Ségrégation et justice spatiale

sous la direction de
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Recognizing Justice:
Identities and Policies in Beer Sheva

"What we ask from you is simple: just observe the law; if you do this, everybody will benefit: you will have well planned, serviced and recognized towns, and we'll safeguard the last tracts of vacant land for the Jewish people around the world, and particularly for those who stayed for the time being in the ex-Soviet Union, for a possible day of crisis."
Ze'ev Boym, Minister for Housing, Beer Sheva, 14 June 2006.

The context is the unresolved land and planning disputes between the Bedouin Arabs surrounding the city of Beer Sheva and the Israeli state. The minister asks the indigenous Bedouin in no uncertain terms to leave their ancestors’ land, where they reside in "unrecognized" (and in the eyes of most Israeli planners “illegal”) villages and towns, and relocate into modernized, legal, and well-serviced localities.

Beyond the colonialist disregard of indigenous rights embedded in the minister's vision, he unwittingly exposed a dilemma about recognition - widely accepted as “positive” in discussions about spatial justice. His comments invoked a type of recognition which works against, not for, group rights and social justice. At the same time, he extended privileged recognition to potential Jewish immigrants. This differentiation provides a puzzling aspect to our thinking about urban justice and group rights rarely addressed by planning theorists. Should we, can we, "open up" the Pandora Box of recognition?

This chapter explores the relations between recognition and justice. We analyze the treatment of various immigrant and indigenous groups by state and urban authorities, and highlight the manner in which various types of recognition guide urban policy. Our central argument takes issue with the mainstream view of recognition as a necessarily positive element in the pursuit of urban justice. Instead, we view it as a multi-faceted socio-politi-
cal process, ranging between positive affirmation, marginalizing indifference and exclusive hostility, with a multitude of possibilities in between these poles. We argue that the "gradients" of recognition are linked to significant changes in the urban fabric. Not only are they clearly associated with socioeconomic (class) stratification, but also with phenomena we identify as new "urban colonialism", "creeping urban apartheid", and the formation of "gray" (informal) spaces.

We thus seek to advance the discussion on spatial justice, by "opening up" the rubric of "recognition". We maintain that a more sophisticated and critical understanding of this concept is needed, and that recognition, or lack of, may enhance or harm social and spatial justice. Recognition should thus be viewed as a continuum, and governing bodies should be aware of the damaging possibilities of marginalizing indifference or exclusive hostility, as much as the positive possibilities of affirmative recognition.

Following a theoretical discussion, a conceptual scheme is used to analyze the impact of planning on various groups in the Beer Sheva region. We trace the formulation of differential policy: affirmative recognition is extended to "Russian" immigrants (denoting Russian-speaking people from the former USSR); "marginalizing indifference" is prevalent in the policies towards Mizrahim (Jews arriving from the Middle East and their descendants); and hostile recognition is evident vis-a-vis most Arabs in the region. The claims of Palestinian refugees are totally absent from the planning discourse, while potential Jewish migrants, as noted in the minister's statement, cast a distant but ever-present shadow over the allocation of space in the region.

This chapter aims to rethink social justice under conditions of variegated recognition. We briefly suggest below the "right to the city" as a possible guiding principle for combining recognition and spatial justice, while avoiding the colonial pitfalls of planning for different types of recognition. This requires politicization and specialization of the abstract concept, and critical engagement with mainstream liberal literature on urban justice.


8. Thomas Hux, "Race, Public Policy and Planning in Britain", op. cit.; Sandbergcock Leonie, Mongrel Cities of the 21st Century, op. cit.
The main consequence of this discussion was the growing introduction of new categories and entities into the vocabulary and imagination of the "just city" concept, most notably "recognition", "diversity", "difference" and "multiculturalism".

