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Spatial regimes of power: combined municipal policing in the Arab city of Nazareth

This paper examines the agency of Arab urban spaces in shaping local policing arrangements in Israel using the recent introduction of Combined Municipal Policing (CMP) in the city of Nazareth as a case study. Departing from prevailing analytical approaches to the study of local governance in Arab urban localities in Israel, it adopts a distributive notion of agency which addresses both the role of (uneven) arrangements of power in producing Arab-only urban spaces, as well as the role of (uneven) material assemblages and infrastructures of power – road networks, in particular – in generating, and frustrating, local policing arrangements within them. Building on a critique of ethnocratic theory as it relates to Arab-only localities in particular, it argues that changes in local policing arrangements should not be viewed simply as a sophistication of prevailing mechanisms of control, but rather as an interactional consequence of a more complex *spatial regime of power* which reveals the latent, unintended and immanent political potency of the (Arab) city to talk to, with and back to power.

Overcrowded and congested, with high rates of poverty and unemployment, Israel's Arab towns and cities contain many "gray spaces" (Yiftachel 2009) which, like Cairo's *ashwiyyat* and Rio's *favelas*, are difficult to police.¹ Situated at the intersection between neoliberal and ethnic governmentalities, new strategies of policing have emerged in these politically marginalised and peripheral spaces which have sought to extend the penetrative capacities of the police within them. Combined municipal policing (CMP) (*shitur eeroni* in Hebrew, *shurta baladi* in Arabic) was first introduced in 2011 as a means of combatting rising levels of crime in Israel's inner cities. Championed by the Ministry of Internal Security (MoIS) as a new direction in "quality of life" policing to be delivered through specially created police partnerships with local municipalities (Harmatz 2012; Saunders et al 2013), the scheme was initially introduced as a pilot scheme in the mixed city of Lod before expanding, within a period of months, to twelve other localities including four Arab-only cities (Biran and Regev 2012). The largest of these is Nazareth.

With its tight network of narrow streets, overhanging buildings and few open public spaces, the sight of "regular"² police officers in Nazareth's inner city was, until the introduction of the scheme, both rare and unusual. Given the long history of "underpolicing" (Ben-Porat et al 2012) coupled with

¹ Referring to those "developments, enclaves, populations and transactions positioned between the 'lightness' of legality/approval/safety and the 'darkness' of eviction/destruction/death", gray spaces, according to Oren Yiftachel (2009: 243) are "neither integrated nor eliminated, forming pseudo-permanent margins of today's urban regions, which exist partially outside the gaze of state authorities and city plans". For more on the policing of gray spaces in Cairo and elsewhere, see: Bayat and Denis (2000); Wacquant (2008).

² Regular police (also known as "blue" police because of the colour of their uniform) are distinguished from paramilitary units such as the Border Police which is tasked with "internal security" on both sides of the Green Line.

periods of episodic violence which have characterised police-minority relations in Israel, the introduction of CMP within Arab localities such as Nazareth raises questions concerning the origins and significance of the scheme (Saunders 2013). Is CMP, as some suggest, an innovative mechanism for responsive and devolved policing based on fighting crime, and rehabilitating community-police relations in hitherto marginalised and neglected sectors of society through consensus-building and local partnerships? Or is it, as others contend, a cynical mechanism for increasing the coercive and penetrative capabilities of the state in remote, inaccessible and “dangerous” spaces?

Two main explanatory responses to these questions exist. The first traces the origins of the scheme back to a series of demonstrations which took place in Arab towns across Israel in 2000 during which 13 Palestinians – including three residents of Nazareth – were killed by police (Adalah 2006). Considered to be a “wake-up call for Israel” (Peleg and Waxman 2011: 96) with regards to its handling of the Palestinian minority, a Commission of Inquiry into the killings made a number of specific recommendations to address what it referred to as a “breakdown in effective policing” in the Arab sector (Or 2006: 39-40). The recommendations, which included calls for an increase in budgetary spending in Arab localities and the recruitment of a greater number of Palestinians in the police, are understood to have laid the basis for the eventual emergence of CMP in 2011. According to this explanation, then, CMP is a part of a deliberate strategy to address the mutual alienation of police and local communities through strategic recruitment and partnership with local Arab partners.

The second explanatory response identifies a different trajectory and source of political momentum for the scheme. Rather than identifying it as an innovation designed to improve police-community relations, this account sees CMP as a sophistication of existing strategies of control based on fears within mainstream Israeli political circles that “Arab crime” has begun to encroach on Jewish population centres. Commenting on an increase in illegal weapons seizures in Arab towns, Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, for example, recently decried the “lawlessness” and “civil terror” which, he said, have turned Arab towns and cities into Israel’s “Wild West” (Lis 2012). Seen in this light, CMP can be understood as a reaction to Israeli (Jewish) security concerns and a strategic attempt to improve and extend the penetrative capabilities of the state inside Arab urban localities in Israel.

Notwithstanding their respective merits, this paper takes issue with both of these explanations which offer a narrow, linear and heavily statist account of political agency in a deeply divided context. If policing involves a wide range of activities and processes “aimed at preserving the security of a particular social order” (Reiner 2010: 5), then changes in the configuration of local policing arrangements on the margins provide a useful opportunity to interrogate assumptions about these

broader social ordering processes – how they are constituted, and changed, over time – but also the particular spatial logics, impulses and dynamics which shape them.

