Original Paper

The City and War: The Case of Tel Aviv-Jaffa

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Abstract

In wartime cities become prime objects for attack and sustain different levels of destruction. The increase since the 1990s in the number and scale of violent conflicts has resulted in growing awareness of the devastating aspect of war in urban areas, which now enjoys the coinage "urbicide". It is by far and large the outcome of the shift from research focused on the history and spatiality of armed conflicts, to a moralist-oriented approach based on the political economies and socio-cultural geographies of militarism. Yet, as portrayed in the case of Tel Aviv-Jaffa, it limits the analysis of the variety of effects of war which vary widely due to location, intensity of fighting and prevailing social, cultural and economic realities.

Keywords

war, urbicide, Tel Aviv, Jaffa, Israel, Palestine

1. Introduction

Since antiquity cities have served as commercial, political, cultural and social centers, and in armed conflict they become prime objects for attack and conquest and sustain different levels of destruction and population loss. In most cases the end of the fighting is followed by the restoration of damaged urban areas (Ashworth, 1991; Kleniewski, 1997, pp. 299-325; Konvitz, 1985, pp. 167-187; Kostof, 1992, pp. 254-266).

To repel attacks and prevent conquest and devastation, cities were formerly defended by turrets, barbicans, walls, moats, forts and earth ramparts. But fortifications became irrelevant following the industrial revolution and the rise of nation states and the capitalist economy, which effected the development of large national armies and mass-destruction weaponry systems, as well as the speedy growth of urban areas and populations during the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth. Large urban areas became susceptible to the effects of armed conflict, as attested by the Second World War, in particular the intensive use of mass aerial bombing which inflicted enormous damage and caused

immense loss of human life (Brakman, Garettsen, & Schramm, 2004; Davis & Weinstein, 2002; Glaeser & Shapiro, 2001; Hewitt, 1983; Swanstrom, 2002).

Consequently, post-war restoration of urban residential, industrial and commercial areas demanded huge resources to finance and implement large-scale projects which were usually managed or coordinated by national authorities (Bartlett & Samardzija, 2000; Bosker, Brakman, Garettsen, & Schramm, 2006; Essex & Brayshay, 2008; Larkham, 2005; Lincoln, 2012).

Consequent to the effects of the Second World War, academic interest in wartime devastation and postwar rebuilding of urban areas intensified in the late 1940s and early 1950s (Crane & Paxton, 1951; Ikle, 1951). It seemed to diminish in the 1960s as the impact of that war gradually faded. It has revived since the outbreak of civil war in former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, the first war fought in Europe since 1945, followed by the infliction of mass terror on Western urbanized societies, which peaked in the September 2001 attack on New York; this was succeeded by the war against terrorism, the fighting in Iraq since 2003, and other contemporary violent conflicts, mainly those waged in the Middle East (Coward, 2004, 2009; Diefendorf, 1993; Glaeser & Shapiro, 2001; Graham, 2006; Robinson, Engelstoft, & Pobric, 2001; Savitch, 2015; Swanstorm, 2002).

The proliferation of research studies has presented various facets of the effect of modern war on urban areas. In addition to the research of wartime devastation and post-war reconstruction it covers wartime economy, which engenders rapid development of cities in rear areas, and the impact on urban areas of wartime and postwar housing of refugees and evacuees. Another field is the construction of war memorials and preservation of war and battlefield landscapes, which often become major tourist attractions and play a leading role in shaping urban and national identities (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 1999; Fregonese, 2009; Giamo, 2003; Konvitz, 1985; Lotchin, 2007; Makdisi, 1997; Shanken, 2002; Vale & Campanella, 2005).

2. Introducing Urbicide

Since the 1990s the number and scale of violent conflicts in the Balkans and post-Soviet Caucasus have increased, as has the involvement of Western armed forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. This enlargement seems to have restored interest in the devastating aspect of war in urban areas, especially among critical scholars. This domain now enjoys the coinage "urbicide" in academic discourse.

