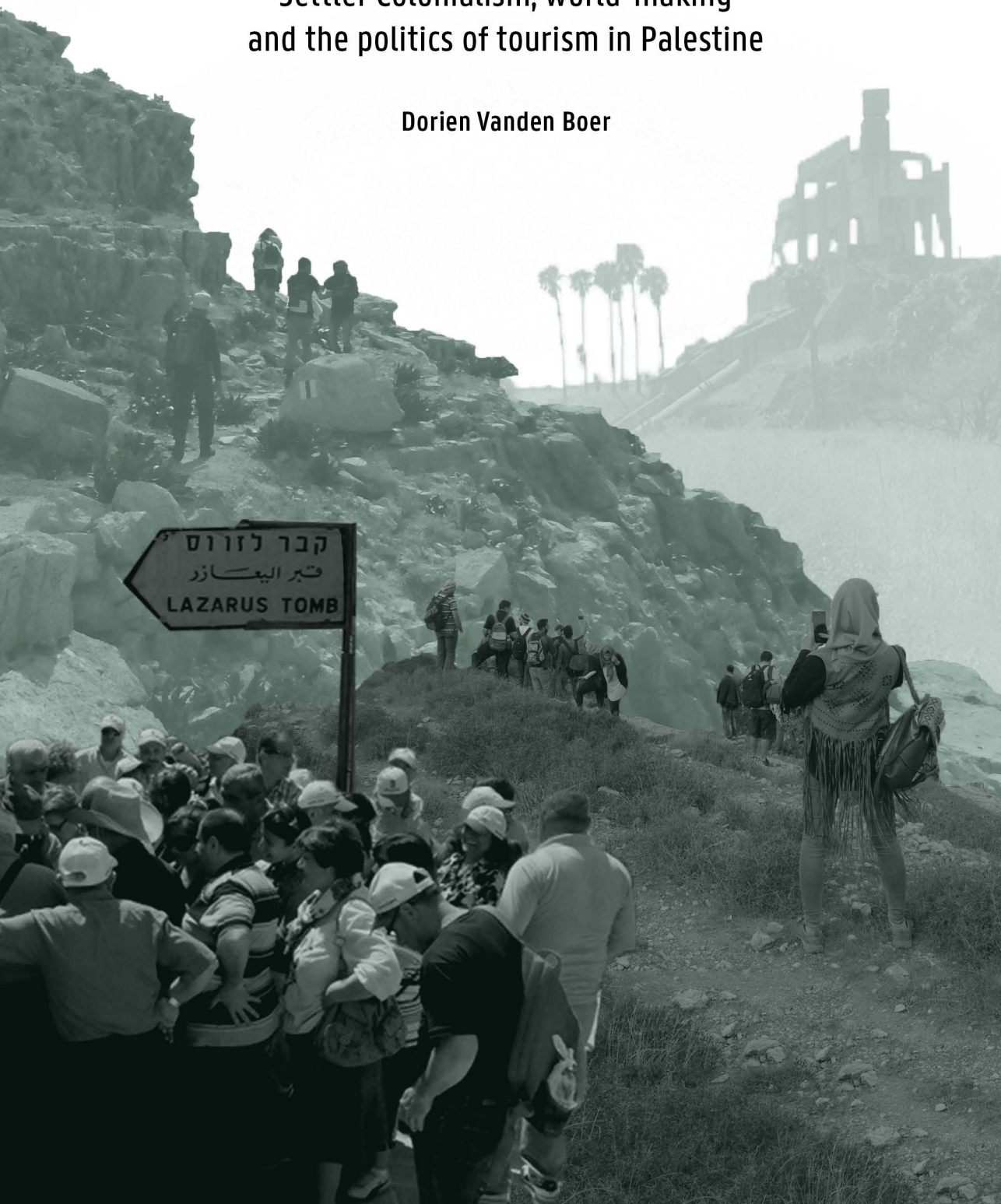


Touristic Entanglements

Settler Colonialism, world-making
and the politics of tourism in Palestine

Dorien Vanden Boer



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SUMMARY

This dissertation contributes to critical tourism studies by integrating a settler colonial perspective with the concepts of world-making, ordering and placemaking, and focusing specifically on the case of Palestine. While the colonial legacy of tourism has already been examined more widely, the specific implications of the settler colonial logic in tourism remain rather underexposed. A relational approach to settler colonialism sheds a different light on the relation between the production of space, knowledge, and power in tourism. By employing literature on ‘world-making,’ Actor-Network Theory and ordering, I analyze how tourism produces spaces and in fact worlds that are entangled into ongoing political processes of colonization and contestation in Palestine. This dissertation is the result of qualitative fieldwork and archival research in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, Israel, and Jordan, combined with a literature study. The case studies I explore range from Palestinian hiking movements to tourism infrastructure in Jerusalem, the development of a Peace Park on the Jordan River, as well as the historic development of tourism in Palestine and its relation to Zionism and settler colonization. The cases expose the complex entanglement of space, settler colonization and tourism as a messy process of co-constitution. The production and consumption of touristic spaces goes hand in hand with the making of affective relations, that reproduce colonial and decolonial ontologies. The research contributes to a critical understanding of how tourism and settler colonialism are intertwined in Palestine and also develops a notion of the subversive capacity of tourism as a way to both make sense and actually produce alternative, decolonial worlds.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AHA	Arab Hotel Association
ANT	Actor-Network Theory
ATG	Alternative Tourism Group
CTS	Critical Tourism Studies
FOEI	Friends of the Earth International
FoEME	Friends of the Earth Middle East
HCAT	Higher Council for Arab Tourism Industry
HLITOA	Holy Land Incoming Tour Operators Association
JDA	Jerusalem Development Authority
JTC	Jerusalem Tourism Cluster
MOTA	Ministry of tourism and Antiquities
NEPTO	Network for Experiential Palestinian Tourism Organizations
NIC	National Infrastructure Committee
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
SCS	Settler Colonial Studies
TAJ	Tourism and Arts Jerusalem Cluster
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization's
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
ZOA	Zionist Organization of America

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PREFACE

Brussels- Somewhere in the second year of my PhD I received an old French history book on Jerusalem from my grandmother-in-law. She had found the book while tidying up and thought I might find it interesting, as she knew I was doing research in Palestine and Israel. She herself had received the book from a friend who had visited the Holy Land, as was marked on the first page of the book. She and her husband had been talking about making the journey themselves and their friend had kindly given them his informative book on the history of the Holy City. I glanced through the book and had a look at some of the yellowed photographs of the familiar streets and churches of the Old City. I got slightly annoyed when I bumped into a picture of Moshe Dayan and Yitzhak Rabin in military uniform standing in front of one of the gates of the Old City in 1967. Other pictures were clearly celebrating the establishment of the Israeli state. Palestinian life was completely absent in the book. The book was written by Moshe Pearlman and “Teddy” Kollek, Jerusalem’s first mayor after 196, who Edward Said (1995, p. 6) described as “a symbol of Israel’s annexation politics.” Together with Moshe Dayan, Kollek had been responsible for the clearing of the entire Palestinian neighborhood of Haret Al Maghariba to build the Western Wall Plaza as it is known today. Dismissing it as another Zionist publication, I stored it away on my bookshelf where it continued to catch dust.

A while later the book caught my eye again and it unexpectedly became a new entry point in my research. When I opened it this time, three carefully stored maps fell out from in-between the cover pages. I was surprised because I had not noticed them before. I had just finished research in the Israel National Library on Israeli touristic maps and brochures, but this time there was a reversal of roles. My fieldwork had snuck into my life in an unforeseen way. I immediately recognized the old logo of the Israel Ministry of Tourism: two stylized human figures carrying a bunch of grapes. Both maps had been published by the Israeli Ministry of Tourism.

The first map was a touring map, published in October 1987. The green line is invisible, and the entire Golan, West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem are presented as an integral part of Israel. The occupied regions of the West Bank are overwritten with their Hebrew names of Shomeron and Yehuda. The

tourism office of Bethlehem's Manger Square's phone number is mentioned as part of the Israeli tourism infrastructure. The map presents Israel as having everything a proper state requires in touristic terms: camping sites, nature reserves, beaches, youth hostels, historic sites all located in occupied territory. The tiny tent and tree symbols on the map tell the reader nothing about the violence it took to get them into place. Military checkpoints and bases around the West Bank are not visible. Cities such as Ramallah or Nablus are recognized as places with tourist accommodation, while only a month after the map was published, the first intifada and the violent repression of the Israeli army was about to rage through these cities. These are events the reader could have never anticipated.

The second map exclusively paints the imaginary of touristic life in Israel, as its title reveals: 'Carte de Pèlerinage en Terre Sainte.' The map was published in 1988 commissioned by the Israeli ministry of tourism. It presents Israel as the Holy Land and lists all the relevant sites with their Biblical reference. Each site has little figures to place the sites in a particular historic period in which the most important events in that site occurred. These events range from the Prehistoric but abruptly end in the Umayyad's period. The gap between 638-1099 in the timeline corresponds with the period of early Muslim rule in Jerusalem. While the map claims a biblical perspective, modern Israeli cities such as Tel Aviv and Netanya are also present. Both maps were the result of the same logic. One that had erased all reference to Palestine or Palestine's Muslim identity by either pushing forward fantasies of the Holy Land or normalizing Israel as a touristic destination. The maps were not just masking Zionist settler colonial violence, they were the actual violence in action, solidified in the abstractions, imaginaries and fantasies rooted in colonial difference and the coloniality of power that has transformed Palestine. The maps bore testimony to a wider effort to create a make-believe space in which fantasies/discourses and materialities converge in a settler colonial reality in Palestine "that has been believed through the making or materialized in the imagining" (Navaro-Yashin, 2012, p. 28). The maps are enunciators of a settler colonial state and inform the way tourists like my grandmother's friend got to know a part of the world.

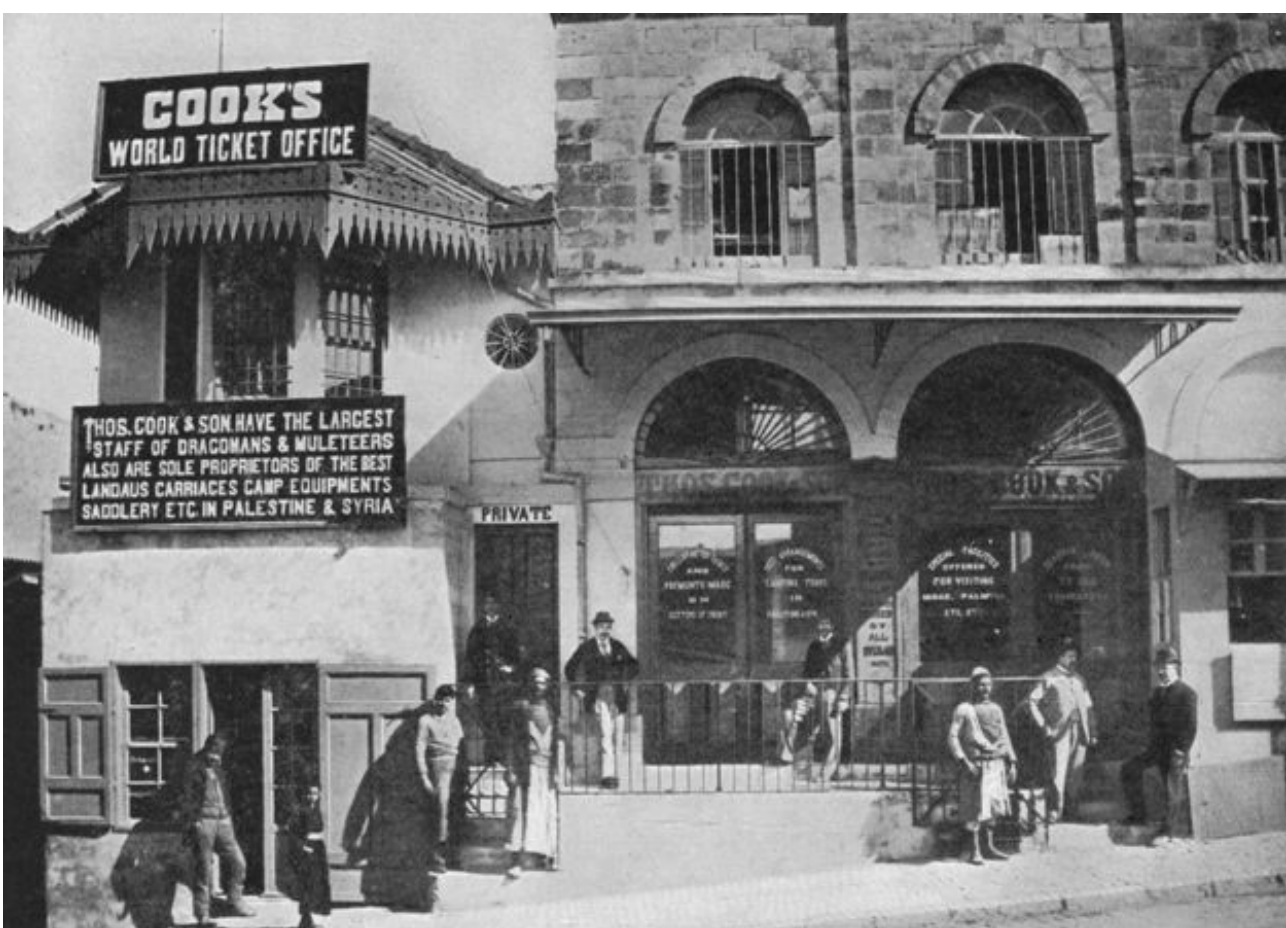
Tourism created a political economy of which both oppressor and oppressed can make use to both circulate their truth claims and make them solid. How does it allow them to create value that has a political effect on the ground? To

return to the maps, their content came as no surprise, I had seen these maps before in the archive. The difference now was, that the ones in my hand had actually been used by someone. These maps had fulfilled their duty. It was one thing to find them in the archive, cataloged and stripped from their context, but to realize that they were actual objects that people had used, was something different. It imbued them with a sense of liveliness, purpose, and travel history. The subtlety, ease, and normality with which they had entered my life, seemed to have made their message even more powerful. It all became more personal now that the realm in which these touristic objects work and come alive also seemed to incorporate my relatives. How had these touristic markers managed to end up with me? What kind of force had made them travel more than 3000 km? I imagined it would have been easier for these maps to travel to Belgium at least 30 years ago, than for Palestinian people to be tourists here. It felt as if these maps had accomplished their mission. Their power was twofold, in their message and in their actual circulation and in the way they had made themselves valued. After all, they had been carefully stored and preserved over the years by someone who valued them as a source of information. This someone had not only brought the maps home with him but also handed them over to a friend to help them with preparing their travels to the Holy Land. So, while he had very likely received these maps for free in an Israeli information center, they were deemed worthy of the journey to Belgium.

What allowed these maps to circulate? And what does this tell us about how they were valued. Their value is not just monetary, but is informed and created within ideological projects. What is valued shifts over time. It restructures the way we understand and categorize the world. Elements of tourism such as a view or an experience are cultivated as being of great value and are capitalized on, but only because they are being made intelligible within the touristic ordering. This has political implications as touristic value works is a spectrum, some places, things, people are highly valued - five-star review and on the bucket listed- while others are not - not worth the detour. What interest me in the case of Palestine is how the creation of value within the tourism market is informed by relations of settler colonialism. Why we value things has to do with knowledge and even more intelligibility. How we get to know things affect the way we value them. Value cannot be disconnected from a wider epistemological context that shapes our thinking and that is unavoidably rooted in global hierarchies and colonial power relations. With this context, I

not only mean established knowledge, but also other affective ways of knowing that determine our understanding of the world, especially of those we get as tourists.

PART I: ROUTES INTO SETTLER COLONIAL FANTASIES



Thomas Cooks' office near Jaffa Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem
(source: Hulton archive/ Getty image)

INTRODUCTION: MAKING SENSE OF TOURISM IN PALESTINE

Change life! Change society! These precepts mean nothing without the
production of an appropriate space.
(Lefebvre, 1991, p. 59)

The space in which we live, which draws us out of ourselves, in which
the erosion of our lives, our time and our history occurs, the space that
claws and gnaws at us, is also, in itself, a heterogeneous space.
(Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986)

Consumption of tourist-services cannot be separated off from the
social relations within which they are embedded.
(Urry, 1990, p. 23).

1.1. Setting the scene: a cable car for Jerusalem

On November 4, 2019, the Israeli housing cabinet approved the construction of a controversial cable car in East Jerusalem. Earlier, in 2018, the Israeli National Infrastructure Committee (NIC) had already approved the plans. The Israeli government foresees a budget of NIS 200 million (\$55.2 million) for the construction of the cable car, characterizing the project as a national priority to solve the “transportation crisis” in Jerusalem. The city will be connected to the settlements of Ramot and Gilo through the new cable car and the light-rail’s blue line. The first section of the cable car will be operational starting in 2021. Khan station, Mount Zion, and the Kedem Center are the first stops to be developed (figure 1.1). Later, three more stops will be added to the route: the Shiloah center, the Gethsemane Station, and the Mount of Olives station.

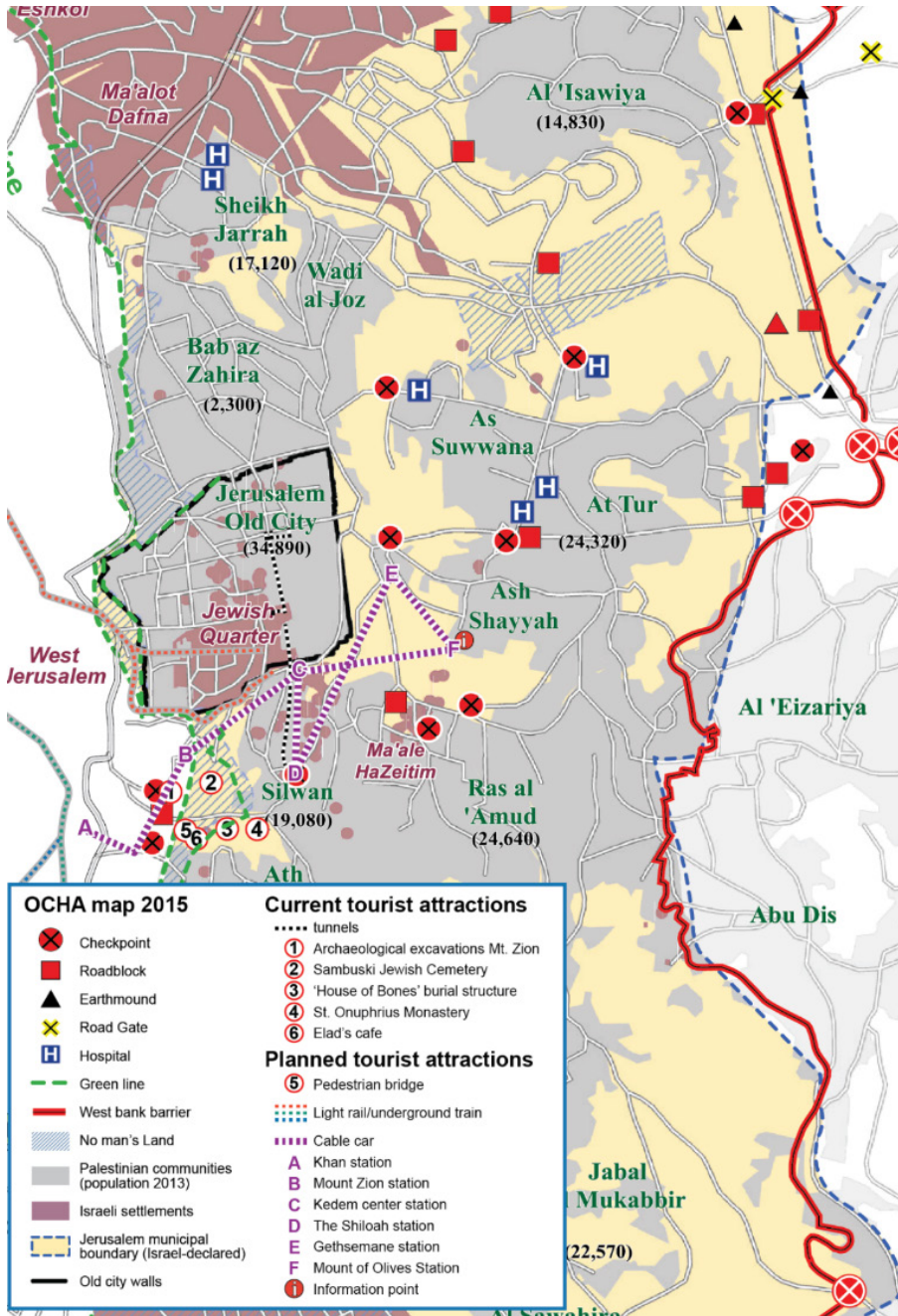


Figure 1.1: Overlay of OCHA access restrictions map with the Emek Shaveh maps of the touristic sites managed by Elad. Map adaptations by Quentin Smets based on the maps of OCHA (2015) and Emek Shaveh (Emek Shaveh, 2019, 2020).

The project is not uncontested. The Israeli Association of Architects vehemently opposes it on the basis that it would “detract from its [Jerusalem’s] status as a world city, diminish its heritage value, and wound its residents and friends the world over” (Israeli Association of Architects and Urban Planners, 2018). Academics have opposed it for the profound change it would bring to the landscape of historic Jerusalem, which is UNESCO-protected heritage. They refer to the cable car as being a Disneyesque concept that disfigures the city by turning it into a spectacle. Identifying the cable car as the solution for the traffic congestion around the Old City allowed the Jerusalem Development Authority (JDC) to fast-track the project. However, it is more than a merely technical intervention. It connects West Jerusalem to the settlements in the East, bypassing Palestinian areas. Indeed, the trajectory of the cable car would transport tourists over the Palestinian neighborhoods of Silwan and Wadi Hilweh. The 73 cars, transporting an estimated maximum of 3,000 passengers per hour, will pass only five to nine meters above the existing houses in some locations. Elsewhere, the upper floors of houses will have to be demolished to make way for the cars (Emek Shaveh, 2018). Emek Shaveh, an Israeli NGO concerned with preventing the politicization of archeology, has filed an appeal to stop the building of the cable car.

The cable car would connect the settlers of the Ir David Foundation, better known as Elad, in the Silwan neighborhood (figure 1.1) and make their projected ‘Kedem Center’ and the already existing City of David site increasingly accessible to tourists. The cable car will be part of an elaborate network of touristic sites in East Jerusalem that Elad has developed and operates. The ‘Shiloah station,’ located at the Silwan pool, is also part of the City of David national park and run by Elad. The pool already has an underground connection to the City of David through excavated tunnels. Another contested example is a large pedestrian rope bridge. The bridge will connect Elad’s southern flank of the Ben Hinnom Valley, where a tourist café is planned, to Mount Zion. In addition, a walkway has already been built between the City of David and Elad’s information center in the Kidron Valley. The Jerusalem Development Agency is furthermore supporting plans for the construction of another visitors’ center near the Mount of Olives’ Jewish cemetery. To realize this project, the government will need to confiscate lands from the inhabitants of the Palestinian neighborhood of Ras al-Amud. Elad also exploits the ‘Peace Forest’ park, where it offers Segway tours and walks along several constructed promenades (figure 1.2). Besides, the organization

wants to build a zip line that starts at the Armon Hanatziv Promenade and ends at the Peace Forest in Abu Tor. The settler organization manages the Tzurim Valley Archeological park, north-east of the old city of Jerusalem, which borders the Palestinian neighborhoods of Wadi al-Joz and As-Suwwaneh. Here, tourists can sift soil coming from the Temple Mount, searching for Jewish relics and other archeological finds. Many Israelis have critiqued that these initiatives are slowly turning Jerusalem into a biblical theme park,¹ but there is more at stake...

The transportation solution offered by the cable car is instrumental in materializing the tourist experience of a 'Jewish Jerusalem.' The experience it creates is not just going to the site but also about the specific connections that are made through the infrastructure of transportation. Just like a guide on a city tour, the cable car stitches Jerusalem together in a visual way. It introduces the visitor to the city with a cadence that gently rocks them back and forth, offering a panoptic vantage point that ignores the Palestinian existence below them. A continuous experience of an Israeli Jerusalem takes shape and is normalized. The cable car also allows for tourists to be channeled into routes that are regulated and controlled by Israel. The flows on these predictable paths help create a settler reality and divert the tourist flow away from the established circuits that Palestinian businesses traditionally have been tapping into, hence actively contributing to the de-development of the Palestinian tourism industry of East Jerusalem.

Figure 1.2 shows how the cable car, the suspension bridge, promenades, and visitor centers seamlessly connect to the already existing tourism infrastructure that is now increasingly encircling the Old City by connecting the Israeli settlements.² Parks, promenades, or visitor centers are examples of how especially Elad is gaining more and more continuous control over both public and private spaces in East Jerusalem. The touristic infrastructure is *de facto* driving a wedge between the Old City and the Eastern Palestinian

¹ Interview with Daniel Seidemann, lawyer at Terrestrial Jerusalem (October 25, 2016, Jerusalem)

² City of David, *Maps and directions* (www.cityofdauid.org.il/en/directions, last accessed on November 27, 2019).

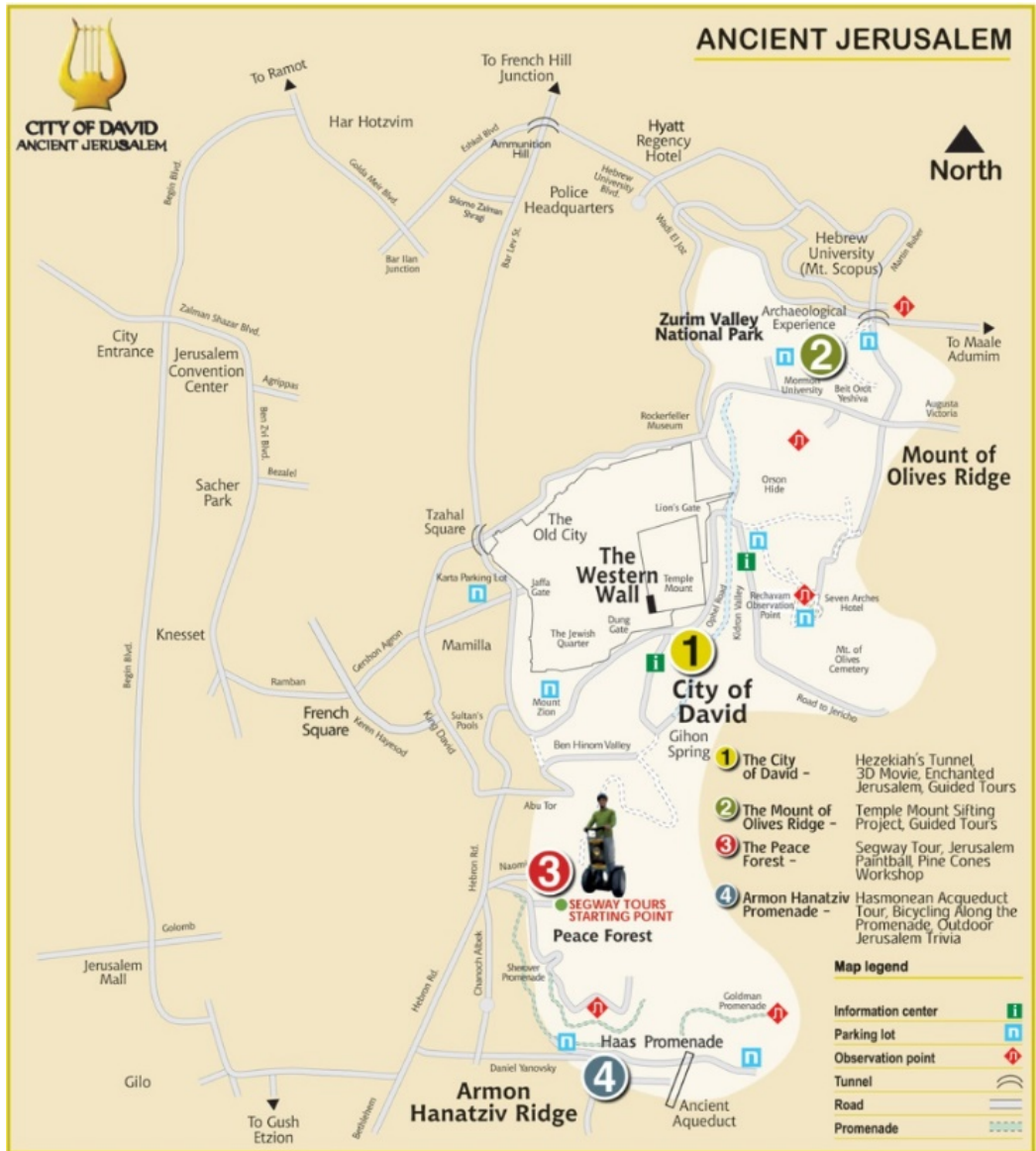


Figure 1.2: The map produced on the Elad's website for the City of David. (The City of David & Ir David Foundation, n.d.).

neighborhoods surrounding it, whose inhabitants are being sandwiched between the separation wall and the settlements. Tourists who take the cable car will not notice this, as they bypass the Palestinian neighborhood from above. Ofran (2013) has called these kinds of tourism infrastructure ‘the invisible settlements.’ However, they are visible to Palestinians, and all too often, tourists are unaware of the fact that they are visiting Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem, which are illegal under international law. The leisurely experience masks them as being an integral part of Israel.³

By taking the cable car, tourists will be funneled into Elad’s tourism sites to be confronted with the organization’s “globalized historicist reading of the Bible” or “biblical realism,” as Paz (2014).illustrated. At these sites, visitors are immersed in Jewish history and the augmented fantasies thereof. For example, in the City of David, which is located across from the planned Kedem Center station, tourists are encouraged to experience the history of ancient Jerusalem and the City of David through a 3D movie, which is screened in a movie theater constructed in the style of the time of King David. Just like the 3D movie, the Elad guides make sure to explicitly and implicitly refer to Israel’s modern reality as the fulfillment of ancient history and the return of the Jewish people to their homeland. These narratives legitimate the Jewish claim to Palestinian land and are used to depoliticize it (Paz, 2014).

Former Jerusalem mayor Nir Barakat is a great proponent of the cable car. In an interview with the *Haaretz* newspaper, he explained the exact merit of the cable car:

I want to enable Jews and non-Jews to recreate this experience. Anyone who wants to immerse [in Siloam] and then go up toward the Temple Mount experience, anyone who does this will know exactly who the owner of this city is. When they have this experience, even leftists get totally confused, because they understand that this is real, and our ties to Jerusalem can never be unraveled. For this experience, it’s also necessary to create a means of transportation. (Nir Barakat as cited in Hasson, 2016)

³ The settlements violate the Fourth Geneva Convention and the The Hague Regulations of 1907 and qualify as war crimes under the Rome statute of the International Criminal Court. The construction of the settlement also violates the international Convention on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights treaties to both of which Israel is a party. The settlements have been condemned on numerous occasions by the international community, e.g. UN Security Council resolutions 465 (1980) and 2334 (2016).

His quote illustrates how the car will be created to convey not just a view of the city but rather a sentiment. It has to provoke an experience of the city that conveys a sense of Jewish ownership. The cable car is designed to confuse, to have a distinctly affective impact that is mobilized in the struggle over East Jerusalem. Touristic sites and infrastructure such as the cable car create emotional ties between Jews from inside and outside Israel and at the same time do away with the perception of a divided Jerusalem in which East Jerusalem is Palestinian (Noy, 2011, p. 31). These touristic spaces are vital in the creation of emotional linkages between the Israeli public and Palestinian spaces (Ofran, 2013) that, through the touristic activities, are produced as Israeli.

On a daily basis, Palestinians are actively resisting the ongoing dispossession and evictions in Silwan. The Wadi Hilweh Center was created in 2009 to reveal “the story behind the tourism site” and share the history and facts of the community in the village of Silwan. Activists explain that the Elad is not only robbing Palestinian land but are also, through their intervention in the village, disruptive on a socioeconomical level. They argue as well as that the City of David was “built on the rubble of Palestinian culture.” Their efforts and presence show how the settler project in the Silwan remains ineffective in its full erasure of the Palestinian presence.

The material transformation of the neighborhood into a touristic site already had severe implications. The tunnels that were excavated below Palestinian homes caused houses to crack and collapse. Tourists who visit the City of David do not see this: they do not notice the real work—and its detrimental effects—required to construct the site they consume. But consumption can also be part of a strategy to do exactly the opposite and raise awareness about how Palestinian life in Silwan is under threat. Many political tours conducted by Palestinian and Israeli guides stop by the center to allow tourists to get to know the people living in the neighborhood and their story. Operators such as the Israeli Green Olive tours⁴ promote visits to Silwan by including the ‘protest tent’ of the Wadi Hilweh Center as one of the highlights of the tour. One can question whether this is a genuine act of solidarity with the people

⁴ For the Jerusalem–Silwan–City of David walking tour, see Green Olive tour’s website: www.toursinenglish.com/2007/11/silwan-city-of-david-tour.html.

from Silwan or a way to make a profit by coopting resistance in the umpteenth niche market?

1.2. Questions, concepts and approach

1.2.1. Entanglements of tourism

The cable car and situation in Silwan illustrate how people, the material world, stories, and images become entangled as tourism is being made in the Palestinian context. It shows how this touristic making transforms places and creates affective relations and an appetite for consuming places in a particular way. Here, tourism seems to be much more than just spending a holiday abroad. In interviews and conversations, respondents gave interpretations of tourism that deviated a great deal from the conventional definitions of for example the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)⁵ and the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC),⁶ which are centered around the demand side and the experience of the tourists (Smith, 2004, p. 29). Here are a few examples:

In tourism, you are producing a reality. It is both your own reality and the reality the tourists want to see.⁷

It's not just selling a product, it's more about getting your opinion out and helping people to understand the situation in Palestine.⁸

Tourism is a tool for development.⁹

⁵ The UNWTO defines tourism as follows: "Tourism is the set of activities engaged in by persons temporarily away from their usual environment, for a period not more than one year, and for a broad range of leisure, business, religious, health, and personal reasons, excluding the pursuit of remuneration from within the place visited or long-term change of residence." For an overview of historic definitions see Smith (2004).

⁶ The WTTC defines tourism and travel as: "Relates to the activity of travelers on trips outside their usual environment with a duration of less than one year. Economic activity related to all aspects of such trips is measured within the research" (WTTC, 2019).

⁷ Interview with Mahmoud Abu Eid, tour guide (East Jerusalem, 4.02.2015)

⁸ Interview with Obay Odeh, guide and owner transportation company, Palestine Exclusive (East Jerusalem, 9/02/2015).

⁹ Interview with Theo van de Laar, Tour Development Officer, Abraham Path Initiative (Jerusalem, 27/01/2015).

In community-based tourism we say, heritage is identity, and identity is existence and existence is resistance.¹⁰

These comments helped me theoretically reflect on what tourism is, what it does, and how it works. Tourism is more than just hosting foreigners; it is a productive process, it creates realities that people consider their own and that relate to the wider socioeconomic and political context they live in. People did not understand tourism in isolation, but in relation to development, identity, existence, or resistance. Tourism is not a neutral activity of “innocents abroad,” as Marc Twain famously labeled them (Twain, 2007). The case of the cable car shows that the making of touristic spaces requires a whole lot more than just the presence of tourists. It necessitates myths, often of development, that make the site legible and calculable as touristic. It demands a whole set of material interventions that facilitate touristic mobility by linking restaurants to religious sites, Segways to souvenirs, buses to bazaars. It depends on the creation of markets, desires, and consumption that at the same time inscribe tourists in struggles over the making of highly political spaces, as is the case in East Jerusalem. I consider tourism not just a global industry or something people do for leisure, but rather a relational practice that shapes and crafts places through material practices in space and as a process of imagining.

This dissertation explores what happens if this productive capacity of tourism becomes entangled in ongoing settler colonization, in which the appropriation and remaking of space is at the heart of the colonial project. The central question is: “how is tourism made as entangled with settler colonial relations of oppression and the resistance that necessarily arises against them?” I borrow the term ‘entanglements’ from Sharp, Routledge, Paddison, and Philo (2000, p. 24), who describe it as follows:

‘Entanglements’ is meant to conjure up the threadings, knottings and weavings of power, thus deploying a metaphor full of spatial imagery to convey the complexity of what we see in the workings of power, domination and resistance. [...] the entanglements are a precondition for the appearance of power, and in a sense, we might say that such entanglements are precisely what releases power, enables power, permits power to ‘do its business.’

¹⁰Interview with Raed Saadeh, owner and general manager of the Jerusalem Hotel, (East Jerusalem, 10/02/2015).

I want to understand how tourism activities, narratives, and materialities become what Liza Cooke (2017) refers to as ‘moral moorings’ for settler colonialism. How does tourism normalize the settler normativity and reproduces it? How is it implicated in the making of the settler world? This is something that is happening in East Jerusalem. The naturalization of the settler narrative in tourism requires both material and discursive work that allow for settler colonial epistemologies to become embedded in mundane activities and situations (Willems-Braun, 1997), such as a ride in a cable car. However, this is the very essence of what settler colonialism does in terms of productivity: it installs structures of domination whose violent colonial roots are hidden to indeed become ‘common sense’ (Veracini, 2010, 2011a). With these questions, I seek to explore tourism’s capacity to solidify powerful epistemologies and entire ‘worlds.’ Can these be debunked? And how can tourism serve as an instrument of resistance?

In the context of the Palestinian struggle, I want to know how tourism can become a means of resistance and emancipation, and whether it can break through the colonial (and capitalist) ontologies that are still dominant in mass tourism. Tourism’s existing configurations have preexisting, carved out connections, itineraries, and formats in which representations can nestle and be catapulted onto a local and global market. They are forms of ordering that took shape within the wider context of modernity, capitalism, and colonialism. However, if tourism practices are rooted in colonialism, what are the implications of using it as a tool of resistance? Can the tools of the oppressor be turned against them or is it, as Audre Lorde warned us, that “the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house”? Resistance tourism might perhaps not bring down the house of Zionist settler colonization, but it can at least remove its façade and show the ugly reality of racism and oppression in which it is built. Can it be a form of epistemic disobedience or delinking, as Mignolo (2007, 2009) puts it?

The objective of this research is to use settler colonial theory to critique tourism, expose colonial power relations, and at the same time foreground alternative ways of doing tourism and hence knowing and making the world. I build on literature that takes an assemblage and Actor-Network Theory (ANT) approach and conceptualizes tourism as a methodological practice rather than an object of study out there. This allows me to study tourism as a practice of ordering people, places, histories, and entire worlds as entangled

with other projects such as Zionist settler colonialization. I do so out of a strong engagement with the Palestinian anticolonial struggle for justice and self-determination and the explicit and implicit ways in which many of those working in Palestinian tourism live and carry out resistance on a daily basis. Consequently, I situate my work within Critical Tourism Studies (CTS).

1.2.2. Situating Critical Tourism Studies and tourism as a colonial practice

Critical Tourism Studies is a field of research that has foregrounded the study of power and power relations in tourism and that is committed to researching tourism in a way that advances “social justice, equality and anti-oppression” (Ateljevic, Pritchard, & Morgan, 2007, p. 3). CTS emerged as a field on the élan of the development of postcolonial, post-structural, postmodern, and feminist theories and the cultural turn in other fields (Cheong & Miller, 2000; A Franklin & Crang, 2001; Franklin, 2007; Hollinshead, 1999; T. B. Jamal & Everett, 2004; Meethan, 2001; Meethan, Anderson, & Miles, 2006; Pritchard & Morgan, 2007, 2000; Riley & Love, 2000; Tribe, 2006). Critical tourism scholars are engaged in more reflexive and critical research, criticizing business-oriented and depoliticized accounts of tourism research. They have integrated broader theoretical and philosophical issues, drawing on for example Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Homi Bhabha, or Michel Foucault, among others. They study tourism with attention to the reproduction of power in relation to class (C. M. Hall, 2010; Wurst, 2011), gender (Aitchison, 2001, 2005b, 2005a; Fullagar, 2002), disabilities (Aitchison, 2000), the body (Johnston, 2001; Veijola & Jokinen, 1990), commodification (Büscher & Fletcher, 2017; Fletcher, 2011) and of course also the production of space (Church & Coles, 2007; Hollinshead, Ateljevic, & Ali, 2009; Lew, 2017), which I will explore in further detail below. From the start, postcolonial writing has recognized tourism as a practice that perpetuates and reproduces colonial relations. It also has uncovered the profound entanglements of tourism with structures and processes of (neo)colonialism (Britton, 1982; Cooke, 2017; Grimwood, Stinson, and King, 2019; Hall & Tucker, 2004b; Notzke, 1999; Palmer, 1994)

CTS draws attention to the fact that in many countries in the South, tourism was introduced as a colonial practice. Crick (1989, p. 322) calls tourism therefore a “form of leisure imperialism” that currently embodies the

“hedonistic face of neocolonialism.” Today, colonial legacies still impact the management of many touristic sites, for example wildlife parks, contributing to the dispossession and exclusion of the local population in favor of foreign Western tourists (Akama, 2004; Sène-Harper & Séye, 2019). Tourism infrastructure such as hotels, parks, resorts, and heritage sites have been instrumental in the appropriation of land and Indigenous spaces (Cooke, 2017; McDermott Hughes, 2001). In many cases, processes of dispossession have been facilitated by the introduction of tourism as a centerpiece of development in formerly colonized countries (Burns, 2008; Kadt, 1984). As Burns (2008, p. 63) points out, the global tourism system has been developed to serve the needs of tourists from former Western colonial powers, not the native population. Others have called attention to the plantation-like system in tourism (Hall, 1994) and touristic neocolonial enclaves such as the resort (Freitag, 1994; Kothari, 2015) as infrastructure that minimizes interaction between tourists and the local population. Tourism has grown as an extractive industry in which revenues flow from the South to the North and economic dependence is created (Britton, 1982; Brohman, 1996, p. 53; Jaakson, 2004, p. 170); a system that ensures the perpetuation of colonial relations of economic and political power.

Knowledge production within global tourism has been consistently erasing Indigenous identity and culture. Transformed into touristic representations and images, they have been commodified, objectified, othered, and essentialized (Amoamo & Thompson, 2010; D’Hautesserre, 2004; Grimwood, Muldoon, & Stevens, 2019; Hall, 1998; Hollinshead, 1992; Salazar, 2009, 2012, 2013; Tucker & Akama, 2009; Wells, 2004). Romanticized descriptions in guidebooks, travelogues, touristic advertisements, and even souvenirs have overwritten Indigenous representations with colonial ones in favor of capitalization and touristic value extraction (Buck, 1993; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998; Lee, 2017). In this way, the making of tourism forces Indigenous people into a “sort of tourized confinement in the suffocating straitjacket of [...] external conceptions” (Hollinshead, 1992, p. 44). It fixes identities of people, both in time and space, in a way that is ultimately distinct from that of the tourist (Hall & Tucker, 2004a, p. 17). This is no exception. Otherness and othering are quintessential to the tourism business, which has produced powerful representations and imagined geographies (Hall, 1998; Salazar, 2013). It is vital to note that these representations are dialectically

reproduced with a physical reality of touristic spaces and indeed (neo)colonial power.

Debunking these representations and their effects has been one of the primordial efforts within postcolonial studies and CTS. According to its pioneers Ateljevic, Pritchard, and Morgan (2007), CTS is a political project that involves

more than simply a way of knowing, an ontology, it is a way of being, a commitment to tourism enquiry which is pro-social justice, equality and anti-oppression: it is an ‘academy of hope’ (Ateljevic et al., 2007, p. 3).

The critical turn in tourism studies aims to bring about a paradigmatic shift in tourism thinking that embraces multiple worldviews and cultural differences. This innovation is presented as an ‘academy of hope.’ This has methodological and epistemological implications. On the one hand, CTS requires a decentering of Western understandings of tourism and framing them as part of wider power relations. On the other hand, CTS necessitates an engagement with emancipatory alternatives to hegemonic Western tourism and ways of thinking about it.

I locate my research within CTS, but not without incorporating some of its salient and constructive critiques. One of the criticisms on CTS comes from a Marxist political economy perspective. Like other critics of postcolonial theory, Agarwal, Bianchi, and Judd argue that much tourism research has focused on social and cultural dimensions and has limited itself to the discursive, symbolic, and cultural realms of tourism, neglecting to a great extent the political and economic relations of power shaping tourism, globalization, and neoliberal capitalism (Agarwal, Shaw, Ball, & Williams, 2000; Bianchi, 2009, p. 487; Judd, 2006). Bianchi (2009) advocates for research that is not just limited to cultural relativism but is also a serious engagement with power relations. He builds on Britton’s (1991) plea for more critical literature that examines the character and politics of tourism and capitalism. The absence of an activist agenda in CTS is further taken up by Freya Higgins-Desbiolles and Kyle Powys Whyte (2013), who indicate that hopeful tourism has failed to engage with the problematic nature of researching oppressed and marginalized communities from a position of privilege. They also question how, in a practical sense, the hopeful tourism agenda can be achieved. Higgins-Desbiolles and Powys Whyte (2013) critique

‘hopeful tourism’ or the ‘academy of hope,’ as they warn to be careful about how we hope and who we hope for, because good intentions can have perverse effects. They argue that a fundamental, critical engagement with colonial power relations is an absolute requirement for hopeful tourism to become an emancipatory project.

Building on the epistemological critique of Donna Chambers and Christine Buzinde (2015), my thesis aims to explore the links between tourism and the coloniality of power. I aim to do so by delving into both theoretical work as well as concrete historic and contemporary cases of how settler colonialism, in particular, works through tourism. However, Chambers and Buzinde pinpoint the problematic nature of the coloniality of knowledge production within CTS, and indeed the lack of (or unawareness of) political engagements of those who are producing knowledge. The authors encourage us to look beyond a mere ‘academy of hope’ (Ateljevic et al., 2007; Pritchard, Morgan, & Ateljevic, 2011) and move from *postcoloniality* to *decoloniality* in tourism research. Chambers (2007, p. 114) challenges the tension between CTS’s relativist ontology, which does not seriously challenge hegemonic power relations but at the same time claims to be emancipatory. There is a need for CTS to shed this ontological relativism and be political in research engagements by identifying these urgent struggles within tourism and investigating them to oppose and resist oppression within the field of tourism. Chambers insists on embracing an emancipatory political agenda in CTS and urges scholars to seriously reflect on the paradigmatic premises on which their research is based, instead of falling into the trap of ontological relativism.

I attempt to do this by exploring the complex entanglement of tourism and the study of tourism within the ‘coloniality of power’ (Quijano, 2000, 2007) as suggested by Chambers and Buzinde (2015). In this way, I will not only expose tourism as being part of a hegemonic colonial project, but also—as I and others have advocated elsewhere (Grimwood, Stinson, et al., 2019; Kelly, 2016; Pritchard et al., 2011; Vanden Boer, 2016)—as a potential site of anticolonial struggle and unsettling hegemonic knowledge, representations, practices, and material realities.

1.2.3. State of the art of tourism research in Palestine and Israel

Early tourism to historic Palestine has been studied from the perspective of imperialism and colonialism (Di Nepi & Marzano, 2013; Obenzinger, 1999; Shamir, 2003; Stidham Rogers, 2011). However, research focusing on Zionism and tourism has largely ignored this context. The study of Jewish- or Zionist-centered tourism in Palestine has mostly been conducted from the perspective of nation-building and Zionism as a national project (Berkowitz, 1997; Cohen-Hattab, 2004; Cohen-Hattab & Katz, 2001; Cohen-Hattab & Shoal, 2015; Cohen, 2014; Kohn & Cohen-Hattab, 2015). Two substantial studies of the topic are, first, Michael Berkowitz's (2013) investigation of the ideology of Zionist travel and the control over tourism exerted by national organizations during the British Mandate era, and, second, Kobi Cohen-Hattab's and Noam Shoal's (2007) comprehensive work on tourism in Jerusalem during that same period. However, the authors neglect that within Zionism, nationalism indicates a disassociation from and neglect of the native people that was designed to lead to dispossession and expulsion. Ilan Pappé (2008, pp. 623, 631) reminds us that Zionism as a nationalist movement employed, and still employs, colonialist tools to implement its strategy and vision, and this should be taken up in the analysis of Zionist tourism in Palestine. As Israeli scholars, these tourism scholars are unreflective about their positionality and do not question the settler colonial logic within Zionism.

A second body of literature on tourism presents a policy-oriented, managerial perspective. In Israel, this ranges from how to deal with the impact of terror and war on the sector (Fleischer & Buccola, 2002; Mansfeld, 1999), to marketing and building a positive image of a destination in prolonged conflict (Avraham, 2009; Beirman, 2002; Campo & Alvarez, 2014), to cultural and religious conflict over touristic spaces (Cohen-Hattab & Shoal, 2007; Shoal, 2013; Urieli, Israeli, & Reichel, 2003). In this kind of work, structural power relations are largely ignored through presenting a conflict between equal parties that is caused by cultural or religious differences rather than being the result of a settler colonial project. Managerial tourism literature on Palestine addresses the potential benefits of tourism for Palestine, especially in the context of the new era that dawned for Palestinian tourism after the signing of the Oslo agreements in 1994 (Al-Rimmawi, Al-Khateeb & Kittaneh, 2013; Al-Rimmawi, 2003; Çakmak & Isaac, 2012; Hardan Suleiman

& Mohamed, 2011; Ijla, 2014). Here, tourism is presented as a potential growth industry for Palestine that can attract foreign revenues and create jobs. While these authors do take a critical stance toward the military occupation of Palestine by Israel, they understand tourism first and foremost as a business and industry and envision it as an opportunity for economic development in Palestine. In doing so, they largely reify the liberal development myths proclaimed by tourism that also serve the settler colonial project in Palestine. Mass tourism has indeed been widely criticized for making use of Palestinian spaces, while benefits flow back to Israel (Hever & Hackbarth, 2014). This also resonates with the long-known global (neo)colonial structure of the tourism industry, in which profits flow back to wealthier countries (Britton, 1982).

In other instances, the literature has also shed light on tourism as an instrument of peaceful resistance against Israeli oppression (Isaac, Hall, & Higgins-Desbiolles, 2016). Here, solidarity tourism is presented as a potential source of economic benefits for the local Palestinian population. Several authors have argued that this kind of tourism can help raise political awareness of the Palestinian cause in those that visit (Griffiths, 2016; Higgins-Desbiolles, n.d., 2013; Isaac, 2011, 2010a, 2010b; Isaac & Hodge, 2011; Isaac, 2010; Isaac et al., 2016; Kassis, 2006, 2013; Kassis & Solomon, 2013; Kelly, 2016). They argue that alternative tourism can generate international solidarity and create a platform for Palestinians to counter the physical and discursive erasure they face in light of the expanding Israeli colonization and occupation. Inspired by Scheyvens' (2002) concept of 'justice tourism,'¹¹ Rami Kassis (2006, p. 3) calls for a new kind of tourism in Palestine that

...builds on a human foundation, which prevents or minimizes the negative aspects of mass tourism by planning and regulating tourism based on the interests of local populations.

¹¹ According to Scheyvens, justice tourism "builds solidarity between visitors and those visited; promotes mutual understanding and relationships based on equity, sharing and respect; supports self-sufficiency and self-determination of local communities; maximizes local economic, cultural and social benefits" (2002, p. 104). Scheyvens illustrates 'justice tourism' as storytelling about oppression, voluntary conservation work, tourists being educated about poverty, tourists volunteering in development practices, and revolutionary tourism (2002, pp. 105–119).

He sees justice tourism as a means to counter the cultural domination that has been reproduced in global mass tourism. However, there have been voices raising concerns about alternative or politically oriented tourism in Palestine.

Despite all the noble intentions that international tourists may have, Belhassen, Uriely, and Assor (2014) warn of the negative effect political activism can have on spaces of conflict by slowly turning them into touristic destinations. These authors examine the case of Bil'in, a Palestinian village located in the path of the Israeli separation wall where weekly Palestinian protests have generated an influx of foreign solidarity tourists. Traveling to this place becomes an act of political activism. However, the flipside is a touristification and commodification of this place that might end up undermining and depoliticizing that very political activism. Koensler and Papa (2011) signal the unintended effect of reproducing hegemonic power relations in solidarity tourism in Palestine. Similarly, Landy (2008) makes critical observations on study trips to Palestine and Western tourists' discursive dominance of Palestinian hosts. Having been in Palestine gives tourists political agency as advocates for Palestine when back home. Landy found that during study trips, Palestinian experts were given very limited space to express themselves on issues wider than their own experiences. The trips created a situation of "a discursive colonization of Palestine by well-meaning Western activists" (Landy, 2008, p. 203). In addition, Jean-Klein (2002) compares what she defines as 'political observation tourism' in Palestine with 'auditing.' During tours, international activists are in fact 'reviewing' political and social activism in Palestine. She marks Western activist tourists as representatives of modernity, which is used as the standard to judge Palestinian activists. Again, her findings point to the way colonial relations are being reproduced in tourism, even if in solidarity and with good intentions. Stamatopoulou-Robbins (2008, p. 114) addresses similar questions on 'being there' and 'witnessing' as political acts in the context of solidarity tourism. She argues that the physical act of traveling is necessary to generate solidarity in the first place and therefore "solidarity relies on and reifies that same power structures it aims to take apart." Experiencing the situation in Palestine through travel provides activists with the relatively easy and comfortable position of being in solidarity with the victims instead of scrutinizing their relationship with the perpetrators. Solidarity tourism and volunteer tourism is as much about the construction of the tourists'/activists'

self-identity as it is about the injustice and inequality it seeks to address (Isaac & Platenkamp, 2010, p. 153).

Knowledge production is another important vantage point from which tourism practices have been studied. This literature exposes how tourism is prone to advancing hegemonic ideologies and power relations. Rebecca Stein's (2008) seminal work *Itineraries in conflict* examines how the Israeli nation-state is reshaped through the practices of Israeli tourists during the Oslo process until the second intifada. Drawing on the work of Judith Butler and Michel Foucault, she uses the lens of 'national intelligibility' to understand what is being produced within the touristic sphere. According to Stein, Palestinian identity was made consumable in a depoliticized way as 'Arab culture.' Tourism articulated Palestinians and made them intelligible according to the hegemonic Israeli national perception. 'Arabness' shifted in the Israeli imagination from being merely a threat to being a subject of leisure, hedonism, and consumption. Stein demonstrates how this renewed intelligibility was reflected in the itineraries of Israeli tourists and in the emergence of an ethnic tourism market, in which Palestinian culture was disentangled from its politics and history and produced as harmless for the Israeli public.

Tourism provided a stage for the reassertion of prevailing national logics, as the tools of cultural performance and consumption provided another idiom by which to dispossess Israel's Arabs citizenry of their history, agency, and symbolic stature within the nation-state. (Stein, 2008, p. 49)

Stein argues that tourism is a site of political meaning making (p. 49): The hedonism of the Israeli tourist going to Palestinian spaces is in itself symptomatic of the broader political changes that were induced by the peace process. Stein argues that Palestinians become intelligible as "objects of Jewish desire" without any recognition of their political agency or rights (p. 49). In this sense, tourism is powerful at depoliticizing heritage and identity that is deemed a threat to the Zionist project of the Jewish state.

What is so interesting about Stein's work is that it shows how discourses in tourism may have transformed and shifted the dominant understanding of Israeli identity and the idea of 'one Jewish people' by promoting and marketing the idea of coexistence with the 'Arab' population. This however without ever undermining the Zionist settler project. Tourism development and investment by the Israeli state in Palestinian spaces within Israel can be

considered as a way to produce and fix Palestinian space. For Israeli tourism workers and planners, what is valued in Arab culture is the proclaimed 'authenticity,' which is always defined on Israeli terms (Stein, 2008, p. 59). They turn Palestinians into people of the past, living in spaces where modernity has not yet manifested itself. Touristic places, discourses, and activities create sites of enunciation that produce a sense of national belonging in which Palestinianness has no political meaning.

Other important work has scrutinized the political implications, power of discourses, and representations of tourism in the Palestinian and Israeli context (Brin, 2006; Brin & Noy, 2010; Clarke, 2000; Feldman, 2007, 2011; Noy, 2011, 2013). Bowman (1992) and Feldman (2007) found that narratives on cultural and religious tours legitimized the Zionist political project both explicitly and implicitly. The shared Orientalized conscience between Israeli guides, Western tourists, and pilgrims made it easier for those tourists to relate to myths of 'otherness' and 'backwardness' of Palestinians. At the same time, 'sameness' and 'modernity' of Israeli Jews and tourists are being reproduced on tours (Bowman, 1992). Moreover, Feldman (2007) points to the strong convergences between Zionist and Protestant beliefs that coalesce in tours of religious sites of the Old City of Jerusalem. These assumptions allow Israeli guides, in collaboration with Protestant pastors, to erase conflict and contestations over space by performing the Biblical Land that depoliticizes. Guides and pastors normalize the shared Zionist and Protestant understanding of religious sites while rendering Palestinian stories invisible. By emphasizing that Palestinian and Israeli guides do not operate or "compete in the same level playing field," Feldman exposes pilgrimage narratives as normalizing Israeli hegemony (Feldman, 2007).

From what was outlined above, we can conclude that tourism is entangled in the making of consumable realities that produce political meaning by reproducing dominant power relations as well as contesting them. I aim to take these previous insights one step further by understanding tourism as embedded in and reproducing settler colonial relations. In doing so, I also formulate a critique on the historic analysis of tourism in Palestine and Israel that does not place tourism within the wider project of settler colonization and hence fails to acknowledge both the discursive and the material relations of domination embedded within tourism, as well as its potential in anticolonial struggle. These relations are not straightforward. Stein (2008), for example,

found that Israeli national discourses of ‘Arabness’ were at times reinforced by Palestinian performances in the tourism business in an attempt to make a profit. Similarly, we have seen that international solidarity tourism, which is aimed at countering hegemonic power relations, often ends up reproducing them instead (Jean-Klein, 2002; Koensler & Papa, 2011; Landy, 2008). This shows us how relations between the settler and native population, locals and tourists are not straightforward but complex: entangled in the manifold ways in which tourism is being produced and consumed. Tourism in Palestine is a messy business.

