

BOOK REVIEWS

BETWEEN CITY AND SUBURB by Amiram Gonen. Aldershot: Avebury, 1995.

Between City and Suburb is a comprehensive multi-dimensional review and analysis of the evolution of Israel's urban residential space during the last 100 years. Among the elements analyzed as factors affecting the evolution of the residential landscape are the history of the Land of Israel; national, ethnic, religious and cultural associations; and the status, in socio-economic terms, of the people involved.

The book's fourteen chapters disclose a careful and colorful description of almost every aspect of the evolution of the urban space of the Land of Israel starting from the late 19th-century exit of Jews into newly built suburban neighborhoods at the edge of Arab Jaffa and old Jerusalem, and concluding with Israel's entry into the post-industrial age and its affiliation with the 'global' economy that is taking place in our times. The roles played by successive waves of Jewish immigration and by the troubling Arab-Jewish struggle are explored, and their impact on the residential built environment is evaluated.

According to Amiram Gonen, the 'middle class' and the 'public sector' are assumed to play a major role in shaping the urban residential space of Israeli urban areas. The preferred location of the middle class, primarily the Ashkenazi population, be it at the core of a city or at the central city of a metropolis until the late 1960s or in a suburban setting since the 1970s, has been the leading component in stimulating the dynamic change in the urban residential patterns. Political parties prior to Israel's independence in 1948, and Israeli governments since, have usually played a role in determining the location of housing estates of the poor, of the laborers, and of the newly arriving immigrants. This has been implemented by means of large-scale housing estate construction in areas located outside the built-up areas of the existing towns and cities, and in newly built development towns spread across the national peripheries, or by populating the deserted post-1948 war Arab settlements.

Gonen starts by exploring the dynamic development of the notion of city versus suburban space. In the second part of the book he reveals how some of the early elements of the residential environments underwent profound processes of change to evolve into suburban communities, into segregated residential enclaves, or into areas of intensive inner-city gentrification. These elements include the early statehood years' public housing estates, the more spacious pre-1948 Arab urban housing occupied by Jewish new immigrants, and a few socially fragile

moshavim (cooperative farm settlements) located at the edge of the metropolitan areas. The processes of change have stimulated the more affluent segment of the urban society to initiate a process of 'succession and invasion' through renovation of the peripheral housing stock. This has induced a process of 'gentrification' at the centers of old cities, and of 'ex-urbanization' at the metropolitan rural fringe. All these, along with the upward mobility by the young and of the well-off among the under-privileged into the center of the city and into the center of the country, have led to the emergence of the mixed residential landscape of the Israeli urban system.

Another important element of the emerging Israeli mixed urban landscape has been the evolution of 'residential enclaves' or rather a unique type of residential 'ghettos', on the basis of national, ethnic, and cultural grounds. The most obvious among these are the urban neighborhoods of ultra-orthodox Jews; the Arab enclaves in the mixed Jewish-Arab cities; the voluntary ghetto of various new immigrant groups; and the partially 'forced ghettos' of the Ethiopians and of the residual population of the under-privileged and urban poor.

Between City and Suburb is a fluent presentation based on the extensive research and publications of the author himself, his graduate students, and his colleagues over the last 40 years. Gonen has managed to successfully synchronize into one balanced volume the complex and dynamic processes of urban development and change which have taken place within a context of an extremely dynamic pluralistic society. Notwithstanding the ample bibliographical range of *Between City and Suburb*, some bibliographical elements that could have shed more light on the phenomena involved are missing.

While Gonen makes efforts to reveal the Israeli residential patterns and processes within a diversified international context he shies away from well-established theories of urban residential development. Example of valuable conceptual elements that could have been integrated into the analysis are 'filtering-down', 'succession and invasion', and upward and downward mobility along the 'vacancy-chains'. Similarly, the notions of 'inner-city' and 'central city' are loosely employed, notwithstanding the fact that at least in Jerusalem and Haifa many inner-city remote neighborhoods are in fact sub-urban ones. The reason for their being 'inner-city' and 'central city' is the fact that the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem and Haifa have been drawn on the basis of geopolitical considerations.

Gonen's *Between City and Suburb* is a valuable text to read and study. It incorporates a dynamic description of a very special geographical environment, one that has evolved during a relatively short period of time and within the context of a turbulent situation in which territory-forming geopolitical forces have played a key role.

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