Identifying Israel as an example of an ethnocratic regime which develops “chiefly when control over territory is challenged, and when a dominant group is powerful enough to determine unilaterally the nature of the state” (Yiftachel 1999: 367-8), a focus on space and the (Arab) city is an intuitive one. Ninety five per cent of Palestinians in Israel live in urban localities.³ Palestinian patterns of urban concentration are, in fact, five per cent higher than those of Israeli Jews (CBS 2014). Ethnocratic theory has usefully shed light on the processes and logics of ethnic expansionism and control which have produced this particular pattern of urban concentration as well as its systemic effects in generating ongoing asymmetries of power on a local and regional level inside Israel-Palestine today. Yet, it has also unwittingly reinforced a rigid understanding of power-as-control⁴ leaving little analytical space to consider the unintended consequences of historic patterns of territorial expansionism and urban concentration in practice.

This is particularly the case with regards to analyses of urban infrastructure and its role in shaping local political interactions. Despite an increase in recent years in the number of studies examining the role of the urban built environment in shaping broader political dynamics in Israel-Palestine (Weizman 2007; Gordon 2008; Shamir 2013), the analytical frameworks adopted by the bulk of this growing volume of critical scholarship continue to neglect Arab-only spaces inside “Israel proper”⁵ where 90 per cent of all Palestinians in Israel live (Jabareen 2014). In so doing, the prevailing critical scholarship has not only tended to overlook the particular materiality of Arab urban spaces in Israel, but it has also tended to hollow out the power and potency of these peripheral, marginalised spaces in shaping, challenging and resisting broader social-ordering processes as they are materialised in the city.

New directions in critical scholarship have begun to challenge this trend. Recent work by Nir Gazit and Robert Latham (2014), for example, calls for an alternative research agenda which provides a greater account of “the existence and possibilities of spatial, forms, practices and understandings that might advance desecuritization and de-subjugation” (2014: 63). Opening up new avenues of thinking about spatial alternatives and counter-sovereignties in Israel-Palestine, their gaze nonetheless maintains a somewhat narrow focus on those iconic sites of power and resistance in the occupied Palestinian

³ An urban locality is defined by the CBS as any locality with a population of 2,000 or more (CBS 2014).

⁴ The territorial control narrative is long-standing in critical scholarship of Palestinians in Israel. See, for example: Jiryis (1968), Zureik (1979), Lustick (1980), Kimmerling (1983), Falah (1991), Forman (2006), Benvenisti (2002), Yiftachel (2006).

⁵ “Israel proper” refers to the territory inside the internationally recognised pre-1967 borders of Israel. Given the gradual erosion of the borders separating the state of Israel and the illegally occupied Palestinians territories, this terminology is used here primarily to enable greater territorial precision.

territories (such as at checkpoints, the Wall, etc.) and, to a lesser extent, on large “mixed cities”⁶ inside Israel proper where only 10 per cent of Palestinian citizens live. Little to no attention, by contrast, is given to either the power and political potential of those “non-iconic” (Wallach 2013) and everyday sites and places which produce the vast majority of spaces of interaction for the bulk of ordinary Palestinians living inside Israel and the role which the material arrangement of these Arab-only urban spaces play in creating a distinctive type of politics (and political imaginary) in Israel-Palestine.

The central aim of this paper is, therefore, to focus on the particular *spatiality* of CMP in Arab-only localities in Israel in order to show how this spatiality reveals a particularly urban form of political contention which has the power and potency to shape broader political dynamics and social-ordering processes. Based on four different periods of ethnographic fieldwork conducted in the city of Nazareth between 2008 and 2014 involving semi-structured interviews with municipal staff, NGOs, police representatives and local residents as well as observation of policing practices before and after the introduction of CMP in 2011, the argument of the paper – and its main contribution to both the literature on Israel-Palestine as well as to a growing critical scholarship on global urbanism and urban forms of political contention on the margins (Sanyal 2015) – is that the same material and infrastructural arrangements of power which contain the city and its population also limit and frustrate local policing arrangements within it. It is, as this paper will set out, the inability of the police to gain quick access and easy manoeuvrability inside the confines of the city which not only explains the emergence of CMP but reveals the ongoing power of the (Arab) city to talk to, with and back to power. It is, in other words, the very material arrangement of the city – its road networks, in particular – which have created the material and political basis from which alternative policing arrangements have emerged. The emergence of CMP, therefore, not only reveals the power and agency of the (Arab) city but the potential of Arab urban spaces in particular to effect broader possibilities of socio-political change from within.

In order to make this argument, the article proceeds in the following way: Building on a critique of ethnocratic theory as it relates to Arab urban spaces, it adopts a materially-grounded, distributive notion of agency which incorporates critical insights from the work of Timothy Mitchell on agency and space before proposing and elaborating the notion of *spatial regimes of power* as a useful heuristic device through which to capture the contentious and fractious nature of material and political interactions in the city. The remainder of the paper applies this to Nazareth. Beginning with an account of the historical processes through which space in the city has been reconfigured since 1948, it then

⁶ Elaborated later on, mixed cities refer to a small number of large urban centres in Israel which have a small but significant Palestinian minority

examines the particular infrastructural logics of road and road networks which not only contain the city but shape, and frustrate, policing arrangements leading up to, and immediately following, the introduction of CMP in the city. The paper concludes with some initial remarks on the future prospects of CMP in Arab cities in Israel before considering the more immediate implications of schemes such as CMP for new and emerging research agendas in contentious urban politics in marginalised settings.

Locating the Arab city

Ethnocratic theory (Yiftachel 1999, 2006) has made a significant contribution to our understanding of uneven political geographies in Israel-Palestine. Developed primarily in respect to the system of territorial control which exists inside Israel proper, its insights have contributed to a burgeoning scholarship on uneven geographies of power and control in Israel-Palestine (for example, Weizman 2007; Gordon 2008 and Harker 2010). Three main issues of analytical focus nonetheless limit its applicability to a spatial analysis of policing in Nazareth: (1) its statist approach to power-as-control rather than an understanding of power-as-contention, (2) its focus on “mixed cities” over and above Arab-only localities in Israel; (3) and its neglect of other forces of power and forms of agency in the city. This section discusses these issues in order to highlight the need for an adjusted analytical framework through which the emergence of CMP in Nazareth can be better located and examined.

