



Urban design in the context of glocalization and nationalism: Rothschild Boulevards, Tel Aviv

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This paper reveals the unique role played by urban design in the demarcation of the political-spatial order in Tel Aviv city centre within the context of glocalization and nationalism. By using European urban design concepts, the city has attempted to be part of western culture while at the same time trying to gain the right to possession of the place by adjusting those concepts to the local contested context. This proposition is illustrated by an exploration of urban design schemes and ideas along Rothschild Boulevards during colonial times and more recently. The investigation into the Boulevards exposes the process of development of the route, the regimes within which it took place and the means and actors involved in two time periods, the 1920s–1930s and the 1980s–1990s. The conclusions suggest that urban design was an active actor in developing the Boulevards as part of the national political economy managed by the city leadership.

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Introduction

In a book published in 1999, the editors wrote, 'Rothschild Boulevards are not just a street. These Boulevards have a fascinating story, about history, culture, landscape and on top of all that, about people..... Some of the housing along the Boulevards has national–historical significance: the state was declared in number 16, during the period of the mandate, the military leadership was concentrated in Golomb House at number 23 and many personalities who have left their mark on the population and the state lived along the Boulevards. That is sufficient for one street is it not?' (Regev and Vidrich, 1999, p. 4). This quote has to be seen in the context of the regeneration processes, which have occurred since the mid-1980s in the city. Tel Aviv and especially the area of the Boulevards has been transformed to accommodate modernization and to attract investors and visitors. Modern high-rise icons of progress along with expensive conservation pro-

jects have replaced housing along the Boulevards. These contrasting tendencies are part of the struggle over space. As one of the leading architects in Israel, Abraham Yaski, says 'There is no doubt that since they have been built, Rothschild Boulevards have been the most attractive, the best maintained and the most important street in Tel Aviv..... Grand beautiful houses constructed by the best architectshowever....we must recognize that conservation of beautiful houses from the past will not reinstate the Boulevards' significance' (Yaski, 1999, p. 126). To support their argument, most speakers in this debate (architects, professionals, developers, inhabitants and the city council), refer to the quality of architecture and urban design and its unique features in the context of the city. However, above all this is a debate about the contested memory of the city. To be able to understand the significance of recent architectural developments and efforts at image-making, as well as the effort to gain UNESCO recognition, it is necessary to review the historical development of the Boulevards and the city. This review allows the role of urban design to be understood not only

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in the demarcation of spatial order, but also in the socio-political structure of Tel Aviv and Israel (Figures 1 and 2).

Urban design and spatial order

Urban design plays a key role in the demarcation of spatial order, which often serves the socio-political structure of the regime in power and sets up its formal representation (Rosenau, 1983). These processes, apparent since the early renaissance, are manifested in the organization and regulation of urban space in squares, axes and streets. Forty (2000) shows how spatial ordering developed by Alberti (Grafton, 2000) influenced Haussmann in Paris (Jordan, 1996) and later how it was integrated into modernist urbanism; the city as a system regulated by functional differentiation and zoning. The similarity between Alberti, Haussmann and the modern master plan is based on the assumption that planned spaces can produce social order. In the search for valid alternatives to the modernist, function-based order, this assumption was challenged by researchers who became increasingly interested in the differences between certain types of cities: the American city (Venturi *et al*, 1972; Koolhaas, 1978, 1997), the European city (Cullen, 1964; Krier, 1979; Rossi, 1982) and the Post-Colonial city (King, 1976, 1990; Abbas, 1993; Bhaba, 1994).

Traditionally, the European model of the city has dominated the discourse about urban design. Often, it is characterized by a dominant urban centre, which provides a meeting place for the residents. Generally, the European city evolved from the medieval city, its expansion is radial and concentric and can be easily identified. It is characterized as a complex overlapping of religious, cultural, political, economic and physical layers, which contribute to its vibrancy. Therefore, it is often perceived as a desirable place to live and many urbanists still perceive it as an ideal model (Beauregard and Body-Gendrot, 1999). The American city was modelled on the industrial city of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It had its low-income neighbourhoods woven into manufacturing districts and adjacent commercial cores and its middle-income neighbourhoods beyond. Only in the late 20th century did the gentry move to the periphery, after World War II. From this migration, the prototypical metropolis emerged with its central city ringed by suburban enclaves. Both the American city and the European city grew towards the periphery, influenced by the ideas of Howard's Garden City and Le Corbusier (Broadbent, 1990; Madanipour, 1996). However, unlike the European city, the American city has developed new enclaves detached from the traditional urban centre, which have changed the social and economic structure radically. The expansion and evolution of the city centre in the Colonial city is connected to imperialist powers



Figure 1. Rothschild Boulevards, 1914 (Tel Aviv City Council Historic Archive).



Figure 2. Rothschild Boulevards, 2004 (Authors).

and has been perceived as an important factor in the transfer of modern capitalist culture to the New World (King, 1990). This can be seen in the architecture and town planning of such cities, which regularly imitated the cities of the imperial power. Colonial cities have operated as important locations in the deployment of the technologies of power through which populations were categorized and controlled. In this context, town planning became the mechanism by which colonial aspirations of cleanliness, civility and modernity were realized quite literally on the ground (King, 1990).

However, today in the context of globalization these models are no longer perceived as separate

categories. Recent studies (Jacobs, 1996; Zukin, 1996; Dovey, 1999; AlSayyad, 2001), show that the capitalist modernity involves an element of cultural homogenization since it increases the levels and amount of global coordination. However, mechanisms of fragmentation, heterogenisation and hybridity are also at work. So, it is not a question of either one city model or another, homogenisation or heterogenisation, but rather of the ways in which these models are manifested in the urban space. This approach emphasises the modern production of urban space as it is assisted by the integration of professional practice into capitalist production (Benevelo, 1967; Choay, 1967; Harvey, 1973, 1985; Jameson, 1991) and as

it serves national aspirations for formal representation (Vale, 1992; Bozdoğan, 2001).