**Recognition and Redistribution**

Nancy Fraser’s new classic essay re-conceptualized much of the above discussion, by arguing that claims for justice can be organized on two major structural axes — distribution and recognition, which operate in constant interaction, but are not reducible to one another. Within each axis, she added, approaches to justice range between "affirmative" and "transformative" measures. Affirmative measures denote relatively cosmetic steps with a temporary effect on injustices, which tend to reproduce in the long-run the unequal capital/nationalistic and male dominated settings. Transformative measures, on the other hand, have more profound effects, by challenging the social systems that produce the hierarchical order of classes, genders, "races" and ethnic entities. Fraser’s intervention and the debates that ensued, further entrenched recognition as a major category in the pursuit of social and urban justice.

Fraser’s work included a profound critique of mainstream liberalism and of the increasingly popular procedural approaches to social justice. Furthermore, she addressed the returning to structuralism, following a period in which Western theoretical debates were dominated by postmodernism and post-structuralism who focused on micro investigations of the communicative interaction of planners and their working environments and inspired by the Habermasian "communicative action" as the key to just and effective "deliberative" planning, at the expense of more structural, material or critical approaches.

Fraser’s critique opened the door for including of recognition of diversity in any consideration of a just city. Yet, and this is our main theoretical point, it appears as if recognition was adopted somewhat uncritically. For most Western scholars, recognition became a catch-all phrase for an act of including minority or weakened groups, allowing them a "voice" in the policy process. Recognition was to be accepted as the liberal or civil "right" to be heard, to be counted and represented. Beyond a general support of inclusion and participation, we wish to advance three main lines of critique to this approach. First, recognition as a "right" presupposes a benign state and political setting and an operating constitutional democracy, where rights can be secured through an independent judiciary. But rights alone are not enough, and should be supplemented by "capabilities" in order to progress towards a just city. Second, the emphasis and operationalization of liberal recognition is chiefly procedural; that is, focusing on participation and inclusion, but paying little attention to the material, economic and concrete power aspects of planning recognition. There have been numerous accounts of this "thin" type of recognition that often neglects and is therefore blind to material inequalities and oppressions.

Third, and most importantly, liberal multicultural recognition tends to overlook the possibility that the marking of distinct groups may also harbor a range of negative consequences, beyond the neglect implied by the previous point. As shown by various studies dealing with minorities, recognition may lead to a process of "othering", and bear distinctively unjust material and political consequences. This negative potential often surfaces
in situations of ethnic, national, religious or racial conflict, where dominant groups are keen to reinforce the difference of weakened groups in order to perpetuate their disempowerment.

**Urban Neo-Colonialism**

The main point behind the need to re-conceptualize recognition is the growing evidence of emerging urban neo-colonial relations, which put in motion a pervasive process we define as "creeping apartheid" and the widespread emergence of "gray" space as part of today's urbanity. Urban colonialism sees dominant elites, whose privilege draws upon their identity, class, and location utilize the contemporary city to advance three main dimensions of colonial relations. These dimensions are: 1) Expansion (of material or power position) 2) Exploitation (of labor and/or resources), and 3) Segregation (construction of hierarchal and essentialized difference).

To be sure, these dimensions operate today in geopolitical conditions very different from classical European colonialism. Most strikingly, the global European conquest and settlement is now reversed, with a flow of disenfranchised, often status-less immigrants and indigenous peoples into the world's major cities. The economic power of the urban elites, and the weakness and deep difference of immigrants (whether from rural regions or overseas), create patterns of ethno-class segregation and economic disparities which often resemble the traditional colonial city. This urban order is most prevalent in liberalizing ethnotropic states, which structurally privilege particular identities, while marginalizing minorities through both identity and economic regimes.

These colonial-type urban relations are linked to the condition we term "creeping apartheid" in which groups enjoy vastly differing packages of rights and capabilities under the same urban regime, drawing on their class, identity and place of residence. The order is "creeping" because it is never declared, and is only partially institutionalized. Profound discrimination and inequality are based on both de-jure and de-facto mechanisms, which are commonly identified as "temporary." One of the most conspicuous "temporary" phenomena is the emergence of "gray" spaces, composed of informal, often illegal, development and populations. Most typically, indigenous and immigrant minorities, squeezed between the various state and identity regulatory mechanisms, occupy and develop these gray spaces into a major component of today's metropolis, thereby augmenting the entrenchment of "creeping apartheid." Hence, despite its putative "temporariness", this exploitive and uneven urban order has been intensifying for decades, and the population of disenfranchised urban residents and workers has grown significantly, often into the millions.

