

# Preserving Urban Heritage: From Old Jaffa to Modern Tel-Aviv

## ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the processes that led to the preservation of urban heritage in Tel-Aviv. Both the preservation of Old Jaffa in the early 1960s and the “White City” in the 1990s demonstrate that small groups of individuals utilizing their personal capital to advance an idea that was not advocated by existing civil groups, succeeded in integrating new ideas into political systems. We label these individuals *Ideological Developers* (IDs), as opposed to executive developers, and expand on that which characterizes their mode of action.

## INTRODUCTION

THE CITY OF TEL-AVIV–JAFFA IS ISRAEL’S MAJOR METROPOLITAN CORE and a dominant cultural center. Tel-Aviv–Jaffa is extraordinary in that it is among the few Israeli cities that incorporate preservation of the built environment as a principle in city planning and, in doing so, manage to promote and institute successful preservation initiatives of large urban areas. In effect, Tel-Aviv is at the forefront of local governments regarding the preservation activities it promotes. The city was the first in Israel to institute a local preservation policy regarding the conservation of Old Jaffa during the 1950s and early 1960s. In the 1990s, Tel-Aviv garnered local and international acknowledgement of the value of its modern architecture, climaxing in UNESCO’s nomination of the “White City” in 2003 as a World Heritage site. Old Jaffa and the White City are exceptional sites in the Israeli urban landscape, as their preservation is managed by the local government as part of the local development policy. Although many other Israeli cities

have archeological and historic sites, few operate comprehensive preservation programs and even fewer succeed in integrating the historic districts into the living city. Moreover, it seems that Tel-Aviv is extending its preservation policy to new sites, as indicated by the recent conservation of the German colony of Sarona and the Ottoman train station in Jaffa.

A closer look reveals, however, that the adoption of its preservation policy followed periods of inner debates and political struggles within the municipal government. Furthermore, each time the preservation issue arose, primary administrators tended to reject it and fought for the adoption of a non-limiting development policy. As a counterforce, however, informal groups of actors from within and without the municipal administration converted the powerful urban officials and enforced the adoption of a preservation policy by the municipality. In contrast to civil movements that pressure elected officials by raising public opinion, we show how informal groups influence the urban administration and promote their ideology, viewpoint, and interests. We claim that such informal groups are a common mechanism in the local urban arena. In effect, the preservation of Jaffa in the early 1960s, as well as the preservation of the White City forty years later, occurred due to the performance of such informal alliances between private citizens and individuals from within the local government.

This article focuses on the contribution of *ideological developers* to the preservation of Old Jaffa and the White City. The term “ideological developer” describes a developer whose motivation is ideological as opposed to financial. The informal organizations that the ideological developer forms are termed *circumstantial coalitions*. The research exposes the unstable nature of these arrangements and highlights the differences and similarities in their emergence and operation. Thus, in addition to investigating the history of preservation in Tel-Aviv, we attempt to contribute to the study of urban politics in general and the discourse regarding *the process of governance* in particular.<sup>1</sup>

Our research sheds light on the way individuals acquire power and influence at the urban level. Especially, we explore the way they transform their views into governing policies and manage to aim, plan, and act. We claim that these informal actors make a fundamental contribution to policy making in local governments, as the selected cases of preservation in Tel-Aviv demonstrate.

The article begins with a brief introduction to urban regime and the role of governing coalitions at the local level and then turns to the case studies of preservation in Tel-Aviv: the preservation of Old Jaffa and the White City. In both cases we stress the crucial role of informal supporters

and the circumstantial coalitions they establish with officials and politicians in order to promote their ideas. Finally, we elaborate on the operation of the circumstantial coalitions and examine their strategies.

## REGIME THEORY AND THE CASE OF TEL-AVIV

Regime theories, associated with the works of Clarence Stone and Stephen Elkin, deal with the political powers that operate at the urban level.<sup>2</sup> In the American city, business groups and local government administration are mutually dependent, and the interaction between them is necessary for managing the local level. Governing capacities in US cities derive from formal as well as informal networks and are relatively stable and enduring in nature.<sup>3</sup> Similar studies conducted in the UK, however, found that the central government is highly influential at the local level.<sup>4</sup> Thus, urban regeneration partnerships in the UK are traditionally based on local authorities collaborating with civil bodies rather than with the private sector, and focus on redistributive functions rather than financial gain.<sup>5</sup>

The backdrop to local governance in Israel is closer to that of the UK rather than the business-dominated atmosphere in American cities. As governmental agencies operate in a centralized manner, land ownership is basically nationalized, and the state activates tight financial control over municipal administration. Local government in Israel is limited both in its ability to set strategies and to deploy policy tools. Thus, long-term alliances between the private and municipal public sectors are not so common. This is also the case with Tel-Aviv: compared with other local governments in Israel, Tel-Aviv is relatively independent—both financially and with respect to policymaking in various issues.<sup>6</sup> The mayor of Tel-Aviv heads the “Forum of the 15”, an organization including the fifteen richest cities in Israel, which are not financially supported by Ministry of Interior. In addition, although the Israel Land Authority (hereafter: ILA) owns about 95% of the state’s land, it is the owner of only 44.4% of Tel-Aviv’s area, while municipality owns another 24.8% of the city’s area. Nevertheless, due to the relations of central and local governments in Israel, the city is not free to ally with market forces and form stable, long-term cooperation, as cities in the US often do.

