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The Americanisation of Israeli housing practices

The UN Resolution 181 of 27 November 1947, which called for the establishment of a Jewish state in parts of Palestine, was one of the only votes backed by both the USSR and the USA. Both superpowers saw the future state as a potential ally. Though being long affiliated with the American agenda, the young state of Israel did possess several Soviet-like characteristics during the early rule of the socialist *Mapai* party. One of the young state's key projects was the construction of new industrial towns and residential neighbourhoods. These environments corresponded with ruling socialist ideology as they consisted of affordable, repetitive, and customised public housing estates. The growing alliance with the USA in the 1960s significantly influenced the Israeli culture and economy, as both underwent a process of 'Americanisation'. This included the promotion of liberal values, such as privatisation, entrepreneurialism, and individualism. 'Americanisation' largely affected the local built environment. Through an intense process of privatisation, the former monotonous publicly built housing estates began giving way to new privately constructed projects. Ultimately, what began as a tool of self-expression was taken over by large-scale private corporations. The early public housing estates first turned into private houses, and later into a commodity. This article aims to reveal how the Israeli allegiance with the USA affected its local culture and economy. Leading to a transformation in the system of housing production, it replaced the former socialist housing approach with a market-driven one. The article focuses on five adjacent settlements located beside the Green Line and the West Bank: Kibbutz-Eyal (1950), Tzur-Nathan (1966), Sal'it (1977), Kochav-Yair (1986), and Tzur-Yitzhak (2005). Analysing their development, the article shows how the growing privatisation process altered the development of the built environment while adapting to changes in local politics, culture, and economy.

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Introduction

The common typology of Israeli housing that comprises the local built environment has transformed significantly since 1948 and the establishment of the state of Israel. The early state-led act of urban development and housing con-

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struction, which was compatible with the Israeli government's quasi socialist welfare-state approach of the 1950s and 1960s, concluded in the formation of new industrial and agrarian settlements in the state's periphery. These settlements were mostly composed of repetitive units, and reproduced housing typologies with strong communal features and an abundance of shared areas. The *kibbutz* and the workers' estates of the new industrial towns are the most well-known examples of this typology.¹ But the increasing Israeli alignment with the USA in the 1960s coincided with a decline in the state's socialist values, as the local economy went through an intense process of privatisation.² This included the privatisation of the settlement development mechanism. As private individuals and corporations took the lead, individualist housing practices began replacing the former monotonous ones. The establishment of new settlements continued to play a crucial role in the local territorial conflict, and their location was still determined by national considerations. But the method of their initiation changed significantly, and the local built environment transformed accordingly. This article aims to show how Israel's affiliation with the USA was parallel to the adoption of liberal and individualist values. These resulted in changes in the local housing typologies that were mainly applied in the growing settlement enterprise in the country's periphery and the West Bank.³

This article will focus on five adjacent settlements built after the establishment of the state of Israel. Their proximity to the border area of the Green Line⁴ and the Israeli Arab towns of Tira and Taybeh brings out their strategic role to secure the Israeli frontier (and later blur it after the occupation of the West Bank in 1967), while preventing the creation of a cross-border Arab territorial chain (Figs 1 and 2).⁵ As these five settlements were constructed gradually along the last seven decades, they exemplify the development of new towns and housing in Israel, and illustrate their changes. The first case study is Eyal, a *kibbutz* built in 1950. This is followed by the settlements of Tzur Nathan (1965) and Sal'it (1977) in the West Bank. Constructed in the 1980s, Kochav Yair was the first project without agrarian features, and followed the lines of a commuters' suburb. Finally, Tzur Yitzhak (2004) retained some suburban features, although it was mainly composed of high-rise residential buildings.

Settlements and national agenda

The modern development of Jewish settlements in Israel was instigated by the first wave of Zionist immigration to the area during the Ottoman era in the late nineteenth century. Their newly constructed colonies (*Moshavot*) were part of the renaissance of the Jewish nation, which included returning to what Zionist ideology regarded as their ancestral land. What began as a sporadic and relatively insignificant presence shortly turned into a large settlement enterprise, fuelled by the growing demand for Jewish independence and additional waves of immigration. During the British Mandate (1921–1948), as the dispute with the local Arab-Palestinian population increasingly intensified, the act of settlement became a practice of land appropriation. It intended to

