

Walking in Landscapes of Displacement: The Spatiality of
Transcultural Activism

by

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Declaration

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my thesis has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the relevant Degree Committee'

Michal Huss, 'Walking in Landscapes of Displacement', Abstract:

Though forced displacement is prominent within public, political, and media debates, and within academic research, too often the public image of forcibly displaced persons is that of voiceless victims – or, worse, a threat to national sovereignty. The geo-temporal scale of forced displacement research also tends to focus on instances of border-penetration and emergency accommodation - stressing the boundaries of nation states and a perception of an unprecedented crisis. This study contributes a new perspective to research on forced displacement that goes beyond this 'moment' to include both the urban every-day and its cross-generational causes and impacts in a post/colonial context. Crucially, it reframes the debate from the perspective of displaced persons as subjects contextualized within history and the city rather than as outsiders. Using city walking tours led by displaced persons as a multiple case study, it examines how they affect the politics and public memory of the cities they inhabit or pass through.

The study focuses on walking tours in two sites of analysis - Berlin and the officially named Jaffa-Tel Aviv municipality - which encompass multiple histories of migration, colonialism, and division. By studying these cities together, the thesis highlights the complex and multi-layered entanglement between cities across the global "north" and "south" divide. In both environments, the research adopts a street-level perspective to study the relationship between national and municipal governance, global politics, spatial imagination, architectural intervention, and the agency of displaced persons to navigate these elements. To study this angle, it utilizes a participatory method of 'walk-along' ethnography conducted between 2018-2020, which entailed joining dozens of tours and interviewing tour-guides and participants. The thesis makes a methodological contribution by demonstrating the importance of applying participatory and creative approaches to study the politics of prolonged conflicts and forced displacement. Additionally, it expands the possibilities of walk-along ethnography to include spatial artistic mediums such as photography, montage, and drawing. Utilizing this framework, the study maps the political potential of walking as a collaborative pedagogy and performative representational practice to extend the understandings of agency, belonging, and political participation in the city. My PhD research centres on making visible the perspectives of people who are typically marginalized in official planning, public discourse, policy, and in mainstream media.

The most significant findings of this study are that histories of wars, divisions, and colonialism continue to shape the ways cities currently deal with forced displacement. Within this context, it provides new empirical understandings of how displaced persons utilize the

genre of the city walking tour to auto-narrate their stories and politics. The focus is on how these tours, as situated within deeply divided and politicised urban contexts, re-narrate the meanings and representations of those cities as they are acted out through tourism and heritage industries. The study therefore advances debates about the politics of urban space and heritage sites by illustrating how tours led by forcibly displaced persons offer a significant de-colonial and cosmopolitan understanding of the places, space-times, and geopolitics of the city. Drawing upon Jacques Ranciere's discussion of the political, the research extends architectural analyses of the built environment by incorporating the walking body in urban space. It argues that architectural theory and memory studies research should include not only the material environment (e.g., buildings, memorials, ruins, infrastructure), but also how marginalised groups can animate those material landscapes, through their bodies, movements, memories, and stories.

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Glossary of Terms

Initialisms in English:

ADRID - Association for the Defence of the Rights of the Internally Displaced

BADIL - The Bethlehem-based Resource Centre for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights

DDR - Deutsche Demokratische Republik

IDPs - Internally Displaced Palestinians

IDF - Israeli Defense Force

PCDLH - Popular Committee for the Defense of Land and Housing Rights

UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

German Words and Phrases:

Altneuland - old-new land and the name of a book

Berliner Spurensuche - Berlin's search for traces and the name of a social walking tour company

Deutscher Dom - German Cathedral

Französischer Dom - French Cathedral

Gastarbeiter - guest workers

Heimattourismus - homeland tourism

Migrationshintergrund - migratory background.

Querstadtein - the name of an NGO and a play on the German word *querfeldein* meaning off the beaten track in nature to suggest a similar meaning in an urban context.

Tränenpalast - the Palace of Tears and name of a museum

Vergangenheitsbewältigung - the attempt to grapple with the local difficult history

Willkommenskultur - welcoming culture

Arabic Words and Phrases:

Alfada' aleamu - public space

al-Nakba - 'the Catastrophe', a Palestinian word for experience of mass exile in 1948

al-Naksa - 'the defeat', a Palestinian word for occupation of the West Bank and Gaza after Israel won the war against Egypt, Jordan, and Syria

Awda - 'return', trips by Palestinian individuals, families, and groups to their cities and villages of origin

Bayāra/t - well-house

Mazra'as - plantations industry

Sabr - prickly pear

Sumūd - ‘steadfastness’, denoting Palestinian national defiance

Multaqa - meeting point and the name of a project in some of Berlin’s museums

Halaqat Istiqbal - a round table and name of a grassroots organization

Wuqūf ‘ala al-atlāl - stopping by the ruins

Yafa - Jaffa

Hebrew Words and Phrases:

‘Aliyah - immigration

Ashkenazi/m - Jew/s of European origins

Galuti - diasporic

Galut – exile, diaspora

Histadrut - General Organization of Workers in the land of Israel

Mizrahi/m - Jew/Jews of Middle Eastern and North African origins

Sabar - prickly pear

Shvil Israel - Israel National Trail

Tiyulim - hiking

Yafo - Jaffa

Yedi’at ha’aretz - Knowledge of the Land

Zochrot - female plural form for “remember” in Hebrew and the name of an NGO

Note on Figures: All images have been produced by the author unless cited or stated otherwise.

Introduction

The most vivid memories my grandfather would share with me were about landscapes he could no longer access and the migratory journeys of his early childhood. His family immigrated to Germany from a small village in an area which then belonged to Poland and now belongs to Ukraine. Yet, with the rise of the Nazi regime when he was eight, his kindergarten teacher who loved him very much warned his parents that they should escape, since Germany was no longer a safe place for Jews. They relocated again, moving across different cities in Europe to seek refuge. He would tell me of the sugar beet fields in his home village and about playing in the streets of Vienna as a little boy on the move, excluded from stability, school, and a home. Eventually, his family infiltrated illegally into British mandatory Palestine and until a much later age he had no legal documents. These stories sparked my interest in how the themes of forced displacement, place, belonging, and memory all correlate. I have noticed that such migratory journeys and the ways they inform identities and cities as multiple and complex, across generations, are not well accounted for within official discourses on forced displacement and within displays of urban heritage. This was the departure point for this research into the politics of the landscapes and representations of displacement.

At the turn of the Twenty First century, forcibly displaced intellectual Edward Said (2000: 138) wrote: 'our age - with its modern warfare, imperialism, and the quasi-theological ambitions of totalitarian rulers - is indeed the age of the refugee, the displaced person, [and] mass migration'. Twenty years later, the number of people experiencing displacement due to war, persecution, conflict, violence, and human rights violations has increased. Within the spell of writing this PhD, there have been two episodes that were depicted in public discourse as an unrepresented 'refugee crisis'. The first wave was caused by the tragic civil war in Syria, and whilst this conflict remains unsolved, another wave of refugees is currently escaping a violent Russian invasion of Ukraine. Simultaneously, people have been escaping devastating wars and conflicts in many other places, such as Iraq, Afghanistan, and Eritrea. All the while, prolonged conditions of forced displacement from earlier periods remain unresolved, as is the case for Palestinian refugees such as Said who were displaced from their homes in 1948. The mechanisms of the denial of their right of return is something that I am well experienced in, having grown up in the state of Israel and bearing witness to its colonial project of dispossession of Palestinian time and place. This has inspired the intervention this study proposes, of expanding the geo-temporal scope of forced displacement research beyond the

penetration of borders and short spells of crisis, and enriching its vocabulary through post/colonial theory - with implications for scholars and others who engage in the research and representation of this phenomena, such as NGOs, media outlets, and policy makers.

According to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), forced displacement is currently at its highest level since the Second World War. Consequently, several academic fields have dedicated greater attention to the theme of forced displacement. However, despite the growing academic interest, the term refugee remains ambiguous in public discourse: it is increasingly difficult to draw a clear border between voluntary and involuntary migrants, whilst refugees' legal and cultural recognition is subjected to shifting public opinion, political agendas, and the perceived authenticity of their life stories (Čapo 2015; Goodman et al 2017). Because the definition is contested, this thesis uses the terms refugee, forcibly displaced person, asylum seeker, or internally displaced person to describe those who claim these titles, irrespective of their official status. This allows for a focus on all the different categories of people who claim the status of forcibly displaced persons. A key approach for studying forced displacement, pertinent in law, media studies, and political science, focuses on its administrations, laws, and representation in national and transnational scales (e.g., Ramji-Nogales 2017; Khan 2016; Cowling, Anderson, and Ferguson 2019; Yitmen and Verkuyten 2018; Ekman 2019). In recent years, the phenomenon of forced displacement has also been examined within architectural disciplines to better understand the infrastructural problems of the so-called refugee “crisis” (e.g., Martin et al 2020; Sanyal 2014; Fawaz 2017; Montaser 2020; Katz, Martin, and Minca 2018; Al Asali et al 2019). Similarly, research in the growing fields of camps and critical border studies chart the elastic architecture of exclusion and violence which is directed towards those who seek asylum and refuge (e.g., Raeymaekers 2013; Casas-Cortes, Cobarrubias and Pickles 2015; Wemyss and Cassidy 2019; Augustova, Carrapico and Obradović-Wochnik 2021; Bird *et al.* 2021).

However, the existing focus of research on the administration of forced displacement, with its architecture of border-zones, confinement facilities, and emergency accommodations reiterates a state-centric geographical imagination of national sovereignty and territory. It also restates the temporal conception of an unprecedented refugee or reception ‘crisis’, which has come to dominant public discourse, especially since 2015 (Gattinara 2017; Triandafyllidou 2018; Ambrosini et al 2019). By focusing on the management, reception, and violence directed towards those who seek refuge, studies also augment a public perception of forcibly displaced people as hopeless voiceless victims (Greussing and Boomgaarden, 2017; Houston and Morse 2017; Tazzioli, 2016; Tirosh and Klein-Avraham, 2017). In fact, a common

cultural framing highlights the invisibility of displaced people in the public domain – although, paradoxically, they constantly appear in the city, within political discourses, the media, and surveillance technologies that monitor their movements (Tazzioli and Walters 2016; Day 2019).¹ Hence, whilst visibility itself is not at stake, the problem is the control and agency displaced person hold over their representations. Accordingly, the key argument outlined in this thesis is that the existing geo-temporal scope of analysis of forced displacement needs to be expanded and better grounded theoretically and methodologically in the voices, perspectives, and acts of agency of forcibly displaced persons.

The study therefore joins an emerging multi-disciplinary trend that utilises participatory methodologies to shift the focus onto displaced persons' lived experiences, voices, and acts of agency (e.g., Ansems de Vries 2016; Ataç 2016; Darling 2017; Katz 2017; Yassine, Al-Harithy and Boano 2019; Field, Tiwari and Mookherjee 2020; Veronese *et al.* 2020). Agency here indicates a capability 'of acting otherwise' (Giddens 1984: 14). A key discussion within this trend examines how refugees disrupt pre-existing formulations of citizenship (Ataç 2016; Nyers and Rygiel 2012; Darling 2017). Important debates have further emerged around the spatial agency of refugees to impact the environments they inhabit and to form social infrastructures and networks of care (Katz 2017; Yassine, Al-Harithy and Boano 2019; Field, Tiwari and Mookherjee 2020; Veronese *et al.* 2020). Spatial agency in this study is referring to the power to re-negotiate existing structures and inequalities through spatial actions, visions, and solutions (Awan, Schneider and Till 2013). However, moving away from the current focus on how displaced persons re-envision formulations of citizenship and reshape the camps they inhabit, this study examines their impact on the politics of representation of cities and their heritage. Specifically, the thesis investigates how displaced persons deconstruct the spatial configurations of urban public memory by leading or participating in city walking tours. Through this, the aim is to expand the geo-temporal depth of research on forced displacement by advancing our understanding of how displaced persons are impacted by *and* affect the multiple and prolonged conditions of division, colonialism, and war that they live within

¹ Over the past few years, a plethora of stories by charities and journalists around the invisibility of refugees have appeared in print and digital media. See for example: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2016/apr/19/refugees-dont-just-live-in-camps>; <https://www.alnap.org/help-library/urban-refugees-raising-the-voice-of-the-invisible>; <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/research/working/4eb945c39/invisible-refugees-protecting-sahrawis-palestinians-displaced-2011-libyan.html>; <https://www.unicef.org/eca/media/10676/file/This%20Analysis.pdf>.

Guided city tours are performative events that weave together time and place to produce an interactive narrative (Richardson 2005; Macdonald 2006; Wynn, 2011). Hence, as a field site, they provide an exemplary opportunity to study the exchange between the agency of displaced persons, memory, place, and architecture. Through the focus on guided tours, the secondary aim of this thesis is to theorise the role that spatial memory assumes within the political struggles of displaced persons. Integrating the theme of spatial memory into debates on the political agency of displaced persons is understood by this study as crucial since memory is a vital resource for the preservation of their identity and heritage and to navigate their rights and integration (Glynn and Kleist 2012; Ram and Yacobi 2012; Butler 2017; Hawari 2018; Tirosh 2018a; Charron 2020). Moreover, migration from and into cities is intertwined within geographic histories of violence (Hall 2012; Johnston and Pratt 2019; Gilroy 2005). To reach these aims, the thesis will focus on the empirical context of heritage walking tours in two ‘wounded cities’ chosen from across the global “north” and “south” divide with the aim of learning through the differences and similarities between them, without universalizing cities. Conceptualizing cities as wounded, Karen E. Till (2012) advises, provides a means to engage with the multiple histories of colonialism, exclusion, and violence that continue to shape urban socio-political life and topographies of displacement. The first site of analysis is Berlin, the former capital of Nazi Germany, a city heavily bombed during the Second World War and subsequently divided by the Berlin Wall from 1961 to 1989. The second is the officially named Jaffa-Tel Aviv municipality, comprised of two cities violently joined following the 1948 Arab-Israel War and the ethnic cleansing and spatial obliteration it entailed.

There are sufficient similarities that render these cities interesting to study together. Both are dominated by a conflicted public discourse around the presence of refugees and categorized by their strong orientations towards traumatic memories, especially related to the Holocaust, which nonetheless involves mechanisms of forgetting and denial. This thesis will contribute to understanding how these memory politics play an integral role in shaping the conflicting attitudes towards forced displacement. Another rationale for choosing these cities is that there are also adequate differences between them to allow for an exploration of how the different political-cultural contexts of cities affect the place of refugees in different ways. For instance, Berlin represents a city that has officially overcome division (after the territorial and political reunification of Germany) whilst Jaffa-Tel Aviv remains disputed along ethno-national lines (in the context of the unresolved Israeli-Palestinian Conflict). Berlin is also considered a city which has successfully dealt with some aspects of its difficult past, but has

not fully addressed its colonial legacy, whereas Jaffa reminds colonized by Tel Aviv. Additionally, whilst Berlin has gained global recognition as a site of welcome for refugees, in Jaffa-Tel Aviv their legal and cultural status is more precarious. By researching these already studied cities through the novel perspective of tours given by displaced people, this study aims to provide new insights onto the politics that shape their public memory and urban sphere. It therefore seeks to advance and place in dialog three key interdisciplinary areas of research: forced displacement, urban studies, and memory studies.

As part of the key aim of this study of expanding the geo-temporal scale of forced displacement research, it argues for a theoretical reorientation within the field towards postcolonial thinking. This is another rationale which underpins the interest in the touristic practice of city walking tours. Indeed, in our era of global capitalism and increased mobility, tourism is one of the most significant and omnipresent means to encounter and interact with the heritage and histories of “others” (Salazar 2005; Schwenkel 2006; McDowell 2008; Chaitin 2011; Marschall 2017; Pfoser and Keightley 2019). Nevertheless, tourism also contributes towards cultivating and performing imperial and national imagined geographies that render certain groups as “others” and reiterates static formulations of space, identity, and culture; and, it epitomizes the connections between colonialism and neo-liberalism (Wilson, 2017; Linehan, Clark, and Xie, 2020; Rowen, 2014; Feldman, 2016). This study therefore maintains that tourism encounters are useful for unpacking the enduring implications of entangled colonial histories and sets out to investigate whether they can also inform counter-practices that elevate the agency and resistance of the colonized and those subjected to colonial processes of “othering”. Towards this end, the study proposes that the scale of the walking body in the street provides a means to register these seemingly contradictory processes. By utilizing guided tours as a dual research topic and method, the study further aims to inquire into the political potentiality of walking as a collaborative pedagogy and representational strategy.

Research Methodology

Walking thus holds a dual significance to this thesis, as a research topic *and* a research method. Whilst walking is commonly associated with utility or leisure, this seemingly mundane activity is also part of a longstanding history of political struggles across the globe, as Yarimar Bonilla (2011: 315) writes:

The act of walking has long constituted an important (yet underexamined) element of political protest and collective action. From Gandhi's Salt March, to the "freedom walks" of the Civil Rights movement, to the weekly counterclockwise marches of the Argentinean mothers of La Plaza de Mayo: countless social movements have been defined by walking or marching as a form of protest and political speech.

At times, the right to walk is the topic of struggle, as was the case with the *Kinder Mass Trespass* in the Peak District of Derbyshire, England, in 1932. It was organized by members of the Young Communist League to protest the denial of walkers' access to open land. At other times, walking is a means to protest broader social injustices. Increasingly, this localised practice morphs into transnational movements such as SlutWalks, which emerged in Toronto in 2011 to protest rape-culture, and subsequently spread to over one hundred cities. Often, walking embodies both a struggle for justice and an act of commemoration, such as the *Grenfell Tower Silent Walk* in 2018, which mourned the seventy-two fatalities of the Grenfell Tower fire and campaigned for safer homes. Advancing the repertoire of protest and commemoration walks that have received scholarly attention, the study focuses on a less straight-forwardly political mode of walking, the guided tour, and inquiries into its potentiality as a collaborative mode of representation and political action. Towards this end, the study utilized the qualitative participatory method of walk-along ethnography, which refers to being on site whilst on the move.

My interest in participatory creative methodologies and collaborative modes of representation began when I was studying my undergraduate degree in art and visual culture. On the one hand, we learned very critical stances about art making and the art world, but at the same time this remained within the boundaries of the classroom. As a means of engaging through art with a wider community, I initiated an Alternative After School Art Club for numerous schools in the Elephant and Castle area. The project revolved around an artistic mapping of the local neighbourhood through walking and looking into its patterns and textures as a way for participants to engage with their locality. This walking methodology was used by students to visually articulate the impact of the rapid gentrification the area was undergoing and its impact on their lives. My theoretical development during an MA in art and politics and my further involvement in activism initiatives have further inspired a conceptual move away from the gallery to the urban public sphere, and from art into vernacular creativity. I further encountered the transformative power of celebrative walking during a tour of a destroyed Palestinian village guided by a Palestinian second-generation refugee. Experiencing how the tour altered my geographical conceptions and led me to re-evaluate the Israel-Palestine conflict through a colonial lens has inspired this theoretical and

methodological investigation into guided tours as a path for de-colonizing contemporary cities. My walk-along ethnographic research for this thesis entailed joining twenty-nine guided tours between 2018-2021 in Berlin, Jaffa, and Tel Aviv. This included: conducting walk-along interviews with tour guides about the process of designing their tours; joining their tours as a participant-observe and conducting walk-along interviews with the audience; and joining more official heritage tours in these cities and regions to familiarize myself with their hegemonic displays of memory. Below is a basic table of information about this research.

| Berlin | | | | | | |
|---------------------|---|-------------------|--|------------|--|---------------------------|
| Date | Title | Location | Facilitation | Tour Guide | Audience | Interviews (see appendix) |
| 1. 4 March 2018 | <i>How I became a Berliner Meeting</i> | Mitte District | Querstadtein, Refugees Show Their Berlin | Wael | German Youth movement (Private booking) | 2 |
| 2. 9 December 2018 | <i>Neukölln from the Newcomers' Perspective</i> | Neukölln District | Querstadtein, Refugees Show Their Berlin | Hussein | Inferential and German Berliners (Open tour) | 22, 23, 24 |
| 3. 11 December 2018 | <i>Route44</i> | Neukölln District | Neukölln's District Museum | Samira | German Berliners (open tour) | |
| 4. 5 April 2019 | <i>Jewish Heritage Walking Tour of Berlin</i> | Mitte District | Viator, TripAdvisor | Nimrud | International tourists (open tour) | |
| 5. 12 April 2019 | <i>Berlin Postkolonial</i> | Wedding District | Berlin Postkolonial | Prosper | International tourists (open tour) | |
| 6. 15 April 2019 | <i>Why we are Here</i> | Mitte District | Refugee Voices | Ahmed | Walk-along interview/guided tour | 26 |
| 7. 5 May 2019 | <i>Post-colonial Tour of Neukölln</i> | Neukölln District | Berliner Spurensuche | Henry | German Berliners | |
| 8. 7 May 2019 | <i>The City and My Life</i> | Mitte District | Querstadtein, Refugees Show Their Berlin | Yasmin | University Students on exchange program (private booking) | 29, 30, 31 |
| 9. 10 May 2019 | <i>Global politics, the city and my life</i> | Mitte District | Querstadtein, Refugees Show Their Berlin | Amir | German and International Hi-tech company (private booking) | 32 |
| 10. 11 May 2019 | <i>Global politics, the city and my life</i> | Mitte District | Querstadtein, Refugees Show Their Berlin | Amir | Educational program for International Muslim and Jewish Youth (Privat booking) | 33 |

