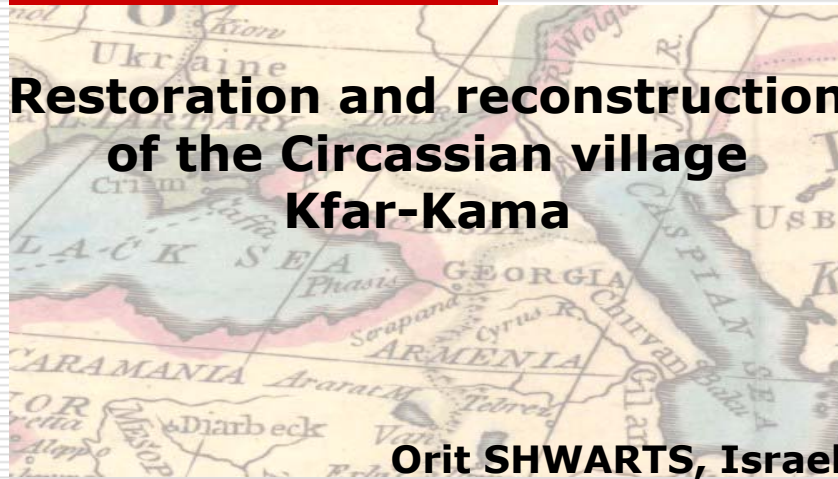


FIG2009

## Restoration and reconstruction of the Circassian village Kfar-Kama

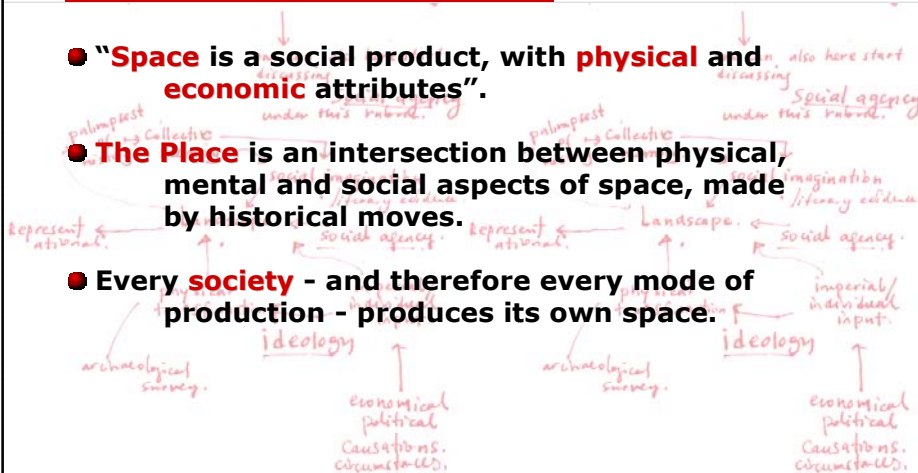


Orit SHWARTS, Israel

1

## "The Production of Space", Henri Lefebvre

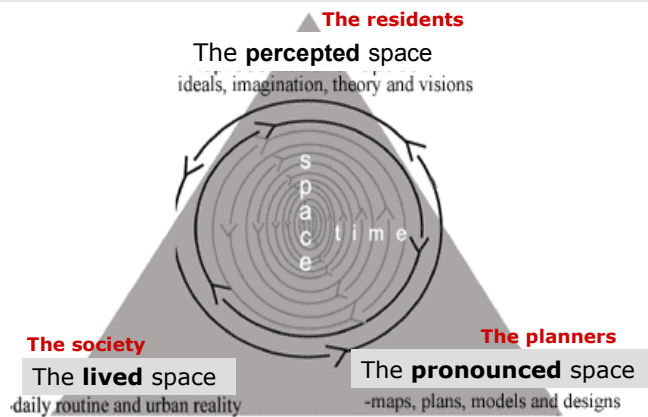
- "Space is a social product, with **physical** and **economic** attributes".
- **The Place** is an intersection between physical, mental and social aspects of space, made by historical moves.
- Every **society** - and therefore every mode of production - produces its own space.



2

## The Same Place at the Same Time... Different Knowledge

---



The relation between those spaces, create the meeting between the individual experience of space and the structural forces.

3

## Discussion Points

---

- **Planning activities** that guided the restoration and preservation of the core of the village, Kfar Kama, and the way in which these activities impacted social processes in the village.
- **External processes** that compete with the architectural preservation of the "authentic" village core.
- **The inner conflict** of the Circassian people, between the desire to preserve their tradition, and life in the reality of the open and permissive Israeli society.
- **The various perceptions** and social constructions of the village core articulated by the planners and the residents.

4

## The Circassian Community in Israel

- The Circassian are people of the northwest Caucasus region. They are Sunni Muslims, but not Arabs in their nationality.
- Circassians began arriving in the Levant in the 1860s and 1870s through resettlement by the Ottoman Empire.
- The Circassian, came to Israel as refugees in 1948.

Ethnolinguistic Groups in the Caucasus Region



5

## The Circassian Community in Israel

Even today, various communities of Caucasian origin living in the Middle East, notably Jordan, Syria, Israel and Damascus.



- In Israel this national minority, lives in two villages; the largest village is Kfar Kama.
- 3,300 population (September 2008) divided to 5 different tribes, and as much as 30 different families.
- The social-cultural intercourse of this core with Circassia centers has weakened because of the truce borders and the relations became indirect, diluted and inconsecutive.