Focusing on the mechanisms through which “disproportional ethnic control over a contested multi-ethnic territory” (Yiftachel 1999: 367-8) is enabled, extended and maintained in practice, much of the critical scholarship which ethnocratic theory has inspired has focused primarily on the forces of (Jewish) territorial expansionism and control in Israel. The reasons for this are clear. Palestinians in Israel have lost more than half their land holdings through state confiscation and today own less than 2.5 per cent of the land. Faced with decades of land seizure and a growing sophistication of legal mechanisms through which that land has been re-allocated, re-zoned and re-purposed for Jewish settlement and development purposes, the municipal boundaries of Palestinian towns and villages in Israel have continuously shrunk and hardened. Not a single Palestinian town has been built since 1948 to accommodate its growing population and Palestinian citizens are denied the right to live, buy or build a house in roughly 700 other Jewish-only settlements (Forman & Kedar 2004; Jabareen 2014).

The physical and geographic containment and control of this large indigenous minority (which makes up 20 per cent of the total population) extends into the policing of Palestinian communities and urban centres. “Violent force,” Yiftachel (2006: 36) reminds us, “is critical in assisting the state to maintain (oppressive) ethnonational control over contested regions and resisting groups. To that end, the

armed forces (the military, the police), which bear the name of the entire state, are predominantly affiliated with the leading ethnic nation". As a result of this emphasis on the forces of expansionism and control, the terms "ethnocratic regime" and "ethnocratic state" are often interchangeably used in the literature (Yiftachel 1997; Yiftachel and Ghanem 2004). There are two main consequences of this problematic terminological slippage between the loosely defined yet distinct concepts of "state" and "regime" which highlight the limitations of this approach to thinking about alternative political possibilities. One, power is equated with traditional powerholders, the "state" and its (Jewish) majority-affiliated elites. Two, the power of space is reduced to a mostly instrumental level of state intentionality to maximise territorial control over land, where land is simply a resource to be grabbed, re-zoned and settled (or be confiscated or evicted from). Obscured from this analysis is the power and potency of alternative forces of power and spaces of contestation to emerge from these uneven territorial arrangements of power and create, in the process, more complex power dynamics.

As Yiftachel observes, an ethnocracy is after all an inherently contradictory and "unstable regime, *with opposite forces of expansionism and resistance in constant conflict*" (1999: 367-8, italics added). The sites at which these forces come into contact and the significance of their interaction for the resilience or mutability of prevailing power arrangements, however, remains insufficiently scoped out in the literature with one notable exception. Examining the intersection between the forces of expansionism and resistance in practice, the bulk of the scholarship on ethnocracy has tended to focus on the particular urban setting of "mixed cities". "Mixed cities" are those large, primarily Jewish cities, such as Haifa, Akko or Lydda, with a significant Palestinian minority population "most of which were, before 1948, grand Arab cities that were defeated and whose original Arab majority populations were displaced" (Galili and Nir 2000, cited in King Irani 2007: 180). Their large size, unique history, and the very physical presence of Palestinian and Jewish neighbourhoods within them render the ongoing processes of physical segregation, encroachment, confiscation and gentrification there clearly visible to the eye.

Yet, only 10 per cent of Palestinians in Israel live there (Jabareen 2014). The overwhelming majority (90 per cent) of Palestinians live in approximately 78 Arab-only urban localities⁷ of varying size that are distinctive not only in terms of their lower socio-economic standing, underdeveloped urban infrastructure and public services vis-à-vis Jewish and mixed localities but because of their very physical and geographic separation from Jewish centres of power. Because of their geographic marginality, these spaces have tended to be neglected and under-researched in the literature. This neglect is, I contend, premised not only on a limited understanding of power-as-control, but also on

⁷ This figure is based on latest Israeli census data. Excluded from the figure are Arab-only localities in the Golan.

vague assumptions about what these forces look like and how and where they come into conflict with each other in the first place. A closer examination of Arab-only localities in Israel, therefore, represents an important opportunity to interrogate these assumptions and to extend our understanding of the possibilities of spatial alternatives and counter-sovereignties (Gazit and Latham 2014) in Israel-Palestine.

Agency and space

A critical analysis of Arab urban spaces in Israel requires dealing in the first instance with ongoing debates about how best to locate, and weight, the power of the state alongside alternative forms of agency and power. This challenge is particularly necessary, and complex, in deeply divided, settler colonial contexts (Robinson 2013), where the seeming pervasiveness of state power has resulted in a heavy preponderance of statist accounts of power in the literature. Despite the increase in recent years in the number of studies examining “internal developments” (Ghanem 2012: 365) relating to Palestinians in Israel, the analytical frameworks adopted by the bulk of this scholarship continue to suffer, as As’ad Ghanem points out, from an “oversimplification of the problem” (2012: 361) and a broad trend not only of treating “Palestinians [as if they] are merely silent objects: Israel is the powerful side, and its politics are behind all the developments” (Ghanem 2012: 365), but of hollowing out the power and potency of non-human forces in shaping these developments.

Rejecting “the assumption that the state is a distinct entity, opposed to and set apart from a larger entity called society” (Mitchell 1991: 89) and identifying that “[t]he power to regulate and control is not simply a capacity stored within the state, from where it extends out into society” (Mitchell 1991: 90), Mitchell identifies the state not as a distinct entity, but rather as a structural *effect* of “detailed processes of spatial organization, temporal arrangement functional specification, and supervision and surveillance”. Mitchell’s critical approach enables a more complex reading of agency and power which allows greater (analytical) space to consider not only the tensions and unintended consequences of particular arrangements of power, but the *inter-relational* role of human and non-human forces in shaping these arrangements in the first place.