Jaffa

| Date | Title | Location | Facilitation | Tour Guide | Audience | Interviews (see appendix) |
|-----------------------------|--|--|---|----------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| 11. 8 April 2018 | <i>A memorial event for the massacre in Deir Yassin</i> | Jerusalem | Zochrot | Umar | Israelis and Palestinians (Open tour) | 4, 5 |
| 12. 15 April 2018 | <i>Al-Quds Free walking tour</i> | East Jerusalem | Al-Quds | Samar | International tourists (Open tour) | |
| 13. 20 April 2018 | <i>Tour of South Hebron Hills</i> | South Hebron Hills | Breaking the Silence | Matan (former IDF soldier) | Israeli University students (private booking) | |
| 14. 14 August 2018 | <i>Tour of Jaffa</i> | Jaffa | Zochrot | Umar | Israelis and Palestinians (Open tour) | 8, 9, 10 |
| 15. 16 April 2019 | <i>Tour of Al-shaykh Muwannis</i> | Al-shaykh Muwannis | Zochrot | Umar | Israelis and Palestinians (Open tour) | |
| 16. 20 July 2019 | <i>The Original FREE Walking Tour of Tel Aviv's Most Visited Area, Old Jaffa, with a Local Guide</i> | Jaffa | Tel Aviv-Yafo municipality in partnership with Sandmans New Europe tour company | Dana | International tourists (Open tour) | |
| 17. 11 August 2019 | | Jaffa | | Yusuf | Walk-along interview/guided tour | 37 |
| 18. 15 August 2019 | | Jaffa | | Umar | Israelis and Palestinians (Open tour) | 34, 35 |
| 19. 7 September 2019 | <i>JNF Erasure of Palestine</i> | Several locations in the North of Israel | Zochrot | Umar | Israelis and Palestinians (Open tour) | 48, 49 |

| South Tel Aviv | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|---|------------------|----------------------------|------------|--|---------------------------|
| Date | Title | Location | Facilitation | Tour Guide | Audience | Interviews (see appendix) |
| 20. 16 August 2018 | | South Tel Aviv | Youth Movement | Naama | Taglit Birthright Participants (Privat tour) | 12, 13 |
| 21. 5 September 2018 | | South Tel Aviv | Israeli NGO | Tom | Israeli potential donors (Privat tour) | |
| 22. 21 September 2018 | | South Tel Aviv | Privat tour company | Hila | German social activists (Privat tour) | 18 |
| 23. 27 November 2018 | | South Tel Aviv | Israeli NGO | Diklah | International potential donors (Privat tour) | |
| 24. 1 August 2019 | | South Tel Aviv | Privat tour company | Hila | Israelis (open tour) | |
| 25. 19 August 2019 | | South Tel Aviv | Youth movement | Noah | Israeli High school students (Privat tour) | 45, 46, 47 |
| 26. 21 August 2019 | | South Tel Aviv | Youth movement | Dotan | Israeli High school students (Privat tour) | 42, 43, 44 |
| 27. 27 August 2019 | | South Tel Aviv | | Togod | Walk-along interview/guided tour | 38 |
| 28. 4 October 2019 | | South Tel Aviv | Privat tour company | Hila | Israelis (open tour) | |
| 29. 7 May 2021 | <i>White Cube Houses - A Tour of the Bauhaus and the White City</i> | Central Tel Aviv | Tel Aviv-Yafo municipality | Shlomit | Israelis (open tour) | |

As Barbara Bender and Margot Winer (2001) exemplify in their research on the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, a walking participant-researcher can offer embodied, emotional, and sensory insights into walking practices. Alongside gathering personal insights, I conducted informal interviews with tour participants and recorded the questions they asked during tours. I found that walking allowed me to conduct interviews that were more collaborative, informed by place, and grounded in embodied experiences. It was also a means

for me to better understand the contexts or environments into which these tours intervene. I revisited the streets passed during tours to comprehend their rhythms, layouts, signs, and socio-political dynamics and interview inhabitants of the street about their perceptions of the tours. Indeed, as existing studies demonstrate (e.g., Wang and Kao 2017; Macpherson 2016; Evans and Jones 2011; Ingold and Lee Vergunst 2008), the added value of walking ethnography is in generating richer data prompted by meanings and connections to the surrounding environment, with its emotional, symbolic, ideological, spatial, and sensual characters. For example, walking around contentious areas of central and north Belfast, Audra Mitchell and Liam Kelly's (2011) findings helped to contradict common assumptions made by political authorities regarding the centrality of the ethnic conflict in shaping the patterns of daily life in the area. Rather, their street-level insights reveal a more primary tension between international peacebuilding policy makers and local inhabitants, and their conflicting interpretations of this space.

Hence, walking methodologies can reveal important insights regarding the process by which urban places are constituted, navigated, and contested, and provides access to overlooked factors within broader geopolitical dynamics. This is an additional advantage of walk-along ethnography: it provides a means of gaining insights into macro socio-political realities, through a phenomenological receptivity that grounds the social in micro-lived and embodied experience (Low, 2009; Pink *et al.*, 2010). An aim of this research is to deploy this embodied approach as an empirical framework to research forced displacement and how it interacts with urban conflict, inequalities, and memory politics. To this end, walking further holds the capacity to illuminate the ways in which mnemonic narratives attach to specific sites and transcend across temporalities. This is exemplified in a study conducted in a similar geopolitical context, in which Joseph S. Robinson's (2020) informers guide him along the Irish-UK border, narrating their everyday landscape, with its segments, twists, and turns as located on a perceived spectrum of risk. Through these tours, Robinson learns how memories of past violence continue to impact everyday life, mobility, and perceptions, in subversion of the officialized story of present-day Northern Ireland as "post-conflict". Other studies similarly frame walking as a productive tool for uncovering onsite layers of secluded or overlooked histories within conflicted, post-conflicted, colonial, and post-colonial places (e.g. Edensor 2016; Degen and Rose 2012; Robinson and McClelland 2020). When practiced collaboratively, Les Back (in Bates and Rhys-Taylor 2017) further demonstrates that this walking pedagogy provides a means for groups to *feel* and *sense* the traces of history and the hidden archives of the streets.

For walking ethnographers, the street is thus an important scale from which to unpack the macro political world. As Haim Yacobi and Wendy Pullan (2014: 533) advise, the street enables us to assess geopolitical processes such as ‘occupation, colonisation, and bordering’ as they affect ‘facts on the ground from the point of view of the ground’. Furthermore, Suzanne Hall's (2012; 2015) methodology of ‘trans ethnography’ illustrates that forming an inventory of one street and its shops can illuminate complex maps of urban migration and multicultural intersections. In a similar vein, this study employed a qualitative fieldwork to produce a detailed inventory of several streets and the interactions they foster between memory cultures from multiple geographies and scales. Existing studies thus establish that walking is a multi-sensory pedagogical and representational tool that can inform new understandings of unresolved geopolitical conflicts and traumatic histories. This framing of walking holds a dual application for this research. In addition to contextualising the methodology, it is useful in theorizing the potential of walking tours to enact a performative mode of memory activism. In other words, the use of walking as a research method provides insights into the experience of walking as a performative practice to protest and uncover unresolved traumas. Developing existing research that tends to utilize walking ethnography to study everyday usages, experiences, and senses of place or processes of place-making, in this research it is used to study a strategic performance and its political implications.

As Diana Taylor (2003) highlights, a shift in the research focus to the performative requires a change in existing methodologies. Accordingly, to deal with the challenge of how to study a site-specific temporal performative event, this research expanded traditional qualitative participatory walking methods through artistic and architectural mediums, such as mapping, drawing, sketching, and photography. Firstly, GPS mapping applications were used to record each tour's route, pace, and weather conditions. The proliferation of such apps has radically transformed map users from mere readers into active agents of map production (Elwood and Leszczynski 2013). As Phil Jones et al (2008) suggest, walking methods in conjunction with GPS allow researchers to collect real-time, multi-sensory information about responses to the physical features of a landscape. In addition, drawing was used as a method to capture behavioural sketches of participants’ bodily activities and compositions during the guided tour experience. In contrast with photography, drawing provided a means to separate the embodied gesture from the surroundings to better elucidate their performative interactions whilst protecting participants’ anonymity. To supplement this, when I wished to focus more on the surrounding to further unpack the contribution of space and architecture to the guided tour performance, I used photography. The artistic medium of collage is another analytical

and illustrative tool used in this research, which many of the above-cited artists, including the Situationist International, use to represent their walks-as-art. I found it easier to unpack the all-encompassing experience of the guided tours visually and my first accounts of field trips were presented through collages. This allowed me to compare, collate, combine, and layer various features and repetitions within the tour-events, such as tour guides' pointing hands or their performative usage of photography.

The medium of collage was also used to create maps of each guided tour to allow the reader a visual and conceptual orientation within the thesis. My background in visual culture and art was useful here. I sought inspiration in the long-standing artistic interest in the imaginative and evocative qualities of maps whilst reflecting critically on their role as geographical techniques and artistic objects (Rogoff 2013). Another conceptual inspiration for my research and representation approach is a tradition of artists that walk and/or map, to explore the aesthetic and social qualities of these spatial practices and to multiply their meanings and implications. Examining the work of artists such as Richard Long, Hamish Fulton, Sophie Calle, Marina Abramovic, and Janet Cardiff led to consider the evocative mark-making qualities of walking and the significance of bodily movement to creative production. Especially inspirational was the Situationist International's method of *derive* (drifting), which entails aimless walks in the urban terrain to provoke a sensitivity, openness, or sense of drift (Debord 1981). For me, this method connected to the experience of walking that is so central to the tours I study, and their sense of being within place, drifting through time and memory, and witnessing site-specific traumas. In addition to translating visual elements into theoretical debates, I deployed creativity as a conceptual approach. Drawing from performance-centred ethnographic research (e.g., Conquergood 2006 and Irving 2007). Building on this, I focused on the interactions between different elements, such as the moving body, words, actions, props and the city stage, and the ways they render explicit or deconstruct existing power relations and social roles. This extended creative walk-along method proved essential in locating themes and theoretical insights for this thesis.

I consider the methodological artistic innovations found “on the road” of the mobile ethnographic process a central methodological contribution of this study and indeed, its challenge. It took many experimentations with different writing styles to address the tensions that my interdisciplinary approach raises between the visual and the verbal. The above visual data gathering methods were triangulated with interviews and informal conversations with activists, tour guides, and non-governmental organizations (NGO) workers. These focused on their self-defined aims and strategies, which became a way to co-produce knowledge, as they

helped activists articulate their own strategies by explaining them to me. From this, I produced briefing papers based on my findings that are used by these activist networks for their funding applications and educational campaigns, based on the knowledge and strategies that we discussed together. These conversations proved essential in dealing with the gap between the macro politics that the tours aim to influence, and the micro politics which are embedded within them. This collaborative approach shows how forming a bridge between social justice research and practice can enhance the understanding and impact of both theory and methods. On the one hand, my study enriches academic theories and methods in fields of forced displacement, urban, and memory studies through the specialist knowledge of social groups and refugee-activities. On the other, I also tried to use theory to impact the organisational policy and practice of civic groups and elevate the work of activists to reveal new methods and new fields for such action.

The tension between macro, micro, collective, and individual was also present in my attempt to extract broader theoretical implications about memory, the city, and migration out of these tours. There have been times where I felt overwhelmed by the depth of gestures and encounters that these tours encompass and my inability to eloquently express their broader theoretical implications. Here, participation in conferences where I presented my findings in a more visual, verbal, and conversational manner proved essential in helping sort out the multiple sources of data, just as conversations with activists helps us both to define their aims and strategies. However, a challenge for this type of participatory research, as Julia Aoki and Ayaka Yoshimizu (2015) advise, is that the social entanglements of walking ethnographers and their experiences of place can impact the research process and interfere with findings. Having taken this into account, it was important for me to remain alert to my positionalities as a researcher and their effects on the research process, on participants, on the tours, and myself. For instance, my cultural background as a Jew of German ancestry impacted the ways German NGO workers interacted with me and affected my perception of the local landscape of Holocaust commemoration. Additionally, my Israeli nationality required me to navigate encounters with Iraqi and Syrian tour guides with great sensitivity and understanding to establish trust. African asylum seekers further wanted to know my opinions, as an Israeli, about their presence in Tel Aviv before agreeing to collaborate with me.

A particular sensitivity was required with regards to Palestinian tour guides, considering that Israel is directly responsible for causing their displacement. As such, interviewees that organize memory tours for Palestinian women had reservations about inviting me to join a tour; instead, we met separately for an interview. Researching such

public events further raised the ethical issue of consent in a research context. To deal with this, I coordinated my participatory research with tour guides, presented myself as a researcher in front of tour participants, maintained transparency, and protected the anonymity of tour guides and participants (for instance, by using drawings or long-shot photographs). The fluid and communicative nature of walking tours was useful in this regard. Participants joined these tours with the intention to undergo a collaborative reflective experience and were eager to share their insights with me. Equality, tour guides arrived with the intention of publicly educating people about their experiences and were happy to extend this gesture towards my research. Nonetheless, it is also worth stressing the sensitivity of researching a marginalised population that has undergone trauma and is subjected to mediated and academic attention, such as refugees. As one interviewee, Amir (Interview 28, 2019), explains in relation to an unpleasant encounter with journalists: ‘my story is not for sale and I tell it my way, to who I want’.² This has inspired me to think critically about the risks of reminiscing or objectifying stories of forced displacement. I decided to avoid direct questions about individual trauma and instead focused on self-expression and political tactics as manifested during the guided tours.

By placing the self-choreographed public gestures of forcibly displaced persons at the forefront of the research method and theme, I tried to address power disparities that exist between myself and a researcher and my interviewees. As such, I hoped to avoid the risk highlighted by theorist bell hooks (1990) that research on issues of difference might further marginalize participants of the study. To subvert binaries between overly researched groups and those less subjected to mediated and academic attention, the study was orchestrated around the performative event of a walking tour. Place, architecture, tour leaders, and participants were considered as equally important components within this political performance. In terms of the implications drawn out of this ethnographic process, Adam Saltsman and Nassim Majidi (2021) write:

What we as researchers, or aid workers, do with the stories gathered from forced migrants can contribute to their social and political invisibility, or our scholarship can be a tool to amplify refugee voices as forms of knowledge that are valid not only as testimony but as expertise to design research, programmes and policies.

² All tour guides, activists, and NGO workers are named in the thesis according to how they introduced themselves, unless they requested anonymity, in which case their names and identifiable features have been altered.

In line with this valuable observation, the following empirical chapters examine what forcibly displaced persons do with their stories, stressing the crucial political and theoretical implications that these gestures provide in terms of practice and theory.

Thesis Outline

The first chapter of the thesis operates as an initial mapping of its interdisciplinary conceptual framework. It outlines the contributions the study wishes to make for the interdisciplinary research areas of forced displacement, urban, and memory studies. Operating as different yet interrelated perspectives, the subsequent three chapters each address the central aim of the thesis of expanding the geo-temporal scale of forced displacement - by studying the impact of forcibly displaced activists on cities and their memory politics. Chapter Two investigates how displaced persons affect the public memory of historical division and conflict in a host-city. This is considered through walking tours guided by Syrian and Iraqi displaced persons in Berlin, a local and global site of remembrance of the scars of twentieth-century tragedies. Moving from host to home cities and from a conflict primarily located in the past to one that has yet to be resolved, Chapter Three asks a correlated question. Namely, how do displaced persons influence the public memory of an unresolved conflict in their home-city? To unpack this, the chapter examines tours of Jaffa guided by Internally Displaced Palestinian (IDPs). Chapter four, the final chapter, works to connect the first two empirical chapters. It advances the debate in Chapter Two regarding the dialectic between host cities and refugees, and the discussion in Chapter Three on the interplay between unresolved ethno-national conflicts and displaced people. Chapter Four asks a third interrelated question: how do forcibly displaced persons, as a seemingly uninvolved third party, affect the public memory of a host-city undergoing conflict and division? This is analysed through tours of the impoverished neighbourhoods of south Tel Aviv, the former borderland between Jaffa and Tel Aviv, and the current home of asylum seekers from Sudan and Eritrea.

Based on the ethnographic research, as outlined above, each chapter presents a close examination of the plurality of the geopolitical contexts, the narratives, and the political and personal agendas that the tours encompass. My 'trans ethnography' (to borrow Hall's terminology) further considers the global and local socio-political contexts, commemoration designs, political performances, and tourist genres which inspire, enable, and constrain these tours. The consultation of the tours as situated in a specific time and place further involves an analysis of the cultural atmospheres in which they operate, a spatial reading of their locations,

and a historicization of the regional trails they traverse. The intention of this study is not to conduct a comparative analysis between the different case studies, rather, the context of three case studies aims to indicate the multiplicity of the voices and agencies of displaced persons, and the diversity of the connections they form with cities and their memories. The choice of case studies therefore intends to demonstrate the diversity of political demands, legal framings, and experiences of forced displacement. For instance, Chapter Two illuminates the cultural and political tensions that arise for those allocated an official status of refugees in a seemingly welcoming city. In contrast, Chapter Three highlights aspects of refuge that are somewhat less acknowledged: the cross-generational implications of forced displacement, and an experience of displacement that does not entail any crossing of state borders. Chapter Four illuminate the plurality of ongoing ethno-national conflicts that displaced persons can be impacted by and affect, beyond merely those occurring in their home countries. This choice of case studies furthers the overall aim of expanding the geo-temporal depth of forced displacement. By focusing on struggles for a more equal co-habitation that have emerged after the acute spell of the so-called ‘refuge crisis’ in Europe, the ongoing struggle of African asylum seekers to seek recognition in the Middle East that since 2008, and the cross generational struggles of Palestinian refugees, these case studies demonstrate the depth of the geo-temporal scope of forced displacement.

Nevertheless, in the categorization of these walking tours guided by displaced persons in different geographies as belonging to the same repertoire of activism, the study seeks to demonstrate a broader argument concerning the impact of the political agency of displaced persons on cities, and the importance of architecture and performativity within it. To this end, each chapter guides the reader through interactions between performing bodies and specific architectural commemorative devices. Chapter Two considers how refugees reference memorials in Berlin to testify to their current traumas of war and displacement. As demonstrated, by citing these important cultural sites, tour guides problematize and expand their meanings. In contrast with this planned commemorative landscape, Chapter Three focuses on vernacular and disregarded architectural ruins in Jaffa. It considers the ways tour guides use these ruins to resist the ongoing erasure of Palestinian traumatic memory *and* modern urban history. Whereas Chapter Two and Three focus on popular segments of the city (the central district of Mitte in Berlin and the Old City of Jaffa), Chapter Four considers an area that is excluded from official heritage and tourism narratives - south Tel Aviv. Nonetheless, the chapter highlights that visiting the southern marginalized streets and their infrastructure - a less obvious example of a memory site - during guided tours provides

access to a rich historical archive on inner-city inequalities and urban transcultural flows. In sum, based on these inventories of interactions between bodies and sites, a key theoretical contribution that this study hopes to develop is a call to extend research on spatial memory and architecture to include how marginalised groups animate those elements through their bodies, movements, memories, and stories.

Another central theoretical contribution is of reorienting forced displacement studies towards urban postcolonial thinking. Each of the empirical chapters will illustrate how nationalist and colonial exclusionary ideologies are inscribed via the public spaces of cities, through deciding which sites are destroyed, commissioned, or preserved, and how they are designed and signposted. However, in parallel, the chapters will trace the mechanism through which the tours problematize the meanings of tourist and colonial landscapes and reappropriate the colonial gaze. To elaborate, then as demonstrated in Chapter Two, by assuming the authoritative role of the tour guide and city expert, refugees enact a right to Berlin's heritage and demonstrate its entanglement with other geographies *and* the colonial lingering past.³ Chapter Three advances this analysis by demonstrating how, through the mimicry of the tourist gaze, IDP tour guides disrupt the colonialist tendencies embedded within the tourism industry. Nevertheless, Chapter Four further discusses how the subversive potential of these tours can be jeopardised by the neglect of indigenous and colonial histories, by commodification, and by elements of voyeurism. While this relates to all the tours presented in this thesis, it manifests most clearly within the tours analysed in that chapter. Despite these limitations, the study maintains that these tours provide important avenues for de-colonizing the city. It will demonstrate that in their performative interactions with architecture, the walking tours problematise existing memory landscapes, cultures, and practices, by illuminating their frictions and entanglements with memories from elsewhere *and* with local traumatic pasts.

³ Paraphrasing Henri Lefebvre's (1996) influential notion of "a right to the city".

Chapter One: A Walk Across Disciplines and Theories

This chapter presents the overall trans-disciplinary analytical framework for the thesis with its main conceptual arguments and theoretical contributions. As the chapter will demonstrate, the study chiefly contributes to the interdisciplinary area of forced displacement studies which has gained pertinence as a field of research since the 1980s - although forced displacement is an age-old phenomenon which cuts across multiple cultures and geographies. As this thesis argues, the complex maps of temporal and spatial relations, overlaid memories and histories, and cross-cultural journeys that make up experiences of forced displacement needs to be better accounted for within research. Moreover, they need to be grounded in the perspectives and acts of agency of those who have been forcibly displaced – theoretically *and* methodologically. The main contribution of this study is therefore in expanding the geo-temporal imaginaries of forced displacement studies beyond borders and camps to include both the urban every-day and cross-generational impacts of violence in a post/colonial context. As this chapter will demonstrate, this is an important intervention in a field which still suffers from an outdated focus on states, territory, and citizenship.

Next, surveying relevant debates in urban studies, the chapter will demonstrate that the urban lens offers a productive ground for linking the geopolitical issues of prolonged conflict and forced displacement to questions of hospitality, solidarity, conflict, and agency, in the everyday. However, the chapter will also reflect on the need to transgress beyond a dichotomic situating of the city as a strategic counter arena to exclusionary national and trans-national powers. Instead, it will argue for the need to adopt greater geographical and specificity and zoom into neighbourhoods and streets, with the plenitude of powers, cultures, imaginations, and histories which shape them. Towards this end, the chapter proposes the useful lens of memory studies which considers the traveling of memories across time and place on the one hand; and on the other, offers useful theorizations around the political and ethical questions of dealing with legacies of repression and trauma. This thesis contributes towards reconciling these two strands of analysis by theorizing how transcultural and cosmopolitan memory is nonetheless grounded in specific sites with their geopolitical contexts. As will be noted, in retheorizing these debates from the perspectives and activism of displaced people, this study advances the existing body of knowledge on the politics of the design of urban spheres and their politics of memory. It therefore extends the understandings of agency, belonging, and political participation in ‘wounded’ cities.

Research on Forced Displacement

As a means of identifying existing trends within the rich and interdisciplinary field of forced displacement research, this section will survey the scale and the geography of forced displacement studies. The term 'scale' is adopted from Human Geography as an indicator of spatial logics of analysis and operative processes (Cobarrubias 2020). The section will demonstrate a tendency within literature on the geopolitics of forced displacement to prioritize national and trans-national scales of analysis. Accordingly, the geographical imagination of forced displacement research centres on borders, camps, and detention facilities. Adopting the critical stance of feminist geographers (e.g., Marston 2000; Hyndman 2004; Mountz and Loyd 2014), the thesis argues that this limited scope privileges a state-centric discourse around sovereignty and obscures the political dynamics and political agencies that transpire at the finer scales of the body. Here it is useful to consider the distinction between 'Politics', referring to big concepts and officialised activities or institutions (such as party politics or ideology), versus 'the political' as an ontological state of being together and the essence of doing politics (Barry 2001).

