Can art breach boundaries? Segregation and hierarchy at a fringe theatre festival in the Israeli mixed city of acre

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Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the relationship between art and urban boundaries using the case study of a fringe theatre festival in the Israeli mixed-city of Acre. While mixed cities today are understood as agglomerations of enclaves, maintained and reinforced by boundaries, urban designers and artists have used art as a culture-led regeneration strategy through which these boundaries may be breached. This study undermines the shared assumption of both fields: that art has the power to breach boundaries, by juxtaposing a city's artistic activity with its segregation patterns and boundaries. Using super-positioning, the findings of two research methods have been integrated: urban research and ethnographic field work. The article shows that although the artistic activity in question is rooted in an avant-garde radical desire to subvert socioeconomic structures, it actually produces new versions and interpretations of the same segregations and boundaries in both space and society.

Introduction

'Boundaries' are a core concept in the fields of art and urban design. Artistic and sociological hierarchies of 'high'/'low', 'in'/'out' and 'do'/'don't' define the boundaries of the artistic field (Horkheimer and Adorno 1944; Bourdieu 1984), whereas spatial hierarchies of 'strong'/'weak' communities and 'centre'/'margins' define boundaries in cities (Du Bois 1899; Wilson and Taub 2006). Both art and urban design share a mutual belief that art has the power to breach boundaries. This study undermines this assumption by juxtaposing a city's artistic activity with its segregation patterns and boundaries.

Based on the case study of a fringe theatre festival in the Israeli mixed-city of Acre,[1] this paper argues that although urban boundaries are breached by the very holding of the festival outdoors in the streets of the city, the festival's inherent artistic and sociological hierarchy create new segregations and boundaries that mirror those of the city. That is to say, the festival actually reproduces the city's pattern of segregation, compressing them from the scale of the city to the scale of the neighbourhood.

The study's exploration of this dynamic contributes to the ongoing discussion on three typically distinct discourses: urban boundaries, boundaries in the field of art and culture-led

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urban regeneration strategies. The current urban discourse understands mixed cities as an agglomeration of ethno-racial, economic and spatial clusters (Hepburn 2004; Calame and Charlesworth 2009; Bollens 2012) which produce a hierarchy that is maintained and reinforced by boundaries and border zones (Yiftachel and Yacobi 2003; Iossifova 2014; Aharon Gutman 2016). In a parallel urban discourse, art as an engine for culture-led urban regeneration strategy has been paid considerable attention (Garcia 2004; Chang 2008; Pollock and Paddison 2010; Molnar 2017). This urbanistic discourse is supported by an artistic one, which, since the emergence of the counter-culture of the 1960s, has sought 'to breach the boundaries of the artistic language' (Boettger 2002; Kwon 2002) by engaging with 'the everyday' through relational (Bourriaud 2002) or situational art (Doherty 2009). The urban and artistic discourse both perceive art as a tool to exclude or include, to improve and affect the city (Whybrow 2011; Pollock and Paddison 2014), and even to breach boundaries, whether they be artistic, social or spatial in nature. The present study combines these three fields of knowledge by considering whether breaching artistic boundaries necessarily means breaching urban ones. In other words, it asks whether artistic activity traverses, breaches or preserves the physical and social boundaries of the urban space in which it occurs.

To explore this question, this paper focuses on an annual fringe theatre festival that has been held in the city of Acre for the past 37 years (Figures 1 and 2). Located in northern Israel, Acre, with its glorious history as one of the world's oldest cities and the capital of the Crusaders' Jerusalem Kingdom, is today a mixed contested city defined by distinct patterns of national, religious and economic segregation (Falah, Hoy, and Sarker 2000; Torstrick 2000; Luz and Stadler 2009). The Fringe Theatre Festival was first held in the city as part of a state policy of empowering the periphery, similar to culture-led urban regeneration strategies of today. During its almost four decades in operation, the festival has become a hallmark of the city. For three days each autumn, the festival shines a spotlight on Acre that transforms the city's urban space and atmosphere. This study analyzes these changes vis-à-vis the city's segregation patterns and boundaries.

Figure 1. Acre's location in Israel's northern coastal plain, and the location of the festival.

Figure 2. Aerial view of Acre's Old City. Source: Flickr/israeltourism.

To this end, super-position – a tool typically used in architectural practice – is employed as a method for integrating information collected using two research methods: urban spatial research of segregation patterns and boundaries, and ethnographic fieldwork. In accordance with this methodology, the findings of each research method were translated into diagrams, and analysis and interpretation were based on an overlaying of the diagrams.

The paper begins with an explanation of the theoretical framework, which highlights three key concepts of urban discourse – segregation, hierarchy and boundaries; discusses similar concepts in the field of art; and links the two discourses using the notion of art as a strategy of urban regeneration. It continues with a presentation of the study's research methodology of super-positioning and then considers the urban setting of Acre and the festival itself. The paper's section on findings analyzes the city's segregation patterns and boundaries in relation to the artistic, sociological and spatial segregation patterns generated by the festival, ushering in a discussion of art's capacity to breach boundaries.

Theoretical framework

Segregation, hierarchy and boundaries in the urban realm

The conceptual foundations of urban segregation discourse are rooted in the Chicago School's classic approach to the city as a patchwork of enclaves that differ from one another in ethnicity, race and socio-economic status (Park 1915; Wirth 1938; Simmel 1950). This

approach has inspired many studies maintaining that weak minority and immigrant groups tend to cluster in enclaves characterized by low socio-economic status, usually located in deteriorating, densely populated enclaves (Du Bois 1899; Bauman 2001; Wilson and Taub 2006; Wacquant 2008), whereas elite hegemonic groups cluster in gated communities typified by well-kept, low density, urban spaces, usually located on the outskirts of cities (Atkinson and Blandy 2005). According to recent studies, urban segregation is a multifaceted phenomenon that manifests itself around the globe (Bollens 2012; Nightingale 2012) and continues to intensify as a result of neoliberal globalization (Marcuse and Kempen 2002; Rokem and Vaughan 2017).

The notion of *hierarchy* is encapsulated within segregation, meaning clusters are not only separated by location but are also constructed by sociological power relations. Based on pivotal theorists such as Lefebvre (1974) and Foucault (2008), this approach ascribes great importance to the diffusion of power in daily life and stresses the role of power relations in the constant definition and redefinition of urban hierarchies through political and ideological struggles between hegemonic and weaker groups. In the same spirit Soja (2005, 43) characterizes cities as agglomerations of "insular cells and walls, obsessed with maintaining boundaries".

