

Negotiating Cosmopolis in Acre: Social and Spatial Interfaith Dialogues in a Mixed Israeli City

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This paper explores the mixed city of Acre through the lens of social and spatial religious dialogues. In recent years the city's municipality and various local religious leaders boasts countless endeavors to promote mutual respect, co-existence and cooperation among different religious urban groups. However, against this social dialogue, there exists a spatial one in which a strikingly different urban reality is revealed. By conflating the two I prioritize urban politics as manifested and inscribed in the city's landscape; the build environment writ large. I survey and analyze events, statements and general discourse as revealed in the various media (newspapers, local internet forums, and social media) and examine them against the city's current religious landscape. My point of entry is three religious compounds; a deserted church, a newly built *yeshiva* and a recently renovated mosque. I argue that the materiality of religion in the city speaks volumes about the current urban power structure as well as questions the significance and outcomes of the social dialogue. Further, it challenges the very notion of cosmopolis, namely a more inclusive city, in the current ethnocentric prevailing logic of the mixed Israeli city.