The Scale of Forced Displacement Research

In studying the geopolitics of forced displacement, a pertinent approach adopts a macro scale of analysis, focusing on universal human rights, international law, and global power dynamics (e.g., Ramji-Nogales 2017; Khan 2016). As studies demonstrate, the Geneva Convention (and its 1967 Protocol), which remains the key legal framework to sanctify the allocated rights of refugees and the obligations of states to protect them, is outdated and inadequate (Opeskin, Perruchoud, and Redpath-Cross 2012; Hathaway 2007; Harvey 2015).⁴ For instance, the Convention fails to protect the rights of internally displaced persons.⁵ Moreover, it only mandates the obligation to protect those with official refugee status. It therefore neglects most of the world's current forcibly displaced people who are pending a decision on their request for refuge, officially named asylum-seekers.⁶ Crucially, the chances for asylum approval vary considerably among countries that have signed the Convention since it is open to multiple interpretations and there is no international body to oversee its

⁴ The Convention, now signed by 149 states, was formulated in 1951 by a dozen countries in the context of the post-1945 period, when millions were displaced worldwide.

⁵ In 2019, they accounted for around 45.7 million out of 79.5 million forced to flee according to UNHCR.

⁶ Out of 79.5 million people around the world that have been forced to flee their homes, UNHCR estimates that only 26 million were officially recognized as refugees as of 2019

implementation. This strand of analysis sufficiently captures the current failures of international law, legal, and political institutions to protect those escaping wars and persecution. However, as Lucy Mayblin (2017) identifies, a notable lacuna in existing research is their little engagement with histories of colonialism - despite the association between the concept of refugeehood with a human rights discourse developed as part of western modernity, and the fact that colonialism was integral to the development of this modernity.

In the lack of a decisive international framework, nation states interpret regulations and laws around the reception of displaced persons differently (Goodwin-Gill and McAdam 2007; Burson and Cantor 2016). This is the departure point for research that adopts a national scale of analysis, dominated by the disciplines of politics and media studies. Such studies point to the deterioration of the universal discourse of human rights that has formulated in response to the atrocities of the Second World War and the mass displacement it entailed. Instead, national-populist discourses are on the rise, framing refugees as an ontological demographic-cultural-security threat (Cowling, Anderson, and Ferguson 2019; Yitmen and Verkuyten 2018; Ekman 2019). As studies further observe, this culture of fear translates into policies, laws, and regulations at national and regional scales that seeks to manage, monitor, and deter the bodily movement of refugees (Ambrosini 2018; Ambrosini, Cinalli and Jacobson 2019; Hagelund 2020). Relevant debates in media studies further note the importance of media in fanning the culture of fear around the mobility of forcibly displaced persons (Heidenreich *et al.*, 2019). For instance, Noam Tirosh and Inbal Klein-Avraham (2017) observe how Israeli newspapers, in their portrayals of African asylum seekers, focus on masses of refugees or symbolic and divisive objects like fences. Moreover, they note that clear representations of their faces rarely appear; when they do appear, photographers use long shots that blur their figures or assume a bird's-eye view, rather than a humanizing eye-level angle. These visual techniques, Tirosh and Klein-Avraham conclude, advance the framing of asylum seekers as a dangerous mob taking over the streets, or, alternatively, as faceless victims.

Hence, in contrast the plethora of stories by charities and journalists around the invisibility of displaced people, paradoxically, studies demonstrate that they constantly appear -within political discourses, the media, and surveillance technologies that monitor

their movements.⁷ However, as Marieke Borren (2008) highlights, for forcibly displaced people technologically enabled regimes of exposure produce a type of ‘harmful visibility’ that reinforces policies of exclusion, dehumanization, surveillance, and violence. Here a Foucauldian (1977) theorization around the inherent connection between the management of power with the control of sight remains relevant. Another issue is that when refugee stories or faces gain visibility, the media tends to ignore systemic and structurally relevant factors. For example, Martina Tazzioli (2016) demonstrates how the representation of rescue operations of refugees at sea reduces them from being people escaping wars into shipwrecked persons needing rescue. Critically, overlooking the structural causes of forced displacement undermines a substantial struggle for justice. Hence, the tendency to privilege the “wound” or the traumatic story (the Greek origin of trauma means wound) obscures its socio-political causes (Ahmed 2013). Trauma here, as used in this thesis, refers to a painful mark of the past that haunts the present on individual and communal scales, physically, culturally, bodily, and emotionally. This socio-cultural understanding of the term borrows from the multidisciplinary growing fields of trauma and memory studies and transcends its clinical definition as formulated in psychological and medical fields (Although, in fact, distinctions between these approaches are ambiguous (Traverso and Broderick 2010)).

As studies on humanitarianism show, even well-intentioned attempts by advocacy groups and charities to assert refugees’ traumatic stories in the public arena often result in a reduction of their agency and voices (e.g., Greussing and Boomgaarden 2017; Esses, Medianu, and Lawson 2013). The concept of the “theatricality of humanitarianism” reveals an inherent paradox: by placing human vulnerability on display to raise awareness, people are reduced to mere victims. This, in turn, results in the disengagement of the audience and a reduction in a sense of solidarity (Chouliaraki 2013). Terri Tomskey (in Bond and Rapson 2014) takes this notion further, equating traumatic representations with capitalism; she points to a globalized ‘trauma economy’ that is governed by sympathetic self-indulgent spectators and informs which traumas are communicated and importantly, *how* they are perceived and framed. As part of this trauma economy, politicians might also seek to enhance the visibility of their humanitarian actions towards refugees to advance their global reputation, as Umut Korkut (2019) demonstrates in the Turkish context. Similarly in Germany, the welcoming of

⁷ See for example: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2016/apr/19/refugees-dont-just-live-in-camps>; <https://www.alnap.org/help-library/urban-refugees-raising-the-voice-of-the-invisible>; <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/research/working/4eb945c39/invisible-refugees-protecting-sahrawis-palestinians-displaced-2011-libyan.html>; <https://www.unicef.org/eca/media/10676/file/This%20Analysis.pdf>.

contemporary refugees has been framed as an atonement for the Nazi past or a chance for a positive transformation of German self-definition (Bock and Macdonald 2019).

The above studies successfully capture the laws, powers, and representational hierarchies that shape contemporary responses to forced displacement. Yet, in prioritizing an abstract scale of analysis, they duplicate the inclination in mediated and public discourses to favour the administrative aspects of forced migration over the voices of those subjected to them. The following section will demonstrate a similar tendency within spatial studies on forced displacement.

The Geography of Forced Displacement Research

As charted within architectural and geographical research, national and trans-national regimes of exclusion towards forcibly displaced persons spatiality translate into border zones, holding centres, detention facilities, and camps. The growing field of critical border studies demonstrates how people fleeing war, persecution, and human rights violations are increasingly met with an elastic regime of border enforcement (e.g., Paz 2017; Ogan et al. 2018; Andrijasevic and Walters 2010; Raeymaekers 2013; Casas-Cortes, Cobarrubias and Pickles 2015). Another theoretical strand which addresses this region of exclusion is the cross-disciplinary mobilities paradigm that attends to the socio-politics of different modes of movement (Sheller and Urry 2006; Sager 2016). As relevant studies articulate, securitisation and restriction of the mobility of ‘undesirable identities’ is emerging as a new transnational form of governance (Rygiel 2011; Cresswell 2006; Thorsen in Scoones and Stirling 2020). Studies from the intersection of forced migration and mobilities therefore introduce the notion of (im)mobility to account for the waiting, confinement, and postponement that are equally integral in the mobility of refugees (Smets 2019; Schewel 2020; Georgiou et al 2020). Utilizing the lens of the mobilities paradigm that retheorizes spaces as constituted through movement, critical border studies further point to the stretching, multiplication, and mobility of bordering practices and zones. Such territorially flexible approaches to border studies provide a new understanding of the scale of border rule which cannot be limited to the edges of states or an outside/inside ordering. Rather, research demonstrates that borders involve a plentitude of localized apparatuses in workplaces, housing, and schools (Andersen, Klatt and Sandberg 2016; Yuval-Davis, Wemyss and Cassidy 2019).

Theoretically, the field of critical borders studies is dominated by the prisms of citizenship and biopolitics which fosters an analysis of how borders determine the boundaries

of civil membership and exercise the power to regulate life and let die (e.g., Parker and Vaughan-Williams 2012; Zaiotti 2016; Davitti 2018). On a similar vein, the growing field of camps research centres Giorgio Agamben's (2008) theorization of the camp as a site of biopolitics and a 'state of exception'. Agamben describes a state of exception constructed by a sovereign power in camps, whereby legality is suspended, and inhabitants lives become bare, in-between the natural and the human realms. Camps literature also builds on Hannah Arendt's (1973) theorization - herself a refugee following the Holocaust – who suggests that refugees exemplify the abstract nakedness of being merely human, excluded from the public realm of political life. Building on this, research demonstrate how governmental or municipal authorities maintain deliberate abject conditions in direct provision detention centres, holding centres, and camps to immobilise and marginalize its residents (Vaughan-Williams 2015; Mountz 2011; Pallister-Wilkins 2018; Augustova, Carrapico and Obradović-Wochnik 2021; Bird *et al.* 2021). Studies also outlines their function as site of violence and exclusion (Dhesi, Isakjee and Davies 2018; Davies, Isakjee and Dhesi 2019; de Vries and Guild 2019). The camp was introduced as an architectural tool of confinement during the late colonial era, implemented in European colonies, and later imported into Europe by totalitarian regimes (Katz 2016). Deposit of this, camps and critical border studies offer little engagement with postcolonial theory. Another issues it that existing research on the violence of border control tends to reiterate a redaction of refugees' subjectivity into mere victims and objects of control.

Nevertheless, a recent strand of research problematise this approach by adopting a micro scale of analysis to register the daily lives and political engagement undertaken by individual forced migrants (e.g., Ramadan 2013; Sanyal 2014; O'Reilly 2019; Martin, Minca and Katz 2020). As feminist geographers have long contended, shifting scales fosters new understandings of politics and power relations that problematize dominant narratives and approaches (e.g., Marston 2000; Hyndman 2004). Utilizing a micro scale of analysis and creative participatory methodologies, such studies retheorise camps and detention centres as sites of confinement and violence but also resistance, creativity, solidarity, and strength. To exemplify, Katz's (2017: 6) analysis of an informal refugee camp in Calais, unofficially called the Jungle, illustrates how refugees employ their creativity to assert their spatial agency; by allocating humorous names to sites within the camp (such as 'the Jungle Books' or 'David Cameron Street') refugees assume an active role in the camp's design and form a sense of place. Working from the scale of refugees subjective and embodied experiences, studies further demonstrate their agency to navigate and manoeuvre the exclusionary transitional

regime of (im)mobility and surveillance. For example, Sarah Nimführ and Buba Sesay (2019) contextualise the ways non-deportable rejected asylum seekers navigate the governing system of their corporeal and social (im)mobilities in the island state Malta.

Another example is the way migrants manoeuvre the Dublin III Regulation that restricts asylum applications to the initial EU country of arrival by using fake names and refusing to be photographed (Katz 2017). Several studies further demonstrate how forced migrants use pocket-sized technologies (such as Google Maps or 'WhatsApp') as enablers for movement; these are deployed to contact smugglers, gather information about routes and destinations, as well as to plan, orient, and track journeys (Zijlstra and Liempt, 2017; Alencar, Kondova and Ribbens, 2019; Presti, 2020). Shifting the scale thus helps illuminate the subjective and daily implications of the violence of border management regimes as well as related strategies of survival and resistance (Mountz and Loyd 2014). This advances a retheorization of borders as sites that fashion new forms of control but also open new spaces of mobility (Cuttitta 2015). Conducting such finer-scaled research on borders benefits from participatory and creative approaches. For instance, Amalia Campos-Delgado's (2018) participatory study relies on cognitive maps drawn by Central American migrants of journeys across the Mexico-US border. These maps illuminate stories that are marginalised in state-centric representations of migration and provide important empirical data on how people live and defy the state-controlled bordering process. As Sarah Fine (2019) advises, refugee voices and auto-representations invoke more nuanced and informed understandings of and responses to forced mobilities. Nonetheless, Fine continues, refugees' expressions of creativity, art, and culture are rarely seen in public discourse.

This study joins the above-outlined new direction of research that raises the question of scale and the need to centre the subjective and embodied experiences and auto-representations of refugees. It seeks to advance the understanding on the correlation between mobilities and political agency by inquiring into the political potentiality of walking as a collaborative pedagogy and a spatial representational practice.

Contribution to Forced Displacement Studies

As this section has outlined, the geo-temporal scale of forced displacement research focuses on instances of border-penetration and emergency accommodation - thereby reiterating a state-centric discourse on citizenship and the boundaries of the nation state. This limited scope reinforces a prevailing temporal perception of a 'crisis' prompted by an unrepresented flow of people penetrating state borders. It therefore negates the condition of internal

displacement and the prolonged and cross-generational aspects of forced displacement, including its enduring links with colonialism. Instead, this study suggests the theoretical prisms of the interdisciplinary fields of urban and memory studies as a means of expanding the geographic imagination and temporal depth of research on forced migration. Moreover, it utilizes a postcolonial and decolonial lens to expand the theoretical vocabulary of forced displacement research beyond the dominant prisms of citizenship, state of exception, and biopolitics. Few recent studies that suggest the theoretical post-colonial prism demonstrate how race, othering, and empire continuously underpin the exclusionary logics of contemporary border policies in Europe (e.g., Mayblin 2017; Davies and Isakjee 2019). However, these studies remain within the restricted spatial scope of borders which dominates forced migration research, and focus on a one-way trajectory into Europe.

To represent a more multidirectional map of forced displacement, this study utilizes the fruitful approach of comparative, global, and post-colonial urbanism. An approach which allows equal footing for cities in urban theorization from across and in between the Global North and Global South (e.g., Edensor and Jayne 2012; Jacobs 2012; Robinson and Roy 2016; McFarlane 2021; Baumann and Yacobi 2022). When calling to de-colonize forced displacement research, it is worth bearing in mind a valid criticism that has long been levelled at postcolonial thinking - regarding its abstract scale of analysis which overlooks the lived reality and resistance of the colonised. As the following section expands on, the urban scale provides a means to address this problem and register the experiences and agency of those subjected to colonial processes of exclusion and othering. As such, it offers a fruitful ground to conduct a ‘contrapuntal analysis’ of forced displacement - a concept developed by Edward Said in response to a criticism of his book *Orientalism* in so far as it overlooks the agency of the colonized (Chowdhry 2007). Contrapuntal analysis offers an interpretation of colonial texts that captures the perspectives of the colonizer and the colonized, of imperialism and the resistance to it. Said (1994: 19) considered these processes ‘as making up a set of intertwined and overlapping histories’. Accordingly, this study sets out to explore intertwined and overlapping prolonged histories of colonialism and resistance as they are enacted in the urban sphere.

Relevant Debates in Urban Studies

Due to the rapid urbanization of the globe, and since conflicts and wars increasingly occur in urban spaces, forced displacement is nowadays overwhelmingly urban (UCR paper 11,

2019).⁸ In 2019, UNHCR estimated that around 58 percent of all documented refugees and 80 percent of internally displaced persons resided in cities. Hence, growing attention is directed within urban, geographical, and architectural studies towards the evaluation of the relationship between cities and displaced persons who live or pass through them. This includes camps that are increasingly integrated within cityscapes and the increased urbanization of camps themselves - which manifests in their size, density, multiculturalism, informal economy, and the socio-political relations they foster (Her 2013; Sanyal 2014; Martin, Minca and Katz 2020). This section surveys two central approaches in urban studies to theorise the dialect between cities and displaced persons, one centred on reception and hospitality and the other on political visibility and protest. From these debates, cities emerge as fragile yet crucial arenas for an ethical struggle to assert refugees' rights and counter national and transnational systems of exclusion. Yet rather than a national verses urban dichotomy, the section argues for a need to adopt greater geographical specificity and particularity.

The Dichotomy of Scales in Urban Studies:

One central approach in studying the relationship between displaced persons and cities utilizes ethnographic and spatial methodologies to register urban processes of reception, hospitality, and solidarity. Theoretically, this direction of analysis highlights the significance of cities as arenas from which newcomers can claim membership as urban residents, thereby reshaping the very meaning of citizenship. As studies proclaim, cities offer a range of benefits for displaced persons, such as social networks and encounters, formal and informal labour opportunities, access to essential services, and relative autonomy and anonymity (Muggah and Abdenur 2018; Hou 2013; Sanyal 2012). Another source of appeal is the top-down globalization they foster, shaped by informal migratory flows that establish trans-cultural communities and sites of trans-local connectivity (Sassen 2011; Amin and Thrift 2017; Mitchell 2012a; Magnusson 2013). Adopting a micro scale of analysis, studies further note how urban municipalities, community networks, civil society organizations, local businesses, and religious institutions - in contrast to states – act as leaders in the reception of displaced people (e.g., Bose 2020; Stürner et al. 2019; Muggah and Abdenur 2018; B. Katz 2016; Ehrkamp and Nagel 2014). Moreover, as conflicting political principles and powers are

⁸ For a critical discussion on the boundaries of academic definitions of urbanity vis-a-viz the rural see Roy, 2016.

evoked to deal with people seeking asylum, studies stress the focal role of cities as basis for a variety of welcoming and solidarity initiatives (Ataç, Schütze, and Reitter 2020; Squire 2011; Paik 2017; Darling and Bauder 2019).

Prominent examples of urban welcoming initiatives include the UNHCR's Cities with Refugees initiative, the New Sanctuary Movement in the USA and Canada, Europe's Cities of Refuge, Latin America's Ciudades Solidarias, and the City of Sanctuary in the UK. These movements are cosmopolitan (referring to an ideal which asserts a common humanity and morality outside the law of citizenship) in operation and ambition. Jacques Derrida's (2003:149) analysis of the ethical dilemmas of hospitality and cosmopolitanism outlines the contradictions that exist between the hospitable city and the sovereign state, and within the paradoxical attempt to regulate and condition the unconditional laws of hospitality. Another analytical political ideal that inspires such initiatives is that movement is a fundamental human right (Rygiel 2011b; 2011a; Isin 2002; King 2016; Heinikoski 2020). Examples of groups that centre mobility rights include the No Border global network, the Free Movement Network of migration activists, and Gisha (a legal centre for the freedom of movement of Palestinians). These groups collapse the distinctions between movement as a kinetic act and movement as a group of people seeking a move away from existing societal orders. Existing studies therefore designate cities as important counter arenas to national and supranational measures of exclusion, restriction of mobility, and the refusal of protection towards refugees (Sanyal 2012; Jonathan Darling 2017; Muggah and Abdenur 2018).

However, the theoretical situating of the city as a strategic arena outside the boundaries of national citizenship fails to grasp how national policies of exclusion and austerity jeopardize urban welcoming sentiment and initiatives. For instance, under existing national laws in Lebanon, Palestinian refugees in Beirut are excluded from owning property or working in seventy-two selected professions such as law and medicine (Halabi 2016); similarly, under Egyptian national laws, Sudanese refugees in Cairo do not receive housing or financial aid (Jacobsen, Ayoub, and Johnson 2014). The duality of national versus city scales also risks understating prevailing urban levelled hostility. For instance, a World Refugee Council Research Paper written by Robert Muggah and Adriana Erthal Abdenur (2018) found that in most cities worldwide, displaced persons face stigma, racism, xenophobia, marginalization, discrimination, and poverty, alongside cultural and spatial segregation. Crucially, around 85 percent of refugees worldwide dwell in underdeveloped cities that experience political turbulence and poverty (Muggah and Abdenur 2018). In terms of living conditions, urban refugees predominately inhabit informal settlements, slums, urban fringes,

or camps near and within cities (I. Katz et al in Katz, Martin, and Minca 2018; Fawaz 2017; Montaser 2020). The living conditions of internally displaced people in cities with ongoing conflicts are even more precarious; they often reside in public buildings or improvised camps in parks and public spaces (Al Asali, Wagemann, and Ramage 2019). Studies which zoom into the scale of the streets, neighbourhoods, and infrastructure help complicate the prevailing dichotomy in urban studies between the hospitable city and the exclusionary state.

Instead, they register the struggles over resources, services, and identity which make up every day urban encounters (e.g. Correa-Velez, Spaaij, and Upham 2013; Bolzoni, Gargiulo, and Manocchi 2015; Kikano, Fauveaud, and Lizarralde 2021). Relevant studies for example, illustrate how the arrival of African asylum seekers into south Tel Aviv has led settled southern residents to adopt a defensive and hierarchical notion of urban citizenship; one that is articulated against newer migratory residents of the south and affluent settled residents of the north of the city (Ravid in Sabar and Shir 2019; Cohen and Margalit 2015; Cohen 2015). As part of a broader increase in peoples' willingness to actively challenge political dynamics within the Twenty First century, such urban conflicts are acted out in the public domain through protests (Fontanari and Ambrosini 2018; Zepeda-Millán 2017; Rosenberger, Stern, and Merhaut 2018; Haselbacher and Rosenberger 2018). Adopting a finer scale of analysis which focuses on daily interactions and encounters also help introduce a more nuanced analysis of urban spaces of welcoming. Indeed studies find that welcoming can reinforce hierarchical power geometries between newcomers and hosts (Wilson 2014; Doty, 2009; Ehrkamp and Nagel 2014; Squire and Darling 2013). For instance, Serin D Houston and Charlotte Morse's (2017) research demonstrates how faith-based welcoming movements paradoxically obscure migrant voices by favouring certain stories, religions, and identities. This politics of representation also operates in sites of activism, as Joe Rigby and Raphael Schlembach (2013) analyse a weeklong protest camp set up by European No Border Network activists demonstrates. They observe how a protest by one of these activists who super-glued his hands to the doors of Calais's Town Hall ended up speaking *for* migrants, thus reinforcing their exclusion from political representation.