The literal meaning of a boundary is a clear line on a map that usually serves to demarcate the territory of a country or a city. However, in sociology and anthropology boundaries refer to differences between social categories, groups or classes (Iossifova 2013). According to Jones (2009), boundaries are not fixed but rather always in the process of being made and unmade, with great bearing on everyday life. They are an expression of a normative cultural and economic layout (Hirschfield et al. 2014) and are necessary to maintain social order and identity (Barth 1969; Sennett 1971). Sometimes, their presence is what enables the co-living of different groups in a dense urban space (Bauman 1990; Wacquant 2008). This paper adopts a dialectical perception of boundaries. It argues that boundaries may be either rigid linear structures or less resolute areas with the capacity to function both as separators, constructed by political processes and the planning decisions of hegemonic cultural groups that serve to highlight differences and inequalities (Massey 1994; Avni and Yiftachel 2014), and as contact zones, enabling encounters, friction, cooperation and communication (Merry 1988; Iossifova 2014).

These three key concepts are the basis for understanding the Israeli mixed city in the context of contested cities (Hepburn 2004; Calame and Charlesworth 2009). Beyond other segregation patterns that are typical to contested cities, its uniqueness stems from the combination of religious and national conflict between Israeli-Jews and Palestinian-Arabs[2] (Emmett 1995; Yacobi 2009; Monterescu and Schickler 2015; Ram and Aharon Gutman 2017). As in cities such as Belfast, Nicosia, Brussels, Sarajevo and Montreal, the establishment of a new nation-state (in this case, the state of Israel) resulted in a large minority group struggling for self-definition (Mbembe 2001; Tzfadia and Yacobi 2011). In the spirit of post-colonial critique, Yiftachel and Yacobi (2003) have claimed that Israeli state policy discriminates against the Arab minority by allocating it fewer resources and services and excluding it from social life, resulting in the emergence of cities with inferior and marginalized Arab neighbourhoods. More contemporary literature offers a less dichotomized view, emphasizing that oppression and resistance are often intertwined and that urban interactions, everyday encounters and basic mutual needs sometimes enable city inhabitants to overcome political differences and national conflicts (Rabinowitz and Monterescu 2008).

This critical discourse on segregation, hierarchy and boundaries contributes to an understanding of Acre as an agglomeration of enclaves defined by national-religious segregations and social hierarchies that are maintained and reinforced by boundaries. However, sufficient critical attention has yet to be paid to artistic activity in mixed cities. By exploring these issues in the context of the Acre Fringe Theatre Festival, this paper seeks to begin filling this lacuna.

Breaching the boundaries of the gallery: boundaries and hierarchy in the field of art

Artists have always aspired to breach the boundaries of the artistic language, making boundaries a key concept in the field of art. Each artistic trend, in its turn, defines itself as innovative and boundary-breaching in relation to the trend that preceded it. According to Bourdieu's dynamics of cultural production (1984), art's boundaries are continuously changing due to internal struggles for monopoly between conservative and innovative forces, as conservative forces strive to maintain existing definitions and boundaries and innovative forces aspire to breach boundaries and accommodate themselves in the field. In the 1960s, it was part of the counter-culture turmoil that inspired artists to breach the boundaries of the gallery — the physical boundary of which symbolized social and political hierarchies of 'high' versus 'low' art, with 'high' art perceived as occupying a separate sphere, higher than everyday life. By breaking out of the white box of the gallery (or the black box of the theatre) and onto the street, artists articulated their own protest against the elite status, commodification and alienation of art and their desire to subvert these hierarchies by working in the 'real world' for 'real people' (Boettger 2002; Kwon 2002; Doherty 2009). In the field of theatre, this process manifested itself in the emergence of new genres of political and social theatre and performance (Schechner 1993; Mackey 2016), one of which was 'fringe theatre', which sprang up as a subversive avant-garde art form that breached the boundaries of established institutional theatre (Aronson 2000). Fringe theatre was truly 'fringe' on both an artistic and a spatial level, moving from the established centralized theatre to eccentric deteriorated urban margins as part of its artistic agenda (Harvie 2009).

Can art breach boundaries? critical urban discourse on art in the city

This artistic agenda of intervention in urban spaces was adopted by local authorities and city designers from the 1990s onwards, when artistic interventions were extensively incorporated into projects of urban renewal (Nakagawa 2010). Culture-led urban regeneration strategies have gained momentum since the advancement of Richard Florida's creative city theory (Florida 2002, 2005), and the publication of a broad array of studies that highlight art's contribution to urban success, social change, people's sense of belonging and community and economic growth (Miles 1997; Garcia 2004). As part of this agenda, art festivals were implicated as a symbolic tool in the reshaping of the image of cities (Shaw and Sullivan 2011; Eizenberg and Cohen 2015), and it was argued that festivals contribute to place-making and culture led-growth (Rota and Salone 2014), as well as to the branding of cities and the promotion of their distinctness (Johansson and Kociatkiewicz 2011).

Over the years, criticism of artistic urban intervention has increased. According to Zukin (1998), art in the city, has become a tool of symbolic economy. As such, it serves as cultural capital meant to strengthen the city's status as a means of marketing and branding. Others, such as Morgan and Ren (2012) or Waitt and Gibson (2009) support this assertion, and argue that the economic investment in artistic intervention rarely trickles down or triggers the wheels of economy as expected. Indeed, local veteran residents are the main victims of these strategies (Shaw and Sullivan 2011; Bodnar 2015), which escalate gentrification (Ley 2003), prompt social exclusion and displacement of the local population (Deener 2007) and, in extreme cases, even lead to local acts of violence against the artistic activity itself (Wilson and Keil 2008). A few recent critiques of urban festivals maintain that their spatial organization tends to use the public realm for political, cultural and economic gain (Stevens and Shin, 2014). Based on the seminal research of Willems-Braun (1994), Jamieson (2004) – who also focuses on the tensions and conflicts between the local and artistic communities – highlights the segmentation, reshaping and representation of central city spaces that occurs during fringe theatre festivals. Stevens and Shin (2014) point out that what is lacking in the current literature is analytical focus on the *spatial* settings of festivals. The current study seeks to fill this lacuna and to offer added value by zooming out from the festival location to the spatial setting of the city as a whole.

By integrating the three typically separate discourses described above within a unique methodology developed for this purpose, this study contributes to this critical line of thought on art's ability to influence the city.