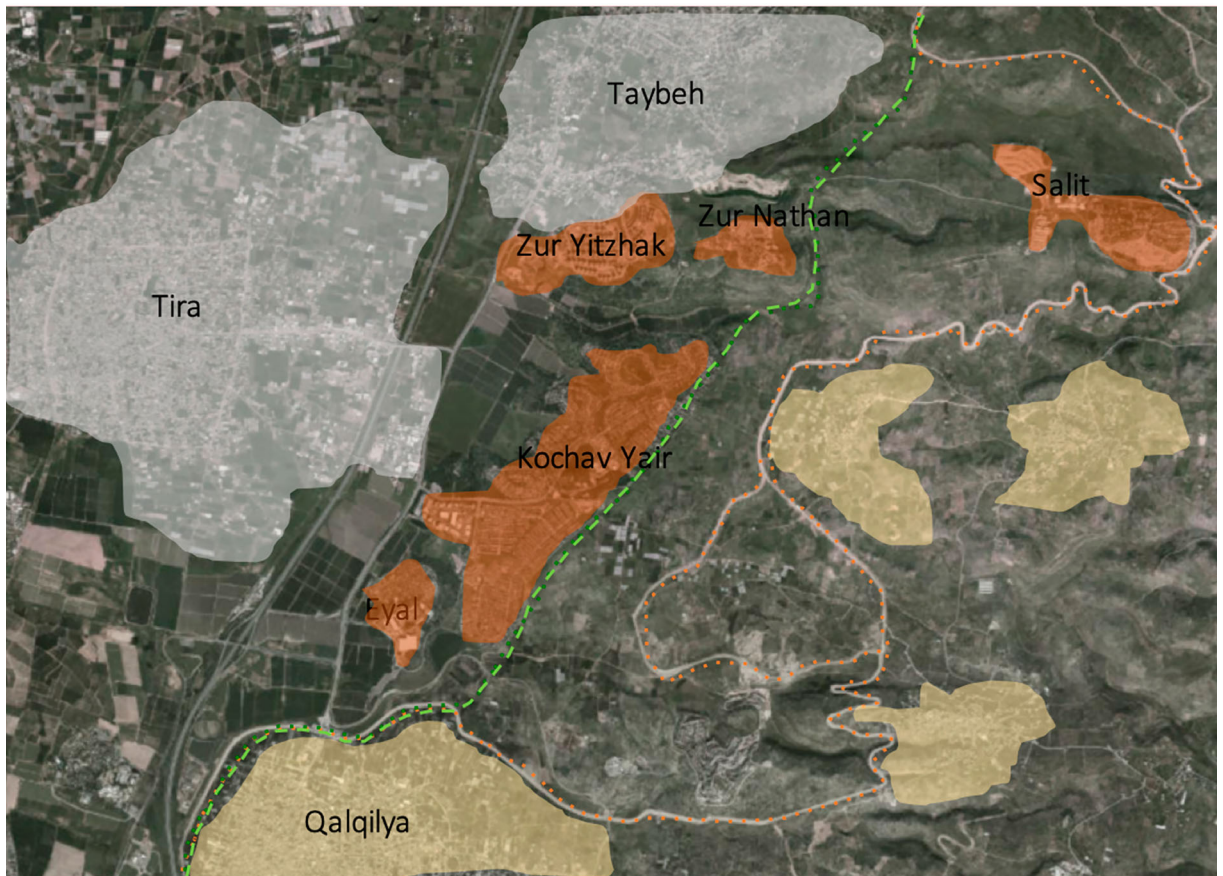


Figure 1.

A map of the area showing the case studies (orange), the Palestinian towns in the West Bank (yellow), Palestinian localities inside Israel (grey), the Green Line (dashed green), and the West-bank barrier (red dots), illustrated by the author, based on an aerial photo from GovMap, 2016 <<https://govmap.gov.il>>

Figure 2.

Panorama showing the case studies and the Green Line, view from south, 2016, © Google, Shai Ben

create a substantial sequence of Jewish presence in the area, and to enlarge the future territory of the independent Jewish state.⁶

With the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, the geopolitical role of the development of new settlements was retained.⁷ The young state established a series of new towns and villages in frontier zones that were meant to secure the country's new borders, and reinforce its control over the area. Moreover, as Meron Benvenisti, Walid Khalidi, Saree Makdisi, Oren Yiftachel, and many other scholars have argued, new settlements were built over former Palestinian villages, which were abandoned during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. These aimed

to disconnect the area from its Palestinian heritage, and incorporate it into the ruling Zionist narrative.⁸

The political role of Jewish settlements was reinforced with the occupation of the West Bank in 1967. The Israeli governments initially refrained from establishing new settlements in the depth of the West Bank, and focused on the border area with Jordan. But the settlement enterprise soon turned into a national project supported by the main political parties from right to left. The West Bank was never officially annexed, and retained its status as an occupied territory. But, as explained by Eyal Weizman, Rafi Segal, Meron Benvenisti, and others, the settlement project was designed to reinforce the Israeli control over the area by creating a Jewish territorial sequence, and by cutting and disassembling the Palestinian one.⁹ Although the right-wing religious settlements at the heart of the West Bank were considered controversial for large parts of the Israeli public, those along the Green Line, which were mainly secular, became an integral part of the national consensus. The religious settlements were intended to prevent the formation of any independent Palestinian entity, while the secular ones mainly ensured that this entity would be significantly limited, with minimal ties to the Arab towns inside Israel, and no possibility of expansion into Israeli territory. Consequently, the scope of construction on both sides of the Green Line became one of the main national projects since the 1970s.

Settlements, housing, and dwelling units were, therefore, leading a national mission. But the ways in which these projects developed transformed significantly over the years. The early Zionist settlement mechanism in Palestine before 1948 and the establishment of the state of Israel depended on small-scale groups that shared similar origins, and ideological backgrounds. They would be assigned lands to establish their settlement from one of the 'National Institutions'¹⁰ such as the Jewish Agency (JA) or the Jewish National Fund (JNF). This was the leading force of the Practical Zionist approach, which sought to promote the foundation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine through active land acquisition and settlement practices.¹¹

The establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 led to the nation-building years of the 1950s, when the amalgam of Jewish immigrant communities was supposed to merge into a unified Israeli identity. As Israel was run for almost thirty years by the quasi-socialist *Mapai* party, the early rural *Kibbutzim* and *Moshavim* remained the ideal role models. But, the scale of the national project was different now. The new strategic plan for the young state called for a hierarchical system of development towns. It focused on industry and infrastructure that aimed to disperse the local population, secure the borders, and tighten the state's control over its territory. Despite this, rural settlements were retained as a leading geopolitical tool. Up until the 1980s, dozens of new ones were founded in the so-called 'frontier areas' along the country's borders. Enhancing Israeli presence, they also served as a first line of defence.