1.2.4. Settler colonialism as a paradigm

Settler colonialism has been theorized as a form of oppression and domination that is distinct from other processes of colonization and imperialism (Banivanua Mar, 2010; Barker, 2012; Coulthard, 2014; Veracini, 2010; Wolfe, 1999a, 2006). The critical field of settler colonial studies started with the work of native scholars within various fields, for example, Native American or Indigenous studies, who have always pointed to the structural and enduring effects of settler colonization (Jafri, 2017; Kauanui, 2016; Vimalassery, Pegues, & Goldstein, 2016). The settler colonial approach introduces critical insights into the continuing relations of domination and violence between Indigenous people and settlers (Johnston & Lawson, 2000). These can only be exposed by understanding settler colonialism as a structure that is not bound to the past (Kauanui, 2016).

Patrick Wolfe’s contribution has been key to the reemerging field of settler colonial studies. He famously conceptualized settler colonialism as a structure that continues in time, not an event in the past. This means that decolonization never took place in settler societies. Wolfe’s approach frames countries such as the US, Australia, Canada, and Israel as places of ongoing colonization. This insight allows us to connect the past to the present and unveils it as inherent to the structures of domination created by the settler colonial enterprise. This also helps us “to challenge the normalization of dispossession as a ‘done deal’ relegated to the past rather than ongoing” (Kauanui, 2016). In the case of Palestine, this translates into the Nakba or catastrophe as an ongoing process rather than an event that took place in 1948 (Jabary Salamanca, Qato, & Rabie, 2012).

Wolfe has identified the logic of elimination as the organizing principle of settler colonialism. The principle intersects with the settler's constant drive for the acquisition of territory (Wolfe, 1999, 2007). This dual logic regulates the settler colonial relationship between territory and demography. On the one hand, the settler sets out to maximize the acquisition of Indigenous lands. On the other hand, the land needs to be settled by a settler population. This can only be achieved through the delegitimization of native claims to the land and the effective dispossession of Indigenous people. Huggill (2017) explains that these forms of dispossession of land and self-determination are complex and comprise intersecting forms of domination. This ranges from genocide and physical violence (Wolfe, 2006) to assimilation (Hoxie, 2008; Moran, 2005). The violence of erasure and appropriation can also be traced in race and gender (Stasiulis & Yuval-Davis, 1995), legality (Carr, 2016; Ellinghaus, 2018; Joronen, 2016), education (McLean, 2013; Pacini-Ketchabaw & Affrica Taylor, 2015; Regan, 2010), nature (Banivanua Mar, 2010; Long, 2009; Willems-Braun, 1997), culture (Cooke, 2016; Veracini, 2006), architecture (Weizman, 2007; Yacobi, 2016), sexuality (Morgensen, 2012), and sexual reproduction and demography (Vertommen, 2017).

The last key characteristic of settler colonies is the replacement of the native population by the settler population. To illustrate this dual movement of creation and destruction within settler societies, Deborah Bird Rose (2004, p. 62) uses the metaphor of the right and left hand:

The right hand of conquest can be conceptualized as beneficent in its claims: productivity, growth, and civilization are announced as beneficial actions in places where they purportedly had not existed before. The left hand, by contrast, has the task of erasing specific life: Indigenous people, their cultures, their practices of time, their sources of power, and their systems of ecological knowledge and responsibilities will all be wiped out and most of the erasure will be literal, not metaphorical. This creates the *tabula rasa* upon which the right hand will inscribe its civilization.

It concerns a zero-sum game in which the natives are gradually but surely replaced by settlers. Moreover, structural relations are such that they erase or suppress the natives while replacing them with settlers (Johnston & Lawson, 2000; Wolfe, 2006). Crucial to the elimination and replacement of the native population is the native counterclaim (Wolfe, 2006, p. 389), in which the settlers become the native population. Settler colonialism is not just about obtaining territory; it is about transforming it to accommodate the settlers, to

make it theirs. Settlers ‘cease’ to be colonizers when they become the majority of the population: they are normalized and indigenized (Johnston & Lawson, 2000, p. 369). Complete replacement is however never fully achieved.

The research agenda proposed by Wolfe aims to end the involvement of academics in the reproduction and reification of settler colonialism and native elimination. He argues that writing in the representation of Indigenous discourses without questioning the structural context is a form of settler assimilation. As “silence constitutes consent,” these well-intended academic narratives cannot escape the panoptic settler structure either (Wolfe, 1999, p. 213). Wolfe therefore argues that “what needs to be written in is not the agency of the colonized but the total context of inscription” (Wolfe, 1999, p. 214). However, by focusing so strongly on the structure, Wolfe leaves little space for native and settler agency to either escape the system or bring it down and effectuate change. And, while his contributions to Settler Colonial Theory (SCT) have been acknowledge, Wolfe’s theorization has been criticized for its structuralism and binarism (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Busbridge, 2018; Day, 2015; Macoun & Strakosch, 2013; Merlan, 1997; Povinelli, 1997; Sissons, 1997; Snelgrove, Dhamoon, & Corntassel, 2014; Svirsky, 2014, 2017).

The presentation of settler colonialism as a zero-sum game leads to a binary distinction between settler and native, in which the native is trapped in an inevitable, all-encompassing structure of elimination. Wolfe’s critics argue that this approach takes the politics out of the equation and leaves no room or entry point for resistance against the system or Indigenous agency. Svirsky (2017) challenges Wolfe’s structuralist approach by arguing that it obscures our ability to imagine both an end to settler colonialism and diminishes resistance, as it is always contained by the hegemonic system:

we risk conceiving no outside to settler colonial power. Thus, oppression and domination in all their forms and shapes are given explanatory monopoly, replicating their omnipresence in the shaping and managing of life. (Svirsky, 2017, p. 22)

Francesca Merlan (1997) argues that the main problem with Wolfe’s argument on the continuity of the settler logic of elimination is that his diagnosis of the settler project means that settler colonialism is “impervious to agency and event.” Building on Merlan, Svirsky (2014) explains that “Wolfe’s binarism leaves unexplained the liveliness of the forces that the settler elimination machines have to work against in order to maintain their primacy.” The only

option that remains seems to be opposing the settler colonial structure, which of course does not equal decolonization (Busbridge, 2018, p. 103). Taiaiake Alfred and Jeff Corntassel (2005, p. 601) warn that “there is a danger in allowing colonization to be the only story of Indigenous lives,” which often occurs by overstating the all-encompassing nature and finality of the settler project. Macoun and Strakosch (2013, p. 435) point to the trap of ‘colonial fatalism’ embedded in the structuralist narrative of settler colonialism and to how this also leads to many scholars finding it difficult to think beyond the settler colonial. Additionally, Sissons (1997) critiques the perseverance of settler colonialism and its continuity in time, while demonstrating that ruptures with earlier logics of elimination are observed and possible.

Povinelli (1997, p. 22) contests Wolfe’s (2013) claim that “the repudiation of binarism” is assimilationist and represents the settler perspective. She argues that this dismisses hybrid forms of colonial subjectivity. Macoun and Strakosch (2013, p. 426) further outline that this is largely due to the whiteness of settler colonial theory and understand it mainly as a white settler effort to understand contemporary colonialism, while failing to truly engage with Indigenous theory, practice, activism, and relationality. The authors point out that settler colonial studies mostly re-empower white, nonindigenous academic voices while decentering Indigenous resistance (2013, p. 436). These critiques expose the problematic relation of settler colonial theory with Indigenous agency and the transformational power of resistance.

As a way forward, Svirsky advocates for a relational approach to settler colonialism. Inspired by Deleuze and Guattari (1987, p. 41) and their conceptualization of structure, Svirsky (2017, p. 29) argues that “the word ‘structure’ may be used to designate the sum of these relations and relationships, but it is an illusion to believe that structure is the earth’s last word.” Building on these insights, Svirsky then urges us to ask, “what are the forces that bring about the variation of the parts of the structure and their relations, redefining it anew?” Snelgrove et al. (2014) also plead for a relational approach to settler colonial power and focus specifically on how settler colonialism is entangled with other forms of domination. Moving beyond binarism, the authors propose a multidimensional understanding of settler colonialism as relationally coproduced with “coloniality, racism, gender, class, sexuality, capitalism, and ableism.” Their approach reveals that various social struggles are interconnected and makes space for solidarity

between Indigenous and nonindigenous people. If one adopts settler colonial theory without taking this into account, one risks falling into the trap of reifying the settler structure, as Snelgrove et al. (2014, p. 4) point out:

without centering Indigenous peoples' articulations, without deploying a relational approach to settler colonial power, and without paying attention to the conditions and contingency of settler colonialism, studies of settler colonialism and practices of solidarity run the risk of reifying (and possibly replicating) settler colonial as well as other modes of domination.

If we do not understand how settlers are produced, we run the risk of representing them as some sort of transhistorical subject with transhistorical practices. Both the approaches of Svirsky (2017) and Snelgrove et al. (2014) give us insight into how to understand resistance against settler colonialism without falling into the structuralist confinement of reification. Relationality is key in imagining the decolonization of settler colonies: it offers an entry point for understanding the efficacy of resistance and rendering the elimination of Indigenous and shared life ineffective.

The analytical framework of settler colonial studies is not new to the Palestinian context (Sayegh, 1965) but has recently been inspiring several interdisciplinary scholars (Badarin, 2015; Busbridge, 2018; Dalsheim, 2005; Hugill, 2017; Jabary Salamanca, 2016; Jabary Salamanca et al., 2012; Jaber, 2019; Jong, 2018; Lloyd, 2012; Pappé, 2014; Pappé, 2012; Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2016; Tabar & Jabary Salamanca, 2015; Veracini, 2006, 2015b; Wolfe, 2012). According to Ilan Pappé, settler colonialism is the most comprehensive paradigm for interpreting the current situation in Israel and Palestine (Pappé, 2012, pp. 40–41). Indeed, colonization was inherent to the project of the Zionist movement (Pappé, 2006). During the British Mandate in Palestine, Zionist organizations were heavily involved in acquiring land and building Jewish settlements. They also organized the migration of Jewish people to Palestine. In 1948, the State of Israel was declared, and a large part of historic Palestine was ethnically cleansed of its Arab, Palestinian population (Pappé, 2006). By destroying their villages or repopulating these with Jewish settlers, and through the 'prevention of infiltration' and 'present absentee' law,¹² Palestinians were prevented from returning to their homes,

¹² The Palestinians who fled their homes due to the war in 1948 and became refugees or internally displaced people were not allowed to return to their homes. They were considered absent by the newly established Jewish state as, by using Ottoman law, the

and their property was declared state property. The creation of an ethnically Jewish state was only possible through the logic of elimination and replacement of the native Palestinian people. These same mechanisms were also at play in 1967, when Israel annexed East Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Golan Heights, and Sinai, and these areas were opened to Israeli settlement. In the West Bank, settlement was accompanied by an illegal military occupation, which in many analyses of the situation is foregrounded as the key problem. However, in doing so, the colonial logic behind the occupation is obscured and ignored.

The settler colonial approach has offered insights into the situation in historic Palestine from the start of Zionism. It taught us how the Zionist drive for territory has resulted in systems of oppression, dispossession, and violence against the native population. Literature has shown how material infrastructure such as roads (Jabary Salamanca, 2016), the cityscape (Badarin, 2015; Hugill, 2017), and nature (Jaber, 2019) have become absorbed into processes of settler colonialism. Settler colonialism reproduced a relationality that perpetuates the Israeli settlers' domination of the native Palestinian population and ultimately created the settler colonial present (Veracini, 2015a). Others have examined assisted reproductive technologies (Vertommen, 2017), gender and sexuality (Morgensen, 2012), settler identity (Dalsheim, 2005), and of course tourism (Barnard & Muamer, 2016; Vanden Boer, 2016). Building on Wolfe's critics, Busbridge (2018) argues that in the case of Israel and Palestine, binary distinctions between settler and native need to be understood as in fact messy. According to her, the national tendency in the conflict remains underexposed, while the "unique affective and socio-political resonances of the native/settler distinction in the Israeli-Palestinian context" are ignored, which makes settler/native relations much messier (Busbridge, 2018, p. 106). Nevertheless, Busbridge recognizes that dealing with the colonial dimension of the conflict is necessary, and that only decolonization can lead to a real solution, which makes SCT better equipped than other theories.

Israeli state took ownership of their properties. In practice, the Palestinian properties were transferred to Jewish settlers. The 'Prevention of Infiltration' law of 1954 ensured that Palestinian refugees residing in neighboring countries could not return to within the borders of Israel. The combination of these two legal instruments led to the dispossession of Palestinians on a mass scale.

Indeed, SCT has several merits when it comes to the study of tourism in Palestine. First, it makes visible the underlying ideology that structures tourism practices and relations. It allows one to understand how these are entrenched within a wider settler colonial relationality, which is not limited to Palestine. It is a methodological choice that enabled me to compare Palestine to other contexts of settler colonialism. It has shed light on how tourism practices have been mobilized in relation to the dispossession and elimination of the native population. This de-exceptionalizes Palestine: instead of framing it in terms of ‘conflict’ between Israel and Palestine, it forms a lens that exposes colonial relations. This analytic framework makes Israel and Palestine intelligible, in line with situations of dispossession and the eradication of natives as it happened in the US, Canada, Algeria, Australia, South Africa, and others.

Second, just like the flows of tourists, relations of dispossession, elimination, and domination do not stop at the green line. Analyzing these relations as a consequence of settler colonialism highlights the connections between what is happening on both sides within the same framework and goes beyond a mere analysis of ‘conflict’ and ‘occupation.’ Touristic spaces created in the ’48 territories are closely connected to those created in the West Bank. Both are situated within the same logic of erasure of the Palestinian population. It perspective allows us to examine how touristic technologies and methods cocreate a settler colonial situation while not being blinded by boundaries and restrictions that are imposed by the colonizer. This approach avoids falling into the trap of methodological settler colonialism by reproducing this same relationality in the research.

Last, SCT frames Israel and Palestine not as a conflict between equal partners but as an ongoing colonial situation. First, this has an impact on how we understand various forms of Palestinian resistance as legitimate parts of an anticolonial struggle of liberation. It also makes us rethink resistance in relation to the central logic of settler colonialism: the appropriation of space. Resistance relates to space; it is about Palestinians’ relationship with the land, their knowing and protecting the land both materially and through representations and affective relations with it. To fully comprehend what these kinds of spatial relations of resistance mean, I turn to a passage by Linda Tabar and Chandni Desai in their editorial on “Decolonization is a global project: From Palestine to the Americas”:

In his interview, Jamal Juma describes how Palestinians living relationship to the land underpins the way they put their bodies on the line on the frontier spaces that the settler state attempt(ed)(s) to clear and eliminate Palestinians from. He describes how a Palestinian peasant, Abu Nidal, whose land was being confiscated by Israeli occupation forces, began to speak to the land during a direct action, while simultaneously mocking the settlers' inability to comprehend the living relationship Palestinians have to land. For many Palestinians, solidarity is not only limited to political relationships with other movements, but it is also expressed to the land. It is through protecting, knowing and taking care of the land that some Palestinians like Abu Nidal and Jamal Juma' enact solidarity with the land, and teach future generations of that responsibility. It is these embodied ties and practices of resistance that enable Palestinians to enact a decolonial process on a daily basis, one that constructs a present and a future beyond settler sovereignty and the "imagined geography" (Said, 1978) that it imposes on the land. The reproduction of the Zionist settler colonial enterprise depends on the ongoing erasure of Palestinian geographies, culture, history and life on the land, via replacement with the settler imaginary. It is for this reason that Palestinian embodied practices, living ties to place and presence on the land are such powerful forms of resistance. (Tabar & Desai, 2017, pp. xi–xii)

As Tabar and Desai explain, acts of resistance allow for a disruption of the settler world and create space for decolonial ways of life. Indeed, SCT foregrounds 'decolonization' (Veracini, 2011b) or 'unsettling' (Snelgrove et al., 2014) as the necessary path forward to end the colonial situation. Decolonization would require the dismantling of oppressive relations as well as settler privileges and the creation of common space, knowledge, and identity. Tabar and Desai (2017) further argue that:

decolonization is about imagining modes of life and futures that are rooted in indigenous Palestinian epistemologies, memory and relations to land, place and the body, and not solely just about replacing the colonial state and racial economy. (Tabar & Desai, 2017, p. xi)

Decolonization is not just about getting rid of a system of oppression but also about changing all economic, cultural and social relations as well as the material and discursive conditions that lie at the basis of its reproduction. As Svirsky (2014, 2017) has demonstrated, seeing the possibility of decolonization within SCT is only possible if we take a relational approach to settler colonialism and resistance. It is therefore vital to understand settler

colonization not as a rigid, all-encompassing structure but as assembled and constantly being produced. This approach allows us to not sink into colonial fatalism and to think the world beyond settler colonialism. It allows us to recognize practices, such as the peasant speaking to his land, as vital in the imagining and enacting of the potential of a decolonial future and Indigenous imagined geographies on a daily basis.

1.2.5. Tourism as a method for making worlds

Settler colonialism creates new realities through the conversion and appropriation of discursive and material spaces. It establishes a condition in which native spaces are reshaped into settler space, in which settler claims can constitute their own world. This world, however, is never fully finished; it is always contested by Indigenous alternatives that are at hand. Tourism, and the consumable places it conceives, plays a role in the reproduction of this material, affective, and discursive relations that constitute settler colonialism as well as the spaces for resistance that can be created through touristic practices. The literature has mostly focused on colonial representation in tourism. For example, Buck (1993) has demonstrated how colonialism was manifested through attractive myths of “paradise” in Hawaiian tourism. Similarly, French colonial tourism was built on the idea of the exotic “African soul” that was accompanied by an extremely paternalistic view on African identity (Dulucq, 2009). Werry (2011) analyzed the consolidation of New Zealand’s settler state by looking at how the native Maori identity is mobilized in tourism marketing. Each of these authors illustrates how colonial representations become commodified and reproduced in commercial tourism. However, touristic representations “do not just reflect the world, they carve and forge the world too” (Hollinshead, 2002, p. 17). Imaginaries that are mobilized do not just represent but exercise authority over places and populations. Tourism is constantly remaking the world and does so in close entanglement with broader political processes, or ‘the political’ at large.

Hollinshead, Ateljevic, and Ali have proposed a research agenda that examines these processes as the ‘world-making’ capacities of tourism (Hollinshead, 2002, 2007; Hollinshead et al., 2009). By approaching tourism as inherently political, they seek to explore the declarative power that tourism has in terms of articulating meaning and truth over spaces, people, histories, nature, and so on. Hollinshead defines world-making as:

The creative and often ‘false’ or ‘faux’ imaginative processes and projective promotional activities, which management agencies and other mediating bodies engage into purposely (or otherwise unconsciously) privilege particular dominant/favored representations of places/people/pasts within a given or assumed region, area, or ‘world,’ over and above other actual or potential representations of those subjects. (Hollinshead, 2007, p. 168)

The worldmaking influence of tourism not only has a constitutive role over what we know about populations and destinations across the geographical world, but that role (in its collaborative and cumulative force) can become contextually sovereign in its normalizing and naturalizing effect—in each instance—over time. (Hollinshead et al., 2009, p. 428)

Hollinshead borrows the concept of world-making from the philosopher Nelson Goodman. Goodman (1978, p. 6) argued that worlds are not brand new but are made “from what is already on hand, the making is a remaking.” Hollinshead expands Goodman’s concept by building on Foucault to expose the quotidian power of tourism in constructing, reconstructing, and deconstructing places, people, and pasts, making objects and subjects and mobilizing them at the same time. What makes Hollinshead’s definition so relevant is the emphasis on the (un)intended ‘normalizing’ or ‘naturalizing’ effect that tourism has on places and people. Representations do not just show the world as it is but are instrumental in its creation (Hollinshead et al., 2009, p. 433). Approaching tourism from a world-making perspective uncovers normalization as a form of power at work in the articulation and standardization of destinations and their population (ibid., p. 434). It opens the door to identifying the authoritative function of hegemonic projects that are active within tourism, which often come from outside the actual populations and places they speak about. The ‘worlds’ in world-making are not restricted to the material world in its global sense but range from localities to regions, from people to pasts.

An emerging body of literature had taken up the concept of ‘world-making’ in tourism to reflect on these forms of coproduction (Ateljevic, Hollinshead, & Ali, 2009; Crossley & Picard, 2014; Hollinshead, 2002, 2007; Swain, 2009). The problem with the world-making approach is that it remains rather focused on imaginaries and representations. Tourism is largely understood as “an immense vehicle of cultural production” (Hollinshead, 2002, p. 8). The approach does not move beyond discourse and does not take into account the

material world that constitutes touristic places. This lacuna can be addressed by turning to ANT-inspired tourism literature. This body of literature has addressed how tourism makes worlds by bringing together the human and nonhuman, discourse and materiality. It focuses on “how tourism works” (Beard, Scarles, & Tribe, 2016; Adrian Franklin, 2004; Jóhannesson, 2005; Paget, Dimanche, & Mounet, 2010; Ren, 2011; Ren, Jóhannesson, & van der Duim, 2012; Simoni, 2007; van der Duim, 2007).

Actor-Network Theory in tourism builds on the performance turn, a perspective that foregrounds the making and co-constitution of tourism and other things, processes, and projects. In this light, tourists are not just visiting places; rather, they are performing them, and as they do so, they reconfigure spaces and places. This approach steps away from the classical singular narrative of the tourist gaze (MacCannell, 1992; Urry, 1990) and draws attention to the ‘madness’ of tourism and its designated spaces (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998). It entails a shift from the ‘what’ of tourism to the ‘how’; from ‘being’ to ‘doing.’ It is an engagement with tourism as a messy object (Ren, 2011). These authors are interested in how people, things, and places get entangled, assembled, ordered, and enacted within tourism. They approach tourism as a process of ordering and becoming, as an emergent project, rather than as a fixed object.

Inspired by the work of Latour (2004), Law (1994), Callon (1984), and Mol (1999) use ANT as a methodological orientation to question how tourism ‘works’ (Jóhannesson, 2005).

Modes or ordering are to be seen as more or less coherent sets of strategic notions about the way tourism should be enacted. Not only do they entail particular ‘dreams,’ conceptualizations of what tourism should look like held by tour operators, hoteliers, tourists, tourism agencies and offices or tourists. They also include a certain set of practices, that is internally consistent, more or less congruous ways of enacting tourism informed by underlying definitions of the situation and providing feedback that might modify these definitions. (Jóhannesson, Ren, & van der Duim, 2012, p. 165)

Franklin (2003, 2004, 2007, 2008) has been particularly influential. He starts from the premise that tourism is not a purely social activity but also implicates nonhuman objects, systems, machines, timetables, sites, photographs, tents, flows, visitors, businesses, etc. In sum, it is a complex, heterogeneous

assemblage; it is a “process of becoming connected” and a “way of being in the world” (Franklin, 2008, p. 32):

once formed and unleashed on the world, [tourism] took on a life of its own *as an ordering*, a way of making the world different, a way of ordering the objects of the world in a new way – and not just human objects. (Franklin, 2004, p. 279)

By drawing on Foucault, Law, Latour, and Deleuze and Guattari, this new tourism ontology opens the possibility for a genealogy of tourism. Orderings consist of narratives that prescribe what should happen: they contain utopic blueprints that are traveling paradigms that can transform places into destinations and create expectations. According to Franklin, tourism can be thought of as ordering in two distinct ways. First, in the way that touristic places are organized through mobility, and, second, in how world tourism is ordering a global space. In turn, the making or becoming of tourism can be described through several ordering effects. First, tourism as a global ordering has created touristic individuals (Franklin, 2008, p. 33): modern consumers who desire to travel and tour for their personal development and relaxation (Honey, 2008, p. 10). Human beings are not biologically programmed to be tourists; their desire to travel has been actively produced and facilitated. Franklin points to the rise of nationalism, modernity, and to a lesser extent capitalism as being essentially the birth of this desire (Franklin, 2008). Second, tourism has provided a set of repertoires of touristic performances that have been imported into, and invoked in, certain places (Franklin, 2003, pp. 14–15). The touristic repertoire can profoundly change both material and nonmaterial things such as places, cities, and cultures, transform them into consumable goods, and alter their relation to the everyday life (Franklin, 2007, p. 137).

To comprehend the politics of ordering that are inherent to tourism, Chantal Mouffe’s conceptualization of ‘order’ is particularly useful. She reminds us that order is created through hegemonic practices, of which tourism can be a part. What emerges is ‘a natural order’ that seems part of ‘common sense.’ However, this is always a temporary and precarious articulation of contingent practices. What is also vitally important to understand is that according to Mouffe, every order is political and based on some sort of exclusion, because alternative possibilities are repressed (Mouffe, 2005).

Understanding tourism as a form and outcome of ordering allows us to shift the attention from isolated tourism destinations to spatial and global processes that materialize as places (Franklin & Crang, 2001). Tourism as ordering is “an ontology of unintended consequences, failure, unforeseen agency and promiscuous enrolment” (Franklin, 2008, p. 31). Building on Franklin’s conception of tourism as ‘ordering,’ authors such as Tribe, van der Duim, Jóhannesson, and Ren, among others, have deepened research on tourism from an ANT perspective by focusing on heterogeneity, multiplicity, and the political nature of orderings. Van der Duim has foregrounded the idea of ‘tourismscapes’ by building on Callon’s concept of ‘translation’ (Callon, 1984).¹³ He draws attention to the ‘processes of association’ within tourism that allow connections to be made between what was previously separated. Translation explains how both people and things become implicated in complex processes of touristic making through association. Thinking in terms of tourismscapes helps understand how intersecting assemblages take place and create meaning within tourism through the material world. The tourismscapes are modes of ordering ‘engineered’ (Jóhannesson, 2005, p. 140) with a specific form of *calculus*, a framework through which reality can be read, interpreted, and translated into new practices (van der Duim, 2007, p. 156).

Studying tourismscapes within a settler colonial context also highlights the exclusion that is happening and the dissociations that necessarily take place, and that are as constitutive to the world that is assembled as the positive associations that are being made. ANT does not say anything about what ordering is preferred, desirable, good, or bad; it tends to leave politics out (Jóhannesson, 2005, p. 141). In the ANT approach, the central question is how tourism works, but often there little attention is paid to how power works through tourism. Indeed, people and places are made touristic; however, the underlying power relations that give rise to the normalization of certain people and places as touristic are widely ignored. This also leads to a rather Eurocentric, Western interpretation of tourism as ordering, in which the tourism situation in the rest of the world is not considered. For example, the touristic ordering effect of cosmopolitanism is described by Franklin (2008)

¹³ This description of what translation is by Brown is particularly useful: “Translation appears as the process of making connections, of forging a passage between two domains, or simply as establishing communication,” it is “an act of invention brought about through combining and mixing varied elements” (S. D. Brown, 2002, pp. 4–5).

as bringing people together as equals, based on their common humanity.¹⁴ And while this might be the case in touristic experiences for some, in many other instances, ‘othering’ and indeed ‘colonial difference’ are fundamental to commodification. The marketing of people and places outside of what is considered the Global North is indeed still based on a neocolonial form of exploitation and appropriation. Similarly, Van der Duim gives the example of passports as stabilizers of touristic actor networks that order global movements. However, he forgets to mention that the colonial relationality translated within the passport generates access to some while excluding many others. The order that is created is bound up in the coloniality of power (Quijano, 2000).

Doreen Massey already warned us that the dispersion of power over actor networks as relational, as presented in ANT, does not mean that structural power inequalities no longer exist (Massey, 2000, p. 280). I believe this critique is necessary and can be integrated into tourism as ordering by featuring a more profound approach of multiplicity also within tourismscales. We should ask ourselves why a particular relationality of things or places becomes dominant over others. It shows how tourism objects, spaces, and so on are enacted, ‘done,’ or ordered in multiple versions. In this way, the ‘excluded’ or the ‘absent’ in every form of ordering also becomes visible, as the vantage point of multiplicity rejects the idea of a singular order (Hetherington & Lee, 2000). If reality is multiple, we can question the reasons and politics of why a certain reality is enacted rather than another (Law, 2004, p. 162). This creates an opening for ontological politics and detecting alternative realities that have been silenced. Mol reminds us that:

Ontological politics is a composite term. It talks of ontology—which in standard philosophical parlance defines what belongs to the real, the conditions of possibility we live with. If the term ‘ontology’ is combined with that of ‘politics’ then this suggests that the conditions of possibility are not given. That reality does not precede the mundane practices in which we interact with it, but is rather shaped within these practices. So the term politics works to underline this active mode, this process of shaping, and the fact that its character is both open and contested. (Mol, 1999, p. 75)

¹⁴ Franklin (2008) further specifies the effects of ordering as being: aestheticization, consumerism, translation, place-making, touristification, cosmopolitanism.

Looking at touristic destinations, these are spaces where the denial of multiplicity takes place, often grotesquely, as in the example of Silwan in East Jerusalem. I therefore recognize tourism as a methodological practice of coproduction that bring representations, humans, and nonhumans together to form seemingly coherent worlds. It is a way of ordering that draws people and things into larger capitalist and colonial power relations, which are in turn also reproduced. A relational ontology of tourism allows us to better understand the intersectionality of relations of power and imagine forms of contestation. ANT helps to feature the material world in these entanglements of tourism, settler colonialism, and resistance and move beyond discursive and cultural perspectives of tourism making the world. In doing so, it illuminates the centrality of physical space in the making and perpetuation of colonial worlds and their challengers.

1.2.6. The production of settler colonial tourism space

Space, and the production thereof, lies right at the intersection of tourism and settler colonialism. Tourism is a business of placemaking *par excellence*: it is centered around the production, commodification, and consumption of spaces as destinations and sites of leisure and interest. Producing spaces is also fundamental to settler colonization. Adam Barker (2012, p. 1) defines settler colonialism as “a distinct method of colonizing involving the creation and consumption of a whole array of spaces by settler collectives that claim and transform places through the exercise of their sovereign capacity.” Reading his interpretation in line with the work of Edward Said (2003, p. 3) reminds us that colonial discourses and colonial fantasies are not just ideas but have a corresponding material reality that is constantly being made and remade. What happens if this spatial capacity is combined with ongoing settler colonization, in which the appropriation and transformation of space is at the heart of the colonial project? How do commercial interests and the desire to consume places intersect with these colonial processes? And how does that affect the way we understand the world and by consequence act in it? What role does tourism play in the making of these settler colonial ontologies and in translating them into tangible, consumable spaces?

To understand how touristic spaces are socially and politically constructed and become entangled in relations of settler colonialism as well as resistance, I build on the work of Henri Lefebvre. Lefebvre’s approach, “space is in any

meaningful sense produced in and through human activity and the reproduction of social relations,” allows us to see that “space is both the locus and medium of power” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 94). Space has been molded through social and political processes (Elden, 2007, p. 107); consequently, “political struggles are not fought on the surface of geography, but through its very fabrication” (Pile, 2000, p. 273). Lefebvre wanted to grasp the world through an analysis of how space is produced and how it is experienced. He sees space produced in both a mental and a material way. Giving the example of monasteries, he explains how “a gestural space has succeeded in mooring a mental space [...] to the earth, thus allowing it to express itself symbolically and to become part of a practice”(Lefebvre, 1991, p. 217). For Lefebvre, space is always produced through human relations and activities and their reproduction. The power that emanates from space is not naturally given, but depends on those who possess the “means of spatial production” (Smith, 1998, p. 54).

In terms of methodology, Lefebvre’s genealogical approach helps us understand the making of space by tracing the process of genesis and development of spatial meaning (Merrifield, 2000). Lefebvre points out that all too often, we take space for granted: we treat it as given instead of uncovering the social relationships that are hidden in space and are produced in space (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 90). Spaces, as fetishized ‘things in isolation’ or black boxes, are depoliticized and problematic (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 87). Focusing solely on spaces as containers would leave out the deeply ideological geographies that represent space in a way that is profoundly intertwined with power relations (Gregory, 1995). In her work, Doreen Massey provides us with the seminal idea to rethink space as ontologically relational as well as a sphere of multiplicity and creative connections. Place is thus a temporary constellation, subjected to continual change and rearticulation (Massey, 2005). It is only by recognizing this openness and fluidity of space that we can trace the struggles and politics of placemaking. By not taking human and natural presence in space for granted, assemblages that are inherently political open up before us (Whatmore, 2002).

Lefebvre’s primordial interest is not space itself but the production of space. His approach allows us to start from the object and retrace the activities and relations that produced it (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 113). It makes us comprehend how space itself is appropriated and put to work in wider processes of

reordering, such as settler colonialism and tourism. He offers us a conceptual framework for understanding the production of space that consists of three elements: (1) representations of space, (2) spaces of representation, and (3) spatial practice:

1. The representations of space need to be understood as conceptualized space. These are abstractions of space and symbolic spaces, used by professionals (planners, developers, architects, ...). The representations of space objectify and codify space. According to Lefebvre, they are the dominant spatial form because they are “tied to the relations of production and to the ‘order’ which those relations impose and hence to knowledge and capital” (Merrifield, 2000, p. 174). Tourism maps, guidebooks, but also touristic rating apps are examples of spaces of representation. To get back to the Jerusalem cable car, this is the language of the planners that objectifies the space in terms of mobility, the maps of the cable car, and so on. These maps represent more than just a route; they reflect the logic of a united Jewish city. Lefebvre himself also gives the example of the resort as a representation of space, where exoticized touristic images are fixed in time and space (Buzinde & Manuel-Navarrete, 2013, p. 500).
2. Spaces of representation constitute the lived space. It is the space as experienced by those that inhabit and use it. It is the imaginary space that is felt, as space that is both physical and affective. It is the space as lived by inhabitants or tourists.
3. Spatial practices are those practices that ‘secrete’ space, according to Lefebvre. It is the day-to day-practice that produces and reproduces space, and that is often taken for granted. Merrifield (2000) explains that “spatial practices structure everyday reality and broader social and urban reality, and include routes and networks and patterns of interaction that link places set aside for work, play and leisure.” Tourism has become such a practice: it carves out spaces for consumption.

But what is really at stake in the production of space? What happens if people are deprived of the ability to produce their own spaces? Examining the production of space within the sphere of settler colonialism necessitates these questions. Lefebvre explains that:

If indeed every society produces a space, its own space, this will have other consequences in addition to those we have already considered. Any 'social existence' aspiring or claiming to be 'real,' but failing to produce its own space, would be a strange entity, a very peculiar kind of abstraction unable to escape from the ideological or even the 'cultural' realm. It would fall to the level of folklore and sooner or later disappear altogether, thereby immediately losing its identity, its denominations and its feeble degree of reality. (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 53)

Settler colonialism creates an abstract space or representation of space that imposes a spatial order with distinct discursive strategies that put into practice the logic of appropriation and replacement. The land was produced as empty through the concept of terra nullius, the introduction of misleading property rights or treaties, and planning aimed at the removal, enclosure, and erasure of Indigenous people. Banivanua Mar and Edmonds (2010, p. 13) refer to these processes as "genocide by cartography." The contributions in their seminal book *Making the settler colonial space* conceive the settler colonial space as a process of production through oppression, resistance, and accommodation. It is both a material place and phenomenon of the imagination (Banivanua Mar & Edmonds, 2010, p. 15). Settler colonialism can be understood as a distinct process of imposing a specific spatial order. This process was always oriented toward the separation of Indigenous people from their places in structural, violent, genocidal, and imaginative ways (p. 13). Or, as Cavanagh (2011, p. 154) puts it:

Racial and spatial ideologies coalesced to form part of the bedrock foundations of settler colonialism [...] space and race, therefore, made a world—or even several worlds—of difference in the settler colonial scheme of things. And they continue to do so today.

The Zionist colonization scheme, like other forms of settler colonialism, revolves around acquiring a maximal stretch of territory while at the same time incorporating the least native non-Jewish Palestinians as possible (Hanafi, 2009). This Zionist settler colonial logic is translated spatially on the land by various means, as Rafi Segal and Eyal Weizman (2003, p. 15) explain:

In an environment where architecture and planning are systematically instrumentalized as the executive arms of the Israeli state, planning decisions do not often follow criteria of economic sustainability, ecology or efficiency of services, but are rather employed to serve strategic and political agendas. Space

becomes the material embodiment of a matrix of forces, manifested across the landscape in the construction of roads, hilltop settlements, development towns and garden suburbs.

These schemes create a powerful space of representation that results in a system of dispossession, enclosure, enclaves, and ghettoization for Palestinians while maximizing the land at the disposal of Jewish colonists. The fixation on land has resulted in complex spatial arrangements in which Israeli military and civilian control is guaranteed over space in a three-dimensional way. Space is therefore not the background to the conflict, but a medium and even object of the conflict (Weizman, 2007). Halper (2000) has defined the situation as a geographic matrix of control installed by Israel, penetrating deeply into the daily life of Palestinians, cementing the population in an increasing state of immobility. The relationship between Palestinians and the land is constantly being restructured by means of infrastructure and a permit system, whose categories and permits structure the Palestinian ability to move. The discursive categories that are used to classify and organize both the Palestinian and Israeli population and territory are constitutive of power relations.

Lefebvre also reminds us that “one of the consistent ways to limit the economic and political rights of groups has been to constrain social reproduction by limiting access to space” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 22). Many authors have illustrated this point by showing how access to space within the settler colonies has been defined within colonial differences, in which boundaries are drawn based on race. Restrictive spatial arrangements prevent native populations from producing their own spaces and their own relationality in space, which in turn results in the overwriting and erasure of their culture, identity, spatial meanings, and intelligibility and eventually ‘world.’ In this respect, it is insightful to go back to what Vimalassery et al. (2016) call the process of “colonial epistemologies of unknowing.” The act of forgetting is not just “amnesia or omission,” but is created and reproduced in relations of violence. They argue that:

Colonial unknowing endeavors to render unintelligible the entanglements of racialization and colonization, occluding the mutable historicity of colonial structures and attributing finality to events of conquest and dispossession. (Vimalassery et al., 2016, p. 1)

The forgetting and silencing are not a simple consequence of the settler colonial structure but help produce and perpetuate it (Regan, 2010; Veracini, 2010, pp. 84–86). The colonial unknowing is the disentanglement of Indigenous relationality and the intelligibility that spouts from those relations. The creation of settler epistemologies goes hand in hand with that of the elimination and erasure of the native ones. The forgetting itself is a violent disappearing act.

How do touristic spaces play a role in creating this settler colonial spatial order? How are the colonial unknowing, legibility, and intelligibility realized through the production of touristic spaces? The issue of the touristic sites in settler colonies has been addressed by various authors (Palmer, 2007; Palmer, 2004; Boggs, 2017; Grimwood, Muldoon, & Stevens, 2019; Furniss, 2001).¹⁵ The work of Lisa Cooke (2017) in particular has been insightful when it comes to exploring these questions. Her eloquent reflections on being a tourist at the Sun Peaks Resort in British Columbia make visible how tourism in the name of economic development expands and normalizes the settler space. Touristic sites are therefore not mere epiphenomena of the settler space, but part of what she calls the “moral moorings” of settler colonialism (*ibid.*, p. 41). They are the spatial anchors that make us forget the initial violence, and the leisure and enjoyment there is shrouded in a cloud of forgetting. She shows this by painfully juxtaposing the modern mobility of the tourists in their chairlifts, paved roads, and ski runs with the colonial violence that enabled the creation of the place.

In the Palestinian context, several authors have shown how with the production of tourism sites material, mental, but also affective moorings for the Zionist settler project are created. Landy (2017) for example argues that both the Zionist settler gaze and the tourist gaze have a similar power effect on spaces, by making them self-referential by contrasting themselves with the locals and identifying with other tourists. His work—together with that of Noy (2011) and Ofran (2013)—on the ‘City of David’ in the Silwan neighborhood in East Jerusalem shows how the touristic site becomes a tool of colonial legitimization. By creating connections between the tourists and the mythical

¹⁵ For more research on the production of touristic spaces inspired by Lefebvre’s work, not necessarily in relation to settler colonialism, see Beriault (2017); Britton (1991); Buzinde and Manuel-Navarrete (2013); Farmaki, Christou, and Saveriades (2020); Franquesa (2011); Gatrell and Collins-Kreiner (2006); Gorbuntsova, Dobson, and Palmer (2019); Kahn (2000); Kulusjärvi (2019); Lin (2015); Saretzki (2018).

Jewish biblical past, the site completely ignores Palestinian history and presence in the area. Noy seeks to understand how tourism informs and molds “symbolic and material reality” (Noy, 2011, p. 28). This occurs through the Hebrew naming of the site and the production of material that represents that site, such as maps and brochures. They produce what Noy (2011, p. 34) calls “a purist fantasy of a homogenized ethno-national (Jewish) life” and erase all Palestinian presence in and around the site. Archeology is central in creating these linkages and is packaged in such a way as to legitimize Israeli claims to these spaces based on an ancient past. Archeology is misrepresented in these touristic sites and loaded with religious nationalism and Zionist perspectives, as is the case in the City of David or national parks (Abu El-Haj, 1998, 2001; Greenberg, 2009; Kadman, 2010, 2015). The material and narratives displayed at these touristic sites can be understood as a move to indigenize the Jewish settler population (Johnston & Lawson, 2000, p. 369) and delegitimizes Palestinian claims to the land.

Tourism sites also mobilize broader narratives that help shape Israeli settler society. Handel, Rand, and Allegra (2015) have identified such processes within Israeli wine tourism. With what they call “wine-washing,” these authors point to the normalization that takes place in vineyard tourism in the West Bank and the Golan Heights. The wineries are mostly located in what the authors call nonideological settlements. They create new Israeli spaces, which are marked not just by the appropriation of Palestinian space but also by actively creating a space that identifies with general Israeli culture through symbols of modernity and Western culture such as wine. It integrates the settlements into a whole world of meaning that is relatable and intelligible to international and domestic tourists. They are not just settling the land but also the ‘hearts’ of those who visit them.

The sense of place that touristic places convey is mobilized in processes of colonization, dispossession, and normalization. Moriel Ram’s work on Mount Hermon in the Golan Heights puts this in perspective. The Israeli side of the mountain has been transformed into a ski resort and popular touristic destination in Israel. By mimicking the Swiss skiing resorts, it is presented as a ‘normal’ and ‘ordinary’ ski resort, which hides the violence of the settler occupation and dispossession and integrates it into the fabric of the Israeli state (Ram, 2014). Ram (2014) demonstrates that tourists become complicit in physically transforming the mountain into settler spaces by literally making it

white. As such, he contends that “the construction of a ski resort on the cleansed Middle Eastern space recasts it as European” (ibid., p. 742). Tourism’s universal character that travels has this power of overwriting and rendering invisible.

1.3. Methodology and method

All modes of knowing work to exclude; they have no choice.
(Law, 2016, p. 21)

Thus, the interpretation of empirical details in fieldwork is always a way of reading and dwelling in the world through theory.
(A Cerwonka & Malkki, 2007, p. 4)

Ethics in tourism research is an arena ripe for the application of decolonizing strategies.
(Lee, 2017, p. 96)

It is only now, at the end of writing my PhD, that I have understood that travel is not only the subject of my research but also a central concept in the way I have been progressing through my work in this dissertation. Traveling has different meanings. Of course, I traveled to Palestine to do my research. Travel and tourism were the subject of my fieldwork. Me being there raised a whole set of questions: ethical, methodological, and personal. There were other forms of travel involved as well. For example, I often felt like a tourist in many academic debates. I wandered into what I considered interesting theoretical spaces, diverting from my theoretical itinerary. I observed them, dismissed them as irrelevant or too complicated, or I became fascinated by them, and deepened my exploratory routes that led me further and further away into more critical and conceptual literature. Wandering has led me to this point. A crossroads of empirical experiences and insights that intersects with inspiring academic debates that helped me make sense of what I encountered in my explorations. Last, the research and writing process itself was also a voyage in which I was also confronted with my own personality. I felt how at times my character enabled me to create connections with people, learn, and discover, while in other circumstances I shied away from contacting or engaging with certain people and from taking certain opportunities. It brought me from the most amazing and inspiring situations to those of doubt and

desperation. In this dissertation, I am now creating my own space of critical reflection on tourism, settler colonialism, and world-making practices that order understanding. I hope it can be a site of interest to be visited and enjoyed during travels of others in this messy field.

1.3.1. Epistemological travels

Conducting research while traveling to other places has a long and problematic legacy that is intrinsically intertwined with colonialism. Travel has been constitutive in making the world intelligible to the imperial and colonial eye. In her book *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples*, Linda Tuhiwai Smith demonstrates that travel, research, empire, and colonialism are practices that are profoundly intertwined. She reminds us that “the effect of travelers’ tales, as pointed out by French philosopher Foucault, has contributed as much to the West’s knowledge of itself as has the systematic gathering of scientific data” (1999, p. 2). Smith (1999, p. 8) further explains how many of the early ‘researchers’ were, in fact, travelers and adventurers that produced a colonial intelligibility of the world they encountered. Their stories about ‘others’ gave rise to colonial images that fixed people both in space and time. Their personal observations became objectified as ‘scientific’ and authoritative notions about the Indigenous people, of course filtered through their particular Western cultural views. Smith (1999, p. 48) reminds us that this was only possible because ideas and perceptions were validated through “the system of knowledge, the formations of culture, and the relations of power in which these concepts are located.” Knowledge never exists without an entire world of reference supporting the claims that are being made. Quijano (2000, 2007) has identified this dominant system as the ‘coloniality of power,’ in which ‘modernity’ and ‘coloniality’ are two sides of the same coin. He emphasizes that until today, this modernity/coloniality continues to have epistemic effects on people, on how they relate to the world and each other. Both Quijano and Mignolo (Mignolo, 2000, 2011) demonstrate how in the colonial knowledge system, the credibility of native epistemology was constantly being dismissed and undermined by positioning it against the backdrop of a universal truth that had emerged out of the local European histories. This the universal project of colonial and capitalist modernity, and its practices have always been contested by Indigenous knowledge systems and research methodologies (Rojas, 2016,

p. 373), of which many are centered around relational epistemologies (Bell, 2014; Gerlach, 2018, p. 3). Gerlach (2018, p. 4) explains that

from a relational stance, the relationships we have with each other are central to being knowers and being able to contribute to the construction of knowledge (Thayer-Bacon, 2003). Thus, relational processes of knowing take place in the context of relationships at a particular time and place and are always situated.

This debunks the myths of universality and positions the modern knowledge system as just one of many, hence not only exposing relations of oppression but also paving the way for knowledge outside of the seemingly totalizing system. To seriously engage with anti- and decolonial struggle, relationality is a methodological as well as ethical imperative.

This choice had repercussions for my theoretical framing of settler colonialism, tourism, and space. This same move toward relational understanding was necessary to rethink settler colonialism from an all-encompassing, fixed binary system to a dispossessing and violent but nonetheless also affective of articulation between space and people that involves both discursive and material practices. This opens up settler colonial studies to demonstrate that it is “fundamentally incomplete—and unable to be completed in the face of Indigenous resistance” and that it “has the potential to be a profoundly liberating and destabilizing move” (Svirsky, 2017, p. 24). The same accounts for space. Smith (1999, pp. 50–53) elaborates on how colonial conceptions of space continue to dominate spatial understanding. The colonial space is static, apolitical, compartmentalized, and measurable, which makes it easier to control and tame (Massey, 2005, pp. 7–8). This logic can also be traced in tourism sites that are carved out for consumption, often with consequences local inhabitants are pushed out and written out of these spaces. This process of dividing spaces is also a way of separating one human activity from another and humans from each other. Understanding tourism as a process of ordering helps us understand the relations of the production and consumption of space and how they create seemingly coherent worlds. Here, an ANT approach draws attention to the ‘making’ that happens. It allows us to trace the material fixations necessary to put in place and that play a role in the production and maintenance of these orderings. ANT also foregrounds the multiplicity and other connections that are always possible. It gives us a physical starting point for discovering alternative orderings that reorder settler

colonial relations, challenge coloniality, and decolonize. In the end, Massey (2000, p. 284) explains that what is politically at stake is not just resisting or finding a space where dominance is less effective, but most importantly transforming these unequal, discriminating, and exploitative spatial relations into more equitable and just ones.

Identifying and tracing the potential of a relational approach is key to my understanding of how to think tourism, settler colonialism, and space in more decolonial terms. Smith (1999, p. 20) describes decolonization as:

a process which engages with imperialism and colonialism at multiple levels. For researchers, one of those levels is concerned with having a more critical understanding of the underlying assumptions, motivations and values which inform research practices.

Reading this definition, I do not want to claim that my research has fully embraced a decolonial method. This has rather been a process of growing awareness and engagement throughout the research. First, this had an impact on reflecting on my relationality and positionality as a researcher, on which I will elaborate in the following section. Second, this evolving understanding also translated into the different approaches in the four chapters presented in this thesis. The first two cases focus strongly on the making of settler colonialism and tourism, on exposing relations of domination. Over time, I came to understand the vitality of presenting alternatives to this domination, the Palestinian efforts at turning tourism into a site of anticolonial struggle, and both the power and ambiguity that emanated from these commercial practices of resistance. Focusing on the Palestinian experience led me beyond the focus of dominating power relations to see the rich alternative possibilities that are constantly being opened in touristic practices.

1.3.2. On being a tourist/researcher in Palestine

The starting-point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is “knowing thyself” as a product of the historical process to date, which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory. (Said, 2003, p. 25)

Through my travels to and in Palestine, I became more and more aware of the inventory that I was actually carrying with me and that informed so many aspects of my research there. Becoming aware of how my own knowing,

values, and position were products of relations to broader political processes also made me more aware of how global relations of power were channeled through everyday encounters with Palestinians and Israelis. Traveling, reading, and discussions with colleagues challenged me and opened my eyes to who I was and where I was going. I also traveled to find my epistemic location (Grosfoguel, 2011) and what I want that location to be. As a white woman with a PhD position at a Belgian university traveling to Palestine, it is needless to say that my nationality, skin color, religious background, and education granted me certain privileges. This required what Ateljevic, Harris, Wilson, and Collins (2005) call a ‘double reflexivity,’ both inward of ourselves and outward of relationships, to scrutinize my own positionality and intersectionality with those researched. During the research, I came to better understand the ways in which my project and my self were entangled in colonial power/knowledge structures that put me in a privileged position when it came to access and credibility in terms of knowledge production. I do not want this reflection on positionality to be a “confession of privilege” (Smith, 2013) but rather the expression of a commitment to change the power structures and system of coloniality that enables that same privilege, through this research.

Doing research on tourism in Palestine, I became aware of the thin line between being a researcher and a tourist, and of what this means. Both tourists and researchers make sense of the world by traveling to places. In this sense, I would argue that travel can be understood as an epistemic practice, in which the one who travels can make claims of having insight and knowledge merely on the premise of ‘having been there.’ This raises all kinds of questions about the relation between knowledge production and travel. Who can travel? And what effect does travel have on the way the world is made and known by some, and not by others, in what could be called a global system of discriminatory access to travel, tourism, and mobility? Whoever is granted the privilege to travel also emerges as knowledgeable about a certain place and having a certain authority about defining it. During my research in a settler colonial context, these questions became all the more pressing. Racist restrictions on movement were so evident that they forced me to open my eyes to the global structures of (neo)colonial discrimination that help sustain them.

Entering and exiting Palestine was always a hassle. There was always the risk of being interrogated by Israeli border control and being denied entry when

flying into Ben Gurion airport. However, I was only interrogated once during my many stays in Palestine. The entire entering/exiting process was much easier for me because I was able to pose as an innocent 'tourist.' Dressing up for the Tel Aviv beach while in fact heading for Ramallah, I was able to circumvent difficult questions when entering the country. However, this was only possible because I was already in the comfortable position of being assumed to be a tourist. Me being white, having the Belgian nationality, and a Flemish name made me a 'credible' tourist in the eyes of Israeli border control. For the Palestinians, posing as tourists was not an option. A young salesman who worked in one of the Jericho souvenir shops told me about his attempts to travel to Sweden to visit a friend and see the country. Each time, his visa had been denied by the Swedish embassy, with the argument that "for a Palestinian, it would have been very unlikely to come just as a tourist." Thus, the (neo)colonial restrictions of movement imposed on him were not only limited to the militarized borders of the West Bank but their ramifications were global, reflected in a discriminatory system of/in tourism and travel. Just to give a quick comparison to indicate the scope of this system: unlike my Belgian passport, which has 184 visa-free destinations, the Palestinian passport only has access to 39 visa-free countries in 2019.¹⁶

In 2016, I joined a group of Palestinian hikers for a walk around a small village a few kilometers north-west of Ramallah. I was doing research on this group, trying to understand how their leisurely activities were part of their resistance to the occupation. When hikers from all over the West Bank, Jerusalem, and the '48 territories (that part of historic Palestine that became Israel in 1948) joined us at the site of departure, an Israeli police car passed by on the road bordering the village. Our group had clearly drawn police attention, as the vehicle stopped to observe us, then backtracked and drove onto the open space where our group had assembled. The policeman accused us of being troublemakers because we wanted to hike in the countryside, too close to the Israeli colonies. They forbade the group from starting the hike unless we would be escorted by the Israeli army and stay on the asphalted road, which was of course completely unacceptable to all participants. The police demanded to see the IDs of several people: a Palestinian guide from Jerusalem, a Palestinian girl from Ramallah, another Palestinian guy, and me.

¹⁶ Global Ranking 2019, Henley Passport Index www.henleypassportindex.com/passport-index, last accessed on April 3, 2019.

The girl had short hair and a nose piercing, the guide was wearing hiking boots, and all of them also basically looked ‘whiter’ than the rest of the group. The guide told me that they singled us out because we looked like Israelis and were assumed to be activists. The policeman took our IDs and passports without further explanation. After about half an hour, he handed them back to us, telling us we would get away with it, “this time.” Meanwhile, army reinforcements had arrived, with four extra Israeli soldiers now keeping their eyes and, of course, guns on us. At first, the group decided to stay put, as a way of protesting the ‘censored’ hike. But when the soldiers started to gear up, the group leaders decided it was time to get back on the bus and get out of there before the situation would escalate.

Looking back at that situation now, it might have been silly of me not to fear the soldiers. When they took my Belgian passport for inspection, I felt confident the piece of paper would somehow protect me, even though the soldiers were heavily armed. The sentiment of security it gave me came automatically; I did not think about it at the time. It is only later that I realized that this is of course how white privilege works. But the privilege reached beyond this sense of protection I drew from my passport. This also made me realize that, however naïve my assumptions might have been, they made me experience the entire encounter in a radically different way. My confidence in the protection my nationality and whiteness would give me was not available to my fellow hikers. In his recent article in the *Guardian*, Tariq Jordan makes a similar point. He recalls a situation at an Israeli checkpoint in the West Bank. A 13-year-old boy sitting next to him on the bus reassured him not to fear the soldiers, ensuring him that British passport was like “kryptonite”(Jordan, 2019). The passport is a rare good that gives its owner power, literally. But, of course, only if you have the right one, from a “strong nationality,” as one of my respondents called it.

The hiking incident also confronted me with how my Belgian passport not only gave me access to the field as a researcher but also allowed me to enjoy the land. The fact that I was able to enjoy and consume the place I was researching was a privilege often not granted to those I was researching. Palestinians face tremendous difficulty and danger while traveling and being tourists in their own country. Most Palestinians living in the West Bank, for example, cannot go to Jerusalem to visit the holy sites or enjoy the Jaffa beach. It is as that same salesman told me during our conversation: “Foreigners can

move freely, and the real owners of this land are locked up.” For me, it was easy to go back and forth between Jerusalem and Ramallah, or to travel to Bethlehem and back if I wanted. When interviewing people, they were often surprised about how much of the West Bank I had already seen and how accessible these places were to me.

While restrictions on mobility did not impede my research, it did complicate research collaboration. At the time, I was working with Hazem. We traveled around the West Bank, doing interviews and participant observation during hikes. However, to enter Jerusalem and '48 territory, he required a permit from the Israeli military; hence, we could not do interviews together there. It was not just a question of getting the permit. Hazem told me that he felt that applying for the permit was a way of recognizing and reaffirming Israeli colonial rule. He reasoned that, as a Palestinian, he should not need a permit to go to Jerusalem nor to the '48 territories or to Gaza, as they are an integral part of his country. Hazem's grounded moral objections made me question how my traveling, my posing as a tourist, my going back and forth between '48 territory, Jerusalem, and the West Bank were, in fact, reproducing the settler system of racialized mobility; a system that rendered me, like other foreign tourists, able to know and experience places Hazem was being excluded from.

How to deal with these issues as a researcher? We need to become more aware of how people's ability or inability to travel affects how we know the world and how indeed that (in)ability is rooted in local and international systems of discriminatory mobility. By doing research in places inaccessible to others, we are producing knowledge that positions us as knowledgeable. At the same time, those physically excluded from these spaces are also excluded from the knowledge production about them, even though they might have a connection to these places. If we consider travel an epistemological practice, what ways of knowing are being censored because of the restricted mobility of so many? Humility and a recognition of privileges is in order when researching these places. With humility, I mean that we should not be blinded by our own good intentions, as Burawoy confronts us:

No matter how we like to deceive ourselves, we are “on our side,”our mission might be noble but there is no escaping the elementary divergence between intellectuals [...] and the interest of their declared constituency. Relations of domination may not

always be as blatant, [...] but they are nevertheless always there to render our knowledge partial. (Burawoy, 1998, pp. 22–23)

Our ability to travel to and know these places should not be taken for granted but considered a privilege bound up in relations of domination. It is necessary to recognize the ‘situated knowledges’ (Haraway, 1988) this produces and situated epistemologies (Alcoff, 2007) they are located in. Only by putting this knowledge to use to challenge those power relations are we more than tourists there.