Methodology: the super-positioning of urban research and ethnography

Conducted at the disciplinary junction of the social sciences and urban design, this study examines a wide range of spatial and social phenomena and combines methods from both fields, namely urban spatial analysis on the one hand and ethnography on the other. These two methods are integrated through super-positioning, a tool inspired by architectural practice and adopted in the spirit of Yacobi, Ventura and Danzig's (2017) concept of 'design anthropology', which calls for integration of theoretical and applied knowledge through development of new tools for the understanding and analysis of contemporary urban design.

The study's three-phase methodological process is illustrated in Figure 3.

The first layer of investigation – urban research, which aimed at analyzing the city's morphology and history – focused on the city's segregation patterns and boundaries based on primary and secondary sources such as historical city plans, archival records and census data. The urban research was then used to produce urban diagrams displaying information about ethnic-religious identity, socio-economic status and density. Focusing on the festival location, and based on festival archives and schedules, the study then considered the spatial aspects of the event itself by mapping the location of each show performed at the festival since 1980. The data served as quantitative information regarding the location of festival shows over the past 37 years.

The ethnographic fieldwork, which constituted the second layer of investigation, honed in on the festivals of 2014, 2015 and 2016 and focused on a different element of the festival for each year in question. In 2014, attention was focused on the crowd, with an emphasis on going where most people went and experiencing the event with no previous knowledge.
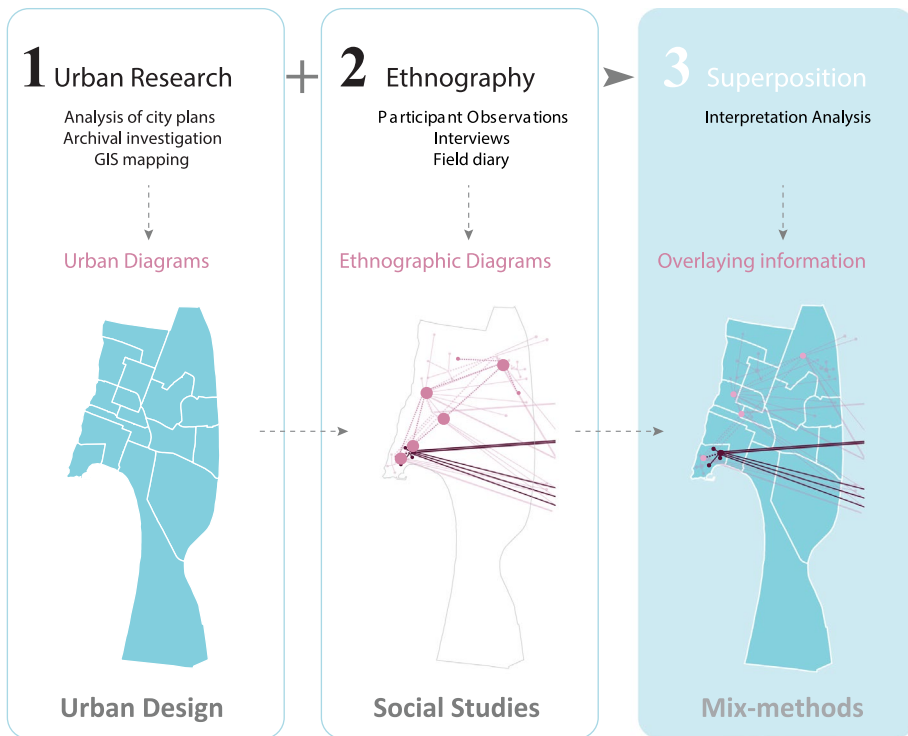
Figure 3. Methodology, the super-positioning of urban research and ethnography.

In 2015, fieldwork focused on the production process by accompanying the local production team and the artists in the months prior to the festival. Finally, in 2016, attention was focused on one of the festival's 'competition shows'. The ethnographic work included countless informal conversations with a varied sample of individuals and over 30 interviews, including: actors, founders of theatrical groups, theatre academics, technical staff, security workers, producers, public relations personnel and a random sampling of people from the audience. All observations and interviews were documented in a field diary and were later translated into spatial diagrams regarding the manner in which different agents used the space.

To integrate the findings of the urban survey and ethnography in a manner that endowed each component and the study as a whole, with added value, super-positioning was employed as an analytical research method. This involved overlaying the urban diagrams from the first layer of investigation with the ethnographic diagrams of the second layer. The super-positioning provided a clear visual expression of the artistic intervention in urban space, juxtaposing urban phenomena with artistic ones from a spatial perspective and shedding new light on the relationship between urban social boundaries and the boundaries of art. To contextualize the findings, the following section offers a brief historical review of the urban setting.

The urban setting: Acre and the Fringe Theatre Festival

Located in the Mediterranean coastal plain in northern Israel**,** the mixed city of Acre has a population of 32,570 Jews, 12,885 Muslims and 1416 Christians (Central Bureau of Statistics

2012). The city today consists of four distinctive areas (indicated in Figure 4). The first to take form was the Old City (Figure 2), a historic walled city that preserves a unique layered structure of a medieval eleventh-century Crusader citadel beneath a fortified Muslim town built during the eighteenth century (Forman-Neeman 2008). The second was the very differently structured gridiron New City, which was built during the twentieth century as an alternative to the deteriorating condensed Old City (Waterman 1971). Until the 1948 war, Palestinians constituted a decisive majority of the population of the city, which enjoyed a rich historic legacy as a hub for maritime activity in the Levant. During the war, however, most of Acre's Palestinian community was expelled (Abbasi 2010) and the city was repopulated with Jewish immigrants (Waterman 1975), while the remaining Palestinians were concentrated in the Old City. Inspired by the 'neighbourhood units' planning strategy, Israeli authorities then constructed the modern city's two remaining distinctive areas: the Northern and the Eastern new neighbourhoods.

Figure 4. The urban setting: four distinctive areas in Acre today.

