**Working Title**

The Contestation over the Production of Space and Cultural Heritage in Historical World Heritage Cities existing in the Conflictual Ethnonational Political Context of a Settler Society.

**Introduction**

The research issues around the general context of transformational official national and urban spatial planning policies and development policies in inner settler societies, in the trail of adapting neoliberal economic and global standards and values. The research topic revolves around the transformation of such policies in world heritage historical cities existing in such societies.

In more details, The proposed research aims to put an insight on the contestation in historical cities recognized by the world heritage committee under the Unesco as world heritage sites for their outstanding value for all humanity by examining case studies. Such cities, because of adapting neoliberal economic and global cultural heritage preservation and tourism standards and values can witness a change from possessing and managing assets by the state towards privatization and from neglect towards preserving cultural heritage and developing cultural tourism instead.

Thus the study will be examining whether these kinds of policy transformations adapt to the existing ethnonational structure or whether the spatial control fractures as a result of the economic liberalization and the globalization of cultural heritage and cultural tourism.

Accordingly, two main research questions will interpret an answer:

1. Does the transformation policies from national proprietorship policy towards privatization policy adapt to the existing ethnonational structure in the city or whether the spatial control fractures following the change in policy?
2. Does the transformation policies from neglect toward preserving cultural heritage and developing cultural tourism adapt to the existing ethnonational structure in the city or whether the spatial control fractures following the change in policy?

The primary approach I will take will be as embodied in the spatial control model in Settler societies (Yiftachel & Ghanem 2004, 647-676). According to this model land, planning and development policies are shaped by the "project" of the state, which expands the ethnonational control of the majority over the multi-ethnic territory.

Analogously the approach dealing with cultural heritage production will be as of a necessary equivalent to spatial control. Policies and practices of cultural heritage are inherently political and an arena for contestation (Silverman 2011, 22) A significant motif in many heritage studies is the social structure of space and the necessary parallel of The contestation of space (ibid, 24).

The academic significance of the proposed research lies in its potential contribution to the elaboration and understanding of the mutual effect and the repercussion of extremely different processes taking place. Namely the aspiration of keeping control over space and heritage production by ethnizing, isolating and blocking the right of peripheral ethnonational groups in the city on the one hand and adapting neo-liberal values and standards which are Ostensibly blind to ethnicity and nationality on the other hand. By that I intend to challenge both; neoliberal theories concerning the neutrality of the privatization, transnational cultural heritage production policies and standards such as authenticity and integrity one the one hand and the claim of control over the production of space and cultural heritage on the other hand.

Researching the uniqueness of processes occurring within world heritage historical cities between the different structural forces mentioned above that shape it is meant to contribute as well to a better and deeper understanding of the effect of these forces on the nature of the social-political relations between the different ethnonational groups living in such cities.

Moreover, the research is about to build on existing knowledge what is already known on contested spaces and contested cultural heritage, and at the same time, it will enhance existing literature by filling the existing gaps by creating the linkage and originally synthesis the different existing bodies of knowledge; the contestation over space in settler societies and the contestation over cultural heritage production. With no much research done on this complexed dual reality occurring in world heritage historical cities in settler societies, answering the research questions will contribute to the existing knowledge and literature both on the social-political aspect of spatial planning and development policies in settler societies as well as to the existing knowledge on contested cultural heritage. The proposed research will

furthermore having that the deliverables of the proposed research are case studies, presents the proposed research with the potential to contribute to broad questions concerning the wide phenomenons examined as well as to narrow questions relevant to the specific case study cities.

Finally the research is also significant for its potential contribution to useful knowledge for its implication and practical impact on assessing the activity of spatial planning and development planning authorities in the national level and of the world cultural heritage committee under the Unesco as a transnational agency as well as the national cultural heritage bodies at inner Settler societies and at countries deeply divided along ethnonational lines in general. Mainly helping to raise the awareness of the rights and the impact and role local inhabitants can have in planning for the future of their city.

**Literature Review**

One of the central courses on which a regime is based as a settler society is the territorial-spatial control system, i.e., land policy and planning and development policy (Yiftachel & Ganem 2004, 765-766). Indeed, they are wrapped by the discourse of modernity, progress, and democracy, but the reality is that of dispossession and exclusion (ibid.). At the urban level, planning policy, land policy, and development policy - despite their presentation as technocratic or neutral, professional and rational they can be convenient tools by which dominant ethnic and social groups work to maintain their dominance within the city (Yiftachel & Yacobi 2003, 680).

Controlling land is often combined by the urgent need to memorize and nurture the official history giving legitimation to the right to exist claims of the regime. Herein cultural heritage including collective national memory gains a great focus by state and by urban authorities as well.

Multiethnic countries face particular challenges in determining and managing their cultural heritage (Silverman 2011, 25). There is an inherent assumption among state archaeologists and legislators that the past is a national asset whose interests precede the particular rights of groups that are generally called ethnic groups (ibid, 29). Conservation itself can be a means of suppressing the cultural identity of groups by the constant public and formal rhetoric about cultural continuity, authentic heritage and characterization of the poor as "traditional" and "living in the past" (e.g., proclaiming Tibet as a world heritage in China's initiative) (ibid).

In settlers societies, such questions arise about the relationship between space and memory regarding the erasure of the "native" presence and the creation of a new historical consciousness. The criticism of settler societies, particularly colonial societies, described the heritage of these societies as "predators" or "plunderer" in the sense that they had to erase or portray "indigenous" memories as inferior and justify the occupation or the takeover and settlement of the foreigners (Harrison & Hughes, 2009, 269).

Modernization and capitalism can be related to colonial and national projects in which the sense of cultural superiority of groups of settlers over indigenous groups serves as an ideological justification for planning and forgetting in space (Fenster & Yaacobi 2011,13).

**Methodology**

For the concern of elaborating the research questions, I will use a qualitative research method. Instrumental case studies method also will be applied. An instrumental case study is a common way to conduct qualitative research (Gerring 2004, 343) and will help to understand the broad phenomena (Stake 2000, 435-438). For that purpose, the old acre city in Israel and another world heritage city with similar characteristics to old acre will be chosen for comparison.

The data will be collected and analyzed using two main research tools:

1. Analysis of text content (Shkedi 2003, 203): The study will analyze official plans and documents of national and municipal bodies relevant to the phenomenon under investigation including document depending on the right to know application that will be submitted to the different managing bodies; as it concerns old Acre: the municipality, Amidar the national housing company, Israel Land Administration (ILA) the owner of the public housing, the Israeli Antiquities Authority, the Acre development company.

The rational adopting this tool is for the planning and development documentation are essential documents relevant to the research questions, that there content and implementation will be fully examined.

1. Semi-structured In-depth interviews: Interviews with community key figures such as social activists in formal and informal organizations, business owners and tourism entrepreneurs from within the community, and official policymakers / policy implementers in the city. The interviews are purposed to reveal the interviewees' ideas on the various processes studied; the privatization, the preservation of the cultural heritage and the developing Heritage tourism. (brief) the rationale for adopting these methods.

**Reference List**

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