



Working Paper No. 1

Policy Models for Multicultural Planning of Green Open Space Around the World and the Relevance for the Arab Society in Israel

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Editing:
Carmit Lubanov

	
<p>Toronto, Canada - Scarborough Parks Plan 2013-17 Planning and design (above), Volunteerism and stewardship (below)</p>	<p>Southern Triangle region, Central Israel, Open Space as pirate Dumping Sites (above); public participation in frame of 'Green Vision Initiative', AEJI 2010-16 (below)</p>
	

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Tags: Environmental Multiculturalism, *Ethnic Minority*, *Migrants*, *Community Gardening*, *Open Space*, *Participative Justice*, *Environmental Justice Policy*

Sources of the cover pages pictures: Toronto Parks Plan 2013-2020; The Association of Environmental Justice in Israel (AEJI).

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A. Introduction

This working paper showcases the methodology of three models of public action to better understand how to incorporate the minority population in multicultural planning in rural and urban localities. It is widely supported that pluralistic planning that sustains varied cultural backgrounds leads to improved social welfare, economic welfare, resiliency, and sustainability in cities (Campbell, 1996; Davidoff, 1965; Qadeer, 1997; Sandercock, 2000). Furthermore, the built environment greatly affects the perception and outlook of everyday life and facilitates expressions of culture and social ongoing. For these reasons, we investigate the models applied to multicultural cities that successfully served the minority population, to understand which components could translate to a better consideration and wellbeing for the Arab society living in Israel².

In 2012 the Ministry of Housing and Construction in Israel, together with the Ministry for Agriculture and Rural Development and the Ministry for Environment Protection, published a controversial guide book for public gardens. The book outlined, on behalf of the Israeli government, that differing minimal requirements were recommended for green area per capita allocation for secular Jewish localities [15 square meter] compared to Arab communities [10 square meters] (Trup and Sarig, 2012). Based on this finding, the state of 'Green Open Space' on a municipal level was comparatively analyzed on national scale by AEJI in 2013, using empirical methods to survey the entire state. An 'environmental justice' database was constructed for each municipality in Israel,³ with each locality being addressed using five parameters (air pollution, water pollution, sewage treatment, accessibility to public transportation, and green open space) that aimed to draw practical conclusions about the environmental state of each area. In four out of five of the parameters measured, the findings

² Inside 1967 green line borders, internationally recognized.

³ 200 out of 257 local and regional authorities

clearly indicated that Environmental injustice was identified in Arab towns and villages, as those localities are also ranked at the lower socio-economic clusters, compared the Jewish localities that were surveyed. Additionally, the most profound gaps were observed from the “Green Open Space” analysis in discovering that out of the 54 municipalities in Israel (200 total) that had zero green open space, 50 of them were Arab localities.

Our research starting point is therefore challenging, since we must address not only the shortage of open spaces used for recreation and communal welfare for the Arab population in Israel, we must also work against the opposing forces of discriminatory directives by government ministries for the allocation of green open spaces. These challenges have led us to search viable models that prioritize ethnic and multicultural components, such as preserving traditions and achieving community participation, in relation to planning open space. To learn from the processes of successfully implemented models from around the world, we must understand how the ethnic population was identified, how multicultural principles were incorporated into planning, and how the scenario reflects the local, socio-environmental situation in Israel.

B. Review of policy models of multicultural planning around the world

After studying a wide number of case studies relating to multicultural planning in academic literature and public discourse, three models were selected to be included in this chapter. These models were selected based off of the broad basis they provide for discussion in the context of integrating the multicultural dimension into the planning processes for the minority population. All three models originate from Western countries, the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States of America; that exemplify a long-standing history with immigrant absorption and the maintenance of a multicultural society. However, each one particularly enables discussion and examination on various scales and modes of implementation, with the Canadian model (#1) on the municipal level, the U.K. model (#2) on the regional/national governmental level, and the Boston model (#3) within the private/NGO realm.

The 1st Model:

In Scarborough, Ontario, an outer neighborhood of Toronto, researchers present an interesting example for how to incorporate the local minority of immigrants into public policy (Basu & Fiedler, 2017). What propagated their success was their redefinition of what forms public space can take and how it is designed in order to fit the needs of the people. In the study, there was a significant recognition of the migrants' pain and anxiety that they carried – related to the traumatic life journeys they faced in the past and also the exclusion they felt in their new home. By creating a channel for their voices and understanding particularly what made up a space that gave them the feeling of exclusion or inclusion, the planners were able to physically characterize the needs of the minority into design stages that not only included creating a park, but also familiar symbols and even store fronts that created a feeling of comfort.