    The 1960s marked the onset of a demographic shift in Acre's population – a steady decline in the Jewish population, as people left the city for towns offering better socio-economic conditions and a slow increase in the Arab population, which gradually expanded out of the Old City into Acre's newer neighbourhoods in search of better living conditions (Falah, Hoy, and Sarker 2000). This ongoing process left the city primarily with a socio-economically lower-class population, making Acre today a peripheral city distinguished by low socio-economic and peripheral indicators.[3]

    This demographic shift, and the city's deteriorating image since the 1960s, has led the Israeli government and the local municipality to stress Acre's main asset – the Old City, with its unique architecture and mystic atmosphere. Investments were made in excavations and conservation, branding it as a tourist attraction and leading to its declaration as a world heritage site in 2001.[4]

    The citadel's courtyard, its exceptional space and the enchanted oriental atmosphere of the Old City were also what attracted the avant-garde theatrical community to establish the Fringe Theatre Festival in Acre. With the emergence of fringe theatre in Israel, this community waved the flag of innovative cutting-edge art. In doing so, it was echoing the contemporary artistic trend of breaching the boundaries of the established theatre in an effort to subvert the mainstream from a peripheral, marginal location. The citadel's unconventional history, first as a prison and later as a mental institution, appealed to the subversive image these artists were looking for (Shem-Tov 2016), and the artistic initiative was consistent with state and municipal efforts to brand the city and improve its status. Like current culture-led urban regeneration strategies, the festival was expected to provide the city as a whole with added cultural and economic capital.

Findings: segregation and boundaries in the city and during the festival

The first subsection of the findings examines Acre's urban segregation patterns and boundaries using three indicators: national-religious identity, socio-economic status and density. Using similar indicators, the second subsection shows how the artistic hierarchy of the festival is transformed into patterns of spatial segregation that resonate and reproduce the city's segregation patterns, creating new and multiplied boundaries.

Urban segregation and boundaries in the mixed city of Acre

Acre's current segregation patterns are rooted in the historic evolution described above and still very much reflect this process. Based on the theoretical framework, Acre's segregation patterns were defined using three indicators. Figure 5 presents these segregation patterns and boundaries according to: (a) segregation by national-religious identity; (b) socio-economic status (as defined by a poverty index); (c) population density; and (d) boundaries. The super-positioning of these layers in Figure 5(e) reflects a correlation between national-religious identity, socio-economic status and density. The Arab population, which was historically concentrated in the Old City, still comprises over 90% of the population of this area, while the newer northern and eastern neighbourhoods are still mainly Jewish. An area of mixed neighbourhoods in the New City, which is gradually spreading into its northern neighbourhood, reflects the Arab population's expansion out of the Old-City and the resulting significant area of mixed neighbourhoods. Whereas the areas with a
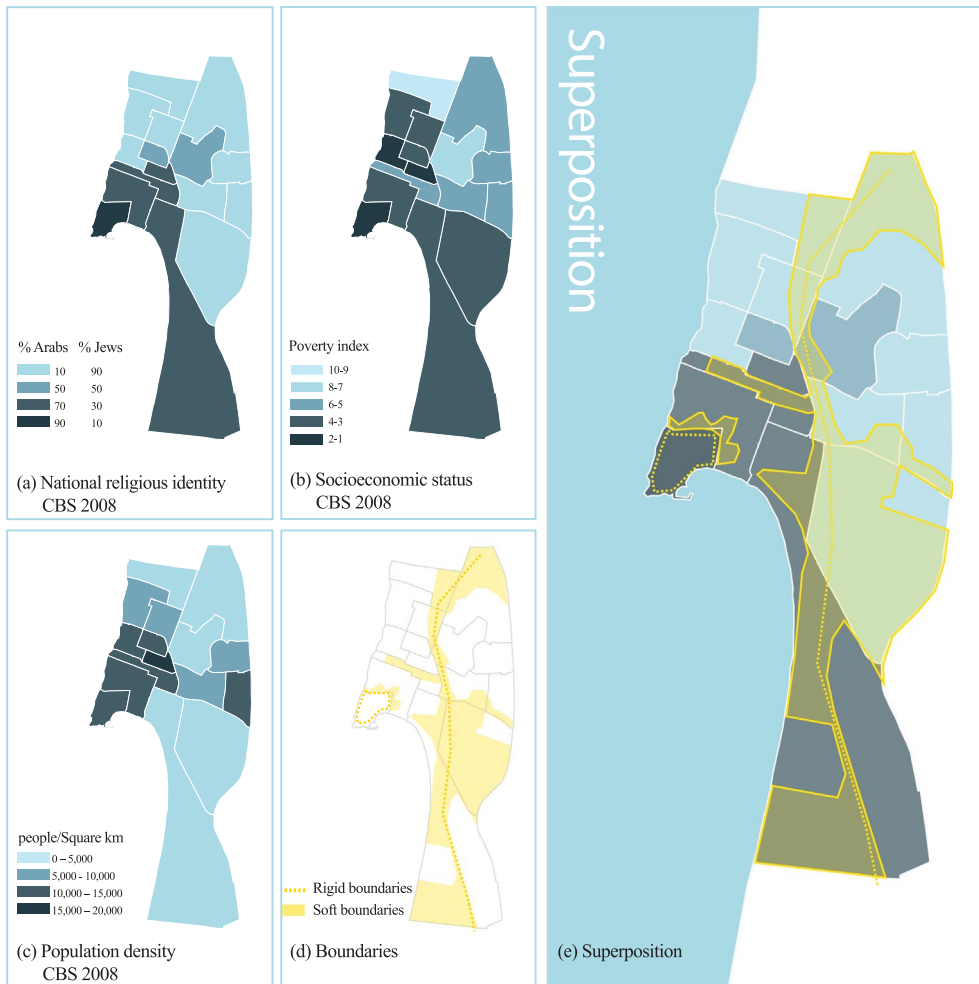
Figure 5. The super-positioning of urban segregation and boundaries in the mixed city of Acre.

Jewish majority are defined by a high socio-economic index (between 8 and 10, with 10 indicating the highest socio-economic level) and a low population density average of 5300 people per square kilometre, areas with an Arab majority are characterized by a notably lower socio-economic index (between 1 and 6) and a much higher population density average of approximately 12,600 people per square kilometre. On this basis, the areas with an Arab majority tend to be poorer and more crowded than the areas with a Jewish majority.

The city's segregation patterns are enhanced by *boundaries*, the most prominent of which – the Old City wall and the railroad tracks – are rigid linear structures that separate the Old City from the New City and the eastern neighbourhood from the rest of Acre and differentiate between Jewish and Arab communities. The 'green belts', inherited from the Israeli neighbourhood units' plan, function as a soft boundary, one that is less linear and resolute in character. According to observations conducted at different times and days over a two-year period, these 'green belts', meant to function as parks surrounding each

neighbourhood, are usually vacant, functioning as a border zone between Jewish and Arab communities, urban voids that break the continuity of the built fabric into separate zones and different communities and enhance the above mentioned segregation patterns.