Urbicide was not initially related to the context of war. Critics such as Marshal Berman (1987) used it to illustrate the aggressive demolition and redevelopment of urban areas from the 1950s in the United States and their negative impact on urban social structures (Coward, 2009, pp. 35-36). Following the outbreak of fighting in former Yugoslavia, academics and politicians adopted urbicide to illustrate premeditated brutal destruction of urban communities, their living spaces, economic and social systems and multi-ethnic and cultural heritage (Beall, 2006; Coward, 2004; Graham, 2004; Hewitt, 2009; Meharg, 2006; Fregonese, 2009). Urbicide has become the focus of recent urban geopolitics, which addresses the proliferation of organized violent acts against cities, their residents, and the support systems that

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activate them (Ramadan, 2009, p. 156; Graham, 2004, p. 4). Some scholars have also retrospectively applied urbicide to the bombardment and destruction of European and Japanese cities in the Second World War (Coward, 2009, p. 63; Hewitt, 2009; Fedman & Karacas, 2012).

In wartime context urbicide is related to genocide, the systematic killing of non-combatants aimed at the destruction of a political or ethnic group (Wood, 2001). Furthermore, Shaw (2004) considers urbicide as not separate from genocide but one of its forms. This recent practice originates in critical-theoretical rather than historical-empirical research. Associating wartime devastation of cities with genocide seems to derive from what Woodward (2005) regards as the turn from traditional forms of geographical-political research to research in the political economies and socio-cultural geographies of militarism resting on moral grounds.

Therefore, some scholars consider the connection of urbicide to genocide rather misleading (Coward, 2004; Travis, 2011), asserting that in contrast to the victims of genocide, cities are resilient and often bounce back from catastrophe remarkably quickly (Thrift, 2005; Vale & Campanella, 2005). With the termination of hostilities, in most cases devastated urban areas are reconstructed and in some cases reconstituted to preserve the cultural heritage destroyed in the time of calamity (Clout, 1999a, 1999b; Hagen, 2005; Calame, 2005; Larkham, 2005; Lincoln, 2012). Critical research seems to overlook wartime devastation and post-war reconstruction of urban areas as constituents of a sequence. In this sense it turns away from traditional forms of the research of political geography, as well as from those of historical-geographical research.

Fregonese (2009) suggests a wider perspective, related to the spatiality of armed conflict and its historical and geopolitical contexts for understanding a variety of wartime and postwar effects on urban areas. In her work on Beirut during the Lebanese civil war she asserts that urbicide should highlight a spectrum of different degrees to which urban space is shaped by political violence—from the extreme example of 1970s Cambodia to a range of more moderate conflicts such as that in Northern Ireland. Accordingly, urbicide may be explored as a context-specific physical and epistemological rearrangement of contested urban areas rather than an inclusive categorization of post-Cold War geopolitical trends.

3. Urbicide in the Israeli-Palestinian Context

Assessing the use of urbicide in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict provides an opportunity to further consider this term. While in the 1990s urbicide was related to the civil wars in former Yugoslavia, in the first two decades of the twenty-first century the focus on urbicide seemed to have moved to the Middle East. Initially critical scholars used the term for the demolition of urban Palestinian areas following the outbreak of the second Palestinian uprising in September 2000 and the subsequent Defensive Shield military operation, whose stated purpose was to stop Palestinian terror attacks against Israel. Later it was used in the context of the 2003 US-led coalition invasion of Iraq and the ensuing fighting in this war-stricken country (Graham, 2004, 2005).

Critical scholars regarded urbicide in Iraq and the Palestinian territories as part of a neo-colonialist assault intended to implement an American-led imperialist world order, disguised as war against terrorism. US-led coalition and Israeli forces targeted and attacked urban areas wherein local residents, considered terrorists, defended their living spaces, causing mass destruction of urban built-up areas and the death of hundreds and thousands of innocent people among their residents (Graham, 2005; Kipfer & Goonewardena, 2007). The events of the civil war that has raged in Syria since 2011, in which vast urban areas have been devastated and populations killed or forced to flee (Vignal, 2014; Shaar & Templer, 2016), seem to a certain extent to challenge the theoretical-radical critical analysis of urbicide in the Middle East, as the involvement of Americans, Israelis and other westerners in Syria is insignificant.

Regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Graham (2002, p. 642) seems to be the first to apply the term urbicide: it defined the demolition of the center of the Jenin refugee camp in April 2002. He assumed that devastation of urban areas in Jenin and other Palestinian cities and towns by Israeli armed forces during operation Defensive Shield was not intended to fight Palestinian terror infrastructures but to "…destroy the urban, civil, and infrastructural foundations of the proto-Palestinian State…a strategy of 'urbicide'. Israel's main purpose was to deny the Palestinian people their collective, individual and cultural rights to the city based modernity…," like the Serb assault on Bosnian urban areas.

Elaborating on Graham, Gregory (2003, p. 317) condemned the urbicide committed by "…the IDF's spasm of destruction [that] had created a landscape of devastation from Bethlehem to Jenin…," while Weizman (2004, p. 230) regarded assaults on Palestinian urban areas during the 2000s as a premeditated war against the rapid urbanization of the West Bank during the relatively prosperous 1980s allegedly regarded by the Israeli establishment as the "*jihad* of building". Pappe (2012, p. 47) rendered the use of urbicide a wider historical context, extending it to the 1948 wartime annihilation of Palestinian Arab political, social, cultural and economic urban centers.

In the same vein, a mounting number of academic papers published since the early 2000s by various scholars use other "-cide" terms such as domicide, spatiocide and symbolic genocide to denounce Israel for its military actions against Palestinians in general, for the building of a separation wall, and for demolition of Palestinian houses and proceeding with the settlement project in territories occupied in the 1967 war (Akesson, 2014; Hanafi, 2009; Grinberg, 2009; Piquard & Swenarton, 2011; Sousa, Kemp, & Al-Zuhairi, 2014). Shaw refers to both historical and recent contexts, postulating that "…Israel's destruction of large parts of Arab society in Palestine in 1948… [was] an extension of the exclusivist nationalism which had…brought about extensive genocidal violence in the European war…" He also considered post-1948 Israeli policies "…the 'slow-motion' extension and consolidation of the genocide of 1948" (Shaw & Bartov, 2010, p. 244, p. 246).

The Israeli historian Omer Bartov criticizes Shaw's inclination to stretch the definition of genocide to include many cases of ethnic cleansing or communal violence, turning genocide almost meaningless from a historical perspective. As for the Israeli-Palestinian case Bartov asserts that "…neither the

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number of losses, nor the balance of forces and populations, nor the nature of the war in 1948 warrants this description [of a genocide committed] as any fair-minded historian would clearly recognize" (Shaw & Bartov, 2010, pp. 246-247). An inclusive use of genocide seems not only to turn it meaningless, but also to foster the politicization of the academic discourse on the Israeli-Palestinian or other conflicts. Therefore, the academic discourse on the devastation of urban areas should consider historical and contemporary contexts as well, rather than elaborate exclusively on theoretical frameworks detached from past or present realities.

Shaw (2013) reiterated his views in a short article in which he demonstrated a vast theoretical acquaintance with genocide; he refutes Bartov's view, which seems partly to correspond with Fregonese's (2009) perspective, related to the spatiality of armed conflicts and their historical context for understanding a variety of wartime and postwar effects on urban areas. As for the use of terms such as genocide or urbicide, Bartov suggests that these should be applied to extreme cases, to accentuate their exceptional character.

This paper opts out of the polemical and politicized debate among Israel's critics over their use of genocide, urbicide and other forms of "-cide". It seeks to present a historical assessment of a spectrum of effects of wartime and political violence on urban areas. This will be through an analysis of the history of Tel Aviv-Jaffa, Israel's main metropolis. Located in a war-stricken area, Tel Aviv-Jaffa's history fluctuates between times of intensive fighting, outbursts of violence and relatively quiet periods. The study of two cases related to the First World War and the 1948 war will concentrate on wartime events, but also on long-lasting effects of violence and fighting on this urban area. This will further elucidate the effect of different war situations on the structuring of urban areas and question the relevance of the term urbicide to the context of war and the city, in the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and in general.

4. The 1917 Deportation: A Case of Urbicide?

On the eve of the First World War, Jaffa was the main seaport of Ottoman-controlled Palestine. Its population numbered about 50,000, second in size only to Jerusalem; most were Arabs. The Jewish community of Jaffa was about 10,000, some 20 percent of the total. Almost all of Jaffa's Jews resided in the northeastern sector of the city. Founded in 1909 as a Jewish neighborhood of Jaffa, the original idea of Tel Aviv was that of a modern garden suburb. In five years from its foundation the garden suburb had developed rapidly, and on the outbreak of the First World War its population numbered some 1,500, many of whom belonged to the upper social and economic echelons of Jaffa's Jewish society, among them prominent Zionist leaders (Kark, 1990).

