'Enabling Periphereality': Artistic Trajectories in a Peripheral City

Sharon Yavo-Ayalon [iD]
Cornell-Tech, New York, USA

Abstract

The common perspective on centre–periphery power relations views central cities as the source of cultural authority and legitimacy, the influence of which peripheral cities passively accept. By following theatre artists' trajectories in the peripheral Israeli city of Acre, the article challenges this perception of the periphery as fundamentally inferior to the centre and focuses on how its environment enables artistic creativity. This perspective is developed through Bourdieu's definition of trajectory alongside everyday practices, in the spirit of de Certeau. By adapting super-positioning from architectural practice the research combines urban spatial analysis with ethnography. The article first identifies the macro-social structures that define Acre and its theatre field as 'peripheral', it then exposes the everyday micro-practices of artistic trajectories that erode these larger, top-down social structures and juxtapose both social structures. This leads to the article's main argument, that ascent within the peripheral cultural field proceeds according to different rules than in the centre, and to developing the notion of Enabling Periphereality to articulate those different conditions and rules.

Keywords

Art, life stories, periphery, segregation, social mobility, theatre, trajectory

Introduction

> If you want to DO theatre – stay in Acre. But if you want to SUCCEED – go to Tel Aviv. I'm interested in succeeding. That's why I'm getting out of here. (Interview, 22 July 2015)

Articulated by a high school student with adolescent confidence in the interview for this research, these words illuminate the perspective of someone growing up in a peripheral city in Israel, where the cultural domination of the Tel Avivian centre is overwhelming.

Corresponding author:
Sharon Yavo-Ayalon, Postdoctoral Associate, Information Science, Cornell Tech, New York, 10044, NY, USA
Email: sharon.ayalon@cornell.edu

This article challenges the perception of the periphery as fundamentally inferior to the centre and deprived of artistic opportunities and proposes a supplementary perception of the periphery as an enabling environment. It highlights how, within the macro-structure of a periphery that preserves hierarchies and elitism, there is an intriguing movement of individuals for whom art has been, and remains, a device for social mobility and a tool for claiming and owning their city (Aharon, 2012). This argument will be developed using the notion of artistic trajectories, following Bourdieu's definition of a trajectory as a series of successive positions that an individual might occupy in a field (Bourdieu, 1992: 258), and by observing the everyday micro-practices that serve as a means of negating social structure, in the spirit of de Certeau (1984).

The quoted student's conviction that success comes from the centre is a common perspective in centre–periphery discourse (Shils, 1975). This is reflected in arguments that art projects imported into peripheral cities reproduce the macro-superstructure of centre–periphery (Fisher, 2012; Morgan and Ren, 2012; Peck, 2005) and that these power relations are reinforced by distinctions between 'high' and 'low' art as a sophisticated means of oppression and domination (Shields, 1991; van Venrooij and Schmutz, 2010). This argument has also been advanced in the context of my research arena. Shem-Ṭov (2016) describes the Acre Fringe Theatre Festival, which in many ways contributed to Acre's image as a 'theatre city', as imposed on the local community by the artistic elite from Tel Aviv. In a previous study, I espoused this perspective and demonstrated how the festival replicates these power relations by creating artistic hierarchies that translate into spatial segregation and maintain the centre's position as a force of social and cultural domination (Yavo-Ayalon et al., 2018). This article dives deep into the everyday micro-perspective of a peripheral city in northern Israel, and introduces the notion of 'Enabling Periphereality' as its main contribution. It strives to define the specific conditions in the periphery that enable upward artistic trajectories and the way those trajectories correspond with Israel's art fields.

Tel Aviv is the economic and cultural centre of Israel, and the CBS peripheral index of cities in the country is largely determined by a location's distance from it (CBS, 2009). Situated in close proximity to Israel's northern border, Acre is both geographically and socially peripheral. With a socioeconomic ranking of 4 out of 10, Acre has a high unemployment rate and an average monthly wage that is below the national average. It is a medium-sized mixed city[1] with a population of 48,000 that is 67% Jewish and 28% Arab (CBS, 2015). These statistics have resulted in a negative image for the city, which, despite its architectural and scenic assets as a coastal city and a World Heritage Site (UNESCO, 2001), continues to contend with these complex challenges. At the same time, Acre is a city with enduring long-term theatre activity, and over the past three decades, has come to be known throughout the country for its Fringe Theatre Festival. Acre is currently home to six theatre institutions, each of which is located in a different part of the city, addresses a different audience, and specialises in a different theatre genre. As part of this manifold network of theatre activity, this article investigates theatre artists as individual agents of social change and traces their artistic trajectories.

The article combines macro- and micro-perspectives and is structured accordingly. It begins with a theoretical framework that elaborates on the macro-perspective of centre–periphery relations, on the one hand, and the micro-perspective of everyday practices

through the concept of trajectories, on the other hand. It continues with a methodological section based on the visual analysis of artistic trajectories using a combination of urban spatial analysis and ethnography. It then hones in on its case study: the peripheral city of Acre and its theatre realm, Like with the theoretical framework, this section first attends to the macro-perspective of the city and then considers the ways in which each artistic trajectory ascends in a different manner using the different conditions of the periphery. All this lays the foundation for a discussion that offers a new perception of the periphery as an enabling environment in which its individual agents, in collaboration with institutional frameworks, can blossom sometimes in better conditions than those in the centre.

Theoretical Framework: Who Enables What and for Whom?

Centre–Periphery Power Relations

According to Shils' (1975: 3) influential theory of centre–periphery relations, the centre is the source of authority and legitimacy, where the material, human, symbolic and cultural resources are concentrated and in which the values, beliefs and collective identity of society are determined. The periphery, on the other hand, accepts the authority and ideas of the centre without taking part in their creation or dissemination. Inspired by this conceptualisation, many studies have refined and constructed this discourse, conceptualising centre–periphery power relations as a socio-spatial configuration that leads to uneven socio-spatial development (Castells, 1997; Kühn, 2015; Scott and Soja, 1996; Shtern, 2018; Wacquant, 2008). Moreover, Shields (1991) links geographical periphery to social and cultural marginalisation. The development of cultural marginality, he maintains, occurs through a complex social and cultural process that associates the centre with 'high' culture, in the sense of European culture defined by enlightenment and modernity and the periphery with 'low' culture, as a hierarchical order derived from its geographical remoteness from that centre. Inspired by Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), Shields argues that the Eurocentric supercilious image of the Middle East was constructed to bolster Europeans' own cultural status and legitimise imperial ambitions by defining the marginal and 'low' other as 'not civilised'. He also emphasises how the image and stigma of marginality becomes part of the identity of residents of the periphery and shows how the periphery was constructed as a social category by stereotypically associating it with 'low culture' (Shields, 1991; Stallybrass and White, 1986).

Focusing on artistic activity in the Israeli periphery, critics argue that government initiatives typically use cultural capital as a tool for imposing ideas and domination (Shem-Tov, 2007; Yiftachel and Tzfadia, 2004). Moreover, artistic selection, gatekeeping, and tastemaking by the central ruling elite produce, direct, and discipline the taste of marginalised communities (Morgan and Ren, 2012; Peck, 2005; Waitt and Gibson, 2009), creating art projects that alienate the inhabitants of these cities (Grodach and Silver, 2012; Shaw and Sullivan, 2011), at times to the point of violent conflict (Aharon-Gutman, 2017; Wilson and Keil, 2008).

