1 | *Introduction*

The Settlements along the Trans-Israel Highway

For a fee of 34 new Israeli shekels one can enjoy a private car ride along the entire 200 km of the Trans-Israel Highway and witness the ever-increasing construction boom that has turned the area from a frontier zone into a blooming real-estate market. Built in the early 2000s, the new, privately funded four-lane motorway presents the local driver with an uninterrupted journey at an average speed of 130 km per hour, bypassing the heavily crowded Tel Aviv metropolis all the way into the third millennium. Driving along the highway, one might forget that it runs parallel to the official border between the State of Israel and the Palestinian West Bank, the Green Line, which was successfully blurred by the extensive development of Israeli settlements on both of sides. Looking closely at the well-maintained landscape, the attentive driver might easily recognize shimmers of the West Bank Separation Barrier that was built east of the official border and surrounds the Palestinian cities of the Occupied Territories, despite efforts to hide it. The overt private highway and the covert state-constructed barrier constitute a mutually rewarding relationship, where the former contributes to the interests of the latter and vice versa.

This book attempts to understand the nature of this mutually rewarding relationship and how it shapes the local built environment. It has its feet in political economy, yet it is written from the perspective of architectural and urban planning history. Correspondingly, while architecture and planning are the subjects of this book, it uses political economic analyses as a perspective to understand how they are formed. Therefore, the book focuses on the production process, rather than the product, using the Israeli settlement mechanism as its object of research in order to understand the built environment it produced. This mechanism is part of a century-long process that began with the first waves

1

of Zionist immigration to Palestine in the late 1800s, intensified during the British Mandate and continued to form official policy even after the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. Consequently, it forms an integral part of the spiritual and physical Jewish national revival and constitutes a leading case study of a state-led geopolitical process of spatial development. With the global neoliberal turn during the 1970s and the liberalization of the local economy, the state began to privatize its settlement project, merging individualistic interests and speculations with geopolitical considerations.

This book claims that the increasing privatization of the settlement mechanism since the late 1970s is the result of a state-directed effort to facilitate its continuation by harnessing it to the logic of the market, leading to a coalition of national and private interests that dictate the formation of the local built environment in an evolving process of *privatize and rule*.[1] I focus on settlements constructed on both sides of the Green Line that are located between the Trans-Israel Highway built in 2002 and the West Bank Separation Barrier erected in 2006. The metamorphosis of this former frontier area was enabled by intense state-led development efforts following the occupation of the Palestinian territories in 1967 and the election of the first right-wing and economically liberal government a decade later. This process relied on the growing involvement of the private sector, marked by the first privatized national infrastructure project – the new cross-country motorway, also known as Highway 6.

Embracing the term *settlements along the Trans-Israel Highway*, which was used by the state more than a decade before the road's paving even began,[2] I emphasize the connection between the privatized highway and the territorial settlements around it. It therefore highlights the use of the seemingly neutral façade of private development to blur the Green Line and to facilitate Israel's eastward expansion into the West Bank. There is rarely any physical connection between the settlements and the highway, which is a national arterial road and thus consists of minimal intersections. Yet, it is these settlements that incorporated the area into Israel's main metropolitan region and enabled the highway's construction. Simultaneously, they also enabled

---

[1] Schwake, "Settle and Rule: The Evolution of the Israeli National Project."
[2] MCH Directorate of Rural Construction and New Settlements, "Plan for the Development of New Suburban Settlements along Highway 6," 6.

the erection of the West Bank Separation Barrier several kilometers east of the Green Line, de facto annexing parts of the Occupied Territories.

This book shows that the settlements along the Trans-Israel Highway are an outcome of evolving modes of privatized spatial production, which relied on a system of *spatial privileges* and have produced different housing typologies over the past four decades. These modes of production are based on the state granting favored groups of individuals, developers, and entrepreneurs the ability to influence the formation of built space as a means to continuously develop and settle national frontiers. The settlements along the Trans-Israel Highway therefore constitute a unique case study of the relationship between the political interest to control space and the ability to carry it out.

