a sentence that would not sound too banal. Meital offers to find a superlative that would fit a slum: “We live in a slum because it’s cool,” she says. “Seriously,” she adds, “I really used to think it’s cool”. This reminds Yael that in one of our first meetings we discussed issues that the municipality needs to improve in the neighborhood, and maybe this is the time to integrate some criticism in the film.*

After a few more minutes of unfruitful attempts to find a way to finish the dialogue, the meeting ended with the script remaining incomplete. The film project froze again.

### ***Closing Scene***

That April evening meeting at the Falafel place was the last meeting of the group as a whole. In the following months, occasional conversations with members of the group showed that there was no strong motivation to continue working on the film. Only with Elias I found remains of careful optimism and motivation, and he took it upon himself to reconsider the outline of the film, and to watch video recordings of the group meetings, to examine whether a film could be crafted based on integrating these materials. In my conversations with him, which were reported to other group members in our random

meetings at the Masada coffee shops, it was agreed that he would work on a new outline, telling the story of a group that failed to produce the film they wanted.

A few months later, when still no significant progress was made, Issam suggested asking an outsider's professional advice. With the remaining budget, we hired an external filmmaker, and asked him to watch what we filmed to that date, and to create a rough draft for a film, without being committed to a specific genre. We even pushed him to think on mixing genres, and on integrating realism with fiction (for example, by breaking the chronology of events), in order to creatively convey the difficulty to understand the Masada Scene.

A few weeks later, Elias and I met with him again, and he sounded skeptical. "It is possible to create a 15 minute film with the materials you already have," he said, and even showed us a rough draft he had prepared, but admitted that he was at a loss. We spent some time brainstorming together, and during the conversation we drafted a storyline that begins with the staged scene from the Falafel, moves on to a mix of footage from group meetings with members' activities outside the group, and ends with Issam's call "Yallah, let's start filming," which was repeated at the end of each meeting. That meeting ended with a sense of renewed motivation, but the project froze again, still remaining a work in process.

Meanwhile Elias got married, moved with his wife to their own apartment outside of Hadar, and returned to the academia to get another degree; Omer left to Berlin for a year; Issam moved back to his family village to assist in his brother's business, and after a while

returned to work in Hadar; and Yael and Meital continued to juggle between part-time jobs and different artistic projects in order to make ends meet.

***Discussion: Will Reflexive Coexistence in the Mixing Neighborhood be Scripted?***

The *Masada Film Collective* worked together intermittently for an overall period of a year and a half, held about twenty general meetings, succeeded in raising external funding for the film, and even managed to start filming. Nonetheless, the film was never completed. At the same time, other projects which were initiated by members of the group did materialize, such as the establishment of the local Palestinian cinema club, the publication of a local literary journal, a series of mass demonstrations during the Haifa Social Protest of 2011, and the production of a couple of independent films.

While all these other projects were not produced by mixed groups, the mixed character of the *Masada Film Collective* was not the reason for its failure to achieve its goal. It was, rather, the hegemonic Discourse of Separation – with or without a formal supervision – which limited the group’s imagination, and blocked its ability to create a representation of their experience of living in a mixing neighborhood. Creating such a representation needed a political and visual syntax which was not available as an objective possibility, and thus was challenging to imagine.

By following the group's work I ended up documenting the incommensurability between the social interactions within the group and the content of the film's script. While the group’s dynamic reflected the mixing, the script surrendered to the discourse of

separation, thereby steering away from ambiguities, from cross-sectional social interactions, from cross-passing (Bardenstein 2005) and from poetics of de-Othering (Bar-Itzhak 2016). Despite the general tendency to stick to realism, and although the group practiced hyper-reflexivity – reflecting on their own reflections on their self-representations – the group failed to represent the everyday experiences of the group members within and outside the group.