The Ottoman Empire's joining in the war on the Central Powers' side in November 1914 was followed by the blockade of maritime access to Palestine, as well as to the Levant as a whole, by the British and French navies. This caused the immediate cessation of commerce with Europe, which resulted in an economic crisis exacerbated by the Ottoman policy of requisitioning foodstuffs and other goods for its war effort. As many Tel Aviv residents belonged to Jaffa's Jewish elite, its local committee emerged as

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the ad hoc emergency representative of the interests of the entire Jewish community of Jaffa before the Ottoman military government. With the persecution of national Jewish and Zionist leaders, from late 1916 it represented the Palestine's entire Jewish community (Shavit & Biger, 2001, pp. 105-116; Shchori, 1990, pp. 93-112).

In late March 1917 the Ottoman military command, which forestalled a British seaborne attempt to invade Jaffa, decided on the deportation of its entire population (Ben Bassat & Halevi, 2018; Golan, 1984). Deportation was mainly enforced on Jews and the deportees were scattered across the Jewish villages and towns of central and northern Palestine. The Ottomans authorities prevented the looting of Jewish homes and property left behind by the deportees but failed to supply their vital needs (Alroey, 2006; Ben Bassat & Halevi, 2018; Shavit & Biger, 2001). Of the 9,000 Jewish deportees about 10 percent perished, mainly from disease, exhaustion and hunger (Alroey, 2006; Efrati, 1991, p. 291; Naor, 2012; Shavit & Biger, 2001).

The reason for the deportation from Jaffa is uncertain. Many among the Jews were of European origin and deemed potential collaborators with the Entente (Naor, 2012). Furthermore, like the Arab and Armenian national movements, Zionism too was regarded a threat to the Ottoman Empire's very existence (Tanielian, 2014; Zachs, 2012). Alroey (2016) regards deportation as corresponding to Ottoman anti-Zionism, yet Ben Bassat & Halevi (2018), although acknowledging Ottoman hostility to Zionism, consider it as mainly due to military needs, in the same vein as the expulsion of the Arab Moslem population from Gaza earlier in March 1917.

Despite the hardship and suffering, deportation did not bring down calamity on the Jewish population of Jaffa. As asserted by Clout (1996), in wartime targeted groups may regroup and maintain their mutual functioning on the societal, economic and cultural levels. In the case of Jaffa's Jews, calamity was averted by the self-proclaimed Immigration Central Committee, which was formally recognized by the Ottoman military authorities as representing the deportees. It was headed by Meir Dizengoff who led the local committee of Tel Aviv and included leading figures from Tel Aviv and Jaffa. They continued their work in exile and provided those displaced with food and financial and medical support (Alroey, 2006; Efrati, 1991; Shavit & Biger, 2001). They also enjoyed some support from Austrian and German consuls and military officers serving in Palestine, who restrained Ottoman anti-Jewish policies (Efrati, 1991; Eliav, 1991; Friedman, 1991).

Following the battle of Beersheba, the advancing British forces captured Jaffa and its environs on 16 November 1917. The Ottoman army retreated from Jaffa without fighting. The urban built-up area and surrounding rural environs survived almost intact. Some Jaffa and Tel Aviv Jews dispersed across the area conquered by the British returned to their homes. They experienced the close presence of the British army, some of whose troops were billeted in Tel Aviv's empty houses. Some of the returning residents of the garden suburb began to trade with the troops, contrary to its prewar set rules. This indicated the beginning of a change in Tel Aviv's socio-economic character and its postwar development as a thriving

economic center. The final Ottoman defeat in September 1918 was followed by the return of almost all the surviving deportees to their homes (Alroey, 2016; Shchori, 1990, pp. 105-144).

The cohesion of Jaffa's Jewish community survived the ordeal of exile. It afforded a remarkable postwar rebound from the wartime upheaval. In consequence of its leaders' crucial role in managing the wartime crisis, Tel Aviv rose as the political and social center of Jaffa's Jewish community. In 1921 the British Mandate authorities rendered Tel Aviv the status of a township, namely an autonomous urban entity within Jaffa. Its boundaries encompassed almost all Jewish neighborhoods of Jaffa; its population in the 1922 census was about 15,000 (Shavit & Biger, 2001).