Despite this critique, it is important to acknowledge that the concept of order is inherited in architectural and urban design practice. Nevertheless, the effect of this critique on the urban design discourse is that 'it was no longer possible to talk about order innocently in architecture' (Forty, 2000, p. 248). Thus, when examining urban spatial order, three relevant dimensions can be explored: order as social-political practice, order as infinite action in space, order as a glocal-national process.

Order as social-political practice

The order of space initiated by power groups can be seen in most regimes that use their authority as an opportunity for changing the inherited social-spatial order. According to Foucault (1971) this order is discontinuous and conditioned by constant modifications to the rules of spatial formation. This change in the spatial order should be perceived as a process which revises the inherited order of the preceding regime. The revision itself (ie of spatial order) means repairing and improving in relation to a previous situation or to an ideal image that is beyond the actual space. Nevertheless, the action of ordering is a social practice of groups that challenge the existing order through negotiation. The outcome of the negotiation expresses the power relationship among the groups. As Foucault (1980) defined it, power is both constructive and creative and not just repressive. Thus, when investigating the urban order as social-political practice it is necessary to look at the power triangle of, regime, means and inhabitants and their decision-making in the design of the city.

Order as infinite action in urban space

In an examination of cities and particularly city centres, four main agendas can be identified for applying urban design ideas in space.

1. Inventing: suggesting new ideas both in terms of cultural and physical context.
2. Erasing: demolishing the existing fabric for control, for new profitable developments or for solving major difficulties in that fabric.

3. Importing: bringing in ideas from other contexts and reusing existing ideas from various periods of time.
4. Sustaining: using the existing fabric, maintaining without radical changes.

The decision on how or when to use certain methods relies a great deal on the structure of the regime and the way it conceives the city's future. Often, methods are used simultaneously or may be the outcome of each other. Using Paris as an example, in the boulevards planned by Haussmann, both erasing and inventing agendas were present. The role of the boulevards was re-invented, as a tool to facilitate the flow of traffic, create order and offer long perspectives to the major monuments. This was achieved at the cost of demolishing and erasing large parts of the densely built-up city. In this case, both the erasing and inventing plans were designed by Haussmann, which emphasizes the close relationships between power, as in the regime and urban design. Erasing strategies were also one of the main tools used by colonial regimes to create order and control, for example, the bombing of Jaffa by the British in 1936 (Segev, 1999), or the demolition of Palestinian cities by Israel today.

Importing and re-using ideas from the past in the name of context characterized post-modern planning and architecture (Ellin, 1996; Loukaitou-Sideris, 1996) as well as colonial cities. Contemporary projects, in city centres, are often preoccupied with history and the desire to identify the local and vernacular. This has created 'invented' traditions, arising from the need (usually commercial) to be 'authentic'. The return to the city is accompanied by slogans of preservationist movements – renovation, restoration and rehabilitation serve the political needs of the dominant classes (Harvey, 1973, 1985; Anderson, 1983). The fourth mode, which characterizes the everyday production of space (De Certeau, 1984; Lefebvre, 1991), is the sustainable agenda. As opposed to the inventing/erasing/importing modes which create something 'new', the sustainable approach claims to create continuity with the existing fabric.

Most places have been visualized through various agendas at different points in time. Thus, the aim in analysing the spatial order is to comprehend which urban design agendas applied and the

reasons for their use. Who gained from it? Who were the actors in the production of space? What were the means? What was changed?

Order as a glocal–national process

When referring to the urban landscape, the idea of glocalization¹ suggests questioning the adaptation of ubiquitous, international architectural ideas to a local landscape and looking at the influence of global economic processes on the development of the city. However, these influences of global power on local affairs are not new (Pieterse, 1995). What is fascinating is the way the nation-state navigates in between the orders, powers and domains of the global and local. This process of navigation contradicts the idea of a prior, given, original or ordinary culture, arguing that all forms of culture and architecture are continually in the process of hybridity (Bhaba, 1994). However, the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original models from which a third emerges, but to consider it as ‘a condition of fundamental interaction among parties with differing positions of power, who must nevertheless cohabit’ (AlSayyad, 2001, p. 8). In this sense, the global and local are mutually constituting (Robertson, 1995).

This theoretical framework is used to examine Rothschild Boulevards as a detailed study. The Boulevards provide an opportunity to investigate the role played by urban design as an active participant in the socio-political process. The Boulevards represent the evolution of the city as it appeared initially in the plan of 1909 and continued to develop in subsequent plans. Since the 1930s it has hosted the Central Business District (CBD). In addition, it was and still is, perceived as the historical core and the economic centre of the city. During the 1920s–1930s and the 1980–1990s the Boulevards were controlled by different regimes and transformed radically by intense developments.² In the 1920–1930s, a decade before the establishment of the nation-

state, the city had an autonomous status in the British colonial regime. The establishment of the State in 1948 changed the power relationships among bodies operating in the city. The boundaries of the city changed (Yediot Iriat Tel Aviv, 1952) following the annexation of Jaffa. The city council and the government adopted a spatial-political perspective and invested mainly along the shoreline assuming that would be the western ‘frontier’ of both city and state and initiated a joint plan to turn it into a tourist attraction. The Boulevards only regained public recognition and interest in the 1980s–1990s with the acceleration of globalization and privatization trends and new initiatives by the private sector. Within the centralized power mechanism of the state, the city is allowed some flexibility (Tel Aviv council, 2002, p. 143). Thus, even though most of the authority is still in the hands of the state, the city tried to recruit designers to produce a spatial order that fitted its vision of a global city. This paper examines the production of urban space in the Boulevards, by investigating the way the spaces have been ordered, the power-structures involved and the planning and architecture models which were used. The examination reveals the evolution and expansion of the Boulevards as a contested space.