By the 1970s, the allure of agriculture and other rural activities had declined significantly. In liberalising Israel, the old ideology of Labour or Socialist Zionism that sought to promote the renaissance of the Jewish nation in its historic homeland by physically returning to it, and cultivating it, was no longer relevant.¹² At

the same time, the national mission to continue constructing new settlements was not abandoned. It effectively intensified with the occupation of the West Bank in 1967, and the political turnover of 1977 which led to the formation of the first official right-wing liberal government. The development of settlements was meant to ensure Israeli sovereignty in predominantly Arab areas by geographically creating a Jewish sequence. This would also limit the creation of an Arab territorial sequence, refusing or reducing any basis for an autonomous Palestinian entity in the future.¹³

Although the settlements discussed in this article were developed in different decades, they were all part of the same territorial agenda. As stated by Yossi Margalit, who was in charge of rural development in the Ministry of Housing in the 1990s, these settlements served an important national cause:

the Jewish concentration along the Hills' Axis is crucial [...] otherwise the entire area would have been populated by Arabs [...] and it would have been easier for the state of Israel to pass the area to Arab control [...] the 'stars' dispersed the population, created blocs and served prominent national interests, the border was ostracised. Without Kochav Yair, Tzur Yigal, Tzur Nathan and their like, the frontline of the Intifada would have been Kfar Sava.¹⁴

In other words, the main mission of these settlements was twofold. They aimed to change the demographic composition of the area while preventing Arab expansion and to fortify and secure the frontier area, while acting as a first line of defence. Initiated by the state through its varied representatives (the JNF, the Israeli Land Authority, the Ministry of Housing, and the Ministry of Agriculture), these settlements represent their contemporary culture, and the ways in which this developed over the years.

USSR-Israel-USA

On 6 December 2006, Hillary Clinton characteristically noted that 'Israel is not only our ally; it is a beacon of what democracy can and should mean [...] If the people of the Middle East are not sure what democracy means, let them look to Israel'.¹⁵ On 3 July 2017, Benjamin Netanyahu proclaimed: 'We are here on a mighty aircraft carrier of the United States and a few miles from here, there is another mighty aircraft carrier of our common civilization — it's called the State of Israel'.¹⁶ The US support of Israel relies mostly on military aid. On both sides of the Israeli-Arab conflict, this is regarded as a given. Some regard Israel, the so-called 'sole democracy' in the Middle East, as an avant-garde of democracy and freedom, represented by the USA. Others see it as part of an ongoing enterprise of American colonialism. In any case, the military nature of these relations is hardly questioned.¹⁷

Yet, the first arm deals between both states were conducted only in the 1960s. In the first decade after the establishment of the state of Israel, the US government refrained from openly allying with Israel. It even supported the continuation of the status quo of the 1949 armistice treaty.¹⁸

At the same time, and for its first thirty years, Israel was ruled by *Mapai* (*Mifletget Poalei Eretz Yisrael*, the 'Workers' Party of the Land of Israel'), a Zionist, yet



Figure 3.
Israeli Soldiers in the GDR
newspaper, *Neue Berliner
Illustrierte*, 19/1949, p. 7, courtesy
of Andreas Butter. The original
image caption in German reads:
'An Army of Volunteers: The Jewish
soldiers are athletically trained men
that arrived from all countries of the
world storming for the Israel flag, to
safeguard the freedom of the
young state. This military that a year
ago was poorly armed, meets all the
requirements of the troop
leadership today, as proven in its
victory over the Arab conquest
attempt, which was inspired and
supported by England'.

socialist, workers' party. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the USSR was the first to formally acknowledge the state of Israel in May 1948. It also enabled the Czechoslovakian arms deal, which played a major part in the first Israeli-Arab war of 1948.¹⁹ Israel under *Mapai* had the potential to become part of the coalescing Eastern Bloc. It was a young state, ruled by a hegemonic elite that sought to build a new socialist society. Renouncing its diasporic heritage, it developed a unified modern nation. This was not ignored by other members of the Eastern Bloc. An article published in the East German newspaper *Neue Berliner* in 1949 in honour of Israel's first Independence Day, praised the Israeli soldiers that defeated the 'English-backed' Arab coalition and the recently constructed Israeli settlements (Figs 3 and 4).²⁰ But the relations between Israel and the USSR fluctuated in the 1950s. They were even entirely cut off for a whole year in 1953, because of the anti-Semitic Doctors' plot, when a group of predominantly Jewish physicians were accused of conspiring to assassinate leading Soviet figures. After Stalin's death, the Prime Minister of Israel David Ben Gurion aimed to amend the relations with the USSR, as he sought the support of the new Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev on both diplomatic and strategic fronts. But Soviet support to Israel was eventually denied.²¹

As the American-backed anti-Soviet Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO, or the Baghdad pact) started to dissipate, and the Soviet support for the post-revolutionary Arab regimes (such as Nasser's Egypt, and Baathist Syria) grew in the late 1950s, the rapprochement between the USA and Israel was almost inevitable. But it was not carried out immediately. Israel's main ally in the 1950s was Charles de Gaul's France.²² US Israeli military cooperation began with the arm deals of the early 1960s. It intensified after the 1967 war and the deterioration of the Israeli-French collaboration. The 1973 war and the oil crises of the 1970s reinforced this collaboration that rendered Israel as an American outpost or avant-garde in the Middle East.²³

As the US Israeli collaboration developed, the local Israeli culture and economy began losing its former socialist characteristics, as it started adopting more individualist and liberal approaches. This process began with the first privatisation acts in the last years of the *Mapai* regime. But it was considerably accelerated with the election of the first right-wing government of Menachem Begin in 1977.²⁴ Begin's contempt for socialism was evident. In his 1981 speech, he commented on the *Mapai* rally that was held earlier at the same place:

in this place there were plenty of red flags, today there are plenty of blue and white flags, this is the moral, historic and ideological difference between us and the socialist [*Mapai*] alignment [...] this [red flag] is the flag of communazism ... and this flag was raised yesterday by those brought from all across the country, in the buses and the trucks of the *Kibbutzim*.²⁵

Begin's words suggest that 'socialism' became a pejorative term in Israeli culture. This was owing to the disappointment of the underprivileged Mizrahi Jews from the ruling Left-Ashkenazi hegemony and the bourgeois-ification of many of their members.²⁶ Not surprisingly, the Labour Party (that succeeded *Mapai*) has refrained from using the term 'socialism' on the official party platform.