A variety of urban colonial relations are recorded in the non-Western cities and mainly in cities of the first world that are focal points of mass immigration and economic growth. Most of these studies find that identity and class inequalities are frequently connected, and that consequently, recognition and distribution intertwine in claims of social and spatial justice. Yet, identity and class also present different bases for human organization, which may undermine one another in the process of political mobilization yet not reducible to one another.

Given the above, we claim that the rubric of "identity," "diversity," "difference," and the catch-all "multiculturalism" are often too vague and at times confused in the current urban literature. We offer a conceptual way forward by sketching a continuum of recognition types, with three main "ideal types"—affirmative, indifferent and hostile. These can assist in a more systematic analysis of the interaction between policy and identity.

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21. Ibid.


25. MARCUS Peter, "Identity, Territory and Power", op. cit.

Affirmative recognition entails recognition of a group’s identity with the associated cultural and material needs and aspirations, allocation of a fair share of power and resources. There are two main sub-types: proportional and privileged recognition, reflecting the group’s power and importance in the policy arenas. Affirmative recognition often leads to the constitution of amicable multicultural relations and inter-group integration in the city, although it may cause some tension with marginalized minorities, who may object to the advantageous position of privileged groups.

Indifference means the passive existence of the distinct group in the policy process. It entails non-recognition of the group’s specific identity and its associated needs and demands, with official acceptance of its members as formally equal members of the urban community. Indifference leads to implicit and covert types of group domination and discrimination, deriving from the inability of minorities to pinpoint their discrimination in the absence of clear categories about their existence as a group. This often prevents from setting legitimate collective goals. Sub-types include benign and marginalizing indifference, with the former typical of liberal regimes where the promise of individual mobility tempers group grievances, while the latter typifies illiberal conditions, where group assimilation is coerced without strong commitment to civil rights. The consequences depend on specific geopolitical and economic conditions, although in general, conflict levels are relatively low. The main focus of urban politics revolves around class and place, while identity politics is nudged to the periphery of the policy process.

Hostile recognition means the acknowledgement of group identity in policy-making, with a concurrent framing of its demands in a range of negative images to the dominant perception of a good city. Hostile recognition constructs the group in question as a nuisance or threat. Subtypes vary between implicit and explicit hostility, which in turn fluctuates according to the nature of the groups in question. The consequences of hostile recognition also vary according to the group type, size and setting, but they commonly cause the emergence of “gray” spaces of informal development, and generate a dynamic of antagonism and polarization. Levels of conflict are highest when national or religious minorities, with strong historical claims to the city, are subjected to this type of policy.

Notably, the above categories, and those used later in the paper, provide an analytical grid which cannot capture the complexity of the policy-recognition nexus. We suggest here a conceptual map to help discern and organize the complex field, with full awareness that all categories are socially constructed and are never stable or complete. The application of each type of recognition depends on a range of historical and political factors negotiated and determined in a wide range of societal spheres and struggles. They also depend on the variegated nature of group identities, which vary in their depth and future goals, ranging between separation, autonomy, integration or assimilation.

Within this context, it is vital to remember that spatial policy is not a mere reflector of political forces imported from the “outside”, but an important actor itself, which determines much of the way groups are treated in the public arena. While clearly set within an active political sphere, urban policy can assist in changing group position from marginalization and hostility towards recognition and equality, and vice versa, as depicted in Figure 1.

![Fig. 1. Policy Justice, Recognition](image)

With this conceptual framework in mind, let us proceed to the planning of the Beer Sheva region, and examine the ability of this framework to shed light on the connection between planning, justice and the city.