1.3.3. Empirical and methodological detours

Doing research and writing up this dissertation was to a large extent an exercise of intellectual nomadism (A Cerwonka & Malkki, 2007). The journey started with a Peace Park. At the time, I was not so much interested in tourism as I was in the captivating idea of a transboundary natural reserve that was to create an atmosphere of peace between two countries that were having troubled relations. The Jordan River Peace Park became the subject of my master’s thesis. While doing research in Jordan, it became clear that the prospect of tourism allowed people to completely rethink a highly politicized place and fill it with ideas of nature that resonated with earlier practices of colonial placemaking that occurred there. I became fascinated with how people could visit that place without really knowing where they were, or knowing about the violent settler colonial history that has been and still is unfolding there.

The park became the center of my PhD grant application. I wanted to know how “tourism projects, such as the Peace Park, rearticulate and reify place in a such a way that the place becomes instrumental in broader political processes of world-making.” However, when going back to Palestine for the first round of fieldwork, I was eager to explore other cases as well. I went on guided tours in Jerusalem and Hebron, did interviews in Ramallah, Bethlehem, Jericho, Nablus, Tel Aviv, and Jaffa, and went hiking all over the West Bank. Every turn I took seemed to confront me with issues of even greater relevance and importance and worth exploring further. But this inability to focus and this eagerness to constantly delve into new cases left me with a scattered landscape of touristic anecdotes and a flood of interviews that seemed to tell me an incoherent story. For example, I did a series of interviews on the touristic development of Jericho and also interviews with the Samaritans living on top

of Mount Gerizim near Nablus, which is both a religious and a touristic destination. Both tell compelling stories about how tourism development intertwines with places and identities, but none of them made it into this dissertation.

Fieldwork Diary, Jaffa, May 5th 2015

The doubts I have about myself and whether I can handle this PhD, have turned into a question of not whether but rather how I will do so. Method is the source of all my PhD misery but also the solution of many of my problems. What it boils down to, is writing to focus my thoughts and develop more concrete ideas. It is like sculpting. It is not about the mass, but how it is aligned, narrowed down. Only by boldly sculpting the edges, defining them, beauty can truly become visible. The Greeks knew this, Heidegger too. Boundaries are not negative; they make sure that things can manifest themselves. They are not positive in the normative sense, but they make things possible, a praxis that is creative. I need to find my boundaries, position myself for the sake of my thesis argument and my own creativity.

This excerpt of my fieldwork diary illustrates how extremely difficult I found it to draw boundaries around what had to be included in the research and what not. Tourism provides such a wide spectrum of possibilities to study, and in relation to settler colonialism everything seemed potentially interesting in Palestine. As I proceeded in my fieldwork, much happened on the way, in an improvised, provisional manner. Cerwonka describes fieldwork as “always already a critical theoretical practice; a deeply and inescapably empirical practice; and a necessarily improvisational practice” (Cerwonka, 2007). Indeed, it was a constant process of going back and forth between my empirical explorations, theory, and literature. The actual story that I wanted to tell was constantly being reshaped in function of the data I acquired. Maybe it was also partly due to the nature of the research topic that I found it difficult to demarcate the scope of my research. Phillimore and Goodson, for example, point out that tourism research is not bound by specific disciplines, and that multiple methods and research paradigms allow a “fluid approach to research.” Because of the interdisciplinary nature of the topic, many tourism researchers struggle with finding epistemological anchors for their field research (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004, p. 20). The fluidity results in a variety of potential research perspectives that can be taken, which poses challenges in terms of determining boundaries and scope, but offers opportunities at the same time. The advantage of the openness is that it allows for creativity in

terms of method and epistemology. It enabled me to employ a settler colonial perspective and the making of spaces and worlds as a lead into researching tourism. This choice was guided by a willingness to contribute to the study of tourism from the location of the Palestinian case study as well as a commitment to exposing the inherent, ongoing colonial violence that lingered in the making of so many touristic places.

1.3.4. A patchwork of data collection

In the course of my PhD research, I conducted five periods of fieldwork in Palestine and Israel that accumulated in a stay of approximately 11 months, mostly being based in Ramallah and East Jerusalem.¹⁷ During this time, I did research in the Central Zionist Archive and the Israeli National Library, both located in Jerusalem and the Archive of the Israeli Electrical Corporation in Haifa. I conducted a total of 150 interviews from 2010 to 2016.¹⁸ The respondents were Palestinian and Israeli tour guides, owners and employees of tour operators, hotels and gift shops, officials from the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism, and municipal employees and politicians, NGO workers, academics, hikers, Palestinians homestay owners, and Israeli settlers in the West Bank. I started with very general interviews with the main players in the field of tourism in Palestine. I interviewed especially tour guides and tour operators, as they not only occupy a position as gatekeepers but often have a large network of contacts in the tourism industry (Cohen, 1985; Ioannides, 1998). I used the exploratory interviews with guides to test the water and determine what potential cases would be of interest to my project. I then mostly used the technique of snowballing to further identify interesting respondents and contacted them over the phone or through Facebook. Facebook was a valuable source for finding new respondents, especially the Palestinian groups. The social media platform not only allowed me to get in touch with them but also to become part of their group and follow their activities online. It helped me stay updated once back home after the

¹⁷ April 2010 (based in Amman), October 2012 (based in Ramallah), March 23, 2014 until May 5, 2014 (based in Ramallah), January 15, 2015 until February 22, 2015 (based in Jerusalem), March 31, 2015 until May 22, 2015 (based in Jerusalem), January 7, 2016 until March 14, 2016 (based at Birzeit University), September 1, 2016 until November 30, 2016 (based at Birzeit University).

¹⁸ The first interviews in 2010 were conducted in the framework of my master's thesis on the Jordan River Peace Park. I officially started my PhD in 2014.

fieldwork. It also gave me different insights on the interaction between touristic activities offline and online and the effect thereof, which I elaborate on in the third chapter.

The interviews I conducted were mostly semistructured—in which I prepared a series of questions—and open, in which several themes were discussed, depending on the situation and person in question. I was able to record most of the interviews after having received the consent of the respondents, then I transcribed them literally. For part of the transcription, I worked with a freelancer from Gaza to whom I sent the audio files. When I was unable to record, I tried to write down as accurately as possible what had been said. I have tried to include many of the interesting quotes and insights of respondents in the chapters. I did so while taking into consideration the context of the interview and issues of translation. Due to my limited knowledge of Arabic, many of the interviews were conducted in English and also in French. It being both mine and the respondents' second language, this sometimes led to situations in which both of us were searching for the exact, right word to explain something. In other cases, the translation from Arabic to English was difficult and in some cases even impossible, for example for concepts such as 'Watan' or 'hiking' (see methodological intermezzo, p. 190).

My lack of knowledge of the Arabic and Hebrew languages severely undermined my ability to research Palestine and Israel. Despite efforts to learn the colloquial Arabic of the Levant, I never attained the level of conversational skills that would have allowed me to conduct interviews in Arabic. The language problem was partially mediated by my choice to do research on tourism, a sector in which the command of both these languages is a huge advantage for those working in it. In the first phase of my research, I interviewed Palestinian guides, tour operators, and government officials. However, my linguistic focus also excluded many people, and I came to find this increasingly problematic. I was often hearing the same story and I wanted to go beyond that, to look at what people were doing rather than at discourses, looking at the 'how' rather than at the 'why.' I decided to do more participatory observation in guided tours and hikes. I hoped this would give me more practical insights into how tourism actually worked and what were the lived experiences of Palestinian tourists in a settler colonial context. It allowed me to focus more on what people did, rather than on what they were telling me. To do this, I teamed up with Hazem Mized, a student from Birzeit

University, whom I hired to be my research assistant and translator. We embarked on long hikes with other ‘tourists’ and saw some of the most beautiful places in Palestine. Working with him granted me access to those in the touristic margins that could not be considered gatekeepers or tourism elite.

Translating the knowledge Palestinian and Israeli respondents confided in me into ‘data’ and theorizing it sometimes felt wrong as it abstracted away from their histories, personalities, and also their kindness shown toward me. It is, therefore, necessary to see these cases as coming together through more than just interviewing or observations from my side; as also through interpersonal relations and the expertise of the many Palestinian people who contributed to this study. I do not want to present these cases with a “positivistic expert voice” (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004, p. 20), extracting knowledge to make absolute truth claims. Rather, they are means of calling attention to some compelling empirical stories to make sense of touristic entanglements with settler colonialism. After all, as Lund (2014, p. 224) coherently summarizes: “a case is not ‘natural,’ but a mental, or analytical, construct aimed at organizing knowledge about reality in a manageable way.”

Besides this lived experience, I also felt the need to have a historically contextualized approach to the relationship between tourism and settler colonialism, and became necessarily intrigued by how the emergence of tourism has always been profoundly entangled with processes of nationalism and colonialism. Given its historic legacy entrenched in colonialism, how could tourism still be useful in more emancipatory projects? These questions led me to employ a multi-method approach or triangulation, in which archival research and literature study was combined with interviews and participant observation. This is not an attempt to verify any ultimate objective reality, but an “alternative to validation” (Flick, 2009, pp. 444–445). Using multiple methodological practices allows a qualitative researcher to come to a more in-depth, rich, and complex answer to their research question (Flick, 2009, pp. 444–445). It gives a multitude of perspectives on the same story. The cases I present in the following chapters aim to do so by providing different entry points for understanding the entanglements of settler colonization and tourism. By bringing together different realities, I explain the process of their making. My research is not an ethnography of tourism in Palestine. However, I employed ethnographic methods and techniques for data collection that allowed me to grasp the complexity of touristic practices. All practices of data

collection I employed during my research were varied and specific to each of the chapters that I have laid out in this dissertation. It became a methodological patchwork that allowed me to document the story of tourism and settler colonialism in the case of Palestine. This is why Lévi Strauss' metaphor of the bricoleur resonates most with my experience in research. The researcher as a figure who improvises and "produces knowledge flexibly by 'making do with whatever is at hand'" (A Cerwonka & Malkki, 2007, p. 24)¹⁹

1.3.5. Navigating Israel/Palestine

Field Work Diary Tel Aviv, February 10, 2016

I met with Gilad S., an Israeli from the Negev who owned a company specialized in adventure tourism. He was very enthusiastic about this kind of tourism. When I asked him about his cooperation with local Bedouin there, I got an unexpected answer. He told me he had seen my Facebook profile and knew that I was politically engaged. "*I can see that you are very political.*" What he probably meant was that I was pro-Palestinian. I fell silent and wasn't sure how to continue the interview. I felt as if I had got caught.

Later that day my phone brought me in a similar situation. I had refused to buy an Israeli sim card before going to Tel Aviv. Because my handbag that had been stolen before I had also forgotten about it. But now I was in Tel Aviv with a Palestinian phone number that shared my political preferences with every call I made to an Israeli. When the owner of the hostel, Ray, asked me for my number so that we could find each other at the Israeli tourism fair, I hesitated. But he gave me his number and I called his phone. When my number appeared on his screen looked surprised and said: "ah you have the number of our cousins." Again, I felt caught red-handed and told him apologetically I had to interview a lot of Palestinians as well and that it therefore was more practical to have a Jawwal number. He seemed to find it a weird idea, especially because I had told him I lived in Jerusalem.

¹⁹ Denzin and Lincoln (2005, pp. 4–6) give an interesting description of the bricoleur as "a maker of quilts, or as in filmmaking, a person who assembles images into montages . The researcher stitches, edits and puts slices of reality together. This process creates and brings psychological and emotional unity—a pattern—to an interpretative experience. [...] The researcher bricoleur understands that research is an interactive process shaped by his or her personal history, biography, gender, social class, race and ethnicity and those of the people in the setting. [...] The bricoleur knows that science is power, for all research findings have political implications. There is no value-free science."

Was is ok to lie about this? Would Israelis like him treat me differently if I told them I lived in Ramallah? Maybe I should try it next time? Anyway the whole story with the sim card was a bit alienating, in no other situation people would question your preference for a particular mobile operator, but here it is part of the politics of everyday life.

Of course, the personal is political, but in Palestine, this becomes heightened, and you constantly need to navigate this highly politicized field when doing research. At times, it boils down to you having the wrong phone number for people to become suspicious. These things become markers of political preferences and engagements that are always already intersecting with doing research. Doing research in Palestine, it is impossible to remain aloof: you are constantly forced to face the situation and give up your so-called neutrality. And I believe this is a good thing. Neutrality does not exist anyway. It is only an illusion that you, as a researcher, must debunk. It is not about just choosing a side. Your own feelings and personality become intertwined with your field and your research. Your anger and frustration about the situation, the injustice people face mold your research in unexpected ways.

My choice of language in the sense of vocabulary in this dissertation is also intertwined with my own positioning as a researcher in this context of ongoing settler colonization in Palestine. For example, I will refer to Palestinians when talking about people of Arab descent, living in both what are known as the Palestinian Territories and Israel. Using the term 'Arabs' or 'Israeli Arabs' would be coopting the settler colonial narrative that is aiming at disconnecting this population from its political heritage and land. Unless people I spoke with identified themselves differently, I will refer to them as Palestinians. Similarly, when talking about the territories, I prefer the term '48 territory to speak of Israel. I reserve the term Israeli to speak about the Israeli government or people who identity as Israeli, but not the territory, as this would reify and normalize the colonial relationality that produced the territory as Israeli.

1.4. Outline of the chapters

I now return to the initial questions that arose out of the presentation of the Jerusalem cable car and situation in Silwan. What makes tourism such a powerful tool to reshape places, particularly in a settler colony such as

Palestine? How does the work of tourism become entangled with that of settler colonization? How do erasure and replacement translate into consumable activities and space? At the same time, new unities are created, the settler society is also produced and reproduced within tourism. By taking a relational approach, with the perspective of world-making and ordering, I hope to expose this creative capacity of tourism as situated at the interplay of various relations of power. It allows me to move beyond touristic imaginaries, narratives, and representations of space and examine the productive relations that create worlds also in a material way. It exposes tourism's normalizing and naturalizing effect on things, people, and places (Hollinshead et al., 2009, p. 433) as entangled in wider relations of power, in particular coloniality. The use of ANT literature draws attention to the material world that also becomes entangled in the assemblages that reorder touristic worlds. Moreover, keeping in mind the multiplicity of reality that is put forward within ANT helps trace power relations that create a world that is seemingly singular as the only option. In this respect, Henri Lefebvre's work gives a more profound understanding of the spatiality of power relations and the spatial implications of touristic entanglements. Departing from the production of space allows me to understand tourism as part of the spatial representations and practices of settler colonization. This politicizes seemingly neutral forms of tourism. Producing consumable tourism spaces only makes sense in a wider context or world that serves as the backdrop to both legitimize their production as well as their intelligibility more generally. What kind of worlds are then necessarily produced to exclude Palestinians and include Jewish Israelis? And how can the production of other spaces and other worlds and making these real through tourism practices be a form of resistance?

In the first section of the dissertation, I will focus primarily on the production of these colonial worlds. I will follow the touristic routes into settler colonial fantasies that were foundational to the spatial transformations in Palestine. The first chapter presents a historical overview of the making and unmaking of Palestine as a tourist destination. It focuses on how the making of a destination goes hand in hand with the making of spaces, geographies, and identities, shaped along the logics of political projects, such as (settler) colonialism. I explore how Palestine was reordered as a touristic destination and how this happened in the context of the Zionist settler colonial project. Palestine was no longer only a Christian pilgrimage destination but was presented by the Zionist institutions as a modern Jewish destination. Tourism

became a tool to attract new Jewish immigrants to the shores of Palestine as well as supporters of the Zionist cause globally. I draw attention to the making of this destination through the production of new maps, guides books, etc., as well as the mobilization of Jewish labor within the tourism sector. By examining maps, brochures, and guidebooks in addition to conducting a literature study, I aim to understand the historic entanglement of tourism and Zionist colonization in Palestine. This chapter will serve to contextualize tourism in the '48 territory and Palestine as a political practice that creates powerful imaginative geographies that are dispersed on a global scale. The intelligibility that is created in touristic products is that of Western modernity and Zionism together.

The second chapter focuses on the case of the Jordan River Peace Park. This initiative of Friends of the Earth Middle East (FoEME) brings together ecotourism, conservation, and peace building. In their quest to attract tourists, FoEME recuperates and omits elements of the place's contested history and redefines its nature and cultural heritage. However, it does so by building on the settler colonial legacy of the place, hence erasing the Palestinian stories and connections. The chapter explores the politics of the making of this touristic site and focuses on how power relations are articulated through space. The material traces in the landscape provide a point of departure to uncover the articulation of connections, practices, and meanings through which the peace park project sought to inscribe itself into global narratives of modernity, tourism development, and progress. It is argued that new subjectivities and boundaries are used to make the place intelligible in wider ecotourism geographies. Consequently, particular people and artifacts that do not fit the frame find themselves out of place.

The second section of the dissertation builds on the colonial imaginaries that reshape spaces and also explores the routes of resistance that open up within tourism practices. The third chapter takes us back to East Jerusalem to illustrate how value is created in tourism in the settler city. East Jerusalem has become a central locus of Zionist touristic settlement. The new tourism infrastructure almost exclusively promotes the Jewish character of the city and further integrates East Jerusalem into the touristic fabric of Israel, while neglecting and erasing the Palestinian presence in the city. Projects such as the Jerusalem cable car are part of a larger strategy to brand Jerusalem as a unified Jewish city. Examining the making of tourism sites offers a window

on how value is both produced and mobilized through the physical transformation of places, landscapes, and the city in the settler colony. Palestinians too are trying to reconfigure Palestinian tourism in East Jerusalem through the production of new touristic infrastructure and products. They see tourism as an avenue to reclaim a Palestinian Jerusalem and revalue its Palestinian heritage and identity. However, creating this Palestinian destination is not a straightforward process: it is hampered by capitalist relations that intersect with settler colonial ones that largely enable settler dominance in tourism in East Jerusalem.

Through examining the case of the Jerusalem Tourism Cluster (JTC), it becomes clear how initiatives of ‘alternative tourism’ work to reorder reality and make claims about Jerusalem, Palestine, and Palestinians and their positions in the world. The main focus is on how tourism is used in consolidating Palestinian identity, heritage, and the nation-state. In this respect, tourism instruments such as brochures, maps, souvenirs, apps, websites, guidebooks, and tours are actively reshaping touristic geographies. Much of the JTC’s work deals with creating a competitive destination, ‘Palestine,’ that can be integrated into the world tourism market. In doing so, they create new representations of Palestinian culture and identity. They capitalize on the diversity and cultural richness of Jerusalem to rebrand the city. Tourism practices and infrastructure embody this knowledge about Jerusalem and its inhabitants and hence alter the social reality in which tourism takes place. Indirectly, they uncover the power relations that are at stake in touristic places and activities. Both tourism activities and artifacts become implicated in practices of world-making. They exert authority over the way places, people, and the past are represented and reified, which in this case need to be understood in relation to Palestinian identity creation, political aspirations, and resistance.

What happens when those who are not considered tourists tour a space that is politically off-limits to them? How does it change spaces in unforeseen ways? The fourth chapter deals with the recent rise in popularity of hiking trips in the West Bank. The first section of the chapter will explore the case of Palestinian hiking trips in the West Bank, to come to an understanding of how domestic tourism and leisure can be a force of resistance. Palestinians are not only providers or producers of tourism; they need to be taken seriously as tourists, travelers themselves. Here, I aim to document their aspirations to explore their

own country in the capacity of domestic tourist and what they create when they move through the West Bank. On the trail, relations of affect emerge between the walkers and what they encounter: the countryside, the village, trees, animals, ... These walks shape 'Palestine' as a tangible, fragrant, and even savory political reality, a homeland or 'Watan.' The trips give rise to a collective knowledge that redefines 'Palestine' on the participant's own terms, opposing the ongoing mental and physical erasure of Palestine under Israeli settler colonialism. Based on participant observation and in-depth interviews with Palestinian hikers, the chapter demonstrates that domestic tourism and leisure activities can become a method of resistance. The walks leave behind what Luxemburg described as 'mental sediment' that normalizes a particular knowledge of 'Palestine' and the presence of Palestinians in a contested space, stretching this well beyond the time and space of the hike

CHAPTER 2: REORDERING PALESTINE AS A ZIONIST DESTINATION

2.1. Introduction

In Theodore Herzl's utopian novel 'Altneuland,' travel is a central leitmotiv. The protagonists, together with other European tourists, come to explore Palestine²⁰, the "Altneuland." The book demonstrates the pride of the Jewish immigrants who are showing the visitors how their work has successfully introduced Palestine into modernity. The region, having become a center of global tourism, is taken as evidence of the progress. Interestingly, the term 'Altneuland' is first used in the book by a Christian traveler who encourages the idea of the Jews returning to Palestine and rebuilding their homeland (Shumsky, 2014, p. 473). Shumsky analyzed the centrality of travel in 'Altneuland' and concluded that Herzl uses Western tourists as the symbol of Western economic and cultural capital that travels to Palestine to enlighten non-Western Jews. In the novel, Herzl indeed specifically discusses how Western 'cultured' capital creates opportunities for non-Western Jews such as enjoying a Western education. In the book, this kind of capital turns out to be a precondition to increase the non-Western Jews' contribution to the making of the Jewish Home Land. The story had to attract enlightened Western travelers, both Christian and Jewish, to invest their capital in the "Altneuland" and contribute to a booming global tourism enterprise in the Holy Land (Shumsky, 2014, p. 476).

In 1902 Herzl already clearly identified tourism and travel as a vital driver for the Zionist settler projects in Palestine. Travel would not only consist of Jewish immigrants coming to Palestine, but an entire global industry of Holy Land travel, in which the Zionists could potentially benefit from Western

²⁰ The geographical region 'Palestine' was named this way officially during the British Mandate period. In I will use both Palestine and Eretz Israeli depending on the contexts, however it indicates the same continuous territory.

capital and European culture to the land. His novel describes the Zionist's view on travel and the Palestinian tourism sector being transformed by the Zionist settler project. Indeed, by the time of Herzl's writing, a global tourism industry had already emerged in Palestine. This was an industry that was largely controlled locally by the Palestinian entrepreneurs and service workers, both Christian and Muslim. They provided guiding, lodging, and catering to pilgrims and mostly Western tourists. Western tour operators were working with Palestinians and also Syrians to arrange practicalities on the ground (Berkowitz, 1997, p. 126). However, in the early years of the British Mandate, this gradually changed (Cohen-Hattab, 2004, p. 62). In the 1920ies and 30ies, the Zionist institutions consciously sought to exploit the tourist sector in order to market a Zionist view of Palestine, while at the same time inhibiting Palestinians from commercializing their view and image of the country on a global tourism market.

In this chapter, I illustrate how the tourism sector in British Mandate became a frontier in the creation of a settler colonial reality in Palestine. By examining touristic guidebooks, other touristic media and archival material from both the Israeli National Library and the Central Zionist Archive, I want to illustrate the making of a new 'Jewish Palestine' and how this gave rise to new imaginative geographies (Gregory, 1995; Said, 2000, 2003). Inspired by Mitchell, I ask which practices contributed to the reordering of Palestine a new destination - a product - that was "made legible and rendered available to political and economic calculation" (Mitchell, 1991, p. 33). In this respect, tourism and travel created new channels through which images, stories, people, and things came to circulate, reaffirm themselves and restructure and reshape the world in both a discursive and material way. A Jewish Palestine or 'Eretz Israel' was crafted as a new destination within the growing market of global travel and held a new position within the imagination of those aspiring tourists or pilgrims. A touristic visibility was constructed in powerful ways by highlighting and empowering certain traditions, histories, and characteristics, while neglecting and erasing others (Gregory, 2001). The settler colonial's imagined geography went hand in hand with the conquering of the tourism market and labor by Zionist forces and, as Herzl envisioned, channeling in Western capital. A Jewish Palestine became a consumable space within a global system of power, knowledge, and geography that favored its colonization and eventually settlement.

I will start by sketching the historical context of the emergence of modern tourism in Palestine that eventually fed into the situation of tourism during the British Mandate period. It is vital to understand how Western tourism in Palestine was already from the start intertwined with colonial and imperial enterprises that were shaping the global image of Palestine as part of the Holy Land. The Zionist efforts to control the sector were in that respect, not a new phenomenon. It is also necessary to understand which stakes the local Palestinian population had in the tourism sector. Only by painting this picture can we understand the implications of the process of dispossession both on an ideological and commercial level that was set into motion by the Zionist forces in Mandate Palestine. I will then further detail how this new destination also became normalized within global touristic circuits.

2.2. The emergence of a modern tourism market in Palestine

The rise of modern tourism in Palestine needs to be contextualized within the development of a global tourism market as well as the rise of Western imperialism and colonialism. From the 19th century, ‘Palestine’ and the ‘Orient’ was becoming more visible as a destination in the imagination of an increasingly mobile Western public. The opening of Palestine to tourism and its transformation into a modern destination was only possible because of technological, political, and economical changes on a global scale. Gradually, Palestine was integrated into a world of fixed itineraries, standardized packages, and strict time tables, all of which introduced Palestine into a world of Western colonial domination. At the same time, the development of the tourism business was only possible due to the local services providers and businessmen who facilitated the influx and access of Western tourists (Nance, 2007).

There had been travel to Palestine for centuries, by pilgrims, traders, and so on. Inhabitants of historic Palestine had been accommodating pilgrims for centuries.²¹ From that perspective, Western tourism was not new. What was

²¹ There was for example the Abu Gosh family who secured the mountain road for convoys of pilgrims traveling from Jaffa to Jerusalem. In exchange of their services

radically different though was the extent to which travel for leisure became commodified. A market emerged in which Palestine, as part of the 'Holy Land,' was turned into a destination and became a product that was marketed and sold. The predecessor of modern Western tourism to Palestine can be found in the 17th-18th century's 'Grand Tour.' This prestigious travels had become increasingly popular among European especially British aristocracy and the upper class (Towner, 1985, p. 299). In what was called 'the Grand Tours,' they traveled from the European mainland to the classical sites in Italy and Greece. From 1850 onwards, a tourism industry started to take shape in Europe centered around these itineraries, with companies catering to travelers and tourists (Leiper, 1979, p. 402). Accommodation and transport were the main services to be provided, but also the facilitation of money exchange or publishing guidebooks, maps, photographic albums, or travelogues (Towner, 1985, p. 324). Gradually, this tourism market also spilled over into Palestine as part of the Grand Tour into the Mediterranean region. Together with the growing industry, the production of knowledge on the new destinations emerged. As the Grand Tour spread out, the Western public started to discover 'the Orient' and the 'Holy Land.'

Until the 18th century, there had been only little Western travel to the East, and at the time most of the pilgrims in Palestine were either Eastern European Christian, Jews, and Muslims (Marzano, 2013, p. 174; Stidham Rogers, 2011). However, Napoleon's military campaign in Palestine in 1798–1801 sparked an interest in the Holy Land among many Europeans. Palestine again became part of the Western collective imagination through the stories and images that traveled back to Europe along with Napoleon. According to Shepherd (1987, p. 37), the founding of the first English and American Protestant missionaries in 1823 marked a first milestone in the commercialization of travel to Palestine. She documents how the missionaries were soon followed by banks and companies that wanted to invest in the Holy Land, and were open to the idea of developing and modernizing Palestine under Western auspice. Consequently, religious missionaries were actively participating in the expansion of Europe into Palestine.

they levied a tax on the travelers with consent of the Ottoman government (Abbasi, 2019).

It was however not until the short conquest of Mohammed Ali in Palestine in 1831, that a more profound penetration of Western powers into the region occurred.²² Ali showed greater tolerance toward the non-Muslim population and foreign visitors than had previously been the case in the Ottoman Empire. He allowed for the expansion of missionary activities and the opening of consulates. His main interest was to strengthen diplomatic relations with the West. The protection of travelers, missionaries, pilgrims, and local religious minorities was an important pretext for Western powers to gain physical ground in Palestine through consulates, missionaries, hospices, hospitals, and even military presence. In turn, the consulates further facilitated the access to Palestine for pilgrims, tourists, scholars and explorers (Hary, 2011, p. 341).²³ European forces, mostly England, Russia, France, and Prussia, gained a foot in the door within historic Palestine and expanded their imperial ambitions in the East (Di Nepi & Marzano, 2013, p. VII; Kark, 2004, p. 215; Scholsh, 1992, p. 43). When the Ottoman Empire regained control over Palestine, these policies of openness were furthered in the Tanzimat reforms and additional Capitulation to Western countries.²⁴ The new sense of security and accessibility facilitated the first actual ‘organized tours’ by steamer to Palestine in 1850, with first French and later Italian church groups (Shepherd, 1987, pp. 173–174).²⁵ The general weakening of the Ottoman Empire, the Crimean War, and the opening of the Suez canal in 1869 further increased Palestine’s accessibility as a new space for Western travel and increased Western control over tourists (Cohen-Hattab & Katz, 2001, p. 169; Stidham Rogers, 2011, p. 1).

Palestine was not just made accessible to the West, it was also transformed in the process of hosting tourists, travelers and explorers. Mazza (2009, pp. 76–77) explains how the foreign population of Palestine was the driving force

²² Muhammad Ali Pasha al-Mas'ud ibn Agha was the Ottoman governor of Egypt from 1805 to 1848, he is often considered the founder of modern day Egypt.

²³ Britain opened its consulate in 1839.

²⁴ The capitulations were a series of treaties the Ottoman Empire had concluded with various Western states.

²⁵ They were organized by Italian Churches, whose parishioners crossed the Mediterranean with the steamship of the Lloyd Triestino line. Following their example, French church groups of the order of St Vincent de Paul would also travel from Marseilles to Palestine twice a year (Shepherd, 1987, pp. 173–174). The voyages were exclusively male until after 1868, when the first women were allowed to join to travel to Palestine.

behind introducing the European concept of modernity to the city of Jerusalem in particular and Palestine at large. In the tourism sector, European entrepreneurs were involved in the construction of hotels. Mazza notes that these foreigners were diplomats, scholars, and tourists, pushing for a further integration of Palestine into the European political economy and modernity. Their aspirations of modernization in Palestine contrasted sharply with the European pilgrims seeking a spiritual experience.

Besides the political changes and motivations for travel to Palestine, technological innovations played a vital role in the increase of tourism, improving travel both in terms of cost and security. Distances between regions were shortened by employing steamships, railways, and telegraphs (Goldhill, 2016, p. 90; Hunter, 2004, p. 29). New maritime routes made destinations, such as Palestine, more accessible physically, and within the imagined geographies of the European and American traveling public (Bar & Cohen-Hattab, 2003, p. 134). The 1978 edition of Baedeker's guidebook to Palestine and Syria reports on weekly steamers to Jaffa from the French company *Messageries Maritimes* (from Marseille), *Austrian Lloyd* (from Trieste), the *Russian Steamboat Company* (from Constantinople and Alexandria) and the *English Steamers* (from Southampton and Brindisi) (Baedeker, 1876, pp. 11–14) (see figure 2.1). Most tourists and pilgrims to Palestine traveled by sea, with steamships being the most comfortable and fastest means of traveling. Steamers thus played a crucial role in the commercialization of travel to the Orient connecting Palestine into a booming market with global reach (Di Nepi and Marzano 2013, VII). Local transport also transformed. In 1867, Ottomans began to pave a road from Jaffa to Jerusalem. Once this project was completed in the 1870s, wagons and coaches transporting tourists began to circulate on the main road between Jaffa–Jerusalem. Tourism was further facilitated by the construction of a railroad connecting Jaffa and Jerusalem in 1892, which was built by a French company that had received concessions from the Ottoman government (Shoval & Cohen-Hattab, 2001, p. 912). According to Vogel (1993, p. 61), these improvements were undertaken to directly address the needs of Western travelers, rather than those of the local population.²⁶

²⁶ In addition, Vogel also notes that it was not until the British mandate in Palestine that major technological improvements in travel reached Palestine, such as the construction of a road and railroad network and telegraphs.

In Palestine, connectivity and integration between the European tourism market and the Palestinian economy increased. Especially Jerusalem and Jaffa experienced an economic boost. The port of Jaffa became a hub for pilgrims and travelers and much of the city's economy depended on the influx of tourists. From 1870 onwards, tourism drastically increased in Jaffa. In 1973, the Cook company opened its office in the city and hence the organized tour to Palestine became popularized (Guillot, 2008; Levine, 2013, p. 56).²⁷ Kark (2001, p. 22) estimated that the number of annual visitors to Palestine, using sources such as Baedeker and other guidebooks, varied between 15.000 and 25.000 until the first World War, with 25 percent being 'tourists' and the rest 'pilgrims.' In the period from 1910-1911, 20.000 pilgrims and 5.759 tourists were counted, of which 28 percent were American. Other reports, focusing on tourists in Jerusalem, state that 5595 tourists visited the city between June 1908 and May 1909, 7196 in 1910, and 5759 in 1911, of which 1626 Americans, 967 British and 895 German.²⁸ And even though the tourist were only small in numbers compared to the pilgrims, relatively they spent a lot more money during their stay and therefore were a good source of income for the local shop keepers (Mazza, 2009, p. 81). While the tourism sector in Palestine grew from the late 19th into the 20th century, it remained rather small as compared to the main industries of soap production, handicrafts, and agriculture.

²⁷ Ruth Kark indicates that during the period of 1883-1907, the economic growth in Jaffa increased tremendously. The number of shops is an indication as 400 new shops opened in the city of Jaffa during these 24 years. In addition, she points out that most of the services provided in the city were destined to tourists (Kark, 1986, p. 47).

²⁸ Mazza based these numbers on the reports of the British consul Harold Eustace Satow in 1911.



Figure 2.1: Baedeker guide to Palestine and Syria (1876) map of the 'Routes to the Levant' (source: Baedeker, 1876).

Many of the touristic changes in the 18th century Ottoman Empire were induced and made possible by the local entrepreneurs and service providers. Creating access for tourists to visit all over the Middle East, they created networks which Western companies were able to profit from once they commercialized travel to and within the Middle East (Nance, 2007).

The port and railways of Haifa²⁹ were also booming under the increased number of visitors, both Christians and Muslims, to the Holy Land. Hotels and other touristic services, such as restaurants, nightclubs and amusement parks, increased. Local inhabitants turned their homes into guesthouses for tourists (Mansour, 2006, p. 14). New hostels, hotels, cafés, and stores also popped up around Jerusalem's Jaffa Gate, as tourists were arriving there straight from the port of Jaffa. Most of them were owned by Palestinian, Armenian, Greek, German, and Jewish merchants and catered to both tourists and the local population (Jacobson, 2011, p. 56). Modern hotels were opened, mostly in Jaffa and Jerusalem to complement the traditional pilgrim accommodation in convents or monasteries in private homes that had been the primary means of lodging in Palestine up till then (Kark, 2001). Many of these new hotels took over the European styles and standards to which their customers were accustomed (Cohen-Hattab & Shoval, 2015, p. 36; Shoval & Cohen-Hattab, 2001, p. 909).³⁰

There also was a booming industry of souvenirs in Ottoman Palestine. The manufacturing and sales included carpets, olive wood carvings, crucifixes, rosaries, embroideries, carpets... (Gibson, Yoni, & Rupert, 2013, p. 10). An American tourist who had been visiting Bethlehem in 1853 wrote the following in his memoirs:

Bethlehem is quite a manufacturing town.... They make a great number and variety of what may be called religious toys, consisting of crucifixes, images, beads, and other figures, representing holy places, persons, and events, which they sell to pilgrims and travelers. Some of these figures are carved from wood obtained from various consecrated places; some are cut on shells or pearl, and others still are cast, some in lead or pewter, for the poorer pilgrims, and others in bronze or even in silver and

²⁹ Haifa was connected to Damascus via the Hijaz railway, popular with Muslim pilgrims coming to visit the Holy sites in Palestine.

³⁰ New products, such as English ham, Yorkshire bacon, potted salmon or jars of marmalade were imported into Palestine in large quantities to cater to the European, mostly British tourist's acquired taste (Brendon 1992, p. 132)

gold. All visitors to the Holy Land become purchasers of these memorials. The pilgrims buy them as sacred relics, endued, in their imaginations, with some miraculous or magic power; while tourists and travelers prize them almost as highly, though in a different way, as souvenirs of their visits to these sacred grounds, and as the means of reproducing, in future years, the sublime and solemn emotions which were originally awakened in their minds by the scenes in the midst of which they obtained them. (Abbott 1853, p. 10, as cited in Nance (2007).

While local pilgrims and tourists might have been the primary market for these artifacts, they were exported as well. In 1876, the Bethlehem traders presented their wooden carvings and mother of pearl handcrafts to the American public in the Philadelphia exhibition. The US was not the only target market for the Bethlehemites. By the 1880s, their products could be found in cities all over the world, from Manila or Kyiv to Port- au-Prince and Singapore (Norris, 2013).

The business of the ‘dragoman’ or interpreters, translators, and guides were an important segment of the tourism industry of Jerusalem, the Holy Land, and travel in the Ottoman Empire in general. They were cultural brokers and translators, mostly Christians, sometimes Jewish or Druze, and well respected for their knowledgeability. The dragoman were often protected by foreign powers, especially those working for diplomats. They took up an important political role in the Ottoman Empire (Lonni, 2011, p. 42) and often had privileged relations with hotel owners and missionaries who would refer tourists to them (Nance, 2007). Their importance declined after the introduction of organized mass travel to Palestine. The dragoman became guides to tourists, with less political power. This evolution corresponded with the creeping colonialization that removed these kinds of mediators in favor of more direct control and rule by Western individuals (Lonni, 2011). From this generation of guides, interpreters, and agents working for European tour companies emerged the first Palestinian Arab-owned tour companies. The Oweida Brothers were the first to start a business in 1931 in Jerusalem. They started a family business in the 1860ies and had since been contracting transportation services for tourists between e.g. Jaffa and Jerusalem (Kaell, 2010, p. 26).

2.3. The place of tourism in the Zionist settler project

The touristic sector in Palestine had already undergone a significant transformation, as was already firmly established by the time the Zionist Executive in Palestine first addressed the ‘problem’ of tourism in 1922 (Cohen-Hattab, 2004). With the publication of the first book for Jewish tourists, the Zionist Executive aspired to fill the gap in the Palestinian itineraries which excluded the new Jewish settlements and the Zionist institutions. That same year, the Department of Trade and Industry of the Zionist Executive in Jerusalem also provided a course for Jewish guides that wanted to increase the number of well-trained Jewish guides that would be able to provide tourists with a Zionist perspective on Palestine. These guides also assembled in the Association for Jewish Guides in Eretz Israel (Cohen-Hattab, 2004).

In 1925, the Zionist Information Bureau for Tourists was founded and was responsible for the publication of touristic information that centralized the Zionist settler project in Palestine. They contacted potential tourists as well as following up with them once returned to their homes. The Bureau was funded by the Zionist Executive, the Jewish National Fund (Keren Hakayemet), and the United Israel Appeal (Cohen-Hattab, 2004, p. 67). From 1927 onwards, the Bureau also published yearly tours and guidebooks in German, English, and French that clearly articulated Palestine as the Jewish national homeland. Seeking to gain both ideological and political support for their project through tourism, Zionist institutions in Palestine considered tourism important, beyond its economic merits.

Several Israeli scholars have thoroughly documented the struggle over tourism in the Mandate period.³¹ Their work shows how Zionists were seeking to establish control over the tourism sector in two different ways. Firstly, by creating a new form of Zionist tourism for Western Jews. Secondly, by taking over the pre-existing and Palestinian-controlled tourism market of both Christian pilgrims and secular tourists.

³¹ However, it must be noted that the authors’ stance toward the Arab population and their behavior in tourism seems to be rather tainted. By using particular terminology that have a negative connotation, they clearly interpret the Arab control over the tourism sector as something undesirable.

Michael Berkowitz's (1997) work examines Zionist travel becoming a tool for gaining both ideological and financial support for the Zionist settler project. His book, *Western Jewry and the Zionist project 1914-1933* elaborates on how a new form of Zionist tourism developed as Jewish secular pilgrimage to Palestine. This form of tourism had an explicitly Zionist agenda. Tourism was mobilized to develop the local Jewish economy. At the same time, it would connect the Western Jews to Palestine (Berkowitz, 1997, p. 129) and authenticate the land as the modern homeland of all Jews (ibid., 134), which in turn would bolster Jewish nationalist pride. Tourism was a means to convert visitors to Zionism, in the hope they would either migrate to Palestine or support the Zionist project financially or politically. Through the visits of prominent figures as, for example, Lord Balfour, the Zionist movement would increase its legitimacy (ibid., 140). Cohen-Hattab (2004) comes to a similar conclusion. His article on the use of tourism as a political propaganda tool in the 'battle over Palestine' illustrates how the Zionists were trying to break the Palestinian monopoly over tourism. He gives a comprehensive overview of the emergence of the Zionist concern with tourism and its importance in respect to their political endeavors in Palestine. Cohen-Hattab and Kohn's (2015) research on Zionist tourism posters reaffirms this conclusion by illustrating how these posters served Zionist ideological and commercial rationales. Posters promoted for example Hebrew labor and the exclusive consumption of Jewish agricultural products.

Hotel architecture and infrastructure is another angle from which the relation between tourism and Zionist ideology have been studied. Smith (2010) documents how Zionist hotels were designed to distinguish themselves from the existing Arab ones in their architecture and comfort, which was to be explicitly modern, hence reflecting the Zionist national ideology of progress, renewal, and the Westernization of the ancient homeland. Smith argues that these hotels "testify to the inseparable bond between material culture and sensibility, between ideal and image in the forging of the new Zionist society" (Smith, 2010, pp. 107, 117). Hotel architecture and design thus became instrumental in consolidating the newly found identity of Jewish immigrants in Palestine and displaying it to tourists.

Considering these different studies, I agree with Cohen-Hattab and Shoval when they conclude that

The Zionist movement, defining tourism in political terms, consciously set out to exploit the tourist industry as part of its national political struggle. As such it launched a coordinated attack on the country's oral, visual and written tourist media. Guidebooks, tourist maps, advertisements, films, and tour guides were all used to shape and present the desired Zionist take on Palestine (Cohen-Hattab & Shoval, 2015, p. 65).

However, there are some notes of criticism that need to be taken into account. It is highly problematic that all of these authors are consequently prioritizing the settler perspective of the story, while neglecting the process of elimination of the native Palestinians within the process of developing Zionist tourism and how that is an essential part of the Zionist settler project (Wolfe, 2012, p. 135). For example, Cohen-Hattab (2004) and also Cohen-Hattab and Shoval (2015) present complaints of discrimination of Jewish guides and the boycott of Jewish hotels by Arab tourism workers as undermining the Zionist cause in Palestine. The reasons why there was so much resistance from the Palestinians within the tourism sector, are however not elaborated on. Similarly Cohen-Hattab (Cohen-Hattab, 2004, p. 62) writes that

It was a battle in which the Arabs had a distinct edge over the Zionist movement, having, under the Ottomans, acquired virtually a monopoly over the country's, albeit rudimentary, tourist industry.

Here, the authors define the economy in terms of ethnicity and hereby problematize the monopoly of the native population. It almost seems as if the 'Arab monopoly' is an unnatural state that gave the 'Arabs' an advantage as compared to the Zionists, ignoring the fact that Palestine, after all, was predominantly Arab, and that it was therefore normal that the local population had developed and was engaged in the local tourism market. With such claims, these authors are reaffirming the settler perspective, normalizing the wider settler project that was indeed redefining Palestine along ethno-racial lines and redefining it as a mere nationalist struggle. The context of settler colonization in which this tourism was developed is completely absent from these authors' analyses. Consequently, they are not adequately taking into account the power imbalances between the Indigenous Palestinians and the Zionist settlers and the preexisting colonial conditions that expedited that Zionist settler project and the conception of a national Jewish space, economy and culture in Palestine.

Prior to the Nakba, a system of dispossession of the native population was gradually put in place by the Zionists in Palestine. It entailed taking over land, labor, and the market through purchase and creating a separate ethno-racial economy exclusive to Jewish immigrants in Palestine. This process of day-to-day exclusion and discrimination cumulated in the dispossession of Palestinians in various ways, but mostly in terms of land, labor, and access to the market. Within tourism, the Zionists also effectively took measures that were aimed at the gradual takeover of the touristic market in Palestine. Their motivations were commercial as well as ideological. Through Zionist tourism, Palestine was gradually rearticulated as a Jewish destination. The discourses and material realities dispersed and created within Zionist tourism created everyday opportunities for the normalization of the Zionist settler project in Palestine.

Within the perception of hegemonic ‘Labor Zionism’³², the creation of a separate Jewish economy was fundamental to the eventual success of the settler state, as it would guarantee economic independence. This premise was based on three principles that guided the development of the Jewish economy: firstly the ‘conquest of labor’ (Kibbush Ha'avoda specified in the concept of ‘Hebrew labor’ Avoda Ivrit), secondly ‘conquest of the market’ (Totzeret Haaretz) and thirdly the ‘conquest of land’ (Kibbush Haadamah). These principles strongly determined the Zionist political economy of Palestine in the pre-1948 period (Yuval-Davis & Abdo, 1995, p. 297). The Labor Zionists believed that the proliferation of Hebrew labor in all sectors and branches of work was a vital precondition for the success of the Zionist settler project (Shafir, 1996, p. 65). The conquest of labor entailed dispossessing natives Palestinians from the land as well as the creation of a Jewish industrial and agricultural working class. Both processes were vital to the success and normalization of the Zionist settler project in Palestine. Consequently, a split labor market emerged within which Palestinians were dispossessed, marginalized and replaced by Jews. Arabs and Jews who performed the same work were paid different wages, with Jewish workers earning much more than their Arab counterparts (Shafir, 1996, pp. 60–61). Simultaneously, Zionists sought to take control over the commodity market in order to gain economic

³² Labor Zionism is a movement within the wider Zionist ideology that find its roots in socialism. It was very popular amongst the early Jewish settlers in Mandate Palestine. Key to their beliefs were the doctrines of the ‘conquest of labor’ (kibbush ha'avoda) and ‘Hebrew labor’ (‘avoda ivrit) (Lockman, 2012).

independence for their settler state. Palestinian products were boycotted to eliminate competition for Jewish producers, which gradually resulted in depriving them of their means of subsistence (Wolfe, 2012, p. 152).

The creation of a segregated Jewish economy was further fueled by the British promise to facilitate Jewish immigration only to the extent that the economy of Mandate Palestine was able to absorb the newcomers. Herby the British only considered the 'Jewish' economy's absorptive capacity, neglecting the losses of Palestinians when the Jewish economy grew at their cost. On the eve of the First World War, the hegemonic Labor Zionism had redefined the desired socioeconomic development based on economic separatism and the exclusion of Indigenous labor and produce. Hence, an exclusive high-wage Zionist economy emerged separately from the Palestinian one, aided with both financial and human resources pouring in from the World Zionist Organization, donations and investments worldwide (Lockman, 2012, p. 12; Shafir, 1996; Yuval-Davis & Abdo, 1995, pp. 304–305). The Arab Palestinian economy did not have this form of gratuitous supply, and was hence being undermined and weakened. Patrick Wolfe reminds us what occurred in many settler colonies: the natives' "limited local stock was no match for capital's global elasticity" (Wolfe, 2012, p. 138). It was indeed this foreign capital which largely shielded the Yishuv (the community of Jewish residents of Mandate Palestine) from global market realities and enabled the further dispossession of the native Palestinians (2012, p. 152).

The Zionist struggle for control over the tourism sector thus needs to be understood in the context of Zionist efforts to develop a separate Jewish economy in Palestine. As in other sectors of the Palestinian economy, the Zionist Executive found the Palestinian control over the tourism sector highly problematic. It was unacceptable that most of the incoming tourists were handled by Arab guides and stayed in Arab hotels, because they would be getting an Arab Palestinian perspective on Palestine and not the desired Zionist Jewish. The matter was first discussed by the Zionist movement in Palestine in 1922 (Cohen-Hattab, 2004, p. 66). The Zionist Executive in Palestine, in particular the Department of Trade and Industry together with the Jewish National Fund and the United Israel Appeal, established several institutions, such as the Association of Jewish Guides and the Zionist Information Bureau, to deal with the problem of non-Zionist inspired tourism in Palestine.

2.3.1. Zionist narratives of travel: A modern Holy Land

In 1922, the Department of Trade and Industry of the Palestine Zionist Executive issued a first guiding booklet titled *Eretz Israel for Jewish tourists*, in which visits to Palestine were promoted among a Jewish public. Targeting Jewish travelers explicitly, it sought to create a new market that would specifically benefit the newly established Jewish colonies in Palestine. The publication sheds an interesting light on the narrative that was being used to craft a new Jewish destination in Palestine. Modernity was used as a central trope.

its interest is modern as well as ancient, and even a short visit to the country will reveal to the tourist something of the scenes of Jewish history and culture and will give him some insight into the growth and development of 'Altneuland' in the reconstruction of Palestine by the Jewish People.³³

The authors refer to 'Eretz Israel' as the best of both worlds; an ancient land in which modernity has come to flourish thanks to Jewish migrations and labor. The explicit reference to Herzl's novel in the booklet reminds us of the vital role of travel and tourism within the Zionist settler project.

The booklet advised the traveler to take itineraries that are strictly limited to local Jewish institutions and the agricultural and industrial enterprises, leaving out the more traditional (religious) touristic sites.³⁴ On the program are for example: visiting the newly built Jewish colonies such as Rishon-le-Zion, Tel Aviv, the colonies in the Sharon plain, the lower Galilee, Degania, the first collective agricultural settlement with its factories. The publication only mentions the local 'Arab' Palestinian population when for example a Palestinian village happened to be constructed on ancient Jewish sites. Hence the Palestinians are rendered largely invisible.

The booklet also advised the Jewish traveler on how to spend his or her money while traveling. For example, visits to Jewish charitable institutions, schools, and unions are recommended and donations to these institutions are also

³³ *Eretz Israel for Jewish Tourists* (1922) Department of Trade and Industry, Palestine Zionist Executive, Jerusalem. Hassolel press: Jerusalem. (Central Zionist Archive, Z4.40284).

³⁴ Recommendations are made for either visits with the Jewish Palestine Express Company, the American Express Company or Thomas Cook & Sons, each of which companies can provide assistance to the Jewish traveler.

encouraged. In addition, the booklet mentions which hotels serve kosher meals, where the tourist can find Jewish souvenir shops and the locations of the office of the Palestine Zionist Executive, the Office of the Palestine Land Development Company and the Jewish national fund. Remarkably, the last page of the booklet contains an advertisement for the Palestine Land Development Co, offering plots of agricultural lands as well as sites for building in the main cities (Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Jaffa and Haifa) to the tourists and informs them about the possibilities and opportunities of investing in land in Palestine.

Eretz Israel for Jewish tourists was not directed to non-Jewish travelers who after all were a large segment of the market in Palestine.³⁵ This problem was addressed in 1927 with *A guide to Jewish Palestine*, that was published by the Jewish National Fund and the Palestine Foundation Fund.³⁶ In the foreword, Fritz Loewenstein, the manager of the Zionist Information Bureau of Tourists in Palestine presents the pamphlet as everything the traveler needs to know about the ‘*New Yishuv*’ and the ‘*modern Jewish settlements*’:

Most guidebooks devote so much attention to the unique historic monuments of the Holy land that modern Palestine is almost perforce overlooked. For this reason, the present pamphlet attempts to summarize compactly all the data which the traveler must have at hand in order to see and to pass judgment upon the whole ‘new Yishuv’ (modern Jewish settlement). It felt that every visitor to Palestine be he Jew or non-Jew, whom the living present attracts no less than the memorials of the great past will be interested to see a people estranged for 2000 years from its ancestral land re-establishing itself on the soil; the moribund classic Hebrew revitalized on the lips of the children, the varied new forms of co-operation created in the hereditary Jewish quest for social justice.

The information provided in the book claims to enlighten the tourist in the making of Jewish Palestine, so that he or she will be able to make “intelligent

³⁵ *Eretz Israel for Jewish Tourists* (1922) Department of Trade and Industry, Palestine Zionist Executive, Jerusalem. Hassolel press: Jerusalem. (Central Zionist Archive, Z4.40284).

³⁶ *A guide to Jewish Palestine* (1927) Jerusalem: Keren Keyameth Leisrael and Keren Hasesod (Jewish National Fund and the Palestine Foundation Fund) (Israel National Library, Jerusalem: S34B1257).

observations” of the country.³⁷ Interestingly, these claims were not new and had long before taken center stage in the first Western guidebooks on Palestine such as that of Baedeker (1876) in German, Joanne and Isambert (1861) in French, Murray (1858) and Cook (1886) in English (Guillot, 2008).³⁸ These guidebooks presented a condensation of the colonial imaginaries that were carefully assembled through stories, maps, and claims of scientific knowledge about the land. With increased interest and travel to Palestine, the image of Palestine that was cultivated within the Western imagined geography was one of a fallen biblical land in need of restoration, and in dire need of Western influence and colonization to achieve its actual potential (Shepherd, 1987, p. 15). The guidebooks made claims to a modern scientific truth, a ‘true’ representation of the Orient, that gave the Orient a sense of intelligibility to the traveler as it became identified and categorized. In each of these guidebooks, Palestine became *contained* and *represented* through dominant frameworks of biblical Science and Orientalism in order to create intelligibility for the Western traveler (Said, 2003, p. 40).

Just as in earlier Western touristic guidebooks, this Zionist guidebook claims to be presenting correct interpretations of Palestine, making the land intelligible in a colonial fashion, this time a Zionist settler colonial fashion. The Jewish people for example are presented as having been forcefully estranged from their ancestral land for 2000 years. In turn, the Yishuv (the Jewish community in Palestine) is presented as the revival of this ancient community and the restoration of both the people and the land. Observations are mediated through a Zionist lens that includes presenting the history of the

³⁷ A guide to Jewish Palestine (1927) Jerusalem: Keren Keyameth Leisrael and Keren Hasesod (Jewish National Fund and the Palestine Foundation Fund) p. 44. (Israel National Library, Jerusalem, Ref: S34B1257).

³⁸ The first Guidebook for Palestine was published by Murray in 1840, reflecting the at the time primarily British imperial interest dominating in the Middle East. Of the most popular guidebooks at the time were the Baedeker, Joanne and Murray (Guillot, 2008). According to Berchet (1985), these three first guidebooks created what he calls the ‘Levantine space’; the imagined geography that opened up the Middle to the a western public with an orientalist gaze. In my analysis, I also add the guidebooks produced by Thomas Cook, as this was the largest tour operator bringing travelers to Palestine. These guidebooks also presented travel to Palestine as a medium for encountering true Christianity, and its landscapes which bring the stories of the Bible to life. Josheph (1995, p. 45) reminds us that these text should be read as having a particular political agenda, in which ‘biblical nostalgia’ are mingled with European myths about Palestine.

Zionist movement and the functioning of the various Zionist institutions as part of this Jewish revival in Palestine.³⁹

The proposed itineraries are comprised of sites of Jewish modernity, such as the Jewish settlements on the coastal plains, the Emek Valley Zionist agricultural museum, the Hebrew University, Jewish industrial enterprises, schools, hospitals, and Zionist headquarters. Especially the agricultural settlements are framed as examples of how the Jishuv was a modern Western enterprise that was ‘making the desert bloom.’ Some of the conventional touristic sights are included in the itineraries, however, most of the important religious sites are left out. Similarly, the largest Palestinian cities are mentioned on the map, but other smaller but religiously and historically relevant cities are not present on the map. The kind of tourism that is promoted in this book is not for the regular pilgrim, but rather the Western traveler that is interested in witnessing a story of modernity and progress in the form of Jewish agriculture and industry in the biblical land.

The German edition of the guidebook ‘Palästina und Südsyrien Reisehandbuch’ commissioned by the Palestine Express Company encourages tourists to stay in the first-class Jewish hotels in Palestine for them to get the relevant information in the ‘Jewish sense.’⁴⁰ The outline of the book is based on the typical guidebooks proposing visits to Jerusalem, Jaffa, Jericho, but also includes Nablus, Haifa, and Tiberias. In each locality, the Jewish institutions are listed. In contrast, the Muslim population is only sporadically mentioned although they actually constituted the majority in most of the cities to be visited. Excursions from the main cities to the Jewish colonies are proposed and an extensive history of the Jewish history in Palestine and the Jewish colonization of Palestine is also provided. Again, the overall narrative of the guidebook is rooted in the idea of Jewish revival and introduction of modernity to Palestine as this excerpt illustrates:

Palestina is no longer solely the land of the Bible and its past of archeologists, theologians and pilgrims. Rather it is the land of the future. It has risen as the homeland and the mental center of the

³⁹ A guide to Jewish Palestine (1927) Jerusalem: Keren Keyameth Leisrael and Keren Hasesod (Jewish National Fund and the Palestine Foundation Fund) (Israel National Library, Jerusalem: S34B1257). p. 44.

⁴⁰ The book mentions Jewish tourism did not develop since after the First World War. Most Jewish tourists would join Christian groups, not getting adequate information on what is Jewish in Palestine.

Jewish people. Therefore it is necessary for those that travel to Palestine to have a book that leads him on the one hand to the rich past of the land and on the other hand through the modern Palestine.⁴¹

The Steimatzky's Palestine Guide Jerusalem edition of 1948 gives the tourist similar reflections on the wave of modernity that the Jewish people had brought to Palestine, and does so by explicitly contrasting Jewish progress and modernity to the backwardness and primitive state of the local Palestinian Bedouin and farmers:

Palestine offers a wide field to one who seeks to study modern life against the background of the past. Here are encampments of the nomad Bedouin with their black tents, still living the pastoral life led by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, while alongside them dwell the fellaheen in primitive stone or clay huts, tillers of the soil, amid field ploughed by a primitive share- a long nail stuck into a wooden pole. And dotted among the Bedouin tents and the fellaheen villages are the Jewish settlements with their modern homes set in fields ploughed by tractors and in plantations cultivated on the most modern lines.⁴²

It is striking that the Bedouin presence is used as evidence for the Jewish heritage in Palestine, as they still maintain the lifestyle of the patriarchs, catapulting them back to biblical times and depriving them of their own history. Again, these guidebooks articulate the images of the local Palestinians in line with earlier non-Zionist Western guidebooks on Palestine. Hereby, the Palestinians are perceived in oriental visions of the biblical in which tourists come to understand the panorama they see as literal throwbacks to what life was like in Jesus' times (Berchet, 1985; Nassar, 2003). Guidebooks and travel writing had therefore already provided a fertile backdrop against which the Zionists could be painted as the driving force of modernization and progress in Palestine. Indeed, in Zionism's hegemonic vision, the exile of the Jews also indicated the end of history and development in the Holy Land.

