



The Phillip & Ethel Klutznick
Center for Urban and Regional Studies

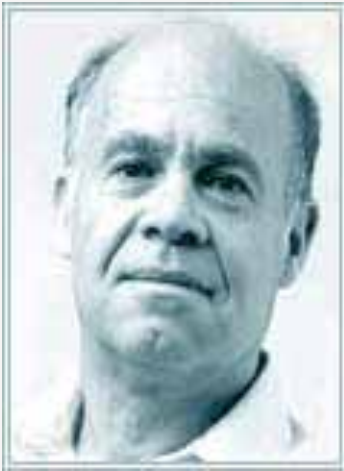
Technion – Israel Institute of Technology

Celebrating 40th
anniversary

JANUARY 2011

Newsletter





Moshe Hill

**Founder
1930-1986**

Professor Moshe (Morris) Hill was the key founder of urban planning education in Israel and through that, the planning profession in Israel. Born in 1930 in South Africa, Moshe was a PhD graduate in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Pennsylvania. Upon his 'aliya' (immigration to Israel), he joined the Technion, and in 1970 founded Israel's first and as yet only graduate accredited professional degree in Urban and Regional Planning. At the same time, Professor Hill established the Technion's Center for Urban and Regional Studies - Israel's leading research center with a specific focus on these topics. For many years Moshe led both the academic program and the research center. Prof. Hill was killed at the age of 56 in a road accident while on an academic visit to South Africa.

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Technion – Israel Institute of Technology

Technion City, Haifa 32000 Israel

Tel: +972 (0)4 829 4019 Fax: +972 (0) 4 829 4071 arcurs@technion.ac.il

<http://curs.technion.ac.il>

Editor: Michelle Oren

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About the Center

The Center for Urban and Regional Studies (CURS) is both a research center and a Think-Tank. It is affiliated with the Graduate Program for Urban and Regional Planning in the Faculty of Architecture and Town Planning at the Technion - Israel Institute of Technology.

CURS was established in 1969 by Professor Moshe (Morris) Hill, and was the first of its kind in Israel. Since 1989 the center has benefitted from the generous support of Mr. and Mrs. Philip M. Klutznick, former US ambassador to the UN and president of Bnai Brith organization.

The center's mission is to contribute to the understanding of urban and regional development processes and to aid policymaking at the national, regional and local levels. Two principles guide the center's work: excellence on an international level in research, and contribution to the enhancement of quality of life in Israel. The Center's researchers have high-level expertise and substantial experience in the following fields:

- Land use planning
- Economic development
- Social planning
- Environmental psychology
- Planning law
- Environmental aspects in planning
- Housing
- Transportation
- Urban renewal and Regeneration
- Regional planning
- Real estate development
- Landscape planning and design
- Planning informatics
- Public participation
- Conflict resolution
- Planning for specific groups: Women, elderly people, children, Arab population

CURS researchers collaborate with other researchers and institutions within the Technion, Israel and abroad. Its research funds are granted by international and national foundations and institutions, Israeli government ministries, local authorities and other public and semi-public bodies. The Center uses various mediums to disseminate its research findings among decision makers, planning practitioners and the general public. The main medium is the publication of books, research reports and position papers, published both in Hebrew and English. In addition, the Center initiates and hosts local, national and international seminars, workshops and symposia. Members of the Center often serve on public committees, both national and local, and they frequently participate in scientific and professional conferences around the world.

Office Holders:

CURS Chair - Prof. Rachele Alterman Tel: 972-4-8294037
Secretary - Mrs. Orit Yimalkovski Tel: 972-4-8294019

Past Events

Planning with/for People – International Workshop

June

On June 14-18 (2009) the Technion hosted a workshop focusing on the social aspects of planning for/with people, initiated by Prof. Naomi Carmon from the Center for Urban and Regional Studies, and headed by her and Prof. Susan Fainstein (Harvard).



Participants Standing from right to left: Dr. Phillip Thompson, Prof. Peter Marcuse, Prof. Judith Allen, Prof. Chester Hartman, Prof. Rachelle Alterman, Prof. Martin Wachs, Dr. Ivan Tosics, Prof. Naomi Carmon, Prof. Denis Keating, Prof. Kenneth Readon, Prof. Rachel Bratt, Prof. Jonathan Levine, Prof. Penny Gurstein, Prof. Suzan Fainstein, Prof. Lawrence Vale, Prof. Amnon Frenkel, Prof. Arza Churchman, Prof. Micky Luria, Prof. George Galster, Prof. Debrah Howe, Prof. Benerjee Tridib, Prof. Enzo Mignione, Prof. Norman Fainstein. Sitting: Guy Kav-Venaki, Prof. Anastacia Cidris, Dr. Emily Silverman, Dr. Ravit Hananel, Prof. Ariela Varenski, Dr. Joseph Jabareen, Avigail Federman, Ofer Lerner.

Participants included 24 prominent professors and leading scholars in the field of urban and regional planning, most of whom currently serve (or had served in the past) as chairs of planning departments at prestigious universities in the United States (Harvard, MIT, Columbia, Penn, Berkeley, UCLA, and others) and Europe (London, Milan, and others). The workshop covered subjects of planning including:

- Planning as social responsibility;
- Democracy and public participation
- Ethics in planning
- Spatial, social, and economic inequality;
- Housing and urban renewal;
- Poverty diversity and exclusion;
- Coping with urban challenges: exclusion.
- The good/just city

Among **CURS** researchers participating actively in the workshop were: Prof. Naomi Carmon, Prof. Rachelle Alterman, Prof. Arza Churchman, Prof. Daniel Shefer, Prof. Amnon Frenkel, Dr. Yosef Jabareen, Dr. Emily Silverman, and Ms. Iris Frankel-Cohen.



Continuing Education Program: Planning in the Rural Sector

In June, 2009 the Center concluded the first session of a continuing education course for planners in the rural sector. The purpose of the course was to provide targeted information to planners and others engaged in rural planning. Funding for the program was provided by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Mifaam, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services, and the Central Regional Council. Additional funding was provided by the Ministry of Construction and Housing, the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Interior, the Agricultural Union, the Kibbutz Movement, and Israel Planners Association. Mr. Dudu Kochman, CEO of the Agricultural Union and Prof. Rachelle Alterman, head of the Center for Urban and Regional Studies served as chairs of the steering committee, Dr. Pnina Plaut as academic head, and Planner Tovi Alfandari served as program coordinator.



The course is part of a comprehensive process that began with discussions between Prof. Rachelle Alterman and Dr. Pnina Plaut as representatives of the Center, and the multi-institutional Steering team for the rural sector. The purpose of these early symposia was to strengthen the connection between academic research in planning and the practical needs of Israel's rural

communities. The course was held over two semesters and consisted of 160 academic hours. Course participants came from a variety of backgrounds and professional expertise, including architects, town and local council members, and private business owners.



The course covered a wide range of topics, including spatial planning, historical, economic and business/entrepreneurial perspectives, government policy and its implications, laws and regulations, social aspects, the role of communities and organizations in rural planning, environmental quality, and more. Course lecturers included Technion faculty members, faculty from other academic institutions in Israel, and planning practitioners.

Beyond continuing education, the program's goals included the advancement of research and projects by students and faculty members. The Center is currently planning future round tables and seminars intended to engage all parties involved in rural development.

A graduation ceremony was held on June 30, 2009 at the Ministry of Agriculture in Beit Dagan and was attended by all members of the steering committee, with a closing address by Mr. Shmulik Rifman, head of the Central Regional Council in Israel. For additional information, please contact program coordinator – Tovi Alfandari, pittovi@netvision.co.il or the Center's secretary.

Past Events

Meeting Experts: Urban Renewal and Affordable housing International experts respond to questions from Israeli planners

July

On July 15th (2009) **CURS** conducted an open meeting aimed at gathering Israeli planners and field experts together with a group of international planners to participate in the "planning with/for community" workshop.

The chair of the Israeli Planners Association, Arch. Amos Brandies opened the meeting. The first session, headed by Prof. Naomi Carmon, focused on issues of urban renewal. The speakers in the session included: Prof. Larry Vale (MIT) who presented lessons from the U.S. plan Hope IV and the difficulties associated with neighborhood rehabilitation; Prof. Tridib Banerjee (USC) discussed tax incentives for renewal and urban development projects in California; and Prof. Susan Fainstein (Harvard) emphasized the importance of closing the deals and the negotiations that are part of the planning process of urban renewal.



The second session, directed by Prof. Rachelle Alterman, focused on affordable housing. Speakers in this session included: Prof. Rachel Bratt (Tufts) who discussed the contribution of CDC's (Corporations Community Development) in the management and distribution of affordable housing in the United States; Prof. Dennis Keating (CSU) presented plans for inclusive housing in the United States; and Prof. Peter Marcuse (Columbia) discussed the successes and failures of the American experience with affordable housing.