Urban policymaking in Tel-Aviv–Jaffa involves small but influential pressure groups that gain access to urban administration and affect local strategy. Similar to local partnerships in the UK, the coalitions formed in Tel-Aviv are driven by interests that are not purely lucrative. Small groups of

ideological developers (IDs) impact the formation of Tel-Aviv's preservation policy. The IDs are strongly committed individuals who leveraged human and social capital to establish a Circumstantial Coalition with members from the municipal administration. With the intensive leadership of the IDs, the coalition works systematically to facilitate policy tools and pursue an operative preservation policy. This article elaborates on the operation of the circumstantial coalition that brought about the conservation of Old Jaffa in the 1960s. It then compares it with the operation of the White City circumstantial coalition more than 30 years later, and discusses the impact such small groups of devotees have on local policymaking.

## THE PRESERVATION OF OLD JAFFA

### *DEMOLISHING THE OLD FABRIC*

Current day Old Jaffa retains little physical evidence to its past as the central urban core from which metropolitan Tel-Aviv developed. The remains of Jaffa are now an urban reserve. The narrow alleyways bear new names after signs of the Zodiac and the old living quarters serve as art galleries and restaurants. It seems as if Old Jaffa is naturally integrated into the urban lifecycle.

The interest in preserving Old Jaffa started only after the systematic demolition of the place had begun, in September 1949. Old Jaffa was vacated by its original residents following the 1948 war, and then seized by the state to be handled by the Custodian of Absentees' Property (hereafter: CAP) and the ILA. The City of Tel-Aviv was given the responsibility to manage the quotidian issues of Jaffa, its southern neighbor. In the following months Tel-Aviv took possession of sections of Jaffa until eventually, on 24 April 1950, Jaffa was annexed to Tel-Aviv, and some parts of it allocated to Bat-Yam and Holon. This responsibility, however, was a challenging task. The houses of Jaffa were rundown as a result of the 1948 war and neglect, and lack of infrastructure in general. The municipality of Tel-Aviv established the Jaffa Administration—a municipal department designated to deal with the various aspects of living in Jaffa.

The formal bodies involved in Jaffa—the municipality of Tel-Aviv, ILA, and the CAP—appointed an engineers' commission to study the state of the buildings in the Old City of Jaffa. The official concern was that the damaged residences were a hazard.<sup>7</sup> However, there were other tacit incentives for the destruction of the old fabric. General contempt and animosity that existed towards Arab cities was related to the deep adherence to rational-modern

ideas of urbanism. In addition, the municipality of Tel-Aviv had a lot to gain from the demolition of Old Jaffa. Tearing down Old Jaffa would provide the municipality with greater control over a highly accessible piece of land located on the shoreline and bordering the city. Golan, who studies the handling of other Arab cities in those years, reports similar deliberations that took place in governmental as well as local agencies.<sup>8</sup> In addition, the great housing shortage for Jewish population, the “public security” argument, and the desire to prevent the return of former residents drove decision-makers into adopting the demolition policy, as with the demolition plan of Manshiya, Jaffa’s suburb, and the actual destruction of the Old City of Haifa<sup>9</sup> as well as Tiberias’ Old Quarter.

Thus, a written report by the Engineers’ Commission in August 1949 includes a clear recommendation to demolish *the entire* Old City. The commission warned of unstable buildings, which would collapse if demolition procedure did not start immediately. The report did not refer to the cultural or aesthetic value of the area and referred briefly to several holy places—mosques and monasteries. The report was adopted by the city engineer. Moreover, it seems that officials from the municipality, the land owner (ILA), and the governmental agency in charge (CAP), agreed that Old Jaffa had to be demolished.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, as soon as the country was no longer at war, the demolition was initiated and continued until late 1950. The destruction started with buildings close to the coastline and progressed towards the city core. The urban fabric of Old Jaffa was doomed to a quick destruction.

#### CIRCUMSTANTIAL COALITIONS AND THE PRESERVATION FRONT

The protest against the demolition of Old Jaffa was, at first, weak and ineffective. The group that struggled during the next decade to preserve Jaffa was comprised of three individuals with respected professional status yet diminutive political influence and indirect access to power. The first was Samuel Yevin, an archeologist, the head of the Antiquities Department in the prime minister’s office. The second was Eliezer Brutzcus, engineer and urban planner, the head of the Research and Survey Division in the Planning Department. The third was Marcel Janco—architect and painter, a leading member in the Association of Painters and Sculptures in Israel. Janco was born in Rumania in 1895 and moved to Palestine in 1941. He was a member of the avant garde Dada art movement, and in 1953 he initiated the artists’ colony in Ein Hod, near Haifa. He worked as an architect for various governmental planning agencies in Israel, including Tel-Aviv. An earlier publication by Paz maps out the action taken by these three individuals in

an effort to save the Old City of Jaffa from demolition.<sup>11</sup> Their strategy utilizes networks within the public sector to promote a preservation agenda. Thus, they successfully created and operated what we coin Circumstantial Coalitions.

Although these three activists as a group of IDs are related, in effect each was acting individually, driven by his own interest in the preservation efforts. Samuel Yevin was the first to learn of the decision to demolish Old Jaffa. Yevin realized that even though the demolition of Jaffa contradicted local planning rules,<sup>12</sup> legal and procedural arguments alone could not halt the demolition.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, he pleaded for the cultural importance of Old Jaffa and the need to safeguard the city's holy places, including the first synagogue of Jaffa as well as several churches and mosques. Yevin wrote an urgent letter to the CAP, where he raised issue with the unprofessional attitude of the engineers' commission that surveyed Jaffa. He then offered to set up a bigger commission, including officials from various governmental ministries, such as the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Health, in addition to planners from the District Planning and Building Commission.<sup>14</sup> In addition, Yevin contacted administrators from these agencies, trying to create an opposition to the official municipal policy. Apparently, Yevin recruited Eliezer Brutzcus, who shared his view that demolishing Old Jaffa was more a knee jerk reaction than any enlightened planning policy. By the end of September 1949, Brutzcus wrote a long letter to the CAP and pleaded against the destruction of the city.