While lived experience in the Masada Scene, as described in Chapters 3-5 and in the film's group dynamic, presents interactions that do not conform with the Discourse of Separation, the group's script, much like Haifa's mainstream image of coexistence (see Introduction) regarded the neighborhood's residents as identified chiefly according to their ethno-national identities and as having no interactions between them. From the salad scene at the first coffee shop, to the following scenes where the main character visits other businesses along the street, characters she meets were presented according to their widespread ethnic stereotypes. Although group members experienced other forms of interaction, such as working together on a joint project, laughing and getting angry at each other, building alliances and rivalries that cross ethno-national identities, parting and mourning together, and most noticeably – reflecting together on all these experiences, these were not translated into a form of representation.

Compared to the analysis of the guided tours (Chapter 2), both chapters focus on practices of re-presenting lived experiences of coexistence. While the tour guides created their narratives mostly based on secondary sources, the members of the film group struggled to create a script based on their own personal experiences of living with the

Other. Nevertheless, both narratives show degrees of detachment from the experience, revealing their authors' subjection to the Discourse of Separation, thereby reproducing it.

What the film project shows is that employing practices of reflexivity in a mixing neighborhood could keep a mixed group going, but is insufficient for presenting a counter discourse to the hegemonic Discourse of Separation.

## CONCLUSIONS

*Together with Tamar and Issam I sit around one of the outdoor tables at Café Terez. We drink and have one of our endless and sometimes pointless discussions on feminism, Orientalism, and politics in general. It's late, and Smiling Nimer has already finished cleaning the floor, lowered the volume of the background music, and pulled in all the vacant chairs from the outside. He steps outside again, approaches our table and says in Arabic: "Jews and Arabs – lower your voices." Then he turns to the people at the other table and tells them: "Christians and Muslims – lower your voices." Before stepping back into the café, he turns back to our table and repeats his request, this time in Hebrew. The hour is late, he explains, we were making too much noise, and he doesn't want to disturb the neighbors.*

This anecdote expresses, in a nutshell, the reflexive coexistence under the discourse of separation in a mixing neighborhood. People of diverse ethno-national backgrounds spend time together, while the dividing categories still play a role in how they regard themselves and each other. At the same time, they are self-aware about what brings them together and apart.

As I showed throughout the dissertation, the concept of *reflexive coexistence* provides a useful framework for analyzing the dynamic of social relations in a *mixing neighborhood* under a hegemonic *discourse of separation*. The ethnographic data presented here reveals how the incommensurability between the discourse of separation and the

mixing neighborhood prompts practices of reflexivity as an available mechanism to make sense of the gap and try to resolve it.

As I showed in the first part of the dissertation, the discourse of separation became hegemonic in Israel during decades in which it has been normalized, to the degree that an alternative discourse becomes unthinkable, or silenced, as the analysis of the tours shows. At the same time, economic forces, demographic changes and municipal policies created the conditions for Hadar to become a neighborhood of diverse populations. Spending time in Hadar, as illustrated in the second part of the dissertation, exposes the agency that the neighborhood has over its residents, in mixing them with each other in the neighborhood's streets, coffee shops, cultural activities, and residential buildings. As I show in the third part of the dissertation, while it is possible to avoid dealing with the contradiction between the discourse of separation and the experience of mixing, this contradiction cannot be unnoticed. What emergence from the awareness to this condition are social attempts to make sense of it, to understand it, to talk about it, to represent it, and to try to resolve it. This dissertation also shows that reflexivity is not a single, unified practice. It can emerge ad hoc as an available tool to resolve a specific case, it can be routinized and serve as goal in its own, and it can lead to outcomes that cannot be pre-determined. It may strengthen the disciplining of the discourse of separation; it may push for imagining – and creating – an alternative discourse, which would reflect and feed the experience of mixing, and it may legitimize the gap and its virtues, thereby recognizing the incommensurability and living within the gap.

Reflexive coexistence as presented and analyzed in this dissertation is a neighborhood-based practice, highlighting long term acquaintances of neighbors who share and make the same space. It is in the neighborhood level, and not necessarily the city as a whole, as argued by Monterescu (2015:37, 285), that national dichotomies are constantly being challenged.