Planning law and Environmental law: Israeli challenges

On July 21st (2009) **CURS** conducted a symposium centered on the environmental aspects of housing with visiting guest, **Prof. Dan Tarlock** from Chicago-Kent College. Prof. Tarlock, an international expert in environmental law and energy, presented the American difficulties in facing global warming and transport pollution and their connection to land use law, using examples of progressive rulings and legislation in the State of California.

A panel of commentators, directed by Prof. Shaul Amir, responded to Tarlock's presentation while focusing on the Israeli challenges. The panel included Prof. Marcia Gelpe, leading researcher and lawyer in the field of environmental law in Israel (Netanya College) and Dr. Daniel Orenstein (CURS) who presented a broader vision of the environmental challenges in the Middle East, primarily: population growth, poverty, and war. Following the panel, the discussion was opened to attendees, among them experts in the field of transportation, government officials, lawyers, and other researchers.



From Left: Prof. Rachelle Alterman, Prof. Shaul Amir, Prof. Dan Tarlock, Prof. Marcia Gelpe.



Participants in Prof. Tarlock's talk. On the right: Dr. Daniel Orenstein.

Past Events

Planning Reform in Israel: Big Opportunity



December

On December 22nd (2009) the Center (CURS) conducted a seminar day to discuss the future reform in the Israeli Planning and Construction Law. The invited guest speakers were: Baruch Yoskowitz (Arch. and Planner), Asher Cahana (Lawyer and Planner) and Iris Hann (Planner- Deshe Institute) and visiting guest **Dr. Eran Kaplinsky** from the University of Alberta, Canada.

Dr. Kaplinsky presented the marked shift from localism to centralization in the Canadian reform implemented in Alberta. From an emphasis on economic development, the provincial involvement in planning was seen by many as a welcome change. However, the provincial cabinet started retaining control over all the aspects of the new system; from the creation of planning regions to the development of the plans themselves; it also retained discretion to limit the degree of public participation and to exempt any body from the requirement to conform to the applicable regional plan. Dr. Kaplinsky indicated that the new Canadian legislation limits the power of the courts to scrutinize provincial decisions, by requiring that applications for judicial review be brought through a provincially appointed commissioner, yet the ultimate effects of Alberta's revolution are yet to be seen.

Housing Policy in Israel and U.S: place for mutual learning



March

On March 11 (2010) the Center (CURS) conducted a symposium centered on housing policy. Speakers in the panel included Ing. Raul Srugo from the Israeli Union of builders, Shulamit Gertel from the Ministry of construction and housing, Prof. Naomi Carmon and Prof. Rachelle Alterman from the Technion and **Prof. John Landis** a guest speaker from the University of Pennsylvania.

Prof. Landis's presentation 'Rethinking U.S. housing policy' discussed three main issues in American housing policy: First- the federal government's disproportionate preference of homeownership over renting; The federal government spent \$6 assisting homeowners in 2008 for every \$1 spent assisting low-income renters; at some point the marginal benefits of encouraging additional homeownership may not be worth the costs. Second, the possibilities of the federal government to reconfigure substantially its various low-income rental housing subsidy programs, or perhaps convert them to a single block grant program; current rental subsidy programs do not sufficiently recognize differences in local housing market conditions. Third- the possible expansion of federal fair housing policy to address issues of economic as well as racial segregation; Residential discrimination and segregation by race are finally on a downward trend, while segregation by income, appears to be rising.

Past Events

CURS CELEBRATING: Our 40th anniversary

The Urban and Regional Planning Program and the Center for Urban and Regional Studies

On June 3rd (2010) the Technion's Program for Urban and Regional Planning and CURS held a special conference to mark **40 years of continuous professional training and research**. Over 400 graduates, as well as leaders in the Israeli planning and policy-making community (government, private sector, research, legislators, and civil society) attended the event.



ארבעים שנה למרכז לחקר העיר והאזור
40th anniversary - Center for Urban and Regional Studies

June

“Celebrating 40 years of continuous Professional training and research”



From Left: Prof. Naomi Carmon, Ms. Michelle Oren, Mr. Oscar Diaz, Ambassador Isaac Gilinski (Colombia), Prof. Rachele Alterman (Chair CURS), Prof. Amnon Frankel (Head of the program), Prof. Peretz Lavie (President of the Technion)

The 40th anniversary conference was opened by Prof. Naomi Carmon, honoring Prof. Moshe Hill (1930-1986) the founder of both the research center and the program. Greetings were given by Prof. Rachele Alterman (Chair of CURS), Prof. Amnon Frankel (head of the Technion's Urban and Regional Planning program), Prof. Peretz Lavie (President of the Technion), Prof. Yerach Doytsher (Dean Architecture Faculty) Arch. Ariel Waterman (Chief engineer, Haifa Municipality); with the presence of the Ambassador of Colombia Eng, Isaac Gilinski.

The conference was organized by a committee of CURS researchers, Professors and PhD students, led

by Dr. Daniel Orenstein. The conference comprised four sessions. Two of them (opening and closing sessions) were dedicated to our keynote speakers: Oscar Diaz and Robert Upton, brought to Israel specially for the conference with the contribution of the Hill Fund and the Technion Society. The second session was a plenary hosting a panel of graduates invited to discuss the challenges faced by urban and regional planners in Israel. The third session divided into targeted thematic groups chaired by the Technion planning program professors.

CURS CELEBRATING: Our 40th anniversary

Opening Keynote Lecturer

“Planning the Sustainable City: Lessons from Bogota”



Oscar Edmundo Diaz, Senior Advisor to former Mayor of Bogota and Senior Program Director at the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP)

The 40th anniversary celebrations opened with a session chaired by Prof. Dani Shefer, who introduced the keynote speaker Oscar Diaz from Colombia. Mr. Diaz is a Columbia University Graduate serving as senior advisor to Enrique Peñalosa, former mayor of Bogota, who is known worldwide for his achievements turning the city of Bogota into an environmentally friendly city with creative planning tools.*

Mr. Diaz presented successful measures that have improved citizens' quality of life, with examples from all over the world. He showed some of Bogota's achievements that were gradually implemented in other parts of the world, such as their model of Bus Rapid Transit system "trasmilenio" and the "ciclovía" (bicycle road).

"I'm showing examples from around the world, because when I show pictures of Bogota (developing country) most remain skeptic; non-the less when you see similar models implemented in N.Y. people start thinking this could actually mean something"



* (see: <http://yes.walla.co.il/?w=2/8681/1640855>)

Past Events

CURS CELEBRATING: Our 40th anniversary

Plenary: Challenges faced by urban and regional planners in Israel

The second session of the 40th anniversary conference was a plenary chaired by Prof. Amnon Frankel. A panel of seven graduates, shared with the audience their experience confronting the challenges faced by urban and regional planners in Israel.



From Left: Michal Tuchler, Tami Gabrieli, Zeev Amit
Guy Kav Vnaki, Badria Biromi, Iris Hann, Amin Sahala.

June

Panel members presenting and their corresponding subject were: **Iris Hann** (head of Machon Deshe) “The challenges of integrating environmental aspects in planning”; **Badria Biromi** (Arab center for alternative planning) “Environment, community development and public participation”; **Guy Kav Vnaki** (Lands authority planner) “Planning without achieving an agreement”; **Zeev Amit** (planner for Tel Aviv district) “Leading stones in the national vision: using agricultural land 1990 and resettling “gush Katif”; **Amin Sahala** (chief engineer of Tamra) “Policy and development in the Arab sector; **Tami Gabrieli** (head of long term national planning department) “Planning in the local authorities: The case of Tel Aviv; and **Michal Tuchler Aharoni** (head of planning department of the Israel ports company) “Multidisciplinary planning in the private developers sector.

Graduates, guests and professors, all profited from the encounter. Members of the conference team issued a graduate’s yearbook (Zurit Armon, Mika Moran and Eddie Bandit), that was distributed to all graduates. The evening program enabled some greater enjoyment of the with a cocktail party and singing (organized by David Bornstein and Ofer Lerner). The conference was covered by the media (thanks to Nir Mualem, Shirily Gilad and professors involved) – see CURS website.



CURS CELEBRATING: Our 40th anniversary

Parallel Sessions

The third session divided in to thematic groups. Each group was chaired by program professors with a number of guest speakers. The thematic groups enabled the discussion of specific aspects of planning.

GROUP 1: Down to the last blade of grass: People, Nature and Open Spaces in 2050, Chaired by Prof. Shaul Amir, Dr. Tal Alon Mozes and Dr. Daniel Orenstein. Speakers: Prof. Dani Rabinovich (Tel Aviv University), Prof. Alon Tal (Ben-Gurion University, Dr. Yehoshua Shkedi (Nature and parks authority).