The political and economic turnover of 1977 was also reflected in the development of new settlements. In the 1950s or even earlier in the pre-statehood days, settling on frontier areas was regarded as a pioneering act that was driven only by a clear ideological spirit. With the privatisation and liberalisation of Israeli society, settling was no longer an exclusively ideological act. Individual interests for better living standards became an integral part of the expanding settlement enterprise. Scholars, such as Tom Segev, have described the Americanisation of Israeli society as a transition from 'the Bolshevism of the early Ben-Gurion years'²⁷ to a consumerist individual-centred society of the early second millennium. This was evident in the growing popularity of American-style suburbs and lifestyle in Israel since the 1970s,²⁸ as shown by Tamar Berger in her book *Autotopia*.²⁹ It is better exemplified in the difference between Ben-Gurion's retirement 'Shack' in Kibbutz Sde-Boker (Fig. 5), and the last Labour party Prime Minister Ehud Barak's 450 m² apartment in Tel Aviv in 2000 (Fig. 6).³⁰

In what follows, I aim to trace the gradual liberalisation and individualisation of the Israeli housing typologies through former prime ministers' private residences.

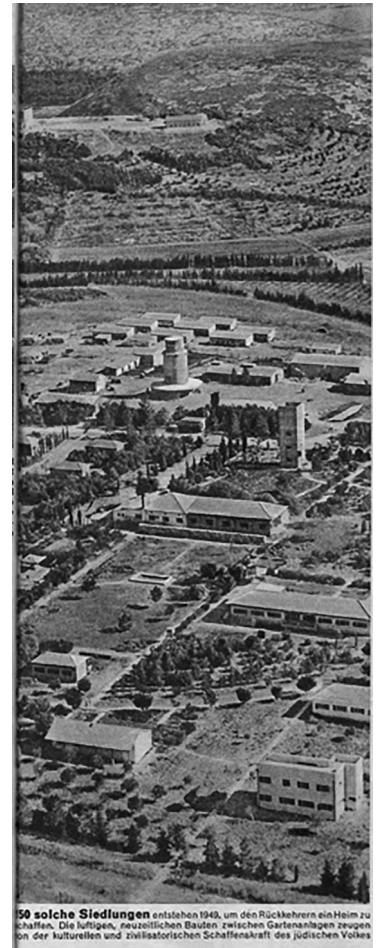


Figure 4. (above)
Israeli Settlements in the GDR
Newspaper, *Neue Berliner
Illustrierte*, 19/1949, p. 7, courtesy
of Andreas Butter. The original
image caption in German reads:
'150 solche Siedlungen
entstehen 1949, um den Rückkehrern ein Heim zu
schaffen. Die luftigen, neuzeitlichen Bauten zwischen Gartenanlagen zeugen
von der kulturellen und zivilisatorischen Schaffenskraft des jüdischen Volkes.'

Figure 5. (top left)
Ben Gurion's 'Shack' in 1971,
photographed by Dafna Ish Shalm, ©
Jewish National Fund (JNF) Archives

Figure 6.
Ehud Barak's Private residence (sold
in 2008), photographed by Moti
Milrod, © Haaretz newspaper



Kibbutz Eyal — agriculture, land, and collective living

The *Kibbutz* was a small-scale communal, and somehow utopian settlement, based on a merger of socialist ideals and Zionist ideology.³¹ It consisted of shared ownership of the means of production, shared labour, and a significant sense of collective community life. Dozens of *Kibbutzim* were constructed up until the establishment of the state of Israel, and they formed the backbone of the Zionist settlement efforts in Palestine. Although there were some differences between the *Kibbutzim*, they were mainly agrarian settlements. Backed by the Jewish National Fund (JNF) and the World Zionist Organisation (WZO), they were usually affiliated with the hegemonic socialist *Mapai* party. In the early 1950s, the pre-state communal and collectivist ideology that idealised the values of labour, agriculture, austerity, and pioneering³² were embodied in the Kibbutz. Kibbutz Eyal was established in 1949, immediately after the 1948 war. Its initial settlers were a group of *Palmach* veterans and the socialist-Zionist *HaShomer HaTzair* who were organised by *HaKibbutz Hameohad* (the united kibbutz), a left-wing communist-Zionist settling movement, aided and supported by the JNF.

Kibbutz Eyal was initiated and jointly planned by the JNF and the Settlement Department (*HaMahlaka LeHityashvut's*) of the WZO. It was built along what was then the Jordanian border. Facing Qalqilya, it appropriated lands that formerly belonged to that city, and fulfilled the settlement's function as an outpost. As described in *Al HaMishmar*, the official newspaper of *HaShomer HaTzair* in November 1949, '4000 Dunams from the lands that were previously owned by Qalqilya were assigned to Kibbutz Eyal [...] three hundred meters from the Legion's [read: the Jordanian army] lines'.³³

The Kibbutz had the typical structure of a communal agrarian settlement. A communal public core that contained the dining hall and all other public

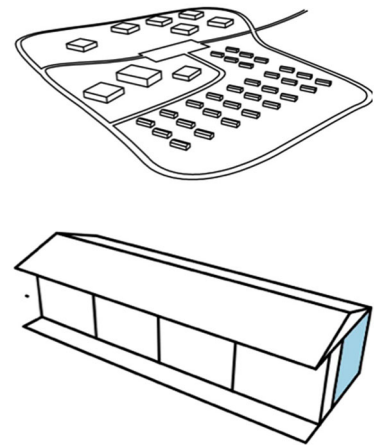
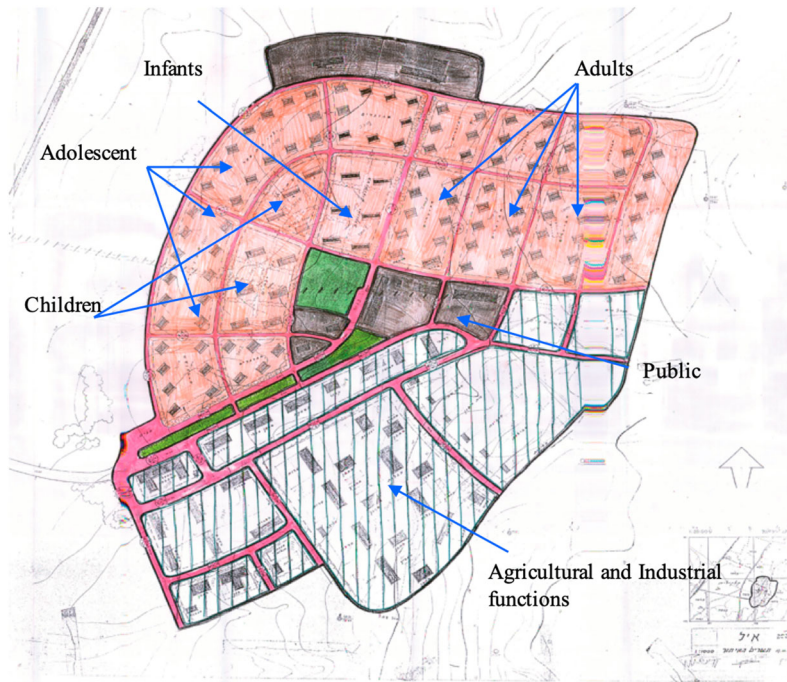