In the Israeli context, scholars have shown how the Middle Eastern or Arab culture of periphery residents was perceived as 'low culture', inferior to that of the western

European culture produced primarily in Tel Aviv, the cultural centre (Aharon, 2012; Regev, 2000; Yiftachel and Tzfadia, 2004). Israel, they explain, was established by the Jewish socio-political elite of Eastern European origin, who were motivated by national-secular Zionism. Through what was known as the 'settlement process' (Hasson, 1981), this hegemonic group settled in the main cities and controlled economic and cultural resources. According to their ideology, the periphery in Israel was settled by a number of 'others' who were perceived as marginal to the Zionist project, namely, the Palestinian Arab minority and Mizrahi Jews (Jews of Middle Eastern and North African origin). These two groups underwent a process of cultural erasure through stereotyping and spatial policies, and their ethnic identity was suppressed as backward (Chetrit, 2010). Both groups were concurrently marginalised in the labour market and socially excluded (Swirski and Bernstein, 1990), although Mizrahi Jews were incorporated into the state-building project as part of the dominant Jewish majority and enjoyed a social position that most Palestinians in Israel lacked (Aharon-Gutman and Ram, 2018). Since 1948, Palestinian Arabs have been marginalised by Israeli intrastate planning policies, and they remain markedly segregated from the Jewish majority in terms of housing and the labour market (Shtern, 2018; Yiftachel and Yacobi, 2003).

This discourse built the macro-perspective of social superstructures, which to this day maintains centre–periphery hierarchies in Israel that are reinforced by cultural-artistic distinctions between 'high' and 'low'. However, some scholars have shown that also in Israel, peripheries might be a source for artistic flourishing and innovation (Saada-Ophir 2006) and that the borders between the two might be blurring with time (Feder and Katz-Gerro 2015). The following section follows the lead of these scholars and proposes to observe these power relations from a micro-perspective, emphasising the trajectory as a means of movement within the social structure (Bourdieu, 1992) and, at the same time, of negating and eroding this structure (de Certeau, 1984).

Individual Agency and the Concept of Trajectory

In his theory of 'social space', Bourdieu refers to a trajectory as 'the series of positions successively occupied by the same agent or the same group of agents in successive spaces . . . one field or a number of overlapping fields' (Bourdieu, 1992: 258). For Bourdieu (1984), trajectory is one of three elements that structure social space, in addition to the volume and composition of capital (economic, social, cultural, and symbolic). Specifically, trajectory is the change in these two values over time – in this way, it represents travel through social space and movement in a certain field over time (Bourdieu, 1984: 114).

As Wacquant (2018) has recently argued, Bourdieu's powerful formulation of the society–space relationship has not yet exhausted itself and is still very much relevant to urban studies in particular.[2] Indeed, his influential theorisation of 'habitus' has been employed as a framework for deciphering urban phenomena such as gentrification (Butler and Robson, 2001; Ley, 2003). His theory of 'social space' has served to analyse the distribution of different forms of capital in neighbourhoods (Bridge, 2006), housing and education choices (Bridge, 2001), and the seclusion of elites in upscale quarters (Pinçon-Charlot and Pinçon, 2018). In addition, his notion of 'distinctions' has been

adapted to encompass the spatial segregation of the city (Marom, 2014; Pereira, 2018). These and many other examples provide only partial expression of the increasing extent to which Urban Studies discourse has come to refer to Bourdieu's sociological theory, applying his vocabulary and concepts to interpret urban processes and spaces (Marom, 2014). However, as Marom argues, these analyses tend to focus on small or medium scale socio-spatial processes and to pay less attention to the scale of the city as a whole (2014: 1345). Moreover, despite the abundant literature, few scholars have thus far engaged the notion of trajectories (Bridge, 2003), and those who have done so have not employed it as a strategy of research, as I attempt to do here.

For the sake of my analysis, the concept of trajectory refers to the movement of inter-related agents between institutions in their urban contexts. As Bourdieu has emphasised, trying to understand the trajectory of an agent without taking into consideration the physical environment or the institutions that enable his or her movement is 'almost as absurd as trying to make sense of a trip on the metro without taking the structure of the network into account' (Bourdieu, 1992: 259).

Based on Bourdieu's different forms of capital, studies such as those of Centner (2008) and Rérat and Lees (2011) developed the notion of 'spatial capital', establishing, in an urban context, that social power relations, mental structures and social distance are all expressed in and reinforced by spatial distance. In a similar manner, I will address Bourdieu's conceptualisation of the social trajectory as a movement in both the social structure and the physical structure of the city. In this effort, I was also inspired by Bourdieu's analysis of 'the Paris of sentimental education' (Figure 1). In this analysis he translates social movement into spatial movement and demonstrates the implications of these movements: 'In this structured and hierarchized space ascending and descending trajectories are clearly distinguished: from south to north-west for the former . . . from east to west and/or from north to south for the latter.' The failure of one of the characters in his specific example is that he never leaves the point of departure (Bourdieu, 1992: 42).

The movement of agents in the field is achieved through the accumulation of capital and the reconversion of different sorts of capital (Bourdieu, 1984) and is linked to social mobility and to institutional affiliations (Lee, 2014), positing a correlation between spatial and social mobility. The greater an individual's mobility in space, the more probable he or she will be to experience upward social mobility (Fielding, 1997).

Whereas Bourdieu links individual agency and social structure in a manner that is useful for framing and analysing movement within existing social and spatial space, de Certeau (1984) highlights the ways in which individual trajectories can generate meanings that differ from the original intentions of the hegemonic social structure:

> *As unrecognized producers, poets of their own acts, silent discoverers of their own paths in the jungle of functionalist rationality, consumers produce through their signifying practices something that might be considered similar to the 'wandering lines' . . . trajectories obeying their own logic . . . their trajectories form unforeseeable sentences, partly unreadable paths across a space.* (de Certeau, 1984: xviii)

'Poets of their own paths', according to de Certeau's *Practice of Everyday Life*, challenge macro-social structures 'not by rejecting or altering them' but by
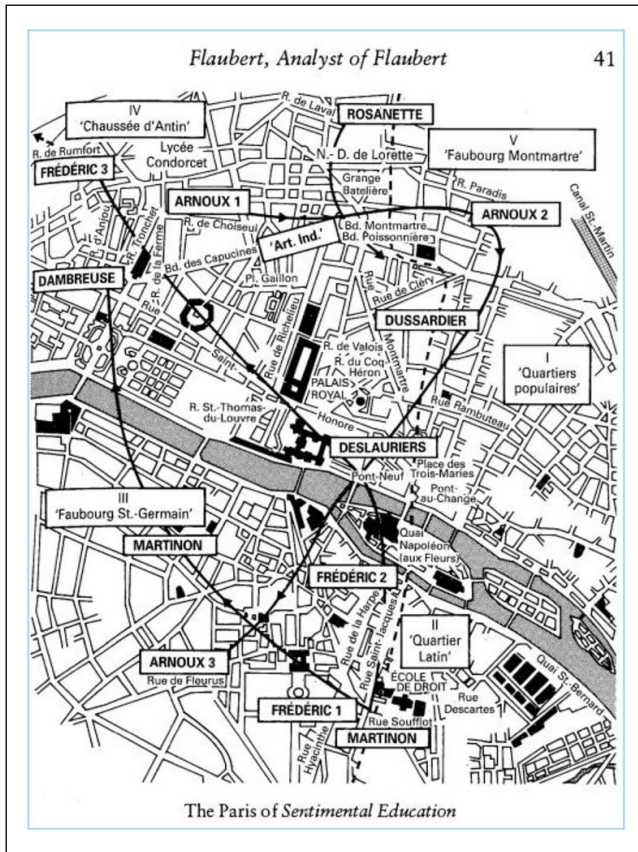
Figure 1. Bourdieu's analysis of trajectories in 'The Paris of Sentimental Education' (1992: 42).

appropriating them, using them according to different rules and manoeuvring them in accordance with their own needs. Focusing on Spanish colonisation, de Certeau asserts that indigenous Indians diverted the culture that was imposed upon them from its intended aims in the way they used it and chose to consume it, employing it in the service of rules, customs and convictions that were foreign to the colonisation they could not escape. In this manner, they metaphorised the dominant order and diverted it without abandoning it. As others within the system that outwardly assimilated them, 'their use of the dominant social order deflected its power, which they lacked the means to challenge'(de Certeau, 1984: xiii).