⁴¹ (1921) Palästina und Südsyrien Reisehandbuch, Im auftrage der Palestine Express Comp. verfasst von Jesaias Press, Jersuaem. Verlag: Benjamin Harz, Jerusalem, Berlin, Wien. (Israel National Library, Jerusalem, 34V 1247).

⁴² Vilnay Zev, (1948) Steimatzky's Palestine Guide Jerusalem: Steimatzky's Middle East Agency. Printed in Palestine by Ahava press, Jerusalem (Israel National Library, Jerusalem, S57B1192). The book was written by Jewish residents of Palestine, some of whom were affiliated with the Hebrew University.

In the 19th century, travel had already produced an image of Palestine that had increased cognitive dissonance between biblical ideal and reality on the ground, strengthened millennial (especially Protestant) movements' perceptions of the Holy Land that needed to be restored by Western force and colonization (Stidham Rogers, 2011, p. 25). Redeeming the land thus meant reshaping it into its biblical image, as interpreted by white Western men, as to make it familiar and recognizable. In essence, they were creating a Holy Land that was made 'more' biblical in their eyes (Obenzinger, 1999, p. 5; Stidham Rogers, 2011). It set in motion what Hermann Guthe, a German settler in Palestine, described as 'friedlichen Kreuzzuges' or a '*peaceful crusade*' (Pappé, 2008, p. 615). This new crusade that was conducted through travel to the land and settlement in the land was meant to redeem and restore the land of the Bible as known by Christians, in particular Protestants. Central to this belief was the return that could only be fulfilled upon the return of the Jews to Palestine and their eventual conversion to Christianity (ibid., p. 615). Buying and settling the land was one way of fulfilling their mission. The eschatological motivation of these settlers in fact disguised the economic interest and political ambitions of the European power in the region, when after all their main motivation was to have as many strongholds as possible in the heart of the disintegrating Ottoman Empire (Pappé, 2015).

The guidebooks, brochures, and maps of Zionist organizations such as the Zionist Information Bureau, the Department of Trade and Industry of the Zionist Executive, and the Association of Jewish Guides, reflect the Zionism's idealization of modernity.⁴³ By combining firstly the ancient claim of the Jewish people on the land, and secondly the modern technology they had brought with them to work the land and make it productive, it positioned them as the rightful custodians over the land. Indeed, the story of the redemption of the land is powerful in tracing connections between the Jewish past of exile, the contemporary desolation of the return to the land, and future restoration. Ancient past became intertwined with modernity. Guidebooks displayed and highlighted Zionism's culture of modernity as explicitly 'Western.' Frequent references are for example made to 'Western-style' and the standards for Jewish hotels in Palestine, often likened to those of Alpine pensions. Indeed,

⁴³ See for example a guide book of 1922 by the department of trade and industry of the Zionist Executive titled *Eretz Israel for Jewish tourists* (Central Zionist Archive file Z4 40284). See also map of Palestine, 1923, that indicates all the Jewish settlements, Association of Jewish guides (Central Zionist Archive file S8.1403.1)

Zionist circles were determined to turn Palestine into a 'Jewish Switzerland' or a 'Swiss corridor to Asia' (Berkowitz, 1997, p. 133).⁴⁴ With these stories and references, Zionists sought to complement the conventional touristic image of the ancient Holy Land with a modernized Jewish version of the land. The mechanisms at work here are part of the work of the indigenization of the settler population (Veracini, 2010, pp. 21-22,46). Tourismscapes that essentialize the land as modern and Palestinians as ancient or backward render them as out of place while at the same time naturalizing the 'modern' Jewish immigrants.

⁴⁴ Later reference compared the newly born state of Israel to Southern California, Florida or the French Riviera as for example in (1950) Tour, Official guide to Israel. Published for: State of Israel tourist department- and the Israel touring club. Editor W. Turnsowsky (Israel National Library, Jerusalem, 69B2472)p . 27.

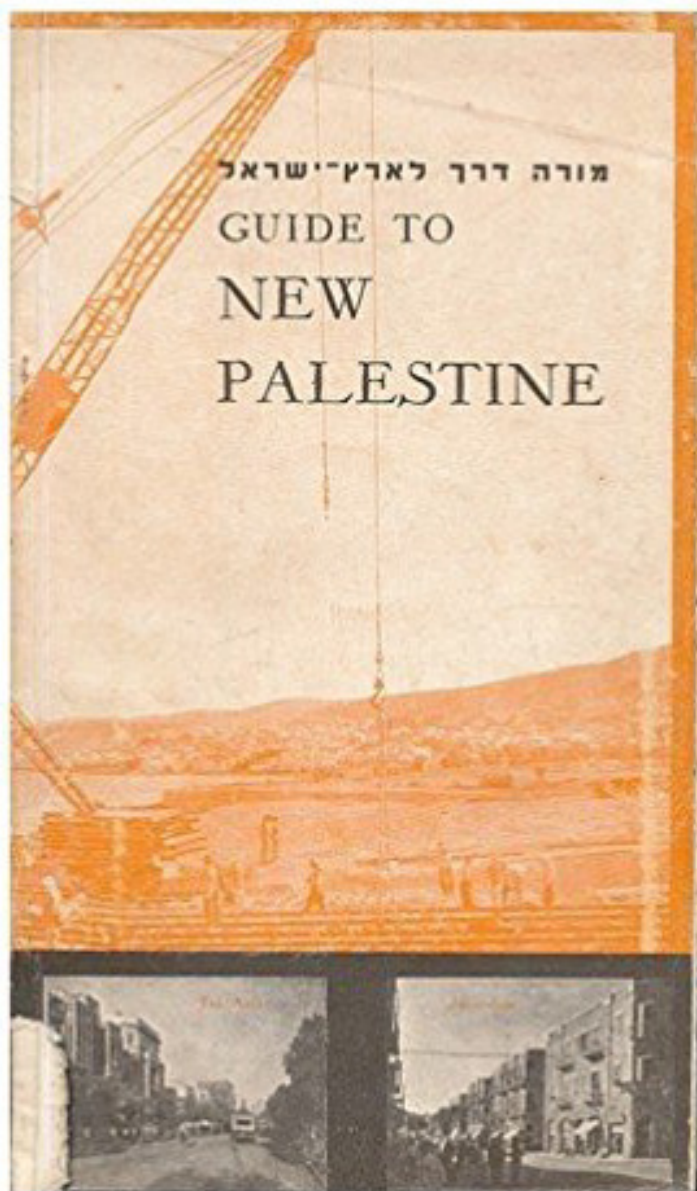


Figure 2.2: Front of the Guide to New Palestine (1936) issued by the Zionist Bureau for Tourism Information in Palestine. Jerusalem: Asriel Press (Courtesy of the Israel National Library)



Figure 2.3: Map of Jewish Palestine as published by the issued by the Zionist Bureau for Tourism Information in Palestine. Jerusalem: Asriel Press (Courtesy of the Israel National Library) from the guide to new Palestine (Israel National Library)

2.3.2. The work of Jewish guides and tourists

Tourism was important to the Zionist projects in ways that went beyond the narratives in guidebooks. Tourism also became subject to the Labor Zionist practice of ‘conquest of labor’ (*kibbush haavoda*) and efforts to achieve the ideal of ‘Hebrew labor’ (*avoda ivrit*). According to Lockman (1996, p. 48) and Shafir (1996, p. 60), the conquest of labor can be interpreted in three different ways. First, it was used to talk about the conquest of the self and the revitalization of the Jewish laborer and a return to the authentic nature of the Jewish people. Work, in particular agricultural labor, would strengthen the emotional connection between the Jewish immigrants and their lost homeland. Second, it indicated the social struggle over labor rights by Jewish immigrants. Its third meaning however is most relevant to this study of tourism; the conquest of labor referred to the transfer of work from Arab laborers to Jewish laborers that was considered a necessary condition for the realization of Zionism. One of the problems Jewish immigrant workers encountered was their inability to compete with the low wages of the Palestinian workers. Labor Zionists, therefore, embarked in the struggle to realize ‘Hebrew labor’ or “exclusively Jewish employment in every enterprise of the Jewish sector of the Palestinian economy” (Lockman, 1996, p. 50).

In the tourism sector, the conquest of labor and the realization of Hebrew labor *Avoda Ivrit* was encouraged by the Zionist Executive for additional reasons. The Hebrew labor of the tour guides, hotel workers, shop owners and drivers etc. connected them not only to the land but also to those that were visiting. By providing tourists with a Jewish Zionist interpretation of the land, tourists were familiarized with the concept of the Jewish national homeland in practice. This meant not just ensuring Hebrew labor in tourism but the Zionification of tourism at large.

The Association of Jewish Guides was an important instrument in this process of Zionification. The Jewish guides, they numbered only 10 in 1922, were instructed to give a Zionist interpretation of the land by formulating an alternative to, in their eyes, the problematic narrative of the Palestinian guides. In this light, the Zionist Executive was committed to fight what they characterized as a class of tourists that “made hasty opinion of things and facts

which deeply concern the future of the Jewish National Home”⁴⁵ because they were mostly informed incorrectly by non-Zionist guides. The role of the Jewish guide was hereby clearly defined in this struggle, as the guides’ association clarified that “in our country, the Jewish guide is not a guide as ordinarily understood. He [sic] is an active instrument of scientist propaganda-political, economic and social.”⁴⁶ Indeed this scientific character of the Jewish guide was also highlighted by the Jewish Guides Association as it praised its guides in a brief to potential tourists as “trained [...] in the scientific knowledge of the past and the present of the land.”⁴⁷

The Association of Jewish Guides complained to the Zionist Executive of Palestine about how Arab guides would only show tourists “the old-fashioned dirty Jews” of the Old City of Jerusalem.⁴⁸ These Jews did not adequately reflect the modern Zionist settler project. On the contrary, they were a symbol of the ancient Jewish decay. Hence the association accused Arab guides of turning every Jewish and non-Jewish visitor into a “bitter enemy of the Jewish National Home,” by giving a bad image of the Jewish in Palestine.⁴⁹ The secretary of Trade and Industry of the Zionist Executive recognized the problem and stated that “any Jewish tourist who was not handled by us while in the country returns to his home as an active or potential enemy of Zionism. This can be easily imagined if it is to be remembered that the country is literally swarming with open and hidden enemies of the Zionist Executive.”⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Letter from the Secretary of Trade and Industry of the Zionist executive to the member of the Zionist executive in Palestine, 7 December, 1923 (Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, S8.1403.1)

⁴⁶ Letter from the Association of Jewish Guides of Palestine to the secretary of trade and industry of the Palestine Zionist Executive, 11th Kislev, Tarifad (Center Zionist Archive, Jerusalem S8.1403.1); Letter from the Secretary of trade and industry of the Zionist executive to the member of the Zionist executive in Palestine, 7 December, 1923 (Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, S8.1403.1)

⁴⁷ Brief of the Association of Jewish Guides, Jerusalem addressing potential tourists for the touristic Season of 1923. In the brief the Jewish guides are recommended for the excellent schooling and knowledge of both the ancient history as well as the recent achievement of the Yishuv in Palestine (Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, S8.1403.1).

⁴⁸ Letter from the Association of Jewish Guides of Palestine to the secretary of trade and industry of the Palestine Zionist Executive, 11th Kislev, Tarifad (Center Zionist Archive, S8.1403.1).

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Letter from the Secretary of trade and industry of the Zionist executive to the member of the Zionist executive in Palestine, 7 December, 1923 (Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, S8.1403.1)

Taking over control from the Palestinian guides was thus vital. Gradually, the Zionist Executive succeeded in integrating Jewish guides within the tourism sector. They described it as an “iron wall” which had surrounded their guides for a long time, and it was now crumbling. In 1923, they wrote that the guides association had finally started to “occupy the position it deserves. [...] another year will pass and our guides will break down all obstacles.” To facilitate this process, the secretary of Industry and Trade called for subsidization of guides.⁵¹ Moreover, the financial support would ensure that the association remained an instrument of the Zionist Executive.⁵² This kind of support was not in place for Palestinian guides. These mechanisms put in place to support Jewish workers again show how the Jewish economy in Palestine could count on an influx of resources from abroad, while Palestinians could not.

As we have seen above, tourism was a means of manifesting the image and material reality of a Jewish Palestine. New books were written, alternative ‘Zionist’ itineraries opened to tourists (see Figures 2.2 and 2.3). However, this did not happen without opposition from the local Palestinian population, nor were international tour operators immediately sold for the idea of commercializing ‘Jewish Palestine’ in the packages they offered. Efforts to include the Zionist narrative into the incoming tours to Palestine were discussed by the World Zionist Organization. They suggested the Zionist Executive in Palestine would distribute leaflets and maps in the hotels with specific parties of tourists and visiting foreigners were residing. This way they indirectly provided the information, as not all tour leaders were sympathetic in distributing the information among the tourists.⁵³

The Zionist Executive proposed contacting all tour agencies worldwide through the Zionist Federations and what they called ‘other friends,’ to determine how many tourists were going to be visiting Palestine the next year. This way the Zionist Executive could prepare for their arrival and make sure they would be treated by the guides, hotels, and companies sympathetic to the Zionist project.⁵⁴ The tour agencies would also be requested to provide the tourists with a statement of G. Agronsky, a member of the Zionist Executive

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Letter from Mr. Stein, Zionist Organization Central Office to Mr. N Tishby, Palestine Zionist Executive. 1924 (Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem ref: S8.1403.1).

⁵⁴ Notes on tourism, from Mr. Agronsky to Col. Kisch , 1924/23 (Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, ref: S8.1403.1).

on the current situation in 'Jewish Palestine.' If the agencies were to refuse to do so, "every effort should be made by our friends to place in the hands of the prospective travelers a statement including an itinerary, setting forth the things Jewish in Palestine." Notes and itineraries, as prepared by the Zionist Executive, were to be placed on the desks of all hotels, hospices, offices of all tourist and travel agencies, and the steamship companies throughout Palestine. The Zionist would go at lengths leaving no opportunity untouched to spread their message and view of Palestine among tourists.

The Zionist Executive capitalized on Jewish labor in tourism not just for transmitting the Zionist narrative to the tourists. The guides' position was to be strengthened within the touristic market for capital to flow to Jewish guides rather than Arab ones. The financial aspect of the guides went beyond providing them with an income. On many occasions, tourists would also donate money to the Zionist institutions or charities after having visited them.⁵⁵ Communications of the Palestine Zionist Executive show that the local branch was warned whenever prominent tourists were arriving on the shores of Palestine, to try to facilitate visits in Jewish settlements or organizations.⁵⁶ Indeed Berkowitz (1997) also concluded that Zionist leaders hoped that "... Jewish tourists to Palestine would disproportionately invest in existing business or initiate capitalist or cooperative ventures, even if they did not plan to stay themselves." Similarly, the Zionist Executive also proposed that Jewish guides promote the selling of land and shares of Jewish companies. H.J. Tisch, secretary for trade and industry and founder of the Jewish Guides Association, stated in a letter that "there are no limits to the possibilities opened up by the existence of the [Jewish Guides] Association. In the first instance, I wish to make every member of the association an intelligent propagator of the Palestine Land Development Company and of the various economic schemes issued from time to time by my Department. Should it

⁵⁵ Letter from Mr. Tishby, Secretary of trade of the Palestine Zionist executive to Mr. Lipsky, chairman national executive of the Zionist Organization of America (4 April 1923) (Center Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, S8.1403.1); Letter from Mr. W.H. White, Assistant manager Thomas Cook & Son to Mr. M.M. Weisgal, managing Editor, the New Palestine and secretary of the Zionist Organization of America (March 3, 1923) (Center Zionist Archive, S8.1403.1). see also letter from the Palestine Zionist Executive to the Zionist Organization in London on December 21, 1922 (Center Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, S8.1403.3).

⁵⁶ Letter from Mr. Stein, Zionist Organization Central Office to Mr. N Tishby, Palestine Zionist Executive. 1924 (Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem ref: S8.1403.1).

appear desirable, the Jewish Guides will become active sellers of shares of our banks, as well as of private companies.”⁵⁷ He also proposed to introduce fixed commissions on every sale of land by the Palestine Land Development Company accomplished by Jewish Guides.

When groups of wealthy tourists would arrive in Palestine, especially when Jewish, their stay would not go by unnoticed. For example, a letter from Keren Hayesod to the Zionist Executive documents the visit of a group of tourists from the Austrian Hakoach sports club in 1924.⁵⁸ The author considered these tourists ‘reputedly wealthy’ and apparently interested in investing in the economic development and opportunities in Palestine. The Keren Hayesod or the Foundation Fund⁵⁹ inquired about the impression the tourists had about the Zionist project in Palestine, especially those of the Keren Hayesod itself. The information would feedback to the local Keren Hayesod branch in Vienna to approach the tourists upon their return home and to encourage them to invest in the organization in Eretz Israel.⁶⁰ Through its global branches, the Keren Hayesod collected donations to provide financial assistance to the Jewish Agency in an effort to foster Jewish settlement in Palestine and the development of a Jewish economy.

Tourists were mobilized in the advancement of the Zionist national project in Palestine. In a report on the tourist situation in Palestine for the Zionist Organization of America, this rationale of fundraising is confirmed: “the importance of encouraging Jewish tourists to go to Palestine cannot be too strongly emphasized as this is the most direct method of encouraging people in the upbuilding of Palestine with a minimum of expense to the Zionist agencies.”⁶¹ Tourism was thus considered an integral part of the international

⁵⁷ Letter from Mr. Tishby, Secretary of trade of the Palestine Zionist executive to Mr. Lipsky, chairman national executive of the Zionist Organization of America (16 august 1922) (Center Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, S8.1403.3)

⁵⁸ The Hakoach Sport Club was an Austrian sports club founded in 1909 by Austrian Zionists who had been inspired by Max Nordau’s idea of the ‘muscular Jew’ as to physically and mentally revive the Jewish diaspora.

⁵⁹ Also known as United Israel Appeal

⁶⁰ Letter from L. Herrman, Keren Hayesod, to S.A. Van Vriesland, treasurer of the Zionist executive, 24 January 1924 (Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, S8.1403.1)

⁶¹ Report of Mr. George M. Hyman on Tourist Situation, July 19, 1922 as send in a letter from Mr. Louis Lipsky, the Chairman, executive committee of the Zionist organization of America to H.J. Tisch, secretary of Trade and industry of the Palestine Zionist executive July 20, 1922 (Central Zionist Archive, S8.1403.3)

supply of funds necessary to the Zionist success in Palestine. And this was a truly global effort: Zionist organizations worldwide were mobilized to convince tourists to travel to Palestine and coordinate their stay with the Zionist institutions in Palestine. Certain types of tourists were considered particularly beneficial to the Zionist settler project. For example, the Zionist Information Bureau considered teachers valuable tourists because they could share their stories and influence the younger generation after having traveled to Palestine.⁶² Rabbis were targeted for a similar purpose. Upon their return home after a tour in Palestine, they could encourage their congregation to donate or increase their contribution to the Zionist cause.⁶³ In 1930, the Zionist Information Bureau started to target independent parties of individual travelers with a smaller travel budget, since these were mostly Jewish travelers. They hoped that these tourists would gladly take an inexpensive tour in Eretz Israel and at the end of the visit invest in Zionist enterprises.⁶⁴

2.4. Globalizing a Zionist destination

From the second half of the 19th century, international travel agencies had opened local branches in Palestine. Thomas Cook and Son in particular grew to dominate the market of travel to Palestine. Their 'Eastern Tours' heralded the real popularization of travel to Palestine. In the year 1872, Thomas Cook and Son had brought 230 passengers to Palestine and in 1879 John Cook claimed that more than three-quarters of the British and American visitors going to the Holy Land had traveled with Cook (Brendon, 1992, p. 135). Between 1881-1883, 80% of all the trips with British or American tourists in Palestine had been organized by the Thomas Cook's company (Kark, 2001). Between 1868 and 1882, they arranged trips for approximately 4200 tourists to Palestine (Cohen-Hattab & Shoval, 2015, p. 29). By 1900, the company had

⁶² See also letter from Mr. Tishby, Secretary of trade of the Palestine Zionist Executive to S. Bloom, Hotel Villa Maccabbi, Egypt, April 16, 1922 (Center Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, S8.1403.3)

⁶³ Zionist Information Bureau for Tourists, Report on the activities of the Zionist Information Bureau during the month of July 1931 (Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, KKL5-3654/2).

⁶⁴ Interview with C.R. Webb, general manager of the Palestine railways at Haifa, 1930 (Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, KKL5-3654/2).

assisted a total of 12 000 people to visit the Holy Land (J. G. Davies, 1988, pp. 148–151).

However, the Zionist institutions were frustrated with the main international tour operators who, according to them, were anti-Semitic and therefore refused to work with Jewish guides, hotels and drivers to accommodate their tourists (Cohen-Hattab, 2004). Especially Thomas Cook, the largest tour operator in Palestine, was singled out by the Zionists because their local operators were perceived as unfriendly toward the Zionist project and he was even accused of being anti-Semitic.⁶⁵ However, it has to be noted that it remains unclear whether these companies' reluctance to work with Jews was indeed motivated out of anti-Semitism or whether the preference of working with Arab Palestinians was the result of previous experiences, continuing their business as usual, making an effort to cater the desires of the Christian pilgrims, or simply a disinterest in the Zionist cause (Berkowitz, 1997, p. 130).

The Zionist Executive was well aware of the opportunities the support of these international travel agencies would bring. Their collaboration would ensure that more tourists, both Jewish and non-Jewish, would go back home with a positive image of the Zionist achievements in Palestine.⁶⁶ Therefore, in the case of the Thomas Cook & Son Company in Palestine, the Zionist Executive made clear efforts to influence the company's local employment, itineraries, and the narrative on 'Jewish Palestine' throughout the company's trips. In 1922 and 1923, the Zionist Executive in Palestine repeatedly wrote the Zionist Organization in London and the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) with complaints about the Cook branch in Palestine that refused to employ Jewish guides or send tourists to Jewish-owned hotels. The Zionist Executive asked the ZOA to put pressure on the Thomas Cook headquarters in both countries to work with Jewish guides and drivers, and include Jewish places of interest

⁶⁵ Letter from the Palestine Zionist Executive, Jerusalem to Mr. L.J. Stein, Zionist Organization London, December 21, 1922 (Central Zionist Archive, S8.1403.3).

⁶⁶ Letter from the Secretary of Trade and Industry of the Palestine Zionist Executive to L. Lipsky, Chairman national executive committee, Zionist Organization of America. 23 February, 1923. The letter was a response to a cable on 12/02/1923 about the arrival of 700 American tourists arriving in Palestine in 1923. The American Zionist Organization complained to the Zionist executive in Palestine that despite prior arrangement no Jewish guides or drivers were provided by the Thomas Cook Agency. (Center Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, S8.1403.1).

into the itineraries.⁶⁷ Moreover, one of the letters also suggested that Mr. Salameh, the manager of the Thomas Cook office in Jerusalem who was notoriously unsympathetic to the Jewish cause, should be replaced: “if the Zionist influence could result in the appointment of a more sympathetic manager to the Jerusalem Cooks, the result would no doubt be better.”⁶⁸

In February 1926, Mr. G. Agronsky, member of the Zionist Executive, directly addressed Thomas Cook’s office with a complaint that had come to his attention through a British tourist. One of Cook’s guides had reportedly said to a group of tourists arrive in Palestine: “you are now reaching Palestine, sacred to us all, which the Jews have come to take from us with the help of British Soldiers. You English gentlemen should help us in our struggle against the Jews.”⁶⁹ In his letter, Agronsky demanded absolute political impartiality of the Thomas Cook guides. At the same time, the Zionist Executive was still pressuring Thomas Cook & Son to hire Jewish guides and work with Jewish-owned hotels, knowing that this indeed would mean requiring additional avenues for spreading their propaganda and gaining financial support for their cause.⁷⁰ The Cook company was not indifferent to including the Zionist narrative on their tours. For example that same year, the Hadassah (the Women’s Zionist Organization of America), was invited to give a course on the history of Palestine on one of Thomas Cook & Son’s cruise ships. They

⁶⁷ Letter from Mr. Tishby, Secretary of trade of the Palestine Zionist executive to Mr. Lipsky, chairman national executive of the Zionist Organization of America, 4 April 1923 (Center Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, S8.1403.1); Letter from Mr. W.H. White, Assistant manager Thomas Cook & Son to Mr. M.M. Weisgal, managing Editor, the New Palestine and secretary of the Zionist Organization of America, March 3, 1923 (Center Zionist Archive, S8.1403.1). See also letter from the Palestine Zionist Executive to the Zionist Organization in London, December 21, 1922 (Center Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, S8.1403.3).

⁶⁸ Letter from the Palestine Zionist Executive, Jerusalem to Mr. L.J. Stein, Zionist Organization London, December 21, 1922 (Central Zionist Archive, S8.1403.3).

⁶⁹ Draft letter to Mr. Salameh, Manager Thom. Cook Palestine send annexed in letter from G.Agronsky, Palestine Zionist Executive to Colonel Kisch, 21st February, 1926. (Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, S25.545.4).

⁷⁰ Letter from Mr. Tishby, Secretary of trade of the Palestine Zionist executive to Mr. Lipsky, chairman national executive of the Zionist Organization of America, 4 April 1923 (Center Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, ref S8.1403.1); Letter from Mr. W.H. White, Assistant manager Thomas Cook & Son to Mr. M.M. Weisgal, managing Editor, the New Palestine and secretary of the Zionist Organization of America, March 3, 1923 (Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, ref S8.1403.1)

would also provide a tour that gave the tourists a taste of the ‘real Jewish life’ and the Zionist renaissance (Berkowitz, 1997, p. 141).

The Zionist Executive kept a close eye on the narrative displayed in the Thomas Cook publications. They specifically challenged the lack of the ‘*Jewish agricultural settlements*’ in the Jisreel Valley in the itineraries proposed by Thom. Cook & Son. Writing to the travel agency, the Executive suggested adaptations to the program such as including Balfouria or Degania on Cook’s route from Nazareth to Haifa, or a stop by the Jewish settlement of Nahalal. The representative of the Zionist Executive wrote that

We should of course be pleased to co-operate with you in bringing to the notice for the many Cook travelers one or two typical Jewish settlements by way of illustrating to the visitor that this ancient country is undergoing a modern and rapid development.

The Zionist Executive also requested Thomas Cook & Son to use the term ‘Jewish agricultural settlement’ in their guidebooks and brochures in instead of ‘Jewish colonies.’⁷¹ A semantic nuance that further normalized and even indigenized the Jewish population in Cook’s guidebooks. By highlighting the agricultural achievements of the Jewish immigrants in that region, the Zionists sought more investments which were vital to increasing the absorptive capacity of the Jewish economy in Palestine. These suggestions were taken seriously by the Cook company and they pledged to adapt the text of the guide book.⁷² The Cook office responded that there would not be a problem showing the tourist at least one of the colonies starting from the next season.⁷³

In 1927, the Zionist Information Bureau for Tourists in Palestine communicated a series of comments about the new edition of Cook’s brochure *Egypt, the Nile and Palestine* to the manager of the Thomas Cook & Son office in Palestine. The Bureau suggested to insert a visit to the Hebrew University to the already existing visit of the Mount of Olives and to add the modern

⁷¹ Letter from the Palestine Zionist Executive to Thom. Cook & Son, Ltd in Jerusalem 14, October, 1924. (Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, S25.545.4); Letter from G. Agronsky, the Palestine Zionist Executive to Thom. Cook & Son, Ltd in Jerusalem 5, October, 1924. (Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, ref S25.545.4).

⁷² Draft letter to Mr. Salameh, Manager Thom. Cook Palestine send annexed in letter from G.Agronsky, Palestine Zionist Executive to Colonel Kisch, 21st February, 1926. (Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, ref S25.545.4).

⁷³ Letter form F.H. Cook to G. Agronsky, Palestine Zionist Executive, Jerusalem, March 31, 1925 (Central Zionist Archive, ref S25.545.4)

Jewish Quarter of the Hadar HaCarmel in Haifa (where the Jewish Technological institute is situated) to the itinerary. Furthermore, the Bureau suggested adding to the sentence “passing through the of Plain of Esdraelon [Jisreel Valley],” the specification of “now the center of Jewish agricultural colonization,” as well as further details on the settlements provided by the Zionist Information Bureau. It also advises to highlight the presence of Jewish settlement on the routes proposed by the Cook publication in the vicinity of Haifa and Beisan. The Bureau also included a map of all the Jewish settlements in Palestine as to inform the Cook office and potentially interested tourists of their existence.⁷⁴ And indeed, the efforts of the Zionist Information Bureau for Tourists in Palestine bore fruits. According to Mr. Gerson Agronsky of the Zionist Executive, Thomas Cook & Son later published a booklet with “two full pages under the heading ‘how to see modern Palestine’[devoted to] exclusively Jewish trips, and again on pages 97-99, Zionist activities are reviewed accompanied by a few striking photographs.”⁷⁵

Successes continued in the 1930ies when the Zionist Bureau for tourist information met with the company’s representatives in London on the topic of promoting both Jewish and non-Jewish tourism to Palestine. The Cook company committed itself to include more Jewish religious, historical and new Jewish colonies into its itineraries, representing the modern Jewish Palestine. Zionist Bureau for Tourism continued to pressure Thomas Cook & Son company and other tour operators to contracting Jewish hotels, drivers, and guides to support the Zionist cause in Palestine (Cohen-Hattab, 2004, p. 76; Cohen-Hattab & Shoval, 2015, p. 73).

The case of Thomas Cook & Son illustrates how the Zionist Executive used its global leverage through connections in the World Zionist Organization. They bypassed the local Palestinians in control of the Thomas Cook office in Jerusalem and encouraged the normalization of the Jewish settlement within the touristic itineraries. They replaced the Palestinian guides, especially anti-Zionists, with guides supportive of the Zionism, to generate access for Jewish tourism workers to the largest segment of the market in Palestine. By influencing international tour operators such as Thomas Cook, the Zionist

⁷⁴ Letter from the Jewish Information Bureau for Tourists in Palestine to Mr. Salame of the Thomas Cook & Son company in Palestine, January 12th 1927, Jerusalem. (Central Zionist Archive, S25.545.4)

⁷⁵ Letter from MR. Gerson Agronsky to Mr. M.B. Hexter on the American Express. 6th July 1930 (Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, KKL5-3654/2)

sought to change the global image of Palestine as a Jewish destination, hence normalizing the Zionist settler project and presence in Palestine among a Western tourism public.

I want to argue there that, even though the details of the adaptation of these guidebooks might seem trivial while bearing in mind the profound political changes Palestine was going through in this period, these kind of stories are important, as they contributed to the reordering of Palestine as the Jewish national homeland. Minor adaptations in guidebooks such as Thomas Cook's might have induced more visits to and greater visibility of the Jewish Colonies in Palestine. Moreover, their inscription into the itineraries as part of the Palestinian modernity, as opposed to the way many Arab Palestinian villages were described as backward or ancient, is very significant for the image tourist would take home about the legitimacy of Zionist colonization.

2.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I sought to illustrate how early modern tourism was an instrument of Zionist colonization in Palestine. It worked on several different levels. First, tourism was a mechanism par excellence to spread the Zionist message and create a positive image of the Zionist enterprises in Mandate Palestine. Second, it provided access to potential funders and settlers. The conquest of labor that took place within the tourism sector served more than just providing work to Jewish guides, chauffeurs, or hotels. It ensured the Zionist ideological entrenchment of the narratives and images directed toward visitors. Gradually, the Zionists' imagined geographies came to take a more dominant role in international travel to Palestine. By reflecting on the 'how' of tourism, it is clear that creating a new material reality in the touristic experience of Palestine took place through assemblages of guidebooks, maps, hotels, itineraries, guides, sites, travel agents,... These created space that was predominantly 'modern,' in which modernity was introduced by Jewish agents.

Zionists were able to build on the hegemonic oriental discourses of class, race, and nation to make the case of their settler project in Palestine. These allowed them to project spatial representations of Palestine they inherited from the European, Western legacy of Palestine as the biblical land. These were images

of the Palestinians as backward, the colonial promise of modernizing the land under Western auspice. In addition, the making of Zionist tourismscapes was only realized through the dispossession of those Palestinians that took up an active position as tourism makers and had played a crucial role in developing a globalized market that already existed before Zionists took control.

The chapter demonstrated the Jewish destination did not emerge overnight. It was the result of gradual assemblages of places, people, touristic materials that came together in tandem with the Zionist settler project. The case also shows that the current process of Judaization that occurs in for example Jerusalem (chapter 3) is a continuation of a long ongoing process of colonial reordering. In this process, Jewish settlers are naturalized as the rightful Indigenous populations that had returned to the land and the Palestinian population discredited and written out of space. The touristic space that was produced sought to destroy native Palestinian relationality in touristic representations and realities and dispossesses them.

In the next chapter, I will develop a case that demonstrates how the trope of modernity, which was central to those early Zionist tourism narratives, is still being mobilized in the making of tourism spaces in contemporary Israel and how they reproduce Zionist legacies and relationalities that obscure violence and dispossession.

CHAPTER 3: TOURISTIC ORDERINGS ON THE FRONTIER: THE JORDAN RIVER PEACE PARK

How many maps, in the descriptive or geographical sense, might be needed to deal exhaustively with a given space, to code and decode all its meanings and contents? It is doubtful whether a finite number can ever be given in answer to this sort of question. What we are most likely confronted with here is a sort of instant infinity, a situation reminiscent of a Mondrian painting.

(Lefebvre, 1991, p. 85).

3.1. Introduction

In 2006, Friends of the Earth Middle East (FoEME) a joint Israeli, Jordanian and Palestinian organization (now called Ecopeace Middle East), announced plans for the Jordan River Peace Park, a trans-boundary conservation area.⁷⁶ Spanning the border between Jordan and Israel and aggregating the areas of Baqora/Naharayim (in Jordan) and Jisr el-Majame / Gesher (in Israel) both around 4 km (Ecotech Jordan, 2008), the park would be accessible from both sides (figure 3.1). While the project is still in the planning phase, FoEME's local field staff already provides tours in the area designated for the park. As they stroll around with the tourists, the place is reimagined into a frontier of

⁷⁶ Currently, FoEME Middle East consists of three partner organizations: Ecopeace Jordan, Ecopeace Palestine and Ecopeace Israel that are respectively based in Amman, Bethlehem and Tel Aviv. Most of Ecopeace's projects are bi-or trilateral because regional environmental cooperation and environmental peace building is their main goal.

nature conservation and peace. The place is, however, more than just a potential ecotourism destination. The Israeli side of the park hosts a pioneer museum that explores the history of *Kibbutz Gesher*. This museum delves back into the early history of Zionism and Jewish immigration to Palestine. At first glance, the Jordanian side seems deserted. It is fenced off with barbed wire. The human presence is limited to a handful of Jordanian soldiers guarding the border. But a closer look reveals more. The ruins of the Rutenberg hydroelectric power station tell the story of Pinhas Rutenberg, a Russian-born engineer who sought to provide electricity for the whole of Palestine back in the Mandate period. A train station alongside an abandoned spur of the Hijaz Railway reminds visitors of an ambitious project to connect the vast provinces of the Ottoman Empire. No less than three bridges, together with a Mamluk khan (inn) and a Mandate-era customs house, testify to the historical connectedness of the place, and to its role in articulating wider worlds. Subsequent civilizations, rulers, and pioneers have left traces in the landscape.

The resulting artifacts have been assembled and reassembled over the years. FoEME has engaged in a new project of placemaking. And as they rearticulate the place by reassembling its nature and artifacts, it is introduced into wider constellations of meaning designed to attract ecotourists and heritage seekers. FoEME's claims are inscribed into space and recreate and present the place as a new coherent entity in which tourism is presented as the vehicle for sustainable development. But while tourists are introduced to the place, other elements are omitted or excluded.

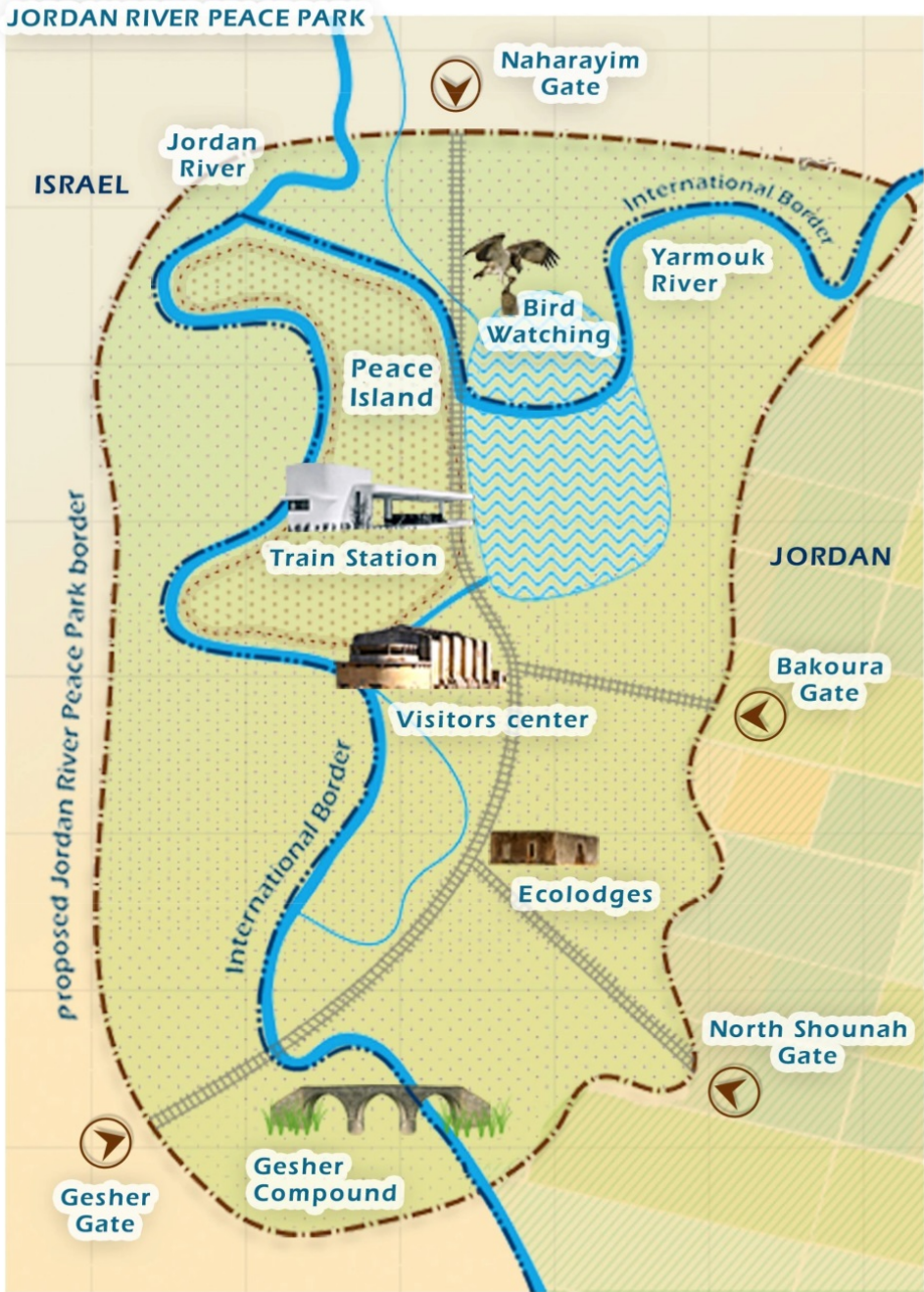


Figure 3.2: Map of the Jordan River Peace Park as envisioned by FoEME (courtesy of FoEME).

These initial observations raise the fundamental questions about how space is produced and becomes meaningful. This particular space is entangled in various world-making projects. Tourism comes to play a role in not just making those visible but also in the legitimation of the transformation of the space in the image of those world-making projects. Tourism comes in to reorder the contested space by reassembling and rearticulating it. The frontier is reproduced based on binaries, such as culture vs. nature, civilization vs. savagery or modernity vs. backwardness, that are easily consumed by tourists and recreation seekers. It is ultimately grounded in the powerful narrative of modernity that masks the coloniality of the project which has transformed the place historically. In what follows, I will first enter the park from the Israeli side in Old Gesher, where the utopic narratives of the Zionist frontier are exhibited. They are not contained by the border and also travel into Jordan. Second, the history of the place will be unpacked, linking up separate artifacts into a broader context of nation-building, modernity, and Zionist settler colonization. Lastly, I question how FoEME reimagines the history of the place and re-appropriates it into its own project by capitalizing on the potential attraction of the place for ecotourists. This chapter is the result of several visits to the site, both from the Jordanian and the Israeli side. Information was retrieved from interviews with FoEME officials and field staff, architects, environmental experts, and government officials in 2010 and 2012 in Jordan and Israel-Palestine. This was complemented with research in the archives of the Israeli Electrical Corporation in Haifa and the Central Zionist Archive in Jerusalem. The findings are a reflection of the plans and the situation at the time.

The chapter will show that new subjectivities and boundaries are created on the frontier that serve wider ideological projects, in this case: Zionism, modernity, sustainable development through tourism, or neoliberalism. I want to illustrate how the frontier binaries are put to work in these various ways. They are territorialized and materialized to create the reality they embody: a modern world. To get to this understanding, we need to start from the relations that coproduce the frontier and its human relations, both historical and contemporary. And eventually, how it reproduces the world anew in the image of the colonizer's fantasies. Nevertheless, 'grand schemes never fully colonize the territories upon which they are imposed' (Tsing, 2005, p. 36). Multiplicity of space is never fully suppressed, which creates leaps, struggles, and friction (Massey, 2005; Tsing, 2005). This is what we will be looking for, as it gives

us a hint of how the frontier's binary logic of abstraction works to make spaces. I aim to understand how the frontier logic is wielded to coproduce space as well as broader projects of ordering or rearticulating such as Zionism, colonialism capitalism, or environmentalism. Consequently, the following questions emerge: how does the production of space allow for these ideological projects to become normalized on the frontier in both a material and discursive way?

I present the placemaking project of the Peace Park as a story of world-making. Following Doreen Massey (2005, 1994), I understand place as a sphere of creative connections, heterogeneity, and relationality; a temporary constellation that is subject to continual change and rearticulation. This implies that placemaking and world-making cannot be approached as spatially or temporally distinct activities. Rather, matches and mismatches characterize the constitutive relationship between the two (Tsing, 2000). Placemaking and world-making thus need to be investigated and thought through together. The concept of the frontier serves to elucidate how different natures and heritage elements are reassembled and redefined along certain constitutive paradigms of modern political thought and practice. As visions of particular worlds are projected into the frontier, the apparent randomness of space is reordered and made legible. It is made subject to belonging and intervention. I take the Peace Park project as a point from which to deconstruct the dichotomies on which the frontier is built, thereby revealing the it as a site of contestation, re-appropriation and agency that aims to redirect the place toward an ideal type.

3.2. The logic of the frontier and the production of space

One of the central place- and world-making tropes in settler colonies is that of the 'frontier.' we often think about the frontier the way it is commonly imagined as site where spaces collide: wild meets civilized, technology meets nature. Turner's contested work on the American frontier in 1893 defines the frontier as the place where cultivated pioneers came to conquer and tame the wilderness, while at the same time creating and spreading the American identity (Turner, 2008). It is intrinsically connected to a sense of progress and mythology that are foundational to the settler colony. Turner's frontier

legitimized American settler colonialism and marginalized the native American population as well as their dispossession that was enabled by the frontier violence (Mamdani, 2015, p. 9). Indeed, Prout and Howitt (2009, p. 397) point out:

In large part, these constructed geographies – what we refer to as ‘frontier imaginings’ – persist in popular discourses which insist that the Indigenous Other is somehow antithetical to and inauthentic in the places that constitute both the urban and the rural. They narrate the Indigenous as authentic only in historical, ‘wilderness’ spaces; and as defined by dispossession and loss. And, in rendering Indigenous people always out of place, these frontier imaginings foster continuing erasure of Indigenous rights, lived experiences, and opportunities.

Authors such as Wolfe (Wolfe, 1999) and Cronon (1995) have criticized Turner’s perception and redeveloped the frontier as a concept that makes human subjects and natural objects based on classic binaries: culture vs. nature, civilization vs. savagery or modernity vs. backwardness. These kinds of binaries have been fundamental in creating a national identity, and indeed a sense belonging, in settler colonial societies such as Australia (Prout & Howitt, 2009), America (Turner, 2008), or Palestine (Wolfe, 1999; Yiftachel, 1998). Here, the frontier was remade and civilized by settlers, who by bringing society and modernity to the land also connected to the land. According to Moore these binary distinctions, society vs. nature, in particular, are violent abstractions that are ‘removing constitutive relations from historic phenomena under investigation’ (Moore, 2015, p. 21). In their abstraction, the ‘natural subjects and objects’ of the frontier appear to us in a fetishized way. Abstraction creates the frontier as a mystified sphere in which people that are perceived as ‘natural’ are presented as not yet part of a broader world of meaning.

Oppressors, colonizers, and enslavers often considered Indigenous people as part of nature, and not as part of society. This occurred in the case of the Indigenous people in the Americas and Australia, African enslaved people in the US, and the Indigenous Arab population in Zionism’s case. The frontier dehistoricized and disconnected Indigenous people from relations as they were subjected to binary abstraction (Moore, 2015). Lacking in history, they and their spaces presented themselves as something open to exploration, reordering, and colonization. Deborah Bird Rose (2004, p. 62) eloquently describes the dual movement that occurs on the settler colonial frontier:

The frontier is thus a cauldron of modernity, a time and place where modern culture simultaneously reveals its capacity for destruction and reinvents its own myth of creation. The hand of destruction and the hand of civilization mutually shape a chronotype focused on year Zero.

The frontier does not just separate. It is a productive process that creates new unities. It produces a settler society where it problematizes and erases the native one. Moreover, Veracini (2010, p. 21) points to the frontier as giving the necessary mythical framework for the indigenization of the settler and the creation of a settler identity.

The frontier is not confined to settler colonies, nor is it “a place or even process but [rather] an imaginative project capable of molding both places and processes” (A. L. Tsing, 2005, p. 32). It is used to open spaces and imagine landscapes that do not exist, at least not yet. Hence, the frontier works as a *trompe l’oeil*, which shows a possible project while masking the violent conditions of its production (ibid., pp. 68–69). The frontier thus imagines pure spaces that can be remade in the image of an ideal world and attempts to normalize these images and accompanying practices. Consequently, it is a powerful instrument in detaching places from their social relations, their history and also other places. Tsing (2005, p.30) explains that it is “the activity of the frontier to make human subjects as well as natural objects.” The frontier thus becomes a site of articulation where new connections in space are made. This rearticulating is a process of differentiation and inclusion and exclusion. Consequently, particular people and artifacts that do not fit the articulation, find themselves out of place.

The frontier thus rearticulates the relations between space, time, people and things according to dichotomous principles that have a seemingly impersonal and universal character (Forrest, 2011; Li, 2000; A. L. Tsing, 2005). For Moore, the frontier can be understood as a site of assemblage and appropriation where new connections in space are made, where movement and expansion are made possible (Moore, 2000). He illustrates how the frontier deploys territorial power and geographical knowledge necessary for the appropriation of resources, labor, energy, a.o. As the case study on the peace park will show, the Jewish pioneers encountered cultivable soil, abundance of water and empty land on the frontier in Gesher, and these elements were co-produced with the frontier itself. They were reimagined as being for the taking, existing only to be used by the settlers. The frontier’s practice of assemblage

is thus a constant process of differentiation, inclusion and exclusion (Forrest, 2011). Moreover, by building on Lefebvre, we can understand the frontier is a way of making space knowledgeable by carving out “part-spaces [...] for inspection from social space as a whole” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 91). The frontier is a particular representation of space that is defined and instrumentalized by the colonizer. As a result, territories are demarcated in a way that allows a differentiated colonial control over the landscape, resources and people and especially the Indigenous population that finds themselves in or out of place.

3.3. A Zionist tourism experience on the frontier

If a tourist would enter the Peace Park through the Gesher Gate, she or he would walk right into the open-air museum ‘Naharayim experience’ at Old Gesher⁷⁷ (indicated in figure 3.1 with ‘Gesher compound’), which is located inside the boundaries of the park. This part of the park is already developed in a touristic way; it is an open-air kibbutz museum, promoted as a destination for Birthright tourism and events such as Bar Mitzvah’s, weddings, and concerts.

A tile mural shown in figure 3.2 decorates the ticket booth of the Old Gehser open-air museum. It illustrates how different landscape elements are assembled both on the mosaic as in the museum to construct the narrative of



Figure 3.2: The mural composed of tiles at the ticket booth of Old Gesher illustrates the fleeing of part of the members of Kibbutz Gesher in 1984. (Photo by Dorien Vanden Boer)

⁷⁷ More details on the museum can be found on the museum’s website www.naharayim.co.il

the ‘Naharayim experience.’ Starting from the right, a bridge crossing the Jordan is pictured. This is how the kibbutz received its name: *gesher* is Hebrew for bridge. We see the evacuation of the children from the burning kibbutz on the second night of the 1948 war. While they flee, they pass the distant Tel Or settlement with its palm trees on the other side of the Jordan River. They also pass the destroyed Rutenberg power plant. The water is still flowing out of the turbines, but the power lines are broken. They hang like wilted flowers. This ornament draws the visitor into the narrative of Old Gesher museum. It represents the kibbutz as a mythical place, a symbol of the perseverance of the pioneers who laid the foundations for the State of Israel.

The museum presents the history of the first Jewish immigrants to Kibbutz Gesher, the story of Pinhas Rutenberg’s power plant, and the workers who lived right across the Jordan River in Naharayim. The museum’s website gives a good first impression of the narrative on display:

A group of determined pioneers came to this strategically important spot on the border and chose to build their homes here by the Jordan River, in a place both distant and rugged yet somehow magical. In the middle of nowhere, surrounded by enemies, these courageous men and women ventured into the wilderness and built a kibbutz for their families, where they raised their children to value equality and hard work. (Naharayim Experience, n.d.)

3.3.1. A wild west on the Jordan River

The next stop is the sound and light screening in the dining hall of Old Gesher. The pioneers describe their first impression of the area as “the end of the world,” or “this really was the wild west.” Gesher was imagined as the far frontier of Jewish presence in Palestine, where hostility was not only coming from the Arab neighbors, but also from nature itself. In a film presented in the dining hall, the visitor is confronted with a hostile environment, as he/she is almost attacked by a horde of giant mosquitos that threaten to swarm out from the screen. The pioneers state that in Gesher “paradise was a distant dream.” During the summer, the tropical heat and clouds of mosquitos and flies challenged the kibbutzniks (members of the kibbutz). In winter, their life was equally difficult due to the “knee-high water” and the “waist-high nettles.”

However, the kibbutzniks were determined to turn this wild landscape into a paradise.

As we leave the dining hall and pass through a gate in the high voltage fence delineating the militarized border, a vintage Egged bus draws the attention. Egged is Israel's National bus company. The bus, with the number 'L3,' was the only one that crossed both the Jezreel Valley (also known simply as 'the valley,' or 'Ha Emek') and the border between Israel and Jordan. It connected Gesher with the Kibbutzim in the valley and the coastal cities and reminds visitors of the Labor Zionist founding '*myth of the Emek*' (Azaryahu & Golan, 2004, p. 499). The story glorifies the heroic acts of pioneering in the Jezreel Valley that transformed the wilderness into cultivated land. As the hostile environment was turned into cultivable land, the Emek became the center of Zionist agricultural settlements and cooperative pioneering (Schnell, 1997). The myth of the Emek is a celebration of Labor Zionism and the effort of the pioneer created the foundations of the State of Israel, in spite of the harsh environmental challenges. The same narrative is constructed around the pioneers of Old Gesher. Their struggle for survival, harmony and collective rural life is presented in terms of a heroic battle against the dangerous and desolate wilderness.

The idea of wilderness, as presented in the museum, does not only refer to a geographical boundary between human settlements and wild nature. Rather, wilderness is constituted of cognitive boundaries between 'civilized pioneers' and the 'backward native' (Andrew Light, 1995, p. 15). The wilderness encountered on the frontier is thus a mental and physical boundary between humans and radical/racial others (ibid.). Based on individual experiences of immigrants, Schnell (1997) explains why in the case of Zionism the wilderness narrative is particularly strong. In his account, Jewish immigrants made great efforts to disconnect from their old diaspora life and reconnect to the new land to pursue the formation of a Jewish state. Inspired by biblical narratives, they saw Palestine as their homeland. However, upon arrival, this utopic image soon turned into a disillusion. The immigrants found themselves alienated, with no sense of attachment to the strange Arab nature in Palestine. As a consequence, the immigrant's personal perception of desolation and wilderness fueled the Zionist ideology of 'making the desert bloom' (ibid., 73). Keeping the utopic biblical image in mind, the pioneers were determined to restore the mythical greenery that had been lost over generations of Jewish

absence. The struggle with nature and physical conditions in Palestine was presented as a necessary precondition to effectuate the transformation of the land from wilderness to Jewish homeland (Kellerman, 1996, p. 358). Here, wilderness needs to be understood as the absence of Jewishness. As a consequence of this environmental imaginary, nature and its Indigenous inhabitants are imagined as ‘wild’ and ‘dangerous,’ whereas Jewish settlers are imagined as civilized people who impose order, discipline and modernity to the bewildered frontier (Schnell & Arnon, 2011, p. 178).

The utopic vision projected against the idea of wild nature produces an ideal type of human inhabitant, the ‘New Jew,’ the antipode of the uncultivated Arab. In the vision of Labor Zionism, the New Jew is the example of the Jewish immigrant and pioneer, who, in defiance of its diaspora roots, sought attachment to the land by cultivating it zealously and introducing new communal ways of life (Katriel, 1993, p. 114). The figure of the New Jew is shaped in the image of the biblical kings and judges and signifies a radical break in Jewish history. The Jew is no longer suppressed and persecuted. He or she becomes, according to biblical mythology, a halutz or a military vanguard that sets the first steps toward the creation of the Jewish state (Katriel, 1993, p. 154). This New Jew was not only a farmer but also a soldier. Menachem Begin, former Israeli prime minister, explained it this way “...a new specimen of human being was born, a specimen completely unknown to the world for over eighteen hundred years, ‘the fighting Jew’” (as cited in Wolfe, 2007, p. 322). According to Zerubavel (1991, p. 135), the creation of the New Jew meant a thorough transformation from the diaspora mentality that would be replaced by dedication and sacrifice toward the rebuilding of the Jewish nation.

The bunker of Old Gesher presents the heroic image of the settlers standing firm. But as we continue our tour in the museum toward the Jordan River, the militant characteristics of the New Jew are further glorified. The boardwalk on the bank of the Jordan River at Old Gesher is carefully selected as a memorial site for the Jewish-Italian Esther Ardit Bornstein. As a nurse, Bornstein dedicated her life dedicated to saving wounded Jewish/Israeli soldiers, becoming known as the “angel of the paratroopers.” According to the audio guide provided at the boardwalk along the Jordan River, “She saw her military service as a privilege and not as an obligation.” The guide refers to Bornstein as an example of bravery for generations of Israeli soldiers to come,

and encourages the visitor to think about his/her own loyalty to the country. Moreover, the boardwalk glorifies this new militant Jewish persona as the building block of the Israeli state.

The identity of the Zionist's settler colonial state is delineated by a frontier that separates modernity and civilization, from the 'wildness' of nature and stasis of tradition. It implies a twofold transformation. First, there is a change in the natural landscape that is modernized through its Judaization. This happened through agriculture, but also through infrastructural works, as will be elaborated below. This Judaization entails the linkage between the Jewish immigrant and the land. This leads us to the second transformation, which is a mental one. In order to truly connect to the land, the Diaspora Jew needs to reconnect to his Jewishness. From this perspective, the New Jew carries within him or herself a personal frontier that needs to be conquered, a frontier that could be externalized and deployed in the development of the Jewish nation-state. By modifying both the natural environment and the very nature of the Jewish people themselves, the foundations for the State of Israel could be laid. For it is on this frontier that its identity became defined, and difference with 'others' was constituted. Once these imagined physical frontiers are delineated, they become wired up in a network that links quotidian acts of placemaking to projects of nation-building and world-making. It is from the imaginary of nature in the utopic narrations of Zionism that the Jewish nation and state are brought forth.

3.3.2. Bridges of connectivity

Despite the imaginary of the hazardous environment, the museum emphasizes that Gesher had been infrastructurally well connected both by train, bus, and electrical current. The train and bus connected the West and East Bank of the Jordan River, passing over bridges in Gesher/ Jisr el-Majame, here we continue exploring the place and make a stop by the Jordan River.

In the Old Gesher narrative, the presence of the bridges is deployed to indicate the strategic importance of Kibbutz Gesher's location: not only was it a connection point on the Jordan River; it also served as a stronghold from which to control passage and water resources. Their history is briefly mentioned. First, the Roman bridge, topped with a construction from the Byzantine and Mamluk era, is narrated as a historical crossing point on the

Jordan River. Second, the concrete road bridge, built by the British in 1925, was used by the Jewish inhabitants of Tel Or and Naharayim. Third is the Ottoman bridge, referred to in the museum as that of the ‘famous valley train.’ This train is known in Israel as the train that crossed the Jezreel Valley. While the museum focuses strongly on how the bridges served the Jewish pioneers in the region and connected them to the wider settlement efforts around Eretz Israel, the bridges silently testify to two different nation-building stories.