The wartime crisis seems to have boosted the transformation of Tel Aviv into a focal point of urban and national activity, heralding the evolution of its distinctive social and economic character. With the consolidation of British rule in Palestine following the war, Tel Aviv ripened from a garden suburb to an autonomous municipality, forming a significant Jewish national, namely Zionist, symbol; it became a model modernist urban form and a fundamental constituent of Jewish national revival, as well as the bourgeois metropolis created to further commerce, industry and profit: "the First Hebrew City" (Azaryahu, 2008, p. 306; Troen, 2003, p. 89).

5. The 1948 War: The Urbicide of Arab Jaffa?

During the British Mandate period (1920-1948) Tel Aviv emerged to become Palestine's primary city and its Jewish metropolis. It was formally separated from Jaffa in 1934 and its 1947 population was about 183,000. Jaffa maintained its prominence as a major Palestinian-Arab economic, political and cultural center. Its 1947 population was about 104,000, among them 31,000 Jews. The urban areas of Tel Aviv and Jaffa formed a single continuum, divided by a municipal boundary. Jaffa's Jewish neighborhoods lay along that boundary, south and southwest of the Tel Aviv built-up area. Although most Jews and Arabs lived in separate quarters, the built-up area along the municipal boundary did contain some mixed sectors. Most of their residents were from the lowest social and economic echelons of the urban society (Shavit & Biger, 2001; Goren, 2016).

The 1948 war, which resulted in the establishment of independent Israel and the defeat of the Palestinian Arabs, lasted from the adoption of the Palestine Partition Plan by the UN General Assembly on 29 November 1947 to the signing of the armistice agreement between Israel and Syria on 20 July 1949. In the Jaffa and Tel Aviv urban area fighting on the ground raged from early December 1947 until the surrender of Arab Jaffa on 13 May 1948. Israeli independence was declared one day later, after which Tel Aviv was occasionally bombed by the Egyptian air force until mid-July 1948 (Morris, 2008).

According to the UN Partition Plan most of Jaffa's urban area was to form an Arab enclave within the prospective Jewish state. The plan was not implemented, and fighting resulted in a revolutionary change in the urban texture of the Jaffa and Tel Aviv area. About six months of land fighting and subsequent Egyptian aerial bombardments caused the death of 313 Jews, 75 percent of them civilians. Estimated fatalities on the Arab side numbered between 500 and 700. The fighting caused the flight of thousands of

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residents, Arabs and Jews, who lived in neighborhoods along both sides of the frontline. The Tel Aviv municipality attended to most of the needs of the Jewish refugees, whose total number reached about 20,000 in early May 1948. In Arab Jaffa the inexorable collapse of the economy and civil order, along with the intensification of fighting culminating in the Jewish offensive in the last week of April, caused the vast majority of the population, about 70,000, to leave Jaffa altogether. Only about 3,000 remained to witness the surrender to the Jewish side (Naor, 2009, pp. 147-161; Peleg, 2004; Radai, 2011; Artillery Duel, 1948).

To house Jewish refugees from the war zone, Tel Aviv municipality allocated schools, synagogues and other public buildings in inner parts of the city as temporary shelters. This disrupted the daily routine of many of the residents of rear areas. To ease that burden, the municipality operated a refugee tent camp, but the most spacious alternative resource for housing refugees was apparently the abandoned buildings in former Arab villages to the northeast of Tel Aviv: Sumeil, Jamassin and Sheikh Muanis. Their original residents had been driven out by Jewish forces between December 1947 and March 1948 (Naor, 2009, pp. 174-200; Shavit & Biger, 2007, pp. 67-69).

Egyptian bombardments affected everyday life all across Tel Aviv. The municipality closed all elementary schools, postponed opening the seaside swimming season, and called on the public to refrain from crowding the seashore promenade and other popular public leisure areas. The numbers of patrons of cinemas, theaters and cafes fell steeply. Sirens were frequently heard, disturbing the daily and nightly routine of adults and children and raising concern among national and local leaders of a collapse of civilian morale. Still, for many, such as the residents of Jerusalem, which was being heavily pounded by Jordanian artillery, or soldiers on leave from frontline areas, Tel Aviv was considered a safe haven (Naor, 2009, pp. 165-168; Fireberg, 2006, pp. 384-392).