**PLANNING AND RECOGNITION(S) IN BEER SHEVA**

Beer Sheva is the main urban center of the Negev/Naqab region accommodates a population of 186,000 in the city, and some 560,000 in the
metropolitan area. The modern city was rebuilt by the Ottoman Empire as an urban service and control center for surrounding Bedouin tribes, and continued this function during the British Mandate period, remaining a small and predominantly Arab town.

During the Independent War in 1948, Beer Sheva was captured by Israel, which drove out about eighty percent of its Arab population to Gaza, Egypt, the West Bank and Jordan. The 11,000 who remained were awarded Israeli citizenship, but were concentrated in a special military controlled zone known as “the siyag” (“the limit”) as depicted in Figure 2.

![Diagram of Beer Sheva and the West Bank](image)

**Fig. 2. La zone du Siyag**

*Source: Ministry of the Interior records. Aerial photograph analysis (1999)*

The ensuing decades saw the first wave of concerted Israeli effort to Judaize the previously Arab-Naqab, using a combination of deeply ethno-


cratic land, development, housing, and planning policies. Israel nationalized nearly all Bedouin land (leaving about fifteen percent of the region still under legal dispute), built eight new Jewish towns and some 105 rural Jewish settlements. Masses of Jewish refugees and immigrants—mainly Mizrahi (“Eastern Jews”) fleeing a hostile Arab world—were housed in large public housing estates, portrayed in the state planning discourses as the national frontier.

In a few short years, however, the frontier, including Beer Sheva, turned into a marginalized periphery, in what was termed the “frontiphery” process. Subsequently, the Beer Sheva region became characterized by social and economic under-development, mediocre levels of education and health, and a stigma deriving from its Mizrahi (Eastern) character. This was most conspicuous in the “development towns”—Israel’s version of new town policy aimed at housing immigrants and creating new urban communities.

Eight such towns were built in the Beer Sheva region during the implementation of one of Israel’s most ambitious planning projects. The towns housed large numbers of Mizrahs during the 1950s and 1960s. Small groups of immigrants continued to arrive during the 1970s and 1980s, mainly from the Soviet Union, South and North America, and France, although they did not significantly alter the region’s Mizrahi character.

In the 1990s a mass influx of Russian-speaking immigrants arrived from the former Soviet Union (hereafter Russians), and some groups of Ethiopians. The city of Beer Sheva, welcomed the new influx, which facilitated large scale development to accommodate the new housing demand, and a new planning and public discourse of a “globalizing city”.


used the vast reserves of low value state land, relaxed planning controls, and generous state incentives for large scale housing developments.

In 2007 the city population was composed of Mizrahim (41%), Russians (31%), Ashkenazim (8%), Ethiopians (4%) and Arabs (3%), and six other small groups. In the wider metropolitan region, Mizrahim also constitute the largest group (29%), while Russians (24%) and Bedouin-Arabs (27%) also hold substantial proportions. The other groups are all smaller than four percent.

![Map of Beer Sheva](image)

**Fig. 3. Composition ethnique à Beer Sheva**

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics (Israel), Demographic characteristics of populations in cities and statistical areas: Population and households – select data. General Census 1999


**Approach**

For this project we have attempted to analyze the overall impact of spatial policies on the main cultural groups in the Beer Sheva metropolitan region. To this end, we analyzed the plans affecting city and region, which include: the 1952 national outline plan (TAMA 1); the 1978 southern district plan (Plan 4/1); the 1991 national plan (TAMA 31); the 1996 development plan for Beer Sheva (non-statutory); the 1998 metropolitan plan for Beer Sheva region (Plan 4-14); the 2005 national plan (TAMA 35); the 2007 metropolitan plan (Amendment Plan 4-14-23); and supporting urban housing, land and cultural policies of the Beer Sheva City Council.

These plans were developed by the ministries of Housing, Interior and Infrastructure, and the Israel Land Authority, and have been only partially successful and Beer Sheva remained a peripheral urban region in terms of its economic, political or cultural standing within Israeli/Palestinian space.