From artistic hierarchy to spatial segregation

The study's exploration of the relationship between artistic activity and the urban space in which it occurs focused on the Old City, where the Fringe Theatre Festival has been held for the past 37 years. It was the first arts festival held in Israel to be characterized by a bohemian atmosphere and high artistic standards, and it is still one of Israel's most prestigious festivals. During its three days, the Old City, which is home to approximately 3000 mainly Arab locals, is flooded with an artistic theatre community and a diverse group of audiences. The event, with its $1 million annual budget, typically draws an estimated 150,000 people from all over Israel. It revolves around the historic citadel, and the opportunity to perform within its unique crusaders halls constituted the main attraction for the theatre community. As seen in Figure 6, its courtyard is marked on the maps as the heart of the event while the Old City's main streets and parking lots surrounding the citadel are the site of outdoor events, food stands and musical performances.

The festival's artistic content is divided into three hierarchical categories. The first and most distinguished category, that of 'competition shows', consists of original fringe shows that are created specifically for the festival and are meticulously selected by an artistic committee composed of well-known figures from the Israeli theatre scene. Selection and participation in this category classifies a show as one of the year's promising fringe debuts. The second category, 'guest shows', is less prestigious and more diverse, and the third category, reflecting the lowest level of artistic prestige at the festival, is 'outdoor performances', which consist of live sculptures, parades, jugglers, circus-like shows, theatre school groups, etc.
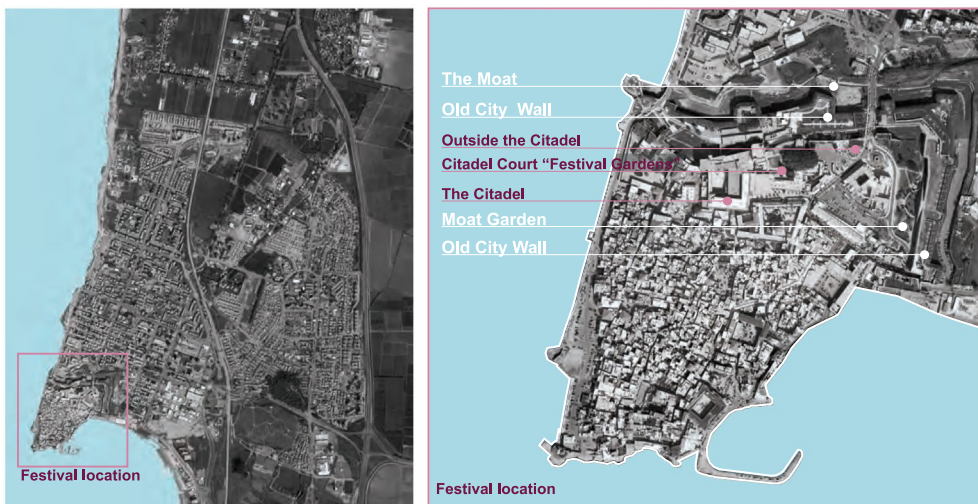

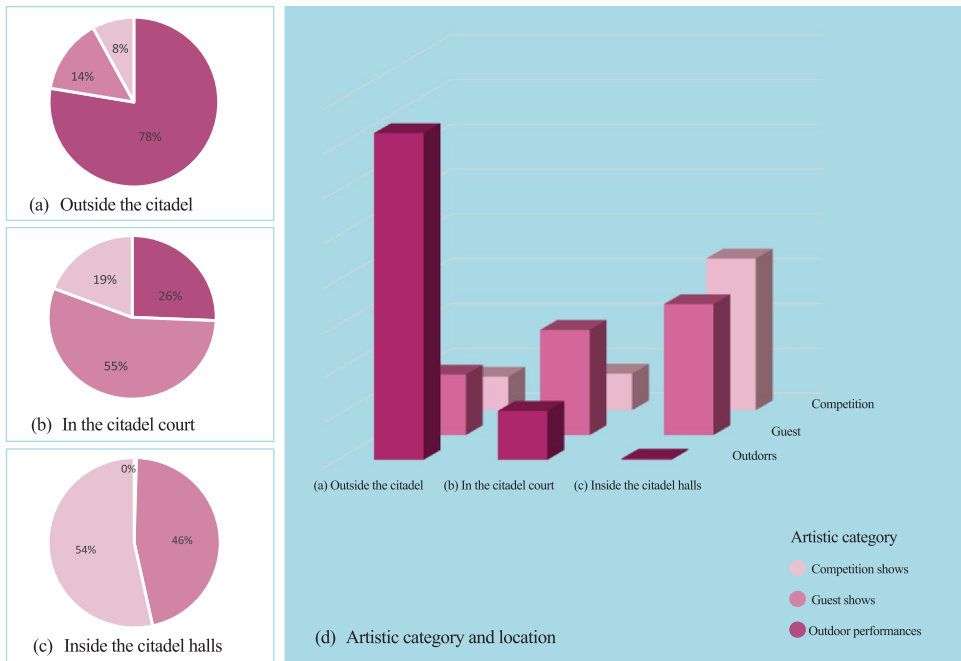**Figure 6.** Festival location in the Old City of Acre.

Figure 7. Distribution of shows according to artistic category and location.

This hierarchy is well known within the artistic community and is explicit in the festival's programme. However, the ethnographic fieldwork also establishes that the events of each of the artistic categories have typically been concentrated in a specific location and attract different audiences. For confirmation, based on the schedules of all 37 festivals that took place between 1980 and 2016, historical research was conducted on the festival locations in the city regarding a total of approximately 1700 shows. The distribution of shows according to artistic category and location was mapped and analyzed to produce pie charts that statistically represented the percentage of the shows that took place in each area. Figure 7 reflects this distribution, indicating that over the 37 years in question, 54% of all shows performed inside the citadel were classified as competition shows, 56% of all shows in the court were guest shows, and 78% of all the shows that took place outside the citadel were outdoor events. Statistically speaking, this establishes that, in most cases, artistic category determined the location assigned to a show, and that, except for random exceptions, competition shows have been performed primarily inside the citadel; guest shows have been performed within the citadel courtyard (or in the New City); and outdoor performances have taken place outside the citadel walls.

The field diary excerpts, which reflect the impressions of an outsider's first visit to the festival – moving from the area outside the citadel inward, into the citadel, highlight the differences between these areas, which are clearly evident to passers-by. To facilitate a coherent comparison with the city's segregation patterns, similar indicators of national-religious identity, socio-economic status and density were employed here too in order to pinpoint the similarities and differences.