Analyzing these modes of production, the spatial privileges they relied on, and the housing typologies they produced, I examine how the state incorporated a variety of private groups into its territorial project, ensuring its continuation while transforming the local built environment. Thus, unlike the research perspective that sees privatization as a state-led effort to ensure the survival of capitalism, *privatize and rule* depicts a contrary scenario, functioning as an economic means to a geopolitical end. Accordingly, this book challenges the conception of the built environment as a cultural product, as it sheds light on the ability of political and economic agendas to dictate the production of space – drawing a continuous line from the strategic regional level, through urban planning and design, all the way to the architecture of the single dwelling unit.

Book Focus

As an outcome of a privatized geopolitical project, the settlements between the Trans-Israel Highway and the West Bank Separation Barrier are a servant of several masters. Accordingly, this book claims that as the state was interested in expanding its *power over* space, it granted select groups spatial privileges that included the *power to* inhabit, plan, and construct it. Therefore, the production of these settlements followed the different functions they were meant to serve. First, the national-territorial aspect of controlling space dictates the location and spread of new settling points and in strategic plans appears as dots or continuous ink stains. Second, the individual and speculative interests of the different private groups that the state has

involved in its territorial project since the late 1970s dictate the manner in which each ink stain is materialized. The book also claims that with the changes in local economic, political, and cultural values, the nature of these select groups altered, and with it the spatial privileges they received, thus creating a series of evolving modes of spatial production that transformed the local architectural and urban products accordingly. I first identify the changing geopolitical, individual, and corporate considerations that form the basis of the evolving modes of production. Then, I analyze the spatial manifestation of each mode of production, thus identifying the architectural and urban components that define the privatized Israeli national project. I examine how the development of Israeli settlements on both sides of the Green Line has evolved since 1977, in line with transforming national economic and geopolitical agendas, and how these were manifested in the settlements' architectural and urban form.

This book focuses on the border area with the West Bank since 1977, as both the location and period signify the privatization and financialization of the Israeli economy and the expansion of the national settlement enterprise. This area was only sporadically settled by the state during the 1950s and 1960s, as it preferred to develop other national frontiers.[3] With the occupation of the West Bank in 1967 and the election of the first right-wing and pro-laissez-faire government in 1977, the geopolitical status of the area became a leading national interest, while its relative proximity to the Tel Aviv metropolis gave it the potential to satisfy personal desires and economic speculations.[4] Located on the fringes of the West Bank, it was ideological enough to become an area of national importance, yet not too ideological like the depths of the Occupied Territories, and thus appealed to almost all sectors of Israeli (Jewish) society.[5] Correspondingly, it turned into a platform for one of the most intense development processes, which, in less than twenty years, concluded in the construction of over thirty new localities. As an extension of the Tel Aviv metropolis, these new settlements attracted thousands of upper-middle-class families with strong affiliations to the secular and centre-left political sector, giving the territorial project a seemingly apolitical and neutral mask.

[3] Gazit and Soffer, *Between the Sharon and Samaria*; Schwake, "Normalizing War: Protective Spaces and National Resilience."
[4] Berger, *Autotopia: Suburban In-between Space in Israel.*
[5] Newman, "Settlement as Suburbanization: The Banality of Colonization."

Developed by a coalition of geopolitical, personal, and financial objectives, the settlements on both sides of the Green Line represent the privatization of the Israeli national geopolitical project. The construction of the adjacent cross-country highway in the early 2000s, the first privately built and operated road in Israel, further emphasizes the role of both privatization and geopolitics – creating a geographical unit of privatized national projects. Focusing on the manner in which the development mechanism was privatized and the different settlement typologies it produced, this book shows how the location, urban fabric, and architecture of the houses corresponds with national territorial aspirations, private interests, and profitability concerns.