GROUP 2: Planning Arab Communities: Experience and Future Challenges, Chaired by Dr. Yosef Jabareen and Dr. Michael Mayer-Brodnitz. Speakers: Prof. Yubert Law-Yone, Eng. Amin Sahala (Tamra), Arch. Mustafa Abu Romi, Arch. Ehud Justman (ministry of interior), Dr. Hanna Swaid (Knesset), Dr. Hanna Chamdan (Tel Aviv University).

GROUP 3: Planning Sustainable Transport, Chaired by Prof. Daniel Shefer and Dr. Pnina Plaut. Hosted: Arch. Doron Megid (Yeffe Nof), Becky Shlisberg (Planner PGL), Dan Rader (Institute for Transport Research), Michal Tuchler (Israeli Ports Co.).

GROUP 4: Housing prices and planning reform, is there a connection? Chaired by Prof. Rachelle Alterman and Dr. Danny Ben Shachar. Hosted: Arch. Doron Druckman, Lawyer Gidon Vitkon, Mr. Dror Shtrom (Israeli Institute for Economic Planning) and Prof. Daniel Gat.

GROUP 5: Can the Israeli Periphery be developed : Sentenced by destiny or failing policy? Chaired by Prof. Amnon Frenkel and Prof. Danny Czamanski. Speakers: Prof. Ezra Sadan, Prof. Shlomo Meital (Neeman Institute, Technion).

GROUP 6: Social planning as a planning professional specialization Chaired by Prof. Naomi Carmon and Prof. Arza Churchman. Speakers: Dr. Emily Silverman (Social lab), Amitai Bar-Lev (Modus), Dr. Michal Mitrani, Tobi Alfandari (Planner Pitronim), Arch. Enaya Bana Geris, Arch Yael Dori (Adam, Teva va Din) and Yosi Ofer.



Past Events

CURS CELEBRATING: Our 40th anniversary

Closing Session

“Rising to the Challenge: Planners and the Planning Profession”



June

Robert Upton until recently Secretary General of the Royal Town Planning Institute. Currently Deputy Chair and Commissioner of the UK Infrastructure Planning Commission.

The closing session of the 40th anniversary conference was chaired by Prof. Rachelle Alterman. Keynote speaker Robert Upton then questioned what is the actual role of the planners, pointing on an existential dilemma, “**It is never clear whether planners are designers or technical, whether the field falls under the parlay of social science, or if it is a hybrid**”. Upton’s speech (published in the Israel Planners association magazine ‘planning’ (tichnun) www.aepi.org.il - translated to Hebrew by Nir Mualem and Ofer Lerner, explored the development of the planning profession through the British experience, claiming that the planning profession cannot rely on a process of institutionalization to give it value and validity, and enshrining planning in law is neither consummation nor transcendence.

Arch. Amos Brandeis (chair of the Israel Planners Association) and **Prof. Shamay Asif** (former director of the national planning office), responded to Upton’s presentation, by sharing a tale on how planners have won their recognition in Israel, initially competing with architects. Both referred to the coming changes in the Israeli planning system: the new planning and construction law and the reform in the Israeli land administration.



Indigenous People's Property Rights: A cross-national perspective and implications to the debate over Bedouin land rights in Israel



From left to right: Dr. Sandy Kedar, Adv. Suhad Bishara, Prof. Ruth Kark, Prof. John Sheehan, Adv. Havatzelet Yael, Dr. Seth Frantzman, Prof. Robert Simons, Prof. Rachele Alterman.

November 28th CURS conducted a symposium centered on Indigenous people's property rights. **Prof. John Sheehan**, Deputy Director of the Asia-Pacific Centre for Complex Real Property Rights and Adjunct Professor at the Faculty of Design Architecture & Building, University of Technology at Sydney, presented some court cases where **property rights of Australia's Aborigine population** had been discussed.

November

Panel speaker **Prof. Robert Simons**, from Cleveland State University, President of the American Real Estate Society, presented his research on **tribal land rights of North American Indians and African tribes**.



The case of the Bedouins in the Negev was presented in two comparative studies, both supervised by Prof. Ruth Kark from the Department of Geography at the Hebrew University, the first research by **Adv. Havazelet Yael** looked at the **legal aspects of Indigenous Peoples and their Landownership**, and the second by **Dr. Seth Frantzman** looked at the **Development of an Indigenous Discourse among the Bedouin of the Negev**. **Adv. Suhad Bishara**, Senior Attorney at Adalah-The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, represented the Bedouin interests by discussing the **land claims of the Bedouins in Israel**.



Ongoing projects



Social planning lab

The Center for Urban and Regional Studies established a new planning lab focused on strengthening the connection between academia and the community – “from learning to action”. The lab is directed by Dr. Emily Silverman.

Enhancing social considerations in spatial planning in Israel

How can spatial planning in Israel take more account of social goals and the needs of diverse populations?



Prof. Arza Churchman and Dr. Emily Silverman have been investigating this question through a series of linked events over the past year, with partial financial support from the Rosa Luxembourg Foundation.

The first quest was to define the terms and to explore the role of the social planner. A group of twenty leading social planners, academics and civil society leaders convened at the Technion on October 21, 2009 and began by describing their own experiences and dilemmas in incorporating social considerations in planning.

From the accumulated anecdotes, the group pulled out four types of social consideration: national social goals, awareness of specific needs of different population groups (such as handicapped, women, or poor), methods of citizen involvement in planning, and the use of space to promote social cohesion and access to opportunities.

The expert group then outlined some of the many obstacles for embedding social considerations in spatial planning. Among the obstacles: the statutory planning bodies do not include a representative of ‘social’ interests, such as the Ministry of Social Affairs, although they do include representatives of other interests such as environment, housing transportation, health and tourism; social planners have a low status, and no recognized training requirements; civil society groups working on social justice rarely engage with spatial planning -- with the significant exception of Arab organizations-- and processes of public involvement in planning are seriously underfunded and under-regulated.

The next event was a large ‘Discussion Day’, with about a hundred and thirty participants. The February 2nd 2010 seminar was held at Tel Aviv- Yaffo Academic College, an apposite venue since the location of the College, in a run-down part of Jaffa, was part of an urban regeneration strategy to help upgrade the surrounding area.

The opening greetings by former MK and President of the New Israel Fund, Prof. Naomi Hazan – Head of the School of Government and Society at Tel Aviv- Yaffo Academic College, and by Dr. Angelica Tim – manager of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation in Israel, and Prof. Rachelle Alterman – head of the Center for Urban and Regional Studies at the Technion.



The Minister of Social Affairs and Social Services, Itzhak Hertzog, sent a letter of greetings, as did the head of the Planning Administration, Architect Shamai Asif. The Director -General of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Nahum Itzkovitz, presented a piercing critique, using the podium to launch a call for the Ministry to be represented in the spatial planning process, and to improve the standing of social planners. In discussion groups throughout the day, the participants explored new ways to improve the current lack of social considerations in planning.

The conclusions called for a clearer language, stronger training for planners and decision makers in social aspects of planning, greater representation of social interests in planning committees, and formal written guidelines for evaluating the social aspects of spatial plans.



Prof. Churchman and Dr. Silverman have been presenting their findings and continuing the conversation in a number of venues, in addition to academic conferences. Their detailed response to the new planning law reforms led by the Prime Minister’s Office has been incorporated into proposals from the Committee for Responsible Planning and the Planner’s Association.

The city of Holon requested a training session for their senior planning and engineering staff, delivered in early March, and the city of Jerusalem has requested several joint sessions for planners and social workers.



Churchman and Silverman are now looking for further funding to carry out international comparative research, to undertake an in-depth municipal level pilot, and to continue to promote further improvements.



Health Promoting Environments- New research group



A new research group was founded recently by Dr. Pnina Plaut at the Center for Urban and Regional Studies in collaboration with Prof. Orna Baron-Epel from the School of Public Health at the University of Haifa and Mika Moran a PhD. student in Urban and Regional Planning. It is devoted to investigation of “health promoting environments”. This research theme analyzes how physical features of the urban environment and planning policy affect health levels and well being of urban residents by means of fostering “Active living by design”.

In contrast with many traditional approaches to public health that focus on pollution and morbidity, this research team adopts an innovative new approach to the connections between health and the built environment. According to it, the urban environment is composed of layers (for example, physical structures, policy tools, social and cultural environment), which affect public health both directly and indirectly, such as by means of their impact on physical activity and fitness, “active” transportation modes (i.e- walking, cycling, transit), nutrition, and so on. “Active living by design” has grown in importance in recent years among researchers and practitioners in many developed countries. Our team is the first such research group operating in Israel dealing with this planning-health nexus.

The group has begun its activity in recent months. This project is partially funded by a grant from the Technion-Haifa University Fund for Joint Research. The group also organized a workshop on the subject of urban environmental factors affecting “active life styles” in which Dr. Erica Hinkson from the Technical University of Auckland, New Zealand, participated. It was held on June 2010. A national conference is planned on February 2011.