Because fighting and bombing were ongoing countrywide, no safe havens for refuge seekers existed outside Tel Aviv. Moreover, the country's largest alternative housing resource was in Jaffa and its environs. As neither side deployed heavy weaponry such as aircraft, large caliber guns or tanks, damage to Jaffa's built-up area was marginal and most built-up structures were preserved; and from summer 1948 they were repopulated by Jews. By early 1949 most former Arab neighborhoods were occupied by Jewish war refugees, immigrants from Europe—many of them Holocaust survivors—and from Middle Eastern and North African countries and residents of Tel Aviv slum areas seeking to improve their housing (Golan, 2001; Cohen-Levinovsky, 2008).

Following military defeat and surrender, Jaffa's Palestinian Arab community was in ruins as the vast majority of its members had been forced to leave their homes; many of them became dispersed in refugee camps in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Jordan or Lebanon. Many of the former residents of Jaffa and their descendants scattered in refugee camps still maintain their identity and sense of community, anticipating their return to their old hometown (Tamari & Hammami, 1998). Most of the remaining 3,000 Arabs were concentrated in Jaffa's Ajami quarter. Former Arab Jaffa was initially placed under military

rule, replaced by the administration of Tel Aviv municipality in June 1949 (Portugali, 1991; Golan, 2001; Shavit & Biger, 2007).

In April 1950 Jaffa was formally annexed to Tel Aviv and the so-called united city was named Tel Aviv-Jaffa. By 1961 its population had swelled to about 386,000, among them 6,000 Arabs living in Jaffa. New residential, commercial and industrial zones emerged south, east and north of the pre-1948 built-up area. Tel Aviv-Jaffa became Israel's leading metropolis and the hub of a large metropolitan area (Amiran & Shachar, 1961).

Despite formal unification of Tel Aviv and Jaffa, the latter remained by far a separate urban entity, contrasting and contesting Tel Aviv's Zionist-modernist-bourgeois image. On the socio-cultural level, from the orientalist view of the dominant European Jewish societal and cultural mainstream of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, Jaffa represented the mysterious exotic orient, the romantic mixture of Arab and estranged Jewish Diaspora cultures, unlawfulness and sensuality, all repudiated by the Israeli-Zionist ethos (Montrescu, 2015, pp. 78-84). On the socio-economic level, Jaffa formed a multi-ethnic concentration of lower middle-class and proletariat that included Jewish immigrants from various countries, in which most prominent were those from Bulgaria, and a small Arab minority (Montrescu, 2011).

The construction since the early 1960s of exclusively Jewish public housing estates east of the pre-1948 built-up area was followed by the relocation of many of the Jewish residents of former Arab houses. Subsequently, Ajami and Jabaliya retrieved their predominantly Arab character, yet years of negligence had turned them into slums. Many houses evacuated by Jews were demolished and infrastructure systems deteriorated (Portugali, 1991).

The pre-nineteenth century quarter, its old core area, was the most impoverished and dilapidated sector of post-1948 Jaffa, the site of extreme poverty, prostitution, crime and delinquency. Yet it most prominently illustrated Jaffa's oriental exotic and romantic character. So the old quarter indeed became gentrified already in the 1960s, with the support of municipal and state authorities; it was earmarked as an artists' quarter and became Tel Aviv-Jaffa's leading tourist attraction (Alfasi & Fabian, 2009).

Discrimination and neglect by government and municipal authorities triggered the formation in the 1970s of local Arab organizations. Their leaders sought improvement of housing conditions and physical and societal infrastructures, economic development, and preservation of Palestinian-Arab cultural and political identities. This movement caused the Israeli state and urban institutions to reevaluate their policies on Jaffa. In the 1980s the Arab residential areas were included in the national neighborhood revitalization project (Portugali, 1991; Menaham, 1998; Luz, 2008; Montrescu, 2011).