To explain how the settlements along the Trans-Israel Highway took shape, I focus on four different development phases, each with its specific modes of production and unique settlement phenomenon. First is the neo-rural development of the late 1970s, which was based on young urban families seeking a pioneer-like experience in the national frontiers and the small-scale Community Settlements they established. Second is the gentrification of the Green Line and the new Suburban Settlements that housed the Israeli upper-middle-class during the 1980s, in its quest for detached private houses within commuting distance from Tel Aviv. Third is the mass suburbanization of the 1990s, which witnessed the increasing involvement of private developers, leading to reproduced and high-rise residential environments. Finally, the current financialization phase and its speculative projects promotes the construction of corporate-led settlements, suburban in terms of everyday life, yet urban in terms of scale.

Political Historiography of (Israeli) Architecture and Urban Planning

The built environment is the human-made space in which we conduct our everyday lives. This consists of the buildings, streets, infrastructure, and nonnatural landscapes that surround them. Being a cultural artifact, the built environment reflects the social context in which it was produced. Therefore, in a basic Marxist analysis, the built environment would be part of the *superstructure*, shaped by the *base* that consists of the means and relations of production.[6] Expanding this analysis,

---

[6] Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Vol. 1, 12.

Adorno and Horkheimer, in their writings on the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, coined the term *culture industry*, classifying culture as an integral part of the means of production and the base that produces the societal superstructure.[7] Correspondingly, Lefebvre, in his analyses of built space, claimed that it is not a mere reflection of the existing social order but rather an integral part it, ensuring its continuation while functioning as "a means of production" and also as "a means of control, and hence of domination."[8] While most Marxist and neo-Marxist theoreticians focused on economic classes, Gramsci introduced the concept of *hegemony*, the ruling social class, to explain additional ruling interests and values that go beyond the simple economic rationale, such as nationalism, conservatism, and orthodoxy. The influence of the ruling class, according to Gramsci, is rendered in the built environment, as it controls "everything which influences or is able to influence public opinion, directly or indirectly . . . even architecture, and the layout and names of the streets."[9] However, whether the built environment is produced by the social order or whether it reproduces it, they both correlate one to the other and as the means and relations of production are constantly changing, the ruling hegemonic values change in harmony. Respectively, their spatial manifestations are supposed to transform as well. Thus, by studying the planning history of a given place – in the case of this book, Israel – we are able to understand the prominent political, economic, and cultural values that dictated the formation of the built environment and how they changed over the years.[10]

The existing scholarship on the politics of built space is vast and multifaceted. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify several leading approaches that characterize the main research perspectives, which analyze the way the power of the state is both reproduced and represented in the built environment. The representational perspective focuses on the manner architecture "symbolises," "expresses," "houses," or "displays" the power of the state.[11] Accordingly, the

[7] Adorno, *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*; Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.
[8] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 26.
[9] Gramsci, *Selections from Cultural Writings*, 389.
[10] Hein, "The What, Why, and How of Planning History," 5–6.
[11] Molnar, *Building the State: Architecture, Politics, and State Formation in Post-War Central Europe*, 11.

focal point of this approach is primarily iconic governmental buildings or national compounds,[12] usually of totalitarian regimes such as Nazi Germany, the USSR, or Fascist Italy, whose aesthetics are supposed to idealize the state and thus legitimize and enforce its rule.[13] Besides the common attention to fascist aesthetics, other researchers also considered democratic regimes, like the metaphoric aspects of transparency in West Germany,[14] or the adoption of Bauhaus architects by the American establishment as part of its efforts to depict the USA as the protector of democracy and freedom.[15] Similarly, at the urban level, Lawrence Vale's analyses of capital cities focus on the manner in which they were used to emphasize the authority of the state and its dominant culture.[16] Alternatively, James Holston and James Scott analyze capitals as a state-led social engineering process, intended to enforce certain behavior and modes of everyday life that confirm the ruling sociopolitical order.[17] Here, the focus is more on the built environment's ability to *reproduce* the existing power relations and less on its *representational* capacities.

The emphasis on spatial practices, rather than representation, originates from social studies theories in the 1960s and 1970s and the "spatial turn."[18] Whether in Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* and the divisions and hierarchies that create a common ideological construct,[19] Anthony Giddens' analyses of privacy and rules as spatial domination structures,[20] Michel Foucault's study of space's disciplinary power,[21] they all focused on the dominance mechanism produced through built space as an attempt to subjugate the individual to the rule

---

[12] Sklair, "Iconic Architecture and Urban, National, and Global Identities."