   In contemporary societies, de Certeau observes similar processes resulting from the production and consumption of culture, arguing that the dichotomised relations between the mechanisms of cultural production disseminated and imposed by the 'elites' can be diversified by their use by 'common people'. In other words, the tactics and practices used to consume the imposed culture can change its meaning. Amongst the tactics he refers to in this context are the trajectories of individuals, which, though composed

within the social order, actually serve to erode it due to the inability of the systems in which they were developed to trace or capture them (de Certeau, 1984: xviii). For de Certeau, a trajectory refers to a temporal movement through space and the unity of a diachronic succession of points through which it passes, as opposed to merely the line, which these points form in space.

Bourdieu refers to trajectories as progress within the social structure, and de Certeau views them as a tool to erode and negate the social structure. In this article I employ both definitions to analyse two interrelated social structures, one of which contains the other – specifically, the peripheral theatre field, which exists within the national theatre field. In this context, I use Bourdieu's definition of movement between institutions and within urban space to analyse trajectories of agents in the peripheral theatre field. At the same time, in the spirit of de Certeau, these exact trajectories serve to negate, erode and challenge the top-down macro-social structure of the national theatre field, as they progress and take shape under different rules. I argue that the peripheral artists avoid the social structure of the national theatre field by developing their own unique rules that change the social order without leaving it. In other words, the ascending trajectories in the peripheral field, which I observe using the Bourdisian definition, offer an alternative to the common social order similar to de-Certeau definition of trajectory.

Methodology: Visual Analysis through Super-Positioning. This article applies the social notion of trajectories to decipher urban phenomena. In so doing, it combines two fields of knowledge – Urban Studies and Cultural Sociology – and uses methods from each, namely, urban spatial analysis[3] and ethnography, respectively. The main challenges were to integrate the data collected using these two different methods and to produce analysis on the scale of the city as a whole. To meet these challenges, great effort was invested in visual analysis with the aim of transforming the data into clear analytical schemes that provide a view of the urban scale and integrate the two research methods through super-positioning. Super-positioning, a tool that is typically used in architectural practice but which I employ here as a research method, refers to the overlaying of different schemes assembled using different research methods. This three-phased methodology, which is elaborated in Figure 2, enabled the integration of the city's macro-social structure with the micro-paths, tactics and strategies of individual trajectories.

Phase I – The urban spatial analysis focused on revealing the morphology and the social characteristics of the two macro-structures that define the city's 'periphereality'. It included historical research regarding the city's development, GIS mapping, and analysis of city plans. The data collected was analysed and transformed into schemes and diagrams reflecting the city's morphology vis-à-vis its theatre institutions.

Phase II – The ethnographic fieldwork provided insight into Acre's theatre field and the varied artistic trajectories it contains. It consisted of participant observations in six different theatre institutions in the city between September 2014 and December 2017, and over 20 in-depth interviews with managers, artists, administrators, high school and college students and technical employees, as well as a random sampling of audience members. From this rich field, three trajectories were selected to present data as varied as possible with agent profiles as diverse as possible. To this end, I chose
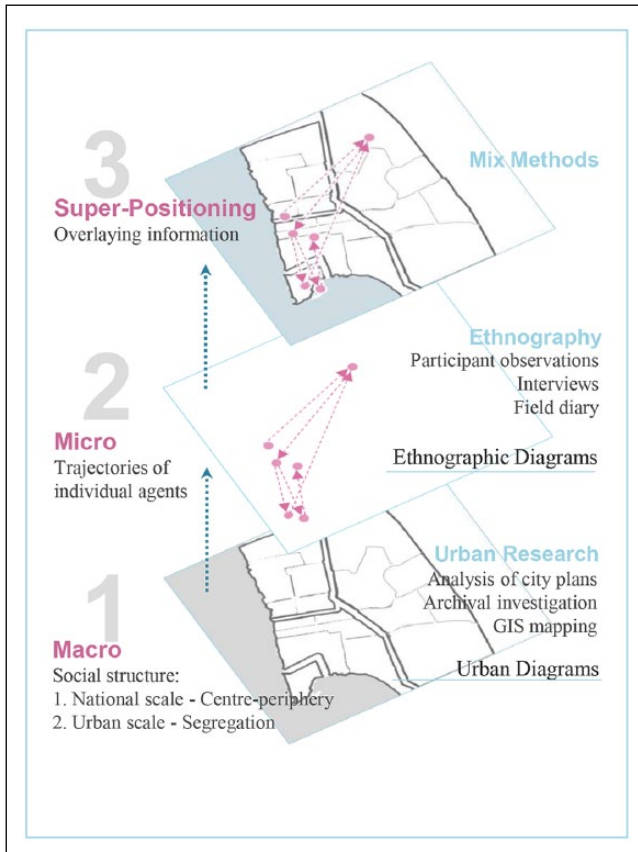
Figure 2. Three-phased methodology through super-positioning.

examples from both the Jewish and the Arab population, thereby demonstrating that the trajectories in question are an option in both of the city's communities and sometimes even cross boundaries. The individual trajectories were documented by interview transcriptions and a field diary and were later translated into spatial schemes designed to reflect the mobility of agents in social and physical space over time.

Phase III – The super-positioning of each trajectory integrates the urban survey and the ethnography by distilling information provided by both methods into diagrams, as shown in Figures 5, 6 and 7. Each of these figures shows the physical structure of the city and the cultural field of the theatre field, with an overlay of individual trajectories. Positions along a trajectory are marked in ascending alphabetical order (a, b, c, and so on), whereas the line's thickness gradually increases to signify the accumulation of social, cultural and symbolic capital.

This methodological tool is one of the study's contributions. It integrates theoretical and applied knowledge to enable better analysis and understanding of cultural sociological processes in an urban context.

The Peripheral Reality of Acre and its Negation through Artistic Trajectories

Peripheral Reality: The Social Structures that Define Acre and its Theatre field as Peripheral

Acre is defined as a peripheral city by two macro-social structures: its geographical and social location and its segregation patterns. Both are an outcome of 'the settlement process' described earlier in the theoretical section, which resulted in a highly hierarchised reformulate national space in which Tel Aviv is the main central and global cultural capital and other cities are ranked according to their distance from it (CBS, 2009).