Nationalism and the spatial order of Rothschild Boulevards in the 1920s–1930s

The Boulevards during the 1920s and 1930s marked the establishment of the Jewish community’s political agenda, which took advantage of opportunities created by the regime to establish a national identity. The planning models that dominate this period consist of ideas imported from Europe, which are then re-invented in the local context. The lack of a common master plan for Jaffa and Tel Aviv, although visualized as one city by Geddes (1925), allowed the Jewish community to develop Tel Aviv as an autonomous entity, perceiving the context for the inhabitants and the physical environment as an extension of the western world. The Boulevards were initially called *Rechov Haam* (Nation Street) and designed as an urban garden. The Jewish community saw the Boulevards’ landscape and adjacent activities as the closest thing in Tel Aviv to European public space. In this sense, the place fulfilled its actual and imagined role in the perception of the inhabitants.

¹Robertson (1995) adopts the concept of glocalisation, originally a marketing term, to express the global production of the local and the localization of the global.

²Prior to the 1920s, in the Ottoman regime, Tel Aviv was a small neighbourhood. Between the 1940s and the 1960s, occupied with immigration movements and wars and following Zionist ideology, the government invested most resources in the periphery.

Historically, the development of the city and the Boulevards goes back to Ottoman Jaffa, which, in the first-half of the 19th century, was a walled city in the midst of an agricultural region. A network of roads connected it with Jerusalem, Nablus Haifa, Akko and the surrounding villages. Tel Aviv's evolution is connected to key dates that define its area and its borders. It is first identified with the move of Jewish neighbourhoods to outside the walls of Jaffa in the early 1900s and the unification of these neighbourhoods under a township by British Mandate in 1921. However, it was 1934 before Tel Aviv received municipal autonomy from the British Mandate authorities and was defined as a Municipal Corporation.³ From its beginning Tel Aviv was perceived as a centre by the Jewish community and it became the economic and cultural hub (Biger, 1994). The headquarters of the Zionist executive were located in both Tel Aviv and Jaffa⁴ (Figure 3).

Three main actors operated in Jaffa–Tel Aviv during the 1920s–1930s, the Arabs, the Jews and the British. The contexts which they represented, the East, Diaspora⁵ and Europe, influenced the urban landscape of the city. The British were interested in urban planning in Palestine from the beginning of the Mandate period in 1918.⁶ This was sponsored by the first High Commissioner and by Attorney General Bentwich (Home, 1997). Both were committed to the Balfour Declaration

³The 1926 Geddes Plan (and its 1927 and 1938 amendments) largely determined the character of the city, although the massive growth took place only after 1948 with the occupation of Arab lands and the annexation of Jaffa. In 1950 both cities were united to form the Israeli metropolis of Tel Aviv – Jaffa. For further reading on the annexation, see Golan (1995).

⁴This in contrast to Jerusalem in the second-half of the 20th century, which was occasionally the scene of inter-communal conflict, but in fact it was not a national centre, neither for the Jews nor Arabs (Biger, 1994).

⁵This term is being used now in contemporary cultural theory to signify a more general sense of displacement as well as a challenge to the limits of existing boundaries. In this paper, it is used in the traditional meaning, which relates specifically to the situation of a people living outside of their traditional homeland. For further reading on these issues and differences see Mitchell (1997).

⁶The British colonial model included a policy of deliberate urbanization, or town planning in preference to dispersed settlement (Home, 1997). Often, land rights were allocated in a combination of town, suburban and country lots. The town tended to be planned in advance of settlement with wide streets constructed in geometric, usually in grid, form. These layouts fulfilled symbolic and functional needs. They removed congestion, allowed the free movement of air, imposed a sense of order, facilitated police control and broke up densely populated areas into manageable units (Home, 1997).

and saw planning as an updated method of colonial administration (Home, 1997). However, this generated a complex triangle of demands; the need to safeguard the interests of the Arabs, which came into conflict with the guarantee of a Jewish national home under the Balfour declaration, as well as the securing of British interests in the region.

Political problems and the aim to maintain the *status quo* prevented the British administration from creating national frameworks for radical urban/rural change. Therefore, it aimed to increase local participation (Biger, 1994). The British introduced principles for comprehensive urban planning and design that contrasted with the local building traditions, aiming to replace the haphazard sprawling patterns with orderly development along European lines (Home, 1997). This policy placed responsibility in the hands of the local citizens yet tightly controlled their actions. Much of the urban development was bound up with the activities of the Jewish community. Planning served their aims, constructing identity and community via settlements. Although the government devoted most of its resources to rural development and thus to the Arab sector, its legislative efforts were chiefly associated with urban development where Jewish activity was prevalent (Biger, 1994). Clashes between the two ethnic groups were connected to the three prerequisites for settlement; land, capital and people (Biger, 1994). In the case of Jaffa–Tel Aviv, conflicts created a situation in which the Jewish community demanded autonomy/separation. On April 1921, the disturbances⁷ between the two peoples became a threat to the security and order of the colonial regime (Segev, 1999). Following that, the High Commissioner granted the town independent status. Although Tel Aviv had begun lobbying for municipal independence prior to the May disturbances, the events in Jaffa only served to spur the British to grant the town autonomous status. Separating Tel Aviv from Jaffa also formalized the principle that had caused the Jews to leave Jaffa in the first place, separation between Arabs and Jews (Segev, 1999). This division helped the Jewish community to effect the planning and architecture styles they have adopted in order to differentiate themselves.

⁷Arabs referred to it as the 'rebellion', the Jewish community called it 'events' (Segev, 1999).



Figure 3. Tel Aviv – Jaffa border (Jaffa – Tel Aviv, 1930, Survey of Palestine, Tel Aviv Historical Archive).

The finance for Tel Aviv came from loans and the Jewish community in the Diaspora. The municipal council was recognized as a legal entity, which enabled it to borrow money from the United States and from the British government (Biger,

1994). Generally the development of the city was related to the conditions and availability of land, operating in a highly speculative market. The spatial expansion took place quickly. It was carried out by private developers, who were

mainly concerned with the immediate needs and to profit from the new settlements (Kallus, 1997).

