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"The Housing Crisis": The Gap Between Plan and Execution

Assaf Zanzuri

We are facing a media reality of an ongoing housing crisis in Israel. More than a decade has passed since the social justice protests of 2011, when the then Prime Minister, Netanyahu, launched the "Supertanker" real-estate program under which the National Housing Committees (NHCs) were established, bypassing the planning system to speed up planning processes and solve the housing crisis. The NHCs failed as did the National Committee for Priority Housing Complexes, also bypassing the planning system to solve the housing crisis. Amazingly, we are still in a housing crisis. Now I want to offer a different thesis: the problem and solution are not in planning, but implementation. Because bypassing planning is a relatively simple way of planning the housing inventory, the various governments chose to invest their efforts on this solution while avoiding the real problem: the shortage of infrastructure and transportation solutions that hold up the progress of plans. Today we are planning more and implementing less. Another mistake is the creation of a huge inventory of unneeded and undeveloped employment areas across the country. Here too, the extra planning is not motivated by planning considerations, but by the structural problem of distributing property tax revenues across the country. This creates planning cannibalism: each local authority against the other chasing after employment areas in a race to the bottom.

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