In his analysis of the implementation of strategies of urban enclosure and planning in colonial Egypt in the late nineteenth century, for example, Mitchell (1991: 172) observed that “[t]he arrangement of buildings seemed to express the institutions and authority of a political power” revealing, both materially and conceptually, a new political “order” which “occurs as a play of correspondence and difference between things, or perhaps better, between forces” (1991: 173-4). However, this

reconstituted and reordered world of roads, railways, schools and police stations, which corresponded to the outwardly projected physical representations of colonial power, also concealed behind its edifices of power new spaces of poverty, malnutrition and unemployment which undermined it. In a later work examining the interstices between colonial and capitalist logics of power, Mitchell (2002) went on to chart how the routes of violence (during the first world war), international trade (of cotton and pesticides), irrigation networks (canals and viaducts) and disease (the spread of malaria) in early twentieth century Egypt revealed the complexity of agency and the power of space in shaping political processes and outcomes. Asking 'Can the Mosquito Speak?', Mitchell made a compelling case to include non-human agencies in broader analyses of political interactions and dynamics.

Research into political and material interactions and relations in the social sciences has since blossomed. From Actor Network Theory (ANT) to assemblage theory, an increasing volume of scholarship has emerged⁸ which seeks to examine the relationship between human and non-human, material and non-material forces as well as the socio-material alignment between relational and distributive processes of power in the production of particular spaces and practices in the city. As McFarlane (2011: 653) notes, however, there has been a tendency within this scholarship of focusing on the "productivist alignment" between different forces in the production of a particular type of network or grid (be it electrical, sewerage, road, housing, etc.) or order (whether ethnic or neoliberal), blurring in the process the city as a distinct unit of analysis and the role of material and non-material interactions in challenging and "undoing" power. This paper takes this critique one step further by suggesting that this tendency to focus on the "sympathetic" (in the Deleuzian sense) alignment between forces loses sight of the distinct agential capacity of the city itself to challenge, disrupt and resist power.⁹

Spatial regimes of power

By adopting a non-prescriptive and non-presumptive understanding of the range and types of interactions and relations which exist between different material and non-material forces in the city, it is possible to reveal the multiple, and sometimes contradictory, political capacities and possibilities of the city itself. In order to capture this complex configuration of different human and non-human material forces in producing the city (including its grey spaces), this paper puts forward the notion of *spatial regimes of power*. A "regime" is broadly understood in the literature on contentious politics in

⁸ For an excellent discussion of the conceptual debates underpinning this direction see: Bennett (2005). For a more recent selection of work on material assemblages, see: Coward (2012); Graham (2009); Graham and McFarlane (2015); Harris (2013); and McFarlane (2011).

⁹ Literature on urban counterinsurgency has long highlighted this agential capacity of the city in resisting prevailing and traditional mechanisms of control. See, for example, Norton's work on "feral cities".

the non-pejorative sense to consist of those “regular relations among governments, established political actors, challengers and outside political actors, including other governments” (Tilly and Tarrow 2012: 45). Neither reducible to the state or a particular government, it is a dynamic and open-ended field of interaction between contending actors and forces which is subject to particular “local space-times” (Lefebvre 1991: 13) in creating particular spatial dynamics of political action and contention.

A spatial regime of power, as advanced here, is one which seeks to emphasise the “field of interaction” within which such claims are made. Neither reducible to state power as a “machinery of intentions” (Mitchell 1991: 82); nor blind to prevailing structures and asymmetries of power as emphasised by ethnocratic theorists, spatial regimes of power are (re)constituted and (re)produced by a range of different material and non-material forces as they intersect and interact with each other in a particular time and space. It is, therefore, the particular materiality of the spaces which shape not only local configurations of power but, in an ever-expanding scale, broader dynamics of power and contention in the city. The geographical distribution of towns and villages; the built environment of the city; the concrete configuration of roads, houses, public spaces and government buildings which connect, and separate, people, towns and villages from each other; and the practical ease, or difficulty, of mobility within and between buildings and people shape spatial regimes of power in fundamental ways. The next section outlines the historical context through which the particular material configuration of roads and buildings in Nazareth emerged.

Producing the city of Nazareth

Pick up any travel guide for Israel and the entry for Nazareth is usually accompanied by a panoramic shot of the city showing a jumble of densely-packed houses and buildings surrounded by rolling Galilean hills. From the centre of the picture, rises the city’s most distinctive landmark, the Basilica of the Annunciation, surrounded by the occasional minaret and cypress tree. Another typical visual representation of the city is a snapshot of the old city’s *suq*, or market, usually accompanied by close-up shots of stalls selling fruits, spices, fabrics and other bric-a-brac, or by a solitary figure – usually an elderly man – drinking tea, blacking backgammon or walking the narrow pathways in traditional Palestinian headdress. Both images capture an idealised representation of old Nazareth emphasising its ancient heritage and the continuity of tradition into the present. Both, however, also reveal, an alternate picture of altogether more modern proportions. Look a little closer at the panoramic shot, and the red-tiled roofs of the older buildings immediately surrounding the Basilica give way towards the edges of the picture to more modern constructions with flattened rooftops and jutting metal

roads¹⁰ while the image of the old *suq* reveals a stultifying dependence on a fickle tourist trade. Both capture a city confined in spatial, material, economic and infrastructural terms.

Left: Basilica of the Annunciation. Centre: Typical panorama of the city. Right: Inside the *suq*.
Photos taken by the author in the summer of 2008.