In 1915 it had 2000 inhabitants and in 1936 140 000 (Biger, 1994). Generally, the demographic development of the city was related to the different immigration movements to Palestine. In 1936, the population of Jaffa was 71 000 (59% Arabs, 22% Jews, 19% Christians) and in Tel Aviv 140 000 (100% Jews) (McCarthy, 1988). In Tel Aviv about 70% were new immigrants, mostly from Europe, the minority (15–20%) was from Islamic countries in Asia and Africa.

In terms of urban design and planning, four phases can be traced; the Achuzat Bait plan (1909), the Kauffmann plan (1921), the Geddes plan (1926) and the Amendment plan (1938). The 1909 plan of the Achuzat Bait neighbourhood was inspired by Howard's Garden City (Figure 4). Here the construction of identity and cultural difference was based on the establishment of autonomous communal life and the setting of a new spatial order. The adaptation of a novel architectural and morphological language, in contrast to the vernacular crowded streets of Jaffa, emphasized the community boundaries. The preliminary proposals included a residential layout consisting of detached houses set in gardens, a public park and, as a centre, an educational institution. The final plan combined elements of various proposals. A high school was included and a park was omitted on the grounds of it being a controversial allocation of private land. During construction, a deep ravine that was unsafe for building purposes was revealed and converted into a long straight garden later to become Rothschild Boulevards. The neighbourhood included 60 houses but its design principles, the sections of the streets⁸ and the size of the plots influenced the plans of both Kauffmann and Geddes (Figures 5 and 6).

Kauffmann's Palestine Land Development Architect, vision of Tel Aviv was based on the Anglo-German garden city (Goldman, 1994). His plan showed a town oriented towards the sea, coherently planned and set amidst gardens. The shoreline was to be the focus of urban life. A broad promenade with squares, markets, parks and cultural and recreational centres was

⁸Main streets – 12-m wide, secondary streets – 10 m wide. Plot size – 500 m² and 33% max. coverage.

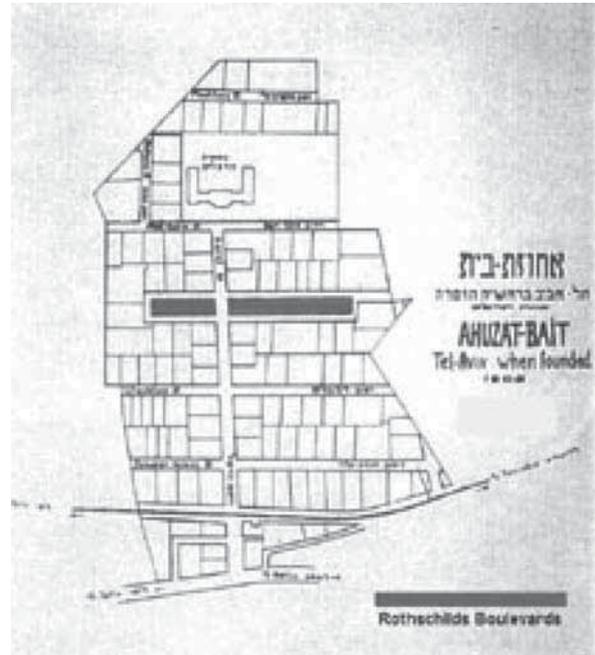


Figure 4. Achuzat Bait plan (Tel Aviv City Council Historic Archive).

planned. The regularly spaced east–west routes were particularly emphasized as tree-lined avenues. Squares with public institutions were placed where these avenues intersected with the promenade. In order to maintain the original garden city character, Kauffmann suggested that the minimum plot size should be increased from 300–400 to 569–1000 m² and that the permitted building volume should be limited (Goldman, 1994).

The third phase, planned in 1926 and identified with Patrick Geddes, was endorsed by the District Commissioner in 1927 and legally validated in 1929 (Biger, 1994). Geddes' plan was crucial in two aspects, politically and physically through the way it addressed metropolitan issues of function and land use and allowed enormous flexibility then and still does today. Politically, Geddes visualized Tel Aviv as a type of garden city and saw it as part of 'Greater Jaffa' (Geddes, 1925, p. 1). Geddes' plan emphasizes his dual approach of both importing ideas to Tel Aviv while at the same time trying to be sensitive to the local community and context of Jaffa. The latter contrasted with the Jewish community's concept of Tel Aviv as an autonomous township. Unfortunately, although it discusses common issues between the settlements, that is, ports and



Figure 5. Kauffmann's plan (Tel Aviv City Council Historic Archive).

boundaries, his plan was detached from Jaffa and included only Tel Aviv.⁹ Physically, the plan

⁹It is interesting to note that the British visualized the two cities as separate entities in contrast to the British master plans for Jerusalem.

imported the organized and systematic layout of a garden city. The dominant physical features were:

1. the north–south orientation of the circulation pattern,



Figure 6. Geddes plan (Tel Aviv City Council Historic Archive).

2. the main facades face east–west to benefit from the sea breeze and prevent direct sun from the south,
3. low-density residential units,
4. various public ‘green’ areas and open squares,
5. the green boulevard motif as a connection between districts and
6. the ‘village’ character created by detached buildings placed in gardens.

These principles defined the Tel Aviv urban block and fabric,¹⁰ which contrasted with that of Jaffa. It has also been able to adapt to internal changes

¹⁰The urban block includes between 7 and 22 plots. The buildings are freestanding on the plot and gaps between the buildings vary from 5 to 8 m. Each building has its own fence around the plot, which defines it as private.

such as budget, availability of land and the need for housing new immigrants, as well as external changes caused by different regimes and western attitudes in architecture and town planning. In 1938 an amendment plan was approved, the small residential houses gradually disappeared and buildings three to four stories high were built.¹¹ The city centre moved from south to north,¹² the gardens from the Geddes plan were transformed into public buildings and Rothschild Boulevards became the main business centre with the spirit of the garden community dissipating over the years.