Current Research

CURS researchers investigate a range of subjects at the forefront of the Urban planning profession and practice.

Housing and the built environment: Policy and Planning

Artur Glikson: The poetry of place in a global world

Researcher: Professor Rachel Kallus

Financial support by The National Science Foundation

This research is based on the humanistic theory of Arthur Glikson, as part of the architectural and planning culture that developed post World War II. Glikson's theory places this research at the heart of professional arguments of the time as they developed in a socio-political context, against the backdrop of a consolidated United Nations, the overpowering flow of capital and labor, categorization of countries as "developed" and "developing", and the establishment of a market of experts as part of the politics of the Cold War. Through study of the works of Glikson, we examine the dispersal of expanding knowledge throughout the world and the creation of an international professionalism that tries to overcome cultural and geographic borders, as part of the professional concern for the human habitat and the built environment. Positioning the growing interest in place and its unique meanings against the modern development project provides a unique understanding into the dilemmas of modernism.

Urban Renewal in Kfar Shalem in Tel Aviv, 1948-2008: A History of Planning Initiatives

Researchers: Professor Naomi Carmon, Emily Silverman and Nurit Tzafrir

The big urban area of Kfar Shalem in the south of Tel Aviv was subject to numerous plans and activities of urban renewal in the last fifty years. The research surveys the various strategies of displacement and redevelopment that were in operation in these decades. It focuses mainly on the unique five-year plan of the 1990's, which provided several dozens of incumbent households the opportunity to "Build Your Own Home" within the neighborhood, while the majority of the area was intended for clearance and construction of multi-family buildings for middle-income households.



Current Research

(cont...)

Following fifty years of intense activity in Kfar Shalem, the planning and implementation of both the clearance and the redevelopment have not been completed. The study is intended to lead to recommendations that may be of use to those who are currently working on a new special law of displacement and redevelopment in Kfar Shalem.

The Potential of TAMA 38 in Distressed Urban Areas

Researchers: Professor Naomi Carmon and Anat Reshef-Gilad

TAMA 38 – a national master plan for strengthening residential buildings against earthquakes and missiles – is intended to motivate owners of apartments to strengthen their old buildings. It provides them incentives in the form of additional building permits, which may allow extensions of the old units and additions of new residential units to the old (pre 1980) building, mainly on its roof. Even though the master plan was issued in 2005 and thousands of stakeholders have expressed interest in it, only one project made of one building has been completed under its roof. Developers and residents say that the incentives provided by TAMA 38 (the additional building permits) are not strong enough, and if at all, it can work only in areas where land values are very high such as in the better neighborhoods of Tel Aviv.

The goal of our research is to disclose the factors that may advance the implementation of TAMA 38 in Israel, focusing on areas outside Tel Aviv, and especially, on old projects of public construction. The study started by investigating the factors behind the success of the one project that has been completed, one that - to the surprise of all - is located in a distressed neighborhood in a peripheral city. We are now in the process of interviewing stakeholders, selected out of those who have had some experience trying to implement TAMA 38. The insights derived from these two stages will assist in the third and central stage of the field work, in which the focus is on two projects of old public construction inhabited by poor residents in a town at the periphery of Gush Dan. For these two sites the aim is to develop a model for implementing TAMA 38 that takes into consideration the social, economic and administrative factors that usually work against implementation, especially in non-attractive residential areas. The model will include also built-in attractions, among them excellent design and “green” features, to attract potential buyers for the “garden apartments” and “penthouses” that will be added to the old buildings. Following discussion of the implementation model with several experts, conclusions will be drawn regarding ways to overcome the barriers to implementing TAMA 38 in various urban areas, including at least part of the distressed neighborhoods in Israel.

Regulatory Tools for Securing Affordable Housing: A Conceptual Framework for Cross-National Knowledge Transfer

Rachelle Alterman and Emily Silverman

Financial support by the Ministry of Interior

One of the side-effects of the globalization malaise has been the gradual erosion of national housing policies, even in those countries previously acclaimed for their exemplary social housing. With the retrenchment of national government from direct supply of low-income housing in many countries, municipalities are often left looking for substitutes, searching for instruments to leverage non-governmental investment in affordable housing. This trend seems unlikely to be rendered obsolete by the current economic crisis.

What can cities and countries looking to develop new tools for affordable housing learn from the experience of those who have led the way? This paper presents a conceptual framework for understanding and devising instruments that stimulate the market to deliver more affordable housing, including land-use regulations, tax credits and land subsidies. We draw on existing academic and administrative literature, together with new research, covering the experiences of the USA, Canada (selected provinces), England, Ireland, Spain, France, the Netherlands, Germany and Israel.

The conceptual framework suggests four dimensions for analyzing affordable housing policies and programs, looking mostly, though not exclusively, at the level of local government. Each dimension is illustrated with examples drawn from the countries or cities studied. The first dimension contrasts program goals, including reducing costs, providing work-force housing, and enhancing social mix. The second dimension compares principles of needs assessment, presenting the strengths and weaknesses of a 'fair share' approach, a 'needs-based' assessment and a 'unitary policy'. The third dimension compares the mixture of household tenure types in different cities and countries, while the fourth dimension examines the changing roles of stakeholders from the public, private and not-for-profit sectors.

The conceptual framework was designed for policy makers seeking to elaborate a new municipal or national policy on affordable housing. It may also be useful as a platform for comparative research, through contrasting macro-scale trends and practices. In this presentation, we will place special focus on the issue of transferability, and in existing instruments 'transferable' to other countries? And what is the likelihood for "bilateral" exchanges?

Current Research

Active Living by Design: Urban Environments that promote Health- Enhancing Physical Activity

Dr. Pnina Plaut, Prof. Orna Baron-Epel and Mika Moran

Funded by The Israel National Institute for Health Policy and Health Services Research

Physical inactivity is a major burden on public health worldwide, due to its established association with several leading chronic diseases. Regular Physical Activity (PA), such as walking or cycling for 30 minutes a day, reduces the risk for chronic diseases, and can simultaneously reduce traffic-related pollution when substituting car trips. However, in many countries automobile-oriented land use patterns facilitate private car mobility and pose barriers to PA. In contrast to the well-documented causal association between PA and health, the role of the Urban Built Environments in PA is a relatively new and interdisciplinary area of research.

The main objective of this research is to examine the associations between detailed measures of the built environment (BE) with Health-Enhancing Physical Activity (HEPA) in Israeli urban environments. At the neighborhood level we will examine high- versus low-walkability neighborhoods. At the individual level, we will examine the relative influence of the BE on HEPA after controlling for personal and social factors. Furthermore, we aim to match specific Built Environment characteristics with specific types of HEPA (Active Transport, Active Leisure). These objectives carry great importance due to current global and national challenges both in the environment (increased car reliance and traffic-related pollution), and public health (high prevalence of inactivity, overweight and related chronic conditions).

Environmental Aspects and Natural Resources: Policy and Planning

Israel's National Parks: "Homeland Museum"

Researcher: Dr. Tal Alon-Mozes

Financial support by Israel's Research Foundation

One hundred and thirty six national parks were established by the State of Israel beginning in the mid 1960s and up to today. Among them are sites that display the archeological and historical heritage of the nation, alongside several of its prominent vacation sites. As a "national museum" many of these sites serve as agents in the construction of an Israeli identity. This research examines the establishment of the National Parks Authority and uses five parks as case studies for evaluating the construction of a cultural identity through design planning, management, and presentation of the landscape and scenery at these sites.

Water-Sensitive Planning (WSP): Empirical Study No.8 – towards a joint plan of land use and land cover with runoff management in a neighborhood on Mount Carmel

Researchers: Professor Uri Shamir, Professor Naomi Carmon and Shai Shalev

For the last 15 years, a series of studies under the title of WSP – Water Sensitive Planning – has been conducted at the Center for Urban and Regional Studies, in collaboration with the Grand Institute for Water Research. The goal is to develop scientifically-based practices for development and construction that conserve the scarce water sources of Israel, reduce floods' damages, and contribute to green, healthy and aesthetic environments for the benefit of people and ecological systems. Seven field studies have been completed, and their results were published in research theses, research reports, papers and books. Until recently, the researchers focused on the coastal strip, which is the most populated area of Israel and which sits above its main water storage – the seashore aquifer. The current eighth empirical study in the series of WSP takes place in a different environment.

The WSP's recommendations regarding principles of runoff management (the three M's) and Best Management Practices were applied in preparing an alternative plan for a new neighborhood on Mount Carmel in the city of Haifa (Givat Zemer), with the aim of comparing this plan with the existing design of land use and land cover. The research uses a GIS-based map of the area, with boundaries and slopes of building plots, roads and open spaces, in order to generate runoff flow patterns through the neighborhood. Historical rainfall record enables the calculation of volume and peak discharges of runoff at selected points in the network and in its outlet. The results of these calculations demonstrate the benefits of WSP's plan, in terms of water quantity and quality. The conclusions of the research may convince the planners of the neighborhood to change their plan before the neighborhood is constructed.