Once a small backwater town of a few thousand people, Nazareth is now home to 74 thousand Palestinian citizens (CBS 2014), making it the largest Arab-only city in Israel today. Ignominiously dubbed the Arab capital of Israel (King Irani 2007: 186), the city achieved this title somewhat inadvertently. During the *Nakba* (“catastrophe” in Arabic) of 1948-9 which saw the destruction of over 400 Arab villages and urban centres, the dispossession and displacement of approximately 750,000 Palestinians, as well as the disappearance of the majority of the Palestinian elite and middle classes (Jabareen 2014: 137), the city of Nazareth not only survived (largely as a result of its historical significance as a Christian holy city (Forman 2006: 338-9)) but was transformed by it.

Refugees and internally displaced families from the cities of Haifa, Tiberias and Beisan, as well as from the destroyed neighbouring villages of Mujeidil, Ma’lul and Saffuriya poured into the city. Initially finding refuge in the city’s old religious quarters, overcrowding and cramped conditions resulted in new patterns of informal settlement along the seams of the city (Emmett 1995; Rabinowitz 1997). The neighbourhoods of Safafra¹¹, Krum and Bir al-Amir all originated as temporary settlements for the internally displaced before eventually becoming facts on the ground. Within the space of two years, the population of the city had more than doubled, and a new Muslim demographic majority had emerged (Rabinowitz 1997: 25).

¹⁰ Given the lack of space and the difficulty in acquiring building permits, it is common practice in Arab urban spaces to leave the top floor of family homes unfinished to allow an additional storey to be built to accommodate the families of newly-wedded sons.

¹¹ The Safafra neighbourhood was so named because it was where many of the displaced residents of the destroyed village of Saffuriya settled (Emmett 1995; Benvenisti 2002)

Protected from further displacement by its international status, the process of in-migration to, and urban sprawl of, Nazareth coincided with a process of involuntary, latent urbanisation (Falah 1991: 75) of Palestinian communities in the region which coincided, in turn, with a broader process of spatial reorganisation, or “Judaization”, of the Galilee. This occurred, as Falah reminds us, in three main stages. The first stage, from 1948-74, consisted of “filling” in the vacuum left by the destruction and depopulation of Arab neighbourhoods with the construction of over a hundred new Jewish settlements. This was facilitated by eighteen years of military rule (1948-1966), “emergency regulations” (including the introduction of curfews, “closed areas” and an extensive system of permits) and the construction of “development towns” which aimed to contain Arab localities and control the movement of Palestinians between them (Jiryis 1968). Natzaret Illit was such a “development town”. Built in 1957 on confiscated lands immediately adjacent to, and overlooking, the old city of Nazareth, Natzaret Illit (literally meaning “Upper Nazareth” in Hebrew) served not only as a means of establishing a Jewish presence in an overwhelmingly Arab region but also as a direct physical bulwark to cut off the only naturally remaining territorial corridor for future urban growth of the old city (Emmett 1995; Rabinowitz 1997).

While the forces of Jewish expansionism reinforced the territorial containment of the Palestinian population within their communities, they did not diminish the Arab demographic majority of the region. As a city with one of the oldest municipalities in Israel (Forman 2006: 339), the city had a pre-existing infrastructure of local governance dating back to Ottoman and British times which other Arab-only localities lacked. This served to attract to, and bolster within, it the remnant Palestinian political elite, particularly of the only Jewish-Arab political party to survive 1948 (the Israeli Communist Party, formerly known as *Maki*, latterly as *Hadash*) who used the city as a political centre (Forman 2006). It also, however, served to facilitate traditional spatial mechanisms of political control. In 1949, Nazareth was the only Arab-only locality in Israel which inherited not just one but two police stations designed to discipline and punish public order disturbances and infractions in the changing political order of the day. These structures, which will be discussed at greater length in the next section, continue to dominate both the landscape and the spatial dynamics of policing in and around the city to this day.

A second stage in the “Judaization of the Galilee” began in 1974 and focused on the establishment of three new settlement blocs in the Galilee region – the Segev, Tefen and Tsalmon blocs – as well as the creation of a network of roads and communication linkages between them and the core. Designed as a means of indirectly shoring up the strength of the new (Jewish) settlements; limiting the outward growth of Arab urban localities; acting as a “wedge” or a buffer between Arab localities; encouraging (with new infrastructural links and services) the settlement of Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet republics; and as a means of opening up the Galilee region as a whole to further economic,

military and industrial penetration by the Jewish majority, this second stage increased the territorial control of the Jewish majority over the region and the increasing isolation and physical containment of Palestinian areas. Highway route 77, once the main west-to-east road connecting Haifa to Tiberias, was rerouted in this fashion to bypass Nazareth entirely. A similar fate awaited other highways to the north and south of the city, further containing and immobilising the city's residents (Emmett 1995: 30).

Beginning in the early 1980s, a third stage in the "Judaisation of the Galilee" began representing a shift away from "the macrolevel of the region as a whole to the microlevel of the single Palestinian Arab settlement" (Falah 1991: 79). Moving away from a policy of "nonplanning" to one of targeted and "direct intervention in the economic life and spatial expansion of individual Palestinian villages in the region" (1991), new regional master plans introduced a zoning system through which the development of Arab localities could be more tightly controlled and limited. In terms of road networks, the routes of the two main highways connecting Nazareth with its hinterland and other major urban centres – routes 60 and 75 – now coincided with the municipal boundaries of the city itself (see map below), reducing levels of municipal access to infrastructural decision-making processes, as well as related investment funds and opportunities. Meanwhile, Jewish towns – such as that of Migdal HaEmek¹² – were earmarked for the creation of new industrial zones, receiving heavy investment in terms of government spending and infrastructural development. The strategic underdevelopment of, and underinvestment in, Arab towns and cities such as Nazareth served to stunt internal opportunities even further. Unable to provide adequate opportunities for employment or economic growth to their residents, a pattern of daily internal Palestinian labour migration between Nazareth and neighbouring Jewish towns emerged which continues until this day.