The third bridge is a remnant of the Ottoman ambition to facilitate trade and realize the fruits of the Tanzimat, an earlier period of economic and administrative restructuring, and to connect Palestine more firmly with Damascus and the rest of greater Syria. It also facilitated pilgrimage to Damascus, Mekka and Medina (Mausell, 1908, p. 570). The construction of the Hejaz railway started around 1900, under the command of Sultan Abdul Hamid II. This would facilitate not only the transportation of resources but also the mobilization of military capacity in Syria and Arabia (Ochsenwald, 1980, p. 9). The construction of the railway can be interpreted as one of the



Figure 3.3: The Ottoman bridge crossing the Jordan River in Gesher. The Old Gehser Museum staff installed an old train carriage on the deserted tracks of the Hejaz railway to give an image of how the bridge was used when the border was still open. The photo was taken from the Israeli side, with the military domain of Baqura in the background. (Photo by Dorien Vanden Boer)

few successful pan-Islamic projects throughout history.⁷⁸ In order to finance the project, the Ottoman authorities made an appeal to the zakat, or voluntary contributions of Muslims. Major contributions were collected outside the Ottoman Empire in for example Egypt and India (Ochsenwald, 1973, p. 130). The railway would have connected Damascus with Medina and Mekka, but was never completely finished. Nevertheless, it materializes Ottoman propaganda with lyrics such as “we have woven a motherland from four corners with nets of iron” (Wasti, 1998, p. 60). Moreover, the Emek line, the secondary connection on the Hejaz railway was strategically and economically important for the Ottoman rulers. It enabled the Ottoman government to bypass the French monopoly over commercial shipping and transportation on the Beirut-Damascus line (Mansour, 2006, pp. 6–7).

The connecting capacity of the Ottoman railway is recuperated and redefined by Zionists in the story of the ‘valley train’ that crossed the Emek as mentioned above, transforming the old landscape into a new one. The museum narrative locates Kibbutz Geshar on the outskirts of the Yishuv. The steam train made it possible for the kibbutzniks⁷⁹ to travel to and from this frontier, and ensured sufficient supplies to sustain what—through the Zionist geographical imaginary—had been transformed from a node articulating a world into an outpost on a frontier. Moreover, the Emek line on the Hejaz railway connected Haifa through the fertile corridor of the Jezreel valley to Beisan, or what is now known as Beit She’an. This facilitated not only the establishment of Jewish settlement in the Valley but—as the agricultural settlements began to produce—provisions could also be sent to the coastal immigration centers by train (Gottmann, 1937). Today, the deserted train carriages on the tracks of the Ottoman bridge testify to how their purpose shifted from linking the Ottoman Empire to consolidating Jewish statehood. They show how infrastructure is used to bind places together, articulating the utopic vision of the nation-state.

⁷⁸ Interview with Andrei Harwell, YUDW Project Manager, Yale University (18.06.2010).

⁷⁹ Kibbutzniks are members of a kibbutz, a collective Jewish community at was mostly based on agriculture and pioneering.

3.3.3. Celebrating electrification and nation-building

The relevance of infrastructure in creating the state is echoed at the next stop on the tour and flagship of the Old Gesher museum: the ‘*Naharayim Experience*.’ This multimedia show about the history of the power station has a prominent place in Old Gesher. The entrance to the ‘Experience’ is an exact copy of the Naharayim train station that was built by the Palestine Electricity Company in Naharayim/Baqora. Inside the train station, pictures show how Gesher and Tel Or used to be connected for travelers, Arabs and Jews alike. The inscription on the wall states “Naharayim –Tel Or 1932-1948 – a settlement and power station which are no more.” It sets the tone for a nostalgic look behind the scenes of the Rutenberg power plant.

A film in the *Naharayim experience* starts by situating the Power plant as one of the great prestige projects of its time (the 1920s), comparing its grandeur with that of the Eiffel tower. The visitor is provided with all the technical details of the plant’s functioning. Water flows through a scale model of the power plant, providing a good image of how the ingenious construction generated electricity. Its creator, Pinhas Rutenberg, is portrayed as “a stubborn man,” “a pioneer,” determined to realize his dream: “the electrification of Eretz Israel.” For Rutenberg, this was an essential component to the establishment of the Jewish homeland and the completion of the Zionist dream. Pinhas Rutenberg was a Ukrainian Jew, revolutionary, and an engineer. He had become an avid Zionist and moved to Palestine in 1917. He dedicated his life to the creation of the ‘Jewish homeland’ that in his vision

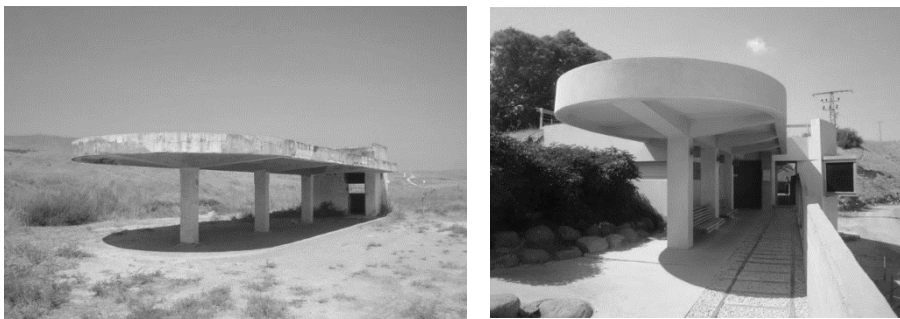


Figure 3.4 (left): The Naharayim train station in Bauhaus style. It was built in 1932 by the PEC and still stands in the military domain of Baqora in Jordan. (right) The entrance of the Naharayim Experience at Old Gesher, is almost an exact copy of the train station. It enables the visitor to see the station, which is inaccessible from the Old Gesher site. (photos by Dorien Vanden Boer)

was to be modern, Western, electrified, industrial, and irrigated on a massive scale. Rutenberg himself never lived to see the creation of the Jewish state, but his legacy lives on in Israel today. In the Naharayim film, the image of electricity being spread throughout the country is strong. Electricity connects cities and settlements, literally weaving a grid of high voltage wires covering and uniting the country. Here, electricity is not merely a technical substitute for wood heating or candlelight; it is presented as a means that facilitates political and social transformations in Palestine. It is not just the result of the development of a technical, abstract force entering the Mandate territory; it is the result of calculated human choices (Hughes, 1983; Nye, 1990). These choices and their motivations can be elaborated looking at how the electrification scheme was embedded in the Zionist project and the frontier narratives that preceded the creation of the Jewish state.

It is forbidden to cross the frontier adjacent to the Old Gesher museum, and proceed to visit the Power plant in Baqora. However, I was granted access from the Jordanian side in Baqora, under military supervision. I crossed the



Figure 3.5: A picture of the ruins of the Jordan Power House at Naharayim/Baqora taken from the Jordanian side of the Park. The water entered from the left and flowed through the turbines on the right. A few palm trees from the Tel Or settlement figure in the background. (Photo by Dorien Vanden Boer)

border from Kibbutz Ashdod Yaacov Ihud, in Israel, to Naharayim/Baqora, guided by a local FoEME field staff. As the tour moves to the other side of the Jordan River, crossing the border, and walking by the remains of the dams, the zero channel,⁸⁰ and the powerhouse, the scope of the project is revealed. The entire Rutenberg scheme transformed the landscape dramatically, not only by building the power plant, but also by diverting the Jordan River and creating an artificial lake on the Yarmouk. It was the absence of Jews in Palestine, according to Herzl, that had led to the neglect and degradation of the land. 'New' and 'modern' European technologies would enable Jews to redeem the land, restore its former biblical richness and abundance of natural resources (Tal, 2008, p. 277). This typical frontier myth integrated the Jewish immigrant into a story of redeeming the land of Israel and created a sense of belonging to the land under the settler population. For it would be those who would realize nature's full potential, restoring the former glory of both the land and, through its rehabilitation, the Jewish people. The chaotic state of Palestine would be made into a productive place. This imaginary did not only apply for the agricultural pioneers (as explained above), but also for the engineers and architects who restructured the landscape. Many of the latter believed that, as the Jewish history was intertwined with the land, the landscape already reflected its Jewishness. Nature merely needed to be reset, modernized and civilized for a modern Jewish society to arise in it (Sufian, 2007, p. 16). From this perspective, the 'modern' grand-scale projects of drainage, building canals, roads, or the Rutenberg electric plant, they were all healing the land. Each of them contributed to the creation of a Zionist nature, materializing the ideology behind the settler colonial project (Anton, 2008, p. 78). Essentially, 'visionaries' -such as Rutenberg- who had "reconnected to their Jewishness in order to bring forth the production of the Zionist nature" were the driving force behind these projects of modernization and progress (ibid., p. 88).

⁸⁰ The 'zero' channel had zero inclination; as a consequence, the water surplus from the lake could flow back into the Jordan River, or the other way around, consequently the artificial lake remained at a constant level for the provision of water to the turbines of the power plant.



Figure 3.6: The Rutenberg-Abdallah lake around 1930, on the left the canal leading to the turbines and power station. On the right, next to the lake is the white house of Rutenberg. (Courtesy of the Israeli Electric Corporation archives)

Pinhas Rutenberg was convinced that electrification, together with irrigation, lighting, heating and refrigerating, was a necessary precondition to motivate immigrants to go live in rural areas rather than in the cities (Herbert, Heinze-Greenberg, & Sosnovsky, 2003, p. 136; Reguer, 1995, p. 694). Consequently, a grid of electricity would need to connect the Jewish settlement in Palestine, wiring them together and creating statehood on the ground. Recognizing this need, the Zionist Organization supported Rutenberg's scheme by selling shares of the future Electrical Corporation to fund the project. In a call for the collection of contributions on an investment basis in 1922, the Zionist Organization of America emphasizes that the "development of Palestine as a self-supporting Jewish settlement depends upon the success of Rutenberg's electrification scheme." The electrification would not only promote a large Zionist industry, but it would also create thousands of jobs, and consequently legitimize more Jewish immigration to Palestine.⁸¹

In 1923, Rutenberg created the Palestinian Electric Corporation (PEC) and obtained concessions for the use of the waters of the Yarmouk and Jordan

⁸¹ Pamphlet of the Zionist Organization of America, (Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, file F38\629).

Rivers from the British High Commissioner of Palestine.⁸² The support of Zionist institutions such as the Jewish Agency, the Jewish National Fund (JNF), and the World Zionist Organization (WZO) had been essential in convincing the British government to grant the concessions (Dieterich, 2003; Reguer, 1995). The PEC mainly collected funds from individual American and British Jews, by lobbying through the JNF and the WZO (Cohn, 2010, p. 46). Gradually, the PEC could already start buying land from Palestinian landowners in Jisr-al Majame. In Transjordan, the land was *jiftlik* land that belonged to the state. Hence, the PEC had to ask for concessions from Emir Abdullah.⁸³ *Jiftlik* land was land formerly owned by the Ottoman ruler and had passed on to the Trans-Jordanian government during the Mandate period. Local farmers were allowed to farm and hold cattle on these lands, and in this case several Bedouin families. In 1927, after long negotiations, Emir Abdullah agreed to sell 6000 dunum of land to the PEC and so the construction of the Nahariym power plant could start.⁸⁴ The Bedouin had to leave the lands bought by the PEC. This was not only necessary for the construction of the power plant; it was also vital in securing the land surrounding the power plant as Jewish. In an earlier communication with the Jewish Colonization Agency in March 1921, Rutenberg had emphasized the importance of having “all works including the Power House on Jewish territory, obviating in this way the necessity of all intercourse with Arab landowners, undesirable in the present circumstances.”⁸⁵ These “present circumstances” referred to clashes between Arabs and Jews all over Palestine in 1921. Rutenberg feared that ‘Arab violence’ would jeopardize the constructions of the Jordan Power plant.

⁸² For the full concession, see IEC archive file 2382/17.

⁸³ In Palestine, the *Jiftlik* lands were transferred to the local farmers by the British High commissioner in the Beisan or Ghor Mudawwara Agreement, which was formally signed on 19 November 1921. Therefore, the PEC had to negotiate with the individual landowners in Palestine, while in Trans-Jordan this was with Abdullah’s government. For more information on the Beisan lands see Tyler (1989).

⁸⁴ Memorandum of agreement between the government of Transjordan and the Palestine Electric Corporation Limited, March 1927 (IEC archive, Haifa, file 2370/8-9). See also: Deed of disposition of immovable property by the Government of Transjordan Directorate of registries (2.3.1927). This deed mentions the detailed description of the land that was transferred to the Palestine Electric Corporation. (IEC archive, Haifa, file 2370/8-9).

⁸⁵ Letter of Pinhas Rutenberg to Mr. Frank, Administration of the Jewish COLonisation Association, Haifa (31.5.219), (IEC archive, Haifa, file 357/181/110).

By creating an all-Jewish territory island in Trans-Jordan, this could be averted.

The environmental imaginaries sprouting from the Zionist frontier narratives were turned into practices in Naharayim/Baqora and changed the landscape forever. However, the transformation was not contained in this specific place. It spread throughout the entire country, traveling through the high voltage wires empowering the Jewish settlements with electrical current. The wires brought modernization from the far frontier—the redeemed wilderness, of Mandate Palestine—to the center, transforming the landscape while cutting through it and thus contributing to the creation of the Jewish state. On a purely material level, Rutenberg’s power plant set in motion the infrastructural preconditions for the provision of electricity in Mandate Palestine. However, the great importance lays in how the project shows that nature could be made productive based on the prevailing Zionist conception of labor, technology, modernity, and the Judaification of the land. In grand-scale projects such as the electricity plant, technology would renew the authenticity of the Jewish people as ‘native,’ whereby the authenticity of the Arab population is reduced to that of the primitive who remain in the wilderness, thus lacking in any real sense of, and connection to, place. By contrasting the Jewish superiority to the ‘primitive’ nature of the Arab inhabitants, the Zionists saw it as their moral obligation to develop the land (Said, 1979 as cited in Sidaway, 2000, p. 591; Wolfe, 2007, p. 322). In addition, the idea that sovereignty over territory should belong to the people best able to develop its resources was held strongly in Zionist cycles (George, 1979, p. 89; Sa’di, 1997). This idea was instrumental to the dispossession and exclusion of the Arab population including the case of the Bedouin displaced by the power plant in Transjordan.

3.3.4. Visiting the last Jewish frontier in Jordan

If we leave the power plant behind and continue our visit eastwards within the Jordanian military domain, the road leads us right by the workers’ houses of Naharayim and Tel Or. Tel Or means ‘*hill of light*’ in Hebrew and of course refers to the Power station. Naharayim is Hebrew for two rivers, referring to the confluence of the Jordan and Yarmouk. Rutenberg had this housing constructed for the workers (Naharayim) and the power plant’s staff (Tel Or). Rutenberg himself occupied a white house overlooking the artificial lake. This settlement was one of the first Jewish settlements in the region and the only

one on actual Jordanian territory. Because Transjordan was excluded from the National Home in Churchill's white paper of June 1922, the concessions Rutenberg received in Baqora were the only legally recognized foothold for Jews east of the river (Reguer, 1995, p. 714). In the spirit of reform Zionism, Rutenberg also believed that Transjordan was to be incorporated in the 'National Home,' albeit through pragmatic means (Dieterich, 2003, pp. 98–99). In his vision, Arabs and Jews would live on each side of the riverbank, with hydroelectric power plants as the center of common industry and labor (Havrelock, 2011, p. 287).⁸⁶ Rutenberg was also convinced, however, that "Palestine will be Jewish only if the entire work relative to the building of Jewish life will be carried out by Jewish workers" (Rutenberg as cited in Reguer, 1995, p. 262). Like the example of the tourism sector I gave in the first chapter, this citation needs to be understood in the context of 'Avoda Ivrit' or Hebrew labor. Such infrastructural projects not only provided a livelihood for newly immigrated Jews, they were also strategic in a well-orchestrated campaign of conquest of labor in Palestine (Lockman, 1993, p. 608; Shafir, 1996). Lockman (1993) gives the example of the railway infrastructure and describes how, from 1919 on, the Zionist Organization channeled Jewish workers into the British railway complex, increasingly substituting the Arab workers. The power plant was part of the 'Hebrew Labor' scheme. The Palestinian Electrical Corporation had embraced these principles and selected Jewish workers and engineers through the Zionist Organization and Jewish Agency. The Arab workers had a part in building the plant, but only Jews could take care of its administration and maintenance.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ To date we see this vision reflected in contemporary Qualifying Industrial Zones between Jordan and Israel for example in Aqaba and Irbid. Special customs arrangements apply to these zones in Jordan, such that they benefit from the Free Trade Agreement between Israel and the US. They symbolize the ideal of peaceful economic cooperation that should foster the relations between the two peoples through the shared trade dividends.

⁸⁷ Interview with Staff IEC, Haifa (23.09.2012).



Figure 3.7: Jewish workers around 1930 at a site of construction with the 'Tel Or' settlement in the background (Courtesy of the IEC archives).

3.3.5. Tourismification of the Zionist frontier

The activities and representations at Old Gesher give the tourist an almost literal taste of history. However, history is subordinated to the heroic narrative—a narrative that describes the project of establishing the kibbutz, and indeed the Zionist project tour court, into the wider narrative tropes of modernity. It is only by knowing the heroism of the pioneers and Israel's founding history that one can find a connectedness to the place, a sense of belonging. According to the museum director, the aim is not to focus on the spreading of knowledge or teaching of history as such. Rather, "it is about giving a cultural experience and a good time to the visitors."⁸⁸ The exhibit seeks to convey a feeling. She also emphasized that the importance of these settler museums lies in providing Israelis with a sense of belonging:

People need to know what happened and how it started here..., if you want to feel like you belong to a place it is very important to know its history and its heroics.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Interview with the Director of the Old Gesher Museum, (Old Gesher, 20.09.2012).

⁸⁹ Ibid.

The practices at the Old Gesher museum need to be understood in the context of the Jewish pioneer settlements and their importance in Israeli society. The museum and others like it scattered across Israel produce a sense of place that is impregnated with nostalgia. They display and celebrate the country's socialist-Zionist past and the pioneering values associated with it, and have become a mechanism of reproducing paradigms that were vital to Israel's emergence (Katriel, 1993, p. 104). It is through the struggle of reordering conflated and hostile natures of the frontier - by separating their disparate essences and bringing them into more productive and harmonious interplay - that both the land and the people inscribe themselves into modernity and its teleologies of emancipation and connection to the land. In this respect, categories of 'wild nature' which are featured in the museum and the historic Zionist discourse are all but 'natural,' but rather carefully crafted to serve the Zionism's political goals (Alatout, 2006).

Despite these difficulties, Friends of the Earth Middle East saw in this arrangement the first seed of a future cooperation on environmental peace building. Even though the Peace Park is still in its planning phase, the area designated for the project has already become imbued with Friends of the Earth Middle East's spatial imagination. With the signing of the Peace Treaty, the frontier was reopened. And together with the restoration and reordering of its natures, FoEME imagined a parallel project of rearticulating the political world more peacefully and sustainably. This transformation would be effected—at least in part—by the inscription of the park's artifacts and natures into the brochures and catalogs that represent the geographies of global tourism, themselves technologies that articulate natures, artifacts, and people to the global market. These natures and artifacts are once again brought into a narrative of global connections, but the world they articulate is new and different.

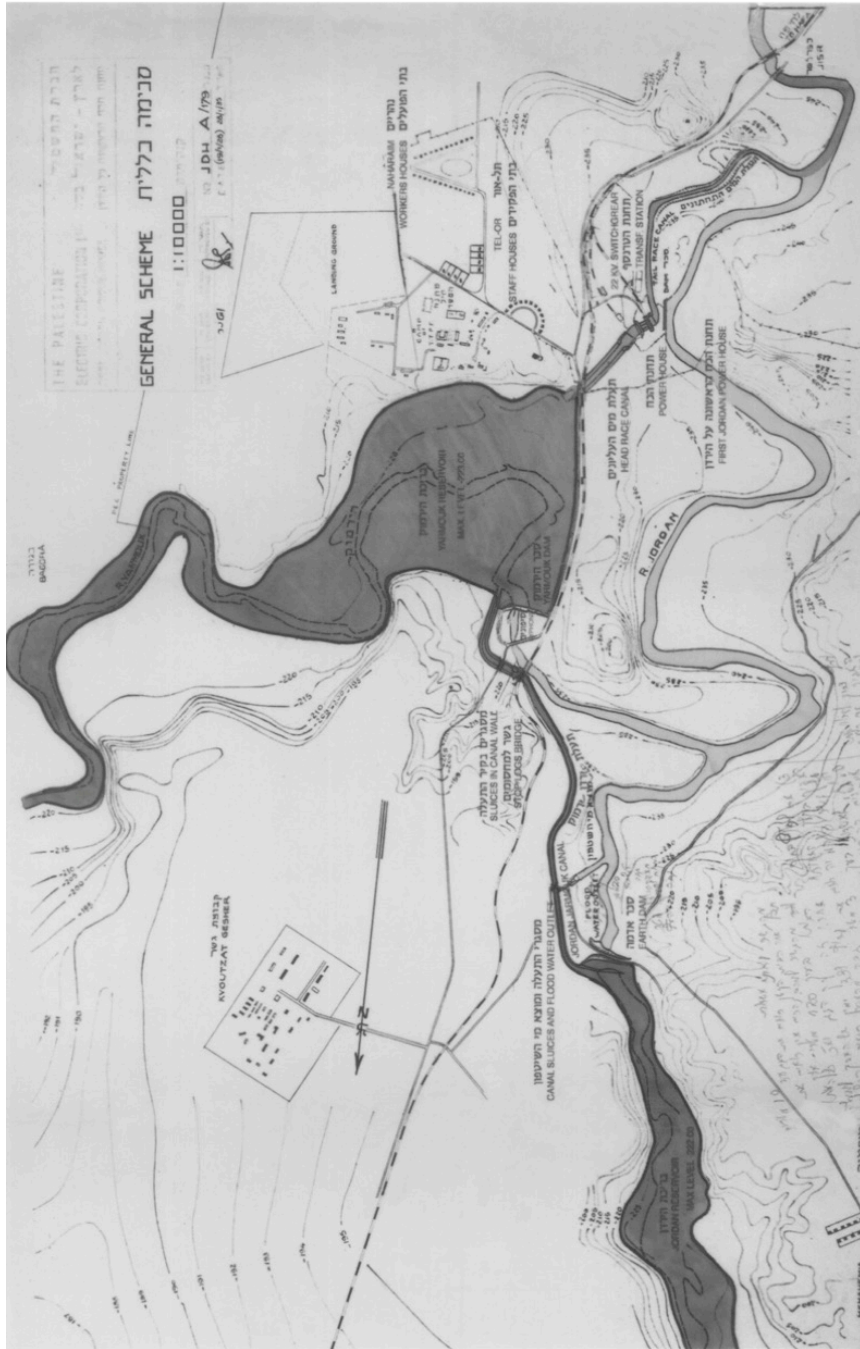


Figure 3.8 Area of the Peace Park on the plans of the PEC in 1935 (courtesy of the IEC). The map shows the entire Rutenberg scheme, with all its dams and artificial lake on the Yarmouk River. Below in the right corner, two of the three bridges are indicated. This is where the current Old Gesher Museum is located.

3.4. The Peace Park reordering: a frontier of protected nature and tourism

The Jewish ownership in Baqora/Naharayim gave rise to a special arrangement in the 1994 Wadi Araba peace treaty between Jordan and Israel, allowing Jewish farmers from the Kibbutz Ashdod Yaacov Ihud to continue farming the land in Jordan. Every morning, Israelis cross the border to Jordan with their tractors to return to Israel in the afternoon. The plot of land they farm, called the 'Peace Island' (see map figure 3.1) is where the story of the FoEME's Peace Park commences. This artificial island was created by connecting the Jordan River with a loop of canals for the power plant. Here, Prime Ministers Rabin (Israel) and Al-Majali (Jordan) signed the peace treaty. The peace precedent fostered FoEME's idea for environmental cooperation between Jordan and Israel in this specific location.⁹⁰ The Jordan River Peace Park has grown out of FoEME's 'good water-good neighbors' project. This project aims to provide a platform for cross border cooperation and foster peace based on shared interests in environmental conservation between neighboring communities (EcoPeace/Friends of the Earth Middle East, 2007, p. 4). On the Jordanian side, the peace park is presented as a solution for the lack of green public space and job opportunities in Muaz Bin Jabal Municipality.⁹¹ On the Israeli side, in the Beit She'an Valley and the Spring Valley, environmental problems were connected to the lack of access to the Jordan River (EcoPeace/FoEME, 2007, pp. 7–17). Lacking a view of the river, the river's pollution by sewage and saline water was invisible to residents and thus neglected. Accordingly, allowing people to access the Jordan River, the Peace Park could raise awareness about pollution (Ecotech Jordan, 2008, p. 11). These two different conceptions of environmental problems are integrated into the Peace Park. The plans include the reflooding of the Rutenberg Lake, the renovation of the Naharayim hydroelectric plant

⁹⁰ Interview with E. K., FoEME staff (Tel Aviv, 13.09.2012). The old Arabic story of Juha goes as follows: Juha owned a house that another man wanted to buy. Juha agreed on one condition. The man could buy the entire house except for one nail. The man agreed, bought the house and moved in. The next day Juha knocked on his door to visit his nail. At first the man did not mind. But Juha's visits became more frequent, both during the day and at night. Brought to despair the man gave the house back to Juha.

⁹¹ Muaz Bin Jabal is a medium-sized cluster of towns and villages incorporating the communities of North Shounch, Adassiya, Manshieh and Baqura.

as a visitor's center and reconstructing its worker's residences as eco-lodges. The park will become an attraction for ecotourists with activities such as bird watching, hiking, biking and kayaking. FoEME aims to open this place for the public and promote it as a historic case of conservation and transboundary cooperation. FoEME's project is pushed forward by a vision of what nature could be, not what it actually is (McAfee, 1999). The latent potential of nature plays a key role in the project. Together with experts from Yale design workshop and Betzalel Academy, FoEME developed plans to transform the place into a high-end bird watching destination, a touristic attraction and a regional center for environmental learning. The park has been financially supported by the Studiosus Foundation, the Jewish Funders Network / Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund Matching Grant Initiative, and the Blaustein Foundation (FoEME, 2009).

The environmental imaginary of Friends of the Earth is grounded in the conviction that the innate scarcity of water resources in the Middle East amplifies the necessity of cross-boundary cooperation on water issues. Consequently, all of FoEME's projects are based on the idea of mutual dependence on nature—and especially water—as a catalyst for cooperation and dialogue, rather than conflict. FoEME reproduces this idea in the peace park by rearticulating natural elements and artifacts present in the place. As such, they bring in the logic of 'rehabilitation of nature,' 'common heritage,' and 'ecotourism' to solve the problems of access, job creation, and a 'warm peace' between Jordan and Israel. FoEME's narrative can be traced back to development strategies centralizing tourism in economic growth, put forward since the 1990s by the World Bank, the IMF, USAID, and others. Brohman (1996, p. 49) observes in these strategies, tourism provides a centerpiece for the neoliberal strategy of outward-oriented development. This was reflected in the Wadi Araba treaty, where peace was seen to go hand in hand with touristic development between Jordan and Israel (Hazbun, 2004). Based on this rationale, USAID programs in Jordan, and the Jordan Valley more specifically, consistently stress that tourism brings a greater return on investment than agriculture, and creates opportunities for rural development (USAID, 2017).

The following remarks elaborate on how the site's redefinition as a Peace Park entails profound changes to the existing landscape. It becomes clear that the place is produced through narratives, practices, and connections that do not

emerge from within the boundaries of the park itself. At the same time, the park is envisioned as a site from which to effect broader changes, in line with FoEME's vision.

3.4.1. Tourism and the reordering a frontier nature

The Peace Park plans of FoEME specify how technical operations in the field will help nature to reach its full potential. But these practices are not merely technical: they absorb, omit and naturalize narratives that have already shaped the place. A first major adaptation FoEME will push through is the reflooding of the lake that was created to serve the hydroelectric power plant. An Israeli FoEME guide summarized how the rehabilitation of the lake enhances not only nature but also tourism and development. The plans explain in detail how the lake will be created, where the water will come from, and how air pumps and whirlpools will be used to maintain good water quality (Ecotech Jordan, 2008, p. 160). Besides restoring the ecosystem, FoEME foresees the lake as a common source of income for the neighboring Israeli and Jordanian villages. An Israeli FoEME guide summarized how the rehabilitation of the lake enhances not only nature but also tourism and development:

The communities on the other side are very poor. They really need more water. The idea is to bring the lake here, you know this is the place where 500 million birds migrate every year between the desert and the sea. Now all the tourists go to Lake Huleh, we want them to come here. Then the Israelis and the Jordanians can benefit from the tourists, it's something good for both sides, so we've got something common for both sides.⁹²

⁹² Interview with FoEME field staff (Naharayim, 19.09.2012).



Figure 3.9: Dry bed of the artificial lake in which Jordanian farmers have their fields. The military post of the Jordanian military of Baqora can be seen on the hilltop on the right. (Photograph made by Dorien Vanden Boer)

By restoring the lake, FoEME aims to attract migrating birds and along with them, bird watching tourists and the revenue they will generate. According to FoEME, bird watching is a high-end niche market, as ecotourism attracts mostly wealthy tourists. To reach this public, quality lodging is required. Therefore, the remains of the workers' houses of Tel Or will be refurbished into eco-lodges. Herby, FoEME aims to tackle the problem of a lack of touristic infrastructure on the Jordanian side in the Northern Jordan Valley. By investing in lodging, tourists can stay the night and spend their money locally instead of returning to hotels in Amman or Jerash. All the FoEME interviewees were convinced that these investments could foster further touristic development in the region. However, while the plans never mention this, an Israeli FoEME guide explained that the Jordanian farmers, who currently cultivate the bed of the artificial lake, would eventually have to leave the park (figure 3.9). While questioning them about these plans, interviewed

FoEME staff argued that the benefits the local farmers could get from the tourists would be far greater than those from agriculture.⁹³

The eco-lodges are not just a way to generate an income for the park. FoEME's Jordanian director reasoned that:

[...] it is one of the first Jewish settlements in the area, so they [the Israelis] have a very strong connection with that place. Now, when we try to put the ecotourism on top, it is to make it easier for the people to visit and try not to concentrate on the history of the Israeli Jewish in the area.⁹⁴

By turning the settlement into eco-lodges, its history is depoliticized. This way the park's plans are meant to be made more acceptable for the Jordanian visitors and Jordanian government, who need to approve the project⁹⁵. However, the controversy remains, as a member of the Israeli FoEME staff explained:

It is nostalgic for Israelis when we think about Tel Or. And difficult to think about the movement of communities, when that community had to be moved during the war, really fled. We feel sad at the loss of what was at the time one of the major achievements of the early Jewish [presence in Palestine].⁹⁶

Despite FoEME's efforts to rearticulate the workers' houses into the ecotourism narrative, the Israeli nationalistic narrative and the nostalgic image of the pioneers, which are omnipresent in the Old Gesher museum, will continue to be a pull factor for Israeli tourists also after the establishment of the Peace Park.

The old hydroelectric power station will also undergo a transformation. Its turbine room will become the centerpiece of entertainment in the Peace Park as the visitor's center. All the hiking and biking paths will all lead by the power station that occupies a central position in the park. Despite the strong Zionist narrative connected to the power plant, FoEME rearticulates the power plant along the narrative baselines of the ecological project: that of common

⁹³ All the interview staff agreed on this point. Interview with FoEME staff (Amman, 7.04.2010), FoEME staff (Tel Aviv, 13.09.2012), FoEME staff (Bethlehem, 26.09.2012), FoEME staff (Amman, 29.03.2010),

⁹⁴ Interview with FoEME staff (Amman, 7.04.2010).

⁹⁵ Interview with FoEME staff (Amman, 29.03.2010).

⁹⁶ Interview with FoEME staff (Tel Aviv, 13.09.2012).

heritage and trans-boundary cooperation. As FoEME's Palestinian director observed:

This hydroelectric power plant shows that we had abundance of water available at that time, to run turbines, to generate hydropower. And these things are still real. The place is like natural museum, so the potential is there.⁹⁷

The hydroelectric plant is presented as a historic symbol of regional cooperation and an abundance of water in the region. A Jordanian FoEME staff member was equally enthused by the significance of the power plant and stated that: "The power plant was a project that would provide electricity for the people of the Middle East."⁹⁸ In their vision, the power plant also is a symbol of early regional cooperation and an abundance of water. Because both projects concern trans-boundary cooperation on water issues, the FoEME staff makes a connection between the power plant project and the Peace Park. In the visitors' center, tourists will be able to learn about this common history of the power plant and meet each other as equal partners.⁹⁹

To construct a historical framework that underpins their vision of regional cooperation, FoEME also focuses on narratives that received less attention in the Old Gesher museum. An example is the three bridges that cross the Jordan River in Gesher/Jisr el-Majame. For FoEME, they symbolize the historic connectivity of both sides of the Jordan River. In the Peace Park, this lost connectivity between the people in the region is renewed. Likewise, the images of travel and encounter that can be found in the stories of the Mamluk Khan (inn) and the spurs of the Hejaz railway are used to emphasize this openness to travelers that FoEME aims to reintroduce in the place. With narrations of travel, mobility and openness, FoEME assembles the heritage features of the park along with specific knowledge about nature as a whole and the common natural and cultural heritage. As such, the place is rewritten: on the one hand, it reinforces FoEME's ideal of environmental cooperation and hereby the paradigms of environmentalism and sustainable development in which the whole scheme is grounded. On the other hand, it reconnects the

⁹⁷ Interview with FoEME staff (Bethlehem, 26.09.2012).

⁹⁸ Interview with FoEME staff (Amman, 29.03.2010).

⁹⁹ Based on the Interview with A. Harwell, Yale University (Skype, 18.06.2010), and FoEME staff (Tel Aviv, 13.05.2010) and (Amman, 25.04.2010).

place to a story of travel that serves as a historic mirror for the new presence of tourists.

Making use of paradigms of sustainable development, FoEME reassembles the place with new and corrective knowledge: they imagine a new destination that brings together utopic visions about the environment, economy, community, and peace. Their ideas and imaginaries become a frontier in the sense of an imaginative project that molds places and processes (A. L. Tsing, 2005, p. 32), and that brings new distinctions and reshape power relations constitutive to the place. Consequently, these practices are not mere technical interventions in the landscape: they absorb, omit and naturalize narratives, things, and people that have already shaped the place. Despite FoEME's efforts to integrate a common history of the area, there are lacunas in their story. The maps that are used for the plans of the park are based on those created by the Palestinian Electrical Corporation and do not represent the place objectively. Rather, they normalize the way that nature was remade by the Zionist pioneers who transformed the landscape. This is reflected in the absence of the Palestinian narrative in the Peace Park. While on these first PEC maps the presence of Palestinian and Trans-Jordanian villages with their inhabitants is noted, later maps erase their existence.¹⁰⁰ Based on these maps, the imaginary of the Peace Park does not leave any space for the former Palestinian inhabitants of the land. Their story is entirely omitted from the Peace Park. The fact that Jisr el-Majame was a Palestinian farming village forcibly depopulated during the 1948 war is forgotten. The village was located where the Kibbutz Gesher is now situated (Taha, n.d.). Neglecting the existence of Jisr el-Majame reinforces the idea of 'the empty land' and Zionist nature, in which there is no place for the Palestinian 'other.'

Even though the Palestinian section of FoEME was involved in the initial stages of the elaboration of the Peace Park plans, the three FoEME sections

¹⁰⁰ See map titled 'Map of Djiftlik lands, Jordan Valley, Neighborhood of Beisan' dated 10.11.1921, IEC archive file 357(181). This map shows the different Arab villages south of the Sea of Galilee and indicates how many people live there, according to the map, Jisr-el Majame's lands are 5000 dunum of which '20 portions are occupied' and '20 portion cultivated'. Remarkably, the lands of Jisr-el Majame also cross the Jordan River in what now is Jordanian territory, where later the power plant was build. In the pre-feasibility study for the park, the map includes only the landscapes as transformed by Rutenberg's power plant. (Ecotech Jordan, 2008, p. 35). See also the maps used in the presentation of a synopsis of the feasibility study (slide 9) (EcoPeace/Friends of the Earth Middle East, n.d.).

argue that the Palestinians are not bordering the park, and therefore cannot be a full partner in the park. However, this does not explain why the Palestinian narrative is completely excluded. In an interview, the director of FoEME Palestine commented upon this problem:

The claim that Israel was founded on empty land that had nobody, that is the Zionist mentality and how it was marketed abroad. The history of the others cannot be denied; the Romans, Ottomans were there too, you know. The Palestinians' history needs to be mentioned in the park.¹⁰¹

Whether intentional or unintentional, FoEME recuperates and reassembles spatial elements like these, designed in former projects of placemaking, to make them fit into their own project. They do so by using paradigms of sustainable development and environmentalism that legitimize the necessity to have eco-lodges, a visitor's center, or a lake, to attract and accommodate tourists. These, in turn, sprouted from contemporary neoliberal schemes that promote saving nature via its commodification without any political change (McAfee, 1999). These schemes manifest themselves within the particular boundaries of the Peace Park and by normalizing or problematizing the presence of certain natural or heritage elements. Binary distinctions of whom and what fits into the park evoke a frontier of environmentalism and sustainable development. It is a frontier that makes abstractions, recontextualizes the place and does away with claims that do not fit, while making the place in its own image.

3.4.2. A neoliberal eco-frontier?

FoEME's utopic vision does not stop at the borders of the peace park. The park itself becomes a tool in recreating the societies' environmental conscience. As one of the Jordanian FoEME staff members stated, "We need to evolve to an enlightened society."¹⁰² He explained that this is only possible through environmental education. This way people will realize that transboundary cooperation with their neighbors is indispensable to restore the

¹⁰¹ Interview with FoEME staff, Bethlehem (26.09.2012).

¹⁰² Interview with FoEME staff (Amman, 29.03.2010).

ecosystem. Furthermore, he was convinced that ecotourism could contribute to a shift in attitude among the local population because:

[...] People from the local communities fail to see what they have as something important. They don't see the park [...] as an important feature and someone from Amman does. When the local communities start to see that people from outside are coming to see these things, they start to realize that it is something important.¹⁰³

His Israeli and Palestinian colleagues confirmed that education is one of the main objectives of FoEME. In this respect, the Peace Park will become a hub of environmental education. The Peace Park is based on FoEME's Sharhabil bin Hassneh Ecopark in Jordan. It is remarkable how nature within the space of the park an ecosystem is recreated and presented to local people. As the Jordanian FoEME staff explained:

You cannot start integration between the ecosystem and the society without a core, and the Ecopark is the core. You cannot start integration without conserving something. In Europe you have forests and lakes. Here it is a little bit different. The society does not recognize the forest next to them, or an important river, or an important ecosystem. So, in order to integrate them, we need to create that ecosystem first and then try to engage the society.¹⁰⁴

Even though FoEME's vision seems to erase certain borders cutting through the park, a new frontier is constituted, that of conserved nature. The park thus functions as a utopic blueprint that can bring about change in society. Change that is to be spread out from the park. It provides a space within which people become familiar with nature conservation and sustainable practices, and—in the process—discover their connectedness to nature. The physical rehabilitation of the park coincides with the psychological transformation of those who will visit it. FoEME aims to thereby bring forth a spillover from the space of the park to the daily lives of local people, from nature conservation to sustainable and ecologically responsible living. In this respect, the park is a tool to educate people and change their thinking about the environment; it will become a place where environmental know-how can spread from throughout the region. If this pilot project proves successful, FoEME is hopeful that peace parks could emerge all over the region.¹⁰⁵ The Peace Park will become a

¹⁰³ Interview with FoEME staff (Amman ,7.04.2010).

¹⁰⁴ Interview with FoEME staff (Amman, 7.04.2010).

¹⁰⁵ Interview with FoEME (Tel Aviv, 13.09.2012)

frontier in the battle against environmental degradation, a key element in the rehabilitation of the Jordan River, in the development in the region and a symbol of peace between Jordan and Israel.

The development envisioned by FoEME is embedded in global paradigms of economic development and conservation. According to FoEME, the peace park can divert jobs from the saturated agricultural market to the tourism industry (Ecotech Jordan, 2008, pp. 97–98). The Mayor of the Jordanian municipality of Muaz Bin Jabal asserted that job creation was his main motivation to engage in the peace park project.¹⁰⁶ FoEME staff also argued that through cooperation with their Israeli neighbors, the Jordanian farmers can benefit from the environmental know-how Israel has developed.¹⁰⁷ The Peace Park will introduce the area into a global tourism market. However, the plans foresee a market in which the neighboring Jordanians can sell traditional crafts and food to tourists, presenting them to the tourists in a profitable but typically traditional way (Ecotech Jordan, 2008, pp. 97–98). Farmers who have been integrated into global circuits of production for the better part of a century are pushed back over the boundaries that separate the global from the local, and modernity from tradition, to create a place that could be inscribed into the contemporary globe making projects of neoliberalism and environmentalism.

As we see here with the Peace Park, projects of sustainable development tend to ‘map people into certain coordinates of control’ (Escobar as cited by Banerjee, 2003, p. 172). Tourists are mapped in, Jordanian farmers are mapped out or need to adapt to the requirement of the park, reshaping themselves into selling traditional crafts to tourists (Ecotech Jordan, 2008). Banerjee points out that hegemonic economic paradigms of sustainable development often have a disempowering effect on local, marginalized populations, as we could argue is the case for the Jordanian farmers in the Park. The park thus draws new borders between ‘modernity’ and ‘tradition,’ ‘sustainable’ and ‘unsustainable,’ ‘tourist’ and ‘local’ in which claims of sustainable development and ecotourism can be made. Making the peace park reflects a clear framework for conservation (Duffy, 2007, pp. 55–68). By making use of scientific knowledge and drawing in experts, academics and

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Ali Hussein Ali Alagi, mayor of Muaz bin Jabal (Muaz bin Jabal, 06.04.2010)

¹⁰⁷ Interview with FoEME staff, (Naharayim, 19.09.2012)

consultants, FoEME produces environmental governance that is market-oriented and takes form in ecotourism. This way, the Jordan River Peace Park creates a new consumable reality for tourists. Consequently, the park becomes embedded in existing global neoliberal politics and economics that are reproduced with claims of modernity and scientific knowledge to recreate nature and reimagine the place as productive. These claims open up a frontier of sustainable practices and tourism that are coproduced with the material transformations of the park.

3.4.3. Contestation and stakes at the frontier

The hydroelectric power plant was operational from 1932 until the Iraqi army destroyed it during the 1948 war. After the war, the PEC was transformed into the Israel Electrical Corporation (IEC), which implied that the land title passed on to the Israeli government, as they owned 99,8% of the company's shares (Strauss, 2010, p. 161). After 1967, the Jewish National Fund (JNF) bought the land from the IEC and—according to the Jordanian land register—the JNF remains the legal owner of the land in Jordan up to the present day (*ibid.*, p. 175). The JNF's ownership of land in Jordan has had implications in the peace treaty and the daily practices on the Peace Island. While the land that had been occupied by Israel was given back to Jordan, the private property rights of Israelis are recognized in Annex I (a) of the peace treaty. Moreover, it was on this same land, the 'peace island' (the island created by the Jordan River and the artificial on Rutenberg lake) that the peace treaty was signed. The arrangement officialized in a 25-year lease of the land by the Jordanian government to Israel, under which Israeli farmers have the right to farm the JNF lands in Jordan.

To date, Israeli farmers from the adjacent kibbutz Ashdod Yaacov Ihud pass the border with their tractors to farm their lands in Jordan. Their presence is remarkable; they cultivate the last Jewish frontier in Jordan. It is a remnant of the utopic vision of the reformist Zionists who wished to incorporate Jordan into the Jewish state. For the military personnel at Baqora, the situation is problematic. Since a 1997 shooting in which a Jordanian soldier killed seven Israeli schoolgirls, Jordanians and Israelis are not allowed into the park at the same time. The Jordanian officers informed me that the farmers were able to

work their lands from 8 am to 4 pm. After 4pm, Jordanian tourists could enter the park. According to the officers, there were no problems between the Jordanians and Israeli farmers, and that stringent security measures to enter the domain were only necessary because they “cannot look into the heads of the people coming here.”¹⁰⁸ However, the presence of the Israelis and the lease arrangement are widely contested in Jordan, especially with the local Jordanian population¹⁰⁹. FoEME staff in Amman also admitted that the presence of the Israeli farmers on Jordanian land was often perceived as the continued occupation of Jordanian land by Israel. He referred to the story of the nail of Juha to make his point:

The farmers are a nail implanted by Israel, a way to legitimize a last Israeli presence in Jordan and a thorn in the eye of many Jordanians.¹¹⁰

He also raised the question of why Israel clings so strongly to the five hectares of land in Jordan. Why is the symbolic value of a Jewish presence on the east bank of the Jordan and Rutenberg’s legacy so important? According to Al O’ran (2009, p. 61), the anti-normalization movement in Jordan considers the whole scheme is a way for Israeli to exert territorial control in Jordan. The FoEME staff in Amman acknowledged the sensitivity of normalization and complained that they were often seen “as the bad guys” because of their partnership with FoEME Israel. When FoEME held a conference in 2010 titled: “Bringing the Jordan River Back to life: Strategies for Rehabilitation,” the committee for anti-normalization sharply criticized FoEME Jordan for inviting their Israeli counterpart (Ben Hussein, 2010).

At the time of my research in Jordan, it was very clear that a transboundary park with Israel would be highly contested and, in fact, only plausible once the Palestinians would have their own state. This was also highlighted by the Jordanian director of FoEME.

When the situation is politically right, we can easily combine the two initiatives across the river to become one peace park. When everybody in the region is satisfied with what they have from the peace initiative. I don’t know when that will be, but I don’t think we can really move ahead with anything [...] without reaching a

¹⁰⁸ Interview with the military staff at Baqura (Baqura, 24.04.2010).

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Qais Owais, Director of Jordan Valley Department for Operation and maintenance (Deir Alla, 24.04.2010).

¹¹⁰ Interview with A.S., FoEME Jordan Staff (Amman, 25.04.2010).

satisfying situation for the Palestinian homeland, the Palestinian state.¹¹¹

In 2018, 85 Jordanian members of parliament signed a petition to stop the land lease in Baqura from automatically renewing when it would come to expire in 2019. In addition, more than 1300 Jordanian activists petitioned Prime Minister Omar Razzaz urging him to end the lease (Kayed, 2018). Last November, King Abdallah officially announced that the lease arrangement would not be renewed and Jordan would reclaim “full sovereignty over every inch of Baqura and Al Ghamr” (Al Deen Al Nawas, 2019). The decision was received as a victory by political and rights activists, as well as the broader Jordanian public (Husseini & Kayed, 2019). Recently, the Peace Park project has been removed from FoEME’s website and, in the current political climate, is likely to die a silent death.

3.5. Conclusion

Similar to many touristic sites, the Jordan River Peace Park creates a new consumable reality. Despite the sensitivity of the place, FoEME Israeli is already working with a German tour operator ‘Studiosus’ to organize guided visits to the Jordan River Peace Park. And despite the sites still being a military domain, many tourists are specifically interested in the imaginary of the peace park.¹¹² But constructing a trans-boundary park to attract tourists is not merely a technical intervention. What this chapter aimed to expose is that these schemes take part in wider projects that make space and even the world meaningful. The case study of the Jordan River Peace Park has led us to understand how the logic of the frontier changes places and makes them intelligible by assembling them into a broader set of meanings. In this respect, we have uncovered how in the park, ideas of Zionism, modernity, sustainable development, or neoliberalism are entangled with tourism activities that seek to reorder the place.

¹¹¹ Interview with M.Mehyar, Director of FoEME Jordan, (Amman, 07.04.2010).

¹¹² Interview with E. Koch Ya’ari, FoEME Israel (Tel Aviv, 13.05.2010).

In the case study, it became clear how the frontier brings unity to the place and demarcates new boundaries. The Zionist pioneers transformed the landscape to integrate it into the Jewish space of Eretz Israel. The Peace Park draws new borders to create a coherent touristic space in which nature can be conserved. New meaningful spaces are created through differentiation, inclusion, and exclusion. Therefore, distinctions that were not relevant before are highlighted in the process of place creation. Nature itself plays a central role here. On the frontier, nature is imagined as wild and unproductive. It then becomes a space of possibilities where technical interventions are legitimized by the very binary distinctions the frontier is founded upon. Hence, the space is opened for colonization: wilderness is turned into civilization, unused space into a productive touristic center.

Indeed, these technical interventions do much more than changing the natural environment, they produce new normative knowledge about the place that generates inclusion and exclusion. We see this in the case study by how people are meticulously articulated into the space. On the one hand, ecotourists are welcomed into the park and their presence normalized by accommodating them with suitable infrastructure. On the other hand, Jordanian farmers find themselves out of place and can only access the park in a different capacity, as storytellers or by selling crafts. This is where the violent side of placemaking projects lies, precisely where boundaries are drawn and modes of exclusion can be generated.

The frontier makes it possible for political claims to circulate from one place to another and to get a grip on places. The case of the Peace Park makes us understand that the world is not always already divided up, but that spaces such as the park, how trivial they may seem, are subjected to a continuous articulation and appropriation through ideological projects. In other words, these places, their nature, artifacts, and people, become entangled as nodes on a particular stretch of the frontier in a wider effort to remake the world.

PART II: TALES OF TOURISTIC DISSIDENCE AND RESISTANCE



A Palestinian Family from Hebron taking pictures by the ruins of Hisham's Palace in Jericho
(photo by Dorien Vanden Boer)

CHAPTER 4: SETTLER AND INDIGENOUS WORLD-MAKING IN JERUSALEM: ASPIRATIONS AND CONTESTATION OF TOURISM IN A SETTLER CITY

I'd rather have a Palestinian train as a fighter pilot than a tour guide
Moshe Dayan (Franks, 2009)

Settler sovereignty is fundamentally predicated on making indigenous
welcomes impossible
(Veracini, 2015a, p. 107)

4.1. Creating Palestinian tourism in Jerusalem: unlimited opportunities?

In May 2015, the main players in the Palestinian tourism sector were invited to participate in a three-day conference on the future of Jerusalem's tourism. The title of the conference read "Tourism and Palestinian Culture in Jerusalem: Unlimited Opportunities." During one of the sessions, the owner of NET tours, the largest Palestinian tour operator, mentioned that "[t]he Arab world has oil, but we have tourism, so let's protect it."¹¹³ Interestingly, I had heard this comparison before. Many of the people working in the tourism business I interviewed had frequently referred to tourism as being the 'Palestinian's oil.' In this imaginary, it becomes a tangible precious good that requires to be conserved. In this case, people kept expressing their aspirations for what tourism *could* bring to Palestine. Many of them were lamenting the political situation as the reason for bad tourism seasons. They were dreaming

¹¹³ Sami Abu-Dayyeh, C.E.O. of Netours and owner of the Ambassador Hotel, during the opening panel Jerusalem tourism cluster conference (19/06/2015, East Jerusalem).

about an abundance of tourists, once a solution would come. But whose tourism and especially what kind of tourism were they talking about?

Interestingly, the idea of tourism being the Palestinian oil resonated strongly with the economic perspectives presented in the Oslo agreements. Oslo came with the promise of transnational flows of tourists creating a common economic interest and benefits for Israel and its Arab neighbors. It was to pacify the militarized borders that divided them (Hazbun, 2008).¹¹⁴ Tourism was presented as progress, something that was inherently good for the region. Tourism was the pathway to regional economic integration and shared markets (Stein, 2008, p. 21). Peace would bring prosperity and would open Palestine for business and tourists. However, the touristic boom that occurred in the second half of the 90ies was mainly beneficial to the Israeli economy, which was much more able to capture value produced within the tourism sector due to the use of domestically produced goods (Khano & Sayre, 1997). The Palestinian Authority had hoped that the private sector would lead to the building of hotels, restaurants and other touristic infrastructure to boost the industry (Alternative Tourism Group, 2014, p. 16).¹¹⁵ However, the Oslo agreement did not result in an independent Palestinian tourism industry, on the contrary. Palestinians still do not have more control over their economy compared to the post-Oslo years. Oslo installed a system of fragmentation which consolidated and deepened Israeli control over all aspects of Palestinian life, rendering a Palestinian state unviable (Hanieh, 2013; Tabar & Jabary Salamanca, 2015). It also instituted a colonial political economy in which the Palestinian tourism sector would always be overshadowed and dominated by the Israeli one (Dana, 2015; Farsakh, 2006). This was realized through various means, physical obstructions, restricted mobility, a permit system, control over touristic resources, and the control and domination of touristic narratives. In Jerusalem specifically, this process took a distinctly urban shape in what can be considered the making of a settler colonial city (Hugill, 2017; Veracini, 2012; Yacobi, 2015; Yiftachel, 2015). Urban processes, as Porter and

¹¹⁴ Hazbun critically analyzed the role of tourism in pushing forward the peace process between Jordan and Israel.

¹¹⁵ The Jericho Casino was built as a centerpiece. Being off limits to Palestinians, it sought to attract Israelis coming to gamble on the peace dividend. Moreover, the casino was run by an Australian company. As such, much of the profit flew out of the county. In this sense, the casino was emblematic for the kind of development that was encouraged after Oslo.

Yiftachel (2017) claim, are central to the dispossession and expulsion, replacing the native space by a settler space. The authors also draw attention to processes that deploy racist imaginaries that sever the city from its Indigenous histories, time, and space to shape the city in the image of the settler. This way, a space is created in which Indigenous people are out of place. This chapter illustrates how touristic representations and practices, especially the biblical ones, became entangled in a political economy that contributed to the production of Jerusalem as a settler city.

In the context of continued this settlement and Judaization, I wondered where the value of tourism “as oil” could be found. How can a Palestinian Jerusalem be promoted as a destination without falling in the trap of reproducing culture and identity with the loss of sovereignty? During the conference, it became clear that there were many different perspectives on the potential of tourism in Jerusalem. Some indeed saw it as oil, as a way to generate business for Palestinians. They called for new investments in Palestinian hotels and touristic infrastructure. Others called for a Jerusalem ‘brand’ that went beyond the religion and pilgrims. Others still emphasized the need to map Jerusalem and get to know it, because “every brick, every person, everything is interesting” with an eye on producing touristic assets.¹¹⁶ This urgency to ‘know’ was linked to the fact that Palestinian heritage has been under attack, just like its population.

In this light, tourism enables the production of knowledge, products, and spaces that go beyond merely making a profit or capitalizing on tourism resources. It enables both the production and the consumption of a national Palestinian identity directed at a foreign audience. In a sense, it helps to produce a Palestinian space and spatial identity. Having a destination ‘Palestine’ makes Palestine more ‘real’ as a political entity. In an interview with a Palestinian tour operator he explained to me how tourism allowed Palestine to be presented differently within global touristic circuits:

Before the Oslo agreements, Israel was always saying that “Palestinians are tribes, there is nothing called Palestine, this is Israel and we have some Palestinian communities living here and there.” And in the early 20th century, people said that Palestinians are only Bedouins, they are not living in cities. So now you can

¹¹⁶ Tom Selwyn, keynote speech made at the conference ‘Tourism and Palestinian culture in Jerusalem: unlimited opportunities’ (East Jerusalem, 19/05/2016).

say, we are a country, we have tourism resources, you can spend,
you can have culture, it's a kind of resistance.¹¹⁷

During interviews, Palestinians valued tourism in very diverse ways. Tourism often stood for modernity, development, connectivity, progress, freedom, or a sense of nationhood. And at the same time, they recognized that 'Palestine,' as a contested destination, was not always commercially interesting to market. Bearing this in mind, I want to explore the creation of 'value' and what 'is valued' in tourism and how it intersects with colonial and capitalist relations of power.

Crossley and Picard (2014, p. 201) explain that "through the public display of social life, sites, and cultural artifacts, value is mobilized as a tangible resource, as an ethical claim, and as a cultural device governing tourism production." Regimes of value in tourism mediate people's understanding of place, things, histories and others. Value also plays at a personal, emotional level. It creates an affective relation between tourists, the places they visit, and the landscapes they cross (Crossley & Picard, 2014, p. 203). Hence value does not just refer to the monetary benefits that touristic commodities can bring but to the *worlds* that are created and naturalized through what is valued within these commodities, activities and services (Graeber, 2013, p. 224; 229). Both Graeber (2013) and Crossley and Picard (2014) build on Appadurai's (1986) notion of 'regimes of value.' Consequently, they conceptualize value as the result of cultural and economic processes that produce a logic of exchange that is diverse and multiple. This leads us to question what is 'valued' and what kind of values are mobilized and scripted into the touristic reality? Where does value intersect with and reinforces the values that are fundamental to the making of the settler colony? And can in this respect, tourism create new worlds, that value the decolonial? The political struggle that takes place within the tourism sector in Palestine, is not just about accumulating wealth, as Graeber (2013, p. 228) points out:

[W]hat politics is always ultimately about: not just to accumulate value, but to define what value is, and how different values (forms of "honor", "capital", etc.) dominate, encompass, or otherwise relate to one another; and thus, at the same time, between those

¹¹⁷ Interview with Michel Awad, Executive Director, Siraj Center (Beit Sahour, 29/05/2014).

imaginary arenas in which they are realized. In the end, political struggle is and must always be about the meaning of life.

Not all is valued in the same way, some dominate over others. There is a hierarchy of value that not just has a colonial origin (Herzfeld, 2010, p. 296), it is determined by notions of modernity, capitalism, universal morale, and the coloniality of power more broadly (Quijano, 2000). Within this framework, tourism emerges a field in which these global hierarchies of value (Herzfeld, 2004) are mobilized and materialize in how destinations are produced and consumed.