Figure 7. (left)
Kibbutz Eyal Plan, 1950, © Israeli
Land Authority Archives

Figure 8. (top right)
A reproduction of Kibbutz Eyal

Figure 9. (bottom right)
A typical dwelling unit in Kibbutz
Eyal

functions was surrounded by a ring of communal dwelling units. On the edge of the Kibbutz, one could find the industrial and agrarian functions, usually a cowshed, a stall, and a factory or a packinghouse (Figs. 7 and 8).

Like many other *Kibbutzim* of this period, the collective lifestyle affected even the inner family cell, as the settlement did not include any family dwelling units. Children were brought up collectively, and they lodged in the children's house, *Beit Yeladim* (Fig. 9). The residential area of the Kibbutz was, therefore, divided into the different age groups that composed it: adults, adolescents, children, and infants. All shared the collective open lot on which their dwellings were built.

The residential units comprised wooden shacks with a tilted roof, and each 'shack' housed two to three units (Figs 10 and 11). The inner layout of each unit was minimal. It could be better understood as a large bedroom with its own bathroom unit, as all other activities were to be done collectively with other members of the Kibbutz. The placement of the units in a slightly tilted angle was intended to provide some minimal privacy.

Kibbutz Eyal provides an extreme example of collective housing. Although the vast majority of the settlements constructed in the same period were hardly as communal as the *Kibbutzim*, the Kibbutz served as a leading role model for the idealist young Zionist state that represented the values of the pioneer settlement. It exemplified the socialist ideals of the early years of the state of Israel.³⁴

Figure 10.
Children's House, Kibbutz Eyal, in
the 1960s, © Central Zionist
Archives



Tzur-Nathan — communal setting and private households

For Israel, the late 1960s were identified with the military success in the 1967 war, the alignment with the USA, and the growing investment in military ventures that enhanced the industrialisation of the country. As a result, the industrial semi-welfare state started to replace pre-statehood collectivism, and prefigured the rise of the state-patronaged small-scale bourgeois.³⁵ The decline in the number of newly constructed *Kibbutzim* and the preference for other less collective settlements could be understood as symptoms of local cultural changes in this period.

Tzur-Nathan was first established as an eastern outpost settlement in 1966. It was inhabited by soldiers from the *Nahal* corps³⁶ who were affiliated with the *HaMahanot HaOlim*, a Socialist Zionist youth movement that had the support of both the JNF and the Settlement Department. As a Frontier settlement, Tzur Nathan was intended to reinforce the Israeli presence in the area by acting as a first line of defence, and increasing the expanse of lands physically populated by Israeli Jews.³⁷ After the 1967 war, it turned into a civilian settlement, and a settling group from the more right-wing *Beitar* movement took the place of the original *Nahal* soldiers.



In its early days as a border settlement, Tzur Nathan comprised a limited number of buildings. These were meant to provide shared dwelling to the settlers, and serve other public and gathering functions. The first buildings surrounded a common open public space, which functioned as the settlement's public core. It consisted of an open lawn and a series of pedestrian paths. The first buildings were constructed collaboratively out of white plastered concrete walls and a flat roof. They lacked any sign of individuality or ornamentation (Figs 12–15).

Figure 11.
Dwelling units, Kibbutz Eyal, in the
1960s, © Central Zionist Archives



Figure 12.
Female *Nahal*/Soldiers, Tzur Nathan,
and the first buildings of the
settlement in the background,
1967, © JNF Archives

Figure 13.
First buildings of Tzur Nathan under
construction in 1965,
photographed by David Hirschfeld,
© JNF Archives

But when the former military outpost became a civilian settlement, its residents chose the form of a *Moshav Shitufi* (a Collective *Moshav*, small-scale agrarian village). While this was still a settlement with joint public functions and some joint labour, it was now composed of private and individual family households. These features can be traced in the settlement's zoning plan from 1970. The settlement was planned in groups of six private lots that would hold a private detached house while sharing common car access and parking. The settlement's core was planned along the topographical ridge as a common public area, intended to contain the future public functions. An area for joint industrial and agricultural functions was also planned in its northern part. Finally, a system of pedestrian paths was proposed to develop between the different lots, and connect all parts of the settlement together (Figs 16–18).

Composed of private households, the houses served the needs of the nuclear family. They included a living room, a kitchen, a bathroom, and individual bedrooms (Fig. 19). The entrance to each house was through the living room and kitchen, which were orientated to the communal area shared by the five dwelling units. The succession of these spaces created a sequence of decreasing collectiveness and increasing privacy.

Tzur Nathan was, therefore, significantly less communal than Kibbutz Eyal. It relied on privately owned and managed households, run by nuclear families. But the placement of public functions, the shared workforce, the arrangement of the dwelling units around a shared access aream and their inner layout suggest that the settlement maintained a relatively high sense of communal everyday life.