In an effort to by-pass the long-standing history of state discrimination and neglect of the city and to use the millennium as a springboard for urban renewal, the local municipality launched the "Nazareth 2000" project in the mid-1990s. Pitched to international investors in terms of an anticipated influx of Christian tourists, it ostensibly promoted one of the only remaining economic bases of the city – Christian-related tourism. The primary purpose of the initiative, however, was to develop the impoverished infrastructure of the heavily congested old city centre (Rabinowitz 2001: 96; Cohen-Hattab & Shoal 2007: 705). Construction of a new town square at the site of an old school which had

¹² Built in 1953 on the site of the destroyed village, Migdal HaEmek was originally designed as a *ma'abara* ("absorption centre") for Jewish immigrants from the Middle East before later becoming a "development town". Today, the city, which has an entirely Jewish population of just under 30 thousand people, is the site of three industrial parks and several global high-tech companies and is often referred to as "the Silicon Valley of the north". Lying just 6km to the southwest of Nazareth, it is also only a 10 minute drive to Natzeret Illit, a 15 minute drive to Afula, and a 25 minute drive to Yokneam Illit, all of which are Jewish towns.

been demolished for that purpose soon ground to a halt, blocked by members of the local Islamic movement who felt that square threatened a local Muslim shrine and that the Christian tone of the initiative did not fairly represent the interests of the city's Muslim majority, particularly in the peripheral areas of the city where infrastructural linkages were the most impoverished. The prevarication and electoral machinations of successive Israeli governments who were reluctant to promote either Christian tourism or a Communist-led municipality in their midst increased tensions between the municipality and the local Islamic movement even further (McGahern 2011). Caught in an increasing deadlock, the project failed to realise many of its original aims. Beyond the introduction of a new pavement and stone traffic bollards on Paulus the Sixth street (the city's main internal artery for car traffic), the hoped-for infrastructural overhaul of the Nazareth 2000 initiative was limited to mostly cosmetic changes, such as introducing a standardised green and beige colour scheme to the shutters of shops in the old *sug* (see image on the top right above).

As a result, despite being dubbed the "independent republic of Nazareth", Nazareth has become, and remains, a "metaphor of suffocation" (King Irani 2007: 186) and stagnation for Palestinians in Israel. The material and spatial *effects* of the implementation of ethnocratic logics of expansionism and control, however, was not only a dense urban patchwork of overpopulated, overcrowded and underserved neighbourhoods which are difficult to access but an increasing number of informal "grey" spaces which are "neither integrated nor eliminated" and "which exist partially outside the gaze of state authorities and city plans" (Yiftachel 2009: 243). As the next section will show, CMP emerged in response to these gaps.

Policing the city

With its tight network of narrow streets, overhanging buildings and few public spaces, access to, and mobility within, many parts of both the old city of Nazareth and its sprawling suburbs is often limited, if not completely impenetrable, to anything other than pedestrian traffic. This has significant consequences not only for the manner in which police power is, and can be, deployed but for the basic penetrative capabilities of the police vis-à-vis the city.

Figure 1: Road networks in Nazareth. Based on OpenStreetMap data.

With the exception of occasional incidences of serious crime, major public order disturbances, such as protests, political rallies and demonstrations, as well as political events involving visits by important dignitaries, the streets of Nazareth have historically been abandoned to a small, understaffed local police force operating out of the *Moskobiyya*¹³. Built during Ottoman rule to house Russian pilgrims to the Holy Land, the *Moskobiyya* was taken over by the British mandatory authorities as a multi-purpose centre of civil administration before it was converted in 1948 to house the local post office as well as a small station staffed with a handful of police officers to deal with local instances of petty crime.

Dismissed by local residents as glorified fine collectors, the under-provision of an adequately sized, equipped and empowered local police force is symptomatic of minority policing in a deeply divided

¹³ Not to be confused with similarly-named "Russian compound" which serves as police and Shin Bet headquarters in Jerusalem, Nazareth's *Moskobiyya* is located in the heart of the old city.

context (Mulcahy 2005; Hasisi & Weitzer 2007; Hasisi 2010; Ben-Porat et al 2012; Guelke 2012). The relative insignificance of Nazareth's *Moskobiyya*, however, stands in stark contrast with another set of buildings located on a hilltop area close to Natzeret Illit. The *Qishla* compound (from the Turkish word for military barracks) was originally built as an Ottoman police station (Emmett 1995: 178) before being converted into a hospital by British missionaries in 1866. Requisitioned as living quarters for the district commissioner for Nazareth during the British mandate, it was fortified further during the Arab revolt by Charles Tegart¹⁴, before being commandeered by the Israeli military in 1948 as the headquarters of the new military government. Today, it serves as the main headquarters for both the Nazareth police and for the Northern District as a whole.

The uneven distribution of (coercive) power between the forces stationed at the *Moskobiyya* and *Qishla* compound reflects the uneven geographies of ethnocratic governance. This asymmetry of power is reflected not only in an uneven distribution of human material – that is, police manpower – inside Arab areas (Hasisi 2010: 162) but of non-human material as well. As headquarters for the northern command, the *Qishla* compound houses not only the most mechanised and mobile force for the district but also one of the largest weapons and ammunitions depots in the region. Strategically placed a few metres away from the terminus of Highway 75, the location of the *Qishla* compound illustrates the importance of road networks to local policing arrangements, and vice versa. Highway 75 is the main west to east road from Haifa. The route of the highway, however, bypasses the old city entirely, steering a clear and deliberate path along the city's municipal boundaries before reaching its final destination just inside the boundaries of Natzeret Illit. While this arrangement facilitates the policing of protests and other major events in and around the city which tend in the absence of other sufficiently sizable public spaces to be concentrated at main roads and intersections (author, forthcoming), it has concurrently undermined the penetrative capabilities of the police *inside* the city itself.