In this chapter, I will analyze the spaces of representation as well as spatial practices within tourism that produce Jerusalem as a destination, carve out spaces for consumption, and enable the extraction of value. How do these practices mediate people's relation to space in East Jerusalem, especially when it comes to the commodification and capitalization of space? What subversive spaces can be made in a settler city? Within Jerusalem, I will investigate how the settler political economy regulates and affects the meaning and experience of place that is created within the Palestinian tourism sector. The settler colonial economy separates Palestinians from their touristic resources, both key sites and the tourists themselves. Israel controls the dominant narratives that circulate within the touristic circuits. The creation of touristic value lays at the interplay of relations of colonial difference, and the production and consumption of space in the settler city.

In the first section of this chapter, I examine how Jerusalem became undone as a part of Palestine after 1948. I build on both the Jordanian and Israeli efforts to rearticulate the city in a way that distances the city from its Palestinian identity. I will then go deeper into the ongoing process of settlement, in East Jerusalem specifically, that occurs through and with tourism, and how this changes the landscape and image of Jerusalem in favor of the Zionist project. Three intertwined processes of space making within the Jerusalem tourism become apparent. First, tourism has been instrumental in depoliticizing the Palestinian presence in the city. Second, it has been used by Israel to expand its territorial control in the city as well as legitimize its presence. Third, tourism has been a force of Judaization and rearticulation of Jerusalem's character and identity as a global city.

In the second part of the chapter, I present the efforts of the Palestinian tourism sector in Jerusalem to counter this continued colonization. I expose the

tensions within the sector over marketing a Palestinian destination. Lastly, I look at how Palestinians in East Jerusalem attempt to counter what has become a settler city by means of tourism. I investigate the case of the Jerusalem Tourism Cluster, a Palestinian organization that is trying to establish a Palestinian oriented tourism in Jerusalem, to show how the sector is trying to introduce what they consider a new kind of tourism that is explicitly Palestinian. This is done through interventions in the tourism infrastructure and with the introduction of new Palestinian products and activities. By doing so, the Jerusalem Tourism Cluster aims to tap into the imaginative power of tourism and its ability to generate resources and development and empowering political alternatives. They also aim to take tourists into a different world, one that gives space to the Palestinian narrative and defies the colonial fabrications that dominate much to the mass tourism coming to Israel and Palestine. Here, Palestine and Palestinianness are coproduced through various touristic interventions and commodities. Maps, guidebooks, souvenirs, activities, and other things valued by tourists now become representations of what is valued by Palestinians as 'Palestinian.' Their shared Palestinian identity becomes condensed within products that are specifically created to appeal to visitors.

4.2. Reordering the Holy City

After 1948, Palestine disappeared as a destination. Jordanians and Israeli both had their own interests in promoting the newly conquered lands as part of their respective national identities. Palestinians however remained active in the tourism sector of East Jerusalem. Despite the division of the city, the tourism sectors on the Israeli, Palestinian and by extension Jordanian sides have always been intertwined and interconnected. Between 1948 and 1967, Israeli, Palestinian and other Arab tour operators would exchange groups of tourists through the Mendlebaum gate crossing on the ceasefire line in Jerusalem (Khoury, 2014). Tourists were only able to cross the border if they did not have an Israeli visa in their passports in addition to a certificate of church membership. Israeli nationals were not allowed to the Jordan territory except for those with a permit for Mount Scopus.¹¹⁸ Jordan refused entry to Israelis,

¹¹⁸ Brochure 'Easter in the Jerusalem, Jordan the Holy Land' (1964). Amman: Jordan Tourism Authority, p. 6 (Israeli National Library, ref: S99B67).

despite it being part of an arrangement under the ceasefire agreement, because Palestinians refugees were not allowed to return to their homes on the Israeli side of the green line (Dumper, 1997, p. 34).

Between 1948 and 1967, the tourism sector in East Jerusalem expanded under the Jordanian rule. New hotels were constructed and new travel agencies, bus companies and restaurants opened their doors to tourists (Romann, 1973, pp. 104–105). According to Cohen-Hattab and Shoval (2015, p. 96), at the height of the tourism boom in 1965, around 750,000 tourists visited Jordan, compared to 296,000 in Israel. This was primarily due to the attraction of East Jerusalem which was a major asset in terms of income. An estimated 85% of the touristic revenues to Jordan came from East Jerusalem. A Palestinian guide in Jerusalem spoke about this period with positive nostalgia. He recounted how the Jordanians had stationed tourism police in Jerusalem to make sure tourists were treated well by shopkeepers and guides.¹¹⁹ However, he also recalled that “there was no Palestine, it was Jordan at the time.” Palestine was no longer marketed nor consumed as a destination.

In 1950, East Jerusalem and the West Bank were formally annexed to Jordan and the Palestinians were granted Jordanian citizenship (Bailey, 2018, p. 2). At the time, the Jordanians wanted to avert the emergence of Palestinian nationalism that would challenge the Jordanian rule. To avoid consolidation of power by the Palestinian majority, the Jordanians sought to assimilate Palestinians under the Jordanian identity rather than allowing the strengthening of Palestinian national identity (Bailey, 2018). Jerusalem was only strengthened as a touristic and religious destination, but not on a political level. On the contrary, Jordan firmly positioned Amman as the capital rather than Jerusalem. A shop owner explained that the touristic products such as maps and postcards were printed in Jordan and imported from there.¹²⁰ Indeed, the Jordanian government distributed touristic merchandise and promotional material produced specifically with the images of the holy sites in reference to Jordan (Katz, 2005). Figures 4.1 and 4.2 show a map of Jerusalem as represented by the Jordanians, with specific mention of Jordan as the Holy Land. The sights that are indicated on the map are Muslim and Christian, there is no mention of Jewish sites. There is an image of the Wailing Wall but it is mentioned as Al-Buraq, which is a mosque at the south end of the Western

¹¹⁹ Interview with Z.J., guide (30/05/2014, East Jerusalem).

¹²⁰ Interview with J.T, souvenir shop owner (15/09/2016, Bethlehem).

Wall. Representations such as these aided the Hashemite Kingdom in reshaping the identity of the city and consolidating their national image as that of the Holy Land (Katz, 2005, p. 129). By restoring key religious sites such as the Haram al-Sharif, the Jordanian king wanted to legitimize Jordan's presence as custodian of Jerusalem and protector of the Christian religious sites.

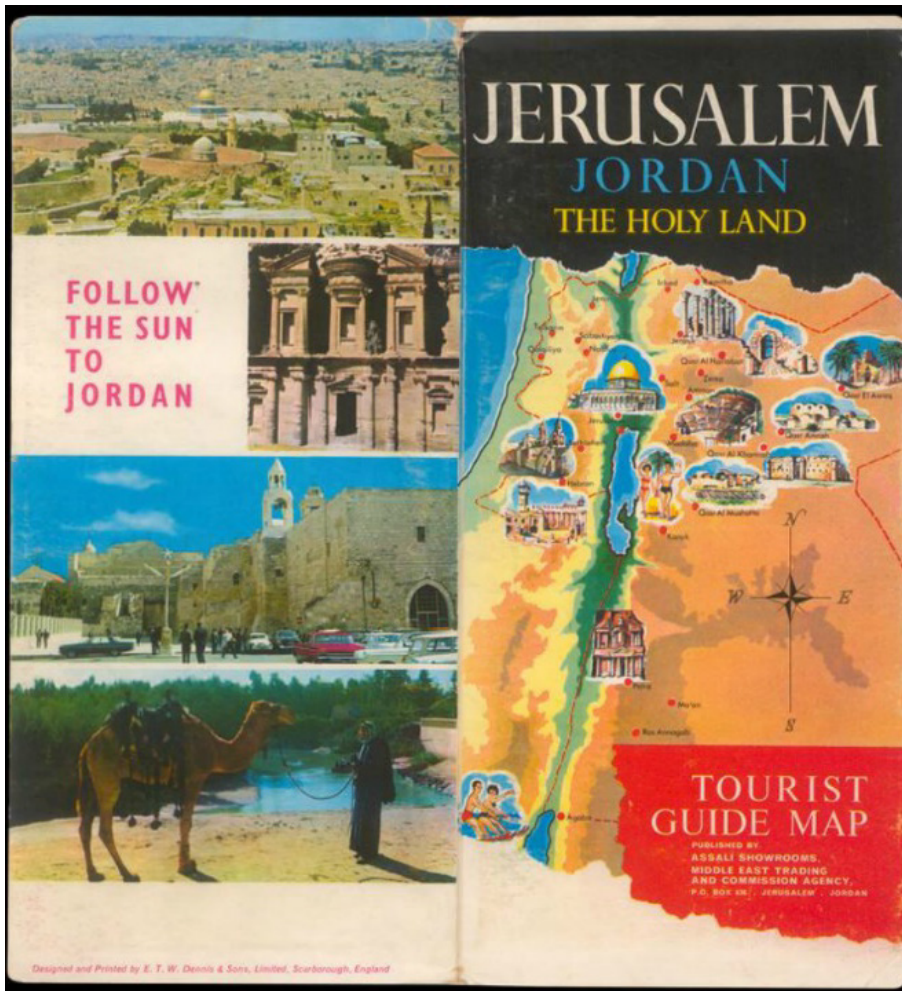


Figure 4.1: Jordan Holy Land, (1964) front cover. Map published in Jerusalem: Assali and printed by E.T.W. Dennis & Sons, Scarborough, England. (Source: Israeli National Library, Jerusalem. Ref: Jer 389). The map features pictures of Jerusalem's Old City, Petra, Bethlehem's Nativity Church, and a man with a camel.

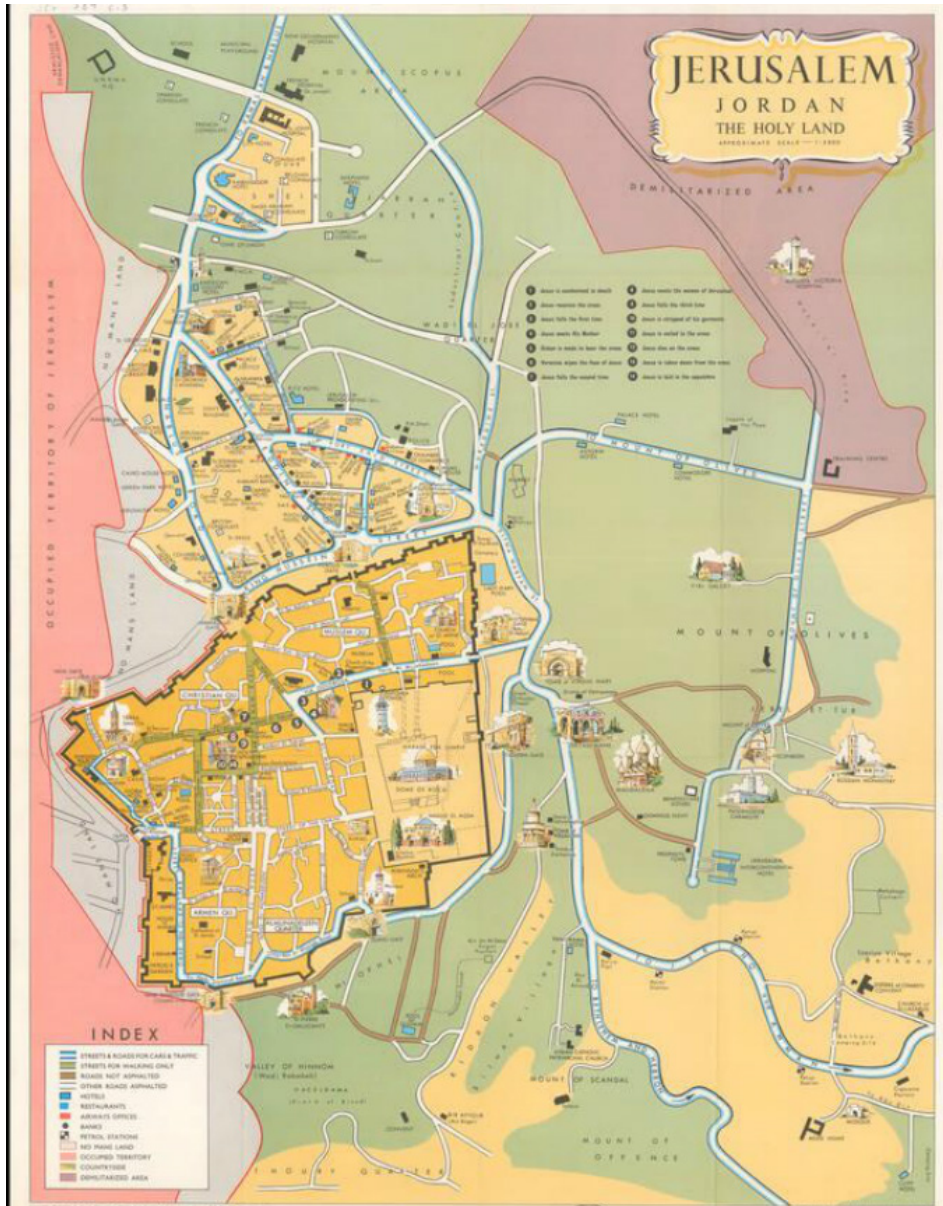


Figure 4.2: Jordan Holy land (1964). Map published in Jerusalem: Assali and printed by E.T.W. Dennis & Sons. Scarborough, England. (Source: Israeli National Library, Jerusalem. Ref: Jer 389). The map shows the Old City of Jerusalem and East Jerusalem. There are several hotels and restaurants on the map that are Palestinian. The demilitarized zone is shown. The sights that are indicated are Muslim and Christian. The 14 stages of the Via Dolorosa are indicated and explained in a legend. There is no mention of Jewish sights. There is an image of the Wailing Wall but it is mentioned as Al-Buraq (a mosque at the south end of the Western Wall). West Jerusalem is colored in red and described as occupied territory.

4.2.1. Shaping West Jerusalem as the new Jewish Jerusalem

On the other side of the green line, West Jerusalem was being drastically transformed into the Jewish capital. During the *naqba*, the Palestinian inhabitants of West Jerusalem had fled the violence. This also implied severe losses for the Palestinian tourism sector in Jerusalem. For example, on 4 January 1948, the Jewish paramilitary organization Haganah bombed the Palestinian owned Semiramis hotel in the Qatamon neighborhood, which killed 26 civilians, mostly Christian Palestinians (Krystall, 1998). These neighborhoods were quickly repopulated with Jewish inhabitants, reshaping the character and identity of the Western part of the city.¹²¹

Under Ben Gurion, the Israeli government tried to compensate the lack of access to the religious sites in East Jerusalem by the construction of a new symbolic national space in West Jerusalem. For example, the Yad Vashem (holocaust remembrance museum) and Mount Herzl cemetery replaced the Mount of Olives and the Knesset building on the Temple Mount as sites of attraction within the city (Cohen-Hattab & Shoval, 2015; Klein, 2004) (see figure 4.3). The new sites created a new symbolic fabric of Israeliness that became stitched together in the touristic experience through roads, packages and standardized tours that were offered to tour operators. It also positioned West Jerusalem as a global center for Jewish culture and religion. When Ben Gurion declared “Jewish Jerusalem” the Israeli capital, West Jerusalem became identified with historical Jerusalem. However, no such connection was historically identified (Klein, 2004, p. 180). This newly produced space was also promoted abroad. In touristic publications, West Jerusalem became represented as a Jewish *pars pro toto*.¹²²

¹²¹ Many Palestinian families had fled after the bombing the Palestinian Semiramis Hotel by Haganah in neighborhood of Qatamon on 4 January 1948. Twenty-six civilians were killed, most from two Christian Arab families of Jerusalem. This caused major panic and triggered the exodus of Arab residents from Qatamon and Talbiyy (Krystall, 1998).

¹²² See also ‘Tour, Official guide to Israel’ (1950), published for: State of Israel tourist department- and the Israel touring club. Editor W. Turnsowsky (Ref: 69B2472); ‘Tour guide to Israel’ (1952), published in cooperation with State of Israel tourist department. Tel Aviv: Litour Ltd. (Israel National Library, Jerusalem, Ref: S89B2471); ‘Israel travel News’ (1950) The holy land, a guide for pilgrims. Tel Aviv: Government Printing Press, Hakiryā. (Israel National Library, Jerusalem, Ref: S0=86B267).



Figure 4.3: 'Jerusalem and surroundings et ses environs' (1957) Published by Tour, Ltd. (Tel Aviv) (courtesy of the Israeli National Library, Jerusalem, ref: Jer 310). Interestingly, in this map the east is at the top, rather than the north. Hence, it reflects the Israeli approach to the city. The main sites of interest in West Jerusalem that are indicated in the general information of this map: Mount Zion, Mount Herzl, Toms of the Sanhedrin, Mea Shearim (the orthodox Jewish Quarter), The Bukharian Quarter, the New Hebrew University Campus, the Knesset Building and the National Institutions Building (Jewish Agency, Keren Hayesod, Keren Kayemet, Zionist Archives, Herzl Room).

For example, in ‘A tourist’s companion to Israel,’ a booklet published by the Israeli Ministry of Tourism in 1952, there is no reference to West Jerusalem. The booklet recommended visiting the highlight of Jerusalem, the Hebrew University, the building of the Jewish Agency, the Hall of the Golden Books (of the Jewish National Fund) and the reconstruction of the study room of Theodore Hertzl who is described as ‘the prophet of modern Zionism,’ the Knesset, combined with visits of the church of St. John and the tomb of Sanhedrin.¹²³ Another example is the 1958 World’s Fair in Brussels.¹²⁴ Even though most of the most important and attractive biblical sites were located in the Jordanian controlled West Bank, the Israeli pavilion was designed to emphasize both its biblical past and modern character of the young state. Moreover, Israel profiled itself as a modern sunny destination comparable to California, Florida or the Côte d’Azur, but then in the Middle East (“Israël meldt zich als toeristisch land”, 1958).¹²⁵

The Israeli government recognized the importance of Jerusalem in creating a politically and ideologically powerful but also a marketable image for the country. In a proposal for the development of the Israeli tourism industry by the office of the prime minister in 1968, Israel’s touristic assets were defined as follows: marketing Israel as the Holy Land, the strong bond between the world Jewry and Israel that could be capitalized on, the archeological and historical finds and the pleasant climate. In addition, the ‘reunification of Jerusalem’ and the access to the holy sites in East Jerusalem would lead to an increased pace of development of tourism in Israel in general (State of Israel Prime Minister’s Office Israel Miśrad rosh ha-memshalah Israel Miśrad hatayarut ha-Weida ha-kalkalit, 1968, p. 1). However, this unified Jewish Jerusalem first had to be produced, and this process went hand in hand with the dispossession of East Jerusalem’s Palestinian population in multiple ways.

In 1967, Israel annexed East Jerusalem, Gaza, the Sinai, and the Golan Heights. The map in figure 4.4 shows how soon after the war these territories became integrated in the Israeli touristic itineraries. The map presents the annexed territories as an integral part of Israel and recommends travel to sites

¹²³ Israel Ministry of Tourism (1952) ‘A visitor’s companion to Israel’. Third edition. State of Israel Tourist center. Jerusalem: Ministry of tourism p. 58. (Israel National Library, Jerusalem, Ref: SPB 5609).

¹²⁴ The 1958 World’s Fair in Brussels was the first world fair after the WWII and the creation of the Israeli state in 1948.

¹²⁵ ‘Israël meldt zich als toeristisch land’ (august 1958), Volksgazet, Belgium.

located in the occupied territories there such as St Catherine’s Monastery in the Sinai and the garden of Gethsemane in the East Jerusalem Kidron Valley as are shown on the map.

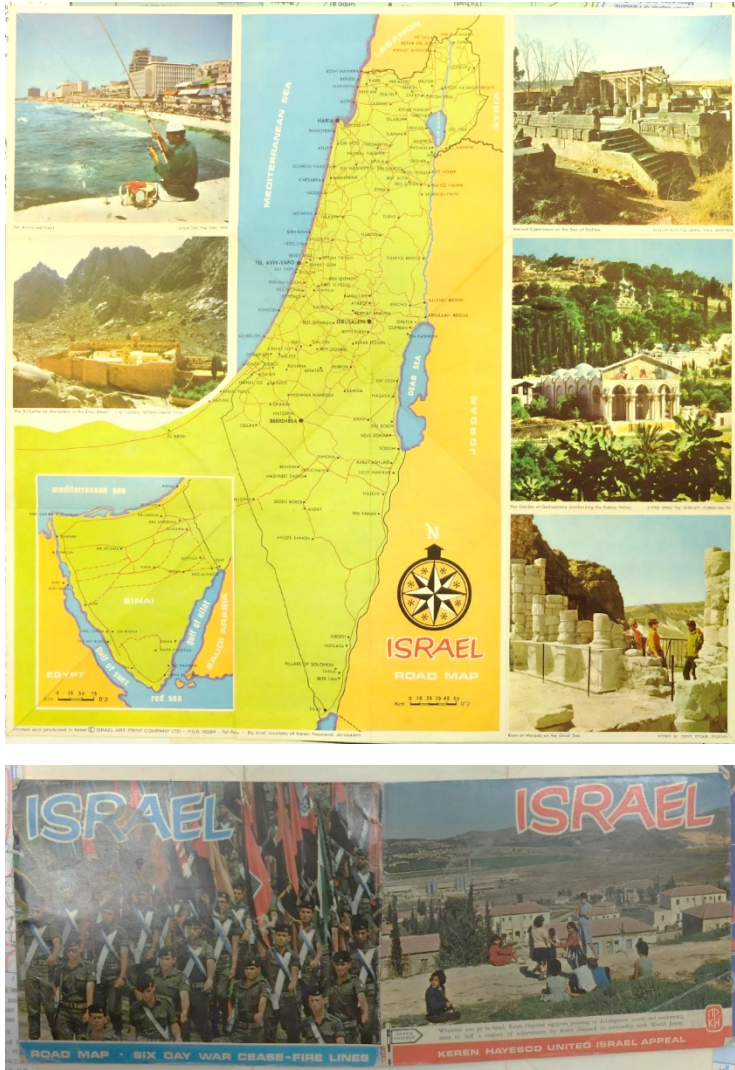


Figure 4.4: (above) Touristic map and (below) the cover of the map. Sinai, Gaza, West Bank and Golan are shown (1968). Published by Keren Hayesod (United Israeli Appeal). (Courtesy of the Israel National Library, Jerusalem ref: Israel 233).

Immediately after the annexation of East Jerusalem, the Israeli government started to reshape the city (Rokem, 2012, p. 4). The transformation needs to be understood in relation to the continuous Israeli efforts to consolidated physical control over East Jerusalem to maintain a “united” Jewish city (ibid.), while at the same time creating the reality of a segregated settler colonial city that ensures a Jewish majority is maintained separated and dominates the Palestinian minority (Yacobi, 2015, p. 580). Dumper explains that:

Since 1967, Israeli settlement policy in Jerusalem has been directed towards a single overriding goal: the consolidation of Israeli control over Palestinian East Jerusalem in order to prevent any future redivision of the city. In political and functional terms, this has involved declarations of a “united” Jerusalem as the “eternal” capital of the Israeli state, combined with the transfer of government offices and the extension of municipal authority and services to East Jerusalem. Demographically, it has meant strenuous efforts to construct housing and encourage the settlement of Israelis in the Palestinian parts of the city. (Dumper, 1992, p. 32).

The annexation of Jerusalem had dramatic effects on the city’s economy which had been largely centered around services, trade, and tourism. Palestinian tourism workers lost their connection to the Arab markets and many of the services they had provided were quickly transferred under Israeli control (Jubeih, 2014). For example, Raji Khoury, the owner of the Palestinian tour operator ‘Shepherds tours and travel,’ recalled how his clients were appropriated by Israeli agents, who had told his clients he had died during the war (Khoury, 2014). New investments were impeded by the closure of all non-Israeli banks and the imposition of Israel law and regulations to Palestinian businesses. And while the Palestinians counted 26% of the total population of Jerusalem, they only represented 6% of the purchasing power in the city (Romann, 1967 as cited Dumper, 1997, p. 217). According to Michael Dumper, the transfer in the tourism sector was enabled through several processes. First, Palestinian tour operators had been catering largely to Christian and Muslim pilgrims from the Middle East and this market had evaporated overnight. Citizens from the Arab states were no longer able to travel to Jerusalem. In addition, a new kind of tourism, the modern package tour, also created new markets of largely Western tourists who preferred to travel with Israeli companies as they were considered more modern, Western, and safe. And lastly, the Israeli governments went at great lengths to support

the development of Israeli tourism in East Jerusalem at the expense of the existing Palestinian sector (Dumper, 1997, p. 225).

Cohen-Hattab and Shoval have documented how the Israeli Ministry of Tourism immediately took measures to develop tourism in Jerusalem after the 1967 war and the annexation of East Jerusalem. The plans were targeting the establishment of the Israeli tourism business in the city. This would not just economically benefit Israel, it would also assert territorial control in East Jerusalem. Moreover, the authors argue that tourism would help legitimize its control over the city (Cohen-Hattab & Shoval, 2015, p. 136). Indeed, under Jerusalem's first Israeli mayor Theodore Kollek, the city was transformed into a center for tourism. According to Jarzmik (2016, p. 212), it was Kollek's ambition to "transform Jerusalem from a village-like, sleepy, overcrowded city to a thriving modern metropolis." To achieve this goal, Kollek recognized tourism as a vital asset, not only to attract foreign revenue and investments to the city, but also as an instrument to "explain Israel to the world" (Kollek, 1978, p. 60 as cited in Jarzmik, 2016, p. 121).¹²⁶ This "explaining" entailed dispersing his vision for Jerusalem, the image of a united Jerusalem, a mosaic of religions and cultures that coexist and all find their home in Jerusalem. However, Jarzmik (2016, p. 196) also warns that the tolerance proclaimed by the municipality toward the different religions present in Jerusalem as the "epistemic foundation for Israeli colonial urbanism." Indeed in practice, this discourse of multi-confessional and multi-features was used to avoid friction (Dumper, 1992; Klein, 2001). Quoting a former Israeli municipal planner, Imseis points to how the "mosaic epithet was little more than a beautiful marketing ploy of selling segregation" (Imseis, 2000, p. 1039). It depoliticized the Palestinian presence in the city while still allowing capitalizing on their existence, in for example tourism, by Orientalizing, exoticizing and othering them.

The image of the mosaic was pushed forward and at the same time a distinct Jewish identity was prioritized in practice. Arab and Muslim identity and culture were promoted in a depoliticized way while the image of a unified Jewish city was forcefully pressed upon the city landscapes. Kollek launched a double movement of prioritizing a Jewish presence, their demographic

¹²⁶ Even before he became mayor of Jerusalem, in the 50ies, Kollek was responsible for the establishment of special tourism department attached to the Prime Minister's office.

dominance, and identity in East Jerusalem while at the same time maintaining an appearance of tolerance toward ‘others.’ The manifestation of the Jewish identity in the city became visible in the physical transformations of the East Jerusalem landscape, directly after the annexation. Kollek declared that these spatial policies were meant “to make it difficult for the Arabs to live, not to allow them to build. Maybe they will get out of their volition ensuring the demographic balance in Jerusalem” (Benvenisti, 1996, p. 132).

The most well-known and immediate interventions to the city landscape were the destruction of the Magharbeh (or Moroccan) neighborhood bordering the Western Wall and the renewal of the Jewish Quarter. Only a few days after the Israeli military had conquered the city, the government decided to clear space in front of the Western Wall. The Israeli National Parks Authority demolished the entire Magharbeh neighborhood that was home to around 650 people and 100 families (Abowd, 2000). The expulsion of the Arab population, mainly immigrants from Morocco, helped to secure the demographic tilting of the balance in the Old City and allowed direct access from the Jewish Quarter to the Western Wall. Creating the open space, that soon was called the Western Wall plaza, was deemed necessary to accommodate the large influx of Israelis and also foreign tourists to the wall (Barnard, 2017, p. 312). The destruction can be considered part of the Israeli strategy of creating facts on the ground that shift the status quo in Jerusalem. The plaza that was created clearly stated ownership of the Israelis over the Old City (Gorenberg, 2006, p. 45). Nowadays, the Western Wall plaza turns out to be by far the most visited site by tourists in Israel (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015).

The renewal of the Jewish Quarter in the Old City is another example of how the Jerusalem landscape was remade to manifest the city as unified, with a predominant Jewish identity. In his comprehensive study of the reconstruction of the Jewish Quarter, Simone Ricca explains that the design of the Quarter was to introduce Jerusalem to the world as a modern Jewish city, that embodied the Zionist ideology (Ricca, 2007, p. 198). Furthermore, the Jewish identity was especially easy to sell to Christian pilgrims and tourists who already had preconceived ideas of Jerusalem as the capital of the Jewish people. Ricca argues that there inevitably was a dialectic process of reassembling and commodifying the space and the expectations of foreign tourists. In addition, he points out that the Jewish Quarter plays an important

role in a wider tourism strategy for Jerusalem. The Israeli presence there helps appropriation and control of the flows of Western tourists in the Old City (ibid., p. 96). Indeed, it allows to divert the flow of tourists that traditionally entered through Damascus gate and Jaffa gate to the Dung gate instead.

4.2.2. Tourism as a strategy for settlement and Judaization

In the late 1980ies, Kollek's principle of coexistence and separation gradually evaporated when Likud came to government in Israel.¹²⁷ Settlement within Palestinian neighborhoods was more and more facilitated by the state. At the same time, an increasing amount of areas were appropriated by the state for the purpose of archeological excavations, tourism and national parks (Ir Amin, n.d.). In this respect, it was an intensification of what has already been going on under Kollek's government. The Parks are a telling example. The Israeli National Parks Authority created the "Jerusalem Walls - City of David National Park" in 1974 as a ring around the Old City. Additional parks were approved, that of the Mount of Olives, Bab a-Zahreh, the Mount Scopus Slopes and the Refai'im Stream National Parks in 2013 and the Tzurim Valley Park in 2000. These parks created a corridor that connects Mount Scopus to the Old City and at the same time, they drove a wedge between the Palestinian neighborhoods in the East and the Old City and were also the pretext for expropriating Palestinian landowners because these parks include Palestinian built-up area. Only in East Jerusalem do the parks include residential areas, as opposed to the West Jerusalem parks.

Like most of the other Israeli settlements in and around the Old City of Jerusalem, the exploitation of the parks is largely done by a private right-wing Israeli settler organization, in this case, Elad (Hebrew acronym for 'to the City of David'). From 1998 onwards, the settler organization changed its strategy from merely taking over houses and sites to actively exploiting them in a touristic way.¹²⁸ Since then, Elad's revenues from selling entry tickets and guided tours have funneled into the maintenance, securitization and archeological digs further developing and expanding the sites (Noy, 2007, p. 31). The City of David grew into what is now one of the most popular touristic

¹²⁷ Especially with Ariel Sharon as minister of housing and construction many Palestinian properties were transferred to Israeli Jewish settler organizations such as Elad.

¹²⁸ Personal communication, Yonathan Mizrahi, Emek Shaveh (Paris, 21.02.2020).

sites in Israel, with half a million visitors in 2019. Their endeavors fit in the new biblical image of Jerusalem that serves a wider political purpose, as Noy (2007, p. 31) explains:

The site functions as a Jewish (national) heritage site. It plays a role in fastening the emotional ties between foreign Jews and Israelis, on the one hand, and the 'unified' city of Jerusalem, on the other.

This process was further fueled by Mayor Nir Barakat who wanted to solidify a unified Jewish Jerusalem as the prime Israeli destination. In 2012, he set out a plan to increase tourism to Jerusalem from 3.5 million to 10 million tourists each year (Associated Press, 2012). Barakat's support for the settlers became more open. He has attempted to 'clean up the city' and aimed to make the existing divide between Jews and the Palestinian population of the city less visible, especially to tourists (Gonen, 2015, pp. 159-160). In practice, this often meant the erasure of Palestinian spaces in favor of Jewish ones. For example, since 2009, the Jerusalem municipality issues 89 demolition orders for Palestinian homes in the al-Bustan neighborhood. They want to clear this area to "reconstruct" the Garden of King David as a tourist site, adjacent to the City of David (Marsalha, 2013, p. 143). This would be another node in the network of touristic sites that project biblical spatial representations upon Palestinian areas to appropriate, erase and Judaize them.

As I already mentioned in the introduction about the Jerusalem cable car, Barakat's approach was often critiqued as turning Jerusalem into what critics refer to as a biblical Disneyland. His touristic ambitions can be traced in several master plans for the city, in which de-development of tourism plays a significant role.

In 2011, the Israeli government commissioned a 5-year plan for the economic development of Jerusalem, which is also known as the Marom Plan. The plan identifies the following fields for boosting Jerusalem's economy: strengthen Jerusalem as a tourist city; strengthen Jerusalem as a center of research, development and industry in the field of biotechnology, and to introduce additional complementary measures aimed at economic development (JIIS, 2013, p. 9). The implementation of the plan was overseen by the Jerusalem

Development Authority (JDA) (JIIS, 2014, p. 10).¹²⁹ The Marom Plan is creating a vision in which new products for tourism consumption in Jerusalem are developed. One of the principal objectives is to attract people for shorter breaks. The Israeli government foresaw \$42 million to promote Jerusalem as an international tourism destination on top of \$21.5 million for the construction of hotels in Jerusalem (Arafeh, 2016).

In the framework of the Marom Plan, the Jerusalem Development Authority provided incentives to build or renovate hotels. This ambition resonates with statewide plans to drastically increase the number of hotel rooms, given the projections of the continued growth of tourism in the coming years (Israeli Ministry of Tourism, 2018). In fact, in 2016 the Israeli government added amendment No.107 to the Planning and Building Law, allowing the recognition ‘tourism infrastructure’ such as hotels as part of the national infrastructure and hence be treated in the National Infrastructure Committee (NIC). The NIC now functions as a ‘one-stop-shop’ for investors seeking a building permit for tourism infrastructure projects, which implies cutting of red tape. The recent change in the law also allowed the case of the cable car to be accelerated and treated as a national priority. The plan for the cable car was referred to the NIC to fast-track it. Normally, the NIC deals with grand-scale infrastructural schemes such as energy facilities, roads, railways and reservoirs (OECD, 2017). The NIC is less prone to public oversight and hence allows circumventing local and district planning committees (Maugery, 2017, p. 46; Surkes, 2019). In this respect, the case of the cable car is the first of the prioritized tourism infrastructures that benefit from this mechanism.

City events are part of the Marom Plan to attract tourists by organizing themed events. The most well-known examples are the Jerusalem Opera Festival, Jerusalem Light Festival, the Sacred Music Festival, and the Jerusalem marathon.¹³⁰ The start of the Giro d’Italia in Jerusalem in 2017 can also be

¹²⁹ Research, monitoring, consultation and evaluation of the plan was conducted by the Jerusalem Institute of Israel Studies (JIIS), a multidisciplinary and semi-official municipal research center concerned with planning in Jerusalem (Arafeh, 2016; JIIS, 2013; Rokem & Allegra, 2016). Rokem and Allegra (Rokem & Allegra, 2016) found that the JIIS staff actively withheld information on the Palestinians in Jerusalem and did not include them in for example their Statistical Yearbook of Jerusalem (which does include the Jewish settlements in the Jerusalem metropolitan area).

¹³⁰ Interview with Eli Nahmias, Incoming tourists and international relations director, Jerusalem Development Agency (West Jerusalem, 11/05/2015)

read in this light. The idea is that these events can be sold as part of larger touristic packages¹³¹ and these have been strongly promoted by Mayor Barkat. Furthermore, the municipality is also looking to attract medical tourists, with the Hadassah Hospital as its key asset. The hospital's medical services are marketed alongside Jerusalem historic sites, malls and restaurants (Hadassah Medical Center, n.d.). Business tourists are another focal segment in the municipality's marketing strategy. In order to attract the latter, the city is promoted as a conference destination.¹³² For example, the Israeli government provides grants of 10 000 to 45 000 euros for international conferences. Among the sites that are available as gala event venues in Jerusalem's Old City are for example Zedekiah's cave¹³³ underneath the Damascus gate, which stretches five blocks under the Muslim quarter, and the tower of David museum near Jaffa gate (Sigler, n.d.).

Aside from these government-initiated plans, there is a third private initiative that sets out to map Jerusalem's future. While the plan has been presented to government officials, it was not formally endorsed by the Jerusalem municipality. However, it does include some of the fantasies projected by former major Nir Barkat of Jerusalem as a global city.

The Jerusalem 5800 plan, also known as Jerusalem 2050 (Jerusalem 5800, 2013), is a private initiative founded by Australian Jewish philanthropist and businessman Kevin Bermeister and his Global Metropolis Group. Bermeister has previously invested in the City of David for the excavation of the Silwan pool, and he donated to the United Israel Appeal (Michiels, 2017, p. 64). Jerusalem 5800 is the first plan to include projected statistics and proposals up to the year 2050, making it the only long-term plan and the largest collection of plans ever compiled for the city (Leaders Magazine, 2013). The plan has the ambition "to shape Jerusalem as a 'World City': an important, tourist, ecological, spiritual and cultural world hub" (Global Metropolis Group, n.d., p. 2). It consists of numerous separate plans that are developed within the vision of Jerusalem 5800, which will be initiated independently from each other by private actors and possibly in collaboration with the public actors (Jerusalem Metropolis Master Plan, 2016, p. 50). According to the Global Metropolis Group, the government agencies have approached them for

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ The cave is under the authority of the East Jerusalem Development Company.

assistance in regional planning projects (Global Metropolis Group, n.d.). In the latest publication of the plan, the minister of tourism hails the plan for the concise way it presents Jerusalem's future.

The initiators of the Jerusalem 5800 plan claim a politically neutral, technocratic position that solely aims to bolster economic development in Jerusalem. However, they refer to Jerusalem as “the historic, modern, and future capital of the Hebrew nation- the Jewish people” (Jerusalem Metropolis Master Plan, 2016, p. 13). Its fundamental premises are first to attract the Jewish diaspora to come to live in Jerusalem by designing an attractive city that can accommodate their needs. The second objective is to maintain a Jewish majority with a ratio of 65/35, which is thus more demographically ambitious than the previous plans (ibid., p. 15). The future imagined by the Jerusalem 5800 plan could be thought of as the settler's ideal scenario: no existing Palestinian state and further annexation of the West Bank territories by Israel. The plan disregards the green line or the existence of the separation wall and consolidates a ‘greater Jerusalem’ that includes Ramallah, Bethlehem, the Dead Sea and the Israeli settlements of Ma’ale Adumim in the east and Gush Etzion in the south. This plan projects a vision of a metropolitan Jerusalem that functions as the motor of economic development for the entire region (which also includes Tel Aviv and Amman). It also completely ignores the future needs of Palestinians in terms of housing or jobs and so forth.

Tourism is rolled out in the plan as key to the future economic development of the city. It seeks to prepare the city to receive a projected 10 million foreign and 2 million domestic tourists in 2050 (ibid., p. 5). It wants to do so by heavily investing in tourism infrastructure and constructing new luxury hotels to absorb the increase in tourism. In this regard, the plan creates synergies with current policies of the Israeli Ministry of Tourism that want to encourage investments in the hotel sector by offering subsidized grants and cut red tape for investors who want to apply for building permits. The first hotel project under the 5800 framework is the Nof Zion luxury hotel that is planned near the Armon Hanatziv Promenade under the control of Elad.

In fact, the plan envisions a ‘biblical experience network’ for tourists, in what is called Jerusalem's Holy Basin. Nodes of religious sites, museums, hotels, restaurants, and other services are to be connected through ‘structured routes’ that direct the stream of tourists. The following paragraph elaborates on the vision:

The experience gained throughout the world over recent years has largely been in the establishment and operation of large facilities, theme parks such as Disney and others, in isolated locations far from urban contexts, and usually include attractions, hotels, commerce, and entertainment. In contrast, Jerusalem does not have the intent nor the option to create closed parks – rather, to create a distributed system in the open urban expanse where attractions, hotels, and entertainment and recreation centers are connected by advanced transportation. (Ibid., p. 53)

This illustrates how the Jerusalem 5800 planners are trying to integrate the leisure infrastructure into the fabric of the city: biblically themed attractions that are spread over the city and connected by means of transportation such as the light-rail and the cable car.

While the plan has not been officially adopted by the Jerusalem municipality, it is remarkable how the 5800 plan integrates already existing settler projects on biblical tourism such as those of Elad in the Hinnom Valley. It shows how private initiatives by wealthy donors are contributing to the touristic reshaping of the city in accordance with the idea of presenting the city as a unified Jewish capital and prioritizing the Jewish history of the city. Initiatives that involve 5800 planners are creating *de facto* linkages between Elad's City of David and the future Kedem Center and the Davidson Center and archeological park. In 2017, Bermeister donated to the development of the Mikveh Trail. The trail guides visitors along excavated Jewish ritual baths and tells the story of the importance of water and the Jewish faith in the time of the second temple. The trail starts next to the City of David and leads up to the southern wall of the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif (Emek Shaveh, 2017). For the 5800 planners, this enables the creation of a continuous touristic site between the Western Wall and the City of David (Jerusalem Metropolis Master Plan, 2016).

4.2.3. Controlling the narrative by all means: guides

In 2010, members of Knesset Gideon Ezra proposed to ban residents of East Jerusalem from serving as tour guides in the city because they do not represent the interests of the State of Israel in an appropriate way. By restricting guiding to people with Israeli citizenship, many East Jerusalem Palestinians, who only have temporary residency in Israel, would lose their jobs. According to Haaretz, the lawmakers want to ensure that travel agencies have their tourists' groups accompanied by a guide who has institutional loyalty to the State of

Israel (Hasson, 2010). It comes to no surprise that Israeli politicians are seeking control and restrict Palestinian guides in such a profound way. Guides have a central position as gatekeepers, they interpret and give meaning based on their own identity (Brin & Noy, 2010). Especially in spaces that are politically contested, tour guides themselves can assume a role of power that enables the transmission of an ideological perspective (Bowman, n.d.; Brin, 2006; Brin & Noy, 2010; Clarke, 2000; Cohen-Hattab, 2004; Feldman, 2007; Herbergs, 2012). Many studies have shown that tour guides assume a position of authority and knowledge (Katz, 1985). Tours are performative, they cocreate. They create a reality, both in the case of Israeli and Palestinian guides, regardless of the narrative that is being deployed during the tour. However, these studies did not consider the aspect of the colonial difference between the guide and the tourists. Palestinian guides, for example, complained about tourists that do not believe them. An East Jerusalem guide explained that tourists often think he wants to convince them of political issues because he is Palestinian. They do not assume he is telling the truth and for him “it is very tiring, you always need to prove yourself.”¹³⁴

While the bill to ban residents of East Jerusalem from serving as tour guides did not pass into law, it is *de facto* very difficult for Palestinians to guide tourists in Jerusalem and ‘48 territory. Before the Oslo agreements, Palestinian West Bank guides were not granted a license. Only Palestinians with a Jordanian guiding license were legally allowed to guide groups. This only changed in 1998 when the Palestinian Authority assumed the role of issuing guiding licenses to West Bank Palestinians. Due to their need for a permit to access ‘48 territory and Jerusalem, there are only scarily able to visit the actual places they study during the guide training. Moreover, Palestinian residents of Jerusalem could only obtain a guiding license after completing the official two-year course of the Israeli Ministry of Tourism. Until 1997, this course was only provided in Hebrew and later also in English (Tayarut, n.d.)¹³⁵, but not in Arabic. When speaking to a Palestinian guide living in Jaffa he pointed to the problematic content of the guides’ course:

Because this is information that goes to the tourists from all over the world and this should continue to keep the classical Zionist

¹³⁴ Interview with Obay Odeh, guide and owner transportation company, Palestine Exclusive (East Jerusalem, 9/02/2015).

¹³⁵ Personal communication, Koen Wagenbuur, consultant (East Jerusalem, 5/02/2016).

narrative. That there was empty land, that was developed by the Zionists and until today it's working like this. And if you go and listen, totally rubbish. But politically it's very important this rubbish. This is why there is total control over everything that has to do with teaching the courses. They are building all the tour guides.¹³⁶

Other Palestinian guides who had taken the course reiterated this sentiment. They confirmed that the course dealt with the history of the land from a Zionist perspective and completely erased the modern Palestinian history.¹³⁷ Landy (2017) refers to the course as “ideological filtering.” Palestinian guides who do speak out against Israel risk to have their license withdrawn by the Israeli Ministry of Tourism.¹³⁸ In addition, according to Israeli law, it is obligatory for foreign tour groups to have a guide (Rozenberg Kandel, 2017). This means that any group traveling in Israel will have their perceptions of the land mediated by a tour guide trained in this course (Bowman, 1992). However, many pilgrim groups take what is referred to as a silent guide and have a non-licensed priest do the actual guiding.¹³⁹

The occupation and its system of restrictions of movement have created a system of territorially bound guides. There are Palestinian local guides, West Bank guides, general guides and of course Israeli guides. Local and West Bank guides are licensed by the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MOTA). Local guides are specialized in a specific region. West Bank guides have a wider geographical range and are trained to guide in what is considered historic Palestine. They are however not allowed to enter Jerusalem nor the border areas such as the Allenby Bridge crossing to Jordan, which of course is controlled by Israel. This makes them less interesting and more expensive to employ by tour operators. According to the arrangement of the Paris Protocol, 50 Palestinian West Bank guides are allowed to guide groups in '48 territory and Jerusalem. In practice, only 42 guides were granted a permit in

¹³⁶ Interview with Sami Abu Shhada, tour guide and owner of the tour operator Discover Jaffa (Jaffa, 05/05/2015).

¹³⁷ Interview with Sami Abu Shhada, tour guide and owner of the tour operator Discover Jaffa (Jaffa, 05/05/2015), interview with Hisham Khatib, independent tour guide, (East Jerusalem, 2/02/2015) and interview with Sebastian Plötzgen, Lecturer Bethlehem Bible College (Bethlehem, 25/02/2016).

¹³⁸ Interview with Prof. Elias Al Hazin, owner tour operator Star tour & travel (Bethlehem, 29/01/2015).

¹³⁹ Interview with Charly Awad, General manager of Awad tour and travel agency (East Jerusalem, 4/06/2014).

2005. By 2015, only 25 were still active. Some had their permits revoked, while others passed away and were not replaced. As a result, only 25 Palestinian West Bank guides are currently able to work within Israel. In contrast, there are over 8000 licensed Israeli guides, who can take groups to East Jerusalem and touristic sites in the West Bank settlements (State of Palestine, Palestine Liberation Organisation Department of Negotiations Affairs, 2017).¹⁴⁰ Israeli guides are not allowed to enter the West Bank Palestinian-controlled Area A, such as Bethlehem, without prior coordination with the Israeli military, but in practice, many enter without authorization. The Palestinian Authority does not control nor restrict these Israeli guides from entering, as they fear this would also mean a decrease of groups of tourists coming in. In addition, they refer to an arrangement under the Paris Protocol that was supposed to guarantee the freedom of movement for tourism workers.¹⁴¹

These West Bank guides first need to obtain the guiding license from the Palestinian Authority and then the permit to guide in Jerusalem and '48 territory by the Israeli civil administration in the West Bank. When speaking to one of them, he testified that he had to stay as far away from politics as possible when guiding groups.

We have to stay neutral, but people want to know about the situation, and this contradicts with our work. We avoid political topics.¹⁴²

For these West Bank guides, the system of closure can profoundly interfere with their professional activities and in fact, makes them unreliable for tour operators. A West Bank guide living in Bethlehem or Ramallah might not be able to join his or her group in time due to complete closure or delay at the various checkpoints to enter Jerusalem. This leads to the contradictory situation of the tour guide who cannot travel. The distinction between an Israeli and Palestinian tour guide is emblematic for the *de facto* situation of

¹⁴⁰ Interview with Hamdan Taha, Former Deputy director Palestinian Ministry of Tourism, (Ramallah, 4/05/2016);and also the Alternative tourism journal a conflict between two narratives (Alternative Tourism Group, 2014).

¹⁴¹ Interview with Samir Bahbah, Chairman of the Arab Tour Guides Union (Shu'afat, 1/06/2014).

¹⁴² Interview with anonymous Palestinian tour guide (Jericho, 15/05/2014).

apartheid in Palestine. Palestinian tour guide's mobility is restricted, Israelis move freely.

The last category is the general guides. These are Palestinians living in East Jerusalem and '48 territory, they do not need additional permits to guide in these territories. However, they have to follow the Israeli guiding course and are licensed by the Israeli Ministry of Tourism. Especially in Jerusalem, the licensing of Palestinian guides is a problem. Guides involved in alternative tourism have difficulties obtaining an Israeli license as one guide and owner of an alternative tour operator in Jerusalem explained:

I'm in Jerusalem and they [Israeli authority] refused to give [the license] to me. So this is why I do it through the hotel, as a business this is just to be legal. So we find a way but it is really difficult, we are just like this. So this is why I am not making a lot of publicity, I can't. So it's only voices, mouth to mouth. They [Israeli authority] gave me a license, but for a travel agency, or like and NGO, in the West Bank, but I don't want this, because I'm based in Jerusalem. I want to be here as a political point, it's very important. This is where I am.¹⁴³

This is just one example; other guides are fired by touring agencies or risk losing their guiding license for speaking out against Israel.¹⁴⁴ One guide put it this way:

In the tourism sector, you can easily be 'burned' ... We have to stay neutral, we avoid political topics ... The Israeli guides can talk about politics, but we cannot.¹⁴⁵

Once it is known that guides are not giving the Israeli state perspective, they will face difficulty contracting groups, as the market is strongly dominated by Israeli companies. These kinds of harassments frequently occur and are part of the Israeli strategy of maintaining control over the narrative fed to tourists visiting Jerusalem. The colonial domination of Israel makes that Israeli companies have a privileged hegemonic position.

¹⁴³ Personal communication, Abu Hassan, guide and owner of Alternative Tours (2/04/2014, East Jerusalem).

¹⁴⁴ Interview with Anonymous Palestinian guide (Jericho, 15/05/2014) and interview with Nasri Hamayel, tour guide (Jericho 15/05/2014).

¹⁴⁵ Interview with anonymous Palestinian guide (Jericho, 15/05/2014).

4.3. Beyond the Holy Land: producing spaces of constructed Palestinian visibility¹⁴⁶

Holy Land tourism has a strong legacy in Palestine and diverting from the beaten pilgrims' path is not a given. Many of the Palestinian tour operators are family businesses that pass from one generation to the next and maintain a focus on Holy Land pilgrims. And while there might be an openness with the younger generation that is gradually taking over, explicit 'Palestine' tourism remains rather niche.¹⁴⁷ Moreover, there is no unified approach or policy for tackling tourism in Jerusalem. The Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MOTA) *de facto* has no authority in East Jerusalem and since the closure of the Orient House in 2001, the Palestinian Authority is no longer present.¹⁴⁸ The Palestinian Authority does not have an official tourism office in Jerusalem and is unable to for example put up signage, rehabilitate and operate heritage sites or other touristic points of interest in the city. Similarly, the Higher Council for Arab Tourism Industry (HCAIT) in Jerusalem was closed down in 2003 by Israel. Active institutions are the Arab Hotel Association (AHA), The Holy Land Incoming Tour Operators Association (HLITOA), the Arab Tour Guides Union (Isaac, Hall, & Higgins-Desbiolles, 2016a, pp. 23–24), and the newer Network for Experiential Palestinian Tourism Organizations (NEPTO) and the Jerusalem Tourism Cluster (JTC). Moreover, most of the large Palestinian tour operators have offices in East Jerusalem.

Despite the presence of these organizations in East Jerusalem, there is a general lack of a consolidated national tourism strategy as well as the necessary investment in the sector (Isaac et al., 2016a). As Masen Sinokrot, one of the leading Palestinian businesspersons mentioned during the

¹⁴⁶ I borrow this term 'spaces of constructed visibility' from Gregory (2001) in his article 'Colonial nostalgia and cultures of travel: spaces of constructed visibility in Egypt'.

¹⁴⁷ Interview with Margo Tarazi, Business Development manager, Universal tourist Agency, (East Jerusalem, 25/01/2016), interview with Dimitri Khoshran, Inbound Tourism Manager, Aeolus tours, (East Jerusalem 15/01/2016), interview with Ali Abu Srour, Director General Tourism Professions Directorate, MOTA (Bethlehem, 17/02/2016).

¹⁴⁸ The Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities was created in 1993. Before that, there was no Palestinian authority over the tourism sector. Everything was regulated and controlled by the Israel military administration.

Jerusalem tourism conference: “there is a vacuum in Jerusalem, and we are the reason for the vacuum, the many bodies we have created but we’re not able to do anything.”¹⁴⁹ The Palestinian tourism sector in East Jerusalem remains rather divided. Traditional pilgrimage providers have different needs and objectives than the niche sector of alternative tourism which has been growing, especially after Oslo. Business interests do not always coincide with the various Palestinian projects of identity formation and resistance in Jerusalem. But pushing forward the destination ‘Palestine’ is difficult.

Some of the leading Palestinian tour operators stick with marketing the Holy Land, rather than Palestine as a destination. The trope of the Holy Land is a particularly powerful one. I came across the same reluctance concerning talking about politics when interviewing Palestinian tour operators located in East Jerusalem. They kept away from politics not just because they risked difficulties with the Israeli authorities, but most importantly it would be bad for business. Most tour operators did not use the term ‘Palestine’ to advertise their products as they believed it is too loaded and associated with negative media coverage on terrorism and violence. They prefer tapping into the trope of the ‘Holy Land’ which is commercially more interesting to attract pilgrims and politically safe. The salesperson for a large Palestinian tour operator in East Jerusalem put it as follows, when I asked him about marketing ‘Palestine’ as a destination:

We do not mention this. We say come to the Holy Land. Not to mention Israel and Palestine... To avoid saying the story, to avoid to tell the clients the story about what is happening here. We are promoting the Holy Land, Holy Land means Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Arab and Palestinian and Israeli places.¹⁵⁰

The marketing strategy of the Holy Land is what constitutes the income of many Palestinian, tour operators, hotels and guides. It functions as a container that depoliticizes by focusing on religion rather than the political situation. It is better for business to follow the religious marketing path and stay away from what is considered potentially sensitive political terminology. However, by opting for this strategy, Palestine is rendered largely invisible within the tourism circuits that are visiting ‘Israel’ and the ‘Holy Land.’ This is the result

¹⁴⁹ Masen Sinokrot’s presentation at the conference ‘Tourism and Palestinian culture in Jerusalem: unlimited opportunities’ (19/06/2015, East Jerusalem).

¹⁵⁰ Interview with Ramzi Copty (13/10/2016, East Jerusalem).

of a deliberate business strategy that has taken shape in the context of a colonial political economy.

Only recently, the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities is seeking to develop Palestine as a destination, that is distinct from the Holy Land, and from Israel. They are encouraging Palestinian tour operators to use the name 'Palestine' or at least 'Palestine, the Holy Land' and market it as the land of three religions and integrate more Palestinian cities and sites to the itinerary instead of Israeli ones.¹⁵¹ On request of the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism, the Bethlehem Bible College became the first school to offer guiding courses. The first program started in 1998. The course includes among others the studying the stories of the Old and New Testament, history, archeology, the three monotheistic religions, natural history, fauna and flora, ethics and field trips. These latter are however restricted to the West Bank despite the course focusing on the geography of historic Palestine and Jerusalem. For example, the Galilee is excluded from field trips.¹⁵² Only in 2016, the Bible College included a course on contemporary Palestinian society and the political situation, under the impetus of the Ministry of Education, the tourism union and Masar Ibrahim Al-Khalil. The latter strived for a more comprehensive guiding course, given the rapid expansion of 'alternative' tourism in Palestine and the lack of adequately trained guides for this niche market. This new approach has profound implications. Going into the contemporary Palestinian story does not just counterbalance the Israeli narrative, it breaks with centuries of 'colonial' biblical gaze on the land. A lecturer at the Bible College pointed out:

There's the classical school, that Palestine is for religious sites established from the 19th century, the Late Ottoman Period, the British, French, when everyone starts to come to Palestine. Just study it from the point of view of religion. However, focusing on the local community and the history, there was no focus, actually. Nobody really pinpointed on that much [before].¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ Interview with Majed Ishaq, Marketing department Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (14/11/2016, Bethlehem).

¹⁵² Personal communication, Hytam Dieck, lecturer Bethlehem Bible College (3/02/2016, Bethlehem).

¹⁵³ Personal communication, Hytam Dieck, lecturer Bethlehem Bible College (3/02/2016, Bethlehem).

Indeed, Palestine ‘becoming’ the Holy Land was vital to the Western imperial and colonial ambitions, both religiously and politically in the 19th century. The trope of the Holy Land motivated and legitimated the intrusion of Western forces in Palestine and travel played a crucial role in creating this new sacred imagined geography. Incrementally increasing Western tourism to Palestine and having an actual presence of travelers and pilgrims also meant the expansion of Western control in the region (Salaita, 2006). The biblical spatial representations of Palestine conjure a particular geography of the land that corresponded with the colonial aspiration of the Western powers. The surge in tourism did not happen overnight. The ‘Holy Land mania,’ as Twain named it, was provoked by a powerful colonial *economy of appearance* that was constructed around Palestine as the Holy Land. Here, Palestine was reimagined as the land of the Bible through contingent articulations of what the land once was and what it potentially could be (A. L. Tsing, 2005). Within this process of increased interest and travel to Palestine, the image of Palestine that was cultivated within the Western imagined geography was one of a fallen biblical land in need of restoration, and in dire need of Western influence and colonization to achieve its actual potential (Shepherd, 1987, p. 15). It was not just Palestine that was being remade, the trope of the Holy Land also rearticulated the Western nations into a position of power over Palestine, it created a relationality between the ‘West’ and the ‘Orient’ as imaginative geographies that were co-constructed one dominating the other.