The working process:

- Surveys were given to refugee settlement services and through the results it was understood that the people sought space that they could frequent every day, that was particularly designed for their own cultural background, and that was reminiscent of their old homes.
- After this information was established, the local government was successfully able to fund spaces like community and recreation centers for the minority that not only tailored to their needs for integrating into Canada (ex. Language classes) but also provided a visual representation via design that represented their cultural background of a home that they formerly knew before immigration. Visually creating this environment allowed the migrants to be part of a process of “home-making” and additionally feel as though they had a palpable image of comfort that can be passed down to their kids.
- Metrics such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS), photographs, and newspaper articles were analyzed over time to confirm that these changes were making effective, lasting change in the community.

The 2nd Model:

Elaborating further on visual cues and the methodology behind creating a visceral experience is a review on the design of open space throughout United Kingdom (Rishbeth, 2001). In this study, it was acknowledged that the ethnic minorities in the country had a significantly different experience with open space than the majority. In internalizing this fact, the researchers sought, through examples throughout the country, to ask what are the key factors that open space architects can consider in order for the minority to effectively create a space that the minority can relate to.

Three design techniques were found:

- symbolic references
- experiential references
- facility provisioning

Providing the first meant the incorporation of design motifs into the public space that obviously or subtly elicited a reminder of the minority culture and home. This was applied throughout the country, and especially successfully in the community garden of Camden, London (The Calthorpe Project), which was decorated with an assortment of murals, tilework, sculptures, and mosaics to reflect the diversity of the community that utilized the space.

The second technique does not just rely on a visual response but instead provides an experience in a public space that elicits a familiar experience for the minority – possibly playing on their touch, feel, sound, or smell. An example of this would be the inclusion of familiar, native plants into the public space that can smell or even sound comforting to the users.

Lastly, urban architects were shown to connect and recruit the minority through the incorporation of facilities that appropriately fit the population's cultural and social activities. In Nottingham, this involved the allotment of plots and seeds for the users to grow familiar vegetables that they could bring home and cook ethnic dishes with.

The 3rd Model:

The last example model, presented by the Barr Foundation in Boston, Massachusetts, expands the implementation of public planning beyond design and execution, and models the importance of continued management of public spaces for the minority (Graves Lanfer & Taylor, 2004). Similarly to the first two models presented above, the foundation describes the implementation of open space through listening to the needs of the minority population and using design features that they can relate to. What they emphasize further, though, is that the minority community evolves quickly, and so do their needs, therefore, concrete steps to protect the public resource for the years to come must be put in place, as following:

- First, the Barr Foundation recommends that the management staff must consist of people that the minority can trust and feel comfortable with. The staff should at least be fluent in the native minority language and, even better, could be members of the minority or have been self-selected by the community. Furthermore, the Barr Foundation recommends that rules and regulations of the open space must be sensitive in order to prevent punishment of the minorities and allow them to use the park in the way they need to most. For example, if outdoor cooking is a priority of the cultural background, grills and fires should not be at the risk of being fined or inhibited. Education about the availability, usage, and care for the park also need to be continued so that the minority can be recruited, the park can be fully utilized, and dignity can be upheld and valued by the users.
- In order to attract the audience the space is intended for, guided walking tours with translators and instructional signage around the area could be provided. Information could also be distributed through the minority community, with brochures or even announcements on minority-run radio stations or newspapers.
- Lastly, the foundation encourages the organization of yearly cultural celebrations for holiday festivals and traditions.

C. Discussion & Concluding Remarks - The Relevance of World Models for the Arab Society in Israel

This working-paper is specifically aimed at looking at policies of open space planning for the minority in urban areas, an issue pertinent to Israel's Arab population and an essential part in creating conditions for reducing the environmental injustice in the Arab localities in shared geographical space. As presented above, the field of accessibility for Green Open Space in the Arab municipalities reflected the most profound Environmental Justice gap between Jewish and Arab localities in Israel and demands a revolutionary approach by the governmental authorities and local municipalities, supported by developing of policy tools for creating the conditions for open spaces for the Arab community in larger context of establishing environmental justice for the minority society.

The three models reviewed in this study showcase many simple, yet important points.

- First, through the Scarborough model, we observe that public and open space must be defined on the terms of the *minority's needs*. In order to make effective policy, their opinions must be sought out first.
- Secondly, exemplified through the United Kingdom review, is the proof that visceral examples – ones that elicit *experiences of the senses* – are effective places to start to design an open space that can be specifically tailored for the minority population at hand.
- Lastly, evident from the model in Boston is the importance of *adaptive and lasting management* – therefore opening a permanent channel for communication with the acting municipality so that the minority can continue to healthily and effectively use the open space over decades.