#### *THE FIGHT AGAINST THE DEMOLITION*

The two administrators, Yevin and Brutzcus, continued to collaborate in promoting a preservation agenda for nearly a decade. While Yevin's strategy was to stress the importance of Jaffa's religious monuments, Brutzcus aspired to preserve the old fabric in its entirety due to its unique aesthetics.<sup>15</sup> Paz reports the pressure that Yevin and Brutzcus exerted on officials, mainly governmental administrators, in their demand to stop the destructive operation and reconsider the future of Jaffa.<sup>16</sup> Resulting from Yevin and Brutzcus' claims, an additional commission was assembled to reevaluate and finalize the debate regarding the Old City of Jaffa. This time, the commission was headed by the Ministry of Labor. It included architects (Marcel Janco thus joined the preservation front), and representatives from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Antiquities Department (including Yevin himself), and the Planning Department. The commission's aim was to examine whether buildings designated for demolition could be rehabilitated.<sup>17</sup> In the first two reports the commission handed to the Minister

of Labor, in September and October 1949, the commission continued to recommend preserving only the listed buildings, in addition to cleaning the Old City, which was piled with heaps of trash. Brutzcus, however, insisted on preserving the city on a larger scale. He met with the commission in an attempt to promote his idea, and wrote to the tourism consultant in the prime minister's office. "Preserving a few scattered houses and leaving them among the ruins is a worthless action. The essence of such projects of preservation is keeping the atmosphere of the Old City", he wrote.<sup>18</sup> Dr. Altman, the consultant, was indeed impressed by Brutzcus' arguments and became a supporter of the preservation idea.<sup>19</sup> Thus, only in its final report, dated 28 November 1949, did the commission find that 72% of the houses marked for demolition could be restored.

A circumstantial coalition of administrators from various governmental agencies who rejected the Tel-Aviv municipality's intention to demolish Old Jaffa, was assembled by the end of 1949. It included members from the prime minister's office, the Antiquities Department, and officials from the Planning Department. The city of Tel-Aviv expressed a clear interest in the demolition of Jaffa, now part of Tel-Aviv. For example, as the destruction slowed down by the end of 1949, due to the massive influx of new immigrants to the old houses and the general housing shortage, the City Engineer wrote to the CAP. He warned that further collapse of buildings was imminent and stressed, "It is strongly advised to demolish all the houses of the Old City once and for all."<sup>20</sup>

#### *THE FIGHT FOR PRESERVATION*

The most pertinent idea—of rehabilitating Jaffa by means of developing it into an artists' colony—came up in the discussions and negotiations that took place throughout 1950, alongside the continuing destruction—although with less intensity—of the Old City. The promoter of this initiative was Marcel Janco, who was fascinated by the vernacular Middle Eastern architecture and its sensitivity to climate and topographical conditions. He envisioned the old fabric of Jaffa as a backdrop to fertile artistic activity and tried to promote his vision both within and outside the municipal administration, with the help of the circumstantial coalition. Janco managed to interest the National Association of Architects, the Association of Painters and Sculptors, in particular the painter Reuven Rubin, and to influence the Preservation Commission—a ministerial commission constructed December 1950 aiming at studying the monuments and the architectural heritage of Jaffa and assuring the protection of buildings of religious, archeological, historical, and artistic significance.<sup>21</sup>

In December 1950, Marcel Janco and the painter Reuven Rubin appeared before a newly established Preservation Commission. The two artists appealed to retain the Old City and develop it into an artists' colony. Janco said, "The modern city, Tel-Aviv, is not pretty. As a matter of fact, it is ugly. There is one beautiful corner; please, do not ruin it."<sup>22</sup> He also reported that several artists had already settled in the chosen blocks and located their residences as well as studios there. By the end of this meeting, Janco managed to receive shaky approval to preserve small building blocks and alleyways in the south-western section of the Old City, and designate them as artists' residences. The CAP were determined to raze the city. As a result of their pressure and after a few more houses collapsed during the winter of 1950–51, a separate governmental commission was set up to investigate the difficulty involved in evacuating the rickety buildings. As this commission reassessed the need to pull down most of the buildings, a ministers' commission was set to deal with the evacuation of the city and its demolition. Janco, Yevin, and Brutzcus carried out a bitter fight against the continued destruction with the help of the preservation supporters, writing letters and applying pressure to administrators from various governmental ministries. The circumstantial alliances they created with officials bore fruit. The Minister of Education Zalman Shazar, visited the site and was impressed by the beauty of the place; Cabinet Secretary Zeev Sherf expressed his surprise at the demolition; the Association of Painters and Sculptor wrote to the CAP and other officials and protested against the continuous disregard of cultural assets;<sup>23</sup> Brutzcus delivered a detailed map of Old Jaffa, pointing out buildings worthy of preservation, to the Ministry of Interior.<sup>24</sup> Mounting political pressure began to show results, and Mayor Rokah met with Janco and Rubin in an effort to reassess the municipality's policy with respect to the extent of the preservation and the artist colony idea.