[13] Sontag, "Fascinating Fascism"; Lane, *Architecture and Politics in Germany, 1918–1945*.

[14] Barnstone, *The Transparent State: Architecture and Politics in Postwar Germany*, 27–60.

[15] Betts, "The Bauhaus as Cold War Legend: West German Modernism Revisited."

[16] Vale, *Architecture, Power and National Identity*, 3–47; Vale, "The Temptations of Nationalism in Modern Capital Cities."

[17] Holston, *The Modernist City: An Anthropological Critique of Brasilia*, 74–84; Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, 117–30.

[18] Brown, *The Black Skyscraper: Architecture and the Perception of Race*, 204.

[19] Bourdieu, "The Berber House."

[20] Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory*.

[21] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*.

of the state. The innovation and popularity of this social perspective led
to a vast architectural and planning history research that is based on the
theories of the scholars mentioned above, as well as on other similar
approaches.[22]

At the same time, as stated by architectural and urban critic Kim
Dovey, the spatial adaption of the social sciences perspective usually
diminishes the role of individuals, considering them solely as *subjects*,
rather than *agents*. He therefore suggests a pluralistic approach that
considers them as both, with the ability to be "*empowered*" and
"*disempowered*" by the built environment.[23] Drawing on the work
of Jeffrey Isaac,[24] Dovey emphasizes the difference between *power
over*, the ability to harness the capacities of others to one's interests,
and *power to*, "[t]he 'capacity' to imagine, construct and inhabit
a better built environment."[25] Applying this distinction to the develop-
ment of Israeli settlements, we could easily claim that this was a process
in which the state enhanced its *power over* space by providing its
citizens with housing opportunities in frontier areas. Accordingly,
this was a state-led social engineering project, which created
a spiritual bond between the citizens and the state while securing its
legitimacy and territorial rule; using built space to control citizens on
the one hand, and using citizens to control space on the other.

Allegedly, the privatization of housing development is a process with
the potential to turn the individual from a mere subject into an agent.
By transferring the responsibility from the state to the individual, the
latter is granted the *power to* inhabit, plan, and create the built envir-
onment. Lisa Findley highlights the role of architecture as a liberating
tool for subjected people, confirming their participation in cultural
production. She refers to Le Corbusier's contention that "taking pos-
session of space is the first gesture of living things" and that "the

---

22 Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human
    Condition Have Failed*; Holston, *The Modernist City: An Anthropological
    Critique of Brasilia*; Findley, *Building Change: Architecture, Politics and
    Cultural Agency*; Hirst, *Space and Power: Politics War and Architecture*;
    Stanek, "French Post-War Architecture and Its Critics," 113–25; Molnar,
    *Building the State: Architecture, Politics, and State Formation in Post-War
    Central Europe*; Barnstone, *The Transparent State: Architecture and Politics in
    Postwar Germany*.
23 Dovey, *Framing Place. Mediating Power in Built Form*, 20.
24 Isaac, "Beyond the Three Faces of Power."
25 Dovey, *Framing Place. Mediating Power in Built Form*, 10.

occupation of space is the first proof of existence."[26] In this sense, the power to occupy space is seen as an essential component of individual liberty that turns one into a spatial agent.[27] Similarly, the neoliberal order, which shifts the focus from the state's role as *provider* to that of *enabler*, adopts the same discourse of individuals as agents. At the same time, as David Harvey shows, neoliberal economies that claim to reduce state involvement eventually conclude in major "special interventions," meant to encourage " '[a] good business or investment climate' for capitalistic endeavours."[28] Ultimately, this limits the individual's power to affect the formation of the built environment while harnessing their interests to those of the market.[29] Nevertheless, while Marxist geographical analyses usually depict geopolitics as means serving capitalist objectives,[30] complex ethno-territorial contexts, like Israel, usually present an opposing scenario.