Outdoor performances: outside the citadel

> … Outside the fortress gates, families with children, Arabs and Jews, young and old enjoy the festival's atmosphere together, temporally forgetting the national-religious conflict that affects their everyday life. It is crowded and hard to walk, almost impossible to find a place to sit. Oriental music mixes with techno-house in blasting speakers and peddlers proclaim their wares. Alongside the outdoor stages and live sculptures, you can find food stalls serving local delicacies such as Kanafeh, Baklava, Lupine, and Ful, alongside less local delicacies such as popcorn, and plastic toys from China ... (Excerpt from author's field diary, September 2015)

The tourist parking lots, some streets of the Old City, the moat garden and the wall are designated as the sites of the outdoor performances, which are free of charge and open to all. In this context, a mixture of visitors from a predominantly lower-middle class socio-economic background were observed and interviewed: Jews and Arabs, families with children and older family members, all of varied ethnicity and national identity. As the Old City is inhabited predominantly by Arabs, and as Acre is located not far from many other Arab localities, the crowd in this area is predominantly Arab. The crowds enjoy the atmosphere of the festival, almost unaware of the artistic competition

Figure 8. Outdoor performances, density and atmosphere outside the citadel.

taking place inside the citadel. For them, the festival *is* the outdoor carnival. As reflected in the photo collage below, (Figure 8) the urban space is highly congested with dense crowds.

Guest shows: the citadel court

… As one passes through the citadel gates, the atmosphere changes dramatically. The density of the crowd, the intensity of noise and activity decrease, and an air of magic and mystery take hold. Inside are huge ancient Ficus trees surrounding an octagonal fountain, gentle lights on the historic citadel, and a hip party vibe. In front of me, the rising starlets of a successful television series embrace for a paparazzi photo. Scattered across the lawn are chairs and white tables, beautiful white light poles, and fragrant cigarette smoke. A familiar actor whispers to his partner in conversation in a heedless tone, and the two of them burst into laughter … (Excerpt from author's field diary, September 2015)

The citadel courtyard contains a mixture of competition shows and guest shows, and, in accordance, the crowd is a blend of the theatre milieu and other interested individuals. This category provides an opportunity for people who are not familiar with the theatrical

Figure 9. Guest Shows, density and the atmosphere in the citadel court.

repertoire but are rather interested in seeing 'whatever's showing tonight'. Tickets for the guest shows are typically available at the festival ticket booths, as opposed to tickets for the competition shows, which are usually purchased in advance. Prices vary and discounts are available for eligible groups. Since the shows are performed mostly in Hebrew, they are not very attractive to Arabic speakers. As a result, this area contains a mixture of socio-econom-ically high-class members of the artistic community and middle-class Jews. The density here is significantly lower than outside the citadel, as reflected in Figure 9

Competition shows: inside the citadel halls

> … Sitting in the citadel courtyard, I felt like an outsider, uncomfortable among the friendly conversations of the theatre milieu. To ease my embarrassment, I decided to explore the well-known citadel, the beauty of which had been recounted to me many times but which I had never had the opportunity to enter. I walked confidently toward the sign 'Crusader Halls' when, to my surprise, I was stopped and asked to show my ticket. Since I did not have one, I returned awkwardly to my seat … (Excerpt from author's field diary, September 2015)

The citadel's unique halls as performance venues are the main attraction for fringe artists, and the competition shows compete for the best halls in terms of site-specificity for their work. As explained by the festival director during an interview at the festival headquarters in the Old City on 20 September 2015, tickets are virtually unavailable at the festival ticket booths as most are sold-out before the festival even begins, purchased at reduced rates as early as two weeks before the festival by the primarily socio-economically upper-class Jewish theatre community from Tel-Aviv. The ticket price for people who are not from the theatre milieu is about $18 each, which is fairly expensive for a fringe show in Israel. Tickets are scarce due to the limited seating in the citadel halls. Consequently, the audience of the competition shows consists mainly of theatre-related personas and radiates the atmosphere of a closed professional clique that is friendly on the inside but not as welcoming to outsiders.

This area is markedly uncrowded, and although the shows themselves are filled to capac-ity, most of the citadel remains empty, with a 450-person audience occupying a citadel of 9000 square metres, as reflected in Figure 10.

Boundaries within the festival

> … The ticket booths are located next to the security gates at the entrance to the citadel. While waiting in line, you get to watch the people entering the citadel gates. Most already have tickets or name tags. But unfortunately, after quite a long wait, it turns out that no tickets are available for the competition shows, which means that we will not have the opportunity to watch a show inside the citadel… 'However', we were told 'the entrance to the garden is free of charge, and you can go in if you wish …' (Excerpt from author's field diary, September 2015)

As Acre is a walled city with a moat and a fortified citadel, boundaries are integral to its year-round existence. However, these boundaries receive new, augmented meaning during the festival. The hierarchy and spatial segregation produced by the festival derive from artistic decisions, which create boundaries that are both artistic and social in character. At the same time, physical boundaries are also created and reinforced by the bureaucracy of safety and security.

The three entrances to the Old City are blocked by security barriers manned by uniformed armed guards, meaning that in order to enter the festival area one has to pass through police

Figure 10. Competition Shows, density and the atmosphere inside the citadel halls.

barricades, a metal detector and a bag inspection. Getting inside the citadel courtyard requires an additional security check, as well as passage through a metal detector (like those used in airports). Although entry is free of charge, this security ritual is enough to forestall wayfarers. The final security check for admission to the citadel is performed inside the court-yard, with the verification of tickets and name tags. These temporary physical barriers dom-inate the cityscape, as demonstrated in Figure 11 and enhance the already existing boundaries. More notably, however, they enhance the artistic and social hierarchies described in the previous section.

To distil the ethnographic findings into spatial analysis, they were translated into diagrams pertaining to the distribution of artistic categories, audience distribution by national-religious identity, socio-economic and density indicators, and boundaries (elaborated in Figure 12).