To substitute the hierarchical notion of hospitality, academics and activists increasingly use the formulation of 'solidarity' (e.g., Hayden and Saunders 2019; Koos and Seibel 2019; Karageorgiou, 2016). Solidarity in this context can be understood through the Arendtian lens as a voluntary form of political interaction of humans that seeks to counter the limits of legislation and achieve political belonging between equals (Kanellopoulos *et al.*, 2020). As Óscar García Gústín and Martin Bak Jorgensen (2019) demonstrate, solidarity

operates on different scales and with different relations to institutional policies: it can be autonomous (e.g. City Plaza Hotel, a self-organized housing project for homeless refugees in Athens); a supplementation or collaboration with local authorities (e.g. the Danish friendly neighbours network); or solidarity can inform institutionalized urban initiatives designed to counter national attitudes of exclusion (such as Barcelona's Refuge City that formed to oppose obstacles placed by the Spanish government). In his study of the Syrian city of Homs, Ammar describes communal forms of solidarity which that have formed to deal with conditions of internal displacement. He notes that those who left the city or own more than one property host internally displaced family and friends, whilst many families in Homs now share houses with homeless relatives. Myria Georgiou et al (2020) further describe smaller-scaled acts of everyday solidarity that emerge out of proximity between older and newer urban inhabitants. For instance, they describe a brief encounter at a local mosque, after which a fellow Londoner gave a refugee struggling with a broken wheelchair a new electric one. Nevertheless, studies also find that the notion of solidarity suffers from vagueness, with activists often feeling uncertain of its meanings and implications (Bauder 2020; Bauder and Juffs 2020).

A limit of the studies examined above is that they center the perspective and agency of those offering reception, hospitality, and solidarity. The following section will consider a strand of research which shifts the perspective of analysis towards the agency of refugees, thereby rhetorizing the supposedly welcoming city as a site of struggle and resistance.

Theorizing Subaltern Agency in the Urban Domain

Rancière's (2015: 77) consideration of politics as inherently aesthetic has inspired a recent body of literature that highlights the importance of cities as stages for displaced people to appear and act politically. For Rancière, politics defines the relationship between what is permitted to be seen and sensed and how, whilst resistance occurs through a disruption of this relationship. Rancière therefore designates genuine 'politics' as organizations, actions, practices, communications, and representations that resist the 'police' (a play on the Greek word for the city-as-a-state *polis*) which orders and naturalizes the 'distribution of the sensible' as an assumption of inequality and inclusion. Another source of influence for these debates is Rancière's (2004) commentary on Arendtian and Agambenian theories. Drawing from the example of women's participation in the French Revolution, Rancière problematizes the division between bare life and public political life. Instead of this polarity, Rancière proposes that through public political performances, those without rights demonstrate

simultaneously their exclusion from political life as well as the ability to act and therefore be political. Namely, resistance is mobilized in the “gap” between the absence of rights and the performative demand of a right to have rights. This lends to a theorization of activism as a performative action that creates new possibilities of what we see, how it is framed, and what can be said or done about it.

Building on Rancière’s theorization of politics, Jonathan Darling (2017) advises that whilst cities cannot fully oppose national and trans-national systems of exclusion towards displaced people, they foster a type of politics that operates within the gaps of such systems. This politics, he stresses, replaces the national framework of legal status (which binds the allocation of rights to citizenship) with an allocation of rights based on the social fact of visible presence. Vicki Squire (2011) provides a tangible example of how asylum seekers disrupt existing urban orders of exclusion through public visibility and performativity. She analyses a café in Sheffield, England, run by asylum seeker volunteers denied the right to work until their refugee applications are processed. As she observes, by volunteering in the café refugees claim visibility as active members of the city and undermine its spatial and sensible hierarchies of exclusion. The function of public space during such performances is twofold: it is the arena where social laws and norms are imposed *and* where they are resisted. This corresponds to Henry Lefebvre’s distinction between ‘representations of space’ (planned, controlled spaces) and ‘representational spaces’ (appropriated lived spaces). Drawing on this, Don Mitchell (2012: 115) suggests that publicness is produced by an interplay between the conflicted spatial visions of ‘those who seek order and control’ versus ‘those who seek places for oppositional political activity and unmediated interaction’. Katz’ (2016) research further illustrates the importance of urban infrastructures in the production of such public spaces of visibility; she frames the informal dwellings of forcibly displaced people as perceptible features in the urban landscape that express their spatial agency and foster encounters with the local population.

Moving from infrastructure to the body, Ansems de Vries’s (2016) research demonstrates the importance of walking as a resource for refugees to tactically manage their visibility and manipulate the city’s systems of control and exclusion. For instance, she describes how they blend within Kuala Lumpur’s cityscape by not walking along highways, a seemingly ‘foreign’ custom. Additionally, refugees constantly change their routes to evade the watchful eyes of migration officers. Hence, rather than a politics of visibility, it is more accurate to speak of a politics of (in)visibility which involves an interaction between the above outlined regimes of visibility and surveillance versus refugees’ agency to manoeuvre

them, blend in or resist visibility, claim visibility, and determine its parameters.

Contemporary research thus demonstrates the relevance of Said's (1994; 254) contrapuntal analysis which maintains that resistance is not located outside of hegemonic orders, but in a relational dialogue with them. Forcibly displaced individuals further shape the parameters of their public visibility by engaging in acutely political performances. Greater academic attention is currently directed towards the rich repertoire of activism by displaced people that manifests their political, spatial, and creative agencies. This ranges from creative self-expression through art and theatre (e.g., Kuftinec 2019; Rotas 2012; Tinius in Bock and Macdonald 2019; Martiniello 2019) to marches and demonstrations (e.g. Ataç, Rygiel, and Stierl 2016; Rajan 2019; Porta 2018; Kanellopoulos et al. 2020) as well as self-harm through hunger strikes or lip-sewing to publicly attest to and protest the voicelessness of being labelled a refugee (e.g. Pellander and Horsti 2017; Edkins and Pin-Fat 2005).

Theoretically, studies note how activism by displaced persons re-mobilizes the very meaning of citizenship in a Rancierian sense; refugees protest their exclusion from civic membership whilst demonstrating their ability to perform embodied indicators of civic participation such as protest (e.g., Rygiel 2011b; 2011a). To advance debates on the spatial and political agency of refugees beyond notion of citizenship and to broaden the possibility of where to locate its manifestation, this study focuses on guided walking tours, a less overtly political performance which blends tourism, creativity, and activism. The urban duality - as a space of governmentality and control but also where the informal and counter-hegemonic manifest - is equally essential in this categoric claim for representation. Perhaps the most eminent theorists to frame the seemingly banal activity of walking as an expression of urban agency are Walter Benjamin and Michel de Certeau. Benjamin's (1997) *Flâneur* (stroller), inspired by Charles Baudelaire, is an emblem of urban modernity *and* a method for reading the city, its sounds, visuals, built environment, and socio-political constellations.⁹ In his book *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984: 93-100) de Certeau takes this notion further and defines pedestrians as 'ordinary practitioners of the city'. He frames their wandering as a 'tactic', an everyday life action that involves a dynamic observation, adaptation, and reassessment of the 'strategies' of urban administration and control. Whilst urban planners and architects determine the layout of the city as an abstract map imposed from above, the 'wanderer', according to de Certeau, is the expert of navigating its lived reality. Through a 'rhetoric of

⁹ See also Benjamin's own exploration of the city of Paris via the method of strolling in *The Arcades Project* (1999).

walking' that includes routes, shortcuts, and detours, 'wanderers' re-write the city and turn it into a lived space.

Furthermore, for de Certeau (1984: 115), 'Every story is a travel story – a spatial practice'. City walking tours compress time and place to produce a communicative narrative (Richardson, 2005). They thus optimise de Certeau's association of the art of storytelling with the tactic of walking through which pedestrians inscribe urban tales. Hence, instead of separating walkers' subjective, perceptual, and corporeal interpretations of the city from the objective realm of infrastructure and architecture, this study considers them as mutually constituted. However, in contrast with these celebrated walking figures of modernity that evade markers of class, race, and gender, this study proposes a historicized reading of walking and guided tours as performances imbued with power structures in specific geographical contexts and imaginations. Indeed, studies demonstrate how material and ideological forms of exclusion along the lines of gender, ethnicity, and class play out in the walking patterns of urban inhabitants (Singer and Bickel, 2015; Greenberg Raanan and Avni, 2020; Guldi 2012). Nevertheless, as well as marking socio-cultural boundaries, walking practices can also transgress them. For instance, Mona Domosh (2010) examines a newspaper photograph of a group of middle-class African Americans walking along the nineteenth-century Fifth Avenue in New York. Since it was an exclusively white area during that period, she frames this documented walk as a 'tactical' transgression of the city's racial orders. On a similar vein, walking tours are imbued with, but might also offer means to transgress, the colonial legacy embedded in the very formation of the tourism industry (Giblin, Ramos, and Grout, 2019).

Recent studies note how "off-the-beaten-track" walking tours that seeks to experience the urban margins reinforce urban constellations of "otherness" along cultural, economic, and ethnic divides (Maitland, 2013; Matoga and Pawłowska, 2018; Lapiņa, 2020). In fact, tourism has long been a key means to cultivate what Said (1995) calls 'imaginative geographies' that render certain places and cultures as exoticized "others". Imaginations that are realised through discursive and visual representations of space as well as designs and performances of space. For instance, in his study of tour guide training in Arusha, Tanzania, Noel Salazar (2006) illustrates how guides are taught to reproduce and exoticify the local to reiterate Western oriental imaginaries. Nevertheless, Salazar also highlights the agency of tour guides, as creative storytellers, to subtly reconstruct or question these narratives. This thesis seeks to advance the debates examined in this section by illuminating the micro politics

of representation that subsists in the liminal spaces between refugees' visible presence and prostate, and between tourism and resistance.

Contribution to Urban Studies

As this section has illustrated, the urban lens offers a productive means to link the macro geopolitical issue of forced displacement with its everyday relational aspects. Nevertheless, the section has further demonstrated the need to adopt greater geographical specificity to consider the scale of street-level interactions, encounters, and mobility. The tendency of existing studies to situate the city as a strategic arena outside the boundaries of national citizenship overlooks urban levelled hostilities, and the ways these are impacted by histories of divide and marginalization. It therefore essentializes cities by overlooking their different geopolitical contexts and histories and how these impact their attitudes towards displaced persons in particular ways. Hence, in calling for greater geographical specificity, this thesis also refers to temporal depth. Refuge and displacement are not restricted to borders and the edges of the state and despite the anthology of dislocation implied in this title, displaced persons are very much part of the urban sphere with its politics, memories, and histories. Moving away from the current theoretical focus in urban studies on how refugees re-envision formulations of citizenship through visibility and protest, this thesis sets out to explore their impact on the representations, memories, and imagination of cities. As such it seeks to offer additional notions of belonging, locality, and participation that exist outside the boundary of urban or national citizenship.

This thesis suggests that the guided tours' performative enactments serve as a political intervention in a Rancièrian (2004) sense, of making space within the space of official public visibility. This thesis charts the potential for guided walking tours to disrupt consensus within two regimes of public perceptions. Firstly, the tours reframe public sensibilities and imagery related to the experiences of forced displacement. Secondly, as a mode of spatial design and a trans-local performance, the tours are informed by and reshape the city's landscape of memory. Hence, the thesis advances Rancièrian political philosophy by demonstrating the importance of particular sites and architectural devices for altering existing perceptual frames and resisting exclusionary orders. Significantly, the tours analysed in this research suggest a move away from the objectification of the traumatic memories of displaced people and the reduction of their agency as described in the first section of this chapter. Instead, during these tours displaced people turn their traumatic life-memories into a self-choreographed and spatiality informed political performances. A useful term to consider, posed by performance

artists Deirdre Heddon, Carl Lavery, and Phil Smith (2009), is 'autotopography', which refers to a walking performance that conveys one's story in relation to a place, or a sense of place in relation to one's identity. As the next section highlights, for displaced persons, constructing an autotopography involves multiple places, some of which can only be accessed through memory. The study proposes the lens of memory studies as a means for conceptualizing the complex maps of overlaid memories, histories, and cross-cultural journeys that make up experiences of forced displacement – and how these, in turn, impact the urban sphere.

Relevant Debates in Memory Studies

As this section will demonstrate, the interdisciplinary field of memory studies offers an additional prism for theorizing the political and spatial agency of displaced persons and the potential of guided walking tours as mode of activism. Within relevant studies, the section will outline a theoretical divide, which correlate with specific disciplines and their assumed scale of analysis. On the one hand, debates in media, literature, and Holocaust studies adopt a global scale of analysis to consider the inherent transculturalism of memory and the potential for an ethic of cosmopolitan memory with its multidirectional possibilities. On the other, debates in geography, urban, and architectural studies demonstrate how national ideologies and histories are scripted and performed via the urban sphere, through conflicting process of remembering and forgetting. By centring the perspectives of forced displaced persons as expressed through city walking tours, the thesis contributes to both these lines of analysis *and* offers a means to broach the theoretical divides between them.

Travelling and Transculturalism in Memory Studies

Paying greater consideration in research to the experiences and agency of displaced persons also requires paying attention to the memories that they carry and transfer across time and place - namely, their traveling memories. The notion of traveling memory is influenced by Said's (2007) essay *Traveling Theory*, in which he explores the ways ideas and theories travel and circulate between persons, situations, geographies, and periods. This travel metaphor was further applied by James Clifford (1997, 2008) to the realm of culture. Researchers in disciplines such as literature, media, Holocaust and cultural studies have further applied the traveling metaphor to call for a transcultural turn within memory studies. A turn which aims to complicate an assumed singular or static bond between memory, nationality, and place by shifting the focus into the travels of memory across and beyond territorial and social borders

(Crownshaw 2016; Carrier and Kabalek 2014; Erll 2011). For instance, in his influential study Michael Rothberg (2009) traces a transcultural archive that consist of the traveling of Holocaust memory within anti-colonial writings. Based on this, he formulates a theory of 'multidirectional memory' that consists of borrowing, dialogue, and revisions between seemingly distinct traumatic memories. This complicates the understanding of the above-mentioned global trauma economy as merely consisting of competition over public recognition and visibility. The multidirectional borrowing, transmission, and appropriation that occurs as theories, cultures, and memories travel is relevant for theorizing the agency of displaced persons to impact multiple urban spheres and cultures.

For instance, Rothberg and Yasemin Yildiz (2011), demonstrate how migrants in Germany form new readings, historical affiliations, and linkages with existing scripts of the Nazi past. Further unpacking the traveling of memory across time through an analysis of literary and visual legacies of the Holocaust, Marianne Hirsch (2012, 2008) formulates the influential theory of 'post-memory'. A theory that captures the enduring and transmitted impacts of traumatic histories on familial and cultural scales across the globe. Indeed, the Holocaust was transcultural in terms of its infrastructures, bureaucracies, and impacts (Assmann and Conrad, 2010). Hence, perhaps unsurprisingly, its commemoration has inspired a global range of practices, discourses, and values - including the discipline of memory studies and the above-noted universal human rights discourse (Diner 2003). Daniel Ley and Natan Sznajder (2002) thus speak of a 'cosmopolitan memory' that transcends national and ethnic boundaries, which is founded on the memory of the Holocaust and offers a cultural foundation for global human rights politics. For example Kelly Butler (2017) notes how the survival testimony has emerged in the post-Holocaust era as a powerful tool to document and protest human rights violations across the globe. Yet, her analyses of Australians' witnessing of the testimonies of Aborigines and asylum seekers presented in literature and media also reveals how this process can end up reiterating existing cultural divides. As she observes, the attempt to grapple with the troubled Australian national history by framing Aboriginal and asylum seeker testifiers as 'objects' for the white-settlers' compassion reiterates hierarchies informed by this colonial legacy. This demonstrates the empirical need to better link debates on travel theory and transcultural memory with postcolonial lens.

Adopting a transcultural approach to memory studies is therefore useful to examine the ethical constraints and possibilities related to the traveling of memory cultures and practices (Moses and Rothberg in Bond and Rapson 2014). However, as Clifford himself has

observed, the notion of 'travel' bares the associations of middle-class recreational activity and muscling adventure. Nevertheless, studying traveling theory from the perspectives of forced displaced persons helps complicate these imaginations and politicize the notions of traveling and cosmopolitan memories. Indeed, the traveling memories of displaced persons hold personal, cultural, and socio-political significance. Displaced persons form attachments to remembered sites that they can no longer access as anchors for longing, identity preservation, and commemoration of the traumas they have undergone (Bender and Winer 2001). Simultaneously, refugees form complex attachments to new and often hostile spaces. As Said (2013: 148) writes: 'both the new and the old environments are vivid, actual, occurring together contrapuntally'. Internally displaced persons similarly form a twofold bond with remembered places that have been altered or destroyed by war and current reconfigured spaces that are unfamiliar and often unsafe (McRae 2019; Charron 2020; Toria 2015). As Azzouz (2019: 107) observes, the devastating aftermath of war can render those who remain 'exiled in their own city, disoriented and lost'. With time, remembered sites are charged with altering emotional and symbolic attributes, and places of misery become sites of desire (Hirsch and Miller 2011; Halilovich 2013). Forced displacement thus involves a painful awareness of places that no longer exist, and complicated relations to homelands, homes, occupied-lands, ruined-lands, and/or host-lands. Within these complex maps of temporal and spatial relations, memory is crucial in the formation and preservation of group and individual identity and heritage.

Memory is also crucial to asylum seekers' and refugees' attempts to navigate or demand acceptance, safety, and freedom in host-lands. In host-countries that have signed the Geneva Convention for instance, the granting of the status of refugee is dependent upon asylum seekers' retelling their life stories (Coffey 2003; Griffiths 2012). Beyond official recognition, significantly, host-societies are more sympathetic and welcoming towards refugees when their life-memories are publicly acknowledged as truthful (Glynn and Kleist 2012). Hence, refugees engage in different tactics to voice their traumatic memories in the public domain, for instance by giving interviews in the media, launching online campaigns, and speaking at public events (Tirosh and Klein-Avraham 2017; Tirosh 2018; Butler 2017). As part of this mnemonic effort, invoking the public memory of host-environments can serve as a source of incorporation or exclusion of newcomers, depending on the socio-political context (Glynn and Kleist 2012). For instance, Haim Yacobi and Moriel Ram (2012) describe how Sudanese and Eritrean asylum seekers in Israel volunteered to help Holocaust survivors clean their homes for the festival of Passover - which celebrates the exodus of Jewish people

from slavery to freedom - in a gesture that was well-documented in the news. African refugees thus referenced Jewish memory and heritage to emphasise a bond based on similar experiences of persecution, exile, and displacement. Memory is equally key to the struggles for political and human rights of internally displaced persons, especially in contexts of prolonged spatial disputes. By memories of lost home(lands), they resist institutionalised attempts to deny their connection to these places and ignore the atrocities they endured (Hawari 2018; McRae 2019; Charron 2020). For instance, Azzouz (2019) describes how in response to extensive regeneration plans in Homs, local architects and citizens form online archives that include the smallest details, such as doors or windows, to commemorate the pre-war city, their identity, and heritage.

A notable gap within the transcultural memory turn and travel theory is its focus on archives (e.g., books, media, and other written or illustrative sources) which overlooks spatial and embodied repertoires of transcultural memory. Paying greater attention to the scale of embodied and spatial interactions can advance the transcultural turn by capturing what Aline Sierp and Jenny Wüstenberg (2015) describe as the 'simultaneous groundedness' of traveling memory. This can advance a contrapuntal analysis on the interplay between top-down and bottom-up constructions of cultures *and* spaces which undermines the association of transculturalism and cosmopolitanism with elites. For instance, through attention to transcultural spatial and embodied elements, Yacobi's (2015, 2016) research traces an 'architecture of diasporic memory' that undermines the Israeli modernist formal landscape that centers Ashkenazi (Jews of Eastern European origin) narratives. His site of analysis is Netivot, a peripheral southern city in Israel with a majority Mizrahi (Jews of Middle Eastern and North African origin) population. In terms of its spatial layout, Yacobi describes the formation of informal street signs directing visitors to the grave of the Moroccan rabbi Israel Abuhitzeira (known as the Baba Sali). He adds that the grave, which draws inspiration from a *mellah* (Jewish quarters in Moroccan cities), has become a popular site of pilgrimage, echoing the practice of visits to tombs amongst both Jews and Muslims in Morocco. As a study by Gruia Bădescu (2019) of the circulation of memorialization practices in Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe similarly highlights, transcultural circulations of mnemonic practices ensue from the agency of individual architects and not merely professional networks and memory regimes. Taking this notion one step further, this study considers urban city walking tours as additional design agents of the city and its heritage.

This thesis therefore wishes to link debates about the traveling of culture and memory with another strand of analyses which considers the spatiality and performativity of memory cultures, as the following section expands on.

Spatiality and Performativity in Memory Studies

Pierre Nora's (1989) notion of '*lieux de mémoire*' (sites of memory) has influenced a rich body of literature within the fields of architecture and geography that considers the spatiality of cultural process of commemoration and the storage of memory. These studies demonstrate the role of cities - with their monuments, street names, archaeology, architecture, and 'old' quarters - as 'theatres of memory' (Samuel 1996). As key debates highlight, cities manifest scripted versions of the past that are anchored in the needs and ideologies of the present; these are fashioned by numerous bodies, objects, and actors, which determine what will be built, signposted, destroyed, renovated, or preserved (Staiger, Steiner, and Webber 2009; Yacobi and Fenster 2016; Ward 2016). The spatiality of memory in cities encompasses designs imposed from above (e.g., memorials, squares, and street names), alongside organically woven informal traces of the past (e.g., historic buildings or sites, ruins, and traces). However, as Paul Stangl (2008) observes, the boundaries between these two styles of mnemonic expressions are in fact ambiguous and fluid. Indeed, sites of memory are increasingly designed to integrate into the urban everyday space, reference pre-existing site-specific memory, and invite collaboration with the audience (Gurler and Ozer 2013). Exemplifying this trend are the Sarajevo Roses, designed by the Ministry of Veterans' Affairs of Sarajevo Canton, Bosnia, in collaboration with the local population. The Roses trace the spatial scars of trauma by filling with red resin the fragmented floral-like patterns left by mortar shell explosions during the Siege of Sarajevo between 1992-1996 (Kappler (2017)). As Maximilian Sternberg (2017) highlights in his analysis of Polish-German border towns, the transformative potential of heritage sites lies precisely in their ability to transcend commemorative and tourist determinations and be integrated into the daily urban environment.