Acre's location in the northern Israeli coastal plain is both geographically and socially peripheral. The city's population has an average monthly wage of NIS 6,400, a negative migration balance and a fourth decile socioeconomic ranking. These indicators stand in contrast to Tel Aviv's average monthly wage of NIS 10,300, an extremely positive migration balance and an eighth decile socioeconomic status (CBS, 2015). Acre's spatial and social segregation, reflects its contested history stemming from the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. During Israel's 1948 War of Independence, most of the city's Arab residents were expelled and the city was repopulated with Jewish immigrants (Abbasi, 2010; Waterman, 1975). The city's Jewish population has declined steadily since the 1960s, and those who could financially afford to, have moved away. At the same time, the Arab population has expanded into the city's newer neighbourhoods (Falah et al., 2000). In the 1990s, an effort was made by the Israeli government to counterbalance these demographic processes by populating the newer parts of the city with Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union (Torstrick, 2000). This pendulum process has left the city with a largely socioeconomically lower-class population (CBS, 2015). Tensions exist between the two communities, and the delicate equilibrium that enables the city's daily routine is shaken by changes in the Israeli-Palestinian national conflict (Torstrick, 2000: 51).

These conditions and divisions have created a negative reputation for the city, resulting in a local state of mind like that of the high school student quoted at the beginning of the article, who feels he must leave the city in order to succeed. This state of mind is also reflected in the words of one of my first interviewees, an Arab resident of the Old-City: 'The Festival brings the lights to Acre, but during the [rest of the] year we are in the dark here . . .' (Interview, 17 September 2015) These words exemplify a discourse that perceives the centre as the source of 'light': authority, legitimacy and 'high' culture. They also demonstrate how social and cultural marginalisation became part of local identity. During my three years of research in the city, however, a different perspective emerged, a perspective of individual agents of change who, by choosing art, challenge this macro-social structure.

Enabling Reality: Three Artistic Trajectories within a Peripheral Cultural Field

This macro-perspective reveals individual agents of change working within Acre's field of cultural production, appropriating it, and making use of it according to their own rules, in the spirit of de Certeau. The field consists of Acre's six theatre institutions, which provide
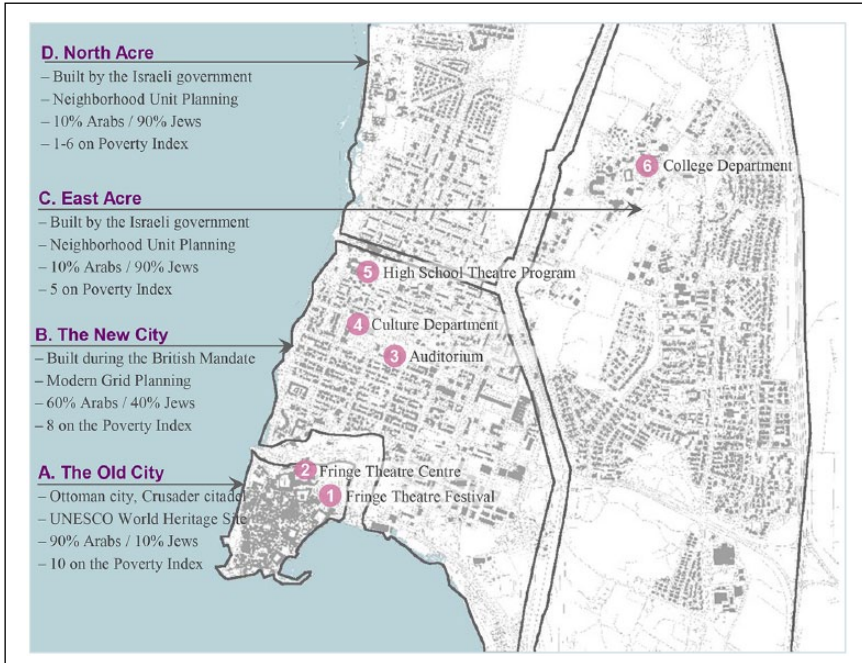
D. North Acre
- Built by the Israeli government
- Neighborhood Unit Planning
- 10% Arabs / 90% Jews
- 1-6 on Poverty Index

C. East Acre
- Built by the Israeli government
- Neighborhood Unit Planning
- 10% Arabs / 90% Jews
- 5 on Poverty Index

B. The New City
- Built during the British Mandate
- Modern Grid Planning
- 60% Arabs / 40% Jews
- 8 on the Poverty Index

A. The Old City
- Ottoman city, Crusader citadel
- UNESCO World Heritage Site
- 90% Arabs / 10% Jews
- 10 on the Poverty Index

6 College Department
5 High School Theatre Program
4 Culture Department
3 Auditorium
2 Fringe Theatre Centre
1 Fringe Theatre Festival

Figure 3. The cultural field of theatre positioned in urban space.

an institutional framework and budgetary support for individual agents to weave their trajectories within and among them. Figure 3 situates each institution in its urban location, reflecting that each is located in a different area and practises a different theatre genre (see also Yavo-Ayalon et al., forthcoming).

This local urban field is located within, or, more accurately, in the margins of, the larger national theatre field, which is situated primarily in Tel Aviv. According to the common macro-perspective of centre–periphery power relations expressed in local identity, this local field looks to the Tel Aviv theatre realm as a source of inspiration, artistic innovation, glamour and prestige. Contrary to this perspective, the second part of the findings focus on the micro-perspective, which offers a different reading of these power relations; one that enables and celebrates artistic creation and creativity in a peripheral city, without the need for approval from the centre.

Figure 4 is a photographic journey through this local field. It illustrates some of the opportunities for 'poets of their own paths', to grow up in Acre and evolve from: (a) being the young child watching the actors and performances in the festival, and perhaps (b) dreaming about being an actress herself, to (c) becoming a stage builder or (d) a security guard or (e) working as a cashier in the ticket booths. If she wishes to get deeper into the field, she might choose to (f) study theatre in high school and, in this framework, to perform in the city Auditorium. If they study in the Arab high school, they can (g) attend an after-school theatre class at the Fringe Theatre Centre. When they finish high school, they

Figure 4. Possible positions along an imagined trajectory.

can (h) enrol in the college department and instruct community theatre groups at varied locations in the city. Eventually, they might even be able to create an original show for the festival. Who knows? They might even win, as reflected in (i) the photograph of the winning show of the 2017 festival, which was created by two Acre-born artists. All of these opportunities exist within this small city of 48,000 residents. Locals can do all that, and some actually have and continue to do so, as we will see in the following three trajectories I identified during my observations and through the in-depth interviews.
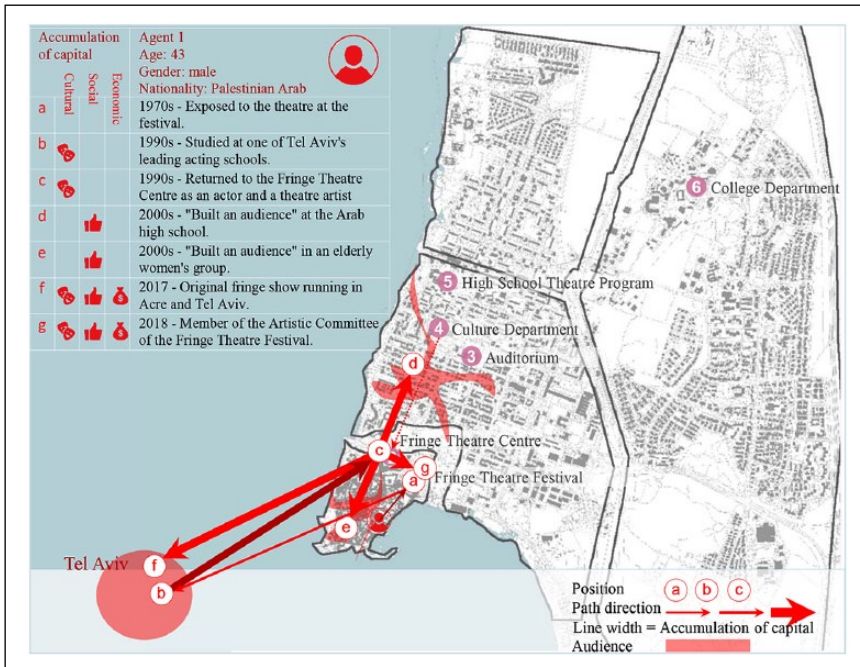
Figure 5. Trajectory 1: 'Building an audience . . .'