By the end of 1950 the demolition of houses in Old Jaffa declined until in early 1951, it finally stopped. Apparently, evacuation of residents was postponed as there was almost no alternative housing available.<sup>25</sup> From the municipality's point of view, Old Jaffa remained a problematic asset: the state of the buildings was poor and dangerous<sup>26</sup> and massive invasion occurred to buildings that were evacuated.<sup>27</sup> However, the coalition still worked to preserve Old Jaffa's remains. Janco collaborated with the Association of Architects and Engineers and continued his efforts. In March 1951, the Association wrote to the minister of education and promised to conduct a detailed survey of Old Jaffa and to prepare a plan for a "cultural district", once the decision to construct an artists' colony was made.<sup>28</sup> The



detailed map attached to this letter, pointing out the exact buildings fit for painters and architects, was most likely created by Janco. Indeed, Janco and other artists were invited to the meetings of the Preservation Commission.<sup>29</sup> However, things went slow. In November 1952, the artists' association readdressed the authorities and reminded them of the obligations to preserve the two blocks, evacuate their inhabitants, and designate the area for artists. They complained that besides retaining the buildings, nothing was achieved thus far. However, in 1953, Marcel Janco established an artists' village in Ein Hod, on the ruins of the Arab village Ein Chud, and in effect left Jaffa's preservation front.

#### *CONSTRUCTING THE ADMINISTERED TOOLS FOR PRESERVATION*

Aaron Horwitz, an American urban planner, was commissioned to plan Tel-Aviv–Jaffa's future development. The demand for preservation and the existence of the Preservation Commission paid off, as the 1954 Tel-Aviv Master Plan he proposed related to a small preserved district dedicated to art and tourism in Old Jaffa. Now that demolition stopped and a decision to create the artists' colony was made, it was only a matter of implementation. Again, a circumstantial coalition was enlisted for support. Yevin and Brutzcus continued to pressure the local authority and tried to create administrative and financial means for the preservation to take place. Letters were sent to the municipality from Office of Interior and Office of Commerce and Industry (Division of Tourism) demanding preservation of the Old City. This ritual continued throughout the 1950s. In the meantime, the buildings continued to deteriorate and some even collapsed. Only two blocks remained that could be preserved, and the IDs aimed at constructing the administered tools for the task. Gradually, it became evident that government officials needed to collaborate with the municipality for the preservation of the remaining two blocks. In July 1958 the director of the office of the prime minister, Teddy Kollek, visited the site in an attempt to promote its rehabilitation. Together with the deputy mayor, Kollek surveyed Jaffa's remains, and agreed that money should be allocated to the development of the site.<sup>30</sup> Six months later, a full partnership between the Israeli Government and the Tel-Aviv–Jaffa Municipality was signed, to establish a company that would administer the site defined as the Old City of Jaffa.<sup>31</sup>

In September 1960, 3233the Company for the Development of Ancient Jaffa was created as a public firm, with equal ownership of Tel-Aviv–Jaffa Municipality and the Government.<sup>34</sup> Its aims were to develop the Old City into a cultural and entertainment center, while protecting its religious and archeological sites.<sup>35</sup> Funding for initial investments in the first years came

from the two public owners. The land was leased to the Company for the Development of Ancient Jaffa by the ILA for a period of five years for one Israeli Lira per year.<sup>36</sup> The company managed roughly 112 dunams, which were defined as the limits of the Old City of Jaffa. By the early 1970s, the Old City was rehabilitated and its buildings rented to local artists and various businesses.

The preservation of the Old City of Jaffa thus exemplifies the methodology utilized by the IDs. Moreover, it provides an opportunity to trace their influence in local decision making. In the case of Old Jaffa, the advocates first struggled to stop the demolition of buildings that took place from 1949 to early 1951. They recruited governmental officials, suggested setting up new commissions, and provided relevant information, in an attempt to influence policy decisions. Once the demolition stopped the circumstantial coalition diverted their efforts to preservation. Again, pressures were exerted, new information and ideas presented, and organizational efforts deployed. The establishment of the Preservation Commission was an important achievement of the IDs; it provided the framework for the artists' colony initiative, which was adopted into Horowitz' master plan. The construction of the Company for the Development of Ancient Jaffa resulted largely from the persistent effort to keep Jaffa on the agenda and reinforce its value and potential urban contribution.

### CIRCUMSTANTIAL COALITIONS AND THE PRESERVATION OF THE WHITE CITY

From the end of the 1990s through the beginning of the 2000s, the preservation of the White City in Tel-Aviv was finalized under circumstances quite similar to the preservation of Old Jaffa. In this case as well, a small group of activists pressured decision-makers and high officials by associations with administrators that created an unofficial preservation front. This time, the IDs included two preservation supporters that did not hold any official position. The two were the sculptor Dani Karavan and the Architecture historian Dr. Michael (Micha) Levin. Although the IDs had no formal political power, officials and politicians granted them frequent audience, including Shlomo Lahat, the mayor of Tel-Aviv during 1974–1993. Karavan was personally acquainted with Mayor Lahat, and Levin was the director of the Tel-Aviv Museum of Art from 1986 to 1990. Levin also later served as Mayor Lahat's consultant until 1993. While the IDs managed to bring the preservation of the White City to fruition, they were disappointed by the

partial adoption of their vision. In the following section, a brief review is given of the structure of forces and coalitions that operated in Tel-Aviv in the 1980s and 1990s with respect to the preservation of modern architecture. The role of circumstantial coalitions—temporary alliances of activists, administrators, and politicians—in urban policymaking in general and with respect to preserving the built heritage in particular is then discussed.