Nevertheless, whether organically attached to place or imposed upon it, existing literature stresses that spatial memory is a powerful informant of national imaginations, power relations, as well as collective and individual identities (Macleod 2013; Drozdowski, Nardi, and Waterton 2016; Mager 2016). The ideological implications of spatial memory are heightened at times of conflict (Till 2005; Pullan *et al.* 2013; Viggiani 2014; Bakshi 2017a; Bădescu 2019). Cities undergoing war and ethno-national disputes are embellished with

heritage sites, memorials, scarred landscapes, and border zones (Schramm, 2011). In addition to the acute violence of wars, ethnonational conflicts are prolonged in cities through land occupation, the displacement of people, and planned destruction of ethnic and sacred buildings and sites (Pullan et al. 2013; Bakshi 2017). They also extend to the present in postwar reconstructions which represent the memory of only one group whilst other memories are left in ruins (Bădescu 2019). As time passes, debates point to the increased commodification and touristification of the engagement with these sites of trauma (Macdonald 2006; Feldman 2008; Weissman 2018; Sturken 2007). However, the rich literature on the spatiality of traumatic memory and contested heritage sites tends to privilege material forms and infrastructure. This relates with the assumed distinction found in Nora's (1989: 8) writing, between *lieux de mémoire* (distant and incomplete mediations, reconstructions, or variations) and '*milieux de mémoire*' (primordial and unmediated gestures, habits or skills). Nora thus forms a binary between memory and history, or, between the archive and the repertoire (such as dance, prayers, and cooking).

Similarly, Till (2008) argues that academic analyses of *lieux de mémoire* tend to privilege a 'biography of a site approach' that focuses on its construction, form, and interaction with the broader landscape of memory, resulting in the formation of an arbitrary separation of time/space, inner/external, and personal/collective. Till suggests that alternatively, academic studies could learn from site-specific activism and artistic practices that reframe conventional understandings of mnemonic sites and creatively explore the interaction between time, space, remembering, and forgetting. Accordingly, this study explores the potential of creative practices by activists to inform theories around the spatiality *and* the traveling of memory. It joins a recent strand of research that considers performative practices such as walking, singing, or praying as inseparable aspects of the experience of sites of memory (e.g., Bonilla 2011; Till 2012 2017; Hawari 2018; Robinson and McClelland 2020). Performance theorists Diana Taylor (2003: 20) observes that repertoires of memory are less studied since they are deemed 'ephemeral, nonreproducible knowledge'; nonetheless, she highlights their importance in recovering marginalized and indigenous memories. Studies from the disciplines of geography and architecture further illuminate the importance of site-specificity to the theoretical and political task of illuminating marginalised memories. For instance, analysing a field near the village of Lovas, Croatia, where a massacre took place in 1991, Jessie Fyfe and Max Sternberg (2019) demonstrate how communal memory work – such as regularly ploughing the field – can overcome institutional disregard and the landscape's natural generational capacity.

Bodily practices around memorials such as placing flowers or images of loved-ones can also minimize the gaps between personal versus institutionalised and collectivised accounts of memory (Edkins 2003). Analyzing the Trail of the Displaced, a walk to commemorate the Karelian evacuation in Eastern Finland, Anna-Kaisa Kuusisto-Arponen's (2009) analysis further demonstrates the potential of walking to activate a bond between people, place, and time. She frames the walk which occurs annually on the same roads used during the evacuation in 1940 as a performance of rootedness and belonging. Bonilla's (2011) research on memory walks organized by labor activists in Guadeloupe further illustrates how the historical intimacy generated by site-specificity can also be harnessed for protest. These walks, she highlights, arrange historical events such as the slave and anticolonial uprising within a common trajectory with to present-day politics. In a timely example for how bodily practises around memory sties can inform protest from June 2020, protesters contested the United Kingdom's memorialisation of its trans-national colonial racist legacy through statues, plaques, and street names in solidarity with the global Black Lives Matter Movement. In one incident they graffitied a statue of the former Prime Minister Winston Churchill in London; in another, activists' tore down a statue of the slave-trader Edward Colston in Bristol. Nonetheless, as Hamzah Muzaini (2015) further demonstrates in his analysis of personal memories of the Second World War in Malaysia, attempts to forget traumatic memories are also enacted through embodied spatial practices. He describes how people navigate space to avoid physical traces of the past, deliberately or unconsciously. Hence, studying repertoires of transcultural memory requires a close attention to the interactions between remembering and forgetting and between performances and sites of memory.

An area especially successful in theorizing the dialect between the moving body and heritage sites is the study of performative tourism (e.g., Edensor, 2000; Sarmento 2017; Shtern, 2022). Studies for instance observe how the very precursor of modern tourism, the practice of pilgrimage, indicates the significance of the movement of body and mind in ritualized recollections of heritage (Legassie 2017; Pullan in Elsner and Rutherford 2007). In our current era of global capitalism, embodied interactions with sites of memory help reproduce and commodify geographical imaginations. Looking at the Cu Chi tunnels in Vietnam - once a site of resistance to U.S. military operations and now a popular international tourist destination - Christina Schwenke (2006) demonstrates how gestures such as crawling through the tunnels mix *real* traces of memory with simulated re-enactments of history. Indeed, the very premise of keeping memory alive always entails reproduction and editing (Young 1998). Studies also point to the agency of tour guides in negotiating the

disparities between the spatial present and the absent past. For instance, looking at the spatialization of Berlin's tragic heritage, Irit Dekel (2009: 76) demonstrates how tour guides mediate voids by providing 'historical and topographic context' (for example, by pointing out 'that was Hitler's bunker'). Similarly, Naomi Leite (2001) charts how Jewish heritage tour guides in Portugal materialize absent histories in a site with few remains, by referencing, encountering, rendering perceptible, and imagining this absent heritage. Indeed, in comparison with officialized and sanctioned landscapes of memory (such as touristic attractions, historical sites, memorials, and museums), walking tours represent history in a more fluid and conversational manner (Wynn 2010). This fluidity can also foster transcultural dialogue between oppositional narratives and identities.

For example, Alena Pfoser and Emily Keightley (2019) demonstrate the agency of tour guides in Tallinn, Estonia to maneuver memory disputes with their Russian audience regarding the Second World War and the Soviet Union. As they observe, the global tourism industry remains understudied within the literature on transcultural memory, although it is a key facilitator of encounters with the traumas and histories of "others". Pfoser and Keightley suggest that this lacuna relates to the association of tourism with *low-culture* and the commodification of trauma and the cultures of "others". More broadly, this correlates with the lacuna in studies that consider the spatiality and performativity of transcultural memory. However, the tactic of guided tours demonstrates that the divisions between commemoration, objectification, commodification, and activism are far more blurred. For instance, studies show how tour guides can tactically manipulate the strategies of official tourism to illuminate marginal histories, such as the anarchist history of Barcelona (Obrador and Sean 2010); anti-racist resistance in Brixton (Harrison in West 2010); or forced evictions and regeneration in Taipei (Wang and Kao 2017). Since these tactical walking interventions voice silenced memories to shift public debate they can be theorised through a future-oriented debate in memory studies on the interplay between memory and activism (Gutman 2017a, 2017b; Rigney 2018; Reading and Katriel 2015). Advancing these debates, this study further considers the potentiality of guided walking tours led by displaced persons as a transcultural mode of memory activism.

Contribution to Memory Studies

Building on the debates examined in this section, the thesis frames heritage tours guided by or facilitated in collaboration with displaced persons as a transcultural mode of memory activism. The transcultural perspective on memory is inherently subversive as it undermines

hegemonic terms, such as nation state or globalisation (Mageo 2001). However, deploying the term memory activism suggests commitment to a more deliberate political action that intends to enrich the dominant collective memory and reframe public debate. Adding the descriptive noun transcultural to this term further indicates a political action that involves mixing local and traveling memories and reframing urban locality and heritage as informed by multiple cultures and mobilities. The focus on guided tours and the motion of walking provides a means for unpacking the importance of the body, place, and architecture to this mode of transcultural activism. Also relevant here is the work of geographers inspired by a Heideggerian phenomenological philosophy which emphasizes the significance of movement to our understanding of place and cities (Casey 2013; Massey 2013; Rotas 2012; Hebbert 2016). This approach helps theorise the ways in which performative interactions with sites of memory can rewrite urban spheres. With further relevance also to the practice of heritage walking tours, Till (2008: 105) notes, places are ‘porous and mobile’, transformed by the ‘movements of memory through landscape, story, and ritual’. Similarly, Tim Ingold (2007: 77) asserts that places are ‘knot tied from multiple and interlaced strands of movement’. These statements encapsulate the agency of narrated walks to form and transform place.

As such, the thesis contributes to the field of memory studies by undoing a theoretical and disciplinary divide between the transcultural turn and studies on the spatiality and performativity of memory. Placing these lines of analysis in dialogue is mutually beneficial. Existing debates on the travelling and transculturalism of memory successfully undermine an assumed static and singular bond between nationality, place, and memory. Nevertheless, they tend to overlook the spatiality and performativity of memory, thereby negating a range of transcultural practises and interactions, especially ones that are more informal and marginalized. Meanwhile, studying transcultural encounters as they manifest through tourism performances and heritage sites can help studies on spatial memory and memory activism transgress beyond the limited analytical categories of nation states and distinct ethno-national groups. Finally, studying travel theory, cosmopolitan memory, and the spatiality of traumatic memory from the novel perspective of displaced persons helps politicise these concepts. Firstly, it links them with an urgent struggle to reframe the so called ‘refugee/reception crises’ by attending to the cross-generational and prolonged aspects of forced displacement. This means attending to what Mindy Thompson Fullilove (2016) defines as ‘root shock’ which requires prolonged acts of justice that transcend beyond the hierarchical temporality of memory versus post-memory. Secondly, the thesis links these debates with a political struggle to claim membership and participation within the urban sphere and its heritage.

Conclusion

As this chapter has demonstrated, though forced displacement is prominent within public, political, media debates, and within academic research, too often the public image of refugees is that of hopeless, voiceless victims – or, worse, a threat to national sovereignty. The geo-temporal scale of forced displacement research also focuses on instances of border-penetration and emergency accommodation – thereby reiterating the focus on the boundaries of nation states and the conception of an unprecedented reception or refugee crisis. In contrast, this thesis offers the urban domain as a productive arena from which to consider forced displacement beyond borders and memory studies as a theoretical ground to reflect on its prolonged cusses and impacts across time and place. To expand the theoretical political vocabulary of forced displacement research outside of the dominant prisms of citizenship, state of exception, and biopolitics, the study utilizes a postcolonial and decolonial lens. Contributing to the existing research which reframes the debate on forced displacement from the scale of embodied experiences, interactions, and individuals agency - the innovation of this study lies in examining how displaced persons actively deconstruct the spatial configurations of urban heritage during the city walking tours that they lead. Through this, it demonstrates that as much as research on forced displacement can benefit from the lens of urban and memory studies, existing debates within these disciplines have much to gain from research which centres the voices and acts of agency of displaced people. The overall theoretical contribution of this thesis is therefore the integration of these diverse theoretical angles within a single project to produce a new trans-local approach to study the experience of forced displacement and the politics of the city. An approach that is useful for understanding the interplay between the micro concerns, strategies, and agencies of forcibly displaced people with macro geopolitical processes at global, national, urban, and local scales.

Chapter Two: Localizing Transcultural Memory



Figure 1: Halbouni, M. 2018. *Public Art Installation Commissioned by Maxim Gorky Theatre Berlin for the 3rd Berlin Autumn Salon* [Online]. [Accessed 27 July 2021]. Available from: <https://www.zilbermangallery.com/manaf-halbouni-a416.html>

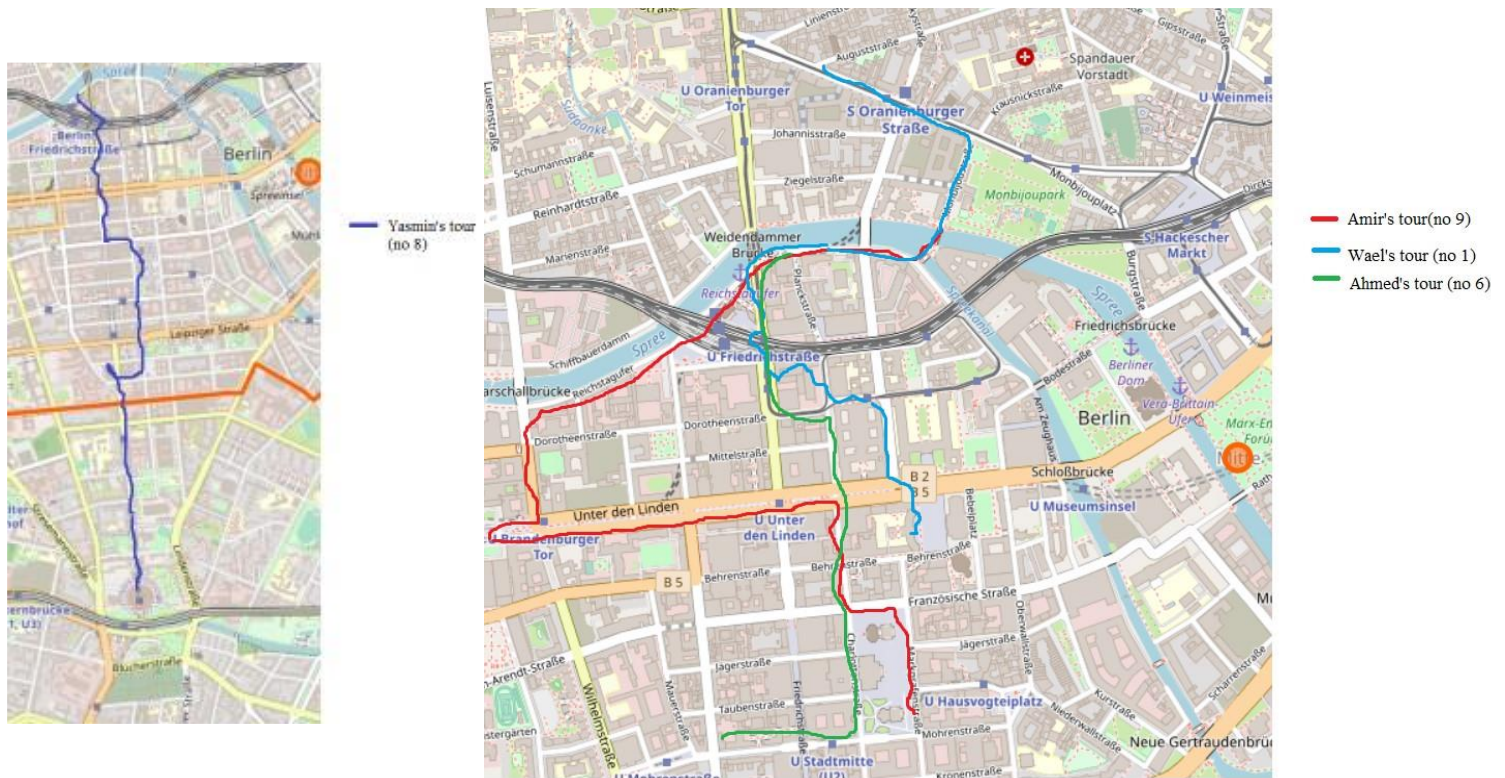
In November 2017, Syrian-German artist Manaf Halbouni placed three up-turned buses in front of the Berlin's Brandenburg Gate as part of an installation entitled *Monument* (Fig. 1).¹⁰ It was inspired by a widely shared photograph of a makeshift barrier in the Syrian city of Aleppo, erected out of buses to protect civilians from snipers during the civil war. The placement of buses near the Brandenburg Gate - an emblem of division as well as unity,

¹⁰ Halbouni's work was set up earlier outside the Frauenkirche church in Dresden.

where the official ceremony of Germany's reunification took place in 1990 – added another layer of symbolism to the artistic installation. As Halbouni states on his website, the artwork aimed to link the experiences of war with the hope for reconstruction and peace among people in the Middle East and in Europe. The installation is a striking visualisation of the key topic addressed in this chapter, namely the interactions between traumatic memories from different cultures, places, and times. This chapter asks: how can refugees affect the public memory of historical division and conflict in their host-city? To answer this, it closely examines city walking tours of Berlin guided by refugees from Syria and Iraq in the migratory district of Neukölln and the centralised district of Mitte (Maps 1-2). As with Halbouni's art installation, these tours use Berlin's sites of memory to draw analogies with traumatic experiences of war and displacement in other cities.



Maps 1: Neukölln district and the paths of the tactical tours closely examined in Chapter Two.



Map 2: Mitte district and the paths of the tactical tours closely examined in Chapter Two.

Indeed, Berlin is embedded with multiple remnants of the various transformations, reconstructions, and conflicts the city has witnessed, especially from the Twentieth century. This traumatic legacy includes serving as the headquarters of the Nazi regime and undergoing heavy bombing and destruction. After the war, the Soviet Union assumed control over its Eastern segment and declared it the capital of the Deutsche Demokratische Republik (DDR). Meanwhile, the allies took over Berlin's western side, which became part of Bundesrepublik Deutschland (with its capital in the city of Bonn). Subsequently, Berlin became a key site of Cold War tensions. The Wall that was built in 1961 became an iconic symbol of the period, associated with the division of peoples and as a border between two different worlds. Nonetheless, the fall of the Wall in 1989 and the following formation of Berlin as a unified capital of a united Germany marked a new chapter in the city's story and its resurrection as the 'New Berlin' (Cochrane, 2006). This coincided with a construction boom, gentrification in eastern neighbourhoods, and the renovation of historic districts. Concomitantly, the establishment of the New Berlin entailed coming to terms with the traumatic legacies of two authoritarian regimes, alongside issues derived from the asymmetric unification, which caused displacement and disaffection for many East Germans. The grappling with these

traumatic legacies has also coincided with processes of construction, design, and renovation that express mixed desires to remember and forget. The city's sites of memory are further experienced, reinstated, and renegotiated through a highly popular landscape of heritage walking tours. Such tours, the chapter stresses, can reinforce or alternatively revise existing displays of public memory and conceptions of locality and belonging.

In its latest incarnation, the New Berlin has become a trendy cosmopolitan city that draws an influx of visitors with a global circulation of memory cultures and preservation practices. Nevertheless, the chapter will demonstrate how the city fails at conveying its heritage in ways that are inclusive of transcultural identities and histories. The need to pluralise and diversify notions of belonging to Berlin and conceptions of its heritage and identity have only increased since 2015. At that time, Germany accepted over one million refugees escaping the Syrian Civil War that erupted in 2011. This 'open arms' policy broke with the position of exclusion adopted by most other European governments (Sigona 2018; Hockenos 2015; Miller and Orchard 2014).¹¹ Consequently, Berlin is now the home of over thirty thousand Syrian refugees (as well as refugees from other war-torn countries such as Iraq). Nearly a decade later, the most basic needs of these new arrivals, such as housing, education, and health have mostly been met. Nevertheless, as part of the broader aim of expanding the geo-temporal scope of forced displacement research, the chapter considers the new concerns that are emerging around coexistence and belonging and frames the refugee-guided tours as a potential mechanism for tackling them. It argues that the tours pave a path for a transcultural co-inhabitation of today's globalized cities and their absent-present histories. Furthermore, through an analysis of these tours, the chapter demonstrates the democratizing potential of performative interactions with sites of memory. Firstly, it highlights the subaltern agency of pedestrians and refugees to intervene in the politics of urban memory and undermine mnemonic displays shaped by specialized networks of heritage and urban designers. Additionally, the chapter illustrates the power of this agency to open national sites and paths of memory as relevant to other experiences and cultures and demonstrate the entanglement between seemingly distinct geographies.

The chapter draws on seventeen interviews with tour guides, NGO workers, and tour participants conducted during and after walking tours and the participation in ten walking tours in Berlin - from across a spectrum between commercial and political intent. Snapshots

¹¹ Most Syrian refugees have been resettled in neighbouring Middle Eastern countries, such as Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey.

from these tours will be presented to convey the plurality of narratives, agendas, encounters, and creative interventions they encompass. Collages will be used to represent the refugee-guided tours' distinctive auto-generated spatial designs and allow the readers to orientate themselves spatially and visually in the chapter. The structure of the chapter evolves as follows. Firstly, it will examine Berlin's official heritage trails and the memories they reveal or conceal, to analyse the "site" of the guided tours' site-specific performance. Subsequently, the tours will be situated within the broader context of Berlin's ambivalent hospitality towards refugees. As will be demonstrated, the refugee-guided tours interfere in the politics of refugees' (in)visibility through a performative mode of self-representation and contextualisation of the local welcoming infrastructure. Following on from this, the chapter will outline the importance of movement and collectivity to the tours' site-specific performance. The subsequent section will frame the tours as a mode of memory activism by focusing on the tours' usage of commemorative sites as a setting to address recent traumas of war and dictatorship from elsewhere. It then expands the analysis of the activism enacted in the tours by considering the tours' tracing of Berlin's local transcultural paths, and the role shift they enact between newcomers and the city expert. This final section will further reflect on the potentials and constraints that arise from the tours' hybrid mixing of tourism and activism.

(In)visible Memory Lanes in Berlin

On a grey April morning I arrive at the Hackescher Markt train station, a babble of languages fills the air as a multitude of tourists try to locate their assigned tour guides. Guides from different companies are wearing distinctly coloured shirts, the variety of which indicate the number of tours offered by the various companies, with different themes and in several languages. Some coordinators who oversee this hectic process help me locate the correct tour, as per my online reservation via the TripAdvisor company Viator. I have booked a half day *Jewish Heritage Walking Tour of Berlin*, which is available in English three times a week at the cost of twenty euros. Next, our tour guide Nimrud introduces himself as an Israeli philosophy student in one of Berlin's universities. His family on his mother's side originated from Berlin, Nimrud tells us, and his grandmother is a Holocaust survivor. Over the next four hours, we walk across the centralised district of Mitte visiting commemorative sites related to the Holocaust. Numerous other guided walking tours follow the same paths and at each stop many other tourists surround us. Through a close analysis of the tour and the memory sites it

incorporates, this section maps out some of Berlin's visible and invisible memory lanes, and the political and representational conflicts they encapsulate.

The heritage tours a city offers reveal a great deal about its public memory, its self-proclaimed story, and the tensions that exist within these. Especially popular in Berlin are Jewish Heritage tours, such as the one described above. Also frequently booked are tours that highlight its emblem as a formerly divided city during the Cold War, and a bridge between a previously divided continent. Two examples are *A Neighbourhood Walk: Living at the Wall* and *A Tale of Two Cities: Exploring Life In East & West Berlin*. The city's traumatic ghosts from the Twentieth century are therefore a key focus within Berlin's commercialized heritage tours. Indeed, Berlin is world-renowned for its relatively successful engagement with what Sharon Macdonald (2010: 1) names 'difficult heritage'; namely, 'a past that is recognised as meaningful in the present but that is also contested and awkward for public reconciliation with a positive, self-affirming contemporary identity'. The German term *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* designates the attempt to grapple with the local difficult history. This is an ongoing project for which architecture provides a means of negotiating the place of the past in the present (Koepnick 2001). The profitable landscape of heritage tours in Berlin that dramatizes, vocalises, and navigates the city's memorials further turns this 'difficult heritage' into a live immersive interaction and a commodity.