Water price regulation

Researcher: Professor Danny Czamanski

Funded by National Water Authority

This study sets to adopt simple principles of public utility regulation to the current conditions of water supply system in Israel. The study develops regulatory objectives and associated criteria by which to evaluate alternate regulatory schemes. It suggests alternate regulatory regimes and recommends the regulatory framework best suited for Israel. The study is part of the strategic plan for water supply in Israel.

Current Research

Management of Runoff and Drainage as a Component in the Water Master Plan of Israel

Researchers: Professor Naomi Carmon and Professor Uri Shamir

Financial support by Israel Water Authority

The Water Authority is preparing a new Water Master Plan for Israel. Following the formulation of vision and objectives, some 20 policy domains have been identified, one of which is Management of Runoff and Drainage. The researchers were commissioned to prepare a policy document for this domain, including: A policy statement, a list of policy components with plausible alternative decisions for each component, an explained recommended alternative for each, and corresponding action items which are required to carry this alternative forward. The process involves consultation with experts and two semi-public workshops.

Rainfall in Israel generates several hundred million cubic meters of runoff per annum. Traditionally, runoff has been considered "harmful waters", to be removed as quickly as possible from the built environment and from agricultural lands. The main contribution of the new policy is a shift away from this paradigm towards Runoff as a Resource, not only a nuisance.

The potential benefits of educated runoff management include: (a) augmentation of water resources by direct use or by recharge of the aquifers; (b) preservation and rehabilitation of stream and wetland ecology; (c) reduction of flooding damage through advised placement of land uses in the watershed, selection of pervious land covers and placement of retention and detention in upstream sections of the watershed; (d) soil conservation against erosion and consequent decline of soil fertility; (e) improving the quality of life in urban areas, through green-blue landscaping and through the involvement of civil society in environmental stewardship. The analysis and proposed policies are based on the researchers' studies, with colleagues and 7 graduate students, over the last 15 years. The policy document is about to be completed. It presents 15 components of runoff management and drainage, 5 related to mainly administrative alternatives and 10 to mainly professional decisions. (see: <http://www.water.gov.il/NR/rdonlyres/8F39B2D7-245C-4AFD-97E8-91F0B54EF00A/0/Neger240810.pdf>)

Population Growth and Environment in Israel

Researcher: Dr. Daniel Orenstein

In this research, I study the history of discourse on the subject of population growth and its environmental impact in Israel. I consider the historical discussions around the subject, from the beginnings of the Zionist movement through the present. I suggest that ideology and collective history have a profound impact on the way Israelis think about the environmental challenges of population growth.

This ideological impact is observable in all segments of society – academia, non-governmental organizations, and government. My most recent work on this subject will be published in the edited book “Israeli Environmental History” (University of Pittsburg Press, 2010) that I am co-editing with Professors Alon Tal and Charles Miller.

Integrating humans into long term ecological research in Israel

Researcher: Dr. Daniel Orenstein

Financial support by the Alter Israel Network

I am working in cooperation with the Israel Long Term Ecological Research (LTER) network (<http://lter.bgu.ac.il>) to expand the traditional ecological research program to include socio-economic systems. Theoretical work in this project includes developing and testing conceptual models for understanding the interactions and feedbacks between human and ecological systems and identifying the crucial ecosystem services that people require of their local environments. Practical work includes setting up research platforms in Israel’s Arava Desert and the northern Negev Desert, establishing protocols for integrating local stakeholders into the platform, and providing guidelines for social and natural scientists to work together on a shared research agenda.

Developing an Alternative Framework for Evaluation of Sustainability in Urban Plans

Dr. Pnina Plaut and Gilad Hazan

Over the past decade consensus has emerged in the analytic literature (and to a large degree also among practitioners) about the acute problems sustainable development is presumed to seek to redress at the metropolitan and regional levels. Most of these problems involve urban decentralization and sprawl involving greater automobile use and dependence. The main purpose of this research is development of a framework and a set of tools for planners that can allow them to evaluate urban or metropolitan development policies with regard to its impact on the above problems.

Current Research

(cont...)

The research has two main goals:

1. Assessing the capability of the planning system to adopt plans that define and incorporate sustainable development principles; and
2. Constructing a framework in which planning policies may be evaluated with regard to their implementation of the principles of sustainable development.

What happens at the urban fringe - sprawl and bio-diversity

Researcher: Professor Danny Czamanski

Submitted for funding to ISF and the EU

All existing models of urban dynamics are "city-centered". The phenomena that occur outside the built-up areas, including the reciprocal relationships between built areas and the surrounding ecosystems, are quite far from the research hotspots of regional science. We claim that this anthropomorphic view is not conducive to understanding the evolution of the ecosystems and landscapes. We call for a focus on the dynamics of the urban fringe - the ever increasing interface between the urban and non-urban land uses. Just as the fraction of the built-up area expresses the "city-oriented" view of the landscapes, the "nature-oriented" approach classifies the landscape into a patchwork of habitats in order to examine the dynamics of species contained within them. In this respect intensive agriculture land-uses are as far from the natural ecologies as are the urban ones. The intensive cultivation of the land that includes plowing, fertilizing and plant and animal pest eradication, results in highly altered ecological community structures. Not surprisingly, recent studies report on increases in species richness and abundance in the areas that are between the areas of intensive agriculture and the city. The urban fringe thus becomes a pseudo-reserve where the anthropogenic influence may yield positive effects compared to the urban and agriculture landscapes that surround it. The wider the fringe, the lower the proportion of the built-up areas and the higher the socio-economic level of the population, the higher is its suitability for natural ecological communities and native species. This is especially true for those species that are able to adapt and exploit the advantages of proximity to the human population. We thus suggest that non-regular, leap-frogging spatial expansion, characteristic of the majority of the modern Western cities, may counter the impacts that urban and intensively cultivated agricultural areas have on natural ecosystems. The corridors and islands created by the wealthy suburbs provide essential habitats that are exploited by native species and ensure their survival. To support the novel and "positive" view of the urban sprawl we review recent studies on the ecology of the fringe areas and present a model of urban-environmental interaction. The model considers the entire evolving "urban-agriculture-natural" space and concentrates on the phenomena that occur at the urban fringe.

Social Aspects of Urban Planning

Spaces of Trust and Spaces of Danger amidst Jewish and Palestinian Communities in Jerusalem

Researcher: Dr. Yosef Jabareen

Financial support by the President Fund

“Space of danger” is a term that helps planners and researchers alike analyze dangers and conflicts that are likely to arise throughout the planning process. Definition of this phrase is derived from the terms “safety” and “danger”, and from Lefebvre’s definition of the three-fold conceptualization of space. Spaces of danger are perceived, created, and they are living spaces with safety levels where people sense lack of protection or experience economic, social, political, cultural, or environmental vulnerability.

The space is created through the combination of perception and the lives lived within them. This terminology is used to analyze the current conflict in Jerusalem between Jewish and Arab communities, and is conducted through data collection and personal interviews in different neighborhoods. This research maintains that planning policy and plans have the power to create urban spaces of danger. The research suggests methods that will enable planners to prevent the creation of spaces of danger.

Social Capital in the Context of Urban Planning

Researchers: Professor Naomi Carmon and Einat Amoyal

Financial support by Glass-Balaban Foundation and Mifa’l ha-Pais.

Social capital is made up of two basic components: One – mutual trust among members of a group, from small to very big, which creates a good basis for joint social, economic and political activity among them; second – contacts with others that a person or a group can make use of in order to advance their goals. Bonding social capital exists among members of a group who share a common origin, racial or ethnic or cultural. Bridging social capital exists among members of different origins.

The objectives of the research are: (a) to contribute to the understanding of the term social capital and its measurement; (b) To investigate whether the levels of bonding social capital and of bridging social capital are influenced by variables that urban planners can manipulate; (c) to follow the extent to which social capital, bonding and bridging, influence the level of integration of immigrants in the receiving society. The collection of data was conducted in the city of Ashdod, mainly by means of personal interviews of immigrants from former USSR who live in socially homogeneous and heterogeneous neighborhoods. The work is currently in the stage of data analysis.

Current Research

Culture Strategies in Cities and their Implications for the Local Population

Researchers: Professor Naomi Carmon and Elvira Molin

Starting in the last third of the twentieth century, cities around the world have been going through significant changes; they recreate themselves as centers of hi-tech industries, of post-industrial services and of creativity and culture. Our research is devoted to strategies of culture development that are intended to positively influence the city's economy and to attract young and creative population to the city. While other studies focus on impacts at the scale of the whole city or even the country, our focus is on the smaller scale of the population that lives in the vicinity of the culture projects.