Parallel to the evolution of the plans, in these early decades the physical urban form underwent many changes. Imported ideas appeared in the form, material and uses along the Boulevards. The uses included the detached house,¹³ the apartment block¹⁴ and public¹⁵ buildings. The first buildings, between 1910 and 1930, imitated a European suburb with small family homes surrounded by greenery. They attempted to distinguish themselves from the local Arabic-Turkish residential tradition by using the typology of rectangular symmetrical buildings, mainly single story with flat or shallow roofs. The materials used were mainly blocks manufactured from the local sedimentary rock, shaped and usually rendered. Later, attempts were made to achieve a ‘Hebrew’ style, which is a variant on oriental and can be seen in the figurative ceramic tiles decorating schools and synagogues. The main topological features were the balcony and the closed corridor with domed or terraced roofs.

¹¹The amendment plan from 1938 included three major decisions: (a) Reduce the spaces between the buildings, (b) Approval to build higher buildings, (c) Remove the paths between the buildings.

¹²The boulevard was never connected to the sea (west) but was developed to the north.

¹³The composition of the house plan and elevation treatment was symmetrical. The symmetry was broken only in the case of buildings located on a street corner. In terms of circulation, the main axes were always perpendicular to the street. The main elevation was the street facade.

¹⁴The apartment buildings often included a front garden, which was used as a space between the building and the street. The architectural composition of the building was asymmetrical, often having 2–3 volumes. The dominant features were the balconies, which appear on the entire elevation of the building. In terms of circulation, the main axis is diagonal. Often all elevations of the building were treated equally.

¹⁵The composition of the public buildings was usually from two volumes in an L shape with a courtyard at the back. The circulation system ran parallel to the street and the elevation has various materials and emphasizes the facade to the street.



However, houses decorated with eclectic architectural quotes from both east and west were given a different look in the 1930s following a triple negation: of the Diaspora, of the bourgeois and of the Orient (Nitzan-Shiftan, 1996). This negation, motivated by a new generation of young architects recently graduated from European schools preaching architectural modernism, led to the implementation of the International Style in Tel Aviv.¹⁶ The apartment buildings became flat roofed, monochromatic monoliths of stucco concrete, with monotonous surfaces broken only by cubist protrusions or balconies¹⁷ (Figure 7).

The power structure of the regime, the nature of the population and means of implementation all influenced the urban ordering which took place. The development of Rothschild Boulevards exemplifies the results of these influences both discursively¹⁸ and practically. All plans were using European models and from the perspective of the founders of the city, the adaptation of the colonial planning approach helped to achieve three objectives; the creation of a western image, winning support from the colonial regime for the implementation of the plans and it was another step in the spatial differentiation and separation from Jaffa and the Arab community.¹⁹ Thus,

¹⁶During the 1930s, new waves of immigrants, especially from Germany, began to arrive bringing with them a large number of architects trained in the new theories of Le Corbusier, Gropius and the Bauhaus.

¹⁷The economic problems in the 1950s reduced the decorative elements on the buildings. The details, which reflected the 1930s, disappeared. In the apartments, residents enclosed the balconies with shutters to form an extra room.

¹⁸In the local newspaper of Tel Aviv, *Yediot Tel Aviv*, in almost every edition, there are articles which refer to 'What's happening in the world?' referring mainly to planning, urban design and architecture developments in European countries (see *Yediot Iriat Tel Aviv*, City Council Archive).

¹⁹A discourse on separation has been a dominant component in the foundation of the Jewish collective in Palestine, even before the establishment of the Israeli nation-state. As in Jerusalem and Haifa, the conglomeration of separate ethnic and religious communities culminated in the establishment of autonomous Jewish neighbourhoods delineated from the Arab city. The uniqueness of Jaffa is that the new developments outside the city wall marked the existence of an autonomous entity rather than a continuation of the city as in the case of new Jewish neighbourhoods in Jerusalem. Tel Aviv was defined as a new city separate from Jaffa. The establishment of Achuzat Bait in 1909, a neighbourhood constructed with the assistance of the Zionist establishment, tended to mark the beginning of Tel Aviv, although other Jewish neighbourhoods, such as Neve Zedek and Neve Shalom, for example, preceded it. However, Achuzat Bait is marked by its founders' use of time and space to express their political and cultural boundaries.

although accidental, the spatial order of the Boulevards followed by the deliberate expansion to the north, played a central role both as a public space and in the national narrative of the town.

Glocalization and the spatial order of Rothschild Boulevards in the 1980s–1990s

The constant changes in the city along with the desire to be up to date with the western world and particularly with the idea of the global city have resulted in an endless effort to re-invent the image and identity of the Boulevards. The city council, by initiating urban regeneration plans in the 1980s and 1990s, aimed at creating a monument and an updated logo of prestige and power. The main actors during these decades were the city council leaders, the city planning department and the national government with the inhabitants having limited power in the process of decision-making. Re-focusing on the Boulevards and the adjacent area as the city core was directly related to the enormous transformations, which were associated with inseparable internal (the movement of population to the suburbs, the Israeli–Palestinian dispute) and external forces (the global economy).

The growth of the population decreased during the development of the city as a business centre in the 1970s. A sharp increase in construction activity occurred in the city in the 1990s, which was largely a result of an increase in demand for office space, retail space and hotels. The 1990s witnessed the development of new corporate areas formerly unknown in the city (Tel Aviv Council, 1995, 2000). Following that, the city's population changed dramatically as new groups of residents entered the city. From the middle of the 1960s the number of residents in Tel Aviv decreased and this tendency continued well into the 1970s and the 1980s. In the period of 1961–1994 the population of Tel Aviv decreased by about 30 000 people, about 8% of the population. In the years 1989–1993 this trend started to change and the population began to increase, mainly due to the influx of new immigrants from the former Soviet Union. However, this increase stopped in 1994 at 339 642 residents and since then the number of people in Tel Aviv has gone down again, to 328 136 in 1998. At the beginning of the 1990s a curfew was imposed on Palestinian territories by the Israeli government, in response to the Palestinian uprising and the flow of