All three models underline the importance of the removal of biases of the dominant culture and their view towards what open space provides for a culture. Rather than basing these decisions on the expected uses of open space (parks, green lawns, play structures), the opinion of the minority is consistently prioritized.

Additionally, this research underlines the importance of a *physical space and its relationship with inclusion* – particularly one that gives visual cues of the belonging of the relevant culture.

This safe space will not only be a symbol of a home or reminder of their past life, but also will

provide a fresh setting for the society to build social links - which are highly dependent on physical space - and strengthen the community.

What cannot be overlooked is how difficult these open-ended solutions will be to fit into the planning system of Israel. An open space review was performed in 2007 of effective and operative methods for implementing open space planning in Israel (Maruani & Amit-Cohen, 2007). Revealed in this study is that the increased rate of urbanization makes it harder than ever to justify and reserve contested land for open space. How will the minority's needs, who are not even mentioned in this review, have a chance at contesting with urbanization and the systematical biases that already make the incorporation of the minority so challenging? While considering these three presented models, it is important to keep in mind the political relationship of the Arab and Jewish population in Israel that will pose many more complications and challenges in implementation. The power dynamic between the two groups is unignorable and ubiquitous. Nevertheless, increased dialogue about the well-established concept of multiculturalism and pluralism in planning and establishing a concrete connection to the Middle East political conflict through effective models will be the first step to progress.

What Next?

The Association of Environmental Justice in Israel (AEJI), the initiator of the research as preliminary work, supports the implementation of these values as guiding principles to enable the effective allocation of more public and open space for the Arab society in Israel. Executing this vision reduce the inequality of shared space in the region, uplift the Arab society's social welfare and environmental health conditions, and increase community resilience for all.

AEJI plans to expand research initiatives, specifically targeting an expansion of understanding surrounding the different forms public space can take and how it is designed in order to fit the needs of the minority. This work will be based on the cumulation and integration of local knowledge and experiences accumulated from abroad in order to find areas of transference and translation of effective minority incorporation.

Please view the following links for further information:

- A. Multicultural approach on the diverse projects around the world presented above:
- Toronto Parks Plan 2013-17 at <https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/9645-parks-plan-2013-17.pdf>
 - UK, Calthorpe Community Garden at <http://calthorpecommunitygarden.org.uk/welcome/>
 - Immigrant Engagement in Public Open Space: Strategies for the New Boston, (2010) at <https://www.barrfoundation.org/blog/immigrant-engagement-in-public-open-space>.
- B. AEJI's Green Vision Initiative in the Arab localities, Israel:
- 'Community planning and environmental Dialogue' project (2013-15) in Arab Village of Jaljulya, Central Israel, at http://www.aeji.org.il/sites/default/files/2015_story_files/aeji_project_environmental_dialogue_-_eco_center_2013-14.pdf
 - Model of Community Engagement in environmental change in Arab Localities 2014-20 at http://www.aeji.org.il/sites/default/files/2015_story_files/greenhouse_kesem_model_-_aeji_work_plan_2020_eng.jpg

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Trup, T., and Sarig, G., "Guiding Book for Public Gardens - according to type of settlement, population sector, climatic zone and topography" Ministry of Housing and construction, In Hebrew. (2012).

The Association of Environmental Justice in Israel (AEJI) is a non-partisan, independent body aimed to research and resources oriented center, set up in 2009. The center focuses on the interconnectedness of society, environment and the decision-making framework in Israel, in order to produce policy recommendations that are real and acceptable while promoting the strengthening of democracy, open governance, equality and environmental justice values.

It aims to advance active deliberated civic participation especially of minorities and residents of the periphery. AEJI' work is aimed as well to Cross-border and Mediterranean collaborations aimed to reduce gaps on regional scale and targeting regional sustainability.

AEJI' activities are conducted in four main fields:

- A. Initiating of researches on environmental justice core issues, including climate justice policy, resilient communities, developing methodology of environmental inequality indexes and participatory models.
- B. Development of policy tools that promote a policy based on the values of democracy, open governance, equality and environmental justice. AEJI prepares policy position papers and working papers and develop acceptable solutions by civic and governance sides.
- C. Increasing civic participation in matters of environmental justice and decision-making processes regarding environment and planning, via empowering civil society especially vulnerable groups such as minorities, women and residents of the periphery.
- D. Working intensely to expanding the borders of the spectrum of activity into regional scale including Africa and East Mediterranean for achieving Sustainability, with emphasize on climate security, climate migration, environmental multiculturalism, women empowerment and gender equality.



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