A new typology of urban strategies for culture development was developed as part of the research. It divides them into three main groups: real-estate developments for elitist culture, community art projects, and development of culture quarters that combine real-estate culture projects and community artistic projects. On the basis of an empirical study in three areas in Tel Aviv- Jaffa, each of them was subject to one of the above three culture strategies. We investigate the implications on attracting new population with certain characteristics, on the phenomena of social homogeneity and gentrification, on community development personal satisfaction and social stability in the studied three areas. The research is advancing towards drawing theoretical conclusions and learning relevant lessons for urban planners.

Residential Mobility: A Comparative Analysis of Origin and Destination Characteristics

Researchers: Dr. Pnina Plaut and Tal Modai

Urban Areas in the more developed parts of the world account for about 75% of the total population. In developing countries this share is growing even faster. Population dynamics to, from and within urban areas are widely investigated in order to analyze changes, patterns and trends concerning the evolution of urban areas.

This research focuses on 'Residential Mobility', the term used to describe the movement of households within a defined labor market. The share of moves relating to this definition is usually the largest of all components of internal migration, and thus they constitute a significant force changing urban areas. 'Residential mobility' is driven by the individual's motivation to change his/her accommodation conditions.

(cont...)

The desirable conditions are a combination of the household's characteristics (life cycle, socio-economic profile, preferences, employment), and the accommodation attributes (location, housing properties, environment properties and amenities).

The Tel-Aviv metropolitan area was chosen as a case study for this research, in order to explore the intra-metropolitan movement patterns, with regard to individual characteristics, location, and environment properties and amenities. The analysis, therefore, is not limited to the geographic aspect only. This case study was chosen under the assumption that residential moves within the metropolitan area do not require job change and vice versa.

Economic Development and Real Estate development

The Contribution of Institutions for Higher Education to Local Development

Researchers: Professor Amnon Frenkel and Emil Israel

Financial support by the Universities Chairs' Committee

Universities play an important social, economic, and cultural role in every modern country. In the past, their traditional role had been to educate and advance scientific knowledge. In recent decades, however, the view of academia as an instrument for the advancement of social, economic, and cultural goals is on the rise. Universities are of great importance for public policy and for regional and urban development. Cities that are home to universities concentrate a quality workforce and offer quality of life that satisfies the needs of upper class populations.

The purpose of this work is to survey and analyze research that investigates the effects of universities on cities and regions and to assess the added value that universities bring to the cities and regions in which they are located. Results show that in most cases the universities had a positive affect on cities, in various ways. Cities that are home to prestigious universities enjoyed a positive image and experienced greater pull. Universities helped cities attract high-tech and research and development activities, strengthen local retail, provide entertainment facilities and high-quality tourist infrastructure. In many of the cases that were surveyed, technology transfer from the university to industry was a critical component of economic growth. Universities provided work and income and created a local income multiplier that was derived from local spending.

Current Research

Examining the effect of light rail on urban land and real estate value

Researchers: Professor Amnon Frenkel, Professor Dani Shefer, Professor Yoram Shifan, and Eyal Salinger

This report presents a comprehensive literature review of case studies and general research that investigates the effect of light rail and parallel transit systems on land and real estate value located along the route and in proximity to stations. The methodology uses two aspects for examining the effect: A. Spatial aspect – as a function of distance from the train station, or railroad track – when property values that are within reasonable walking distance from the stations are compared with property values that are far from the station. The difference between the two sets of values reflects the effect of the light rail on land (property) values. B. Time dimension – across different time periods, when land (property) values prior to notification of the establishment of a rail line are compared with land values after notification. The difference between the two sets of values represents the effect of the light rail on land (property) values.

In addition to light rail, this work investigates the effect of parallel transit routes since there is a greater wealth of literature that investigates effects of heavy rail, and likewise, in order to emphasize the effects of proximity to rail projects in general, and to train stations in particular, on land (property) values. Most of the results point to positive effects, further strengthening the results that pertain to light rail. It is reasonable to assume that the negative externalities of heavy rail (noise and air pollution) are greater than the negative externalities caused by light rail. However, this assumption was not salient in the results. Therefore, we conclude that the positive effect on land values, as a result of improved accessibility is, for the most part, greater than the negative externalities caused by heavy rail, all the more so for light rail.

The differential affect on land values is expressed also through the various types of land uses. For example, retail (and office) use enjoy a greater increase in value than residential use. Likewise, we find a differential effect in various places where the train passes. For example, the greatest effect was primarily found in proximity to stations in peripheral regions, compared with stations located in the downtown business district. In general, it was found that the greatest effect of the train is stronger in middle range socio-economic neighborhoods – it was better, in comparison to the extreme case of degraded neighborhoods with low socio-economic status, as well as to affluent, high socio-economic neighborhoods.

The Correlation among Immigrant Homeownership, Objective and Subjective Household Characteristics, and Good Citizenship: New Evidence from the Israeli Experience

Researchers: Yuval Arbel, Danny Ben-Shahar, and Yossef Tobol

This research presents new findings on the variables that correlate with immigrant homeownership attainment. In this context, we empirically test the correlation between various immigrant objective and subjective characteristics and the likelihood of achieving homeownership. Moreover, we examine whether homeownership promotes good citizenship and community involvement among immigrants. Observing a sample of immigrants who arrived in Israel from the former Soviet Union between the years 1990 and 2005, we find that a longer stay in the host country, living in proximity to other immigrants, being over 35 years old, holding a full-time job, earning above average income, and being a single or divorced woman associates with greater likelihood of attaining homeownership. Moreover, we find that the subjective notion of both respect for the host culture and proficiency in the language positively correlate with homeownership. Finally, we find that the previous empirical findings, according to which native homeownership is tied to good citizenship, extend to the immigrant population. Research findings may serve decision-makers in setting policies that advance homeownership among immigrant populations.

The Local Cost of Terror: Effects of the Second Palestinian Intifada on Jerusalem House Prices

Researchers: Yuval Arbel, Danny Ben-Shahar, Stuart Gabriel, and Yossef Tobol

This research presents new findings on the economic cost of terror. To that end, we provide evidence of changes in house prices in the Gilo neighborhood of Jerusalem in the wake of the 2000 Second Palestinian Intifada. During that period, Gilo suffered from sporadic and ongoing gunfire from the neighboring Palestinian village of Beit Jala. Our sample includes 555 housing transactions from the Gilo neighborhood of Jerusalem over the 1997-2008 period. Results of VAR estimation indicate that shooting events result in a lagged 12 percent reduction in Gilo house values. However, as evidenced in the impulse response functions, those effects are largely reversed within 18 months of the terror event. Difference-in-difference analysis of the micro-data permits further assessment of the neighborhood spatial incidence of terror.

Current Research

(cont...)

Results indicate an average quality-adjusted house price decline of about 10 percent among “frontline” relative to “non-frontline” dwellings in Gilo in the aftermath of the outbreak of hostilities; moreover, much of that effect persisted some five years subsequent to the cessation of violence. Research findings suggest substantial residential property value effects of terrorism as incurred by households living in conflict areas. Those same households—like many others—would be the direct beneficiaries of conflict resolution.

How Do We Determine Which Housing Market Allows Greater Mobility?

Researchers: Dr. Danny Ben-Shahar and Eyal Sulganik

Mobility among different states (classes) of the housing market not only generates liquidity but also carries a crucial effect on the price pattern in the market. Studying housing mobility may thus provide insights to the current developments in worldwide housing markets. We theoretically explore vacancy chains and mobility in the market where, among the various results, we know that, in comparing markets with different degrees of mobility, when the probability to transit from any given state to lower states is zero, the expected number of intra-state transitions (as opposed to inter-state transitions) is always smaller in the market that allows for greater mobility.

Also, we derive upper and lower bounds for the expected number of intra-state transitions in the market – the latter representing a measure for “degenerate” transitions – and specifically show that the “multiplier effect” of the vacancy chain represents a lower bound for this measure. Among the other results, we show that for every given housing state i , the expected number of intra-state vacancy transitions is greater than the expected number of inter-state transitions for all states $j \neq i$. Moreover, we find a condition under which we characterize a subgroup of markets whose expected number of intra-state transitions is greater than the expected number of inter-state transitions for each vacancy chain. Our analysis of mobility and vacancy chains, while specifically focusing on housing markets, may be generalized to other markets as well.

Partly Cloudy To Clear: The Israeli Economy And The Local Housing Market Under The Storm Of The World Financial Crisis

Researchers: Dr. Danny Ben-Shahar and Jacob Warszawski

Why did the storm of the world financial and housing crisis leave what may presently be judged as only a minor and short-term effect on the Israeli economy and its local housing market? We examine this question by descriptively focusing on the behavior of major relevant economic variables during the years that preceded the crisis as well as the policy adopted by the decision-makers in response to the crisis. Apparently, the solid economic condition in which Israel has met the world financial crisis, combined with the economic measures carried out in a timely response to the outbreak of the crisis, acted as what currently seem to be effective ingredients to cope with the urgent, intensive, and challenging economic situation that emerged.