During this period of debate over the region, Israel implemented an urbanization planning strategy for the region's Bedouin Arabs. This has involved an attempt to concentrate the Bedouins into seven modern towns surrounding, but not part of, Jewish Beer Sheva (see Figure 2). This policy relocated about half the Arabs of the south (some 85,000 in 2007) and mainly those with no land claims, through the lure of modern infrastructure and prospects of modernization. However, despite some development, the towns became known for their marginality, unemployment, deprivation and crime. The remaining Bedouins, estimated at 80-90,000, have steadfastly stayed on their disputed land in some 45 unrecognized (shanty) towns and villages (Figure 2). A protracted land dispute over this "gray" space has persisted for decades.

The combination of these plans and policies, and the accompanying discourses, regulations, and development initiatives are the subject of our analysis. We focus mainly on local and district plans, and pay special attention to the implications of these plans for the region's main ethnic communities – Russian, Mizrahi and Arab. We gain further insights by conducting a series of interviews with six key policy makers in the region, as well as 11 in-depth interviews with members of the communities in question.
PLANNING AND AFFIRMATIVE RECOGNITION: “RUSSIAN” IMMIGRANTS

Planning for immigrants from the former USSR in Beer Sheva has generally been marked by a benign attitude, premised on generous distribution and affirmative recognition, and couched within a long-term expectation of Russian integration into the Israeli-Jewish culture and society. The policy has been promoted jointly by an active state government, and by urban authorities interested in accommodating the immigrants.

The main thrust of the urban policy towards the Russians, as reflected in National Plan 31 and the various Beer Sheva development plans, was the provision of rapid housing, first temporary and then permanent. In parallel, the Israeli housing and planning systems thoroughly reorganized themselves and sped up the approval process, released previously protected agricultural land for urban development, and provided generous subsidies and incentives for both immigrants and developers. A level of 65% of home ownership was achieved in 2005, a mere 10-15 years after their mass arrival with meager financial or property resources.

The influx of over 40,000 Russian immigrants to Beer Sheva during the 1990s, and a corresponding period of rapid economic growth, spawned large scale new housing and office construction. Initially, the mass arrival caused economic and social concerns, because the population was relatively old, and relied heavily on the city’s welfare services. However, within a decade, the economic benefits to the city outweighed the social costs, as the combination of social benefits and human skills propelled large sections within the Russian communities into the city’s middle classes.

City planning revisions created three large new neighborhoods on the outskirts of the city – Ramot, Nahal Ashan and Neve Z’ev/Nahal Beka.


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(Figure 3). The latter two are characterized by their high percentage of Russians, and their predominance in shaping local landscape and institutions.

With regard to culture, large parts of Beer Sheva’s urban landscape have been “Russified”, with signs, institutions and businesses catering to their growing demand for Russian products (especially food, drinks and sex) supported, financially and planning by the Beer Sheva authorities.

This has also been reflected in Russian political organization, which formed several local parties, created conspicuous levels of collective Russian political representation in City Hall and appointing Russian professionals.

It is important to frame that Russians are still expected by the majority of Israelis to integrate and eventually assimilate into the mainstream Jewish community. Israel has not adopted an open multicultural approach, and denies the right for separate legislation or institutions for autonomous governance. Partial Russian autonomy is created “from below” by communities, markets, and local governments, and this cultural autonomy is thriving due to the population’s overall development in accordance with the Zionist state and its Judaization project termed as “the ethnicization of Zionism”.

PLANNING AND (MARGINALIZING) INDIFFERENCE: THE MIZRAHIM

The backbone of Beer Sheva’s population is made up of the Mizrahim (Eastern Jews) who arrived en-mass to the region during the 1950s and 1960s. The treatment of these migrants by urban authorities can be termed, “marginalizing indifference.”

From the outset, the Mizrahim were the “step child” of Zionism, mobilized to join the Jewish national movement after the horrific consequences of the Nazi holocaust of the 1940s. As Zionist-Palestinian tensions rose, Arab regimes and Islamic societies became increasingly hostile to Middle Eastern Jewry causing mass exodus during the late 1940s and early 1950s. Most of these Jews arrived in Israel and were housed by the state, first, in temporary camps, and later in mostly peripheral urban centers. Beer Sheva was one of the largest centers to accommodate Mizrahi immigration, with the city population rising six fold between 1950 and 1970.