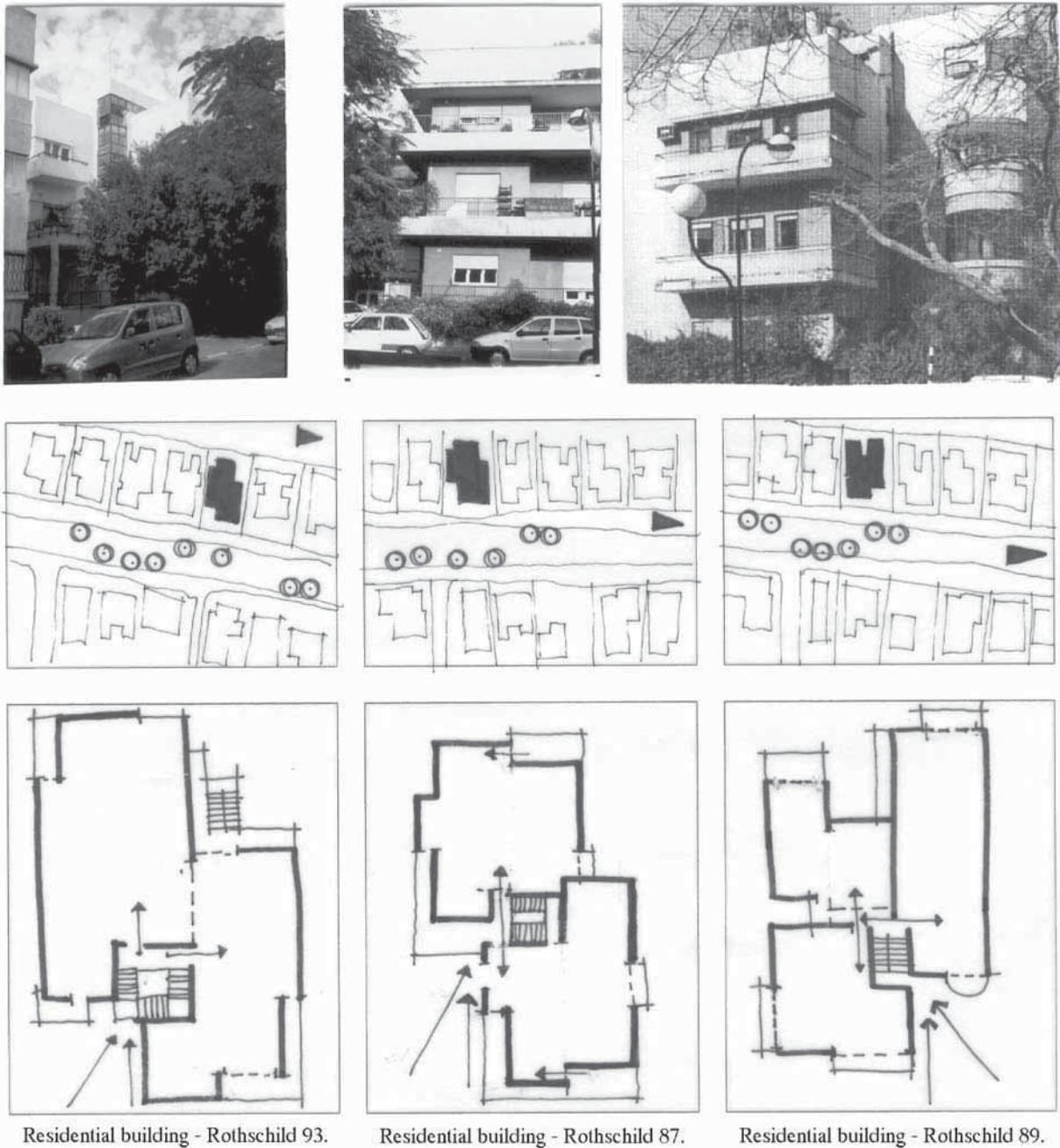


Figure 7. Residential Buildings along the Boulevards (Authors).

Palestinian workers into the Israeli labour market was stopped. Foreign workers from different countries began working in Israel in 1993. There are probably about 50 000 but estimates of the exact size of this group are uncertain since many of its members are illegal aliens (Schnell, 1999). In contrast to the decrease in the number of people living in the city centre, the population in the satellite cities of the metropolis increased signifi-

cantly over the period 1961–1994 (Hason and Hoshen, 1996).

These population movements originated in the urban strategies adopted by the council up to the 1980s and later. Prior to the 1980s, the Shimshony Plan, prepared at the beginning of the 1960s, defined the main business district of the city, designating Tel Aviv as the centre of the metro-



polis. In the 1980s the Institute of Urban Studies (IUS, 1979, 1980) prepared a strategic plan which was accepted by the city council in 1985, but, like all other plans, was not given statutory approval. The plan referred to the entire metropolis, defining it as the financial and cultural centre of Israel. Re-defining the relationships between land uses and activities, the IUS plan had a significant influence on the development of the city centre, the designation of specialized areas within it and the revision of the relationship between residential areas and commercial activity (Yoscovitz, 1997). In addition, during the 1980s and 1990s new high-rise buildings were developed along the Boulevards, using the flexibility that Geddes' design of blocks allowed. The gated office buildings created a strong contrast with the residential fabric of the international style of the 1930s. The decrease in the number of residents caused great damage to education, health and other local public services in the area. The 'threat that the city centre would become hollow' was articulated by the Institute of Urban Studies which also promoted a strategy to counteract it (IUS, 1979, 1980). The IUS encouraged and planned two parallel ideas, the expansion of the business centre to the north along Ayalon Highway²⁰ (see Figure 8) and the re-generation of the city (The City Heart Project).