#### *THE WHITE CITY: A CONCISE BACKGROUND*

The White City of Tel-Aviv is an area that was built in the 1930s and 1940s by Jewish architects that immigrated to Palestine from Europe and introduced the modern architectural language they had practiced there. As the city rapidly expanded in this period, this modern architecture, also referred to as International Style, became dominant in the city center.<sup>37</sup> This well-defined building style, so different from the Oriental Style of Old Jaffa as well as the Eclectic Style of Tel-Aviv's earlier days, is also associated with the Bauhaus School. Each building is unique, yet they all share the same appearance: three to four stories high, with clear horizontal emphasis, light plaster walls, flat roofs, and windowed staircases.<sup>38</sup>

The buildings aged rapidly due to poor building materials. The smooth plaster peeled, the lime brick walls cracked, and the metal banisters corroded. Within a short while, the modern architecture of the city center appeared ugly and dull. In addition, as the city continued to expand, the city center underwent a transition, turning a residential district into a busy financial center. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, residential apartments were usurped by small businesses and light industries, which exacerbated the deterioration of the buildings and infrastructure. As families left this area, schools and community centers became disused. The population of the city center grew older and poorer. The nearby metropolitan Central Business District expanded into the area that now suffered from heavy traffic and pollution.

By the mid-1970s, district planning authorities prepared a metropolitan outline plan, suggesting developing secondary employment centers that would relieve the pressure on the metropolitan CBD. In addition, the plan called for reinstating residences in central Tel-Aviv and restoring its communal atmosphere.<sup>39</sup> Derived from this initiative, the municipality of Tel-Aviv together with the Ministry of Housing prepared a detailed plan for the center of Tel-Aviv, called Lev Ha'ir plan. The plan, created in 1981 by architect Adam Mazar, developed various tools for the physical and social revival of the city, including reorganization of traffic flows and parking permission, up-zoning of residential lots, and prohibiting the diffusion of

businesses into residential buildings. The idea of preserving buildings from Tel-Aviv's early days was introduced as part of these tools. However, the planners were unaware of the cultural significance of the local International Style buildings, hence linked the preservation idea with buildings of the Eclectic Style. In addition, since they were interested in commencing urban renewal rather than preservation per se, they suggested that buildings that undergo preservation be supplemented with one to three floors.<sup>40</sup> Soon, this attitude was challenged by a small group of devotees of the Modern, International Style, that—like the supporters of Old Jaffa—carried on a stubborn, persistent struggle for the preservation of this urban heritage.

#### *THE CCS OF MODERN HERITAGE PRESERVATION*

In 1980, both Karavan and Levin became aware of the contribution of the Bauhaus School to the architecture of Tel-Aviv, and in particular to the uniqueness of Tel-Aviv as having one of the largest collections of Bauhaus buildings in the world.<sup>41</sup> It seems a traveling exhibition hosted by the Tel-Aviv Museum of Art concerning the architecture of the Bauhaus School was the catalyst of this awareness. Although the exhibition did not link Bauhaus architecture to Tel-Aviv, the two understood the impact of the Bauhaus School on Tel-Aviv's architecture and, at the same time, recognized that the buildings designed in this style were in abhorrent condition. Inspired by this exhibition, Michael Levin initiated voluntary research regarding the impact of Bauhaus architecture in Israel, and few years later, in 1984, was the curator of an exhibition entitled "White City" at the Tel-Aviv Museum of Art.<sup>42</sup> Several years later, in 1988, Dani Karavan presented Kikar Levana<sup>43</sup> (in Hebrew: white square)—a large sculpture located in a park overlooking the city of Tel-Aviv.<sup>44</sup> Levin's exhibition and Karavan's sculpture represent the origin of the "White City" metaphor with respect to Tel-Aviv's international style, as noted by Azaryahu.<sup>45</sup> In addition, they are evidence of the IDs' commitment to exposing the importance and beauty of Tel-Aviv's modern architecture in general, and the preservation of the modern heritage in particular.

The city administration, including the City Engineer and planners from the municipal planning department adopted the Lev Ha'ir plan and shared the plan's attitude towards preservation. Thus, in line with the plan, the Planning Department adopted a list of about 300 buildings in the city center, most of them belonging to the Eclectic Style, and designated them for preservation. In addition, the Planning Department accepted the fact that preservation was a tool for attracting development to the area and

aspired to increase the residential units in the Lev Ha'ir district by 25%, mainly by adding stories to preserved buildings.<sup>46</sup>

Since their attempt to collaborate with Lev Ha'ir's planners did not work out, Karavan and Levin searched for other potential alliances that could transform the official policy. In the interim, the editors of *Ha'ir*, a popular local weekly, initiated an urban preservation campaign. In the early 1990s, ensuing the Lev Ha'ir plan, the magazine invited architects to design the preservation of city center buildings. Eighteen houses in Ha'Gilboa Street, a small street in the center district, were raffled among eighteen architects. Architectural plans and models were presented in a public exhibition, called *Ha'Gilboa Street: A Case Study*. However, the buildings were originally three to four stories high and the directive to the architects was to add one to two stories to each building. Changing the buildings' outline was a fundamental point of contention between Karavan and the magazine's editors. For example, during a symposium that accompanied the exhibition, Karavan, who was in the audience, exclaimed: "We are facing a terrible disaster. We have a precious asset and we are about to ruin it."<sup>47</sup> Clearly, Karavan and Levin did not find assistance in *Ha'ir's* editors or among the architects of the Ha'Gilboa buildings.