4.3.1. Tourism, activism, and resistance

In April 2014, I participated in a tour of the Old City, this time with a Palestinian guide from Jerusalem. He was giving a tour of the Judaization in the Old City of Jerusalem. We went around the Palestinian neighborhoods that had been targeted by Israeli settlers and talked to the inhabitants of a *hosh*¹⁵⁴ that settlers were trying to take over room by room. During the tour, I noticed our group was being followed by two private Israeli security guards who were listening in to what Nasser was telling us.¹⁵⁵ They even confronted us not to listen to the lies he was telling. Nasser urged us to ignore them as we proceeded on the tour. Two days after the tour, Nasser was arrested and

¹⁵⁴ The ‘*hosh*’ refers to a court that had been created by adding up rooms around an open space courtyard, mostly for members of the same family.

¹⁵⁵ Nasser is a pseudonym, not the real name of the guide in question.

detained for two days by Israeli police, without any formal charge. When I met him after his release, he said that the Israelis wanted to punish him for the stories he was telling. Moreover, Nasser had refused a formal payment from us for his tour. As he was not licensed by Israel as a guide, he could only do informal tourism, in which he asked the participants to tell anyone that they were old friends of his, visiting on a casual stroll through the city, rather than on a guided tour.

While making our way through the bustling streets of the Christian quarter, Nasser had explained to me that doing these kinds of tours which make the Palestinian presence and situation in Jerusalem visible for him was a question of “to be or not to be.” Manifesting the Palestinian identity of the city through his tours was so closely connected to his own identity as a Palestinian. It resonated with the idea of *sumud*, the Palestinian steadfastness, resilience, or the resistance through being and staying there despite hardship. From interviews and focus groups with Palestinian activists on the topic of *sumud*, Rijke and van Teeffelen (2014, p. 91) conclude that “being samida or samid [steadfast] requires that one does not allow oneself as a Palestinian to be written out of history.” Making sure that the space of the Old City reflected that Palestinianness was Nasser’s way of staying put. Through Nasser’s stories, the cityscape was drawn into his resistance against the Israeli colonization and erasure and into a different world.

Nasser is not alone in his efforts to expose the situation in the Old City of Jerusalem to the broader public. This kind of ‘political’ or ‘alternative’ tourism has a long legacy in Jerusalem and Palestine in general. During and after the first intifada, many foreigners, especially church groups and fact-finding delegations, came to Palestine in solidarity. They wanted to hear from Palestinians what was going on (Ijla, 2014). In 1988, the Palestinian Center for Rapprochement was created, not just to create a dialogue and contact with Israeli activists, but also to deal with the influx of international activists and solidarity visitors.¹⁵⁶ In the 1990ies, after Oslo, the services they provided were professionalized with the creation of the Alternative Tourism Group (ATG). The idea was to reach out to tourists and pilgrims and have them spend time with Palestinians. Therefore, the ATG started the homestay program in

¹⁵⁶ Interview with Majed Nassar, co-founder ATG (Beit Sahour, 25/02/2016), interview with George N. Rishmawi, Executive Director of the Palestinian Center for Reapprochement (Beit Sahour, 29/10/2016).

1997. This format would provide an income to local families as well as allow encounters between tourists and Palestinians, which according to one of the co-founders would lead to solidarity and ‘*human souvenirs*’ when tourists went back home.¹⁵⁷

So tourism as you can understand [...], it is a key... an important thing here, because that’s where people can meet. We cannot travel abroad, but when people come here, they do not just meet historic sites, they meet people from different places and they learn about us in reality, they learn the good things and the bad things.¹⁵⁸

In Palestine, there is a movement toward tourism that sets out from a Palestinian perspective to generate a better understanding of the colonial situation in Palestine. More and more tour operators and individual guides engage in this kind of ‘alternative tourism.’ However, within Palestine, the idea and practices of ‘alternative tourism’ are growing. Many see its potential in terms of economic benefits and resistance. The concept is contested, and there are additional reasons to those mentioned above. Practitioners in Palestine have been describing this form of tourism in various ways as alternative tourism, justice tourism or political tourism. According to Rami Kassis, director of the Alternative Tourism Group in Beit Sahour, Palestine, ‘alternative tourism’ is “all tourism that is not controlled by Israeli companies.” Summing up different elements of alternative tourism, Kassis emphasizes that these forms of tourism share a certain engagement with Palestine. For him, this engagement blurs common distinctions between ‘locals and visitors’ in which tourism becomes almost ‘informal’ (Kassis, 2013).

However, during the interviews, several respondents rejected the term ‘alternative tourism,’ as it evokes the idea of Palestinian tourism that is alternative to the Israeli one. They emphasized that Palestinians are no alternative to nobody, that they are the native inhabitants of the land, or as one guide put it:

Some people don’t like alternative tours, because they say: we are the original, as Palestinians we are not alternative. But it is

¹⁵⁷ Interview with Ayman Abu Azulof, co-founder ATG (Beit Sahour, 25/06/2016).

¹⁵⁸ Interview with George N. Rishmawi, Executive Director of the Palestinian Center for Reapproachment (Beit Sahour, 29/10/2016).

attractive to the internationals. We have to keep it. There's a big discussion about it.¹⁵⁹

I don't have a specific name, but I don't like alternative tourism. I am working with what I've seen and experienced. It is not alternative; I am talking about my own experience.¹⁶⁰

I don't call it alternative. The word alternative is hard to hear. Alternative of what? I like to call it experiential tourism, because sometimes the world alternative is misunderstood. But experiential means that you are looking for an experience. People want to travel responsibly and at the same time have an experience.¹⁶¹

This kind of tourism can also be found under the name Palestinian tours, political tours or community-based tours.

Many of the 'alternative' guides in Jerusalem that I spoke with, started as local experts or go-to-figures in their communities, where international activists or delegations on 'fact-finding missions' would be referred to when interested in learning about the situation.¹⁶² For example, two of the first guides to start political tours in Jerusalem worked at the Palestinian Human Rights Information Center.¹⁶³ In general, the 'alternative' tour guides emphasized the importance of portraying Palestinians as the native population and making the Palestinian culture and heritage visible. In this way, tourism can challenge the occupation. Above all these, individual guides want to give a Palestinian account of both the sites and situation. By focusing more on people instead of sites, this form of tourism is aimed to get the human aspect of the Palestinian message across.¹⁶⁴ Not all of the tour operators have the same approach. Some focus exclusively on the political aspects, while others also focus on the cultural and religious life in Palestine. But all in some way expressed that "you have to come in here by yourself and check that by yourself, and see the

¹⁵⁹ Interview with Daoud El Ghouli, Palestinian activist and guide (Haifa, 21/01/2015).

¹⁶⁰ Interview with Mahmoud Jiddah, guide in Jerusalem (East Jerusalem, 1/03/2016).

¹⁶¹ Interview with Michel Awad, executive director of Siraj Center (Beit Sahour, 29/05/2014).

¹⁶² Interview with Ya'qub Odeh, guide in Jerusalem (23/02/2016, East Jerusalem).

¹⁶³ Interview with Mahmoud Jiddah, guide in Jerusalem (1/03/2016, East Jerusalem) and interview with Ya'qub Odeh, guide in Jerusalem (23/02/2016, East Jerusalem).

¹⁶⁴ Interview with Abu Hassan, guide and owner of Alternative Tours (East Jerusalem, 2/04/2014).

situation with your own eyes,”¹⁶⁵ otherwise people would not believe what is really going on in Palestine.

We are at war, not with weapons but culture, and all aspects of life. The enemy, the occupier is attacking us in history, removing our memory to do away with the link between the land and the men. We are obliged to fight in order to keep our history and heritage against other stories of racism, stories that tell us ‘I’m not like you’ and only see the Jewish while all the others are rubbish. These are the conditions we are fighting in. We fight with culture, civilized heritage, that we know much better than them, that we can work with and counter them.¹⁶⁶

Of course, the situation in Jerusalem is different from that in the West Bank. In Jerusalem, operators of alternative tours face more difficulties as they are often forced to operate without a license. One Palestinian guide told me he wanted to start his own agency but was refused a license by the Israeli Ministry of Tourism. To operate in a legal way, he is now running his tours from a Palestinian owned hotel in East Jerusalem.

Besides individual guides, various organizations have been pressing for a Palestinian perspective in touristic representations.¹⁶⁷ Many of them have articulated their efforts as explicitly political. The organization Grassroots Jerusalem, for example, has developed a political tourist guidebook for the city titled ‘Wujood’ (Arabic for ‘Existence’), as well as a political tour of Jerusalem. The maps created by the organization give a detailed overview of all Palestinian sites, organizations, businesses, services and so forth, of interest to potential tourists and activists in Jerusalem municipality. It provides practical information to tourists who are looking to visit East Jerusalem.

¹⁶⁵ Personal communication, Abu Hassan, guide and owner of Alternative Tours (2/04/2014, East Jerusalem).

¹⁶⁶ Interview with Mahmoud Jiddeh, tour guide and activist (East Jerusalem, 1/03/2016).

¹⁶⁷ I should also mention the study tours provided by Israeli rights organizations such as for example ICAHD, Emek Shaveh and Ir Amin. These do challenge the ongoing occupation and violation of human rights in Jerusalem. In addition, a few Israeli companies are now also providing political tours in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, like The Green Olive Tours or Abraham tours. These have grown less out of solidarity with Palestinians and more out of a commercial interest. The growing demand for seeing the ‘Palestinian side’ has been translated in for example ‘dual narrative’ tours in which both the Palestinian and Israeli perspective are presented. I do believe this is problematic as it politicizes the colonial context and power imbalance between the two communities.

Secondly, it gives context and insight into the overall political situation from a Palestinian perspective. The organization profiles itself as “a platform for Palestinian grassroots mobilization and networking with the goal of contributing to the creation and implementation of a Palestinian-led long-term strategy for al-Quds (Jerusalem)” (Grassroots Jerusalem, 2020). By working with the local communities, Grassroots Jerusalem maps parts of the city, and also collects oral histories about the various Palestinian Neighborhoods in Jerusalem. This way, they try to visualize the effect of the occupation on the daily lives of the Palestinian Jerusalemites, but they also want to highlight the specific unique identity and stories of each neighborhood (Swanson, 2016, pp. 131–132).

Another organization that is trying to create a Palestinian form of tourism in Jerusalem is the Jerusalem Tourism Cluster (JTC). In the last section of the chapter, I will go into more detail on the making of the “experiential tourism” in Jerusalem by examining their work. I will especially highlight how the organization is trying to intervene in the urban landscape of Jerusalem through the deployment of particular spatial practices that attempt to reorder the city as a Palestinian destination.

4.3.2. Experiential tourism of the Jerusalem Tourism Cluster

The Jerusalem Tourism Cluster (JTC) is one of the organizations that is engaged in promoting this kind of engaged tourism that centralizes Palestinian culture, and Jerusalemite culture more precisely, in the creation of touristic products. The Jerusalem Tourism Cluster is an umbrella organization that is concerned with the development of tourism in Jerusalem specifically. They started operating in 2009, aiming to bring together partners from the tourism industry and socio-cultural organizations, in order to create new touristic products that represent Jerusalem and its Palestinian inhabitants, in a – for them – accurate way. The Jerusalem Tourism Cluster presents itself as a nonprofit network organization that connects various players that are involved in the Jerusalem tourism industry. Its aim is threefold: first, to network between relevant sectors that are linked to tourism and enhance the competitiveness of the Palestinian tourism sector in Jerusalem. Second, to develop a form of community-based tourism from which local people can benefit. And third, to produce tourism that is distinctly Palestinian and highlights the Palestinian identity of Jerusalem. Its vision stipulates the

necessity to create distinct and competitive Palestinian tourism products that are closely linked to civil society (Jerusalem Tourism Conference, 2015).

The JTC is also part of the Network for Experiential Palestinian Tourism Organizations (NEPTO).¹⁶⁸ The network aims to consolidate a wider effort undertaken by various Palestinian organizations to promote ‘experiential’ tourism in Palestine. They believe that...

The Palestinian Tourism Industry is at a turning point. On one hand, there is a great potential for improvement, however, the challenge of positioning and branding the industry remains in the shadow of neighboring competition, which seems to be selling and promoting the same sites and packages. [...] The effect of this effort goes beyond the creation and introduction of an attractive and a diverse Palestinian product which is cultural in nature and income and employment generating in design. The strategy to create a reciprocal benefit for the local communities, where the tourism programs and packages take place, helps to reduce the alienation that exists with the pillar resources of these initiatives. Such resources include culture, heritage, architectural heritage, archeological sites and landscape. (NEPTO, 2018).

According to one of its founding members, Ra’ed Saadeh, experiential tourism is distinct from alternative or an explicitly political form of tourism, rather it focuses on the local communities as the basis for all their activities and communications. It therefore applies to all kinds of tourism, also pilgrimages (Saadeh, 2012). Other members of NEPTO define experiential tourism in a similar way, highlighting the importance of the unique experience that Palestinian identity could bring to tourists.

It’s about the identity of the country that you visit. It’s about the culture, the food, the language, the customs, everything. This is the identity.¹⁶⁹

One of the main problems the JTC tries to address is one-sided and mostly Israeli-dominated tourism. To change this, the JTC started developing new touristic instruments that could help change tourism in the city, in such a way

¹⁶⁸ NEPTO’s members are Masar Ibrahim al Khalil, Center for Cultural Heritage Preservation, BTA, Palestine Wildlife Society, PACE, Jerusalem Tourism Cluster, the Environmental Education Center, Alternative Tourism Group, AECHF, Rozana Association, Riwaq, Siraj, Joint Advocacy Initiative, Hebron Rehabilitation Committee, Holy Land Trust and Sunbula, Hanthalah Cultural Centre.

¹⁶⁹ Interview with Michel Awad, Executive Director, Siraj Center (Beit Sahour, 29/05/2014).

that the Palestinian population could benefit from it. In their effort to do so, they brought into life objects and narratives that not only undermine the Israeli hegemony, but aim to reorder the social touristic reality in Jerusalem and beyond. They are not the only ones working toward this reordering. Other organizations have a similar approach (e.g. the Alternative Tourism Group, Visit Palestine). The touristic reordering of Jerusalem is therefore a contingent process in which different actors strive toward a similar goal. Through the touristic practices and within tourist products, new representations and truths about Palestine and Palestinians are enacted.

There is no real tourism in Jerusalem, only pilgrims. Essentially, there are not enough activities to attract people. The packages don't reflect diversity and Jerusalem is not a destination but a station [on the touristic routes].¹⁷⁰

To realize this vision, JTC has produced several strategies that are directed toward the visualization and making consumable of the Palestinian and more specifically the Jerusalemite culture and identity.

Producing a Palestinian Touristic Infrastructure in East Jerusalem

Given the Israeli control over much of the tourism infrastructure and public spaces in Jerusalem, it is very difficult for Palestinians to build hotels, restaurants or other infrastructure to develop the city in their image (Hever & Hackbarth, 2014). The Israeli authorities rarely grant building permits to Palestinians. Consequently, one of the spheres in which the JTC tries to maneuver around these restrictions is what they call “tourism’s soft infrastructure.” This mainly covers touristic services, products, and activities, but also branding the city as a Palestinian destination.¹⁷¹ The cluster does so in different ways. One of their initiatives is the website www.enjoyjerusalem.com and an accompanying mobile application. This medium brings Palestinian businesses and potentially interesting sites under the tourist’s attention. The website mentions both Christian and Muslim sites in the Old City, but omits the Jewish ones. This, according to the director, is

¹⁷⁰ Personal communication, Anan Gaith, JTC executive director during the JCT conference preparatory meeting, (East Jerusalem, 15.05.2015).

¹⁷¹ Personal communication, JTC executive director, East Jerusalem (5.02.2015).

still too sensitive in Palestinian midst. Promoting guides through the website is also difficult. Many Palestinian guides, especially those doing political tours, operate without an Israeli license and would get in trouble by being posted as a guide on the web.¹⁷² The guides that are currently posted on the website are licensed. However, they are willing to give the Palestinian perspective in their tours and do speak out on political issues. Alternatively, the cluster is thinking about other strategies to include guides who are not licensed and protect them from potential prosecution. By calling them society guides rather than tour guides they believe that the license issue can be circumvented.¹⁷³

Another part of this soft infrastructure is the future daily tours JTC plans to organize, and also the electronic concierge, or touristic booth (figure 4.5). The booth offers tourist information about sites of interest, restaurants and bars in East Jerusalem and so on. Together with brochures, the booth is an alternative to Israeli brochures and maps that can often be found in Palestinian hotels, by lack of other information supplies. These are all instruments to bring touristically neglected Palestinian neighborhoods outside the Old City under the tourist's attention. The maps therefore clearly visualize the connection between the Old City and the rest of East Jerusalem. This touristic booth is an alternative to a

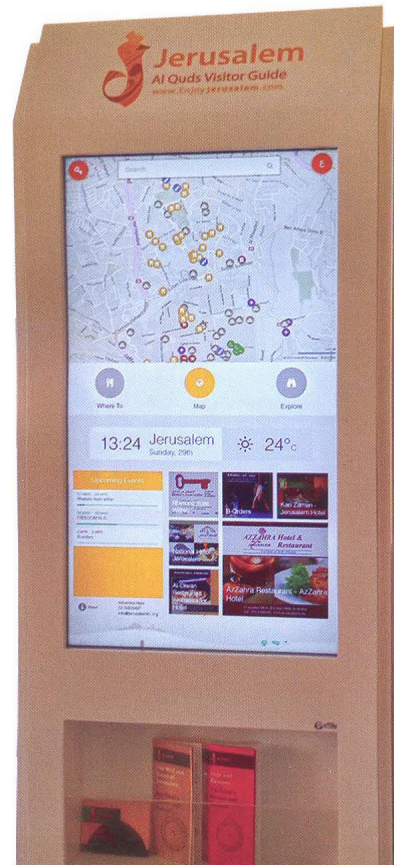


Figure 4.5: Tourism booth or electronic concierge of the JTC, on which tourist can discover East Jerusalem and find touristic facilities provided by Palestinians (courtesy of JTC).

¹⁷² Interview with Anan Gaith, JTC executive director, East Jerusalem (5.02.2015).

¹⁷³ Interview with Anan Gaith, former JTC Executive Director, via Facebook call (17.01.2019).

‘brick and mortar’ Palestinian tourist information center in the Old City of Jerusalem. However, the project could not be initiated due to a lack of funding and the need for permits from the Israeli municipality. Nonetheless, JTC’s partner the Tourism and Arts Jerusalem Cluster (TAJ).¹⁷⁴ aims to further expand the touristic booths, and also place them in shops where they will reach a more diverse public than in the Palestinian hotels.¹⁷⁵ The project started in 2015, and by January 2019 there were 16 booths spread over the city in various hotels, restaurants, and cultural venues.¹⁷⁶

In terms of tangible infrastructure, the JTC tries to work in ‘public-private spaces.’ A clear example here is their plan to install explanation tags, digital codes or route indicators on buildings in East Jerusalem. Being required to ask for official Israeli permits to place these tags in public spaces, the JTC is looking for private spaces that are also accessible to the public, such as the facades of shops owned by Palestinians.¹⁷⁷ In this manner, they can make the city intelligible to tourists in a way that defies the settler colonial narrative. The use of public-private space and soft infrastructure as a way to navigate within the settler colonial structures, while avoiding the need to apply for Israeli permits. Another example is the ‘RE/viewing Jerusalem’ art tour developed by the art institute Al Hoash in cooperation with the JTC developed in 2016. This walk is inspired by the global trend of tours that aim to “bring back life, enthusiasm and encouragement to marginalized areas through the use of art” (Al Hoash, 2016). The walk introduces people to forgotten places in and around the Old City of Jerusalem. Artworks and music are displaced in these public-private spaces, and by doing so, the Palestinian presence is manifested and made visible to tourists, both international and domestic, in unexpected and creative ways.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁴ The Tourism and Creative Arts Cluster is a group of enterprises such as hotels, restaurants, souvenir shops, tour operators and tour guides, as well as the creative arts industry. This cluster is set out with the purpose of “enhancing marketability and competitiveness of tourism & Creative Arts Cluster, developing the tourism industry supply chain, acquisition of new technologies, developing product quality, cost reduction, employment of best practices and building a unique touristic location that can compete with international sites abroad” (Palestine Cluster, 2019).

¹⁷⁵ Interview with Bashar, TAJ manager (East Jerusalem, 6.10.2016).

¹⁷⁶ Interview with Anan Gaith, former JTC Executive Director, via Facebook call (17.01.2019).

¹⁷⁷ Interview with Anan Gaith, JTC executive director (East Jerusalem, 5.02.2015).

¹⁷⁸ Participation in Art walk on 21/05/2015.

A very important feature of this strategy is the ‘interpretation center’ in the center of the Old City that opened in December 2018. The JTC sees this as a major step in promoting Palestinian tourism. However, some critique was voiced over the modalities in which Palestinian identity is being presented in the center. The lack of Palestinian flags to clearly refer to the struggles is problematic according to some.

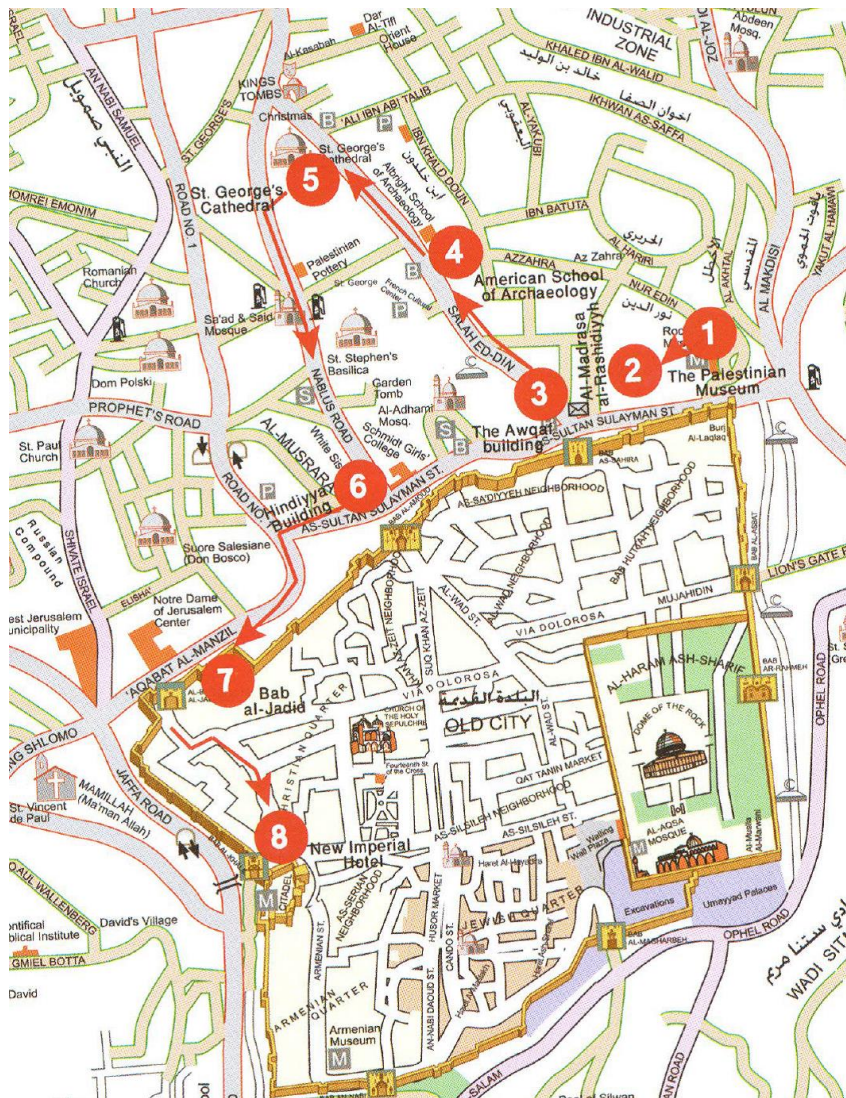


Figure 4.6: Map of the Mosaic Architecture trail leading the tourist into the Palestinian neighborhoods outside the Old City of Jerusalem (courtesy of the JTC). Source: guidebook by Al-Natsheh, Discovering Jerusalem’s secrets: Walking trails through the Old City and beyond. (Jerusalem Tourism Cluster, 2015)

Coproducing identity and culture

The Jerusalem Tourism Cluster greatly values the diversity of Palestinian society, the Old City of Jerusalem in particular. This is also reflected in new products they have developed and proposed to both conventional and ‘alternative’ tour operators. A telling example is a tour of the different communities of the Old City to “show not religious sites but the beauty and diversity of the city” as our guide explained. Normally the JTC does not provide tours, but this one was organized for a group of Palestinian journalists, which I was able to join. The tour did not lead us to the main religious sites such as for example the Holy Sepulcher. Instead, we got to observe it from the roof of the neighboring Salahaddin mosque, where we chatted with the managing lady. Our group also met with people from the Assyrian and African community and passed by the Afghan and Indian community centers as we strolled through the alleys of the Old City. Continuing the tour, we met a family whose house was gradually being taken over by Jewish settlers room by room. The format of the tour allowed the tourists to interact and get to know the diverse communities and people living in the Old City and experience the complexities of their everyday lives, entrenched in politics. Consequently, the tour also offered a platform for people that are otherwise bypassed and not heard in the mainstream touristic itineraries. According to the JTC, this kind of firsthand information from the local inhabitants is vital to avoid propaganda on tours. On the one hand, tourists then get to know the lived realities in the city, on the other, it makes the tours more embedded in the community.¹⁷⁹

These encounters gave us impressions of the heterogeneous Palestinian communities living in the Old City. They allowed people to represent themselves and for the tourist to get a more nuanced understanding. In displaying diversity as a central characteristic of Palestinian identity and culture in Jerusalem, the JTC wants to break with the representation of Palestinians as only Muslims or Christians. At the same time, this diversity is key to the touristic potential of Jerusalem, as the director explained: “this is a very unique mix and this can be marketed as the city of everyone.”¹⁸⁰ However, he also recognizes the risk in capitalizing on this representation; as

¹⁷⁹ Interview with Raed Sa’adeh, Chairman JTC, (East Jerusalem, 10.02.2015), also confirmed in interview with Mahmoud Abu Eid, Tour guide on the JTC directory board (East Jerusalem, 04.02.2015).

¹⁸⁰ Interview with Anan Gaith, JTC executive director (East Jerusalem, 5.02.2015).

“the Israelis can use this as ok there is not any Palestinian here, you are all from small communities, here and there, which is not the original truth.”¹⁸¹ Therefore, they try to emphasize the connectedness of these communities and their common identity as Palestinians, as was done on the tour.

Other features designed by the JTC have a similar purpose. A new guide book, recently published in both Arabic and English, leads tourists along new paths in the Old City. The tours focus on themes such as woman’s architecture, Sufi institutions and religious schools, mosaics or the Hammam Al Ayn, which was closed down by the Israeli authorities. By means of regulation, destruction or archeological fraud, Israel has deprived Palestinian Jerusalemites of much of their heritage (Abu El-Haj, 1998). The JTC’s routes lead tourists away from the beaten path in the Old City and offer new ways of knowing the city that correspond with how the JTC wants Palestinians in Jerusalem to be experienced by tourists: as a diverse and open society. Consequently, they shed new light on the remaining, often neglected sites in the city from a different (woman, Sufi, diversity...) perspective. In the process of doing so, new elements are drawn in that reshape Palestinian identity and culture, in the way that it is presented to tourists.

For the JTC, the importance of culture in tourism cannot be underestimated. As one of the respondents explained: “cultural tourism is the only option to compete with the Israeli’s. I can sell culture, they can’t sell my culture. They try to take falafel and hummus but still it’s my culture.” He also emphasized that Palestinians “need to work in developing and showing our culture for national reasons.”¹⁸² The creation of new tourist products thus becomes intertwined with Palestinian political aspirations. An example here is the folkloric show that the JTC is developing. They see it as a way to represent Palestinian culture in their own correct way, as opposed to Israelis who have also created shows in which Dabké, a traditional Palestinian dance, is performed. Concerning this show, the respondent said that:

The Israelis [...] used to show the Palestinians as these silly stupid people. We used to look very very bad, the Arabic culture. They do not ignore us, they put us in their show, but they put us wearing these gowns and looking very funny, like animals. We are people

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Personal communication, Anan Gaith, former JTC Executive Director, via Facebook call (17.01.2019).

that were here 6,000 years, we have very big deep culture. We know how to reflect it and we are going to reflect it in this show.¹⁸³

This show is a way to make tourists acquainted with the Dabké, but it aims to do much more. It should prove to be a platform on which Palestinians can reclaim their culture, present it in a decolonized way and not in a performance of culture in which the lens of the colonizer is imposed. The plans have been lingering. There were a few initiatives, but they never resulted in actual shows. Nevertheless, the JTC remains convinced that the shows could potentially be a touristic success and wants to push this forward in the future.¹⁸⁴ The question remains how the JTC or its partners will actually develop these shows, and how this will be perceived by the Jerusalem public. Gotham warns that these kinds of spectacles absorb cultural activities in a process of commodification, in which desirable experiences for tourists are produced. He points to a shift in which the consumption of these practices takes precedence over the production and that this can lead to cultural banalization (Gotham, 2002).

4.4. Conclusion

Jerusalem has been rearticulated as a Jewish destination in parallel with the physical transformation of the landscape to a settler city. Tourism became entangled in this ongoing production process that as Veracini (2015a, p. 107) is reaffirming settler sovereignty by making the native welcome impossible. The spatial reordering of the city ranges from representations on maps to tours, the narratives of guides, establishment of parks and a cable car, but also repressive mechanisms such as the control of guides' narratives. This process is not confined to the practices of the Israeli municipality, state-run organizations and private settler organizations. This is a messy process. Settler relationality being reproduced by Palestinians as well, it is a way to accumulate wealth through the colonial value system. Moreover, it is a global process in which the tourism industry, as well as tourists themselves, become complicit (willingly or not) in the reordering of Jerusalem. The making of tourism offers a window on how value is both produces and mobilized through

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

the physical transformation of places and landscapes, the city in the settler colony.

Within the settler colony participation of Indigenous people in the market economy is widely based on their domination and comes at the cost of their political status as Indigenous. Moreover, their sovereignty is often further eroded as their identity becomes commodified and is reduced to stereotypes that essentially serve the settler project. Their participation would eventually result in “grotesque performances that reproduce colonial domination” (Vimalassery, 2013). In addition, Lefebvre’s concerns about people’s access to the production of space also resonate here. If a people claiming a reality but being unable to produce their own space, they risk being reduced to what Lefebvre (1991, p. 53) calls the “level of folklore” to eventually fade out of reality. Determining the spaces and world at large in which one lives on one’s own terms or collectively is part of one’s self-determination, or as Margeret Kohn and Keally McBride (2011, p. 18) have articulated, it is the ability and “the freedom to make a world, a polity, not merely respond to the world as it is.”

The case study of the Jerusalem Tourism Cluster shows us that touristic elements that coproduce affective relations of identity and community can be put to work in an anti-colonial project. As such, tourism can take people “into another world,”¹⁸⁵ dissolving colonially constructed categories as they create new touristic products that integrate Palestinian narratives and lived realities. At the same time, these products highlight particular aspects of Palestinian life and reshape the way identity is perceived and thought of. The JTC capitalized on the diversity and cultural richness of the city to rebrand it. But there is more at stake, the narratives they display are not just competing with the Israeli narratives in the touristic arena which Jerusalem has become. They uncover the power relations that are at stake in touristic places and activities. This kind of alternative tourism opens the door for a different kind of relationality, it can contribute to a decolonized knowledge production. At the same time, tourism practices enact this knowledge about Jerusalem and its inhabitants, and hence alter the social reality in which tourism takes place. However, these commercial practices remain entangled in capitalists relations. The question that lingers is how the alienation, that inevitably occurs in the production of

¹⁸⁵ Interview with Raed Sa’adeh, Chairman JTC (East Jerusalem, 10.02.2015).

these new spaces, works to undermine the decolonial potential of these forms of tourism.

CHAPTER 5: WALKING WATAN: HIKING, AFFECT AND RESISTANCE IN THE WEST BANK

The fight against this collapse of imagination and engagement may be as important as the battles for political freedom, because only by recuperating a sense of inherent power can we begin to resist both oppressions and the erosion of the vital body in action.
(Solnit, 2004)

Walker, your footprints are the path, and nothing more; walker, there is no path, the path is made by walking. – Antonio Machado

What's the soul of the '47, sham put the soul in the 47, no agent no guarantee, no landlord on your back, no country no form, back to the peasants to the falaheen born.
– 47soul¹⁸⁶

5.1. A note on walking in the West Bank

It was quite a warm and sunny day in February, when I went for a hike with Sahari, the Bedouin desert ecotourism company of the Hamadin family. In Ramallah, I met up with one of the other hikers to take a service to Jericho. He was a young guy from Nablus, who was very passionate about hiking and other outdoor activities. The driver dropped us on the emergency lane on route

¹⁸⁶ Palestinians would often bring a portable radio or mp3 player on the hike as I recalled from one of the hikes. I recall this scene from my notes on the hike to Kaur, November 2016: “As soon as we started walking, some of the guys played songs with a boom box they were carrying. There were some old Arabic songs that everybody seemed to know but also new ones. When the song ‘intro to shamrock’ by 47soul was played, everybody was singing along both in Arabic and English.”

1 as there was no access road to the sea-level community¹⁸⁷ where the meeting point was. We stopped at a manmade gap in the rocks that was shielding the road from the valley below and climbed over the guardrail to walk down to the village. The Israeli highway literally bypassed them. There was no decent access point for the Bedouin to get onto the road one except from driving on a dirt road that also crossed the dried-up bedding of a small stream in the Wadi (canyon).

Ahmad welcomed us to the community and invited us to have a seat and coffee, of course, in a large open tent at the entrance of the village. More hikers arrived. Before we set off for our hike, our guide Ahmad, explained the group that the community has about 70 people, all from the Hamadin family. They were Jahalin Bedouins. The community was part of the Jahalin tribe originally from around Be'er Sheva in the Nakab. After forced displacement in 1948, the community continued their seasonal lifestyle in the Yatta area around Hebron, despite the shrinking lands and limitations to access of movement (Heneiti, 2016, p. 52). In 1967, the Israeli Occupation further restricted the seasonal lifestyle of the Bedouin, and in 1980 the community settled down in their current location 'Sateh El Bahar' in Wadi Qteef while still moving to the Ramallah area during summer. Their situation was precarious, not only had the Israeli settler project deprived them of their ancestral grazing lands, it now also aimed to confine and disconnect them from the rest of the West Bank by means of infrastructure. He also said that they started their company Sahari as a way to make a living and sustain the community that was threatened with demolition orders. As we started our hike by heading west, we walked past the structures that were threatened by demolition. Tents, cabins, and corral for sheep and goats were not just people's homes and livelihoods. Displacement would not just transfer this infrastructure to another town a few kilometers further, it would transform the community by forcing it into a different lifestyle, away from their pastoral habits.

A few minutes outside the village, we halted at a high point where we could clearly see the neighboring settlement of Mitspe Yeriho on the hilltop on the other side of road 1 toward the Dead Sea. The settlement was looking down at us, and seemed to be able to trace our every movement. While we paused, our guide explained that the sea-level community used to be located at this

¹⁸⁷ A Bedouin community that is located on route 1 towards the Dead Sea, right where there is a mark and monument to indicate the sea level.

very location, but that when the settlement was built, the Israeli army forced them to move east, to their current location.

We continued the upward hike. Here and there, we found rocks with white and green stripes indicating the road. When I asked Ahmed who had put them here, he replied that Israelis had marked the trail already in the 1970ies. Seeing these signs so deep inside the West Bank stunned me. It made me realize how profoundly entangled Israeli and Palestinian life was. I had gotten used to the most visible aspects of the occupation: the wall, the checkpoints and the settlements that were spread all over the West Bank. In their mere appearance, they already show the violence they embody. But sometimes, one stone can tell you more than all these walls of concrete. These banal rocks with a bit of green and white paint on them opened my eyes to understand how a military occupation became embodied in leisure infrastructure and profound normality with which Palestinian land was annexed through these rocks. It was their sheer banality that struck me most. Israeli hikers would probably not even notice they are in occupied territory, let alone Palestine. Similarly, metal rungs and ladders were installed by the Israeli Natural Reserves Authority to facilitate our navigation, where the path forced us to climb or descend the steep slopes of the narrow canyon. And the path itself which leads from East Jerusalem to Kibbutz Almog and Kalya near the Dead Sea, and invites people to walk its way. The rocks, the handles, and the path had become accomplices in the annexation of this canyon.

After about an hour we reached the summit and got to enjoy the beautiful view over the maze of wadis that were meandering toward the Dead Sea. We stopped to rest and take some pictures of the scenery. As we were watching another group of hikers passed beneath us in the next Wadi into Wadi Mukalak. The guide said they were probably coming from Ma'ale Adumin, the major Israeli settlement East of Jerusalem. We took a long break and continued our journey with no other hikers in sight, only flocks of goat and sheep. In an interview later, Ahmad explained that we lingered at that spot



Figure 5.1: climbing up the slopes of Wadi Mukalak. The white and green marks indicate that path. Higher up, to the right of the first hiker, the iron support handles peek out of the rocks. (photo by Dorien Vanden Boer)

because he did not want us to encounter that other group. He'd rather avoid confrontations with Israeli settlers or tourists for that matter, so we waited until they were out of sight. Ahmed complained that "they [Israelis] consider it as a military zone for us. At the same time, it is a tourist site for themselves."¹⁸⁸ One of the arguments given by the Israeli civil administration for the community's eviction order is that the community is located in a closed military zone, which therefore poses a danger to the lives of the Bedouin. However, according to the members of the community, the borders of the military zone only start about 15 kilometers south of their location. And while the hikers walked by the village, the discriminatory logic of the civil authority in the West Bank resonated with their every step. The Hamadin family found themselves squeezed into a strange space of restrictive military regulations intersecting with tourism movements and activities.

5.2. Walking, affect and the material world

The experience of hiking with Sahari resonated with what Reja Shehadah, Palestinian author and hiker, has written in his book 'Palestinian Walks: notes on a vanishing landscape':

As our Palestinian world shrinks, that of the Israelis expands with more settlements being built, destroying forever the wadis and cliffs, flattening hills and transforming the precious land which many Palestinians will never know. (Shehadeh, 2007, p. xvii).

The Palestinian landscape of the West Bank has been profoundly transformed through the building of settlements, the creation of nature reserves, and military zones. It has become a patchwork of various forms of control of which these trail markers, paths, and signs were all part of. They marked the wadi as a touristic leisure space for Israelis. They normalized this part of area C as an integral part of the Israeli territory. What does it mean for Palestinians to walk in a landscape that is increasingly being carved out as a space for Israeli recreation and tourism? What are the implications of walking in a space where movement is greatly restricted and your presence read as a potential danger that you linger on your path as to avoid the confrontation with those that

¹⁸⁸ Interview with Ahmed Hamadin, (Sea-level community, 29.02.2016).

dominate the land? With these restrictions of space and mobility, moving through space, walking and having fun become subversive activities for Palestinians, whether intended or not. Can hiking be considered subversive spatial tactic, such as poaching or fence jumping of the Aborigines in Australia (Byrne, 2010). Can it be a way to circumvents the spatial regimes produced by the settler colonial project that ontologically codify Palestinians, much like African Americans in the US as in the nowhere, the detour, the backyard? Their movement is almost automatically suspicious, sanctioned and exceptionalized (Cervenak, 2014, p. 9).

In this chapter, I question what happens when Palestinians go out for a leisurely hike in the West Bank countryside. Together with Palestinian hikers, I embarked on a ramble, trying to understand the political implications of hiking in a settler colony. Wandering around with my fellow walkers I was introduced to the Palestine they themselves were discovering and simultaneously creating on the way. On the hikes hills, valleys and olive trees became imbued with nostalgia, aspirations, hope and above all a determination to keep the Palestinian identity of these places alive.¹⁸⁹ In what follows I will position the practice of hiking in a settler colony to be able to understand the implication of Palestinian leisure in the countryside. Next, the particularities of Palestinian hikes and their enabling character in generating knowledge about the land are introduced. Then the hikers speak and illustrate how the encounters with the landscape and its material features give rise to new feelings, experiences, and knowledge. In doing so they assemble new geographies and in fact a new reality, Palestine as enjoyable ‘Watan’ (homeland) in which leisurely activities such as hiking are possible

By taking hiking as the topic of this last chapter, I permit myself to deviate a little from the touristic path I have been following through this dissertation. Hiking is often considered a leisure activity and not always a form of tourism *stricto sensu*, there are many overlaps which make it worth examining them in the context of this dissertation. While these Palestinian walkers did not refer to themselves as tourists, during the trips much repertoire of touristic performances (Franklin, 2003, pp. 14–15) was recuperated: a guide, bus, visiting the highlights of a place, buying souvenirs, and so forth. Moreover,

¹⁸⁹ In more touristic hikes Palestine was presented from a different side, its natural and cultural diversity celebrated and put in sharp contrast against the hegemonic images of violence and terror many tourists might have picked up at home or in Israel.

there are more similarities in their capacity to make worlds and assembling spaces as I will elaborate on. Therefore, I will draw the analogies from tourism theory into the hiking practices to understand how space, objects, and reality are performed here and consequently what is politically at stake.¹⁹⁰ By tracing connections in space between the human and non-human, discourses and the material world, I aim to understand what is constituted, enacted and entangled in the practice of Palestinians hiking. Lastly, my focus on hiking is also informed by recent development in Palestine. In 2014, National Geographic Traveler catapulted the West Bank to the world stage as a destination for hiking. The magazine elected the Masar Ibrahim (Abraham Path), a trail in the West Bank, as the best new hiking path in the world. The path is lauded for its sceneries, hospitality and the “sense of immersion is what makes the Abraham Path project so extraordinary— it gives travelers the chance to shape their own perspective.” The National Geographic ranking introduced Palestine to the world as a credible hiking destination that was now competing with trails leading adventurers to Caribbean volcanoes or the Himalayan mountains (“10 of the best new trails,” 2014). During organized hikes on the Abraham Path, I also encountered many Palestinians participating besides many foreigners (tourists and people working in Palestine).

The aspect of presencing makes hiking interesting on an ontological level. It can be considered a technology that allows the body in motion to be positioned into space. By manifesting its presence and engaging in encounters, the body becomes entangled in practices of making of space and knowledge simultaneously. Several authors have engaged with hiking from this perspective, they provide insight on what walking is and how it works. Ingold and Vergunst start from the premise that walking is an inherently social activity. From this perspective, they contend that “social relations, [...] are not enacted in situ but are paced out along the ground” (Ingold & Vergunst, 2008, p. 1). Walking is a relational practice that allows us to make new connections from which knowledge can emerge. Ingold (2010) argues that by walking around we inscribe or imprint ourselves in a landscape, etching our own stories step by step (Ingold, 2010, p. s127). Similarly, Edensor understands walking as an embodied practice that (re)produces and (re)interprets space and place; it is a medium that confers meaning to the self, the social and the natural

¹⁹⁰ For literature on how tourist places are performed by tourists focusing on how production and consumption are hybrid and mutually constituting processes see Edensor, 2000a; J., Haldrup, Larsen, & Urry, 2004.

environment through movement. It transforms the landscape by rearticulating the relation between the pedestrian and place by bringing together the sensual experience of space, and the symbolic significance attributed to the landscape (Edensor, 2000b, p. 82). Both authors draw attention to the centrality of the body and the embodiment that takes place during the hiking experience. In the process of walking, we can claim that Palestine becomes visible, tangible, tasteable, smellable, and might even challenge people's sense of equilibrium. Hikers not just leave their imprint upon the landscape, but the landscape also rubs off on their bodies, it contaminates them, becomes part of them in a sensory way.

Navaro-Yashin (2012, p. 18) articulates well that what occurs: “[...]the environment exerts a force on human beings in its own right, or that there is something in space, in material objects, or in the environment that exceeds, or goes further and beyond the human imagination, but that produces an affect that may be experienced by human beings all the same[...].” This implies that affect needs to be understood relationally, together with knowledge, and as the result of the encounters of the physical body in the world and not just reserved to the interiority of the hiker's body. With affect, I do not just want to point at emotions that are triggered during the hike, but rather “a different kind of intelligence about the world.” Indeed, Thrift (2008, p. 175) understands affect “as a form of thinking, often indirect and nonreflective true, but thinking all the same. And, similarly, all manner of the spaces which they generate must be thought of in the same way, as means of thinking, and as thought in action.” Affect needs to be understood relationally, together with knowledge and as the result of the encounters of the physical body in the world. It is not merely an emotional reaction but a way of making sense of the world and understanding and knowing it. The objective of this chapter is to understand how walking, space and knowledge are mutually constituted. More particularly, we want to how the connections made by hiking and the knowledge that emerges from it are transformative to what is politically at stake for Palestinians, in the context of Israeli settler colonialism.

5.3. Methodological reflection on ‘hiking’

What do we talk about when talking about hiking in Palestine? During the interviews, I talked about hiking. However, the word ‘hiking’ often got lost in translation. My research assistant pointed out that in fact there is no literal translation for ‘hiking.’ Words used in Arabic often shed its very Western connotation: the idea of walking vigorously for the purpose of walking. Most of the respondents would use the word ‘shatha’ (شطحة) which means ‘to ramble’ in the sense of ‘going off your normal path.’ A woman that organizes hikes explained what hiking means: “We actually translated Shatha as rambling, rambling rather than hiking, because hiking is an American word, which I really don’t know what it means. But rambling is walking without a sense of direction, you just walk in nature, without any objective, you are not trying to get from point A to point B in a very... you just ramble. I see your point yes, it’s very loaded, especially within settler colonialism, because hiking played an important role in charting territory for colonizers all over the world, particularly the Zionists.”¹⁹¹ Another word that was frequently used is ‘tijwal’ (تجوال) meaning ‘wandering around.’ There was also mention of ‘masar’ (مسار) or ‘the path’ and ‘imshi,’ which means ‘to walk.’ In turn, ‘masar mashi’ (مسار مشي) means ‘the path we walk on’ or ‘the walking path.’

Looking beyond the interviews, a specific language used in books can also shed a light on the meaning of walking in Palestine. A booklet for Palestinian Scouts published in 1933 expands on ‘the trip’ or ‘al-rihla’ and explains that the “the scout must roam (yatajawwal) his country and explore its plains and hills, mountains and valleys, its pastures and field” (Nashashibi, 1933 as cited in Degani, 2014, p. 15). In his celebrated book *Palestinian walks*, author Reja Shehadeh uses the word ‘Sarha’ to speak about the walks he embarked on. He translates ‘Sarha’ as “to roam freely, without restraint, it is about walking to nourish the soul and rejuvenate” (Shehadeh, 2007). Alternatively, in the guidebook *Walking Palestine*, Szepesi refers to ‘Shammet hawa,’ as to what Palestinians say when they go outdoors, literally meaning sniffing in fresh air (Szepesi, 2012, p. 21).

All these words and meanings can be used when talking about walking in Palestine and are evidence of a rich culture of walking in nature that might not

¹⁹¹ Interview S. B., co-foudner of the Shatha, (29/11/2016, Birzeit).

be termed hiking as such. Indeed, none of these words have the exact same connotation as ‘hiking’ does in English. In conversations in English, respondents would often say ‘going on tijwal’ with its specific nuance, rather than ‘going on a hike.’ These remarks confronted me with the fact that the concept of ‘hiking’ is in fact culturally embedded in the practice of European and North American walkers that go to walk for the sake of walking. It invokes images of backpacks, boots, hiking poles and so on. During an interview, Hazem, a Palestinian hiking guide, pointed me to the difference between hiking with Palestinians and hiking with foreigners:

“There is local and international. You need to separate when you are explaining about these topics. Because for the local taking them [on a hike], that is very political. For the internationals, no, it is different. Internationals want to have fun, to learn or to see. It is still political, but not any kind of resistance. Still political, but educational. They come and see. We call it facts finding.”¹⁹²“There is local and international. You need to separate when you are explaining about these topics. Because for the local taking them [on a hike], that is very political. For the internationals, no, it is different. Internationals want to have fun, to learn or to see. It is still political, but not any kind of resistance. Still political, but educational. They come and see. We call it facts finding.”¹⁹³

The practice of walking that can be found in Israeli, in Hebrew ‘tiyul,’ is much closer to the actual meaning of ‘hiking’ and also originates from the European and American context (Ben-David, 1997). It is imbued with meaning from a specific context often closely connected to nationalistic and (settler) colonial practices. The Palestinian ‘tijwal’ should not be conflated with Western hiking practice as it has its own characteristics and dynamics (as will be further detailed below). Tijwal should not be understood as ‘walking’ or ‘hiking,’ but as a practice that is formed by and embedded in the socio-political context of Palestine. It is therefore as closely linked to the notion of leisure as it is to resistance. One of the hikers pointed me to the political relevance of the use of the word ‘tijwal.’ Palestinians call the curfew imposed by the Israeli military ‘Mana’ tajawol’ (منع تجول) or the prohibition to roam around freely. Doing ‘tijwal’ was what he called ‘a political thing’¹⁹⁴. This word indicates a

¹⁹² Interview with, Hazem Bannoura, hiking guide (Bethlehem 6/09/2016)

¹⁹³ Interview with, Hazem Bannoura, hiking guide (Bethlehem 6/09/2016)

¹⁹⁴ Interview with Y. N. and S., organizers hikes (Ramallah, 22/11/ 2016)

practice aimed at doing exactly the opposite of what the Israelis military occupation is trying to enforce.

Some of the hikers I interviewed were indeed inspired to go on hikes because of their experiences in Europe or the US. However, in Palestine hiking is not just a practice that is imported from the West or introduced by Israelis walking. Other hikers nostalgically told me that walking the land was a natural thing to do for Palestinians, something that their ancestors, who had all been farmers, used to do on a daily basis but had now fallen into desuetude due to subsequent occupations. Throughout the hikes this story often surfaced. The walker seemed to tread in the footsteps of the iconic Palestinian farmer, in the sense that now the relation with the land was more and more defined by a temporally passing through. Connecting to the land no longer materialized through plowing and sowing, that has sculpted the landscape into its characteristic terraced form, but through new rituals that were constituted during the walks, that made these walks Palestinian and eventually made Palestine in the image of the walkers.

By going on hikes with two Palestinian hiking groups and doing interviews with their hikers, I try to understand what a leisure practice as hiking can mean in term of resisting the Israeli settler project. Hiking could be conceptualized a form of domestic tourism, especially because in practice it was often accompanied by visits to villages and heritage sites, while also consuming in the local stores. Nevertheless, I prefer to call it a leisure activity, as to respect the definition given to me by the hikers themselves. They did not consider hiking as tourism, because they did not want to be considered as tourists in their own country and visiting these villages. They did not consider themselves strangers, but instead guests discovering the nooks and crannies of their own country, while showing solidarity with the people that live there.

5.4. Walking in a settler colony

In the context of the ongoing Israeli occupation of the West Bank, there are myriad of reasons why hiking and rambling are not associated with Palestinians in the first place, neither by Israeli nor Palestinians. The severe restrictions imposed by the Israeli occupation, the shrinking Palestinian territory, and settler violence have made it difficult and dangerous to roam

around in the countryside. Many of the Palestinian hikers I spoke to recognized that it was because of the Israeli occupation that Palestinians were facing the loss of their 'hiking culture' or their culture to roam around freely in the countryside. With the risk of encountering Israeli military or settlers, it was simply considered too dangerous to go out on foot. On the other hand, meeting Israeli (settler) hikers made me aware of how profoundly the ethos of hiking is entrenched within Israeli society. The mentality of exploring the country on foot has been and is still is very actively promoted by Zionist institutions, a practice that can be traced back to the early days of Zionist colonization. Hiking has become a tool by which Israeli settlers manifest their presence in the West Bank, it is a way of claiming the rural West Bank areas as a leiscapescape for all Israelis and the tourists they bring in. Hiking can therefore be considered part of the hedonistic side of settler colonialism, in which the natural beauty and the tranquility of the landscape can be enjoyed but also commodified by those with the right religion and ethnicity. This increased Israeli leisure mobility in the West Bank went hand in hand with the creeping immobility of Palestinians at all levels.

As I have already pointed out in the introduction, the settler logic of elimination works in two particular ways in relation to space and movement (Wolfe, 2006). It is a structure that has a positive organizing principle that reverberates in spatial reorganization. A settler space is actively constructed by destroying the native space, to replace it with that of the settler. In turn, the settler claims indigeneity to express the bond with the land.¹⁹⁵ Space is where politics take place (Massey, 2005), it is both a medium and an object of conflict (Weizman, 2007). This logic of colonial appropriation of space has been translated spatially upon the land, as Rafi Segal and Eyal Weizman (2003, p. 15) explain:

space becomes the material embodiment of a matrix of forces,
manifested across the landscape in the construction of roads,
hilltop settlements, development towns and garden suburbs.

These schemes resulted in a system of dispossession, enclosure, enclaves, and ghettoization for Palestinians, while maximizing the land at the disposal of Jewish colonists. The relationship between Palestinians and the land is continually being restructured by means of infrastructure and a permit system,

¹⁹⁵ we see this clearly in the Zionist hiking practice and how walking the land creates this bond, and indigenizes the settler.

whose categories and permits structure the Palestinian ability to move. This racialized system mobility has taken different shapes over the years, and ranges from checkpoints, buffer and firing zones, bypass roads, the separation wall, closure, curfews and so on... All of which contributed to what Halper (2000) has defined as the geographic matrix of control installed by Israel, penetrating deeply into the daily life of Palestinians, cementing the population in an increasing state of immobility.

In this context, territory and population are constantly being rearticulated along the line of its logic of elimination and replacement (Alatout, 2006; Wolfe, 2006). This reflects in immobility for Palestinians whose movement through spaces is constantly already considered suspicious by the Israeli occupier and sanctioned as to limit and eventually eliminate it. At the same time, the mobility of Israelis, and Israeli West Bank settlers specifically, is facilitated and enabled as to normalize the space as an exclusive settler space. As such, the flipside of Palestinian immobility is increased Israeli mobility (Petee, 2017, p. 2). Mobility became “a privilege granted to a minority: an entire society was stratified and segmented on the basis of whether one had access, and in what portion, to the ‘privilege’ of freedom of movement” (Hass (2001) in Brown 2004, p. 518). “Those who were granted passes, were often looked upon suspiciously and considered collaborators” to the extent that “freedom of movement other than for work or medical treatment” was no longer seen as a right but as a ‘luxury’ for which it was somehow shameful to struggle (Hass, 2002, p. 13). Moreover, part of the rearticulation of space along the lines of settler colonial difference (W. D. Mignolo, 2000) manifests itself in creating unpredictability for Palestinians on the move, while making the same space knowable and predictable to Israelis. The Israeli subject is thus positioned as the knowing subject in space while the Palestinian are confronted with the illegibility of their own space, they no longer know them (Alcoff, 2007, pp. 85–86). Space is thus being colonized, not just by means of brute force but through the colonization of knowledge.

Against this backdrop, hiking and leisure practices became a way of familiarizing the Jewish immigrant population with the land of Palestine and to normalize their presence by claiming the space as a leisurescape and by extension a national space for them. From the 1920ies onwards, ‘hiking’ or ‘Tiyul’ in Hebrew started to be actively promoted by the Zionist movement and became institutionalized within the settler colonial project in Palestine,

recognizing its transformative potential (S. Katz, 1985; Kesler & Goldstein, 2015; Stein, 2009, p. 337). By hiking, Israeli settlers were not just getting to know the land but were actually walking a new political order into the land, creating connections that made the space intelligible to them and performing the envisioned Jewish state. Moreover, the maps and information gathered on hikes by Israeli youth were of strategic importance in the ethnic cleansing of Palestine (Sela, 2013). While hiking is still a national pass time for Israelis, Palestinians too have found their way back to the countryside for a ramble. In what follows, I will argue that Palestinians engaged in hiking produce a new kind of knowledge and intelligibility about the spaces they traverse in their trips. They counter the settler colonial projects by manifesting themselves as knowing subjects. In this light, Palestinian hikers are not just countering colonialism, they are creating something new in the exercise of their kinetic agency. Hiking implicitly becomes an act of resistance.

5.5. Hiking in Palestine, the revival of a culture of walking

Over the last ten years, hiking has become increasingly popular in the Palestinian West Bank, both as a commercial activity for tourists and as a leisure practice for Palestinians. In the context of tourism, new paths were developed such as the Nativity trail ¹⁹⁶ and the Masar Ibrahim (Abraham Path)¹⁹⁷ and the Sufi trails.¹⁹⁸ These initiatives are catering mostly to a specific niche public of outdoor tourists and foreigners living in Palestine. However, recently there has been a surge in Palestinians going hiking in the countryside in groups. These groups vary in age, gender and number. There are groups for women or men, youth or families, people affiliated with professional organizations or political movements, West Bankers, Jerusalemites, and Palestinians from '48. Some of the groups limit their number to around 15

¹⁹⁶ The trail was created by the Bethlehem 2000 project and sought to link Bethlehem to Nazareth and invite tourists and pilgrims to discover this route on foot.

¹⁹⁷ The initiative was taken by the international organization the 'Abraham path initiative' but the trail itself was developed by Palestinians in 2010.

¹⁹⁸ several hiking paths developed by the Rozanna Association in Bir Zeit The paths lead hikers through the region north of Ramallah, visiting a number of Sufi shrines on along the trail.

hikers, while others try to encourage as many people as possible to join and embark on trips with more than 100 people.

During my research, I focused on several groups that are mostly based in the Ramallah area. I embarked on hikes with Palestinians to understand what it meant for them to hike given the occupation and colonization of their land. Besides hiking, I also performed interviews with the organizers of the hikes and with ordinary hikers. Both groups hiked with embraced diversity, as both men and women, religious or not, were welcomed in the group. The cost of participation was limited to bus ride to the starting point of the hike, which made these hikes much more affordable than their commercial counterparts. Both groups did not restrict their activities to walking as such. Most of the hikes started with a visit to a village, guided by a local inhabitant who welcomed the groups to his or her village.