40. Ibid.
41. Yiftachel, Oren, Ethnicity: Land and Identity Politics in Israel/Palestine, op. cit.
But the type of recognition extended to the Mizrahim was condescending and marginalizing. Their inclusion into the Zionist project was premised on their Judaism, but at the same time on a denial of their Eastern and Arab cultural affiliation. The state attempted to re-build Jewish identity in the vision set by European secular elites. To that end, the masses of Mizrahim, who became a majority among Israel’s Jews in the mid 1950s, had to be westernized, secularized and de-Arabized.

In Beer Sheva, as noted, Mizrahim quickly made a decisive majority, accounting for over 70 percent of the population. However, the city leadership remained predominantly Ashkenazi (western Jewish). The Ashkenazi-Mizrah tension marked much of the local political scene during the first three decades of the state, but no genuine Mizrah leadership could prevail at this time.

Over the years, only one Mizrahi mayor was appointed during the 1970s and was considered as a soft “mizrahi” with the influx of Russian immigrants, the Mizrahi “threat” was blunted. The two long-serving mayors who followed (one is incumbent), came from the traditional Ashkenazi elites, preventing city Mizrahi communities from receiving open, public recognition.

Urban planning initiatives for the Mizrahi immigrants involved dense, modernist, public housing developments, located in a dozen centrally planned “garden city” type neighborhoods across the city. During the last two decades, several new, low density, neighborhoods and three suburban “satellite” towns, have attracted most of Beer Sheva’s (small) Ashkenazi population and those Mizrahim who moved into the middle classes. A degree of benign ethnic mixing began to occur in these localities, as it did in middle-class neighborhoods within the city limits. Large groups of Mizrahim still remain in the inner city stigmatized neighborhoods. Their employment was predominantly in labor-intensive industries and low-medium-level public sector, as well as small traders and local businesses. This created a conspicuous overlap between their Mizrahi ethnicity and working and lower-middle-class position.

The organization of Mizrahi parties was constantly understudied by the state and city leadership, and portrayed as “divisive” and harmful to the

43. Cohen, Eitan, Beer Sheva – the Fourth City, op. cit.
44. Peled Yoav, Shas: the Challenge of Israeliness, Tel-Aviv, Yediot Ahronot, 2001 (Hebrew).
45. Cohen, Eitan, Beer Sheva – the Fourth City, op. cit.
Levels of poverty, child mortality, and crime are the worst in Israel/Palestine, and create a metropolitan geography of stark ethno-class contrast with the well-serviced adjacent Jewish localities. The Beer-Sheva metropolis has come to resemble many Third World cities that comprise a well-developed modern urban core, and a range of peripheral informal localities, suffering severe poverty and deprivation. It is here that the process of urban colonialism and “creeping apartheid” noted above, are most evident.

Arab campaigns against deprivation have highlighted both equality and identity, focusing on the right to reasonable material conditions, as well as cultural preservation. In recent years, religion has played an increasing part in Arab urban campaigns, especially around education and places of worship.

Bedouin Arab representation in urban and regional planning affairs has ranged between non-existent and negligible. Despite being the indigenous inhabitants of the region, and constituting nearly a third of its current population, Bedouin presence in planning bodies has been meager and random. During the last decade, for example, only two Bedouins have sat on the district planning council (each in turn being one amongst 13 Jews in the council), and not even one Bedouin is represented on the Beer Sheva city council. Other planning bodies such as the Israel Land Authority, Ministry of Housing, Welfare and Education have occasionally included a single Arab member, but always in a position of distinct minority.

The combination of land, cultural, and material deprivations and a lack of representation, has bolstered antagonism towards the state and spurred the Bedouin Arabs to form their own institutions. The Regional Council for the Unrecognized Villages (RCUV) was formed in 1997 to combine the various localities surrounding Beer Sheva and present an alternative planning approach, based on full recognition of indigenous rights and equality. This form of “insurgent planning” rallied a group of notable NGO’s to support the new (unrecognized) council, and caused some change in the public discourse. It is no longer possible to ignore the Bedouins as mere “invaders” or “outsiders” to the metropolitan region, and their demands are heard continuously in the media and in administrative and professional circles.