In order to gain access to the city, police units leaving the *Qishla* compound must either travel down a steep, narrow road or take the longer, winding path of HaGalil Street until it meets the city's main street (Paul the Sixth Street) where traffic slows to a crawl. Hemmed in on both sides by buildings, busses and other road users, movement and manoeuvrability is extremely limited. As a result, local policing in Nazareth has in a very fundamental manner been ground to a halt by the built environment of the city. This material resistance of the city to policing, therefore, reveals the immanent power and

¹⁴ Charles Tegart was a colonial police officer and engineer responsible for the construction of a network of police fortifications throughout Palestine referred to as "Tegart forts" (Krozier 2004; Sinclair 2006; Connolly 2012). Usually situated on hilltops outside Arab localities or at strategic crossroads, Tegart forts were designed to be impregnable from the outside while containing within them large offensive forces.

potential of the city to talk to, back, and with power. Yet, the resulting emergence of under- and non-policed grey spaces has also exposed this power to the state. Previously ignored as a local issue, fears that “Arab crime” have begun to encroach on Jewish population centres has led to its politicisation. Yet beneath the sounding of the alarm by the holder of the highest political office in Israel mentioned at the start of this paper, lies a more fundamental dilemma: that of policing; or, more precisely, the dysfunctionality of traditional methods of policing to “secure” Arab urban spaces. It is not insignificant that in the same incendiary statement referring to Arab towns as Israel’s “lawless” “Wild West”, Israel’s prime minister also appealed to Israel’s internally demonised others – the cities’ Palestinian residents – to “help police officers stamp out Arab crime in their community” (Lis 2012). Yet, it is not, as the next section will show, primarily (Arab) crime which the authorities seek local residents’ help to police, but the (Arab) city itself.

Combined municipal policing

The introduction of CMP to the city of Nazareth in June 2011 took place quietly without the levels of publicity which one might have expected to accompany it. Described as a proactive move by the government to involve local municipalities in the fight against crime in their neighbourhoods (Biran and Regev 2012; Harmatz 2012; Saunders et al 2013), the main method of policing at the heart of the scheme is that of a joint, or combined, police patrol. Specifically designed as a mobile force to be composed of at least one regular police officer appointed by the Ministry of Internal Security in combination with one municipality inspector appointed by the mayor, the CMP patrols seek to merge the different human and material resources of the regular police, based at the *Qishla* compound, with those of the municipality and the *Moskobiyya* next door.

Initially composed of six officers, Nazareth’s CMP force had, by 2013, grown to 26 officers possessing a small fleet of four patrol cars emblazoned with the words *shitur eeroni* and *shurta baladi* (CMP in Hebrew and Arabic respectively) on its side whose mandate it is to navigate and patrol the narrow streets and alleyways of the city. This 50:50 quota is observed in practice in Nazareth with 13 of the 26 places filled by local municipality inspectors. Although there are no official stipulations concerning the ethnic composition of the force, the organisational division between the police and municipality mentioned above assumes, and directly encourages, local recruitment. As a result, Nazareth’s CMP force is, with the exception of four Jewish regular police officers, primarily Palestinian, encouraging the development of local human networks of policing in the city.

The official mandate of the CMP patrols is to tackle “quality of life” issues such as the use of fireworks, littering, noise pollution, vandalism, illegal parking and construction as well as to provide special support functions during religious holidays, feast days and special events in the city. More serious

incidents of crime remain in the hands of the regular police stationed at the *Qishla* compound. This limited range of jurisdictional powers of the patrols can be seen as evidence of an enduring division and asymmetry of power. Given the deep levels of suspicion towards the police, however, local municipal representatives interviewed for this study were keen to stress the importance of this limitation as well as the role played by the municipality in maintaining the strict jurisdictional and operational boundaries of the scheme. A focus on local, “non-political” policing, as they put it, is emphasised and visually coded in different colour uniforms: grey for the municipality inspectors and either light or dark blue for the regular police officers (depending on rank).

Beyond this visual marker, proudly enframed in a photograph of the unit hanging in one local municipal building I visited, the legal powers held by regular police and municipality inspectors also differ. All regular police officers are, for example, required to carry a holstered handgun with them on their patrols while municipal officers are not.¹⁵ Municipality officers, moreover, do not have the power to make an arrest – a power that is legally restricted to regular police officers. Municipal inspectors, by contrast, have other powers which are unique to them. In addition to having the power to issue on the spot fines as well as issue confiscation or seizure of property orders – something which regular police are not legally mandated to do – municipality inspectors can also conduct searches of persons and properties without a warrant. As a result, regular police officers and municipality officers have a *combined* higher level of access enabling them to enter a person’s house or yard, remove items from properties and make arrests in a single visit. In this regard, CMP can be seen to have either a rehabilitating or a sanitizing effect on the idea of policing. Both views, however, fail to take into account the deeper, material forces and infrastructures which continue to shape and delimit the implementation of CMP in practice.

