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Human – Sea Heritage

Spatial-Environmental Disputes between the Port and the City in Haifa

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The fifty largest ports in the world (in terms of container traffic – TEU) are adjacent to a built-up urban area and are not, as of today, "islands" in the sea (Hall and Jacobs, 2012). As a result, and according to the international experience, the interface between cities and ports leads to numerous conflicts, first among them the statutory planning separation between the two entities. This also includes the definition of land ownership and the degree of access to and control of the shore and territory adjacent to it. Nonetheless, research in urban planning points to the fact that in recent years changes have occurred in the approach to separation between industrial-commercial activity and public-municipal activity, such as residential housing and leisure. As a result of technological and social developments, there is a growing desire to find greater balance between various land uses and also between and economic and social needs of urban residents (Gavrieli et al., 2016). For example, it is commonly argued that different uses of land can coexist under arrangements that ensure security and safety.

Alongside the industrial-economic activity of a port, which is essential and strategically important on the national level, there are well-known negative implications of port activity on the local level and in particular its effect on the maritime, coastal and urban domains. These include: pollution of the sea, air pollution, blockage of public access to the shore, consumption of additional land in the "port's hinterland", the increased burden on road and railway infrastructure, etc. According to previous research, a long-term market failure in Haifa's metropolitan area has left a neglected and unexploited space that is characterized by disputes over the ownership of land and abandoned territory, which is in need of rehabilitation (Felsenstein et al., 2014). The adverse effects of the port on the city, on the one hand, and the constraints created by the city on the port's activity, on the other, lead to numerous conflicts that, as mentioned above, are common to port cities around the world (del Saz-Salazar et al., 2014; Daamen and Vries, 2013).

We analyzed 16 planning challenges related to the city-port interface in Haifa. In order to accomplish this and to identify the main conflicts, we analyzed the relevant regulation and legislation and conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with position holders and other stakeholders (including the Haifa Municipality, Israel's Ports Company, Haifa Port Company, the Director of Planning and the planning committees, the Ministry of Transportation and the Ministry of Environmental Protection).

The challenges are to a large extent the result of the issue of ownership of land or, more precisely, disputes surrounding the question of rights (or lack of them) that are attached to the land. Such disputes arise in the planning processes of, for example, the Kishon Park, the airport and the municipal waterfront. Most of the issues are complex ones,

partly due to the divergent interests of the various players involved in the planning and also because the planning reality in the area is the outcome of historical developments on the one hand and a slow process for implementing change on the other.

The complexity of the issues is also the result of the broad and multidimensional implications of each issue, which usually have institutional, economic, planning, regulatory, architectural, security, health and quality of life implications and an effect on the quality of life in the city. The military harbor creates additional planning challenges, some of which are publicly known (such as the location and size of the "Polinum" structure) while others are not (such as safe distances from dangerous weapons and materials in the harbor). Other planning conflicts include the separation in statutory planning between territory of the city and that of the port, the question of the removal of the grain silo, dealing with the cumulative pollution from the "garbage mountain" and access to historical buildings in the territory of the port for purposes of preservation.

The starting point of research is that the port has the potential to become an asset and an opportunity for the city, rather than a threat and efforts should continue in order to locate opportunities to leverage its advantages, by means of appropriate and balanced planning solutions. Similarly, the city can support port-related activity that will encourage continued economic growth and optimal exploitation of space. In the current effort, we focused on one case of conflict mapping (the port-city of Haifa) and such efforts should also be made in Ashdod and Eilat. Later on, there will be a need to identify alternatives for resolving these existing conflicts. One of the ways to develop such alternatives is by analyzing international experience in this domain. This will likely enable the adoption of arrangements that will reinforce the possibility for cooperation and mutual ties between the city and its port and will advance practical solutions to a variety of planning challenges.



Figure 1 – Stones and quarrying materials used to construct the new harbor at the entrance to the Kishon Park

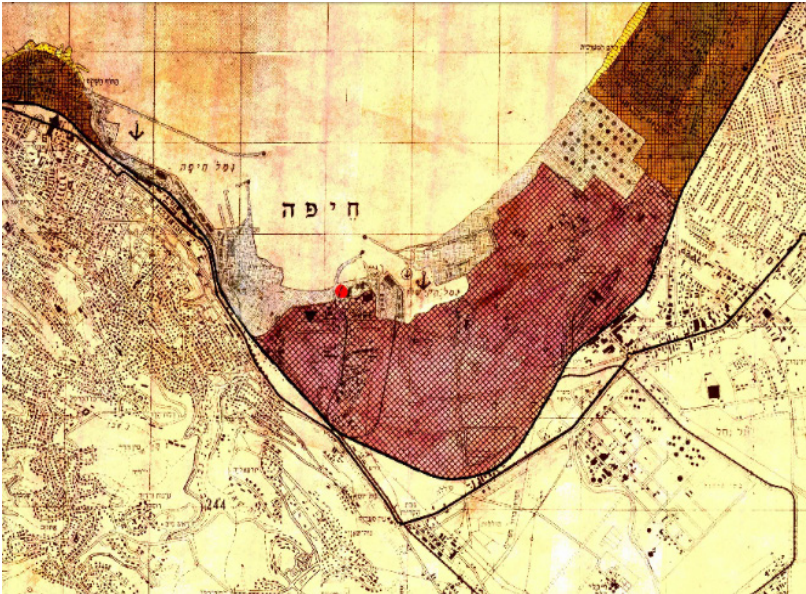


Figure 2 – Already in NOP 13 (1985), deviations from the coastal areas and the creation of a "belly" for industry and engineering installations

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