Figure 14.
First buildings of Tzur Nathan on
the map of the settlement, 1970,
© Israeli Land Authority Archives

Sal'it — a community of private houses

The late 1970s are considered as the beginning of the bourgeois revolution in Israel. In this period, the growing privatisation and liberalisation of the local economy enabled the former auspice bourgeois to become more independent. The formerly limited private sector also began to replace the public one. This affected the local lifestyle, as the Israeli market witnessed an increase in foreign consumer goods, and new retail stores.³⁸ Private car ownership turned from a privilege into a standard amenity. This was the result of the so-called 'Subaru Syndrome' when imported Japanese vehicles flooded the local roads.³⁹

Newly constructed Community Settlements such as Sal'it (initially built as a *Moshav*) could be regarded as a result of this bourgeois-ification of Israeli culture.⁴⁰ Sal'it was one of the first settlements to be constructed at the eastern side of the Green Line, in the occupied West Bank. As its formation resembled that of Tzur Nathan, it was initially called Tzur Nathan B. In 1977, a settling group of *Nahal* soldiers set up the foundation for the settlements, as instructed and approved by the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Ariel Sharon. Sal'it was part of Sharon's plan to enhance the Israeli control and presence in the area by constructing new small-scale settlements across the Green Line. While this was initially part of the planning of earlier governments, they had not eventually carried it out. The new colony was first meant to be inhabited by a settling group from the left-leaning *HaShomer HaTzair*. But, as the new right-wing government sought to enhance the settlement enterprise in the West Bank, they refused to proceed further.⁴¹

As a result, the settling group was formed from the right-wing *Herut Beitar* movement. The settlement took the form of a *Moshav*. Its relatively limited level of collectiveness relied on purchasing, marketing, as well as construction in some cases. But each household was totally autonomous and maintained its economic independence.

The settlement was planned accordingly. Its public core included the secretariat, the kindergarten, a bus stop, and other functions. A series of cul de sacs spread outwards from the public core. The settlement's houses were placed on them (Fig. 20). The access to each house from the street was immediate. There was no mediating common path or parking area, as in Tzur Nathan. In this layout, individual houses were not planned to face the communal parts of the settlement, but the view outwards. The houses were, therefore, placed along the topographical lines (Fig. 21) to maximise the panoramic view of each living room (Fig. 22).

Sal'it distinguished and segregated private from public functions. Direct car access to each dwelling unit and the units' orientation towards the view outside of the settlement emphasise the prevalence of the private over the public realm, which consisted of limited services. The location of the industrial park outside of the settlement reinforces this claim. It could suggest that this industrial park relied on a foreign workforce, arriving from outside of the settlement, most likely from neighbouring Palestinian villages. Furthermore, over the



Figure 15.
Tzur Nathan settling group on the
settlement's central lawn in 1968,
photographed by Kurt Meirovitch,
© JNF Archives

Figure 16.
Joint Labour in Tzur Nathan in
1969, © *Maariv* newspaper

Figure 17.
Tzur Nathan zoning plan, 1970, ©
Israel Land Authority Archives

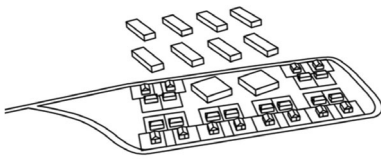


Figure 18. (top)
A reproduction of Tzur Nathan

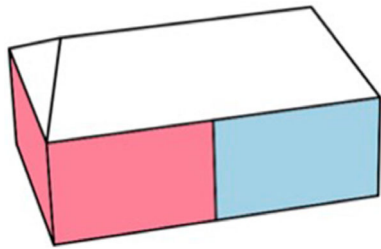


Figure 19. (bottom)
A typical house in Tzur Nathan

Figure 20. (below)
Zoning plan of Sal'tit, 1979, ©
Central Zionist Archives

years, Sal'tit lost its former communal aspects. Although some still refer to it as a *Moshav*, it functioned more like a Community Settlement, a non-rural village community of 200–300 commuting families.⁴² This typology was used as the most efficient settlement development tool by different Israeli governments that sought to attract Jewish families to frontier areas. The new Community Settlements were meant to provide better living standards, including a private house, and affinity to nature and landscape, in a homogeneous gated community. They tied the dream of better living to the national project of territorial control.

Kochav Yair — withdrawn family-oriented suburbia

The so-called bourgeois revolution of the late 1970s intensified in the following decade. It was somehow completed in the mid-1980s, when the local market was further liberalised.⁴³ Headed by the first elected right-wing government in 1977, these measures were maintained and deepened by all successive governments from both sides of the political spectrum.⁴⁴ As a result, consumerism and individualism also intensified. The increase in private capital, foreign goods, and the devaluation of agriculture led to the construction of new suburban settlements such as Kochav Yair. These new settlements consisted of detached houses that were accessible only by privately owned car.⁴⁵

The story of Kochav Yair is similar, but also rather different from previous settlements in the area. It was initially promoted by an ideological settling group of veterans of the right-wing *Herut-Beitar* movement. They named the settlement after Abraham Stern,⁴⁶ the leader of the right-wing Jewish *Lehi* Militia who adopted *Yair* as his *nom de guerre*.⁴⁷ The settlement was backed,