Figure 12(a) offers a visual representation of the historical research and the mapping of show locations by artistic category over a 37-year period. It reflects that in most cases, artistic category determined show-location.[5] Figure 12(b) reflects crowd-distribution, and Figure 12(c) reflects the rigid and soft boundaries identified in the festival area. The super-positioning of all three
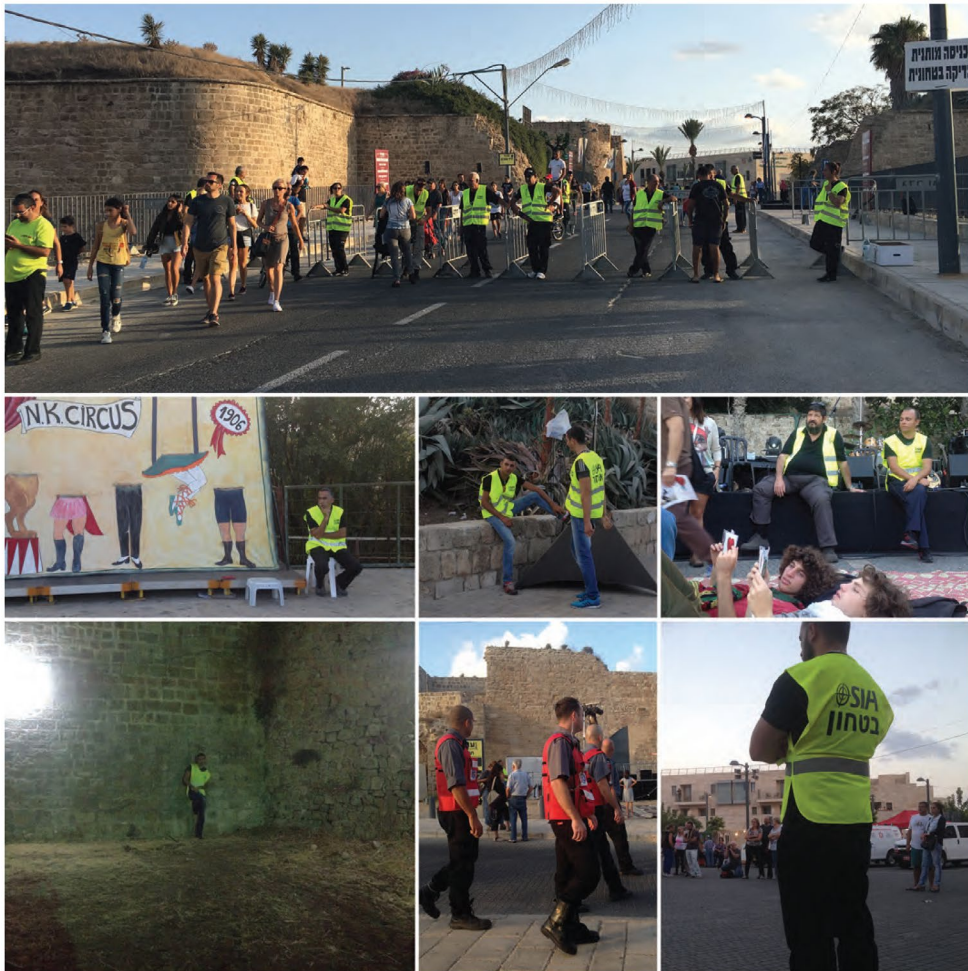
Figure 11. Boundaries during the festival.

diagrams in Figure 12(d) reveals spatial segregation stemming from a correlation between artistic category and audience distribution. 'Outdoor performances', constituting the least prestigious artistic category, take place in the area outside the citadel, with its high density, predominantly Arab, and socio-economically lower-class population. The intermediate 'guest shows' are staged primarily within the citadel courtyard, which can be understood as a transitional space in which the audience is predominantly Jewish, of medium density and characterized by a mixture of middle and high socio-economic status. The 'competition shows', the most prestigious artistic category, are performed inside the citadel before a low-density predominantly Jewish audience of primarily high socio-economic status.

The distinctions between these three areas are the material from which the festival's social boundaries are fashioned, and they are enhanced by the physical boundaries of the festival's security apparatus. At the same time, the unique boundaries created by the festival facilitate a different notable phenomenon: the transformation of the night-time experience of the upper walkway above the walls, the moat garden and, to some extent, the citadel courtyard.
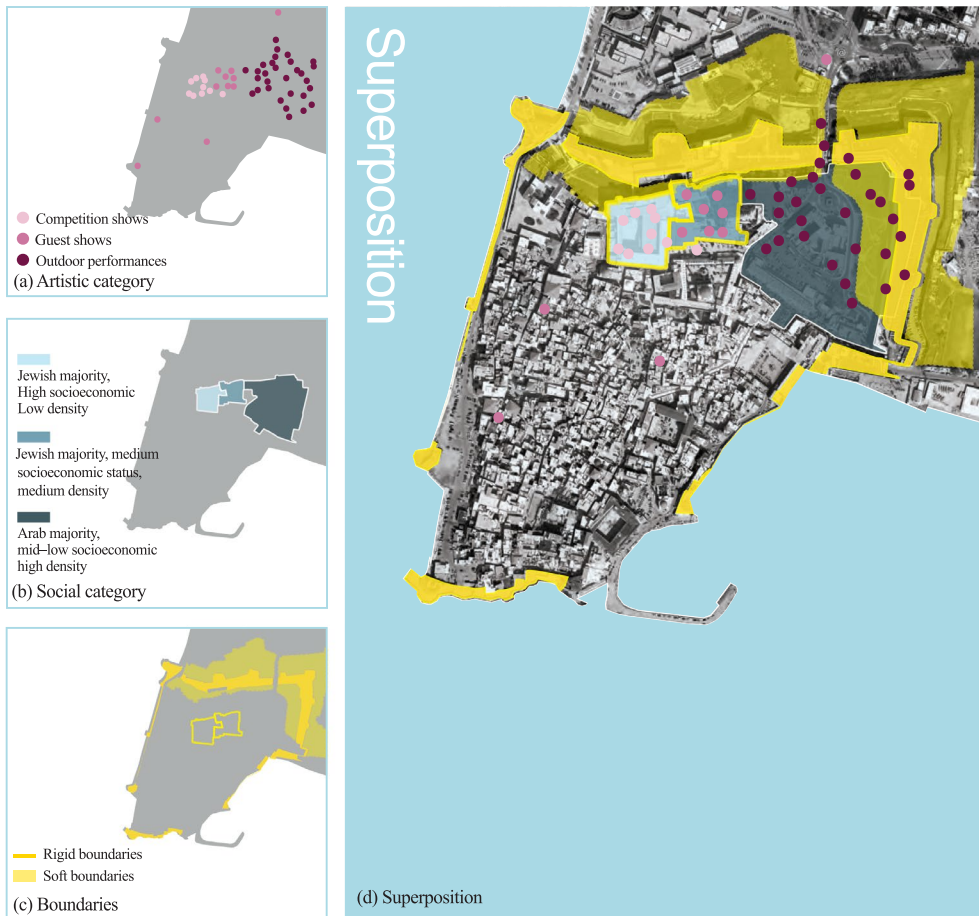
Figure 12. A super-positioning of urban segregation and boundaries during the festival.