Trajectory 1: "Building an audience. . .". The first trajectory is that of a 43 year-old Arab artist whose path is illustrated in Figure 5. Like many other children growing up in the Old City, he first encountered the theatre when the festival was in town. His point of entry to the field is marked with an (a) at the festival's location. As a child, he was invited to participate in one of the shows and was infected 'by the theatre bug'.[4] When he grew up, he left the city to follow his dream and to receive professional training as an actor at one of Tel Aviv's leading acting schools (b). After spending three years in Tel Aviv working alongside other ambitious and competitive young artists, he came to feel that he 'could not find his place there' and decided to return to Acre. Following his return, he found an artistic home in the Fringe Theatre Centre (c). There, 'I was able not only to perform but to *create* and to work on my own material.' Over the past 15 years, he has been developing an acting career that has earned him fame as an actor in the Arab sector, taking part in film and television productions in addition to his theatre activity. At the same time, he has been working inside the local Arab community as a 'theatre educator' who 'builds his own audience'. He is currently working with two local groups, each located in a different part of the city: one in the local Arab high school (d), and another for older women (e). 'Creating theatre is not enough', he explains. 'You also need someone to watch your work. There is no theatre without an audience, and here I have no audience. Teaching those kids and those grandmothers means that they will learn to understand what I do, they will become my audience and they will bring their families with them.' Building an audience also means that he is constantly engaged in creating

shows for children, building an Arabic-language repertoire of children's literature, folk-tales and even classic interpretations of Shakespeare plays. In order to build this repertoire and mobilise an audience he co-operates with the municipality, which enables his inclusion in the cultural advertising system. In addition to his work with the community, he continues to create original fringe shows, the most recent of which is still running in Acre and Tel Aviv (f) simultaneously. In 2018, for the first time, he was nominated to serve on the festival's artistic committee, marking his current position within the local theatre field (g) in the same physical space where it started. However, contrary to Bourdieu's example of an artist who never leaves the neighbourhood of failed artists, his is a circular trajectory, by which he returns to the same physical space but in a much higher position within social space.

His trajectory advances within the city, where he emerges as an active and influential member of the local community and the national theatre realm – a local agent of change that simultaneously continues his professional dialogue with the centre as a source of inspiration. His activity in Acre earned him renown within the Tel Avivian theatre realm – a status he may not have been able to achieve had he remained in the highly competitive Tel Aviv arena to struggle for his 15 minutes of fame. His trajectory includes movement between two parts of the city, in and out of the city, and between four of the city's institutions. It also involves creating new platforms for his work.

Trajectory 2: "Not everything happens in Tel Aviv. . .". Figure 6 illustrates the trajectory of a 30-year-old Jewish Israeli director who was born and raised in East Acre. His point of entry into the field (a) is similar, as he too attended the festival in his youth. Later, throughout high school, he threw himself into theatre in the high school theatre programme (b), where he functioned as both a student and an assistant director. After he graduated, he became the teacher's assistant and, at her recommendation, he left Acre to receive professional training at one of Tel Aviv's leading acting schools (c). However, he was not satisfied there: 'They did not have what I was looking for.' He explains. 'I came with experience as a director from Acre. I wanted to *create* and do different things, and they insisted on teaching me how to be an actor.'[5] For this reason, he left Tel Aviv and returned to Acre, 'because here I found a place to create and a supportive municipality, in comparison to the Tel Aviv scene, which is very difficult to enter'. With the municipality's support, he then initiated a community theatre class in the Auditorium (d), using its stage and facilities in accordance with his creative agenda. 'I never regarded what I do as amateur work, although I do work with the community. I try to make it as professional and as faithful to my artistic values as possible. I want to show that not everything happens in Tel Aviv.' After a few years in the city, he left to practice theatre abroad (e), but maintained working relationships with key figures in the city, such as the Auditorium manager, the Fringe Theatre Centre and the municipality. In the festival of 2017, due to a conflict with the artistic community from Tel Aviv,[6] his colleagues from Acre invited him to produce an original show for the festival (f). Today, he is working on a new play at the Fringe Theatre Centre (g), starring actors from both Tel Aviv and Acre.

Trajectory 2 reflects movement through all four parts of the city and four of its theatrical institutions, as well as in and out of the city. He too begins at the festival and returns
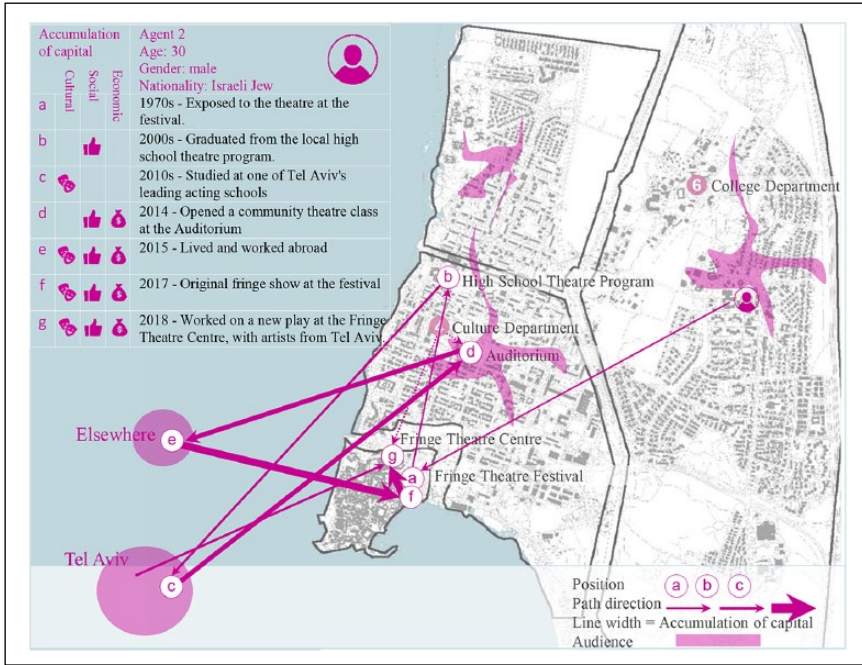
Figure 6. Trajectory 2: 'Not everything happens in Tel Aviv . . .'

to it, but in a much higher position within social space. For him, the local 'periphereality', with its close ties and connections, was the fertile ground that enabled his artistic development, which was obstructed in Tel Aviv. And although he continues his dialogue with the centre and has earned a name for himself as a director through his participation in the festival, he emphasises that this acceptance by the centre is not what dictates his agenda.