In addition to the decrease in population the problems which were foreseen were the uncontrolled expansion of the Central Business District, the traffic capacity, the poor state of the public infrastructure and the buildings (IUS, 1979, 1980). IUS proposed a strategy as part of the City Heart project to re-order the district and remove offices from residential buildings in the area and to permit additional stories for residential use (up to six floors)²¹ while renovating the building facades. In

²⁰Parallel to the City Heart project, in the mid 1980s, IUS prepared a master plan (Tel Aviv Yafo, 1985, 1990) for the northern branch of the main business centre. The plan was based on four principles: directing the main business centre of Tel Aviv towards the main highways in the east by developing a northern and a southern extension to the CBD; regulating the distribution of the CBD between Tel Aviv and the adjacent cities; enhancing and improving the quality of the residential environment in the western section of Tel Aviv, along the coast and the town centre; treating elements of the infrastructure, mainly transportation, as coordinated metropolitan systems (Tel Aviv Yafo, 1985, 1990).

²¹Owing to the different plans for the Boulevards, the height of the buildings was not consistent (between one and six floors). Many of the residential buildings were three to four stories high.

1983 a detailed plan for the Boulevards was prepared, which reduced vehicular movement along the street and included a rehabilitation scheme. The implementation of the plan was supported by the government and other organizations.²²

In addition, a conservation plan was prepared and implemented by the city council. The plan was followed by events, which have fixed the White City narrative within the public consciousness since the 1980s (Nitzan-Shiftan, 2000). These events, known as 'Bauhaus in Tel Aviv', strengthened the importance of 1930s modernism in the collective memory. The built environment became a reminder of the past and efforts were made to preserve individual buildings in the area of Rothschild Boulevards (see Figure 9). 'Pastness' became a social resource illustrated by laws and plans for historic buildings, which were regarded as collective rather than private property. Nitzan-Shiftan (2000) describes the process of the 'whitening' of the city. 'Over the last decade, about a thousand Bauhaus buildings designated for preservation in Tel Aviv have been stripped of their polluted greyness and their window blinds.... This whitening of the Bauhaus buildings, built in the 1930s and 1940s with the influence of European architectural modernism, rehabilitates their image in the Israeli consciousness and helps in establishing them as a national architectural tradition' (Nitzan-Shiftan, 2000, p. 227) (Figure 9). According to Nitzan-Shiftan, this represents a historiographic move, which is based on the canonization of the White City Style and is juxtaposed with political and social processes. That is to say, the revival of the 'first Hebrew city' should be understood in the context of the conflict dividing Jerusalem.

These tendencies in the 1980s–1990s were marked by the construction of a hybrid built form along the Boulevards. New high-rise office buildings comprising one volume, cube or cylinder,²³ alongside conserved buildings from the 1930s. This dualism was generated by the city council, in

²²The support included the Ministry of Housing (loans for the acquisition of flats), the Halamish Corporation (funds for the project) and Ezra & Bizaron (rehabilitation of buildings), Keren Tel Aviv (funds and donations to the project).

²³The main changes are the removal of the front or back garden; the plot is completely paved and used as an area to service the building; the composition is based on one main volume; the circulation system is usually located in the centre of the building.



Figure 8. Rothschild Boulevards, Israel, 2003 (National Archive of Maps and Ariel Photographs).

exchange for an increase in the percentage floor area. The plot size remained the same, in some cases two plots were combined into one. How-

ever, the building height was increased to 20–25 stories and the materials used were almost solely glass and screen walls (Figures 2 and 10). Above



Figure 9. Renovated building along the Boulevards (Authors).

all, the towers created a visual event along the Boulevards and reflected the values of the period; modern technology, capital, power and a particular lifestyle.

This clash between new ideas and the struggle over memory is not unique to Tel Aviv. Generally, cities over the last decades have changed significantly due to the information and technological revolution and the emergence of a global economy operating in real time on a planetary scale (Castells, 1989). According to Zukin (1996), the contemporary city has become a command centre for the global economy and competitive arenas. These transformations have affected the structure of society and its culture. One major result of these processes is the re-structuring of urban space (Sassen, 1991) along with the emphasis on 'culture' in urban re-generation. It is clear that the participation in economic competition encouraged cities to decorate themselves with architectural assets in an attempt to become a centre or significant power domain on a global scale, for example, the re-generation in Berlin. These actions also contribute to re-ordering the relationships between the urban environment, the local society and the collective memory (Zukin, 1996).

At the end of the 1990s, Rothschild Boulevards became the icon of the city's history, a kind of virtual memorial appearing in innumerable lit-

erary and pseudo-historical descriptions. This was re-inforced at the beginning of the millennium with the recognition of Tel Aviv by UNESCO. This global acknowledgment is part of the tourism economy and the drive to 'Globalise Tel Aviv'. In other words, the post-modern condition increased cooperation between capital and urban production. As Jameson (1991) explains, architecture is closely related to and develops unmediated relationships with the sphere of economics. However, this point needs careful consideration, as the production of space includes many actors and capital, as Marcuse and Kempen (2002) remind us, is 'not the engine but only the fuel'. In this example, capital is merely a tool in the struggle over memory. In other words, global changes were used as a tool by the planners to re-inforce the roll of the historic core of Tel Aviv in general and Rothschild Boulevards in particular, as the centre of the metropolis.

Glocalization and the order of space

The aim of this paper was to illustrate Rothschild Boulevards as a complex contested landscape. The approach taken, allowed a discussion of urban identity and meaning by referring to the potential of urban design as socio-cultural conduct. This discussion has shown that, although Tel Aviv is located in the east and populated and used by various communities (Arab, Jews and foreign immigrants), the urban design was based on a western and capitalist approach. Since the 1920s–1930s there has been a correlation between the different actors in the city (regime, developers and planners), which has supported the implementation of imported agendas. The attitudes of the Jewish community and the support provided by the regime, (for reasons of control and strength), the developers (for profit) and the planners (by importing various ideas such as preservation), have generated multiple glocalities throughout the city. In the case of Rothschild Boulevards, the implementation of imported planning agendas has been used as a tool to develop the image of Tel Aviv as a historic centre.