During the year, particularly at night, these areas are dark empty urban spaces that people find intimidating and tend to avoid. However, on the nights of the festival, they are illuminated and the site of some five outdoor stages, which draw large crowds. The increased density, activity and light in these locations represent a significant change in the day-to-day life of the city, as areas that are typically empty and serve as boundaries between different communities are filled with Arabs and Jews alike, providing an example of the boundary's potential as a meeting place — a space of opportunity and encounter — as opposed to a zone of division.

The three distinctive areas created by the festival segregation pattern are comparable to the segregation patterns of the city as a whole, with its distribution by national-religious identity, socio-economic status and density.

Discussion: the characteristics of the social-urban boundaries reproduced by the festival

Counter-culture aspired to abolish social hierarchies, and fringe theatre, as one of its expressions, aspired to traverse the boundaries of the theatre field. A fringe theatre festival held

outdoors in the streets of a peripheral town is also a breaching of spatial boundaries – a move from the alienated theatre-hall into urban space, from the city's cultural centre into its peripheral margins. Artistic and social boundaries appear to be challenged by the very holding of the festival in Acre. However, the conclusions refer to two different scales of urban boundaries. On the scale of the city as a whole, urban boundaries are indeed breached in the sense that the lion's share of the festival (in terms of its presence and the people it attracts) takes place outside in a bi-national atmosphere that 'temporally forgets the national-religious conflict', bringing together people from diverse ethnicities and religious and socio-economic backgrounds within the same urban arena. However, a closer look on the neighbourhood scale reveals that although the Old City is packed with people and artistic activity, it none-theless remains segregated. The artistic activity creates new segregation patterns, compressing and reproducing Acre's segregation patterns and boundaries on the level of one neighbourhood: the Old City.

Fringe theatre, the art form in question, may have breached its own disciplinary lingual boundaries, but instead of breaching urban boundaries it has actually recreated the 'gallery' within the fortress by reproducing and multiplying the segregation patterns that characterize urban space in Acre and redefining their boundaries.

With the aim of contributing to the study of urban design, this paper joins the sociological and anthropological discourse that emphasizes the strength of socio-economic structures underlying social and spatial segregation. By showing that although the artistic activity in question has been rooted in an avant-garde radical desire to subvert the prevailing socio-economic structures, it has actually produced new versions and interpretations of the same hierarchies and patterns of segregation in both space and society. This research contributes to this critical discourse on both levels. On the spatial level, the findings illuminate the ways in which the Fringe Theatre Festival creates a hierarchical framework that reorganizes and transposes socio-spatial relations, compressing Acre's segregation patterns into the Old City during the days of the festival; on the social level, they translate the distinct logic of fringe theatre – with its own system of rules and hierarchies – from artistic language into spatial and social language, distilling the large-scale urban experience into a smaller-scale experience that is in some ways easier to observe.

The study's main contention is that, in contrast to its underlying ideology of breaching boundaries, the festival reproduces and replicates Acre's urban hierarchical segregation on the scale of the neighbourhood. At the same time, the research identifies two important differences between the prevailing urban segregation and hierarchy and those created by the festival.

The first difference is the quality of the boundaries. The study documents the process of translating the city's boundaries of segregation into one of its neighbourhoods: the Old City, which during the rest of the year is inhabited primarily by Arabs and frequented by tourists. That is to say, this study does more than simply document the process of redefining segregation and boundaries as a result of the diffusion of power in everyday life. It also teaches us that these boundaries can be translated into new contexts and logics, as during the festival, Acre's everyday urban boundaries, which are linked to economic mechanisms such as housing policies and prices, are translated into a smaller-scale, sophisticated, artistic mechanism. The result is a new set of segregations and boundaries with the same social implications but a different expression in physical space. This expression is shaped primarily by the rules of the theatrical arena as shaped by elements such as committee selection, the

conditions of competition, and ticket distribution and prices, reinforced and intensified by the security apparatus. This is the stuff from which new boundaries are constructed and organized in the festival's built environment.

The second difference has to do with scale. Simply put, the festival significantly reduced the scale by introducing several social groups into a small area and reorganizing it according to artistic-sociological categories, thereby increasing the friction between the groups. Whereas in everyday urban life these groups are defined and confined by urban boundaries such as railroad tracks and green areas, during the festival, as shown, a thin security fence, in conjunction with ticket prices and artistic content, serve to distinguish and separate rich from poor and Jews from Arabs. The resulting high level of friction reflects the manner in which the breaching of an urban boundary, which in theory plays an important role in preserving the urban order in everyday life, can serve to both increase friction and create new possibilities.

Although the research revealed that, in this case, the festival's artistic spatial array replicated urban segregation and created new boundaries in a similar spirit, further studies comparing this festival to other fringe festivals should be conducted to deepen and expand the range of the findings here. It is also important to highlight a different perspective: the conviction that these boundaries are not only spaces of separation but also spaces of meeting and observation from which urban change can arise, in which different social groups, including members of Acre's younger generation working as festival ushers and security guards, can observe new content and different social worlds with the potential to influence their own spaces of possibility. This is a promising direction for future research.

Notes

1. The term 'mixed city' has been used in scholarly literature to describe a situation in which Arab and Jewish communities share a single urban jurisdiction. It is a parallel discourse to that of contested cities, but one that is more local in focus. This study's analysis of Acre as a mixed city is partially based on studies such as Rabinowitz and Monterescu (2007) and Yacobi (2009) which have made significant contributions to understandings of the mixed city in Israel. However, it also makes its own contribution to the continually evolving discourse.
2. Israel's population, including that of Acre, is divided into religious and national categories. From the perspective of religious identification, it consists of Muslims, Christians and Jews, and from a national perspective, it can be broken down into Israelis and Palestinians. Most Jews consider themselves to be Israelis and most Muslims and Christians consider themselves to be Palestinians. The definitions and distinctions between national and religious affiliation in Israel are sensitive and somewhat complex. For the sake of clarity, this paper divides the population of Acre into two groups: the general term 'Arabs' will be used to refer to a group that comprises mostly Muslims and Christians who sometimes prefer to be referred to as Palestinians, whereas the term 'Jews' will be used to refer to Israeli Jews.
3. According to the 2014 census, Acre's peripheral and socio-economic indexes are 4 out of 10.
4. http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1042.
5. Considering the time period and the number of shows, the Figure also indicates that there were some exceptions in which shows took place outside the clusters.

Disclosure statement

Funding

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