

Université de Montréal

From the Pioneer to the Last Landscape
Disappearing Open Landscapes in Israel

par

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Ce mémoire intitulé :

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SUMMARY

The root of the problem presented in this essay stems from the limited, and constantly diminishing open landscape resources in Israel. Within a few decades, Israel has been transformed from a sparsely settled and empty new state into one of the most crowded countries on earth. The fear is that the growth of urban systems will form a connected network of human settlement that, within a few decades, will extend all the way to Israel's southern border. Such an extension would turn the whole country into a single city-state, with agricultural land and open landscapes consumed within an urban continuum.

In the last century, the shape of the Israel's landscape has undergone vast changes—from the original Zionist ideas of cultivating the land into a modern industrialized community. Both the shifting conceptual priorities of the population and the fast growing demand for housing have resulted in the disappearance of open landscapes.

From the viewpoint of the landscape architect, the rapid transition from a pioneer landscape to a modern industrial landscape leads to a number of crucial questions. In a long and continuous planning process, what are the critical design tools that will cause a landscape to survive or disappear? What has changed in the approach to landscape planning, knowing that it is the last landscape left in Israel? To what degree are we as planners willing and able to have an impact?

This work examines the chain of events, history, evolution of planning, and socio-cultural effects that have led to this catastrophic situation. It will attempt to propose critical tools that might conserve the remaining open spaces in Israel.

This study begins by picturing the situation of diminishing open spaces from a macro viewpoint—by analyzing the planning strategy in Israel through a perspective of national plans, and by aiming to investigate the planning factor as portrayed in the image of the Israeli landscape. Then, this study will address the smaller scale in two ways. First, it will address the selected case study of the Ayalon Park, which encompasses the last significant open space remaining in the heart of Israel (at the border of the largest urban continuum of Tel Aviv and its adjacent cities). Secondly this study will deal with the principles of open landscape strategies in order to understand what tools are available to the landscape architect for "translating" national scale planning decisions to the conservation and development of landscape.

Key words: Open Landscape, Pioneer Landscape – Israel, Boundary, Urbanization

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARY/RÉSUMÉ	i
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
LIST OF TABLES	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
LIST OF ABBREVIATION	ix
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	x
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER I The Israeli Landscape in the Context of National Master Plans	6
1.1 The reality of Israel 2003.....	7
1.2 The problem statement.....	9
1.3: Background- the first years.....	13
1.4: Planning the pioneer Landscape: 'Sharon' National Master Plan-1952.....	14
1.4.1 Basic principles.....	15
1.4.2 Landscape design.....	16
1.4.3 The organization of national space.....	19
1.4.4 The planning language.....	20
1.4.5 Graphic expressions	21
1.4.6 Boundaries	23
1.5:Planning the “Last Landscape”	28
1.5.1 National Master Plan 31.....	30
1.5.1.1 Basic principle.....	32
1.5.1.2 Landscape design.....	33
1.5.1.3 The planning language.....	34
1.5.1.4 Graphic expressions	34
1.5.2 Israel 2020.....	35
1.5.2.1 Basic principle.....	35
1.5.2.2 Landscape design.....	36
1.5.2.3 The organization of national space.....	38
1.5.2.4 Planning Language.....	38
1.5.2.5 Boundaries.....	41
1.5.3 National Master Plan 35.....	42
1.5.3.1 Basic principle.....	39
1.5.3.2 The Planning Language.....	43
1.5.3.3 Boundaries.....	45
1.5.4 Summary.....	45
1.6 From the pioneer to the last landscape.....	48

CHAPTER II	Critical issues :boundaries and urbanization.....	52
2.1:	Boundaries	53
2.1.1	Boundaries as a line.....	55
2.1.2	Separation zone, <i>boundaries as a space</i>	57
2.2:	Urbanization.....	65
2.2.1	Garden city	66
2.2.2	Green lungs.....	71
CHAPTER III	Case study: Ayalon park -the “last landscape”.....	74
3.1	Description of the site.	77
3.1.1	Agricultural land.....	79
3.1.2	Mikve Israel agricultural school, historic background.....	80
3.1.3	Ayalon stream.....	81
3.1.4	Hiriya landfill.....	82
3.2	General historic review.....	84
3.2.1	Municipal Park movement.....	84
3.2.2	Central park New York.....	86
3.2.3	Mount Royal park, Montreal.	89
3.2.4	Bois de Boulogne.....	89
3.3	Background of the conservation of the Area	94
3.3.1	Physical facts.	94
3.3.2	Ayalon Park in the view of national planning.....	95
3.3.2.1	Sharon National Master Plan, 1951.....	96
3.3.2.2	National Master Plan 31.....	97
3.3.2.3	Israel 2020.....	97
3.3.2.4	National Master Plan 35.....	99
3.4	Conclusion.....	100
CHAPTER IV	Principles of an open landscape strategy.....	103
4.1	Basic definitions.....	104
4.2	Open space in Israel: reality and its problems.....	105
4.3	Strategies for designation and preservation of open space.....	109
4.3.1	Changing paradigms in the environment idea.....	109
4.3.2	“Economical” versus “Ideological Norm” approach.....	112
4.4	Strategies and concepts for open area planning.....	117
4.4.1	Knowing the place.....	119
4.4.2	Heritage Landscape: Maintaining a sense of history.....	120
4.4.3	Environmental learning.....	121
4.4.4	Sustainability.....	123

CHAPTER V:	Conclusion	126
5.1 Principle of transparency		128
5.2 Principle of “meaning”		129
5.3 Principle of Environmental awareness		131
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....		134