6

## The inner conflict

---

- integrating but not assimilating

### The Circassia family

- These patterns led to a change in the traditional patriarchal family structure, which was united and discipline and values.
- The major change : the family is not able any more to integrate the children in its economic and social system.



---

7

## The Circassian society is totally involved in the everyday life in Israel:

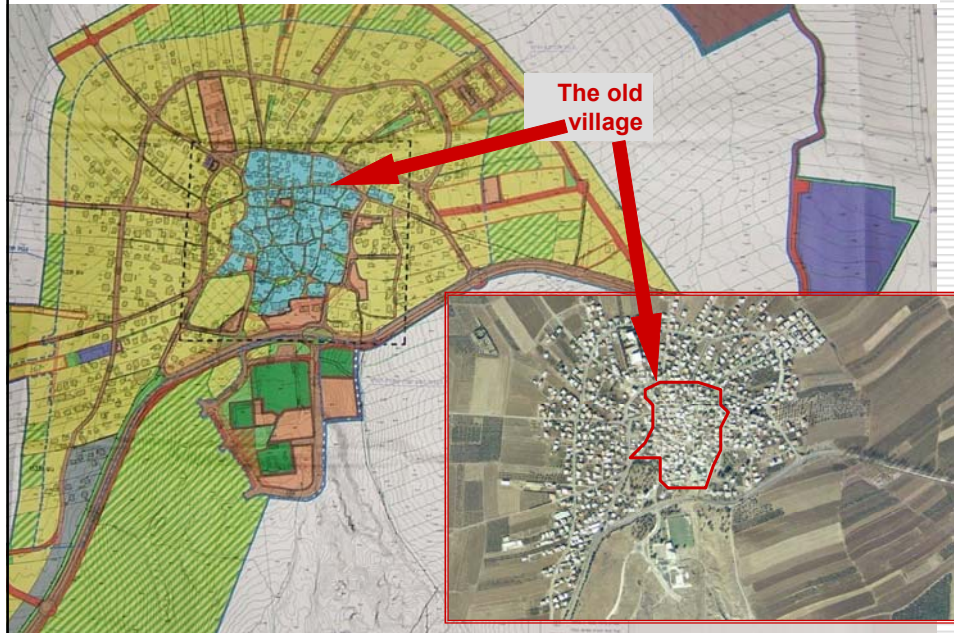
---

- Going to **work** outside the village and outside the family
- **Migrating** from the village
  - **education** standards in the village has rise
  - Circassians are subject to **mandatory conscription** to the IDF
  - The Hebrew **language** is being taught in primary school and expands to different variety of directions

---

8

## The physical structure of the village core



## The physical structure of the village core

- **Narrow and twisting lanes**



- **The alley, their path and width**



## The physical structure of the village core

---

● The old buildings are built in a European-style, with local black Basalt, and sloping tiles roof.



● The walls

11

## The Restoration

---

many houses collapsed while others are unstable.

abandon buildings.

old buildings were destroyed and completely new ones built instead



Few new buildings, usually built on top of old buildings

12



## The Pronounced Space – The Planners

### Reconstruction

**By The formal definition** of the Ministry of the Housing and Construction:

**The main goal** of reconstruction projects (also called the 'Neighborhood Upgrading Program'), is a comprehensive and Multi dimensional dealing with the expanding Phenomenon of **social gap** in Israel, and handling targets of **social distress** and areas of **physical deterioration** at urban centers and developing Communities.

13



## The Pronounced Space

- In a very clear **stereotypical way**, the circassian group is attributed with the Arab sector in Israel.
- no **participation** took place during the planning process.
- no **inquiry** made to find out the residents needs or Course of everyday life.
- Early poll, made by the planners, was a **physical planning** recommendation.
- The planner mentions that rehabilitation was done only in the streets and refers only the **buildings front**.

14

## The Village Residents – The Local knowledge



### Who got the political power in the village?

According to what is the political influence in the village determined? Is it property, land or religion?

religion ?

Religious radicalization is not well accepted, and caused distancing and aloofness.

! property

Social status is increasingly determined regarding the educational level.

? land

Circassian do not give lands to those whom are not Circassian as well. Within circassian people, land is inherited but not divided. Young people are leaving the area, local population is growing old

## Conclusive Discussion

• Daily lives in the village, are **based on the ethnic logic** of space while its **goal** is to **keep Heritage, tradition, and uniqueness.**

• The Efforts and the devotion to preserve the heritage and the strict social codes, together with the strictness on the Islamic religion - lead to **clashes** and daily **conflicts** with the open western life in Israel.

• Without any attempt to unify the knowledge gaps, the reconstruction was done in quite **forced mode**. There wasn't any attempt to unify between the perceived space and the lived space.



---

- The perceived space is originally wrong. Not only the planners don't understand the **circassian community**, they refer it as part of another community – the Israeli Arab community.

---

- The planning comes out of the perception that there is a problem needs to be solved rationally, without considering the **unique characters** of the circassian.

---

- Reconstruction has caused the people of the village an obvious orientation of national identity arising.

---

17

---

- It's possible to say that reconstruction improved the residents' **position toward the neighborhood** and their willingness to continue and live in it.

---

- Most probably, the reconstruction doesn't recreate the Circassian life style reliably and doesn't bring back the village to what it used to be, but this move brought the Caucasians to the understanding that if they will not wake up on time to their nationality, they will be assimilated in the surrounding society, until their Circassian identity will completely vanish.

---

18



## The acceptance

---





**"A place where you can't  
find something old –**

**something new and  
good will not grow in it"**

**(A Circassian saying)**