Among the major factors that contributed to the strength of the Israeli economy and the local housing market when meeting the stormy world developments were a declining trend of public-debt-to-GDP ratio; relatively low unemployment rate; balanced government budget; per capita GDP in levels comparable to Western economies; increasing ratio of the number of households to the number of dwelling units in the market; relatively strict financial regulations vis-à-vis a strong banking system (entering the crisis, for example, with 11.2% of capital adequacy, the highest level since 1992; see Bank of Israel, 2008); absence of a formal institutionalized secondary mortgage market; relatively narrow sub-prime mortgage market; and, finally, financial institutions (such as pension funds and trust funds) whose assets (per fund) are not only limited in scope, but also mostly invested in local financial assets and government bonds (see also Bank of Israel, 2008).

We concentrate on the local housing market and particularly study the pattern of local housing prices and affordability. Using a structural model of supply and demand in the housing market, we derive a reduced form equation of housing affordability, where the affordability variable is measured by the number of average monthly wages per employee job that is required for purchasing an average dwelling unit (referred to as the housing price-to-wage ratio; see, for example, Gan and Hill, 2009). We empirically estimate the model in order to examine the factors that correlate with housing affordability in Israel for the years 1989-2009. Moreover, we compare the actual time series of housing affordability to the fitted values of affordability that arise from the model, thereby studying housing price (and affordability) dynamics prior to and following the world financial crisis.

Current Research

Mean Reversion and Momentum: Another Look at the Price-Volume Correlation in the Real Estate Market

Researchers: Yuval Arbel, Danny Ben-Shahar, and Eyal Sulganik

Based on behavioral finance and economics literature, we construct a theoretical framework in which consumers of newly constructed housing units perceive prices to follow a stochastic mean reversion pattern. Given this belief and the high carrying cost maintained by real estate developers, potential buyers opt to either exercise immediately or defer the purchase. We simulate the model within a real option framework by which we show that the optimal time to wait before exercising a purchase is positively related to the price level; hence, a negative (positive) correlation between transaction volume and price level (yield) emerges. Observing data on housing prices and new construction sales in Israel for the years 1998-2007, we apply an adaptive expectation regression model to test consumers' belief in both mean reversion and momentum price patterns. The empirical evidence shows that while consumers' demand pattern is simultaneously consistent with the belief in both momentum and mean reversion processes, the effect of the latter generally dominates. Moreover, while the data does not allow for testing the volume and price-level correlation, it does provide support to the positive volume-price yield correlation.

Real Estate Personality: Do Personality Traits Correlate with Preferences in the Housing Market?

Researchers: Dr. Danny Ben-Shahar and Roni Golan

This research presents new findings on the correlation between personality traits and individual preferences on real estate and housing related issues. Our sample includes 1138 observations, emerging primarily from an on-line survey, on individual scores on the Big Five personality test, personal preferences on a series of housing related issues as well as personal background and individual socio-economic characteristics. Results of the order probit estimation indicate a significant correlation between the Big Five personality traits and preferences on tenure mode, mortgage loan type, housing unit characteristics, and real estate investments. Results further indicate a significant correlation between both personal background and socio-economic characteristics and housing related preferences. Research findings thus propose a new perspective for studying individual and household motivation, preferences (and thus behavior) in the real estate and housing markets.

Funds from Operations versus Net Income: Does Depreciation Matter for Real Estate Investment Trusts?

Researcher: Dr. Danny Ben-Shahar, Eyal Sulgank and Desmond Tsang

Market participants of the Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) industry generally argue that the reporting of funds from operations (FFO) is beneficial because, above all, it excludes accounting depreciation that tends to distort net income as being a reliable performance measure for real estate firms.

We explore the validity of this claim by comparing the extent of measurement errors inherent in FFO versus net income subsequent to the increased REIT industry effort to improve the reporting of FFO in the year 2000. Since FFO differs predominantly from net income by the exclusion of depreciation expenses and several one-time, non-recurring accounting adjustments, we utilize accounting quality models to empirically assess the measurement errors inherent in the two measures. We find evidence that FFO, as a performance measure, is of higher quality than net income with lower measurement errors. This result is robust to alternative definitions of accounting quality. We further investigate the specific impact of reported depreciation on the quality of the performance measures and find that the inclusion of depreciation in net income significantly reduces the quality of this measure.

Finally, using the abnormal portions of depreciation expenses to proxy for measurement errors in reported depreciation, we find that it is particularly the measurement error component in depreciation expense that is inversely related to the quality of the net income measure. Overall, our findings suggest that measurement errors in accounting depreciation distort the reporting of REIT net income, thus providing further support to the dominance of FFO over net income for financial reporting in the REIT industry.

The dynamics of housing prices

Researcher: Professor Danny Czamanski

This research addresses the interplay between demographics and housing market dynamics in Israel. The case of Haifa offers a typical non-controlled experiment on how demographic shocks and associated changes in housing demand affect the housing market. The number of inhabitants rose in the 1990s to 250,000 with about 66,000 immigrants. The aim is to analyze how the housing market absorbed the demographic shock.

Current Research

Spatial Planning

Urban sprawl – policies and ecological impact

Researcher: Dr. Daniel Orenstein

Financial support by The Research Foundation of Israel Ministry of Environmental Protection and the Technion Manlam Fund

In this research I am investigating the rates and spatial patterns of urban sprawl in Israel from the 1960s to the present using thematic maps in a GIS platform. I am interested in what social and demographic processes drive sprawl and what factors determine when and where it occurs. I am also engaged in assessing the effectiveness of urban spatial growth management policies. In collaboration with Professor Amnon Frenkel, we are investigating the effectiveness of such policies in Israel's central Sharon district. Finally, I am interested in the ecological impact of urban sprawl, investigating changes in species composition in areas recently converted from open to built space.

Planning decisions and sprawl

Researcher: Professor Danny Czamanski

We suggest a plausible explanation for the spatial evolution of high-rise buildings. Contrary to intuitive expectations, the histograms and spatial distribution in Tel Aviv indicate peculiar and non-continuous patterns. These patterns evolve as a result of developers' behavior in real-estate markets. One of the critical variables in decision-making of developers is time. Despite obvious differences in land prices within a particular real-estate market, differences in costs and prices are relatively small in comparison to differences in their time incidence. We present simple search models of land development that suggests an interesting explanation of the spatial sprawl of cities. The central parameter in our model is "characteristic time", the period of time from the acquisition of initial property rights in the land and until the first return on the investment is realized. The model leads to leapfrogging patterns, mainly during downturn periods and explains the appearance of high-rise buildings in the urban periphery.

The 3D evolution of Tel Aviv

Researcher: Professor Danny Czamanski

Funded by ISF

This research is concerned with the dynamics of heights of buildings in Tel Aviv. Based on a unique time-series database of buildings, size incidence and spatial patterns of building heights are analyzed. Contrary to intuitive expectations the histograms indicate peculiar and unchanging patterns. The distribution of heights of high-rise buildings was fitted using exponential decay function and represents random apparition of heights.

(Cont...) Rank size analysis of heights in Tel Aviv and adjacent towns was also included and indicate four classes of types of cities. A spatial analysis was performed using global and local measures. It indicates low clustering patterns of buildings that tend to weaken over time and high heterogeneity of heights in space.

Urban Sprawl in Israeli Arab Towns and its Causes

Researchers: Professor Amnon Frenkel and Emin Sahala

Financial support by Pais Lottery

The "footprint" of the Arab settlements in Israel today is a result of the sporadic development of "historical built-up area patterns" combined with planning actions promoted by the government and other institutions. Arab settlements have recently begun to experience extensive expansion of the built-up areas, characterized by low densities and leapfrog development. These characteristics are identified with a very much debated phenomenon relating to the relatively new development form of cities and metropolitan urban areas in Western countries, called **"Urban Sprawl."** In this study, a large sample of 57 Arab settlements in Israel were chosen for an empirical examination of **the "Urban Sprawl"** phenomenon and other spatial urban development characteristics from 1995-2006. The employment of different indices (density, leapfrog, shape, and fractal) enabled the intensity sprawl in each of the settlements to be measured and ranked along a comparative scale, from very compact to the highly sprawled. The study's hypotheses were tested by multiple linear regression models that examined the interconnections of sprawl intensity, as the dependent variable, and various socio-economic and cultural independent variables. The results showed that the leapfrog sprawl pattern in Arab settlements was not a temporary phenomenon but long-lasting. However the extent of the phenomenon reduced in most settlements during the investigated period, which might prove the infill spaces in-between main and leapfrog clusters. Other important findings are the significant rise in number of the Arab settlements that became compact during the investigated period. Findings obtained from the general regression model testified to the fact that sprawl intensity was higher in settlements characterized by a high percentage of private land ownership and in small settlements. On the other hand, there were no relationship between socio-economic variables and sprawl intensity in Arab settlements.