Trajectory 3: 'We wanted to create, but not at any cost . . .'. The third trajectory tells a story of Jewish-Arab collaboration. Figure 7 integrates two intertwining trajectories of two artists who hail from Acre's two opposing communities and reflects their acquaintance and collaboration, which was facilitated through theatre.

This trajectory begins with a 65-year-old Mizrahi Jewish director who was born in East Acre and who went to study theatre at Tel Aviv University (a) towards the end of the 1970s. Fresh out of the academy, he created and directed a fringe show that won first prize in the first Acre Fringe Theatre Festival in 1980. This marked his entry into the local field (b), the same physical starting point as the other trajectories, but at the outset, from one of the most prestigious positions within the national cultural field. Encouraged by this new prestige, he approached his professors, in an effort to initiate a Fringe Centre on Tel Aviv's outskirts, but was repeatedly rejected. These setbacks in the Tel Avivian theatre field led him to embark upon a long trip abroad (c) to find his inspiration within the tradition of Grotowski physical theatre. After three years of travel, he returned to
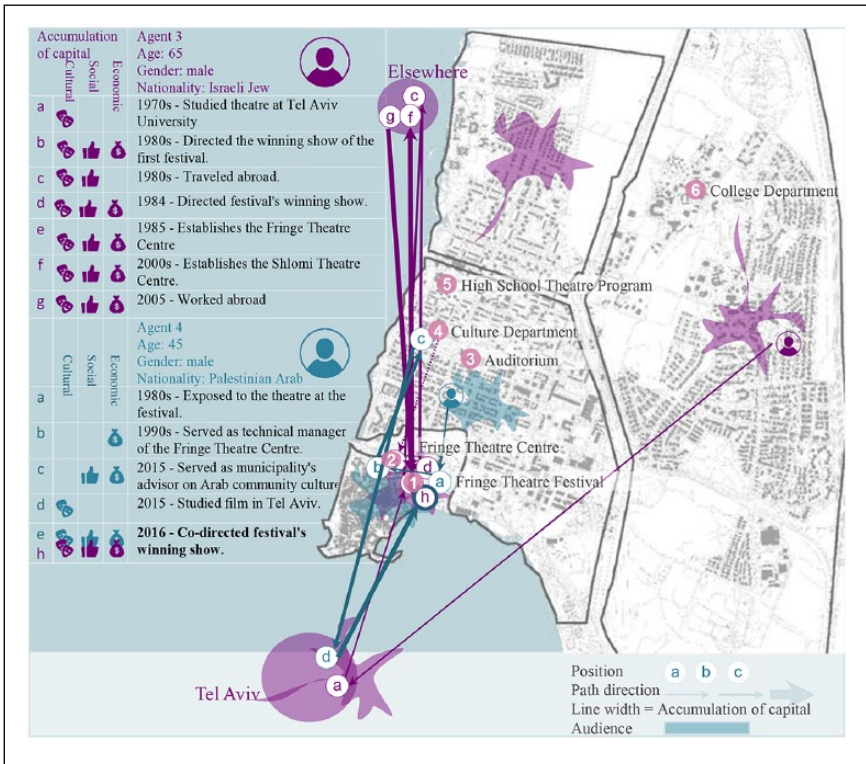
Figure 7. Trajectory 3: Collaboration of two agents.

Israel and produced a show for the 1984 festival that again won first prize (d). His travels and the inspiration of Grotowski led him back to Acre, where the peripheral location within the ruins of the ancient citadel provided a suitable setting for the marginal fringe group he sought to establish. Strengthened by the support of the municipality, he resolved to lay anchor there: 'They [the local municipality] told me – you can get these spaces in the citadel – and I went there and grabbed as much as I could! Because I knew it was an opportunity that would not repeat itself.'[7] In this way, he created a second position for himself within the local field by founding the Fringe Theatre Centre (e), which he led for more than a decade and left for personal reasons, only to set up a similar centre in an even more remote peripheral location (f). A few years later he decided to expand his artistic work abroad (g). However, despite his physical absence from the local scene, he has continued over the years to be one of the most influential figures in the Israeli theatre and continues to maintain working relations with the fringe centre he founded.

The second of the intertwining trajectories is that of one of his protégés, a 45-year-old Arab artist who grew up in the Old City of Acre, in the presence of the festival (a), and over time found his way to the Fringe Theatre Centre (b). There, under the guidance of his mentor, he received his informal education in theatre and evolved into the Centre's

technical manager, with responsibility for the sound, lights, and sets. He maintained this position for a decade after his mentor left but ultimately decided to move on to a different position in the local arena as the cultural manager of an Arab community centre (c), responsible for building the cultural programme for the Arab community. In addition, he sought a formal education and enrolled in a film studies programme in Tel Aviv (d), during which he stumbled upon an old documentary film focusing on 1976 Acre. Based on this film he approached his mentor, and together they initiated a process that resulted in the festival's (h) winning show of 2016.

One of the main goals during their collaboration was to maintain a relaxed working environment, as they both emphasised in separate interviews: 'We wanted to create, but not at any cost. We weren't willing to surrender to the stressful atmosphere that typifies festival productions. Each time we hit an obstacle, we chose the easiest way around it. And we chose this remote location outside the citadel to avoid the interaction and the stress of all the other shows.'

They used their personal experience within the local arena and with the theatre realm in Tel Aviv to make their own rules. These intertwining paths, like the other trajectories, demarcate a circular route between institutions in the city and in and out of the city. In a segregated city where Arab and Jewish communities share the same urban space but almost never interact, the theatre field provided a platform for an intersection of paths that apparently would not have have occurred otherwise.

Discussion: The Peripheral City as an Enabling Environment

By turning the spotlight on a peripheral city in Israel, this article challenges the perspective of art as replicating and maintaining centre–periphery social power relations and the perception of the periphery as fundamentally inferior to the centre, deprived of artistic opportunities, through the observation of artistic trajectories as an everyday practice that fractures these power relations. To shift the perspective from viewing periphery through the eyes of the centre it proposes the concept of 'Enabling Periphereality' as its main contribution. This concept helps to highlight a reality that is enabled despite, and perhaps as a result of, the characteristics of the peripheral city. The notion of 'Enabling periperreality' strives to define the specific conditions in the periphery that enable upward (or the emergence of) artistic trajectories and the way those trajectories correspond with in Israel's art fields.

The case study of the Acre theatre field rendered the relationship between the concept of trajectory in Bourdieu on the one hand, and in de Certeau's on the other. The article juxtaposed the two macro-social structures that define Acre's urban identity as 'peripheral'. The first, which exists on a national scale, is the centre–periphery dichotomy inherited from Israeli discourse, of 'the settlement process' that assigns low status to Mizrahi-Jews and marginalises their culture as 'low'. The second, which exists on the urban scale, is the city's segregation between two marginal communities stemming from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Throughout the article I have shown that these macro-social structures are negated, eroded and diversified in different ways in the trajectories of the peripheral artists. By developing their own unique rules, they divert the social

order without leaving it. Following Bourdieu's and de Certeau's conceptualisation of trajectories, three trajectories were transformed into lines on a map that reflect the artists' movements in physical and social space, as well as their evolution over the years. These visual trajectories contribute to the analysis of socio-spatial processes on the city scale and facilitate a clear visual analysis that represents the 'Enabling Periphereality' of the city. Thus, combining the Bourdieusian trajectory that enables ascent within social structures and institutions in the peripheral theatre field with de Certeau's trajectory that suggests an alternative to the common social order by working from within, I argue that the local theatre field enabled the ascendance of these trajectories, despite the common perspective integrated in some of the local ideas that 'success comes from the centre'. Specifically because as the local artists moved upward within the social structure of the city, they enjoyed a different relationship with the theatre realm in the centre, enabling them to go back to work in the centre or develop a dialogue with it from a higher position within the cultural field.

