Honors thesis

COURSE OF

ARCHITECTURE FOR SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

Abstract

BRIDGING COLLECTIVITY AND INDIVIDUALITY:

AN ARCHITECTURAL JOURNEY THROUGH THE KIBBUTZ.

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The origin of this dissertation is linked to the XII Biennale of architecture of Venezia in 2010, where a pavilion about kibbutzim was located.

The main focus is to understand the relation between kibbutzim's architecture and man, if the former did interact with his behaviours, if it did limit him or if was the man itself to limit it. We want to understand how the social organization was formed inside the settlement, if the design of kibbutzim and his buildings was thought only for this reality or if it referenced other phenomenons.

The points of view of the dissertation are: sociologic, to understand what were man's behaviors relating to ideology and architecture, architectonic-urbanistic to comprehend the structure of settlement, historical to understand the process and his steps and how settlements were influenced by external factors.

Aerial view of kibbutz Grofit, 2012. (www.flickr.com).

The foundation of this research is writing a detailed catalogue for each kibbutzim and consequently building a database, start a campaign of interviews and consulting a scientific bibliography.

The dissertation starts from a general analysis of social utopias, then focuses on two practical utopias previous the kibbutzim experiment.

The social historic background that brought the birth of kibbutz ideology and therefore the creation of the Israel state is then analyzed.

The next section, thanks to the historic periodization and the database, focuses on the territorial dynamics to process them into a series of historic and demographic thematic maps .

Comparing these maps we can deduce how the years between 1921 and 1967 were the most prosperous period for the foundation of new settlements.

From 1968 the new kibbutzim were reduced as a result of some kind of difficulties in the system.
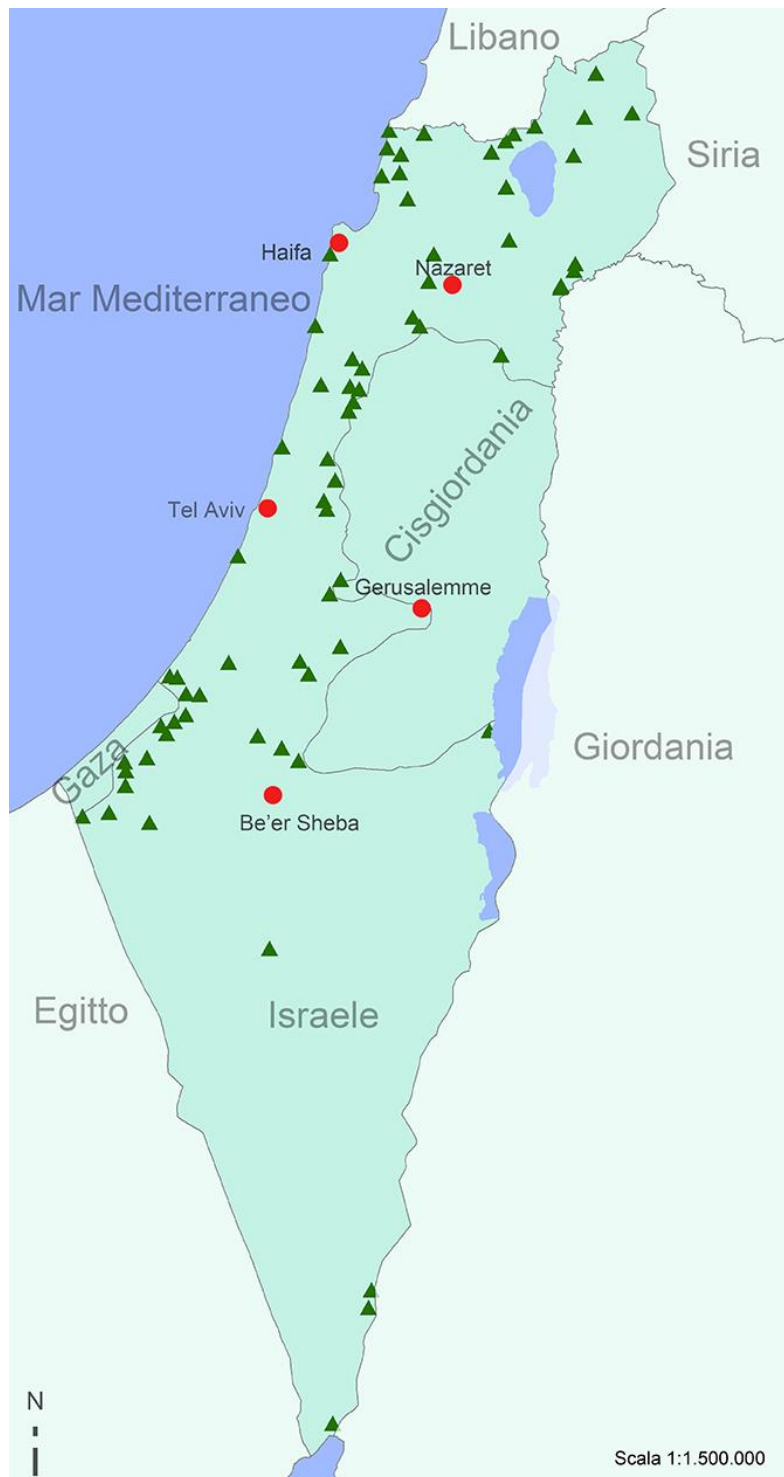
Map of kibbutzim founded from 1949 to 1967.

The dissertation offers an external point of view through the use of a campaign of interviews proposed to experts and witnesses.

A chapter analyzes the kibbutzim structure under the urbanism-sociologic aspect and the architectural aspect defining the different functions of the buildings.

View of dining hall of kibbutz Merhavia, Arch. Shmuel Mestechkin, 1970. (Bar-Or & Yasky, 2010:242).

A section is dedicated to the landscape design, observing his changes and adaptation to the new ideology and society.

The last chapter studies the changings in ideology, architecture and social dynamics after 1980.

According to research the high point of original ideology was reached at the end of the 50's because the first changes appeared in the early 60's.

The introduction of self-service and the transition from "common sleep" to the "family sleep" of children represent the clear signal of a revolution.

From the 80's the founding philosophy changed deeply, in most settlements the common services were abandoned due to a privatization that makes each member responsible of his financial autonomy.

The leading characteristics of this period were the increasing need for privacy and the precedence given to family instead of the community .

These revolutions, however, do not induce the end of the kibbutzim experience but demonstrate how they are able to change and adapt to times.

From research it appears that kibbutzim are a live phenomenon, constantly developing, as highlighted and confirmed by the interviews.

By the end of the dissertation we can deduce how the relationship between architecture and man is dominated by the ideology, itself controlled by man.

So architecture is adapting to the human's ideas that at the same time are reflected into ideology.

In opposition of initial theory, where we imagined the architecture influencing man's life, we can notice that architecture simply is the concrete result of ideology used as a mean by man, its creator.