Their access to influential figures within the municipality, as well as the impact of Levin's exhibition, provided the preservation supporters with an alternative route of action. They gained the support of the city museum's director and the Tel-Aviv Fund's director, as well as the interest and acknowledgement of the City Engineer. In addition, they managed to utilize Karavan's personal acquaintance with the mayor of Tel-Aviv. In line with their suggestion, the Local Council passed a resolution stating that the city would purchase five buildings in the Bauhaus Style and use them as showcases of the preservation effort. Implementing this decision was delayed, however, and the IDs continued to pressure high officials. This circumstance led them to create a most efficient coalition, which was an association with the Tel-Aviv Development Fund (TADF), a municipal firm under the auspices of the municipality. TADF's director, who became a preservation supporter, agreed to finance the work of an architect who would choose the buildings that best exemplify the International Style. As an outside body, TADF proved to be more flexible than the municipality in hiring personnel. Karavan and Levin recommended architect Nitza Szmuk and were highly involved in her work. Szmuk supported the aims of the preservation front and, within a short while, was busy conducting a comprehensive survey of the International Style architecture in Tel-Aviv.<sup>48</sup>

Despite the supportive atmosphere Karavan and Levin created with the City Engineer, the municipal Planning Department was not keen to cooperate with the preservation architect of the TADF. Tacit struggles as well as open clashes took place in 1990. Karavan and Levin demanded that the survey results of more than 1,300 structures of the International Style be recognized and utilized by the Planning Department. This demand was controversial, as officials from the Planning Department found it hard to accept such an extensive database, prepared and conducted by outsiders.<sup>49</sup> However, at the beginning of 1991, the amendment to the National Law of Planning and Building was accepted, ordering local planning authorities to include a preservation committee, to prepare a conservation plan and to set guidelines for a preservation appendix.<sup>50</sup> Szmuk, the preservation architect, was asked to help and was given a small workplace in the Planning Department and the assistance of a graphic designer. She was still employed by the PADF but gradually became part of the daily work of the department. The survey she had completed was the basis of the municipal conservation plan that the department initiated, and city planners consulted her whenever inhabitants and developers appealed with changes to buildings that were on her list. Since early 1993, Szmuk was employed by the municipality and TADF and, by 1994, she became a full municipal worker.

The peak of integration between the IDs and the municipality was symbolized by the White City celebration, conducted by the municipality in 1994. The city engineer was actively involved in organizing the event and the city was a cosponsor, with UNESCO. The extended event included an exhibition of the International Style<sup>51</sup> contribution to Tel-Aviv Architecture, based on Levin's exhibition from a decade ago, as well as a signpost campaign around the city that pointed out significant Bauhaus buildings, a photographic exhibition related to the Bauhaus movement in Tel-Aviv Museum of Art, and more.

However, the preservation front did not settle for local recognition of the importance of modern architecture and sought ways to force the local authority to preserve the buildings belonging to the International Style. Apparently, they encouraged the departing mayor to invite UNESCO's Director-General, Federico Mayor, to attend the primary event of the White City celebration. With the mayor's blessing, they initiated efforts to gain UNESCO's inscription of Tel-Aviv as a World Heritage Site, which they hoped could obligate the city to strictly preserve the urban fabric.

Obtaining the nomination from UNESCO involved much effort. As before, it required a devoted and coordinated involvement of the preservation front. In 1994, Israel did not yet adhere to the World Heritage

Convention, whose formal ratification occurred in October 1999, and was not committed to protect built heritage. Moreover, the new city engineer suspected that the limitations to further planning and development of the White City resulting from such a nomination, would exceed its possible advantages. These limits were precisely the reason that found favor with the IDs. Once Israel adhered to the World Heritage Convention, the White City was included in the proposed list of preserved sites, necessary for the UNESCO nomination. Then, they pressured the mayor and city engineer to support the short listing of the White City. Thus, Karavan and Levin continued to guide the nomination process that finally took place in June 2003, with the same stubborn commitment and pressure. To this day, the IDs continue to serve as the preservation gatekeepers. For example, at the beginning of 2007, Karavan is highly involved in a struggle against the municipality of Tel-Aviv, which is striving to change the structure of Heichal Ha'Tarbut, the large performing arts center located in the buffer zone of the White City. To this end, Karavan is utilizing his personal leverage in the art world and recruits artists and architects worldwide to support his agenda.

## CONCLUSIONS

The growing interest in questions of urban governance and local policymaking highlight the impact of organized civil groups as well as a businesslike interest in local policy making. Our research regarding the processes that preceded the preservation of Old Jaffa and the White City reveals the central role assumed by informal groups at municipal and national levels. In both cases, small groups of individuals managed to influence official bodies to adopt a preservation policy very much in contrast to the original policy. In the case of the White City, the CCs worked to impact municipal officials, whereas in the case of Old Jaffa, they also pressed various national agencies. By persistent, coordinated action, with the help of influential partners, and utilizing their own professional and personal status, these small groups of individuals practically changed the urban landscape in line with their own values, and contributed substantially to the richness of the urban fabric.

In the Israeli context, the preservation of urban heritage in Tel-Aviv may be considered an outstanding example of municipal commitment to the urban heritage. Therefore, processes that took place behind the scenes of the municipal administration are extremely significant. The recurring mechanism discussed demonstrates the crucial role of IDs in the

crystallization of local preservation policy in two distinct cases. The impact of IDs was crucial despite the fundamental differences between Old Jaffa and the White City, and the time periods in which the policies took form. While the preservation of Old Jaffa required the effort of administrative agencies, the preservation of the White City poses a much more demanding challenge—regulating the development of a lively city. Nevertheless, despite the different historical circumstances, the involvement of the local authority in the preservation was influenced by the efforts of a group of supporters. Thus, in terms of urban development, these supporters not only initiated the preservation efforts but also contributed professional knowledge to its implementation.