Following Nimrud across the streets of the old Jewish quarter - now a bustling area packed with businesses, restaurants, and commercial shops - we are faced with a representational paradox. Namely, walking tours that deal with the city's difficult heritage seek to render a traumatic absence visible and comprehensible. As one anonymous reviewer on the *Jewish Heritage Tour* website notes, the tour is 'sparse on landmarks'. To counteract this lacuna, Nimrud leads us through some architectural and artistic attempts to trace and mark Berlin's absent-present voids. The memorials we visit during the tour further grapple with the complex representational task of commemorating atrocities from the perspective of the land of the perpetrators, accounting for guilt and national responsibility. One example is the *Block of Women*, designed by artist Ingeborg Hunzinger in 1995. It commemorates a weeklong street protest organized by a group of German women in 1943 in demand for the release of their Jewish husbands. The figurative sculpture comprises of three large red sandstone blocks carved with Jewish symbols (such as a broken violin symbolizing the destruction of Jewish culture) besides a couple embracing (Figs 2-3). Like many of the city's memory sites, it assumes monumental capabilities in the sense that it is composed, large in scale, and formalised.

However, beside such explicit spatial acts of historical communication, during the tour we also visit efforts to challenge the iconography and spatiality of traditional memorials. For instance, we gather around one of the *Stolperstein* scattered across the city, designed by artist Gunter Deming (Fig. 4). The *Stolperstein* are plaques with Nazi victims' names placed on sidewalks near their former houses in Berlin and other European cities that cause people to 'stumble' into the act of remembrance (Gould and Silverman 2013). These memory provocations effectively convey the National Socialist past as originating from the city's daily rhythms and mundane spaces. Indeed, the city's infrastructure is embedded with present-absent signifiers of this history, such as houses from which Holocaust victims were expelled, school buildings formally used as forced-labour camps, and pavements built by prisoners of war. We also visit the Missing House in *Große Hamburgerstrasse* that was destroyed during a bombing raid in 1943. On the firewalls of the buildings adjacent to the vacant space, conceptual artist Christian Boltanski has placed information about the former inhabitants of the missing house (Fig. 5). As Nimrod tells us, prior to 1942, most residents in this building were Jews; however, by the time of the bombings, they were evicted, displaced, and murdered.



Figure 2: Jewish Symbols in the Block of Women Memorial.



Figure 3: Block of Women Memorial



Figure 4: *Stolperstein*.



Figure 5: Christian Boltanski's installation.

The juxtaposition of traumatic memory in mundane places and the spatial play with absence and presence are two of the strategies Adam Sharr (2010) designates as the ‘architecture of absence’, which offers creative spatial solutions to the representational paradox of visualising a traumatic void. Passing along the city’s many memorials, the New Berlin’s compulsion - to imprint local difficult memory within the urban fabric so that it is not forgotten – is highly noticeable. Nonetheless, memorials’ attempts to repair are always inadequate, as memorials always involve a crisis of memory, legitimisation and representation (Till 2005). Moreover, memorials are a means for sterilising local traumatic memories by sealing them in a concrete structure and linear narrative that articulates a trajectory of redemption (Landzelius 2003; Edkins 2008; Till and Kuusisto-Arponen 2015). The extensive construction of memorials and their dramatization through tourist practices thus suppress the awkwardness of dealing with Berlin’s difficult heritage by affirming its identity as a city that has sufficiently dealt with its traumatic past. This contributes to Berlin’s international appeal as cosmopolitan, liberal, *and* an acceptable member of ‘a global moral order’ (Till 2005: 22). Therefore, whilst Berlin’s memory sites communicate a local history they are inspired by a global circuit of narratives and values. Additionally, they are informed by an international bureaucratic regime of preservation solidified through the cultural UN agency UNESCO. This regime of preservation formalized during the twentieth century, in step with the violent impulse to cause ruination that so characterises this era (Allais 2018).

As we are a small group of seven participants, there is an intimate atmosphere during our tour, and we get to know each other. One British family tells me that they are here to learn more about their Jewish-German heritage. An Italian couple note that this is their first time in Berlin and that they hope to visit all its landmarks. Indeed, in addition to a global influence of values and preservation practices, the audience that experiences the vast landscape of memory in Berlin is also international. Such visitors come with different sets of values, mnemonic cultures, and consumeristic expectations that often conflate with local memory politics. Personifying this tension is the former border crossing between East and West Berlin at Checkpoint Charlie. This is one of the few spatial remains of the Berlin Wall, whose considerable present-absence adds to a multitude of scars, voids, and memorials that make up the urban sphere of the ‘New Berlin’. An open-air exhibition besides Checkpoint Charlie further commemorates the notorious shootings of East Berliners trying to cross into the West, an additional tragic association with the Wall. However, the preservation of Checkpoint Charlie, informed by an international interest in Berlin’s former role as the DDR

capital, contrasts with the local hegemonic narrative which underlines a unified German identity and privileges a West German perspective (Souto 2011; Frank 2016).

In fact, since re-unification, the city has been rebuilt and its history retold from the perspective of its western side. The formation of the New Berlin was orchestrated by historiographers, architects, urban planners, and politicians predominantly from the former west of the city, who sanctioned the erasure of DDR architecture, memorials, and street names (Lee 2010). The controversial reconstruction of the Schlossplatz façade, announced in 2003 and completed in 2020, is an indication that this spatial forgetting is ongoing. The original palace, situated in the cultural complex of the Museum Island, was heavily ruined during allied air raids. In 1950, the DDR destroyed its remains and subsequently built on its ground the Palast der Republik, a symbol of socialism's triumph over monarchism. As part of the recent restoration-work, the Palast der Republik has been eliminated (Costabile-Heming, 2017). Furthermore, whilst the renovation of this dominant feature in the cityscape is seen by many to mend urban scars, others view this expensive endeavor as a mere "Disneyfied" replica of Prussian Baroque architecture. The reconstruction, designed by Italian architect Franco Stella who was selected from an architectural competition in 2008, cost 590 million euros (Werning 2012).

During the *Jewish Heritage Tour*, we visit the reconstructed *Hackesche Höfe*, a courtyard that was damaged during the Second World War. This extensive reconstruction, completed in 1997 at the price of 80 million deutschmarks, is a similar attempt at architecturally citing the past and another emblem for the urban renewal of the New Berlin. Like Schlossplatz's renovated façade, it reveals representational tensions around past, present, nostalgia, simulation, and the metaphysics of authenticity. Kurt Berndt built the original site in 1906 and August Endel designed its Art Nouveau façade. We next visit Hackesche Höfe, a symbol of the historically cosmopolitan Scheunenviertel (Barn Quarter). This was once the home of many Jewish migrants who lived alongside French Huguenot refugees (Protestants persecuted in France due to their religion). However, whilst the New Berlin champions commemorating a cosmopolitan history associated with its long-gone persecuted Jewish minority, it struggles with the representation of newer minorities and migratory histories (Mandel 2008). The recent reconstruction of Schlossplatz's façade further reflects this tension. Its ambition to restore a glorified pre-Nazi past conflates with the attempts to reinvent New Berlin as cosmopolitan and inclusive.

For instance, plans (announced in 2017 and eventually overturned) to restore a cross on the palaces' dome and a band of text calling for people to submit to Christianity instigated

opposition from leftists, Muslim, and Jewish communities. Criticism has further arisen over the Humboldt Forum collection that is now housed in Schlossplatz, which contains looted objects from former colonies generalised under the category of 'non-European artifacts' (Steckenbiller 2019; El-Tayeb 2020). As de-colonial initiatives (such as Humboldt 21 and Berlin Postkolonial) stress, this collection glorifies Germany's imperial past and marginalizes the histories of people who moved from the colonies to the metropole (Schwarz 2013). The renovated site therefore speaks to the German tendency to overlook and trivialise its difficult colonial heritage (partly since it consisted of a shorter period in comparison with other colonial regimes).¹² More broadly, this correlates with a pan-European memory culture which disregards the injustices of colonialism (Gilroy 2005; Engler 2013). The public outrage caused Bénédicte Savoy, an advisory board member of the Humboldt Forum, to resign and publicly denounce the museum as a poor reflection of contemporary, multi-cultural Germany (Bowley 2018). As she alludes to, this controversy encapsulates a central tension in contemporary urban heritage production which often fails to acknowledge urban trans-cultural identities and histories.

Returning to our guided tours, following the brief reference to a past vibrant Jewish life in Hackesche Höfe, we again return to the theme of death. Our next tour stop is the Old Jewish Cemetery and the Jewish school and home for the elderly built besides it (Fig. 6). Nimrud describes how the Gestapo destroyed the cemetery and turned the School and Elderly home into a transit station from which Jewish Berliners were deported to extermination camps. Nimrud further points our attention to one of the city's first monuments to the Jewish victims of Nazism, from 1985. The expressionist-style sculpture which consists of thirteen bronze figures was designed by Willi Lammert (Fig. 7). As our tour nears its conclusion, it becomes apparent that despite the promise to teach us about the city's Jewish heritage, it is hardly mentioned, and instead the tour mainly focuses on its horrific destruction. The tour thus caters to an international touristic obsession and fetishization of the Nazi history. Such cathartic engagements with sites of trauma, occur at the expense of a more critical reflection on the socio-political causes of past violent events (Sturken 2007). Visiting highly visible and easy to locate sites of memory, the engagement of commercialized walking tours such as the *Jewish Heritage Tour* with the memory trails of Berlin reiterates existing exhibitory practices involving the 'preservation' and 'conservation' of 'what already is' (Hall 2000: 3).

¹² Germany's colonial rule began in 1884 and ended during the First World War, when it was seized by Britain and South Africa.



Figure 6: Tombstones remains in the Ancient Jewish Cemetery.



Figure 7: Monument to the Jewish Victims of Nazism.

Nevertheless, a similar practice of urban walking tours is used in the city to expand, problematize, and question its public mnemonic displays. As Fabian (Interview 21, 2018) a German tour guide and educator explains, in Berlin tour guiding does not require formal training and registration. This, on the one hand, authorizes an unregulated market in which large international tourism companies hire cheap and inexperienced guides, reducing the salaries of those more qualified. However, the lack of formal training requirements permits more informal walking tours that critically engage with the local history. Such tours cater to a shift in consumer demand identified by Fabian, in which 'the audience is more diverse and therefore it seeks perspectives that are more versatile'. Therefore, Fabian adds, instead of merely addressing 'what is there', these tours trace what is missing or marginalized. The social walking tour company Berliner Spurensuche ('Berlin's search for traces') exemplifies this trend and indicates the focus on traces in its name. It was initiated by activists and historians to illuminate the everyday cultural history of Berlin through offering tours such as *The Precarious Berlin: The story of poverty and solidarity*.

The increased diversity and politicization of Berlin's landscape of walking tours is a glo-localised process which correlates with a global trend in various cities. This trend links with a broader shift in cultural memory, influenced by post-colonial, feminist, and queer critical thinking, which is more attentive to marginalised perspectives. As such, tours of local LGBT history and culture can be found in San Francisco (*Cruisin' the Castro Walking Tours*), Barcelona (*LGBT Tour of Barcelona*), as well as in Berlin (*Schöneberg and Kreuzberg's Secret Gay Tour*). Nevertheless, as Fabian (Interview 21, 2018) describes with regards to Berlin, such 'alternative' tours are co-opted as markers of its urban alternative trendy image, 'even while the city's underground culture is undercut by gentrification'. Therefore, these politicised tours cannot fully evade the consumeristic and touristic logics that are embedded in the global tourism industry. However, despite being comprised by the logics of tourism, these tactical tours nevertheless manage to problematize the standardise tourist performance. They act as mode of memory activism by opening a space of critical reflection on history, its memorialisation, and representation. This is further evident in tours that deal with Berlin's marginalised difficult colonial heritage, such as Berlin Postkolonial's tour of the city's African Quarter in English and German. It narrates the histories of Prussia's enslavement trade and anti-colonial resistance against the German Empire, linking these with recent de-colonial initiatives (Förster *et al.* 2016).

Berlin Postkolonial thus deploys the heritage walking tour performance - which collapses the distance between the past and the site-specific present - to illustrate how a linear

sequence of before and after fails to grasp the colonial order and its multiple temporalities (Mbembe 2001). Like the above-mentioned ‘architecture of absence’, the tours play with voids that are outlined by the words and gestures of tour guides (Sharr 2010). Moreover, such tours encourage a critical spatial reflection on public mnemonic modes of display. For instance, during a *Post-colonial Tour of Neukölln*, facilitated by Berliner Spurensuche, we visit Columbiadamm Cemetery. Our tour guide points to the placement, in 2009, of a far smaller memorial for Herero and Nama victims on the grounds of the 1907 memorial for the very German soldiers who committed the genocide (Fig. 8).¹³ Furthermore, our tour guide notes, the memorial does not use the term genocide and instead honours ‘the victims of German Colonial Rule in Namibia’. The engagement with this difficult European legacy through tactical walking tours also transcends national borders. Similar tours can be found in London (*London's Black History Walks*); Belgium (*Guided Walk: from Colonial to EU Power*) and Lisbon (*African History Tour of Lisbon*). Nevertheless, *Post-colonial Tour of Neukölln* overlooks a transcultural link between the genocide in Namibia and the Holocaust.¹⁴

This section has walked through some of the mixed spatial processes that construct the public memory of Berlin, which are derived from conflicting desires to remember, forget, transform, preserve, overcome, and re-write history. As argued, these localized processes are shaped by urban, national, and global actors, practices, and politics. Nevertheless, as the debate on the reconstructed Schlossplatz façade has further demonstrated, the inherent transculturalism of the city and its heritage are not sufficiently represented within the city’s memory lanes. On the one hand, commercialised walking tours have been shown to re-affirm the distribution of the sensible as it relates to these hierarchies of memory. On the other, the section has charted the formation of tactical heritage tours that turn urban space into a stage for critique, reform, and diversification of public memory. To advance the understanding on the implications mixing sightseeing and activism, the following sections examine walking tours of Berlin guided by refugees from Syria and Iraq. As argued, the tours provide a much-needed avenue for opening the city’s public memory to more inclusive and transcultural standpoints.

¹³ German military forces committed a genocide of the indigenous Herero and Nama in their colony in Southwest Africa (present-day Namibia) during 1904-1907 (Conrad 2012).

¹⁴ Heinrich Ernst Göring, the colonial governor of German Southwest Africa and one of the perpetrators of the Herero and Nama genocide was the father of Hermann Göring, one of the leading figures in the Nazi Party. For more on the connections between the Holocaust and colonialism see (Arendt 1973).

To better understand the aims and implications of the tactical refugee-guided tours, it is crucial to consider the cultural atmosphere in which they operate. The following section therefore situates the tours within the broader context of Germany's ambivalent hospitality towards refugees and compares them with other initiatives that try to bridge newer and more established Berliners.



Figure 8: Memorial Stone in Honour of the Victims of German Colonial Rule in Namibia Besides a Memorial for German Soldiers.

Ambivalent Welcoming Infrastructures

Standing near Woolworth at Karl-Marx-Straße, the meeting-point for a *Refugees Show Their Berlin* tour, a young participant (Interview 22, 2018) tells me why she is here: 'I am from Berlin, and I want to understand what the city is like for a newcomer.' Another participant (Interview 23, 2018) says: 'I am not after the normal touristic experience; I want to learn from people who know the neighbourhood'. As more participants arrive, we gather around our tour guide, Hussein, who introduces himself: 'I used to be a businessperson in Damascus, but as you know everything got destroyed. After five years of that horrible war, I found myself here, as a refugee'. Over the subsequent two hours, Hussein narrates his painful, funny, and frustrating encounters with the city. For instance, as we walk past a refugee camp, Hussein notes that whilst the media reports the fights that break out inside these shelters, it neglects to mention 'the level of [over]crowdedness in the camps that creates these problems' (Map 3, Stop 2). He further describes his personal experience in *Tempelhof* (a former airport built by the Nazis and recently turned into an urban refugee camp): 'There is always noise... You hear everything. If someone tells his wife I love you, someone from the other side of the camp responds, I love you too'.¹⁵ Through the tour, Hussein intervenes in the politics of refugees (in)visibility through a performative process of self-representation and contextualization. Correspondingly, this section frames the refugee-guided tours as a self-choreographed counter-mapping of Berlin's ambivalent welcoming infrastructures from the perspective of its recipients.

¹⁵ For more on the controversial camp see Parsloe 2017.



Map 3: Central features in Hussein 's tour, December 2018, 2.83 km, 1 hour 58 minutes, 8°C.

Amidst a global reception crisis, Germany has become renowned for its *Willkommenskultur* towards refugees, exhibited through acts of solidarity such as cheering newly-arrived refugees at train stations.¹⁶ A driving force for this *Willkommenskultur* is the public reckoning with the difficult heritage examined in the section above. For instance, the welcoming of contemporary refugees has been framed as an atonement for the Nazi past or a chance for a positive transformation in German self-definition (Bock and Macdonald 2019). Furthermore, reports in 2015 of border guards firing on refugees at the south-eastern boundaries of Europe drew comparisons with the ‘shoot to kill’ policy of the former DDR’s border guards (Borneman and Ghassem-Fachandi 2017). Simultaneously, the arrival of refugees has impacted the way German history is remembered. For instance, German politicians, intellectuals, and volunteers have cited the memories of *Heimatvertriebene* ('homeland expellees') to evoke a sense of compassion with the more recent refugees (Karakayali 2019). The *Heimatvertriebene* were some twelve million ethnic Germans expelled due to the Second World War from parts of Central and Eastern Europe. Whilst their experiences were publicly acknowledged in the early-post-war period as a marker of Germans' suffering, in later years it became a taboo, associated with pre-war border claims and pro-Nazi sympathies (Levy and Sznajder 2006). Now, this traumatic history has resurfaced in association with more inclusive values.

In keeping with the national *Willkommenskultur*, over the past few years a vast number of Berlin’s residents have supplemented or substituted national and municipal welcoming efforts, providing refugees with healthcare, translation services, bureaucratic registration, and housing (Holmes and Castañeda 2016; Karakayali and Kleist 2016; Bochow 2015). However, over half a decade since the governmental ‘open arms’ policy was announced, the numbers of new arrivals into Berlin are declining, emergency volunteer work has scaled down, refugees are more settled in the city, and a fatigue and reduction in the initial welcoming enthusiasm is being felt (Selim et al. 2018). Nevertheless, new concerns are now emerging around notions of integration, breaking stigmas, and overcoming cultural barriers. Accordingly, many grassroots initiatives focus on bridging differences between newer and more established Berliners through collaborative actions such as making music, dialogue, storytelling, or cooking (Selim et al. 2018). Guided walking tours by refugees joins

¹⁶ See for instance a report by *The Guardian*: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/05/refugee-crisis-warm-welcome-for-people-bussed-from-budapest>.

these collaborative endeavours. As Hussein tells us at the beginning of his tour, 'It's not a regular tour, but a way to integrate newcomers and locals'. His tour is facilitated by the NGO Querstadtein (a play on words which means 'off the urban beaten track'), as part of their series of tours entitled *Refugees Show Their Berlin*.

Querstadtein initially came up with the idea to tactically manoeuvre the genre of walking city tours as a tool for political education in relation to the theme of homelessness. However, in 2015, they decided to develop another strand of tours to voice refugees' perspectives, hitherto largely unheard within German public discourse. *Refugees Show Their Berlin* tours are available in German and English every Sunday via an online booking system at the cost of 13 euros per individual; alternatively, they can be privately booked for a group at the price of 175 euros. Michelle (Interview 20, 2018) who works in Querstadtein's office notes that the invitation of homeless people to guide urban tours is 'more obvious', since 'they are the experts of the streets, it's their sphere'. Nevertheless, she further observes: 'if you arrive as a refugee to Berlin, your ways of moving and your perspective on the city are completely different than that of a resident, and I think that's really interesting'. Accordingly, Querstadtein utilises an autobiographical approach to showcase the multifaceted and varied journey refugees have undergone and their personalised ways of navigating Berlin. To recruit tour guides, Querstadtein approach various networks that engage with refugees to find individuals who are eager to become active and are comfortable with gaining public visibility. The next step is to assess whether their stories can be expressed through the urban fabric.

Tours with a similar theme are also facilitated by the NGO Refugee Voices. Much like Querstadtein, the organization's stated aim (on their website) is: 'to give a voice to people who are often talked about in the media, but who are rarely given a chance to speak for themselves and explain their own stories'. However, their founding in 2015 was more informal. It was initiated by a group of friends who met through the OPlatz Protest movement (advocating for refugee rights in Germany). One of them, a British Berlin-based tour guide, suggested the idea of using the format of a guided tour. She had noticed an increased interest in the refugee situation amongst her tour groups. Refugee Voices is self-managed by the tour guides, who are all Syrian refugees. In contrast with Querstadtein's personalised tours, Refugee Voices have a set tour format which was designed by Ahmed (a tour guide and a politics student) and entitled *Why We Are Here*. As Ahmed (Interview 26, 2019) explains: 'the name of the tour is Why We Are Here? and we try to answer this question, why people came here in these numbers, at this time and in this way'. At the end of the tour, participants

are invited to a family-run Syrian restaurant. Tours are available in English every Saturday in exchange for a tip at the suggested price of 10 euros, with no booking required. Since 2020, tours can also be booked via the travel company Contiki, as part of their newly-launched sustainable and ethical approach to travel.

