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Dynamic and flexibility in a planning NGO

Tommer Dekel, Rachel Kallush and Nurit Bird-David

The non-governmental planning organization (NGPO) *Bimkom* is described and discussed based on interviews with and observations of its planners. Their ongoing professional struggles in the name of disenfranchised communities demonstrate how they defy the dichotomy between professional planning and spontaneous non-governmental planning. We present *Bimkom* as an example of a non-governmental agency using professional tools and expertise to promote what is, in many respects, radically democratic planning. We examine this praxis that moves flexibly and dynamically between routes of action, methodological principles and socio-professional agendas. Relying on Bourdieu's theory of capital and neo-pragmatic planning theories, we argue that this flexibility and dynamism are key attributes for NGPOs interested in promoting ideologies opposed to state hegemony.

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Of Interest

Refereed articles on theory, research and practice

Planning with grey margins: the case of HW 31 and the Beduin in the Northern Negev

Batya Roded, Arnon Ben-Israel and Avinoam Meir

In recent decades a rich literature has emerged on grey and informal space. We are dealing here with roads as spatial entities within grey space, an issue that has eluded scholarly discussion. Our focus is on HW 31, a central artery in the northern Negev, as a social-cultural space. Jewish residents live beyond its edges, but along the road itself there are dozens of unrecognized Bedouin settlements with about 70,000 residents. This space, within metropolitan Beersheba, meets the definition of grey space. Our two propositions are: (1) Discriminatory spatial policy that excludes an indigenous minority group may generate pressure on the planning establishment to produce a grey planning mechanism from 'above'; (2) This mechanism may serve the minority group by encouraging its steadfast position on land, thus perpetuating greying of space from 'below'. Since Bedouin space is viewed as illegal from above, and produces civil insurgence from below, there emerged the need for mid-level planning assisted by grey mediation to legitimate the present situation for both the Bedouin and the state. Displacement of Bedouin from the highway's margins perpetuates and even intensifies grey space. Spatial separation produced by upgrading the road furthers Bedouin segregation from Jewish space and supports Bedouin desire for full control of their space, weakening state power in this space.

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