The authorities have also been forced to recognize nine of the 45 unrecognized villages, although no infrastructure such as running water, roads or permanent schools, have been allocated to these localities as yet. Insurgent indigenous planning practices and the prevailing attitude of “hostile recognition” has clashed in recent years to cause spiraling polarization between Bedouins and authorities, with little progress towards resolving the conflict. One such issue revolves around the renowned and architecturally significant Beer Sheva mosque, which was built by the Ottomans to serve the region’s population. Despite constant Arab demands, the city refuses to open it for Muslim worship, with one powerful councilor of the ruling coalition, Eli Bokker claiming that “the region has dozens of mosques in Bedouin localities and towns, and Beer Sheva is now a Jewish city, with the right to protect this urban character.”

As a result, the Mosque has been lying idle for decades, and is now in an advanced state of architectural deterioration. Following a recent appeal by several NGO’s, the Israeli high court ruled in favor of opening the mosque for “Arab cultural uses.” Despite the latest ruling, the city is steadfast in its refusal, and has now condemned the building as too dangerous for human use.

Eli Bokker’s statement is a reminder of the powerful narratives framing urban colonialism, and the resultant politics of denial, fear and hostile recognition as well as the process we termed “creeping apartheid”.

**Impact and Reflection**

The foregoing shows that, indeed, groups are recognized in very different ways by the urban policy process. One clear question that arises from this is what the long-term impact of such uneven recognition is, although its systematic examination must await a different context.

Yet, it is not difficult to intuitively associate negative types of recognition with socioeconomic marginalization and political weakness. This is supported by a cursory look at the socioeconomic standing of urban communities in the Beer Sheva region. We can take, for example, the “quality of life” index of localities prepared by the Israel Bureau of Statistical...
tics which is based on a combination of socioeconomic characteristics. In the 2005 survey, the typical Russian neighborhood of Neve Zeeva received a score of 12 (in a 1-20 range), while a decade earlier it received only a score of 8. Another concentration of Russians, Nahal A'chan, received the score of 9 against 6 a decade earlier. In relative typical Mizrahi neighborhoods such as Schuna Gimmel, and Schuna Tet, the scores remained quite the same during the years: 8 in 2006 and 9 in 1995, and 13 in both years respectively. The Bedouin Arab localities surrounding Beer Sheva, Tel Sheva and Lakiyya scored 3 and 4, respectively in 2005, and 2 and 3 a decade earlier. These scores indicate the significant improvement of localities identified with Russians, as opposed to the stagnation characterizing localities with Mizrahi and Arab majorities. They also highlight notable differences within each cultural group, indicating that other forces are at work in the stratification process. Needless to say, the link between recognition and development requires a more in-depth investigation. This cursory look confirms however the importance of considering the specific type of recognition as a key element in theorizing justice and oppression in the city. Our understanding of spatial justice has indeed been complicated in recent years with the introduction of "recognition" as a new philosophical axis for justice claims, and by the mobilization of politics of identity. Recognition claims interact in complex ways with the well-established call for fair distribution of material and political resources and fairness in decision making processes. The nature of this interaction is further complicated by our main argument in this paper, namely that recognition has to be studied critically, and that it may work for or against, the group in question.

Clearly, the questions raised in this paper present a major challenge to the justice literature, and need to be explored further – theoretically and empirically. The need for this investigation is reinforced in the rapidly changing urban world, where diversity, hierarchy, and identity politics are re-written within a globalizing economy, and within new regimes of uneven citizenship. We plan to continue the current exploration both comparatively, between various types of ethnically divided cities, and theoretically, engaging new debates over spatial justice which emerge from changing urban and political environments.

A promising way forward may be found in the further development of the Lefebvrian notion of "the right to the city" that lacks specific details on...