The location of Hussein's tour, Neukölln district, has a rich migratory history, housing various groups of refugees, *Gastarbeiter* (guest workers), and those with *migrationshintergrund* (a migratory background). Nowadays, it is known for its large Turkish and Arab minorities, high welfare dependency, and low levels of education and income. Furthermore, Neukölln is often used to exemplify a 'failed integration' that is blamed on migrants themselves for maintaining a 'parallel society' (Tize and Reis 2019). Contributing to this reputation is a book which criticises multiculturalism, written by the former district's Mayor Heinz Buschkowsky (2012) and entitled *Neukölln ist überall* (Neukölln is Everywhere). The failure of integration is also the theme of our guided tour. However, it is told from the opposite perspective; that of a newcomer. As Hussein explains during his tour: 'I am afraid that we will have two separate communities, and this is my motivation for creating this tour'. An elderly German participant interrupts: 'but do you have an idea of how we solve these problems? Because it is a real problem, it is difficult when such a large group arrives at your country'. Hussein says, 'Germans have made no bond with the refugees, there is no communication'. He stresses that providing refugees with legal papers is not enough, rather, interactions between older and newer Berliners are key, and that the tour 'is a chance to talk, to get to know one another'.

Participants' questions are an important aspect of the conversation created by tours. During numerous tours that I joined, guided by various tour guides, participants repeatedly sought to comprehend the practicalities of the journeys that refugees had undergone, learn about their everyday life in the city, and inquire into the safety of their families. They asked questions such as: 'How did you get here?', 'Where did you come from?', 'Did you come alone?', 'Why did you leave, was there a particular event?', 'Do you have permission to stay?', 'What will be the requirements that you can stay here longer?', and 'Where do you work?'. These repetitions speak to an attempt to comprehend an intangible geo-political situation. One that is mostly represented theoretically through facts, numbers, political debates, and statistics. As a tour participant observes:

Hearing a personal story that you can identify with, instead of theoretical information about refugees makes it easier to understand the situation, we all know the reasons for the arrival of refugees here, but less about their experience of the city'.

Hence, the tours function as what Fredric Jameson (1990) names ‘cognitive mapping’, through which a phenomenological subjective perspective, such as a refugee’s experience of the city, anchors a situational representation of the vaster un-representable totality of socio-political structures.

As we continue our guided walk across Neukölln, Hussein calls out dramatically:

Do not think that I am complaining. Thank you, Berlin! Thank you, Berlin! I thank you because here I am safe. So, thank you. So, why am I bringing up the negative points? Because Germans help us, but they also keep their distance. And if you don’t know someone, you don’t understand.

As Hussein humorously indicates, certain hierarchies manifest within the German *Willkommenskultur*, between ‘grateful’ and ‘ungrateful’ refugees. Furthermore, a distinction is drawn between ‘deserving’ refugees and ‘undeserving migrants’, and those reluctant to learn German or integrate (Holmes and Castañeda 2016). For refugees, whose legal protection is temporary and requires frequent renewal, integration is further complicated by Germany being a temporary home. As Amir, a refugee from Iraq and tour guide who works at a call centre, notes during his tour: ‘don’t ask me why I don’t learn the language, why I don’t work - and when I do all these things you still send me back’. Moreover, integration is inherently unequal since it positions immigrants as responsible for adapting to German society, which holds no obligation to learn about the cultures of newcomers (Castaneda 2012). As Hussein highlights during his tour, ‘the Germans say you need to become German. But this is not true; we need to integrate both cultures’. The framework of welcoming is thus limited in its reliance on the choice of hosts to provide hospitality, which is allocated selectively, thereby reaffirming the power hierarchies between ‘hosts’ and ‘guests’ or between ‘refugees’ and ‘citizens’.

A related issue is that the German public perception of refugees is subjected to ‘mood shifts’ that swing between indifference, ambivalence, xenophilia, and xenophobia (Borneman and Ghassem-Fachandi 2017). For instance, during a walk-along interview, Ahmad notes that initially, in 2015, the *Willkommenskultur* was dominant, with ‘tons of organizations, a lot of charity work’. However, he observes that since 2016, the atmosphere has shifted: ‘So what changed is how the subject is being talked about. Still, there are a lot of organizations, a lot of people who offer help...but it’s not the vocal side’. Instead, xenophobic attitudes are gaining prominence and are translated into legislation such as attempts to limit refugees’ family reunifications (Vollmer and Karakayali 2018). The 2017 elections were another indication of

the growing popularity of anti-immigration sentiments. Although Merkel's party Christliche Demokratische Union won, the far-right Alternative für Deutschland (which centred their campaign on anti-immigration sentiment) grew to be the third largest party in the 19th Bundestag. Additionally, xenophobic violence against refugees has been on the rise across the country (Benček and Strasheim 2016; Jäckle and König 2017). Muslim newcomers are especially subjected to a process of 'othering', and this new wave of refugees has been deemed harder to integrate due to 'cultural differences' (Çakir 2016; Borneman and Ghassem-Fachandi 2017).

In another stop in Hussein's tour, we visit Sonnenallee Straße, commonly known as 'Arab Street' (Map 3, Stop 3). As he explains, Syrian refugees come here for a 'taste of home', though they cannot afford to rent in this rapidly gentrifying area. Hussein shares an anecdote that emphasises the importance of this area for Middle Eastern newcomers: 'Once a refugee that just arrived in Germany stopped me in this street and said, do you speak Arabic? I said yes, he said 'thank goodness!', and I explained to him everyone in this street speaks Arabic, no need to thank god'. Walking across the street, the smell of Shisha smoke wafts through the air, and we catch a glimpse of falafel shops, Turkish bakeries, Lebanese restaurants, alongside Berliner hipsters. The street marks the cultural legacy of different Arabic migratory waves (such as Moroccan and Turkish *Gastarbeiter* that began arriving in the 1950s, followed by Lebanese and Palestinian refugees escaping the civil war in Lebanon between 1975-1990). Hussein interprets the material traces of the Arabic culture, explaining, for instance, why a shisha bar is named Umm Kulthum (after a famous Egyptian singer). Next, to simulate the experience of having to navigate a space with an unfamiliar language, Yousuf hands out little notes written in Arabic with restaurant names for us to try and locate. Therefore, in addition to re-mapping and re-contextualising the local welcoming infrastructure, Hussein assumes the role of a transcultural educator.

The final stop of Hussein's tour is the café Refugio where he now lives with people from all around the world (Map 1, Stop 4). Hussein tells us how once, before a tour, a man approached him and said: 'there is supposed to be a refugee leading the tour, but I can't see any refugee'. This anecdote speaks to the burden of representation related to the title refugee. In contrast, for Hussein, Refugio is a marker of a more effective approach towards integration where refugees 'can just be people'. Indeed, whilst refugee, internally displaced person, and asylum seeker are internationally accepted legal statuses, they also serve as identity-boundary markers which overlook the many differences within these designated groups. For instance, Hussein asks tour participants about their associations with the word refugee. They answer:

‘war’, ‘sadness’, ‘a journey’. Hence, the ontology of forced displacement correlates with trauma, sorrow, movement, and dislocation. In response to these answers, Hussein says: ‘don’t be shy, you can say the negative connotations that the media uses; I have been here a few years and I have seen how this word receives bad connotations, such as refugees are taking our jobs, or they only came here to have fun’. As Hussein alludes to, mediated framings increasingly tie the labels “refugee” with negative connotations of illegality or falsehood.

Interestingly, Querstadtein are not alone in facilitating tours which enable ‘Germans’ to visit and learn about this migrant neighbourhood. Another example is *Route 44 Tour*, guided by women from Neukölln with a migratory background, who studied local history as part of an initiative by the district’s museum. As the *Route44 Tour* website highlights, their tours allow participants to discover the ‘unknown’ and ‘get a different picture of Berlin’s notorious district’. Assuming the role of transcultural educators to teach “locals” about migratory cultures undermines a one-way process of integration into Germany by which newcomers are responsible for adopting to a homogeneous conception of the local culture. As Michelle (Interview 20, 2018) explains, ‘through the tour, refugees can be educators and not all the time be educated...they can switch the roles which is very important’. It also provides a means for migrants that have been blamed for the failure of their integration into Germany, or newcomers that are deemed harder to integrate, to insert their own perspectives about integration and protest the inequality it embodies. Nevertheless, these tours further risk perpetuating cultural stereotypes by orientalising and exoticizing this migratory district and reducing its inhabitants to their identities as Muslims or Arabs. In contrast, the project Multaka [‘meeting point’ in Arabic]: Museum as Meeting Point – Refugees as Guides in Berlin Museums, connects refugees to German culture.

Like *Refugees Show Their Berlin* and *Route 44*, Multaka replaces institutional acts of speaking for marginalised groups by upscaling them to serve as tour guides. Nevertheless, instead of refugees describing their own environments, they provide Arabic-speaking free tours of Berlin’s museums. Furthermore, in contrast with *Route 44*, *Why We Are Here*, and *Refugees Show Their Berlin*, which target international and local audiences, in the Multaka project refugee tour guides lead tours of museums for other refugees. Bernadette Lynch’s (in Janes and Sandell 2019: 119) research captures both the potentials and limitations of this project. She illustrates their successful usage of museum collections as a bridge between refugees and the local culture. Nonetheless, the Multaka coordinators she interviews observe that their rigid training solidifies a ‘controlled corporate message’, that the tours maintain

people in 'their bubble' as both coordinators and participants are refugees, and that this state-supported project facilitates a 'drip-drip integration process'. In sum, deploying the walking tour format to teach 'locals' about migratory cultures or to teach newcomers about local culture is a promising avenue for fostering dialogue and understanding. However, it also risks perpetuating divisions and binaries between Western and Eastern cultures or between locals and migrants. In contrast, a more promising meeting point between cultures is constructed during refugee-guided tours of Berlin's memory-scape in Mitte district (such as Amir and Ahmed's tours as well as other tours described in the following sections).

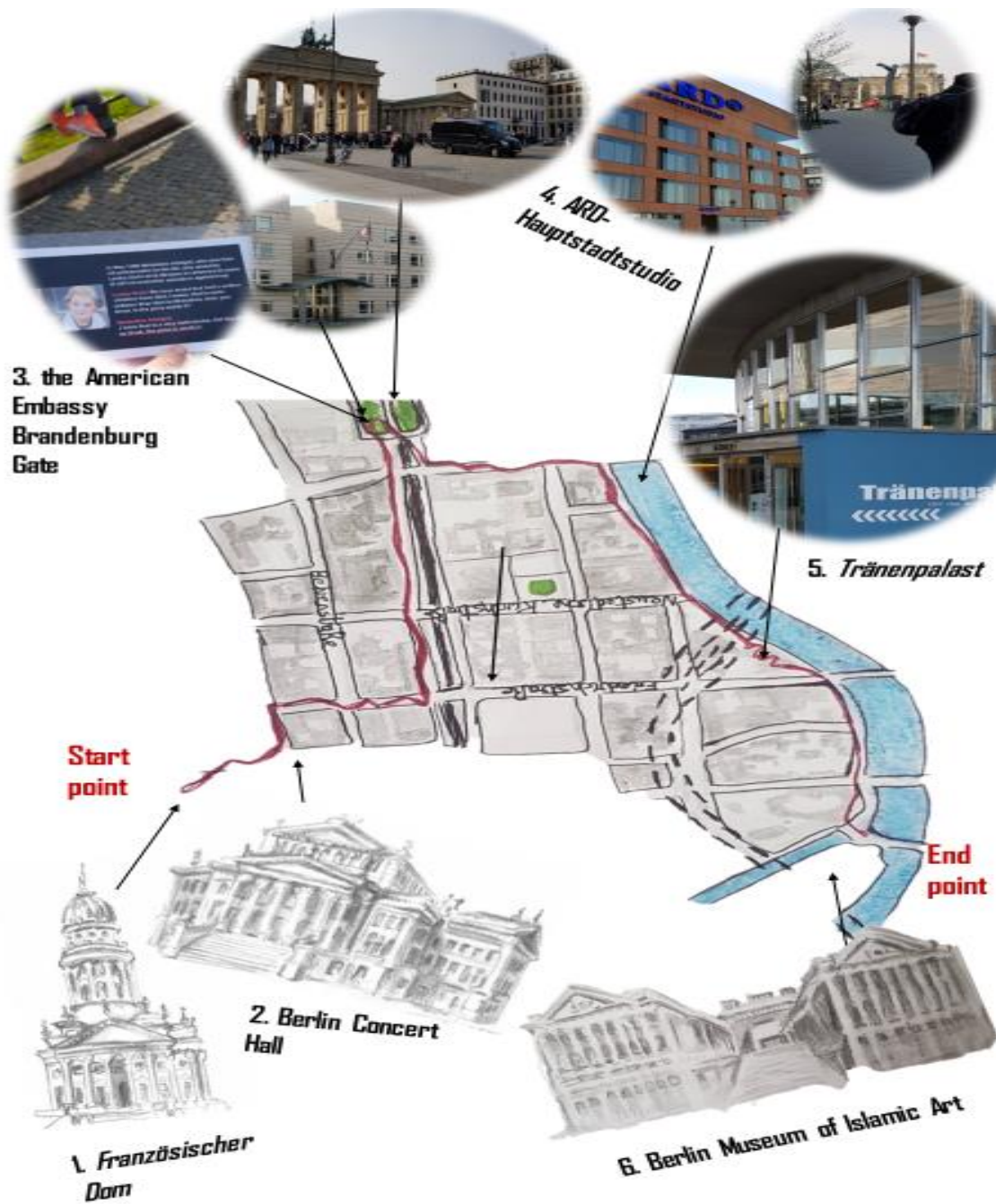
The name Mitte (centre) alludes to the district's geographical and cultural significance. Mitte houses Berlin's historic core and the Museum Island cultural compound (an UNESCO World Heritage Site). It is also popular amongst sightseers as one of two boroughs which encompasses both former East and West Berlin, and the old Jewish Quarter. In fact, Querstadtein themselves note the limitations of their tours in Neukölln. Michelle (Interview 20, 2018) believes that they fail to reflect refugees' expanding knowledge of the city and raise the question of 'how long you want to call someone a refugee'. She explains: 'they don't behave like refugees in 2017, of course, they know the city, they have favourite places, they have historical knowledge of the city, and they see parallels with their home countries'. Emma (Interview 25, 2019), another Querstadtein administrator, further frames the tours in Mitte as 'a step further, because they have more historical content, and the focus is more about what's happening now, and the political situation'. Ahmed's *Why We Are Here* tour also takes place in Mitte and consists of local memory sites. The logic Ahmed (Interview 26, 2019) provides for his tour design echoes similar themes: 'in each of these stops we can focus on an idea of what happened in those places in Germany and then connect them with something similar that happened in Syria'. Refugees learn about Berlin's official mnemonic sites in their German courses, yet in the tours, as Ahmed describes, they communicate a perspective of these sites that is informed by memories of other places and times.

This section has demonstrated how a morality informed by local traumatic memories conflates with mood shifts, xenophobic fears, and asymmetric integration to shape Germany's ambivalent hospitality towards refugees. The framework of welcoming is subjected to shifting public moods and confirm existing cultural hierarchies. Within this divisive atmosphere, breaking cultural barriers and redefining parameters of urban belonging are ever more pressing. To this end, this section has framed guided walking tours as one possible avenue for tackling these issues. As argued, the tours are an expression of agency by refugees in which they self-narrate their experiences related to Berlin's welcoming

infrastructures and problematize the one-way process of integration. Nevertheless, when such tours merely upscale refugees to communicate the local heritage or present a migratory neighbourhood and translate its cultural expressions to locals, they risk reinforcing existing cultural and geographical divisions. In contrast, the next sections explore a more transcultural and multidirectional practice of walking tours in Mitte, stressing the importance of mobilities and providing more context on the tours' formation and delivery.

Collectivising Autotopographies

Much like other tours that pass-through Mitte, Amir's walking tour focuses on local sites of memory and heritage. In contrast, however, Amir uses these sites to echo a personal story of displacement that is tied with a broader tale of global power relations. As he explains to a group of fifteen participants from an international firm: 'On tour today, I will show you touristic places in Berlin, but I will not focus on how beautiful they are, but on their relationship with power and how this affects my life'. One of these beautiful sites is the Berlin Concert Hall in Gendarmenmarkt where Amir heard his first ever concert at the age of twenty-eight (Map 2, Stop 2). Amir describes how he stumbled upon the Hall in his early days in the city, whilst strolling around, and bought a ticket with all the money he had left from his journey. He explains: 'where I lived it was very difficult, we couldn't move in the evening, so it is impossible to go to a concert'. This story reflects the importance of walking for newcomers to familiarise themselves with Berlin. It is also through the notion of (im)mobility that Amir articulates his experience of living in a war-ridden city. Accordingly, this section considers the importance of (im)mobilities to the refugee-guided tours, in terms of their themes, design, delivery, and collective endeavour.



Map 4: Central features in Amir's tour, May 2019, 2.38 km, 1 hour 47 minutes, 13°C.

(Im)mobilities, in their everydayness, offer a comprehensible means to communicate the complex experiences of forced displacement. For instance, Amir (Interview 28, 2019) describes his changing relationship to the city through walking:

When I arrived, I felt like a tourist, I was in a good mood and after that to walk in this city is different...I was happy at first; I would walk and think how beautiful this city is. Then I found out after two months...I understood the situation, the huge number of refugees coming from different countries.

Wael (Interview 1, 2018), a politics student, tour guide, and Syrian refugee, further observes how his bodily memories of forced movement shape his walking habits in the city at present:

Walking was more than 75 percent of my journey to Germany... you walk ten hours a day than you feel exhausted. The next day you realise that walking for ten hours is not enough, its only five kilometres and you need to walk more than five kilometres. After I arrived, I didn't like to walk, really! When I walk, I feel like I walk fast, I still have the habit, it's always in my mind like I have to arrive somewhere.

Therefore, walking provides a means for representing abstract socio-political realities through a phenomenological receptivity in lived and embodied experiences. Similarly, the refugee-guided tours deploy the practice of walking as a dialogical kinaesthetic mode of communicating refugees' experiences of forced movement.

Navigation and mobilities are also integral to the complex process of designing the tours. For instance, the construction of each of the individualised *Refugees Show their Berlin* tours starts with guides identifying certain locations in the city that are meaningful to them. To illustrate, Amir's starting point for his tour design was the Concert Hall (that later became the second stop of his tour). As Michelle (Interview 20, 2018) notes, it is challenging to find sites of personal significance within walking distance since refugees' mobility in the city is scattered and dispersed: 'they get their registration at one part of the city, and then language learning in a completely different part, and another where they have to work and so on'. Therefore, the next stage of designing the tours involves multiple walks around chosen landmarks to identify other potential stops. For instance, Amir (Interview 28, 2019) describes how walking around the Concert Hall, he accidentally stumbled upon the *Französischer Dom* (French Cathedral), now the first stop of his tour, and realized 'it was perfect' (Map 4, Stop 1). He further notes: 'It took months to plan the route of the tour, because it must be two hours, we must walk, and so the distances should not be too great, and you must find the right places'. The spatial process of designing the walking tours thus requires tour guides to work with and around the materiality and topography of the city, alongside the regulations of the genre of city tours.

Therefore, for some guides like Amir, planning the tour is a long process that can take up to a year and involves ‘brainstorming’ with the NGO workers. At other times, the attempt to express individuals’ stories or perspectives through the city’s urban fabric is unsuccessful, as Emma (Interview 25, 2019) describes: ‘We had one tour guide, she is from Afghanistan, and she had an amazing story, but we never succeeded in developing the tour because she had no places...we couldn’t place it in the city’. As this anecdote emphasises, the city is integral to the guided tours’ performance of ‘autotopography’ (Heddon, Lavery, and Smith 2009). Other guides find it easier to convey their personal story in relation to the city. For instance, Yasmin (Interview 27, 2019), a tour guide, urban planner, and refugee from Syria, notes that once she realised her tour concept - to tell a story of a place and mirror it through her life - stops on the map just ‘lit up’ in her mind. These stops include memorials and buildings that she read about and wanted to see, as well as places she accidentally discovered in her walks around the city. As Yasmin explains:

I have a map of Berlin in my room, and I wanted to walk the whole city, which is huge. But still, I marked down places I wanted to see. When I have nothing to do on the weekend, I say, ok I’ve never been in this area of Berlin so let’s go and walk there. I just walk around, you know, slowly and take pictures of all these details, like I said, stickers and weird things that happen in Berlin.

This reiterates the importance of walking as a means of forming a sense of emplacement in a new locality.

The process of designing the tours therefore involves a mixture of two types of urban walking practices identified by Filipa Matos Wunderlich (2008): the spontaneous ‘discursive walking’ that focuses on the journey itself; and ‘conceptual walking’, which is planned and reflective. Through the mixture of ‘discursive’ and ‘conceptual’ walking styles, the tours enhance refugees’ processes of emplacement and navigation in a new urban environment. As Amir (Interview 28, 2019) describes: ‘the tour made me feel closer to the city’. Walking is equally integral to the tours’ participatory delivery, as comes across in a participant’s (Interview 2, 2018) observation: ‘It is not only about talking and listening but involving all our body, and this kind of nonverbal communication, I think makes it more of an experiential event, an experiential situation where *you* participate’. This experiential participation involves the invitation to ‘see’ Berlin and its memory-scape from a new perspective, as Ahmed (Interview 26, 2019) explicates: ‘So, it’s this idea, we are going to walk around, see the sights of Berlin and in a way, how I see the sights of Berlin; I’m here, I see certain things, I know what happened in this place and for me it’s something else, it reminds me of certain

things’. The tours’ collaborative walking style thus entails sharing a pace and direction of movement as well as a mutual perceptible field. This creates a sense of bond and solidarity and allows participants to become habituated within the performance.

‘The walk to our next landmark is the longest’, says Amir during his tour, and adds: ‘you can use this time to ask me personal questions if you want’. We start moving and participants gather in small groups that walk at a different pace, chatting to one another, or with Amir. Whilst others immerse themselves in the urban surrounding, photographing different elements. Such ‘in-between’ moments resemble María Lugones (2003) descriptions of the spatial practice of ‘hang outs’. Namely, fluid, communicative, collective occupations of space that are in-between the public/private split. Likewise, the spaces formed whilst walking from one landmark to the next are more intimate and fluid than the public stages that are constructed at each tour stop when participants gather around the tour guide to listen to his or her explanations (Fig. 9). These ‘in-between’ moments might appear as a ‘break’ from the tour; however, they are in fact integral to it. As Ingold (2007: 93) states, ‘in the storytelling as in wayfaring, it is in the movement from place to place – or from topic to topic – that knowledge is integrated’. Accordingly, the walks in between in between tour stopes and themes allow participants to observe the content of the tours and reflect upon it, individually, with other participants, or with the tour guide.