Along the length of the Boulevards the footprints of various urban design agendas can be traced. Colonial and European models influenced the initial evolution and global processes have impacted on development in recent decades. As has

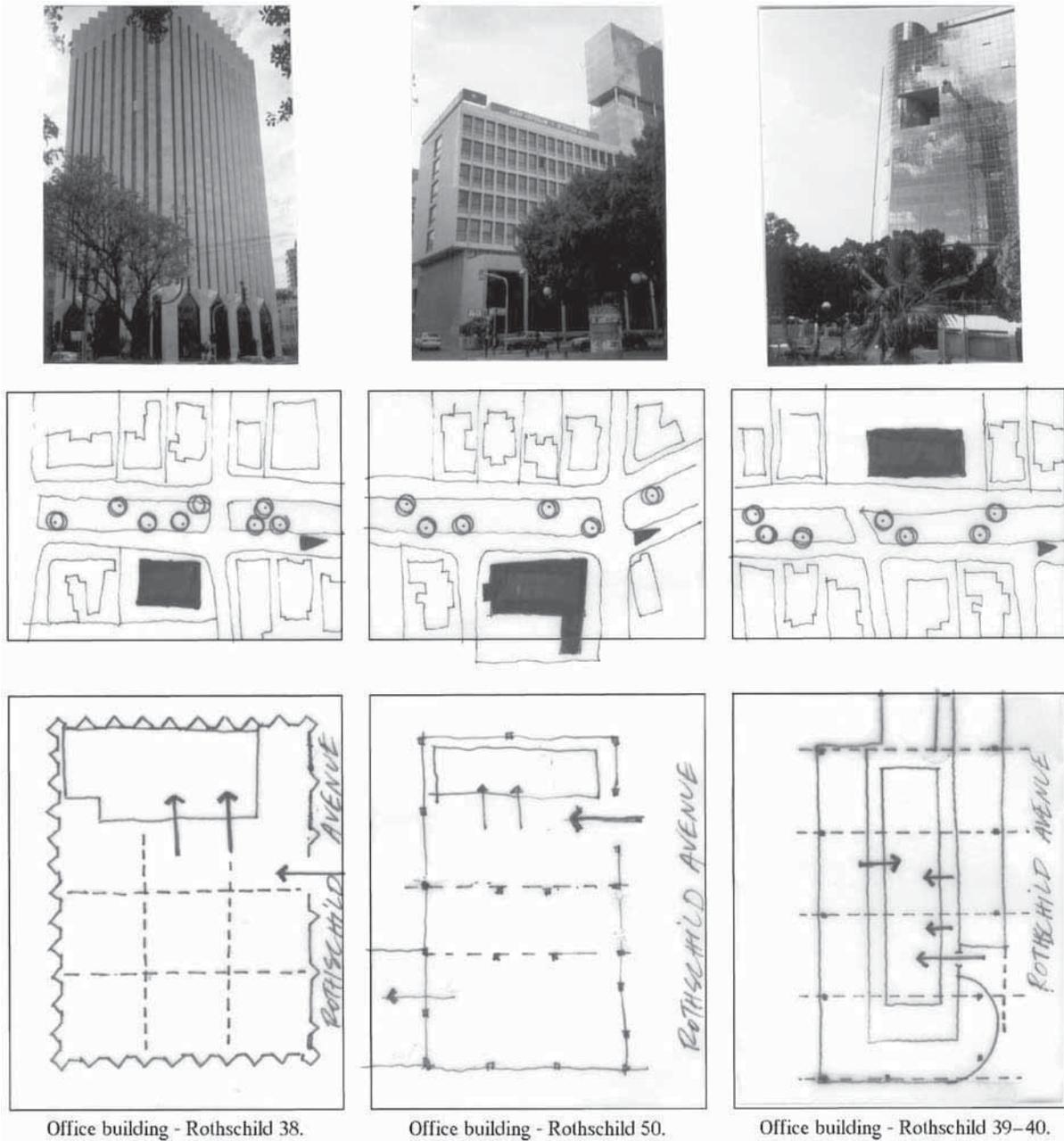


Figure 10. Form and use: typology of high-rise along the Boulevards (Authors).

been described, the population and means were imported into the city during the 1920s–1930s and again in the 1980s–1990s. However, there is a difference between these two periods of time in the way that planning and urban design was perceived. In the 1920s–1930s planning was seen as a political tool, which aimed to achieve collective goals. It was perceived as part of the struggle for space with the Arab community. The

planners were mainly educated in Germany and England, influenced by British planning agendas and dedicated to the national ideology of Zionism. In this sense the Jewish community used the British regime’s aims of control and order to re-organize their space. This perception of space was re-inforced in the 1990s when planning and urban design became a tool to adjust, re-generate and rehabilitate space as part of the city’s national

economy, within the processes and context of glocalization.

The case of the Boulevards shows that glocality is an active process rather than a finite product. However, there are limitations to this process. First, the Boulevards are constantly in a process of re-definition trying to attract the most recent up to date concepts. This creates a situation where sustainability and maintenance are rarely used as planning tools. Furthermore, the lack of consideration given to the inhabitants and the context is inherent in the concept of glocality, which gives priority to the global over the local. In addition, glocality is not a new or natural concept but part of the political economy managed by the dominant groups, which use selective concepts of planning for constructing national narratives. In the case of the Boulevards, the use of a hybrid agenda often acted as a regulatory mechanism. As in so many other examples, cultural glocalization in Tel Aviv was meant to guarantee a national identity, which would secure the city's place in the modern world.

The idea of glocality illustrates that the use of the city as an economic-national asset is unavoidable but that it must include conceptualization of the local context. Current time and space creates hybridities of all kinds, however, as shown in the case of Rothschild Boulevards, this does not guarantee multi-cultural or more humanistic approaches to space, or as AlSayyad puts it, 'The assumption that hybrid environments simply accommodate or encourage pluralistic tendencies or multicultural practices should be turned on its head. Hybrid people do not always create hybrid places and hybrid places do not always accommodate hybrid people' (AlSayyad, 2001, p. 17).

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