The research reveals the nature of the coalitions that operate behind the scenes and that impact decision making in the municipality of Tel-Aviv. Small groups of individuals with specific professional knowledge and acknowledged personal capital join forces with other influential actors and create effective coalitions. The activists in the hard-core of the coalitions, the IDs, lack formal organization and function. They do not operate on behalf of an economic or civil body and do not promote the interests of a defined public. Thus, they form conditional and circumstantial alliances: the make-up of the coalitions change in relation to the current status and needs, in line with occasional opportunities and events. The small group that promoted the preservation of Old Jaffa included governmental officials and national public figures, resulting from occasional acquaintances of Yevin, Brutzcus, and Janco. However, it also stemmed from the existing political structure, in which the state was the owner of the land and buildings while the city was given an operational responsibility. The coalitions to preserve the White City were composed of local officials. As the IDs wished to influence the mayor and the Planning Department, their efforts were directed towards the urban administration. Unlike the Old Jaffa case, the governmental level was irrelevant here.

The struggle for the preservation of urban heritage is a rather elitist issue. This was the case in the 1950s, when Old Jaffa faced the invasion of newcomers to deserted houses, as was the case in the 1980s and 1990s, when urban groups struggled to allocate public goods. Thus, the IDs could not promote their issue via organized civil groups and NGOs, nor did they attempt to raise massive public opinion to support their views. Instead, the circumstantial coalitions were the tool they utilized to impact decision-makers. In both cases, the coalitions operated intensely for a relatively long time period. Nevertheless, they did not manage to completely realize their vision. Old Jaffa was largely demolished, and only part of it was preserved.



With respect to the White City, the Planning Department did not fully adopt the claim that preservation does permit additional construction and various amendments to modern buildings. Still, these two cases demonstrate the important role assumed by non-economic cultural interests on policymaking and its implementation in Tel-Aviv–Jaffa.

## NOTES

1. Note Eran Vigoda, “From responsiveness to collaboration: Governance, citizens, and the next generation of public administration,” *Public Administration Review* 62.5 (2002) 527–540.

2. Clarence N. Stone, *Regime Politics* (Lawrence, KS, 1989); Stephen L. Elkin, *City and Regime in the American Republic* (Chicago, 1987).

3. Clarence N. Stone, “Urban regimes and the capacity to govern: a political-economy approach,” *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 15.1 (1993) 1–28.

4. For example: Alan DiGaetano and John S. Klemanski, “Urban regimes in comparative perspective: The politics of urban development in Britain,” *Urban Affairs Review*, 29.1 (1993) 54–83; “Urban regime capacity: A comparison of Birmingham, England, and Detroit, Michigan,” *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 15.4 (1993) 367–384; Alan DiGaetano and Elizabeth Storm, “Comparative urban governance: An Integrated Approach,” *Urban Affairs Review*, 38.3 (2003) 356–395.

5. Jonathan S. Davies, *Partnerships and Regimes: The Politics of Regeneration Partnerships in the UK* (Adlershot, 2001); “Urban regime theory: A normative empirical critique,” *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 24.1 (2002) 1–17; “Partnerships versus regimes: Why regime theory cannot explain urban coalitions in the UK,” *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 25.3 (2003) 253–269.

6. Nurit Alfasi and Tovi Fenster, “A tale of two cities: Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv in an age of globalization,” *Cities*, 22.5 (2005) 351–363.

7. During the winter of 1949/1950, several houses collapsed due to exceptional snowfall. On 16 April 1950, 18 people died and another 28 were injured when a building near the Old City of Jaffa collapsed.

8. Arnon Golan, “The politics of wartime demolition and human landscape transformation,” *War in History*, 9.4 (2002) 431–445.

9. Tamir Goren, *Fall of Arab Haifa in 1948* (Sede-Boker, 2006) [Hebrew].

10. By the end of August 1950, a second engineers’ commission inspected the Old City and reached the same conclusion. The commission considered three alternative solutions: rehabilitating the site, evacuating the residents and fencing off the area, or demolishing it, and ruled out the first two.

11. Yair Paz, “Preserving architectural heritage in deserted neighborhoods after Independence War,” *Cathedra*, 88 (1998) 95–134 [Hebrew].