The rise in the 1990s of a neo-liberal economy in Israel resulted in a rising number of initiatives by private building companies to purchase land in Jaffa and build residential quarters for middle- and upper middle-class populations, mainly Jewish. It sparked a wave of protests among Arab residents who considered gentrification a threat to their living space. Jewish residents of the area joined the protest, demanding improved living conditions for all populations of Jaffa. The protest spurred the Tel

Aviv municipality to form the *Mishlama*, a special organ to deal with Jaffa's needs (Marom & Yacobi, 2013, p. 68). The municipality was apparently encouraging joint Arab-Jewish civil activity for the improvement of living conditions, but also sought to strengthen a sense of mutual locality and restrain the rise of Palestinian-Arab national sentiments, propelled by frustration originating in long-lasting discrimination and negligence by Israeli authorities.

In December 2015 the Arab population of Tel Aviv-Jaffa was estimated at about 18,300, about 4.2 percent of the total (Tel Aviv Statistical Yearbook, 2016). At present most of these Arabs live in Jaffa, where they constitute over a third of the total population. Almost seven decades have passed since the Jaffa Palestinian-Arab community was ruined during the 1948 war. Although repopulated by Jews and annexed to Tel Aviv, Jaffa has retained a unique urban character. Down the years, its Arab community seems to have risen from the ashes. Former urban Arab areas have undergone re-Arabization. The Arab population has developed a sense of communality, demanding the implementation of civil rights as Israeli citizens on the one hand, as well as the preservation of Arab-Palestinian culture and identity on the other (Goldhaber & Schnell, 2007; Montrescu, 2011; Marom & Yacobi, 2013).

6. Discussion

The city of Jaffa seems to have experienced "urbicide" twice in the twentieth century. The first time was during the First World War, following the deportation in 1917 of its Jewish community; the second was during the 1948 war, with the defeat of Arab Jaffa. Despite different historic circumstances and conjectures, in both cases Jaffa rebounded from catastrophe. These recoveries are unexceptional, for since antiquity cities that experienced war which wrought havoc on urban built-up areas and on social, economic and cultural textures have mostly reemerged; still, recovery may have resulted in total or partial transformation of built-up areas, ethnic-national character and social, economic and cultural structures.

Post-First World War Jewish Jaffa developed into Tel Aviv, which in less than three decades became Palestine's main metropolis. Following the 1948 war Arab Jaffa was downgraded to a poor quarter of Tel Aviv. Although its Arab population was reduced to a small minority, Jaffa maintained a unique ethnic and social structure and cultural character. Its inclusion within the limits Tel Aviv resulted in its changing from "the First Hebrew City"—the urban incarnation of Zionism—into a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic city of Tel Aviv-Jaffa, in which a growing Palestinian Arab minority struggles to preserve its living space and cultural heritage.

The shift from political geography, focused on the history and spatiality of armed conflicts, to a moralist-oriented approach based on the political economies and socio-cultural geographies of militarism, established urbicide as apt for describing the impact of war on urban areas. As portrayed in the case of Tel Aviv-Jaffa, "urbicide" relates to one constituent of a historical-geographical process, the violent disintegration of social, economic, political and cultural urban systems, which may be accompanied by physical devastation. Yet treating urbicide as genocide, which is irreversible, or considering it one of its

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forms, seems misleading, as in most cases urban disintegration and devastation are followed by restoration and reconstruction. Moreover, the totality of urbicide seems also to limit the analysis of the variety of resultant effects of war and postwar conditions on urban areas to location, intensity of fighting and the force of weaponry systems, as well as prevailing social, cultural and economic realities.

Urban areas in the Middle East, including cities and towns in the Palestinian territories, were and are heavily affected by wartime events. Residential, commercial and industrial areas were and are damaged or demolished, and thousands have perished or fled to become refugees. Nevertheless, these urban areas seem to have rather quickly recovered from calamity; presumably, recovery will also take place in recently devastated urban areas in Syria and Iraq.

As in the case of Tel Aviv-Jaffa, comprehensive political- and historical-geographical research may thoroughly evaluate diverse facets of the devastating effect of warfare on urban areas, as well as the resilience and vitality of urban societies that afford post-war recovery. A theoretical highly politicized study of urbicide and other "-cides" cannot and should not replace the thorough and balanced traditional study of the effects of war and violence on cities, neither in the Middle East nor in other regions of the world.

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