While the mixing neighborhood can serve as a *third space*, when it is mediated via practices of reflexivity it cannot guarantee the emergence and articulation of new subjectivities, new politics, and new identities as argued by Bhabha (Rutherford 1990). It has already been argued by social geographer Gill Valentine (2008) that contrary to the “contact hypothesis” of psychologist Gordon Allport, neighborhood encounters do not necessarily promote social integration and respect for difference, and can even generate different scales of resentment (ibid:328). What my research shows is how in the case of Haifa's Hadar neighborhood reflexivity serves as an available and familiar mediating mechanism for these possible outcomes. Reflexive coexistence, is, therefore the contemporary reaction to the incommensurability and the expression of living within it, of being aware of it, and of trying to make discourse and experience commensurate again – an imagined reality which may lead to pacifying the need for reflexivity.

Similar to other configurations of coexistence, reflexive coexistence cannot guarantee the emergence of a counter-hegemonic discourse to the discourse of separation. Disappointment at the various practices of coexistence has resulted in several radical activists calling for a shift from co-existence to co-resistance. For example, Palestinian musician Joan Safadi, who had performed and lived for a while in Hadar, posted on July

2014 a public status line on his Facebook page, saying (in English): “I have a dream... that one day Jews will also join the intifada! I call it co-resistance.” Similarly, based on his ethnographic research in Jaffa, Daniel Monterescu (2015:283) regards co-resistance as being counter-hegemonic. However, co-resistance might not necessarily serve as a productive ground on which an alternative discourse can grow. In fact, it can even reflect just another aspect of the hegemonic discourse. For an alternative discourse to emerge, what is required is acknowledging the mixing social environments *as* the alternative discourse.

Such emergence of an alternative discourse can also feed into contemporary discussions regarding the larger Israeli–Palestinian conflict. According to political scientist Bashir Bashir (2016:560), while the dominant political discourse on solving the conflict has been trapped in the past four decades by the logic of partition and statehood, the reality on the ground became increasingly bi-national. Scholars and activists alike have started calling to shift the focus toward integrative solutions “that view Israel/Palestine, the territory between the Mediterranean Sea and Jordan River, as a single historical and political site.” In his review of the various integrative solutions, Bashir notes (ibid:566) that the liberal solutions

entail a paradigmatic shift from a politics of separation to a politics of integration, rendering Palestinians and Israeli Jews internal rather than external to each other. Seeking integration requires the formation of Arab–Jewish partnerships and cooperation that lead joint and common struggles, activities, movements, and parties. Yet, forming Arab–Jewish partnerships and the tools required for mobilization, joint struggles, and actions remain strikingly esoteric and, for some, even unrealistic under the current circumstances.

Following Hal Foster's notion (2015:4) that contemporary avant-garde, far from being heroic, "does not pretend that it can break absolutely with the old order or found a new one; [and] instead it seeks to trace fractures that already exist within the given order, or pressure them further, even to activate them somehow," the ethnographic data and the analysis presented here offer the opportunity to regard the mixing neighborhood as one of the avant-garde social spheres within which the current circumstances could be challenged.

I write this last chapter in January 2017, during another rise in tension between Arab residents and the state of Israel. Following the state's attempt to evict the Bedouin village of Umm el-Hiran and to build a Jewish village in its stead, one of the village's residents as well as one policeman were killed, and dozens were injured.<sup>157</sup> As events unfolded, the Arab leadership in Israel issued a call for the international community to protect them, as minority under threat.

In a context of such brutal practices of separation, the existence of neighborhoods such as Hadar is, indeed, a miracle.

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<sup>157</sup> <https://972mag.com/two-killed-in-bedouin-village-slated-to-be-demolished-replaced-with-jewish-town/124514/> (retrieved: January 19<sup>th</sup> 2017).

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