Superficially, a privatized national settlement project seems an oxymoron, as individual interests usually contradict those of the state. In his analysis of architectural production, Charles Jencks depicts three separate systems, *private*, *public*, and *corporate*, all of which have their own motivation – *usage*, *budget*, and *profit,* respectively.[31] Nevertheless, Jencks does not mention the ideological or political incentives of the state. Most importantly, he ignores the fact that it is the state that enables the private and corporate systems to operate, and that their produced architecture is thus subject to the state's interests as well, especially in a case like Israel.

To analyze the evolving modes of production and the role private agents began to play in them, I use the term *spatial privileges*. The term is usually used to describe the advantages members of a hegemonic group enjoy within the built environment,[32] whether this is due to race,

[26] Le Corbusier, quoted in Findley, *Building Change: Architecture, Politics and Cultural Agency*, 5.

[27] Ibid.   [28] Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 70.

[29] Graeber, *Debt: The First 5000 Years*, 376.

[30] Brenner and Elden, "Henri Lefebvre on State, Space, Territory"; Brenner et al., "State Space in Question."

[31] Jencks, *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture*, 25.

[32] Logan, Zhang, and Chunyu, "Emergent Ghettos: Black Neighborhoods in New York and Chicago, 1880–1940"; Wilton, "Colouring Special Needs: Locating Whiteness in NIMBY Conflicts"; Leonard, "Landscaping Privilege: Being British in South Africa"; Dirsuweit and Wafer, "Suburban Road-Closures and the Ruinous Landscapes of Privilege in Johannesburg"; Neupane and Chesney, "Violence against Women on Public Transport in Nepal: Sexual

ethnicity, gender, or social class.[33] Thus, it is an integral part of Logan
and Molotch's "place stratification model,"[34] which describes the
ability of privileged groups to manipulate the production of space for
their own socioeconomic benefit.[35] Re-explaining the model, Logan
defines "spatial privilege" as the objective of hegemonic groups seeking
segregation, eventually creating a "rigid hierarchy of places."[36]
However, in this book, I use the term to describe the exclusive rights
members of favorable groups receive from the state as a means to
incorporate them into the national geopolitical project with the pur-
pose of ensuring its continuation and constantly recreating the hier-
archy of places. Returning to Dovey's analysis, these spatial privileges
are an outcome of a quid pro quo relationship that is based on granting
favored groups the *power to* plan, construct, and colonize space, as
a means to enforce the state's *power over* it. Therefore, in the privat-
ization of a geopolitical project, it is by enabling (select) groups and
corporations to participate in the production of new settlements that
the state is capable of domesticating its frontiers.[37]

Ethnically oriented, the State of Israel granted spatial privileges to
specific socioeconomic groups that could ensure the geopolitical object-
ives of its territorial project and the evolving economic rationale behind
it. Haim Yacobi and Erez Tzfadia refer to this process as "selective
privatisation," as the Israeli Government granted substantial spatial
rights to "selected elites" in order to promote the settlement of its

      Harassment and the Spatial Expression of Male Privilege"; Van Slyck, "The
      Spatial Practices of Privilege."
[33] Other uses include pedagogy studies that explain the relations between pupils
      and teacher inside a classroom, and even in computer science, examining the
      user experience design; see Niu and Gang, "Enforcing User-Space Privilege
      Separation with Declarative Architectures"; Engle, Langer-Osuna, and
      McKinney de Royston, "Toward a Model of Influence in Persuasive
      Discussions: Negotiating Quality, Authority, Privilege, and Access within
      a Student-Led Argument."
[34] Logan and Molotch, *Urban Fortunes: A Political Economy of Place*; Alba and
      Logan, "Variations on Two Themes: Racial and Ethnic Patterns in the
      Attainment of Suburban Residence."
[35] Pais, South, and Crowder, "Metropolitan Heterogeneity and Minority
      Neighborhood Attainment: Spatial Assimilation or Place Stratification?," 261.
[36] Logan, Zhang, and Chunyu, "Emergent Ghettos: Black Neighborhoods in
      New York and Chicago, 1880–1940," 1058.
[37] Prescott, *Political Frontiers and Boundaries*, 36–55; Weizman, "Principles of
      Frontier Geography."