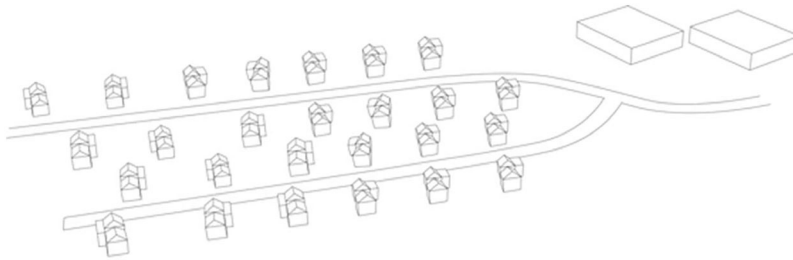


Figure 21. (top left)
A reproduction of Salit

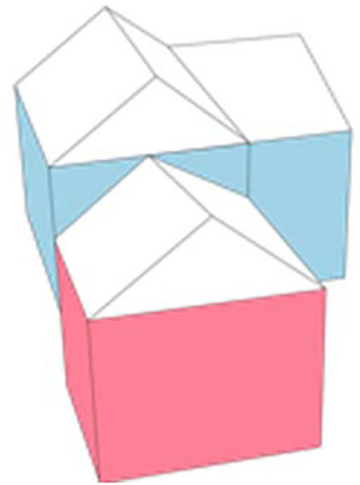


Figure 22. (top right)
A typical house in Salit

planned, and funded by the Rural Settlement department of the Jewish Agency for Israel (JA), which referred to it as a *Mizpe* (lookout).⁴⁸ This resembled the contemporary *Mitzpim* plan, also led also by the JA, which sought to increase the number of Jews living in the predominantly Arab Galilee. To this end, it aimed to develop dozens of small-scale Jewish settlements on hilltops between Arab towns. This is why they called them lookouts.⁴⁹ In the first plan of 1981, *Mizpe Kochav Yair* was planned as a group of private houses on private lots, surrounding a communal access and parking area, and an open public space (Fig. 23).

But as the settlement expanded, the settling group became a settling company. This represented a growing group composed of the initial Herut-Beitar members, high-ranking IDF and Ministry of Defence officers, a group of Jewish newcomers from South Africa, and other upper middle-class couples.⁵⁰ Consequently, the former closed and communal compound was replaced by an open, centreless and non-hierarchical road system (Fig. 24). Unlike former settlements in the area, whose well-defined core included the key public functions, Kochav Yair's public functions were located at the entrance of the settlement. This created a clear separation between the private and public aspects of a settlement whose curving roads provided an immediate and easy access to each of the private houses (Fig. 25).

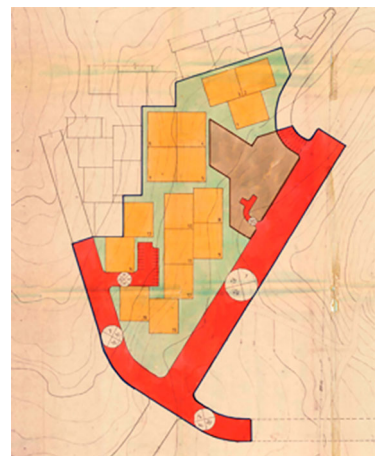
Constructed simultaneously by a limited number of private contractors, the houses of Kochav Yair came with a private parking space and an access path. The entrance to the house consisted of a service area, which led to the kitchen and living room at the lower level. These were oriented towards a private enclosed backyard, away from the settlement's communal and shared areas (Figs 26 and 27).

Taken together, the focus on private car usage and autonomous detached private households, and the distant segregated public zone in Kochav Yair demonstrate a further step in the restriction and condensation of the public in favour of the private realm.

Tzur Yitzhak — introvert high-rise development

In the 1990s and 2000s, Israel went through a post-industrial revolution. These decades witnessed an increase in service industries, and a decrease in traditional

Figure 23. (below)
Kochav Yair zoning plan, 1981, ©
Israel Land Authority Archives



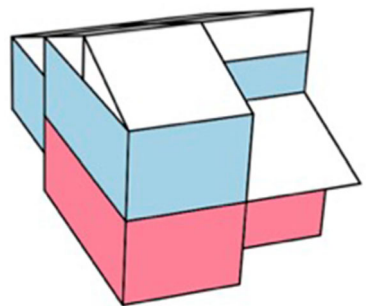
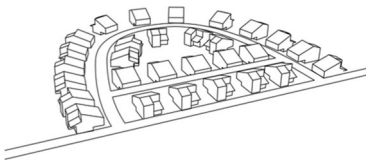


Figure 24. (top left)
Kockav Yair zoning plan, 1983, ©
Israel Land Authority Archives

Figure 25. (top right)
Kockav Yair in 1986, photographed
by Nati Harnik, © Israeli
Government Press Office

Figure 26. (middle left)
A partial reproduction of Kochav Yair

Figure 27. (bottom left)
A typical house in Kochav Yair

Figure 28. (opposite, top)
Tzur Yitzhak zoning plan, 2000, ©
Israel Land Authority Archives

Figure 29. (opposite, bottom)
Plan of Tzur Yitzhak by Hanan Mor
Ltd, 2013, © Hanan Mor Ltd



sectors (textiles, agriculture). This was fuelled by an even deeper privatisation of the local economy that favoured the private over the public sector. A new class of economic elites was established in this period. The transition from collectivism to liberalism did not result in decentralisation of the local economy, but in a shift from public to private centralisation.⁵¹ In the construction industry, the development of large-scale projects, new neighbourhoods and settlements, such as Tzur Yitzhak, were now led by a smaller number of entrepreneurs, financiers, and developers.

Named after the former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin who was murdered in 1995, Tzur Yitzhak is the first of my five selected settlements that was not initiated or planned by a unified settling group. It was rather promoted by the Ministry of Housing and Construction and its Urban Development Unit, unlike previous settlements that were regarded as rural.⁵² This transition from rural to urban development was compatible with the so-called Stars Plan of the early 1990s, which sought to develop new urban settlements along the Green Line.⁵³

Approved in 2000, the initial plan for the settlement consisted of a mixture of high-rise and low-rise housing in three different clusters around a core of public buildings. These would all be constructed by private developers, and marketed through private real estate agents (Fig. 28). But as planning progressed, public buildings and housing units swapped places. Schools and kindergartens were pushed to the edges. From its current location, the school overlooks the Arab city of Taybeh, a view that would have been probably harder to market to future buyers. A pamphlet published by one of the developers stresses that the strip of public buildings faces Taybeh (Fig. 29).