Split between two separate authorities (the municipality and the Ministry of Internal Security) in administrative and organisational terms, and two separate buildings (the *Moskobiyya* and *Qishla* compounds), CMP remains a fractured affair. There is, for example, no separate, integrated CMP station or headquarters, with little intention, desire or investment, on either side, to create one. As unaligned centres of authority, CMP suffers from the same infrastructural deficiencies as traditional methods of policing. The previous section has documented the infrastructural challenges facing the deployment of police power from the *Qishla* compound to the old city and its environs. The connective infrastructure surrounding the *Moskobiyya* is also limited. While the building itself is located in a

¹⁵ While it is not expressly forbidden for municipality inspectors to carry arms, the only option they have of doing so is to bring a privately licensed gun with them to work. To do this, they must apply for a legal gun permit through the usual channels and demonstrate that they have a secure place to store the weapon at work and at home.

central location close to the *suq* and next to many of the city's more popular tourist destinations as well as one of the city's few public squares (Church Square), a narrow one-way system of roads (where double-parking is common) inhibit ease of access and manoeuvrability around it as well. In fact, the further into the old city one goes, the narrower the streets become until they become quite impenetrable to anything other than foot patrols.

Due to the lack of space and connectivity in the city, as well as the small size of the force, the central ethos of the CMP scheme – mobile police patrols – is interrupted. Stationed overnight at the *Qishla* compound, CMP cars begin their patrol at six o'clock in the morning, making their way down into the city. Unable to navigate the narrow and overcrowded streets, these mobile patrol units have increasingly been replaced by "stationary patrols" at a limited number of central locations in the city which are more easily accessible by car, such as the near City Square or adjacent to it at Mary's Well. In these – primarily commercial and tourist – areas, it is not an uncommon sight to see CMP officers leaning against a parked patrol car, talking on their phones or giving directions to tourists. Inside the heart of the *suq* and in the surrounding informal neighbourhoods, the sight of a CMP officer remains rare.

Conclusions

At first glance, the introduction of CMP in Nazareth confirms contending views which see it as either a positive innovation in local governance or a sophistication of ethnocratic controls. The manner in which the scheme has been implemented in practice, however, reveals a more complex story – one which uncovers not only the cautious interaction between the needs, interests and fears of the authorities on the one hand and those of Nazareth's municipality and residents on the other, but one which, ultimately, exposes the broader power of the material configuration of the city in creating, shaping and limiting these interactions in the first place. Produced by the ethnocratic logics of power, the Arab city of Nazareth has exerted a force of its own which has (increasingly) shaped the range of possible policing interactions which can and have taken place within it.

The peculiarities of Arab spaces in Israel, therefore, allow them to be seen as generative of a distinct type of politics in Israel. In light of plans to introduce CMP in other major Arab urban centres in Israel, this enquiry is both timely and necessary. Challenging the assumption that the scheme itself is an innovation initiated by the state or the result of a deliberative process of policy change, the introduction of CMP in Nazareth reveals that the main driver behind the initiative was neither the state nor the municipality but the city itself, its built environment and its enduring infrastructural

deficiencies and inadequacies, which have created a particular material assemblage of power and a particular set of spaces of intersection and disjuncture which impelled traditional actors to come together, interact, and find a grudging, partial response to a growing problem. Rather than view CMP as evidence of either a proactive attempt to rehabilitate police-community relations and improve local attitudes to and confidence in the police, or as a cynical ploy to extend the penetrative coercive capabilities of the police inside Arab localities, CMP reveals a much more complex form of political spatiality whereby police-community relations and attitudes have increasingly had to inflect themselves to the latent power of the city.

The introduction of CMP in Nazareth, therefore, suggests a more dynamic and open-ended range of possibilities for the future of Arab local governance in Israel than has hitherto been considered. Challenging the “deep and pervasive pessimism” (Gazit and Latham 2014: 77) which currently pervades the literature regarding the possibilities for political transformation in Israel-Palestine, the introduction of patrols (mobile or stationary) which combine (albeit in an uneven way) the forces and resources of two traditionally separate and antagonistic sources of authority suggests that the prospects and potentialities of exchange and (inter)change will increase in the future. Given that the CMP force remains small, under-resourced and without its own headquarters, however, suggests that the same (infra)structural asymmetries of power which exist in the city will continue to dominate and delimit its remit in the future. Until such a time as more serious consideration and efforts are invested in the development and extension of currently inadequate levels of critical infrastructure in Arab urban localities, the dislocation and marginalisation of Arab communities will continue to grow alongside the “policing gaps” which CMP are expected to fill.

Should the current infrastructural neglect of Arab urban localities in Israel continue, it can be expected that the issue and slogan of “Arab crime” will not only become increasingly common but that the Arab localities which are associated with it will increasingly become politicised as a “security threat” in their own right. In the absence of a more equitable development of local urban infrastructures in Arab towns and cities, the increasing securitization of Arab-only localities is likely, in turn, to undermine not only the effectiveness of CMP but local levels of receptivity towards the scheme as well. The growing politicization of neglected Arab urban spaces will, however, only increase the political capacity of the Arab city to talk to, with and back to power as an alternative space of political interaction and as an increasingly important site for future political contestation (and conflict) in Israel.

Beyond considering the implications of CMP in Nazareth for the future of Arab local governance in Israel, the findings of this paper speak to emerging scholarship on contentious urban politics in a broader range of contested urban settings. Shaped by, and constitutive of, wider political dynamics,

marginalised and peripheral urban spaces as much as major metropolitan centres (if not more so) carry a latent, unintended and immanent form of political agency which has the capacity to talk directly to, with and back to power in a dynamic and ongoing manner. However unexpected and indeterminate this potential may be, bringing urban space and the city – in this case, the Arab city in Israel – to the centre of our analysis has important consequences not only for the manner in which we conceptualise the stability of political regimes but, more broadly, for considering alternative and localised forms, processes and prospects of urban political contestation and change as they emerge and are materialised in practice.

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