12. *The Official Gazette of the Government of Palestine*, No. 1375, 24 November 1944 declares large parts of Jaffa as antiquities, according to Antiquities Ordinance No. 51 of 1929. The demolition of Jaffa, thus, was prohibited by law.
13. Paz, "Preserving architectural heritage in deserted neighborhoods after Independence War."
14. Yevin to Mr. H. Reizel, the CAP, Israel State Archive (ISA), 43, 2747/GL-8, 19 September 1949.
15. Brutzcus to the CAP, SA, div. 43, 2747/GL-8, 24 October 1949.
16. Paz, "Preserving architectural heritage in deserted neighborhoods after Independence War," 110–114.
17. Final report of "The Committee for Monuments in Ancient Jaffa", Tel-Aviv Municipal Archive (henceforth: TAHA), 15/114, 28 November 1949.
18. Brutzcus to Dr. Altman, SA, div. 43, 2747/GL-8, 25 October 1949.
19. Paz, "Preserving architectural heritage in deserted neighborhoods after Independence War."
20. Tel-Aviv City Engineer to the CAP, TAHA, 15/114, 6 January 1950.
21. Protocol of meeting: The Committee for Preservation of Structures of Historic, Architectonic, and Religious Values in Ancient Jaffa, SA, div. 43, 2211/G-3, 21 December 1950.
22. *Ibid.*, 28 December 1950.
23. National Association of Architects to Mr. Porath, the CAP, SA, div. 43, 2211/G-3, 28 February; National Association of Architects to the art subdivision in the Ministry of Education, SA, div. 43, 2211/G-s, 19 March, 1951.
24. Brutzcus to Mr. M. Cahana, the Ministry of Interiors, SA, div. 43, 2211/G-3, 21 January 1951.
25. Golan, "The politics of wartime demolition and human landscape transformation"; Paz, "Preserving architectural heritage in deserted neighborhoods after Independence War".
26. Mayor Rokah to Mr. D. Gefen, the regional office in Jaffa, SA, div. 43, 2211/G-3, 2 February 1951. The letter reports on distressful housing conditions in Old Jaffa, including the lack of running water, sewage solutions, and electricity.
27. A. Ben-Dor, the Antiquities Department to M. Porath, the CAP, SA, div. 43, 2211/G-3, 27 June 1951. The letter deals with safeguarding evacuated buildings in Old Jaffa from invaders.
28. S. Shaag, the Association of Architects and Engineers to the Minister of Education, SA, div. 43, 2211/G-3, 19 March 1951.
29. Minutes of The Committee for Preservation of Structures of Historic, Architectonic, and Religious Values in Ancient Jaffa, SA, div. 43, 2211/G-3, 28 December 1950 and 11 April 1951.
30. Minutes of meeting between Deputy Mayor Shechterman and Teddy Kollek of the Office of the Prime Minister, TAHA, 15/167, 3 July 1958. A principal agreement is mentioned regarding the construction of a company for the development of Jaffa.

31. Minutes of meeting between Deputy Mayor Shechterman, Teddy Kollek, Mr. Yanai of the Office of Tourism, and Architect Tanai, TAHA, 15/167, 8 January 1959. The agreement called for financial investments by all parties.

32. Protocols of the Company for the Development of Ancient Jaffa, TAHA, 28/454, 8 September 1960. 25% of the Company was maintained by the Governmental Company for Tourism, and another 25% was handed over to the Company for the Development of Tourism.

33. Report, Survey of Municipal Companies, TAHA, 28/454, December 1963.

34. Protocols of the Company for the Development of Ancient Jaffa, TAHA, 28/454, 20 October 1960. The protocol mentions that following a five year trial period the area will be leased for a longer period of time.

35. Yaacov Shavit and Gideon Biger, *The History of Tel-Aviv*, Vol. 1 (Tel-Aviv, 2001) [Hebrew]; Irit Amit-Cohen, "Synergy between urban planning, conservation of the cultural built heritage and functional changes in the old urban center: the case of Tel Aviv," *Land Use Policy*, 22 (2005) 291–300; Maoz Azaryahu, *Tel-Aviv: Mythography of a City* (Syracuse, 2006).

36. Abba Elhanani, *The Struggle for Independence of Israeli Architecture in the Twentieth Century* (Tel-Aviv, 1998) [Hebrew]; Nitza Szmuk, *Houses of Sand*, (Tel-Aviv, 1994) [Hebrew]; Amit-Cohen, "Synergy between urban planning, conservation of the cultural built heritage and functional changes in the old urban center: the case of Tel Aviv."

37. Shavit and Biger, *The History of Tel-Aviv*; Niki Davidov, interview, Tel-Aviv-Jaffa, 6 January 2004.

38. Davidov, *Ibid.*; Tzofia Santo, interview, Tel-Aviv-Jaffa, 8 April 2004.

39. Michael Levin, interview, Tel-Aviv-Jaffa, 25 August 2003.

40. The exhibition was part of the 75th anniversary of Tel-Aviv and the first to link the small houses of Tel-Aviv to the cultural heritage of modernism.

41. The sculpture is presented in the artist's website: [www.danikaravan.com](http://www.danikaravan.com).

42. Karavan grew up in the center of Tel-Aviv. His father was the municipal gardener. He learned to appreciate the unique built environment and felt committed to the place.

43. Azaryahu, *Tel-Aviv: Mythography of a City*.

44. Davidov, interview, 6 January 2004; Santo, interview, 8 April 2004.

45. The exhibition and symposium were presented in the magazine: Esther Zandberg, "Ha'Gilboa Street: A Case Study," *Ha'ir*, 5 May 1990, 12–21.

46. Levin, interview, 25 August 2003; Nitza Szmuk, interview, Tel-Aviv-Jaffa, 26 August 2003; Dani Karavan, interview, Tel-Aviv-Jaffa, 17 August 2006.

47. Levin, *Ibid.*; Szmuk, *Houses of Sand*; Santo, interview, 8 April 2004; Karavan, interview, 17 August 2006.

48. Amendment number 31, regulation proposal 2045, 12.3.1991, and Amit-Cohen, "Synergy between urban planning, conservation of the cultural built heritage and functional changes in the old urban center: the case of Tel Aviv," 292.

49. The exhibition organizers chose to name the event “The Bauhaus Exhibition”, for marketing reasons.

50. Karavan, interview, 17 August 2006.

51. Levin, interview, 25 August 2003; Szmuk, *Houses of Sand*; Karavan, *Ibid.*

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