Although it was promoted by the Urban Development Unit, Tzur Yitzhak does not look more urban than Kochav Yair. It follows similar lines: a series of curving roads that provide immediate and easy access to the dwelling units; a clear seg-



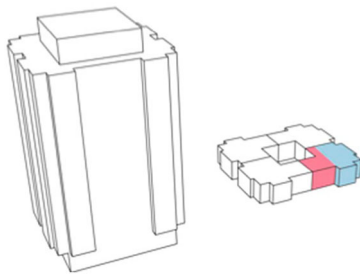
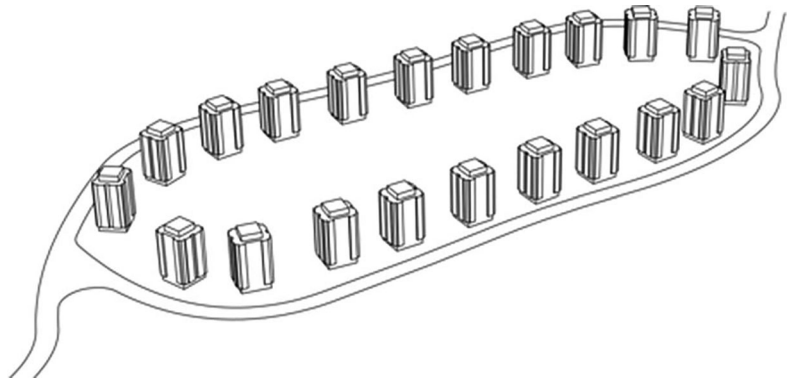


Figure 30. (top left)
A planned dwelling unit in Tzur
Yitzhak, © Hanan Mor Ltd

Figure 31. (top right)
A partial reproduction of Tzur
Yitzhak

Figure 32. (bottom left)
A typical building and dwelling unit
in Tzur Yitzhak



regation of functions; and a lack of occupation options and recreational facilities. As a result, Tzur Yitzhak looks similar to a Corbusian high-rise suburb.

The public buildings in Tzur Yitzhak include an elementary school, kindergartens, and a small commercial centre. As it does not offer any employment and recreational opportunities, Tzur Yitzhak serves only as a collection of unrelated dwelling units that just happen to be assembled in the same building envelopes. This is also evident in the promotion plan of one of the projects under construction. An apartment is advertised without any reference to other units, the rest of the building, or its surroundings (Fig. 30). Furthermore, the shape and outline of the apartment mimic a private detached house the future clients may have liked but not been able to purchase due to rising property values. The dependence on private car access, leading to an underground parking lot that is directly accessible from each floor by an elevator, renders public interaction very unlikely. It certainly reduces the possibility to develop communal aspects or public life within the settlement (Figs 31 and 32).

Again, this is best explained in an advertisement to a project in Tzur Yitzhak: Along the Samarian slopes, opposite to HaMarzeva valley, *right near Nahal Alexander and the blossoming Tzur Yitzhak Forest*. There, in the midst of nature, *with no barrier to the view and the open air*, stands a residential project. The project overlooks the entire settlement of Tzur Nathan in the Sharon, *and is close to Highway 6 and 531*, so it is easy to get to employment and recreation places in the Dan region, in the Sharon cities and in general.⁵⁴

This quote showcases the logic of Tzur Yitzhak, a notion of living in an open landscape, away from the city life, but connected to major highways. One is supposed to socialise, and seek employment and recreation outside of the settlement. All that is just a car ride away. But inside the settlement one should only seek to be at home.

Conclusion

Uri Ram has illustrated the Americanisation and globalisation of the Israeli society through its gradual adoption of US fast-food culture. In the late 1960s, the

growing alignment with the USA coincided with the appearance of the first industrialised hamburger in Israel. In 1972, Burger Ranch, the first branch of a local fast-food chain, opened in Israel. In the 1980s, Burger Ranch expanded into a chain of a dozen branches nation-wide, and in the early 1990s McDonald's and Burger King opened their first local franchises. In 2002, there were already 250 branches of the three chains, and the fast-food industry generated hundreds of millions of US dollars annually.⁵⁵ In a way, these cultural changes are, respectively, reflected in changes in the local built environment.

The five case studies presented in this article illustrate a gradual yet continuous decrease of the public sphere in Israeli culture over the last seventy years. In the most communal of these settlements, Kibbutz Eyal of the early 1950s, private life was limited to the couple's bedroom. The individual's everyday life was, in fact, the community's everyday life. The joint core and the public open spaces formed the heart of the Kibbutz. The built environment followed the same logic. In Tzur Nathan, the core of the settlement maintained its communal public functions. Although households were now private, their formation created a gradual transition from communal to private spaces. In Sal'it, the private and the public were further segregated as the autonomy of each household was reinforced. In Kochav Yair, communal functions were effectively ostracised to the margins of the settlement, further reinforcing the prevailing individualism. In the last example of Tzur Yitzhak which did not include public functions, communal life was not only pushed towards the fringes of the settlement but even further beyond it.

These changes were not only reflected in home ownership or in the location of public buildings inside the settlement. They also extended to the placement of the housing units, and their inner layouts. In Kibbutz Eyal, the living room of individual dwelling units was the shared lawn of the *kibbutz*. In Tzur Nathan, the living room faced the communal pathways. But in Sal'it, it changed orientation to focus on the view outwards. In Kochav Yair, the houses were designed to further isolate the nuclear family from its immediate surroundings. Finally, Tzur Yitzhak separated the apartments from their surroundings even further, through their layout, orientation, and access.

These changes in the built environment developed in parallel to the changes that the Israeli society, culture, and economy had undergone over the years, as a result of the growing Israeli-American collaboration. From the 1950s era of the 'Bolshevism of Ben Gurion' in Kibbutz Eyal to the individualist entrepreneurial era of Tzur Yitzhak in the early 2000s, the Israeli built environment followed the American dream of a private house and a private car.⁵⁶ As this dream was also utilised to attract more families to the developing settlement enterprise in the West Bank and other frontier areas, it eventually substituted the pioneering values with individual ones.⁵⁷

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