Conclusions

What then are the conditions in the periphery that enable this movement and mobility of individuals in the theatre? The study has shown that movement within the peripheral social structure can subvert centre–periphery power relations in various ways. First, it has shown that ascending in the local field might involve progress within different roles that were created as a reaction to or a counter-culture to that of the centre. For example, by building an audience that is not part of the mainstream, building an independent repertoire, creating a unique artistic language, creating unique narratives and working within a less stressful process. These insights were all part of their reaction to the theatre realm in the centre. In addition, as locals, they are familiar with those roles and therefore able to navigate smoothly within them, appropriate them, or invent new ones as they go. Different roles also mean a tighter and more familiar field, in which 'everyone knows everyone else', including the mayor and the municipal Culture Department. Each of the trajectories described in this article was aided by the municipality and was offered better working conditions than those available in the centre. It was easier for them to initiate new ideas within the peripheral municipality, which appreciated the cultural capital they provided.

The concept of "Enabling Periphereality" allows its agents to ascend via parallel routes, which in many cases might be shorter because of the smaller scale of the local field. Moreover, ascending via the local trajectory also changes one's perception of the centre as a source of legitimacy, sometimes leading to the realisation that its approval is not a real necessity but rather a configuration imposed from the outside. Still, movement to and from the centre and in and out of the city was a major part of all three trajectories, indicating that they did not reject the macro-social structure altogether but rather found a way to work with it and to manipulate it to meet their needs.

Finally, in addition to challenging the conviction that the periphery is deprived of artistic opportunities suggesting an alternative to centre–periphery power relations on a national scale, these and artistic trajectories play another important role on an urban scale. These trajectories may potentially erode the second macro-social structure of urban segregation, with movement within the cultural field that brings individual agents

of change into different parts of the city. This phenomenon reinforces the claim that social mobility is related to both institutional affiliation and spatial mobility, showing that as one trajectory ascends in social space, it also achieves greater physical volume: a movement that occurs *within* the social structure of the cultural field, on the one hand, and *between* different parts of the city, on the other. Simply put, Jewish artists create and perform in Arab areas and vice-versa. The movement within the cultural field erodes the social structure of the city, creating collaborative efforts between individuals and groups that otherwise might not have met. In this sense, Bourdieu's movement within the structure becomes de Certeau's subversion of the same structure.

This article's concept of 'Enabling Periphereality' challenges the perception of the periphery as deprived of artistic opportunities and suggests that progress in the peripheral theatre realm erodes the centre–periphery macro-social structure. The periphereality of Acre creates a field of opportunities that enables locals to ascend in the social and cultural realm on both the urban and the national scale. In this sense, the article highlights a fascinating social moment that should be further studied in other peripheral cities in Israel and might be strengthened by examples from other countries as well. Nevertheless, between the lines, or the trajectories not chosen, there are hints that progress in the peripheral field is not equal for all. This was apparent when speaking to Arab artists who mention the unequal distribution of cultural budgets, or by observing women's trajectories that progressed differently from those of men in the city. The question that arises from this is: Does the periphery enable equal possibilities for everyone? Alternatively, is the code of urban behaviour created in the city an egalitarian code for all its inhabitants? These two questions remain unanswered, though they call for further research that might tell whether this stream of individualism will increase and tip the scales to produce a valid and long-lasting social change, or whether those individual agents of change will ultimately be overcome by the spatial and social macro-structures.

Funding

ORCID iD

Sharon Yavo-Ayalon https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9720-3717

Notes

1. The term 'mixed city' is used in Israel to describe cities in which Arab and Jewish communities share the same urban jurisdiction. For further elaboration see Rabinowitz and Monterescu (2007) or Yacobi (2009).
2. In a two-part interventions piece in the *Journal of Urban and Regional Research* titled 'Bourdieu Comes to Town', Wacquant, influenced by Savage (2011), assembles and analyses a significant body of urban research produced by a new generation of scholars who employ Bourdieu's conceptualisation in urban contexts (Wacquant, 2018).
3. This field of knowledge has experienced substantial growth over the past three decades, which has been evident in the major increase in the number of articles, the range of journals, and the

number of conferences with urban morphological themes (Loureiro de Matos, 2018). For a detailed review of the different approaches to the study of urban form see Vítor Oliveira's *An Introduction to the Study of the Physical Form of Cities* (2016).

4. All the quotations in this trajectory are taken from an in-depth interview with the artist. Interview, 13 November 2017.

5. All the quotations in this trajectory are from an in-depth interview with the artist. Interview, 1 April 2015.

6. This conflict and its outcomes are discussed in a previous article (Yavo-Ayalon et al., 2019).

7. The quotations in this trajectory are from two interviews. The Jewish director was interviewed on 1 February 2017 and the Arab director on 2 January 2017.

References

Abbasi M (2010) The fall of Acre in the 1948 Palestine War. *Journal of Palestine Studies* 39(4): 6–27.

Aharon M (2012) Riding the culture train: An ethnography of a plan for social mobility through music. *Cultural Sociology* 7(4): 447–462.

Aharon-Gutman M (2017) Art's failure to generate urban renewal: Lessons from Jerusalem. *Urban Studies*. Published online first, 19 December. DOI: doi.org/10.1177/0042098017743682.

Aharon-Gutman M and Ram M (2018) Objective possibility as urban possibility: reading Max Weber in the city. *Journal of Urban Design* 23(6): 803–822.

Bourdieu P (1984) *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Bourdieu P (1992) *The Rules of Art Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Bridge G (2001) Estate agents as intepreters of economic and cultural capital: The gentrification premium in the Sydney housing market. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 25(1): 87–101.

Bridge G (2003) Time-space trajectories in provincial gentrification. *Urban Studies* 40(12): 2545–2556.

Bridge G (2006) It's not just a question of taste: Gentrification, the neighbourhood, and cultural capital. *Environment and Planning A* 38(10): 1965–1978.

Butler T and Robson G (2001) Social capital, gentrification and neighbourhood change in London: A comparison of three south London neighbourhoods. *Urban Studies* 38(12): 2145–2162.

Castells M (1997) *The Power of Identity*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

CBS (2009) no. 45. Available at: http://www.cbs.gov.il/publications/pw45.pdf (accessed 26 July 2019).

CBS (2015) Information available at: http://www.cbs.gov.il/publications17/local_authorities15_1683/pdf/218_7600.pdf (accessed 13 September 2018).

Centner R (2008) Places of privileged consumption practices: Spatial capital, the dot-com habitus, and San Francisco's internet boom. *City and Community* 7(3): 193–223.

Chetrit SS (2010) *Intra-Jewish Conflict in Israel: White Jews, Black Jews*. London and New York: Routledge.

de Certeau M (1984) *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Falah G, Hoy M and Sarker R (2000) Co-existence in selected mixed Arab-Jewish cities in Israel: By choice or by default? *Urban Studies* 37(4): 775–796.

Feder T and Katz-Gerro T (2015) The cultural hierarchy in funding: Government funding of the performing arts based on ethnic and geographic distinctions. *Poetics* 49(April): 76–95. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2015.02.004.