Although it may seem novel, hiking is not a new practice in Palestine. Like everywhere else in the world, people have been walking for centuries. Farmers would walk to their fields to tend to their crops and walk back to the villages. Bedouin would walk long distances to reach grazing land for their livestock, moving along with the seasons but always returning to the same places. Walking was an essential part of daily life. On special occasions, such as religious festivals, people would undertake longer journeys on foot. Pilgrims, whether Jews, Christians or Muslims, all walked along established routes toward holy shrines and sites (Halabi, 2002; Tamari & Nassar, 2014). In all these instances, walking was rather destination-oriented and a means of transportation, as opposed to walking for the sake of the journey. Well aware of this vibrant history of walking, the hiking groups I researched considered themselves as revivers of a culture that had been lost under the subsequent colonizers in Palestine.

Hiking is not new to the Palestinian society, but in the past, it wasn't called "hiking." People were farmers and simple and they used to go picnics in the mountains. This shape of organization is recent, but all people, when things were safer, used to go to the mountains regularly, and they had a natural relationship with the land and there is simplicity and spontaneity. When we were kids sometimes we used to go on donkeys. [...] Things were simple and natural then, now with the occupation, people are afraid of

going into the mountains, even the landowners. This means that now we should have organized hiking groups.¹⁹⁹

The most important achievement the *tijwal* [trip] had, is that it broke the idea that we cannot move, or that there is nothing worth visiting.... Sometimes it sounds as if it is normal, but in the Palestinian context, it is a very important thing. A 100 year heritage of not moving.²⁰⁰

We don't like to walk alone, we don't like to walk in empty space, we don't like to walk in the night, we are scared to do anything outside our bubble. This is a normal reaction from a normal person, who is living under this [occupation], in these circumstances. But in the end, if we do...try we can break the ice.²⁰¹

These hikers felt that breaking the mental barriers, cultivated among Palestinians, can be overcome by walking and by reclaiming walking as a normal leisure activity in Palestine. A 45-year old hiker from Ramallah did not consider 'hiking' as something new in Palestinian society. However, he did recognize its changing dynamics. The hiking groups fulfilled a specific social role, namely providing a sense of security and especially access to spaces that are off-limits in the mental maps of Palestinians and those drawn by the Israeli occupier. Through walking, they want to redeem these lost connections and habits that were perceived as once normal or natural in Palestinian society. The 45-year old hiker realized that hiking with a large group would make it more difficult to cover long distances. However, the increased interest in walking was more important to him than walking as such.

In addition to a past of walking that is rather self-evident, there is also a substantial history of hiking connected to the Palestinian Boy Scouts and other youth groups. Interestingly, here too hiking became linked to Palestinian nationalism and the idea of 'knowing the land.' Palestinian Scouts would learn about the history and geography of their land by walking it. Exploring the country on foot also confronted the youngster with the Zionist settlements there were being built, a sight that was said to nourish their nationalistic feelings. Both Degani (2014) and Greenberg (2008) argue that the educational aspect of the trips was inspired by the Zionist principle of '*knowing the land*' (*yedi'at ha-arezt*) and the important pedagogic value that was attributed to

¹⁹⁹ Interview with A., organizer hiking group Ramallah (Ramallah, 12/11/2016,).

²⁰⁰ Interview with Y.N., hiker from Jenin (Ramallah, 22.11.2016).

²⁰¹ Interview with Hazem Bannoura, tour guide (Bethlehem, 6/09/2016,)

hiking trips in this respect. In 'Al-Kashshaf al-Arqa' (The Most Advanced Scout, 1933), a booklet on scouting inspired by Baden Powel's writing, the author laments that "It is with much regret that the foreigner knows about our land more than we do, particularly since we are the scouting community. We shall do as the foreigners who have come to our country from all the regions of the world, and study its ancient and modern history." The foreigners to which is made reference are the Jewish immigrants, who were discovering and getting to know Palestine (Degani, 2014, p. 80).

Interestingly, these same comments were reiterated during interviews with Palestinian guides, who regretted the demise of knowledge of the land among Palestinians.²⁰² Hikers told me that during walks they discovered a Palestine that had been hidden to them, that was unknown. One hiker, recalling his first hike to the village of Battir, put it this way:

There was so much new information to me, and I discovered how beautiful things are in my country, things I did not know about. So why? Why the politics of ignorance? Why is there nothing to help me know my country?²⁰³

These politics of ignorance, which the hiker refers to, prevent them from knowing their country. It is the lack of movement and the disconnection that contributes to a 'unknowing' of the land by its Indigenous population. This serves as a means of depriving them of knowledge, while settlers introduce their own new knowledge upon the land. During interviews and the hikes, it became clear to me that the Palestinian hikers had become very much aware of these 'politics of ignorance' and hence 'knowledge of the country' emerged as a vital trope to counter the Zionist settler projects. Moving through space introduced the hikers to the land, its nature, its people, actively producing new knowledge that takes various shapes and keeps alive Palestinian imagined and lived geographies.

²⁰² Interview with Mahmoud Abu Eid, tour guide (East Jerusalem, 4.02.2015) and Hisham Khatib, tour guide (East Jerusalem, 2.02.2015).

²⁰³ Interview with M. D. A., hiker from Ramallah (16/11/2016, Ramallah).

5.6. Assembling new geographies on foot

The hiking group *Tijwal Safar* embraced the slogan “walk the land to own it.” At first, the slogan seems to express a claim of physical possession of the land, that walking the land generates a form of ownership over it. Of course, this cannot be taken literally. However, by walking with them, I came to understand that it is about ownership over the discourses and knowledge on the land, shaping narratives in a way that undermines the colonial narrative that delegitimizes Palestinian presence on the land. To “walk the land to own it” is to reclaim its geographical imagination, and in turn, seek ownership over the way space is being made.

We have the right to move, and to be moving and stepping on the land, makes it in one way or another, makes it your land, because this is the core of the land. This is the land, and sometimes someone puts a myth, fake history of this geographical place just to claim it, to pretend that this is theirs.²⁰⁴

This 34-year-old hiker from Jenin refers to the way in which biblical stories have been mobilized and used by Jewish Israelis to claim land in historic Palestine. Inscribing this history into space meant erasing all Palestinian history and creating ‘a land without a people for a people without land.’ Hazem, my Palestinian research assistant who also joined on the hikes, clarified during the interview that “it is not just a walk [a journey or picnic], it has a deeper meaning, it’s reclaiming the right to your land, creating new spaces, your existence.”²⁰⁵ As he experienced it, walking the land is a way to appropriate it, to make it your own and by doing so asserting your right to be there as a Palestinian. From what I experienced on the trails, this happened in various ways. Knowledge of the land was not restricted to being able to identify the geographical characteristics or its fauna and flora. It was about creating memories in places and embodied experiences in which having fun, enjoying the beauty and meeting people were key incentives.

²⁰⁴ Interview with Y.N., hiker from Jenin (Ramallah, 1.10.2016).

²⁰⁵ Comments by Hazem Mized during the interview with Y.N., hiker from Jenin (Ramallah, 1.10.2016)

5.6.1. The politics of fun and food

When asking Palestinian hikers why they hike, the first answer that would most likely come up is: “because it is fun.” They explain that walking gives them a way out of the cities, away from the daily routine, that walking in nature is relaxing, good for one’s health, a way to meet new people and amuse themselves together. One of the founding members of hiking group ‘Shatha’ put it this way:

It was because we thought it was fun, [...]. In a way, we thought living conditions were very hard anyway, especially movement. So we thought that’s another aspect where we can enjoy life here because it is after all our life, so we need to enjoy it.²⁰⁶

Similarly, a young female hiker told me, having lived in the Gulf until two years ago, she had always believed Palestine was just a very small county, with not much to offer. She had believed that, as a Palestinian, you would need an Israeli permit to actually have fun, as she had deemed this only possible in the '48 territories. However, by going hiking with Tijwal Safar, she now realized that she could go visit a tiny Palestinian village and have fun there, because she now knew that there would always be something interesting and worthwhile to discover. She recalled her first trip with the hiking group to the village of Aqraba, southeast of Nablus. Although it was only 18 km from where she lived, she had never heard of the village. When she visited it, she was truly amazed by the natural beauty of the mountains. She had never imagined finding such natural beauty in Palestine. Exploring these places had made her see Palestine in a different light.²⁰⁷ Another female hiker (54) from Nablus had a comparable sentiment when hiking through Wadi Qelt. She explained: “Wadi Al Qelt, the first time we were there, it had many foreigners and Israelis, while youth here don’t know what it is. When I went to Wadi Al Qelt, I hadn’t imagined we had something like that in Palestine.”²⁰⁸

During a break on a trip to Ras Karkar, the group sat down to have a conversation about the walk that had abruptly been halted by Israeli military. A young hiker from Jenin shared his feelings about hiking.

²⁰⁶ Interview with S. B., hiker from Ramallah (Birzeit, 29.11.2016).

²⁰⁷ Interview R., hiker from Nablus, (Kor, 25/11/2016)

²⁰⁸ Interview with J. Q., hiker from Nablus (Nablus, 19.11.2016)

I have been hiking with [...] for 3 years. I asked myself why go to Ramallah? What could be there to see? I discovered that there are beautiful things in Palestine. The hiking also brings connections to people, not just the country. I started to get to know people from Ramallah and Nablus. When I started hiking, I discovered there are good people and that our country is beautiful and worth walking in.²⁰⁹

Two aspects of his testimony are striking and resonate with the experiences of the previously mentioned hikers. Firstly, hiking seems to make Palestine intelligible in a radically different manner that breaks with the daily images of occupation. It is through surprises that he rediscovered the beauty of his own country. As such, the hiking trips are recapturing the imagination of what is possible in Palestine. Hiking allows the land to surprise people so that they, in turn, can marvel at it, and get to know it from a completely different angle. Rebecca Solnit illustrates this in a more poetic way

The random, the unscreened, allows you to find what you don't know you are looking for, and you don't know a place until it surprises you. Walking is one way of maintaining a bulwark against the erosion of the mind, body, the landscape, and the city, and every walker is a guard on patrol to protect the ineffable. (Solnit, 2004, p. 11).

Through surprise, hiking constitutes new relations of affect between the walker and the landscape, a new form of knowledge is produced in this interaction. One that is entrenched in emotions but nonetheless is a knowledge that, in the case of Palestinians, goes against the erosion of collective spatial imagination and connectivity to the land. Secondly, this hiker referred to the connective capacity of walking. Not only does it connect people to the land, but it also connects people to other people, both in the hiking group as in the villages. It makes people break their isolation and ghettoization imposed by the Israeli occupation and creates a new sense of community.

Sharing food and eating together was one of the most important features of the hikes I participated in. When I asked R. what she liked best about going 'on tijwal,' she replied: "the breakfast, for sure!" In turn, J. told me that for her the most important aspect of the Friday hike is cooking the tomatoes with olive oil on a wood fire. She said to enjoy watching the men cook for the women and sharing the food with others. Each hiking group has its own

²⁰⁹ Hiker of Tijwal during the hike to in Ras Karkar on 23/09/2016.

traditions and habits. On the hikes where I participated, people would bring mana'ish, pizza, olives, sweets, hummus and much more to share with each other in a picnic. Some would cook tomatoes or make some coffee and tea on a small wood fire.

Eating and sharing food is an essential aspect of socialization on the hike. Hikers would often bring tasty food to share during the breaks. The 'ceremony' of eating and preparing tea or coffee outdoors is very important and significant for Palestinians and had become an integral part of hiking. One of the hikers had noticed that for foreigners the food aspect of the waking was less imperative. Sharing food created a space during the hike for relaxed conversation and interaction, whereas this was not always possible during the walking itself. The food itself becomes part of the relational practice of the hike seems to be a method for melting down boundaries between the hikers, it creates a sphere of intimacy, acceptance and community.



Figure 5.2: Sharing food during a break on a hike (photo by Dorien Vanden Boer)

5.6.2. Experiencing and shifting geographies of the ‘Watan’ (homeland)

Hiking inevitably exposes the walker to the elements and the natural features of the landscape. This automatically engages the walker in an interaction with everything around her or him. Talking to Palestinian hikers it seemed that it was in encountering all these elements they were painting a different picture of their homeland, or ‘Watan’ in Arabic. During a moment of rest under a large tamarind tree, a young man from Hebron shared his experiences with the group. He explicitly linked the love for the land to the actual tangible interaction with the land that was made possible through walking. He said “to me walking is not like seeing the land on a page of Facebook, for example. To own the land, you have to love it, to experience it, to rub yourself in its dirt. To walk through the land is to own it. It allows you to communicate with the land.”²¹⁰ Through the tactile encounters with the land that occur during the hikes, the idea of Palestine materializes into something as concrete as the mud on one’s boots. Later that hike, some of the men enthusiastically started cleaning an old water reservoir that was used by local farmers, but had become polluted with plastic bags, broken branches, and leaves.

The remarks from the hiker from Hebron suggests walking is more than just being in space. It is an intimate relational practice in which a conversation is created between the hiker and the elements of the landscape. Trees, insects, rocks, ruins, springs, and clouds become imbued with a certain *Palestinianess*. A Nabulsi hiker, who had created her own hiking group in the Nablus region after having hiked with Imshi, showed me some of the comments her fellow hikers had left on Facebook. A woman said that her affinity with the geography of her homeland had improved, that she had gotten to know more places, that walking had made her familiar with natural herbs of the countryside and made her feel more attached to her homeland. She also described how she enjoys the sound of the trees when the air passes through them, something she had only come to appreciate while walking. Another woman posted that everything around her started feeling “more Palestinian.”²¹¹ Using Solnit’s words (2004, p. xv) “each walk moves through space like a thread through fabric, sewing it together into a continuous experience.” For many of the Palestinian walkers, this continuous experience

²¹⁰ Hiker on Tijwal to Ras Karkar (23/09/2016).

²¹¹ Interview with J. Q., hiker from Nablus (Nablus, 19.11.2016)

was one of their ‘Watan’ (homeland). The ‘Watan’ is actively created during the hiking through transformative encounters of the hiker with the environment and other people. A., an organizer of ‘Imshi,’ saw the changing perception of Palestine:

I think that a big part of the people hiking started to see ‘Watan’ differently. Before walking they say: If I had an opportunity to immigrate, I would, but now we love Palestine much more. Some people say: we didn’t know the real Palestine, we thought it was just Nablus and we used to walk in the streets but not know what was in these mountains. There are many people who individually rediscovered Palestine. And what’s beautiful is that they become part of this movement unconsciously.²¹²

He further explained that hiking had transformed the concept of ‘Watan’:

[It is] not only the words you say, ‘Watan,’ but ‘Watan’ when you walk on it, you need to build a relationship between people and the Watan, it’s the land you are walking on. And you start making memories with those places.²¹³

This also came up in interviews with other hikers. For example, J. explained how she now looked differently upon the landscape while passing, saying that she now had memories in these places, they had become meaningful to her. And of course, these memories would be tainted by the feeling and experiences hikers had had in these places. She added that “[Walking] strengthens the connection you have to your homeland, you hold on to your homeland more.”²¹⁴

Palestinians that walk in their homeland are also actively producing it, making places ‘more Palestinian’ only by their own presence in the land, and by the meaningful artifacts they bring along on the hike. The Palestinian flag for example is always prominently present during hikes. Individual as well as group photos would be taken with the flag. The flag is another way to manifest the Palestinian identity in the places the group is hiking. It also makes the group recognizable for others, also to Israelis.

The Israelis don’t like that we go hiking because it increases the bond between the youth and the land, they become more inclined to learn about it, and they connect to the nature. Also there are

²¹² Interview with A.H., Hiker with Imshi from Ramallah (Ramallah, 12.11.2016)

²¹³ Interview with A.H., Hiker with Imshi from Ramallah (Ramallah, 12.11.2016)

²¹⁴ Interview with J. Q., hiker from Nablus (Nablus, 19.11.2016)

ideas that come to your mind to prove this is Palestinian land and they want to put the Palestinian flag everywhere, so they think about things that represent their connection to Palestine. Also they take the Palestinian flag to show that Palestinians are here.²¹⁵

The revitalization of the concept of Watan by walking the land is an important aspect of the resistance that emerges from these hikes. People get to know it from a radically different perspective, changing their knowledge and geographies of Palestine. An avid hiker explained that in a land under occupation, with all its physical restrictions of movement, the act of hiking had also become an act of ‘stretching the land.’

Both of us had been hiking for years and it’s something that we enjoy, so we thought why not share, open an avenue for enjoying Palestine. That was one thing, but another was stretching the closed distances, since it takes 20 minutes to hit any checkpoint in any direction, in the West Bank. So, one way of stretching this enclosed enclave distance is by walking, and so one way to get out of this catastrophic Israeli closures is to stretch the distance. It’s like one way of bypassing the enclosure. Another was that we really wanted people to like this place. It’s beautiful, but people don’t see it as beautiful. They see it as tiresome, as dangerous, as contemptuous. But people don’t see it anymore as beautiful while it’s amazing.²¹⁶

Stretching the land through walking, is a vital aspect of Palestine becoming rearticulated in terms of imagined geography. Stretching the land increases the walkability of the land without interruption by finding those routes that circumvent Israeli checkpoints and settlements and experiencing the land as enjoyable. It expands the Palestinian leiscapescape beyond the cities, spilling into the countryside. This way, the act of walking along the paths through wadis and olive groves articulates political meaning, it is “a subversive detour, the scenic route through a half-abandoned landscape of ideas and experiences” (Solnit, 2004, p. 12).

The leiscapescape that reimagines Palestine as a homeland expands well beyond the separation wall and the green line. Hikes are also organized in ’48 territory around Haifa or Jaffa, despite the problem of passes that hikers need to deal with. After having hiked in the West Bank, individual hikers also

²¹⁵ Interview with J. Q., hiker from Nablus (Nablus, 19.11.2016)

²¹⁶ Interview with S. B., hiker from Ramallah (Birzeit, 29.11.2016)

decided to go explore the '48 territory by themselves. One of them recalled his visit:

I decided to try to live an adventure [that eventually lasted] for 22 days. I started from the north of Palestine, walking by the coast, till I reached an area called [...]. Each day, I slept in some place, and every weekend I went to my aunt's house [...] near Haifa. [...] I had a sleeping bag, and I discovered something very important; Borders are something existing in our minds and drawn around us, and especially if one has security restrictions of movement, he would think twice before entering the occupied land [Israeli territory of '48]. But I discovered that once you are in [the occupied land], no one asks you where are you going or what are you doing. You live a normal life if you have enough money and arrangements. [...] This was the greatest adventure of my life, and on the 22nd day, I was caught in an area called [...], a place near the coast. The police caught me, they asked for my permit and I said I didn't have one. They put me in the police car and dropped me off in Jenin, so the first time I entered Jenin was when I was going back after being caught.²¹⁷

Another passionate hiker I befriended during my period of fieldwork told me that he had jumped over the wall to travel to Haifa and the Golan. He told me that jumping the wall was the best thing he had ever done, and despite the risk, it had been totally worth it. Being in Haifa had made him feel out of place. He realized this was part of historic Palestine and considered it as an integral part of his homeland. He felt alienated from it. The encounters with Israelis as well were very strange to him. He told me that the whole experience, seeing how most of the traces of Palestinian presences were completely erased from the city, and seeing everything in Hebrew and with Israeli flags had made him very emotional.

5.6.3. Picturing Palestine: Watan online

The stretching of Palestine's physical and imaginative geographies, as well as the concept of 'Watan' also occurs through the way hikes are documented, how this information is unfolded and disseminated. Photographs and videos play a vital role here. Each hike seemed to me the best-documented hike in Palestine (and probably the world). This was not because I was taking notes and pictures for my research. As soon as people get off the bus, cameras,

²¹⁷ Interview with M. D. A., hiker from Ramallah (16/11/2016, Ramallah)

smartphones and selfie sticks are unleashed upon the landscape and other members of the group. Before starting, the organizer always requested the participants not take unwanted pictures of others, or put pictures of others on Facebook, urging them to realize that not everybody appreciates being portrayed. The group often has hikers who were hobbyist photographers and people specialized in taking pictures of specific details of the landscape, flowers, animals, or their fellow hikers. Others Facebook-livestreamed the guide with their smartphones while he or she was giving an explanation about a specific building or the history of a village. During the walks, everything is of potential photographic interest: old buildings, plants, animals, rocks, people. Each got their abundant amount of shots, and eventually shares and likes on Facebook or Instagram.

These pictures and videos were much more than visual memories of a hike for social media. They mostly show the county from a different side as compared to mainstream media. Flowers, curious rock formations, desert landscapes now become an integral part of the Palestinian reality. On a political level, the



Figure 5.3: Selfie, Palestinian flag and Kuffiyes on a hike in Wadi Qelt (photo by Dorien Vanden Boer)

pictures highlight and make visible the presence of these Palestinian hikers in the villages, nature and the ‘unknown’ and ‘surprising’ Palestine. They also show its people, the forgotten villagers, the Bedouin and those that walk and enjoy the land. With every click, new images of Palestine are created. Collectively, and through the use of social media such as Facebook, these images become inscribed in what Palestine is.

The hiking groups mostly work with Facebook groups that are private but have a public page on which pictures and information about the hike are displayed, without showing individuals in a recognizable way. Scrolling through the public and private Facebook pages of the hiking groups, I noticed how they had almost become encyclopediae of Palestine. Pictures and videos of each hike were shared, often with an explanation about the trail or village that been visited. People also wrote comments on how they had experienced the hike. These pictures and comments were not just meant for fellow hikers, but many others followed the group. A. explained to me:



Figure 5.4: More pictures and selfies after olive picking and a walk in the Battir area. (photo by Dorien Vanden Boer)

Also to us, walking and introducing Palestine to people living abroad is something very important. Messages arrive from Gaza, Lebanon and Europe. Look, for example, one of the Palestinians in Lebanon sent me saying thank you for making a weekly return trip to Palestine. [...] If it takes me too long to post the photos, imagine, someone from Gaza calls me saying they are waiting for the photos. That is the effect of the group and the photos we post to introduce people [to the land], and the effect on the people living abroad is unbelievable. Watch the comments saying: please explain to us about this certain location, what it has, why something, and also sometimes we walk in certain locations and somehow, we do good to the place without being aware.

It makes me happy. Sometimes I listen to the radio and they have a show on Saturday that describes the Facebook activities. So very often on Saturday they say: as usual, hiking photos are all over Facebook. So, the photos played an important role for people and introduced them to the country differently.²¹⁸

The pictures posted by Imshi were no exception, M. (29) an avid hiker and photographer also pointed to the interest he sees from Palestinians that live outside of Palestine:

That is part of what I do, especially that I have a [Facebook] page called [...]. I post short videos on it, and people send me messages saying: “This is the village I come from,” or saying that I was near the place where they originally come from. Especially people living abroad, those who are living in America, France or Saudi Arabia and such. I get a lot of messages asking me to go to certain places and take pictures there.²¹⁹

When I later visited his page, indeed I found comments from Palestinians living in California and Guatemala, commenting and liking a video he had posted.

The pictures visualize that it is possible for Palestinians to go to these places. The mere fact that they show the Palestinian body in these spaces. As already mentioned above, this Palestinian identity is often highlighted by bringing along Palestinian flags or Kuffiye’s. These recognizable symbols of Palestinian identity, together with the bodies of the hikers themselves, make the spaces legible as Palestinian, not only during the hike, but also on the vast array of pictures and videos that record the walking. Secondly, the pictures

²¹⁸ Interview with A.H., Hiker with Imshi from Ramallah (Ramallah, 12.11.2016)

²¹⁹ Interview with M.D.A., hiker from Ramallah (Ramallah, 16/11/2016)

show the natural beauty, not the misery and violence in Palestine. The natural beauty of the walked landscapes but also the beauty of ancient architecture is juxtaposed upon the ugliness of the occupation that is destroying Palestine with its gray concrete walls and checkpoints, that are associated with death and suffering. The pictures make Palestine concrete, imaginable in a positive way. They create connections between Palestinians living in the West Bank and those in the diaspora. The pictures are thus creating a reality of Palestine as performed during the walking, that spreads well beyond the time and space of the hike.

Indeed, hikers acknowledged the fact that the walking had increased their connectivity, not only just to the land, but to Palestinians in the diaspora.

Yes, I am more connected. Sometimes on my Facebook page, where I have many friends, some from the Arab Gulf and some relatives and people from abroad. Even my sister in Amman told me that her friends anticipate the photos I post every Friday. My uncle called me the other time saying that he goes with me on hikes, he is not allowed to enter Palestine and he watches the photos I post and feels like he goes with me.²²⁰

The tangible reality of Palestine on the hike is represented into a virtual reality that takes people on the walk. The photographs and videos become intermediaries through which the places are translated along with the new affective relations that are constituted during the hike (Jóhannesson, 2005, p. 140). With social media, these relations and perceptions of Palestine become transmitted on a global level by transforming the spatial knowledge that Palestinians have about their country.

5.7. Leisure as resistance by default

On my first hike with Tijwal Safar, the group was stopped by the Israeli army. The soldiers did not want us to walk through the olive groves adjacent to a Palestinians village located in Area B. To my surprise, the hikers did not decide to retreat and go walk elsewhere, but just sat down and started picnicking in front of the soldiers. After having enjoyed lunch, people started

²²⁰ Interview with J. Q., hiker from Nablus (Nablus, 19.11.2016).

singing, clapping and even dancing dabké while the armed soldiers were still observing them just a few meters away. The whole happening had something of a spectacle that was put up to make sure the soldiers would understand that the group was there to enjoy themselves and would not be intimidated by the display of force. Talking to one of the girls in the group she explained to me that:

they [the Israelis] don't want us to explore because then we get attached to the land. This is the countryside so it is even more important for them [Israelis] to keep us out, because it is filled with what they need: land, water, olive trees. The more you know about the place, the harder it is for them to take it.

She added that once she had visited unknown villages, she could feel more attached to it because the place and its people had become more real to her. She would now know it.

The act of leisure that had turned into an explicit act of defying Israeli power had felt empowering to some of the hikers, as one of them later told the group: "Today I felt that I didn't want to do what the IDF told me to do. Now I love [the village] even more and I promised to the man of the village to help him."²²¹ The fact that the group had refused to leave and had manifested its presence, by picnicking, singing and even dancing had given people a feeling of resistance and that alone felt victorious.²²² Talking to the organizers of the hike, they made it clear that resistance was part of the reasons for engaging in hiking. By going to places that are threatened by Israeli settlers or that face isolation due to the wall or military zones, the hikers aim to reconnect to these spaces, demonstrating their presence as to reclaim them as an integral part of Palestine. However, they also strongly emphasized that resistance is not something they intentionally do or plan, but that going hiking is 'resistance by default' in the current situation of oppression. Leisure thus needs to be placed in the context of the well-known *sumud* or steadfastness and the Palestinian motto of "existence is resistance." Resistance is not something that they pronounce explicitly, but is the backbone of everything they do.

Hiking becomes resistance through the knowledge that is produced and transmitted to both the hikers and those that they encounter on their paths. In an interview the day after a hike from Beit Ur Tahta to Beitunia, the organizer

²²¹ Hiker during a hike with Tijwal in Ras Karkar (23/09/2016)

²²² Conversation with Hazem

was agitated about the local guide had refused to take the group uphill because of the proximity of the wall. The organizer explains why it is so important that Palestinians are confronted with these aspects of the occupation:

We were mainly there to walk beside the wall. To tell the people what happened there, and he doesn't want us to walk beside the wall saying "don't go near the wall." Why do you think I was shouting? Trying to get people to go up! Because that is what is needed. And he's telling people it's dangerous besides the wall. So that is an example. You need to help people reach the places so they can see it, because there are many people in the cities not seeing these things. Not seeing the effects of the wall and the settlements and the waste of the settlements. When you go up the mountain, you start seeing the effects. And to the Israelis, this is disturbing. That you take a group of 200 people and suddenly you are in Ein al-Sacut in Toubas, at the borders close to Ein al-Beida, there is Ein El Sacut, we reached it! And to the Israelis it that was insane that we reached it!²²³

He also recalled the group's hikes to Umm Safa, close to the Israeli settlement of Ataret and how their presence had changed the way people perceived the place and how the village relatively close to Ramallah now had become a credible space for leisure, whereas before it was considered dangerous for Palestinians.

That you go to Umm Safa, nowadays all the people of Ramallah go there. But only after we had gone there and done activities, people started to go sit there and have barbecues and enjoy. People used to think that it was forbidden to go there. When we started to go from down to the village from below or up, they [the Israelis] were surprised and didn't know what to do with us. People are now encouraged to go to Umm Safa. For nearly two months we kept going to Umm Safa every Friday, once we would go from here and once from there once from up and once from below. We drove them crazy. And now you can go to Umm Safa. Not just us alone but we played an important role in Umm Safa. We kept broadcasting images, that you could go to Nabi Innyr near Khirbet Dar Samhan, places where settlers swim and that are taken over by them, while it's [Palestinian] peoples' land. We went there and we didn't do anything, we remain silent, we sat. But what matters is that we reached the locations. In many places, we managed to reach the place and stay there.²²⁴

²²³ Interview with A.H., Hiker with Imshi from Ramallah (Ramallah, 12.11.2016)

²²⁴ Interview with A.H., Hiker with Imshi from Ramallah (Ramallah, 12.11.2016)

Walking on foot confronts Palestinian with the geographic contradictions of settler colonialism, makes them more aware, in a sometimes very physical way by for example being forced to take a detour because of fences or Israeli settlements or crossing a stream that is polluted with sewage from the surrounding settlement. On the other hand, hiking in groups also counters people's beliefs that it is dangerous to go out into the hills and the countryside. Again, these experiences reshape how people perceive Palestine as their homeland and this is challenging the way colonial power is trying to dislocate connections between the Palestinian population and the land of the West Bank.

Israeli power is also challenged by confusing categories that reflect the Palestinians' immobility and Israeli mobility. Hiking is something Israelis assume Palestinians do not do, as these hikers pointed out during interviews:

Israelis have appropriated much of the West Bank countryside as their leisure space. As most of it is in Area C, they assume that Palestinians do not come here for such activities. The presence of Palestinian hikers often comes as a surprise to them.

Israelis would think that we are Israelis, the army would think that we are Israelis lost in the mountains and the hills, and few times they stopped for us, saying [imitates a Hebrew accent] "you know you are very close to Arab areas?", and they would speak Hebrew, basically assuming that we are Israelis. They would be in shock that we're not!²²⁵

By presenting themselves in space in unexpected ways, Palestinian hikers make themselves increasingly illegible to the Israeli regime of occupation by going for a walk. By engaging in this leisure activity, which often is automatically connected to Israeli culture, they unsettle existing categories of control through which the Israeli army works in the occupied territories. This also has spatial implications, as these categories emanate from 'territorialisation' (Vandergeest & Peluso, 1995), 'geographicalisation' (Valverde, 1996, p. 372) or Halper's matrix of control. Territories are demarcated in a way that allows a differentiated control over the landscape. Control is exercised through the production of a specific knowledge that is applied within demarcated boundaries that forces people into conformable

²²⁵ Interview with A.H., Hiker with Imshi from Ramallah (Ramallah, 12.11.2016)

patterns of behavior. It is not just about what fits in and what is out of place, but why subjects and objects are produced as out of place with what purpose.

5.8. Conclusion

These hikes through the West Bank are no isolated events. Seemingly unrelated things become connected. Acts during the hike reverberate beyond the path of the walk, both in space and time. Hikes demonstrate the possibility of leisure and fun in a highly disturbed, fractured and dislocated landscape and the political implications thereof. Thoughts, memories and feelings, spaces become reimagined and reshaped through the embodied experience of hiking. By presencing themselves in space, feet-first, walkers are constantly reproducing the character of the space itself, as public, as Palestinian and as a leiscapescape. Hence, this creates new knowledge about Palestine, and how they relate to it.

This story of hiking is not about merely expanding the Palestinian space or searching and making a space where Israeli dominance is less effective. The real political stake is in transforming, subverting and challenging those relations, which are constitutive to the spaces Palestinians walk in, in the first place (Massey, 2000, p. 283). Palestinians do so by presencing themselves in space as knowing subjects, by walking the land, changing what is possible and deemed possible. The hikes (temporarily) transform the landscape into a Palestinians leiscapescape. People and things come together in assemblages that allow hikers to make claims. ‘Palestinianness,’ ‘beauty,’ ‘community’ that are not just out there, but emerge out of the relations that are spun through the practice of walking the land. These claims shape what Palestine is as a ‘Watan’ or space open to leisure activities, a new reality that is simultaneously discovered and made by the hikers. These relations produce both space and knowledge in a way that the hegemonic settler colonial logic is challenged.

As such, the Palestinian hikes become visible as a form of resistance, whether intentionally or not. However, leisure as resistance is not a given, leisure becomes resistance as Shaw states (2001, p. 186) “leisure as resistance implies that leisure behaviors, settings and interactions can challenge the way in which power is exercised, making leisure a form of political practice.” It is in relation to hegemonic power that leisure becomes subversive and in turn enables

people to exercise power themselves. The walking I encountered on these hikes is not about finding or creating spaces that escape power or make the walker invisible to power as de Certeau (1984) famously claims. Rather, it is about acquiring knowledge that transforms space, that it is ‘worlding’ (Blaser, 2014) in defiance with the Israeli settler project. It is ‘epistemic disobedience’ in the sense that these hikers are explicitly delinking from the truths imposed by settler colonial difference (Mignolo, 2009) and performing a reality that can accommodate Palestinian aspirations, imaginations and indeed leisurely activities and fun.

6. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

From the onset, this dissertation wanted to do three things: expose tourism as a modern (settler) colonial practice, explore tourism as a relational and spatial practice, and, at the same time, identify tourism's potentially subversive capacity. First, the research was guided by the question of what happens if the productive capacity of tourism is combined with ongoing settler colonization, in which the appropriation and remaking of space are at the heart of the colonial project. A second set of questions focused on the ability to turn that capacity around and mobilize tourism as a meaningful form of resistance. What are the implications of using tourism as a subversive practice, given its colonial legacy? Is it possible to delink, decolonize? In what follows, I will bring the four case studies into conversation with each other and expose the intersecting analytical themes of world-making, political economy, affect, and resistance that emerged as vital to understanding the making of tourism spaces in the settler colony. In doing so, I will reflect on the contributions of this research to tourism studies, settler colonial studies, and the study of Palestine more broadly. In this process, I will also point to the limitations of this dissertation and make suggestions for further research.

6.1. A relational approach to tourism, space, and settler colonialism

From the start, I aimed to contribute to the developing field of Critical Tourism Studies by thinking from Palestine within the framework of Settler Colonial Theory. The case of Palestine is a window that allowed me to challenge dominant Western perceptions about tourism and expose its interplay with colonialism. By building on the epistemological critique of Donna Chambers and Christine Buzinde (2015), I engaged with a more political agenda within

CTS and also embraced a reflection on the paradigmatic foundations of CTS research and how this might reproduce the very relations of power that I seek to challenge. To decenter colonial thought in my approach, particular theoretical, methodological, and epistemological moves that foregrounded relationality were required. This resulted in thinking through the concepts of tourism, settler colonialism, and space as co-constitutive.

The case of the Jerusalem cable car introduced tourism in the settler colony as a messy process that is in interplay with colonization, consumption, emotional connections, and the making of space and the material world. To capture these intersecting processes, I came to understand tourism as both a creative process of ordering and an epistemological practice; a way of both knowing and making worlds. The lens of world-making (Hollinshead, 2002) and ordering (Franklin, 2004) allowed me to trace what is enabled and enacted through tourism. It exposes the productive power relations that shape and are shaped within the touristic field. It allows us to think tourism in relation to a broader set of political claims—such as modernity, conservation, or economic development—that also circulate in Palestine. In this regard, tourism is also methodological in shaping and crafting places through material practices, (political) imaginaries, and affective associations along these wider claims.

Approaching tourism as a process of becoming, as an emergent project, rather than a fixed object is necessary to appreciate these productive entanglements. ANT literature on tourism opens up this space. First, it draws attention to how the nonhuman and the material are implicated in the making of these touristic worlds. Here, I also presented the concept of tourismscapes to comprehend how tourism entails spatial modes of ordering that are arranged to generate a specific intelligibility. Second, ANT foregrounds the concept of multiplicity of reality and the fact that the material world can always be engaged in different networks of meaning-making. The cases of the Peace Park and the Jerusalem Tourism Cluster demonstrate how there is always this tension around how material elements become mobilized in the making of touristic places and worlds. Bearing in mind that reality and space are multiple and open-ended, helps to trace power relations that come to create a world as seemingly singular.

This kind of thinking also opens the door to looking beyond settler colonialism and refusing to accept it as an unavoidable structure. It allows us to understand how mundane tourism activities were entangled in the making and breaking

of ongoing processes of colonization and domination that are constantly being challenged. It shows that the appropriation of native land does not depend on mere conquest; it goes hand in hand with a redefining of the spaces under settlers' control. Space emerged as a central and vital aspect of both the making of tourism and the settler colony. Both of these require particular spatial arrangements in which their claims can become normalized. Lefebvre (1991) conceptualizes the production of space as central to political struggle. Linking both discursive and material spaces indicates how the physical world becomes a mooring for representation and mental spaces. Lefebvre's approach encourages us to understand power relations as spatial and pay attention to the spatial implications of touristic world-making practices. For example, the case of the Peace Park illustrates plans to rearticulate the various physical elements of the space. It does so by building on previous colonial place-making projects, whose claims are reproduced and normalized in the physical elements of the place. When these kinds of power relations are not dealt with, as is the case for the Peace Park plans, the colonial relationality is reproduced in space. This has more profound implications. The production of consumable spaces such as the Peace Park then goes hand in hand with dispossession and ongoing erasure, which are key to the settler colony. With this case, I also hope to encourage critical reflections on the making of new touristic spaces that foregrounds peace, collaboration, and sustainability, to avoid the reproduction of colonial relations that are still damaging today.²²⁶

The case of Zionist tourism evinced how the Zionist movement has historically embraced tourism as an instrument to redefine Palestine as a Jewish space and destination. The ordering process in tourism played out in several ways. Zionist guidebooks, maps, and itineraries were commercialized to create new networks of Jewish-oriented sites of interest, Jewish settlements, and the popular religious sites. Redefining the consumable narratives within tourism in Palestine was accompanied by economic transformation, which set out to ensure employment for Jewish tourism workers—such as guides, hotel personnel, and drivers—mostly at the expense of Palestinian and Arab tourism workers, who had been key to the developing tourism market. The new Zionist space of representation that emerged within these tourism practices, heavily

²²⁶ My analysis was picked up by Friends of the Earth International (FOEI), who built on it during their negotiations with Ecopeace Middle East to become affiliated with FOEI. They were deeply concerned about the practices and power relations that came to play both in the peace park and the Ecopark in Jordan.

leaned on European modernity to conceive an intelligibility of the Zionist project that legitimated its own creation. However, as Quijano (2007) reminds us, we know that this always comes with its counterpart of coloniality.

These efforts are also traceable in transformations of material space. In Chapter 4, this becomes clear when I take a closer look at the changing status of Jerusalem as a tourism destination. The claim of the unified city had to become physically matched on the ground. This happened through settlement but also through the creation of new touristic sites, such as national parks and archeological sites, that severed the Palestinian identity from the city and implanted an 'old-new' Jewish Israeli one. The Israeli making of a 'unified' Jerusalem as a touristic destination offers a window on how value is both produced and mobilized through the physical transformation of places, landscapes, and the city in the settler colony. Centering Jewish identity, heritage, and culture in the places accessible to tourists creates a world of reference, in which a Palestinian welcome and existence is rendered increasingly difficult (Veracini, 2015a, p. 107). It should be noted that this has been a continuous process of touristic making from the Mandate period until now. After the establishment of the Israeli state, the '67 war and the annexation of Jerusalem, spaces that came under Israeli control were transformed not just to accommodate the settler but also to make the 'settler welcome' possible and normal. This is likely to continue with the current Israeli government's plans to annex the West Bank.

The making of these new colonial spaces is not limited to rearticulating the relation between the settler and the native; it also involves external actors such as of course tourists and tourism workers but also foreign philanthropists, academics, or nature conservators, as was the case in the Peace Park. They become entangled in the colonial matrix. This requires a more global approach to settler colonization, as the paths that lead in and out of the tourism spaces there do not stop at national borders. Nor does this making of these spaces pass unchallenged. From the start, the Zionists' efforts were met with opposition, such as for example the 1936 general strike (Kabha, 2003). Further, exploring how this unfolded in the Palestinian tourism sector would provide better insight into these contestations.

In addition, more research into the case of Thomas Cook Company and other international tour operators could also be a window on how these settler transformations faced a backlash from Palestinians and other Arab actors in

the tourism sector. This would picture the process of colonizing as less straightforward or smooth. It could also shed light on the relation between the discursive change and consumption on the ground, for example by tracing the effects of the adaptations of Cook's itineraries in Palestine. Similarly, we could trace Palestinian and Arab labor in the tourism industry, not just as guides or hotel owners but also in e.g. construction and services, which lay the material preconditions for a flourishing tourism sector in Mandate Palestine.

The same could be argued for the settler museum in Old Gesher. There, nature and the Palestinian landscape were narrated in an explicitly hostile manner and also materialized as such in the museum. The narrative positions the Jewish settlers as the rightful owners, cultivators, and modernizers and normalized their relation to the land. Nevertheless, Palestinians, and the Arab population more generally, played a role in the transformation of the place, as it was also their labor that made it 'modern' in the first place. This is an aspect of the place that remains underexposed in the chapter and merits further research. This, together with more attention to the inclusion of the Jordanian farmers and Bedouin population, could show how people were, and still are, mobilized differentially in place-making projects that reproduce colonial relationality and the intersecting racial political economy. I believe this to be a lacuna in my research, mostly due to my lack of knowledge of Arabic, that should have been addressed.

6.2. A colonial political economy of tourism

While tourism is often presented as a tool for development and economic boom, throughout the dissertation I have contested this by demonstrating how it intersects with settler colonial relationality. The situation in Jerusalem, for example, demonstrated that the gains of tourism are spread differentially according to colonial lines of division. A colonial political economy does not just lead to economic disparity but also demonstrates how, through highly political interventions, tourism becomes a tool to depoliticize. Even when Palestinians can participate in and benefit from the settler-dominated touristic market, they often do so in a depoliticized way, through narratives of religious coexistence or imaginaries of the Holy Land. The same can be traced in relations with the Jordanian Bedouin: they are given a place in the Peace Park,

but only conform rather colonial imaginaries. The fact that they are largely deprived from the means of spatial production also prevents them from inscribing their own sense of value into the space. The control over and ability to make space is key to understanding how value takes shape and is produced. According to Lefebvre (1991, p. 53), people who are unable to determine their own spaces risk falling into “the level of folklore and sooner or later disappear altogether.” In the settler colony, this results in spaces where settler worlds and lives are valued over those of the Indigenous people to such an extent that it leads to violent erasure.

This kind of depoliticization is definitely not restricted to the cases examined in this dissertation. It can be traced in contemporary place-making projects in which tourism plays a role, for example in the new ‘Peace to Prosperity’ plan drafted by the Trump administration. Here, tourism is being framed as a source for “unleashing economic potential” of the West Bank (White House, 2020, p. 10). According to the plan, support will be provided for hotels, restaurants, and hospitality training. However, the plan also stipulates the loss of the important historical, religious, and touristic sites in the West Bank currently under Israeli control, as well as the loss of Jerusalem as the Palestinian capital. It proposes tourism at the expense of the Palestinian ‘worlds’ and Palestinians’ capability to produce their own spaces, as well as their sovereignty.

This is important, because what is valued in these tourist places is reflected in the consumption and affective relations that generate them. Chapter 2 showed that this process was instrumentalized to also generate benevolence toward the Zionist enterprise. The fact that Zionist products capitalized on the value of modernity facilitated this process by creating a recognizable framework of reference that made settlers and settler spaces intelligible. It enabled the Jewish presence in Palestine to be explicitly inscribed into Western geographies that sharply contrasted with the Orientalized Arab/Palestinian geographies. In this sense, new touristic circuits and spaces that were produced by the Zionists either excluded what was Palestinian or Arab or narrated it into the tourism orderings along the lines of colonial difference. Similarly, sites such as the pioneer museum in Old Gesher built on these same orderings to create emotional links with international Jewish visitors but mostly Israeli organized groups and school children in what Katriel (1993, p. 129) calls “secular pilgrimages.” This can also be traced in the remaking of Jerusalem as a destination for Jewish tourism, where new ‘shrines’ of the

national Israeli space, such as the Knesset and Mount Herzl, were included in the packages while at the same time Israel was framed as an explicitly modern destination, comparable to other popular destinations such as the Côte d'Azur.

Sarah Ahmed (2004, p. 120) reminds us “that emotions work as a form of capital: affect does not reside positively in the sign or commodity, but is produced only as an effect of its circulation.” In dialogue with Ahmed’s affective economies, we can understand that place and people are assigned value through emotions, which means that they are either aligned with or fall outside of the dominant ideology. Touristic spaces and representations of space are produced to evoke certain emotions to attract consumers, and at the same time spaces accumulate even more affect through the circulation of tourists and visitors who consume them. In the context of settler colonialism, these spaces become part of the affective economy that renders the settler reality into the everyday. In this respect, it is worth referring to an Israeli owner of a bed and breakfast in an illegal West Bank settlement, cited by Ram (2012, p. 5), who points to the intimate connection between visitors having a good time and the settlers’ political goals:

... The Golan Heights became part of the Israeli consensus because people came and vacationed and saw that it was good, it was lovely, it was fun, and it would be a shame to give it to the Arabs. The same thing could happen in Samaria...I don't talk about the land of our forefathers and ideology. ... I want people to come here, to love the views and to become unwilling to give them up.

In tourism, consumption and leisure can create an experience of settled places as fun, enjoyable, and beautiful, which provides an affective dimension to the normalization of Israeli claims to sovereignty. The long Zionist legacy of hiking is a telling example of how presenting oneself in the land, getting to know it, and enjoy it forged an emotional connection to the land that was vital to the expansion of the settler project. Thrift (2008, p. 175) suggests that these affective relations are also a form of knowledge, a way of knowing the world. Therefore, affect can also be mobilized in making place intelligible in a way that is centered around settler colonial ontology and world.

The involvement of international tourists urges us to look beyond the settler-native divide when it comes to the political economy of tourism. Tourists themselves are active players who contributed to the making of settler colonial spaces by being present and acting within them. The making of these spaces

is not limited to the local but can be traced within a global political economy. Corporations like Airbnb, Booking.com, Expedia, and TripAdvisor—the dominant actors in a multi-billion-dollar worldwide online tourism industry—are making a profit from listing Israeli settlements in the West Bank that are built on stolen land (Amnesty International, 2019). At the same time, they are normalizing the settler presence there and facilitating settlers’ access to a global market. This plays to the deliberate strategy of for example the Israeli settlers of the Yesha council, who employ tourism to attract both Israeli and international visitors to the West Bank settlement.²²⁷ In this respect, the tourism of white American Christian evangelicals is on the rise (Gjelten, 2019) in what has been referred to as “Tour Bus Diplomacy” (Aldrovandi, 2011, p. 118). Experiencing the settlements as enjoyable, as spaces for shopping and consuming, is instrumentalized to make people understand them as a normal and integral part of Israel.²²⁸

6.3. The subversive potential of tourism

The perspective of multiplicity urges us to look beyond colonial fabrications in tourism. Alternative worlds are always already there. The question is: how do they come to the foreground? And is this alternative way of seeing the world manifested? The last two chapters about tourism in Jerusalem and hiking are illustrations of how this can take shape. First and foremost, tourism is mobilized as a way to raise awareness about the Palestinian situation among foreigners as well as Palestinians themselves. It makes Palestinian life, heritage, culture, and existence visible. The idea of experiential tourism is now gaining ground next to other forms of alternative, political, and solidarity tourism. While it is more commercially oriented, it contains an explicit engagement to create a ‘Palestinian experience’ for tourists. This experience comes to life not just through narratives but also through infrastructure. In addition, the case of the JTC demonstrated that this goes hand in hand with the coproduction of the idea of Palestine and Palestinian identity. The motto

²²⁷ The Yesha Council an organized body founded in the 1970s representing Jewish Israeli settlers in the West Bank and, until the 2005 Gaza Disengagement, the Gaza Strip.

²²⁸ Interview with Yigal Dilmoni, Deputy CEO Yesha council (Jerusalem, November 7, 2016).

“heritage is identity and identity is existence and existence is resistance” draws powerful lines between the past and present of Palestinian life in Jerusalem. These efforts, together with those of other organizations such as Grassroots Jerusalem, contribute to the creation of Palestinian spatial representations of the city that defy and contest the dominant settler colonial representations. This does not only counter the settler colonial erasure and reproduction of a self-referential Jewish past of the city but also aims to create a new space in which Palestinian existence in Jerusalem is normalized.

A similar effect can be observed in the Palestinian hikes. Here, Palestinian identity is manifested not so much through the touristic infrastructure, but through the presentation of Palestinians as tourists in place. Their movement through contested places reassembles and reorders the space and makes visible the possibility of leisure, despite the danger and risk they might run into. In doing so, they also produced new knowledge about what Palestine is. Despite the temporariness of the hike, the spatial representations it produces reverberate for example online. They create a new world in which ‘Palestinianness’ is valued and reproduced in space and reshapes the land as *watan* or the homeland.

Both the hiking activities and tourism in Jerusalem are particularly inspiring because they show how leisure activities can also be spatial practices that become a form of resistance. They show us that the acquisition of knowledge can also be a transformative spatial practice. Here too, the affective experience constitutes a relation between the visitors and the places, but this time in a frame of reference that contests coloniality and foregrounds Palestinians’ existence and knowledge. In a settler colonial context, this matters because it counters the erasure of Indigenous relationality in space. This can be traced to the very core of Palestinian resistance, to *sumud* or steadfastness. The importance of being and remaining present in space is key, because it exposes the settler colonial project as incomplete and continuously met with resistance. This presencing through tourism and leisure activities is rendering processes of colonial elimination less effective or ineffective. And they do more. Following Lefebvre (1991, p. 113), these spatial practices ‘secrete space’ and structure reality. Transforming space needs to be understood as central to the decolonization of the settler colony. Resistance is a place-based activity.

As we have seen, within the settler colony there is limited space to produce new touristic spaces or draw existing ones into Palestinian tourism circuits.

Chapter 4 has shown that the options to develop Palestinian-oriented tourism in Jerusalem for example are very constrained. The concept of soft infrastructure emerged as an alternative and shows that a reordering within tourism is still possible. If tourism, and leisure activities at large, can be considered as a way of both knowing and producing the world, epistemological practices then also comprise the capacity of ‘epistemic disobedience.’ In that sense, hikers, tourism infrastructure, and guides are explicitly delinking from the truths imposed by settler colonial difference (Mignolo, 2009). Focusing on tourism and leisure activities draws attention to a form of resistance that might seem enjoyable and trivial. However I, by no means, want to romanticize or minimize the cost of real resistance (Massey, 2000, p. 281). The colonial regime installed by Israel is brutal and oppressive, and even these seemingly leisurely tourism activities can come at a great cost for Palestinians. We must not forget the numerous Palestinian guides who have been arrested or the violence with which Palestinian hikers are confronted when walking past settlements or the separation wall. However, I hope to demonstrate that in the context of settler colonization, even such practices become subversive and indeed powerful. In this respect, the case of Palestinian hiking might not be a case of tourism, but it does give us inspiration for how tourism can be done differently.

Resistance can intersect with other objectives that differentiate among Palestinians according to religion, ethnicity, age, gender, sexuality, or class. As Svirsky (2017, p. 29) argued, “we rarely find a pure operation of resistance. [...] Therefore, acts of resistance need to be analyzed in their complexity to diagnose how and to what extent they submit to, confront or evade power.” Indeed, one such intersecting process within tourism is of course capitalist commodification and alienation. The implications of transforming Palestinian culture, identity, and land from having a use value to having an exchange value need to be considered with regard to the limits of the subversive potential of tourism. When looking at Palestinian-oriented tourism in Jerusalem, for example, these new routes can easily become absorbed in packages of both Palestinian and Israeli tourism actors that are selling Palestine out of commercial interest. This market-based engagement with Palestinian culture and space could lead to a further alienation in both production and consumption (Xue, Manuel-Navarrete, & Buzinde, 2014). I noticed this in conversations with Israeli tour operators who were seeking to connect with Palestinian counterparts to develop products that would meet the

changing demand in the European market. They argued that tourists are becoming more aware of the situation and want to “see Palestine as well”; therefore, they were reaching out to Palestinian organizations.²²⁹ However, these kinds of initiatives reify both the capitalist and the colonial relations through which these touristic products are shaped and that form a context for touristic activities.

Alternative tourism that is engaged in solidarity with Palestinians might work to counter this colonial power while at the same time commodifying it and turning it into a marketable product. This kind of ‘dark tourism’ (Isaac & Ashworth, 2012) can open tourists’ eyes to unequal power relations. At the same time, we have to question how it intervenes in Palestinian spaces to make them consumable in a way that mainly serves tourists’ desire for spectacle and depoliticizes activism (Koenlsler & Papa, 2011). An interesting example that merits further research is the growing phenomenon of homestays in Palestine. Due to the limited touristic accommodation and the difficulty of obtaining Israeli permits (in for example Areas B and C), especially in rural areas, the formula of homestays is becoming more popular. This formula focuses more on individual travelers who seek to diverge from the beaten paths, and opens up a new niche in Palestinian tourism. But what happens to the people’s sense of home, once it is transformed to accommodate tourists?

6.4. Hopes for decolonial tourism?

Recognizing resistance in the settler colony as a complex process that can differentially oppose and reproduce relations of power renders the question of decolonization equally complex. Indeed, Tabar and Desai describe decolonization as follows:

decolonization is about imagining modes of life and futures that are rooted in indigenous Palestinian epistemologies, memory and relations to land, place and the body, and not solely just about replacing the colonial state and racial economy. (Tabar & Desai, 2017, p. xi)

Decolonization is not just about getting rid of a system of oppression but also about changing all economic, cultural, and social relations as well as the

²²⁹ Interview with Gedi Hampe, tour operator SK tours (Jerusalem, January 25, 2016).

material and discursive conditions that lie at the basis of its reproduction and finding an Indigenous epistemological ground on which a new world can be based. This study hoped to raise questions on the potential of tourism in the decolonization debate. It did so by making explicit the world-making capacities of tourism and presented it as a method for knowing the world. The worlds that are created through touristic activities resonate in the material world and shape both people and places. Colonial epistemologies are powerful and actively work through tourism. But tourism offers more: it can also be emancipatory. The case of Palestinian hiking in the West Bank provides us with a hint of tourism's true emancipatory potential. Travel as a way of knowing makes people knowledgeable and allows them to create knowledge about the places they visit. It allows them to make these spaces their own. Talking about travel, rather than its commodified version, tourism might open doors to rethink the decolonizing potential that it has. If we shed the colonial relations that inhabit the fixed itineraries and visits, we might find ways in which travel can contribute to political struggles in a way that is meaningful on an epistemological level. While some spaces are carved out for colonization, decolonization requires a different movement, one of connection, reconstitution, and the recognition of the multiplicity of spatial relations.

Decolonization in tourism also needs to address questions about the form of touristic objects. Guidebooks and maps are colonial tools *par excellence*. Can these abstractions be used or do they replicate other forms of domination that are also problematic? To ensure that the latter does not happen, we need to think creatively about the representation of people and places within travel. Or perhaps there is a need to move beyond even that? Building on the work of Audra Simpson, Smith (2013) argues that decolonization requires the practice of "ethnographic refusal," or what she calls "the refusal to be known and the refusal to be infinitely knowable." Decolonization is the process of creating 'new worlds' that might not yet be thinkable or speakable but are, nevertheless, necessary to move forward beyond settler coloniality.

Palestinian organizations such as ATG, JTC, and Grassroots Jerusalem are taking the lead in presenting these Palestinian narratives and linking to Palestinian communities. Palestinian efforts to build tourism are oriented toward materially foregrounding Palestinian history and experience, through signage for example. When seeing the potential of tourism as a means of

resistance, the creation of Palestinian tourism should be considered more than a form of resistance against Zionist settler colonization. It is also a means of creating identity and community and anchoring them into space. Taking into account this relationship between making worlds and anticolonial struggle opens up the body of literature on world-making in tourism, with potential avenues for resistance against hegemonic and totalizing projects. In the context of a settler city such as Jerusalem, resistance through tourism necessarily becomes a spatial practice. It is a practice of producing new spatial imaginations and representations that can contest the dominant settler ones. However, in creating these new representations, the risk of domination is never far away. This is why the commodification of Palestinian culture in this new form of experiential tourism merits further exploration, as Massey (2000, p. 21) reminds us:

Moments of resistance are also constantly conditioned by the structures of dominating social and political power, hinting that resisting power is constantly in danger of replicating the structures of the dominant.

Despite the criticism on the ‘academy of hope’ within Critical Tourism Studies, my findings in Palestine show that tourism does give people a sense of hope. Whether this hope is realistic and will be turned into a material practice and reality is another question. Many Palestinian guides and tourism workers were convinced that through tourism, they could bring about change. These changes ranged from the sensitization of foreigners and raising awareness about the Palestinian cause to the preservation of Palestinian heritage, identity, and a sense of community and making political claims in space. Creating a world in which the Palestinian presence is normalized and globalizing this world can be a powerful form of resistance. This is also why this is met with such difficulty and repression by the colonizer.

To conclude, I would like to refer to a quote from Snelgrove et al. (2014, p. 27), which is also a call for engagement for future researchers of critical tourism who are committed to solidarity with the Palestinian struggle.

This also demands place-based solidarities—that is, relationships and practices—that center both Indigenous resurgences and more relational approaches to settler colonial power. After all, settler colonialism will not be undone by analysis alone, but through lived and contentious engagement with the literal and stolen ground on which people stand and come together upon.

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