The findings proved the hypotheses regarding the relationship of sprawl intensity to social, cultural, and physical land factors. Settlements with more refugees were found to be denser (more compact). On the other hand, the more private land held in a settlement and the older its population, the less dense it was (more sprawled). Both integrated and individual indices indicate that sprawl in Arab settlements in Israel has different and complex aspects; the characteristics making for sprawl in them are not unequivocal. Special attention must therefore be given to the unique characteristics of Arab settlements and to the issues discussed in this study, and taken into consideration in the planning process.

Publications

Building Green:
Promoting Energy Efficiency in Israel
Yael Bar Ilan, David Pearlmutter
and Alon Tal, 2010



"A genuinely pioneering book that touches upon one of the prominent and most challenging themes of our century. This timely and important volume offers a practical and balanced perspective in evaluating policy tools, while providing recommendations towards promoting energy efficiency in buildings in Israel. Through its profound and intelligent writing it constitutes a key contribution to the local and global understanding, knowledge and policy making about green building."

Michal Bitterman, founding member, executive committee of the Israel Green Building Council (ILGBC)

"Israel faces a unique set of challenges as it develops its next generation of energy policies. This book provides an invaluable roadmap for a new Israeli energy efficiency strategy that increases energy security, promotes economic opportunities, and reduces carbon and other emissions."

Joe Kruger, Policy Director, the National Commission on Energy Policy, Washington D.C. and lead author for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Water Sensitive Planning (WSP)
Integrating Water Considerations Into
Urban and Regional Planning
Naomi Carmon and Uri Shamir, 2010



**Urban Sprawl: A comparative
Perspective on Land Use Regulations**

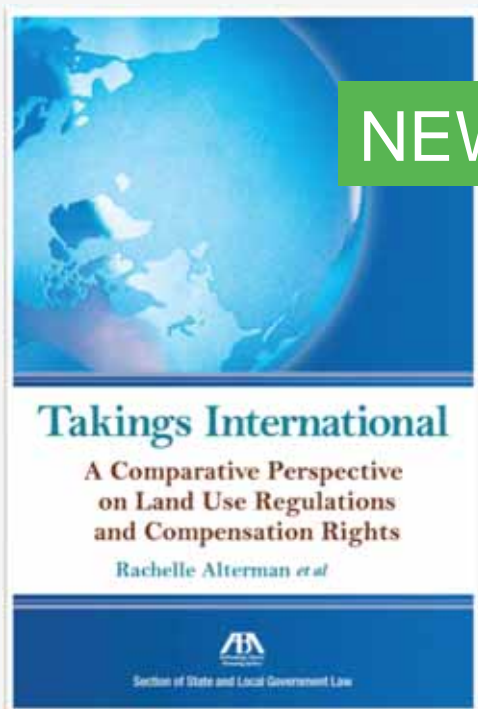
Amnon Frenkel and Amin Sahala, 2010



In
Hebrew

Takings International :
A comparative Perspective on
Land Use Regulations

Rachelle Alterman, 2010



NEW

Everywhere in the world, land use law and regulation affect real property values – either increasing or decreasing them. Regulatory takings is the potential raw nerve of land use regulation, yet policymakers and civic groups have tackled the issue without the perspective that a cross-national exchange of ideologies, laws, and practices can provide.

Takings International is the first large-scale effort devoted to this controversial issue, providing a vast platform of comparative knowledge on direct, indirect, categorical, and partial takings. Written for legal professionals, academics, urban and regional planners, real estate developers, and civil-society groups, the book analyzes thirteen advanced economy countries representing a variety of legal regimes, institutional structures, cultures, geographic sizes, and population densities.

The comparative prism yields some surprising and counterintuitive observations. In a climate of intensifying controversies about property and the role of public agencies, the book enables informed debate and provides all sides with a sense of scale by which to evaluate current state practices and propose alternatives.

Excessive Property Rights:
Compensation Claims for Diminished Land
Values Caused by Statutory Plans in Israel

Shira Brand and Rachelle Alterman, 2010



NEW

In
Hebrew

From Conflict to Participation:
Anticipating and preventing Public
Objections to Land Use Plans

Doron Drukman and Rachelle Alterman, 2010



NEW

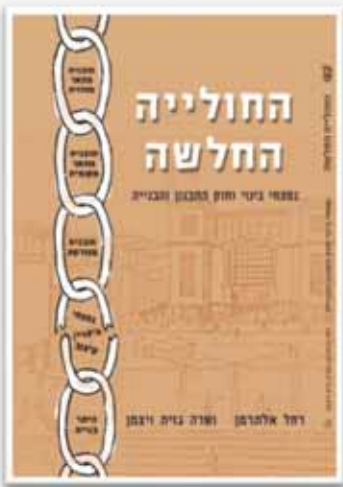
In
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Publications

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Design Supplements to Statutory Plans

Rachelle Alterman and Sara Gazit Witzman, 2009



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Failed Towers – The Problem of Long-term Maintenance of High-rise Condominiums in Israel

Rachelle Alterman, 2009



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Strategic Plan for Galilean Hatzor: Student projects report

Rachelle Alterman, Pnina Plaut and Idan Porat 2009



Hebrew

Affordable Housing in Tel Aviv-Jaffa Findings and recommendations

Emily Silverman, Ehud Pasernak, Michal Yocale, Nurit Tzafrir and Naomi Carmon, 2009



Hebrew

Affordable Housing in Ashdod – Kalaniot Center Findings and recommendations

Rachelle Alterman, 2009



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The Housing distress of the Palestinian Community in Jaffa

Sebastian Wallerstein and Emily Silverman, 2009



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Between Extreme Centralization and Hesitant Decentralizations: Plans Under Local Jurisdiction in Israel's Building And Planning Law

Rachelle Alterman and Einat Gavrieli, 2008.



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From Public Goals to Private Obligations: Agreements Between Planning Authorities and Developers

Rachelle Alterman and Aviva Zuberi, 2008.



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Spatial Planning in Israel: Ground Politics

Arye Hershkowitz, 2008



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Hedva Hevroni and Rachelle Alterman, 2008



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Housing strategy for a large city: Tel Aviv-Jaffa Proposal

Naomi Carmon, 2008



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Water Sensitive Planning: Integrating Water Considerations into Urban and Regional Planning

Uri Shamir and Naomi Carmon, 2007



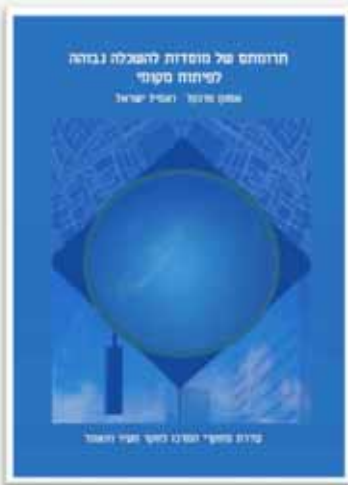
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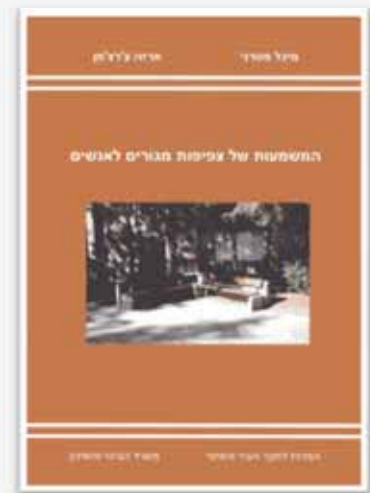
Yosef Jabareen, 2007



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The Meaning of Housing Density for People

Michal Mitrani and Arza Churchman, 2006



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Gilat Benchetrit and Naomi Carmon, 2006



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Planning for Cycling: Spatial and Traffic Planning

Pnina Plaut, Miron Mendelson and Daniel Shefer, 2005



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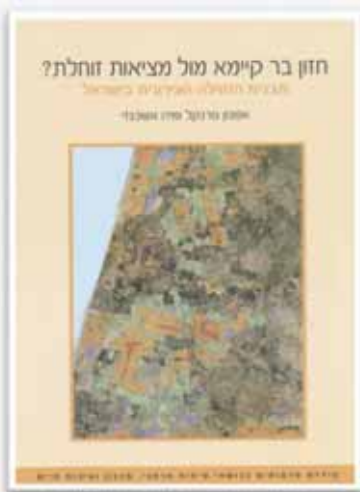
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Shlomit Beer, Naomi Carmon and Uri Shamir, 2005



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