

Changes and Turbulence in planning in Israel: Sixty years of the Planning and Building Law

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ABSTRACT

The Planning and Building Law was enacted in 1965, replacing the Mandatory Town Planning Ordinance of 1936. The law adopted the structural framework of the Mandatory ordinance, maintaining district and local planning committees while also establishing a new national planning institution, the National Council for Planning and Building. In addition, the law defined the planning hierarchy: national master plans, district plans, local plans, and detailed plans. The Planning and Building Law concentrated most powers in the district and national committees, and gave local committees limited authority, functioning primarily as licensing authorities. With the enactment of the law, a system was created that was intended to balance development and publicness - between private initiatives and public interest. However, over six decades, the opposite phenomenon was recorded: a long series of amendments and reforms transformed the law from a tool for long-term planning, into a tool for acceleration, concentration of powers, reduction of public participation and prioritization of economic interests. Structural distortions weakened the original purpose of the law.

Although the Planning and Building Law has undergone numerous changes, this article focuses on the erosion of the institutional hierarchy (through committees that bypass the established planning institutions) and the erosion of the planning hierarchy (through the erosion of Outline Plans and Statutory District Plans (TaMAMs)). These erosion processes create inherent conflicts with the concept of national planning policy.

National master plans, enacted under the Planning and Building Law, express national policy directions and serve as instruments for implementing government policy. Over the years, conflicts have arisen between these national policy frameworks and the political ambitions of successive governments. In recent years, such conflicts have intensified, particularly in light of government decisions that weaken planning institutions, undermine the law and established planning procedures, and, most notably, prioritize the establishment of new settlements. All of these stands in direct contradiction to national planning policy. Furthermore, many decisions are made that weaken and even blur the foundations of national policy.

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ENGLISH ABSTRACTS

SPECIAL SECTION: The Planning and Building Law 1965 after 60 years

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