Fielding T (1997) Migration and poverty of the relationship. *IDS Bulletin* 28(2): 48–57.

Fisher L (2012) The art/ethnography binary: Post-colonial tensions within the field of Australian Aboriginal art. *Cultural Sociology* 6(2): 251–270.

Grodach C and Silver D (2012) Local politics in the creative city. In: Grodach C and Silver D (eds) *The Politics of Urban Cultural Policy: Global Perspectives*. Routledge, 399–423.

Hasson S (1981) Social and spatial conflicts: The settlement process in Israel during the 1950s and the 1960s. *L'Espace Geographique* 3: 169–179.

Kühn M (2015) Peripheralization: Theoretical concepts explaining socio-spatial inequalities. *European Planning Studies* 23(2): 367–378.

Lee J-A S (2014) An institutional framework for the study of the transition to adulthood. *Youth & Society* 46(5): 706–730. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118X12450643.0

Ley D (2003) Artists, aestheticisation and the field of gentrification. *Urban studies* 40(12): 2527–2544.

Loureiro de Matos F (2018) Book review of *Urban Morphology: An Introduction to the Study of the Physical Form of Cities*, by Vítor Oliveira. *Journal of Urban Affairs* 40(8): 1197–1199. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/07352166.2018.1470872.

Marom N (2014) Relating a city's history and geography with Bourdieu: One hundred years of spatial distinction in Tel Aviv. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 38(4): 1344–1362.

Morgan G and Ren X (2012) The creative underclass: Culture, subculture and urban renewal. *Journal of Urban affairs* 34(2): 127–130.

Oliveira V (2016) *Urban Morphology An Introduction to the Study of the Physical Form of Cities*. eBook: Springer.

Peck J (2005) Struggling with the creative class. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29(4): 740–770.

Pereira VB (2018) Urban distinctions: Class, culture and sociability in the city of Porto. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 42(1): 126–137.

Pinçon-Charlot M and Pinçon M (2018) Social power and power over space: How the bourgeoisie reproduces itself in the city. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 42(1): 115–125.

Rabinowitz D and Monterescu D (2007) Introduction: The transformation of urban mix in Palestine/Israel in the modern era. In: Monterescu D and Rabinowitz D (eds) *Mixed Towns, Trapped Communities*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 1–32.

Regev M (2000) To have a culture of our own: On Israeliness and its variants. *Ethnic & Racial Studies* 23(2): 223–247.

Rérat P and Lees L (2011) Spatial capital, gentrification and mobility: Evidence from Swiss core cities. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 36(1): 126–142.

Saada-Ophir G (2006) Borderland pop: Arab Jewish musicians and the politics of performance. *Cultural Anthropology* 21(2): 205–233. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1525/can.2006.21.2.205.

Said E (1978) *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Savage M (2011) The lost urban sociology of Pierre Bourdieu. In: Bridge G and Watson S (eds) *The New Blackwell Companion to the City*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 511–520.

Scott AJ and Soja EW (1996) *The City: Los Angeles and Urban Theory at the End of the Twentieth Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Shaw S and Sullivan DM (2011) 'White night': Gentrification, racial exclusion, and perceptions and participation in the arts. *City & Community* 10(3): 241–264.

Shem-Tov N (2007) *The Acre festival as a struggle in the theatrical field and the social field, 1980–2004* (in Hebrew). PhD dissertation, Tel Aviv University, Israel.

Shem-Ṭov N (2016) *Acco Festival: Between Celebration and Confrontation*. Boston, MA: Academic Studies Press.

Shields R (1991) *Places on the Margin: Alternative Geographies of Modernity*. London and New York: Taylor & Francis.

Shils E (1975) *Center and Periphery: Essays in Macrosociology, Volume 2*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Shtern M (2018) Towards 'ethno-national peripheralisation'? Economic dependency amidst political resistance in Palestinian East Jerusalem.

Stallybrass P and White A (1986) *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*. New York: Cornell University Press.

Swirski S and Bernstein D (1990) Who worked in what, for whom, and for what? The economic development of Israel and the formation of ethnic division of labor. In: Ram U (ed.) *Israeli Society: Critical Perspectives*. Tel Aviv: Beirut Publisher, 120–147.

Torstrick RL (2000) *The Limits of Coexistence: Identity Politics in Israel*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

UNESCO (2001) UNESCO 2001. Available at: https://whc.unesco.org/uploads/nominations/1042.pdf (accessed 26 July 2019).

Van Venrooij A and Schmutz V (2010) The evaluation of popular music in the United States, Germany and the Netherlands: A comparison of the use of high art and popular aesthetic criteria. *Cultural Sociology* 4(3): 395–421.

Wacquant L (2008) *Urban Outcasts: A Comparative Sociology of Advanced Marginality*. Malden, MA: Polity Press.

Wacquant L (2018) Bourdieu comes to town: Pertinence, principles, applications. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 42(1): 90–105.

Waitt G and Gibson C (2009) Creative small cities: Rethinking the creative economy in place. *Urban Studies* 46(5–6): 1223–1246.

Waterman S (1975) Early post-state planning in Israel – The 1949 plan for Acre. *Horizons in Geography* 1: ix–xviii.

Wilson D and Keil R (2008) The real creative class. *Social & Cultural Geography* 9(8): 841–847.

Yacobi H (2009) *The Jewish-Arab City: Spatio-Politics in a Mixed Community*. New York: Routledge.

Yavo-Ayalon S, Aharon-Gutman M and Alon-Mozes T (2018) Can art breach boundaries? Segregation and hierarchy at a fringe theatre festival in the Israeli mixed city of Acre. *Journal of Urban Design* 4809(January): 1–24. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/13574809.2017.1418174.

Yavo-Ayalon S, Aharon-Gutman M and Alon-Mozes T (2019) A city for itself: A peripheral mixed city's struggle for cultural capital. *City and Community* (2019): 16–23. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/cico.12431.

Yavo-Ayalon S, Alon-Mozes T and Aharon-Gutman M (forthcoming) The shape of theatre in the city: A theoretical and methodological approach for analysing artistic activity in urban space 2019. *Journal of Urban Affairs*.

Yiftachel O and Tzfadia E (2004) Between periphery and 'third space': Identity of mizrahim in Israel's development towns. In: Kemp A, et al. (eds) *Israelis in Conflict: Hegemonies, Identities and Challenges*. Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 203–235.

Yiftachel O and Yacobi H (2003) Urban ethnocracy: Ethnicization and the production of space in an Israeli 'mixed city'. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 21(6): 673–693.

Author biography

Sharon Yavo Ayalon is a Postdoctoral Associate at Cornell Tech, researching the social effects of urban renewal projects on the elderly population. Her research strives to understand the nature of

the demographic changes caused by urban renewal and, according to past data, to develop a computerised model that will visualise those changes and simulate future scenarios. Her PhD explored the linkage between urban renewal and art and the manner in which local identity, spatial (in)justice and social (ex-in)clusion are forged or deconstructed by artistic activity in cities, focusing on artistic interventions in contested cities and the ways in which they affect and are affected by urban segregation patterns and boundaries. This research was awarded the President of Israel's Grant for Scientific Excellence and Innovation. With a background in architecture, she combines her research interest with creating art installations, performances and curatorial practice. She received her PhD from the faculty of Architecture and Town Planning at the Technion IIT, where she graduated summa cum laude with a BArch and an MSc.