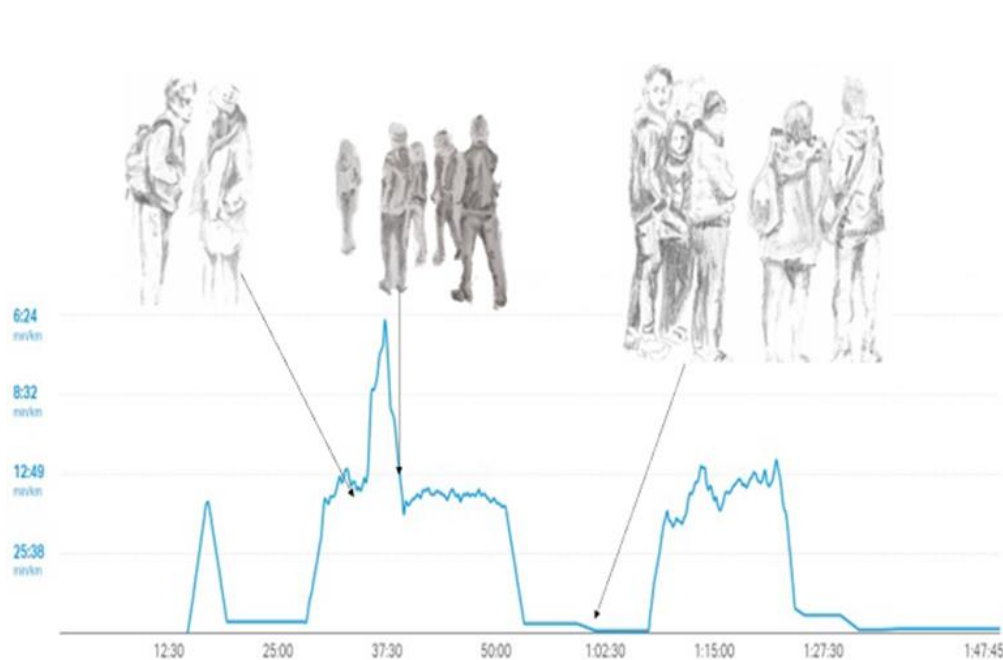


Figure 9: The varying pace of Amir’s tour alongside illustrations of Participants’ behaviours.

After walking for fifteen minutes along the busy streets we arrive at our next destination, the American Embassy (Map 4, Stop 3). A naked protester standing by the nearby Brandenburg Gate distracts our attention. Once the group regains its focus, Amir explains why he chose this landmark:

After coming to Germany, a safe place, I had time to think about why I left my home. When your house burns down you just run away, you don't think of anything...So why did I leave? I realized that 50 percent of the reasons I left were because of America's involvement in my country...I am angered by the attitude of the Americans towards my country.

To reflect this attitude, Amir hands out a poster with an image of Madelene Albright, former US Secretary of State. A text which accompanies the image describes how Albright was asked in 1996 (while ambassador to the UN), whether the 'price' of half a million dead Iraqi children is 'worth it' (in relation to US-led economic sanctions in the country), said 'the price is worth it'. Like the naked protester next to us, Amir uses the material fabric of the city as a public stage to voice his political message. Indeed, across different cities and periods, people repeatedly use public spaces to make their political claims visible (Butler 2015; Hou and Knierbein 2017). The tour further adds to a city-level history of protest, such as the squatter movements that emerged in the 1970s, activism against the rapid privatization and gentrification in the 1990s, and a recent wave of protests over rent rises and shortages of social housing.

This history is engraved into the very fabric of Berlin, as the Görlitzer recreational park demonstrates; the original Görlitzer Bahnhof was turned into a park during the 1980s following pressure by the squatter movement. However much the city is impacted by activism, it simultaneously imbues activism with meaning and determines its design. This duality comes across in the Madres de Plaza de Mayo campaign for missing Argentinian children. As mothers that are marginalized in Argentinian politics, they deliberately occupied a powerfully symbolic plaza in the heart of Buenos Aires, and the plaza's design of paved circles around a monument informed their performative repetitive walking in circles. Over time, such temporary embodied interventions inscribe new associations to places that permanently alter their meanings in public imagination (Endres and Senda-Cook 2011). For this reason, the Egyptian government recently refurbished Cairo's Tahrir Square, which had acquired a central symbolic place in Egyptians' collective memory for its recurrent use for demonstrations. Now, it is dotted with new monuments, lighting, and security guards to prevent future protests. Similarly, the locations of the refugee-guided tours are emblematic of their themes and enhance their political message. Berlin's American Embassy, for example,

is a highly symbolic setting to protest past and current American involvement in Iraq. The tours' temporary yet repetitive movement around Berlin's public sites further informs new associations and visions for them.

From the embassy, we walk for around five minutes along the river until we reach our next stop, the front of ARD-Hauptstadtstudio offices, a television studio in Berlin operated by the federal broadcasting network ARD. From our standpoint we can also glimpse the Reichstag building in the far distance (Map 4, Stop 4). Amir notes that this tour stop represents the influence of the media and government on the public image of refugees. He further discloses, 'the name refugee is a heavy name to carry; in Berlin it's easier, but in other cities it's harder for refugees'. Nevertheless, even in a relatively welcoming city such as Berlin, Amir observes: 'sometimes you love the city because you fell in love with someone, and sometimes you hate the city because an immigration officer was unkind to you'. To demonstrate the representational burden embedded in the refugee label, he explains:

There was a case of sexual harassment by a refugee and it provoked a very negative reaction from the Germans. And it happened just before the election! People said Germany had failed to manage the refugees. Hearing this, I felt I had no energy. I was a part of it because I share the name refugee with other people.

Hence another aspect of the semiotic divide created by the 'refugees' label, which links with the notion of harmful visibility, is that the actions of a few are understood as an expression of the qualities of an entire group.

Due to this burden of representation and semiotic divide, Yasmin had an 'issue' with Querstadtein's tours being titled '*Refugees Show their Berlin*'. Yasmin (Interview 27, 2019) says: 'one of the first issues I had when I met Querstadtein is that they call it a refugee tour.... But I didn't like this label, so I was a bit sceptic to be honest'. She further explains:

It felt like everything that was happening was dividing people between refugees and non-refugees. I really did not identify with that label a lot, which I talk about in my tour. Because I came as a student and I didn't want to be a refugee actually, I was sort of fighting it. I tried different places and different ways to stay here legally but then I couldn't, so again it happened, and I had a problem with this label personally. Still, it was somehow part of my life here and the situation that I am in.

Nonetheless, when Yasmin realised the tours are not about 'doing social work for refugees', she changed her mind. Instead, through her tour, she unpacks the disconnect she feels with the 'refugee' label and the divisions it informs. Moreover, Yasmin's tour draws a parallel between the multiplicity in experiences of displacement and the plenitude of stories associated with Berlin, aiming to reflect: 'how one city can have so many narratives, the same way any person or refugee group can have so many different narratives'.

For instance, during Yasmin's tour, we visit Mehringplatz, a rounded plaza on the southern segment of Friedrichstadt neighbourhood (Map 6, Stop 6). As Yasmin explains, whilst it was planned as 'a big important square in 1730', nowadays it is 'branded as one of the problematic areas in Berlin as it has a high number of families with immigration backgrounds'. Walking around here, Yasmin once met 'a group of punks' on their way to an anti-immigration rally. They told her they do not oppose the arrival of people escaping war, however, pointing at a Turkish woman wearing a veil, they noted that she clearly does not belong here. Nevertheless, this urban site of divide holds a different meaning for Yasmin: 'this is a place that I feel I am welcome somehow'. She explains that her 'personal connection' to the area was doing an internship 'in a public office that assists neighbourhoods like that in doing more social projects'. Yasmin adds: 'I find this area very rich, there are so many social projects happening, like that café has a social orientation, [and] this whole house has social projects'. Therefore, she observes: 'every place of separation is also a place of connection'; through the tours, refugees map and narrate their intricate geography of connection and separation or emplacement and displacement in Berlin.

Alongside 'places of separation and places of connectivity', Yasmin's tour traces urban labels related to divisions such as East and West Berlin. For example, during her tour, we also walk past a backstreet in between Checkpoint Charlie and Gendarmenmarkt square. She directs our gaze to the ground, where a double row of cobblestones marks the course of the former Wall across the city's centre (another example of the city's 'architecture of absence') (Map 6, Stop 2). Yasmin explains that although the Wall no longer exists, 'when you want to search for it, you can find remnants of it'. For instance, this past divide can be traced through the tram system which only operates in the former East of Berlin. She adds: 'what I see as an urban planner is that these walls are here to stay, it's like the wound in the flesh that can't really heal, there is always a mark'. In an analogy, Yasmin discloses: 'I had this problem with the label and this name refugee and what I could do, what I wanted to do'. Nevertheless, through her new job, located ten blocks from where we now stand, Yasmin regained her self-definition as an international urban expert. Thus, she concludes that much like her daily crossing of the Wall on her commute to work, she has moved 'beyond the limitations of the refugee label' (a designation made easier to shift by the prestige and income of her occupation).

In contrast, supervising tours that are titled refugee-guided tours does not offer the same possibility of transcending the refugee 'label'. Instead, the tours' autotopographies break this label into personal and everyday stories. This performance of agency over the

'refugee' title undermines its objectifying power and re-contextualises its meaning through self-choreographed subtext, emphasis, and context. Therefore, in a Rancièrian sense, the tours impact the 'dissensus' related to the public visibility of refugees in Berlin by changing the framing through which it is perceived. This shift in framing entails expanding the trajectory of forced displacement beyond its ontological associations with border crossing, a journey, and dislocation. Instead, the tours express refugees' complex and multiple attachments to new and old environments. Emphasising the memories of places refugees were forced to leave further links the refugee label with its overlooked geopolitical causes. As Yasmin observes during her tour, 'my history or my country is not much talked about except for the context of the refugee crisis, not even the war'. The tours undermine such tendencies to disregard the structural causes behind forced displacement. To further exemplify, Amir's tracing of the workings of trans-national power in relation to his personal trauma of displacement contrasts mediated and humanitarian portrayals of refugees as individual tragedies.

The tours intervene in the politics of refugees' (in)visibility by reiterating the longer-term geopolitical stories behind the trauma of displacement and reinserting their voices and agendas in what might otherwise be impersonal tales of power dynamics. Ahmed (Interview 26, 2019) similarly stresses that instead of relying on 'the media narrative' and its portrayal of forced displacement, his self-designed tour provides a 'personal aspect to it and gives some historical context so that people understand the motives and the environments that people were fleeing'. Crucially, the refugee tour guides seek to extract a collective statement out of their personal autotopographies. In another example from a tour guided by Wael, we visit the Kunsthaus Tacheles building, a non-descript block of flats (Map 5, Stop 4). He explains that it was originally built as a department store in the Jewish quarter, later used as a Nazi prison, and in the post-unification period become occupied by an artist collective (who are now facing eviction). The guest room of this artist collective was Wael's first home in the city, after he was homeless for five months in the cold German winter. As we stand outside, the material condition of the cold weather further intensifies the experience of bearing witness to Wael's memory. Wael then links this personal experience to a broader and collective refugee-housing problem. As Wael emphasises during our interview (1, 2018): 'I don't matter...what matters to me is to reflect the conflict or reflect the suffering or reflect the whole image of all people upon everything'. Accordingly, the tours record a constant movement from the individual experience to a collective perception, and from personal trauma to public memory.

This section highlighted two important elements of the refugee-guided tours' performance. Firstly, the centrality of walking and mobilities to the themes, design, and

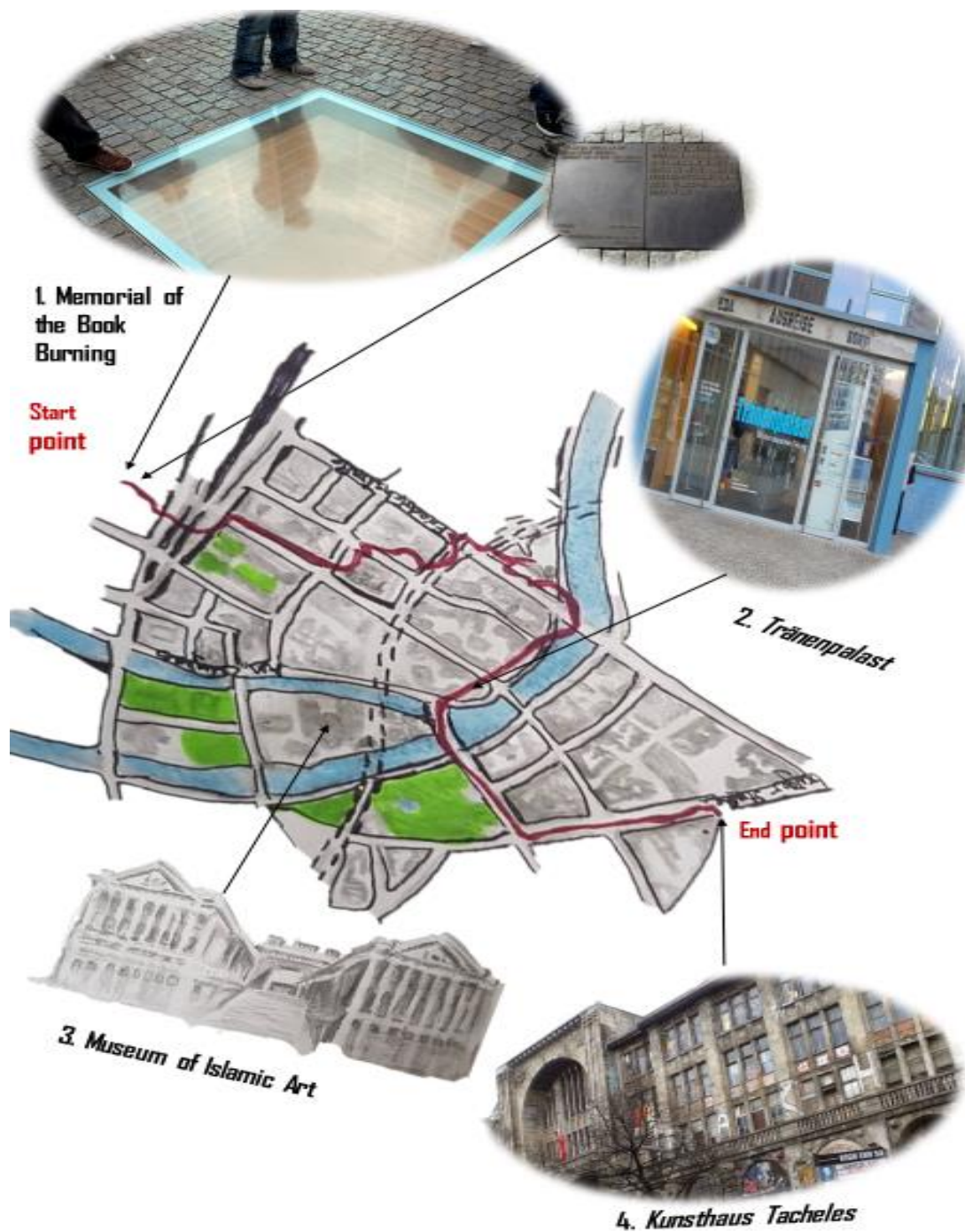
delivery of the tactical refugee-guided tours. Secondly, the importance of collectivity to the guided tours' walking style and content. As the section has illustrated, through the sharing of a common movement, direction, and perception, the tours stress the structural causes of personal stories of displacement and extract a collectivised message out of personal lived experiences. The tactical refugee-guided tours thus form a correlation between movement as a motion and movement as a political action. In parallel, the importance of the city-stage to this moving performance has been outlined. Like other modes of activism, the tours mobilise the city and its symbolism to claim public visibility and extract a political message out of their autotopographies. The next section elaborates on another collectivising gesture enacted in the tours that involves opening national sites of memory to a broader variety of experiences and cultures.

Witnessing and Mixing Trauma

The starting point of Wael's tour, booked by a group of fifteen German youths, is the Memorial of the Book Burning (Map 5, Stop 1). The memorial is another example of the 'architecture of absence' since it holds no notable presence within the cityscape. In fact, it only becomes visible when turning the gaze downwards, through a glass panel set in the ground - instead of the usual vantage point of looking up upon a monumental landmark. Wael begins with a brief description of the memorial, which commemorates an event that took place in the very same square in May 1933, when Nazis burned the works of hundreds of authors and academics. Its features, designed by artist Micha Ullman in 1995, include an underground room with empty bookshelves and two bronze plates inscribed with the following:

That was but a prelude;
where they burn books,
they will ultimately burn people as well.
Heinrich Heine 1820

The memorial is a highly symbolic setting for what Wael tells us next: he describes how gradually Syria became a dictatorship and protesters, opposition parties, and intellectuals were tortured and killed. Wael further notes that the Syrian government imprisoned and tortured his brother. This section focuses on such instances that mix between traumatic memories from different places and times, contextualising them as a transcultural site-specific testimonial encounter and a mode of memory activism.



Map 5: Central features in Wael's tour, March 2018, 2.29 km, 1 hour 34 minutes, 12°C.

Sites of historical trauma bear an aura of authenticity and credibility derived from their site-specificity (Souto 2011). In the attempt to testify to trauma, the multi-sensory engagement with these sites is valuable in providing a non-linguistic affective presence or sensation (Till 2008). Hence, as part of a transcultural circulation of mnemonic practices, traumatic sites are commonly used for spatial displays and practices of public commemoration (Bădescu 2019). Accordingly, sites related to the memories of the Holocaust such as the *Memorial of the Book Burning* are routinely visited as a transformative multisensory pedagogical experience (Cooke and Frieze 2015). As Jackie Feldman (2008: 90) notes in his study of the popular Israeli youth *Shoah* (Holocaust in Hebrew) trips to Poland demonstrates, students' sensory and emotional experiences of traumatic sites are an 'important means by which experiences become imprinted on students' imaginations'. Since these sites carry such strong symbolic and affective attributes, 'Holocaust non-witnesses' (people with no direct or familial connection to this trauma) visit them in an attempt to personalise and intensify their experience of this history (Weissman 2018). In contrast, Wael and his tour participants cannot access sites related to his traumatic memories of war and dictatorship. Instead, he references a local site of commemoration as an affective and symbolic stage to voice his personal traumatic experiences. As Wael (Interview 1, 2018) explains: 'it's about also putting the people who are attending the tour in the scene'.

Wael's first stop thus demonstrates a spatial and performative manifestation of Rothberg's (2009) notion of 'multidirectional memory', as the Holocaust is a vehicle through which other histories of suffering are articulated. Similarly, during Yasmin's tour, we visit a small Holocaust memorial plate, designed by Helga Lieser in 2014 and placed on the entrance to a block of flats (Map 4, Stop 4). It is comprised of a stainless-steel plate with the inscription: 'the early concentration camp Gutschow-Keller was located here', accompanied by an image with the caption: SA man guard prisoners in a shed in the backyard, March 6, 1933.¹⁷ Yasmin explains that this was one of the first concentration camps in Berlin, where hundreds of trade unionists, communists, Jews, and social democrats were imprisoned. She decided to include the memorial as a tour stop after it was removed in early 2018 by Nazi-sympathizers but later restored by the police. Yasmin (Interview 27, 2019) saw it as a fitting setting to discuss the current rise in xenophobic sentiments that make refugees feel unwelcome. Interestingly, both the removal of this memorial and Yasmin's subsequent usage

¹⁷ Translated by the author.

of it in her tour demonstrate that the tensions, conflicts, and hatreds memorialized in Berlin are not confined to the past but continue to surface in the present. Moreover, both gestures show that memorials are not merely fixed inscriptions of historical narratives; rather, they are constantly evolving public stages for mnemonic negotiations and battles that are informed by bodily gestures.

The linkage formed by the walking tours between local commemorative sites of trauma and refugees' traumatic experiences articulates an appeal to the morals, values, and emotions attached to these architectural features. For instance, by visiting memorials related to the Holocaust, refugees appeal to the local collective memory and its focus on guilt, seeking to be recognized as additional victims. At other times, tour guides invoke the memories of the Cold War to establish a sense of solidarity with German suffering. As Wael (Interview 1, 2018) describes, 'I can come to a conclusion that we all ran, you ran from the GDR and climbed a wall, I ran from the government and started a journey, so it's the same'. Ahmed (Interview 26, 2019) describes a similar equation when explaining the decision to include Checkpoint Charlie in his tour design:

Checkpoint Charlie in German context was a very dangerous place. If you are in the eastern side, you are not allowed to cross to the western side; those who tried to cross were killed because of this, so it is a matter of life and death when you are on a checkpoint in a way. The same thing you need to deal with every time you go through a checkpoint in Syria.

In parallel, many of the refugee-guided tours visit the permanent exhibition space Tränenpalast (the Palace of Tears) which holds similar connotations (Map 3, Stop 5; Map 4, Stop 2; and Map 5, Stop 1). Before unification, the glass and steel pavilion served as Friedrichstraße railway station's customs and passport checkpoint for passengers crossing from East to West Berlin. Tour guides are attracted to Tränenpalast and Checkpoint Charlie due to their symbolism, since borders, divisions and departure constitute important and painful signifiers in their life stories.

Accordingly, during Amir's tour, he explains that the name Tränenpalast represents the tearful partings that took place in front of the building between Western visitors and East German residents who were not permitted to travel to West Berlin. When he first visited this museum, it reminded him of the situation he left back home, of barriers, walls, and barbed wire. This, he says, made him 'sympathize with German suffering'. Standing by the Tränenpalast, Amir describes what it was like for him to live in a city that remains divided by the barriers and cross points placed by Sunni and Shia militias: 'I would only come home

every three weeks, at random times, so as not to be an easy target for snipers, just because I am Sunni.' In response, a tour participant asks, 'were there soldiers everywhere?' He answers, 'yes, they could kidnap or kill you at any moment. It's one thing to die, but I didn't want to be killed by a man that I don't even know why he killed me'. The tours thus engage in an 'analogical framework' through which 'the juxtaposition of different histories reorganizes understandings of both' (Rothberg 2011: 538). As Michelle (Interview 20, 2018) describes, in addition to learning about refugees' experiences, 'at the same time, people learn something about the place, like a double structure'. By testifying to similar yet different experiences from other places and times, the tours link the past with a present-day notion of responsibility. A responsibility related to the contemporary horrors of war and dictatorship, to global inequalities that place certain moving bodies under risk and scrutiny, and to everyday discrimination that new arrivals endure in their host-environments.

We also visit Tränenpalast during Wael's tour (Map 3, Stop 2). After describing the site's history, Wael enacts a creative gesture to render it more vivid: he shows us an image of how the train station looked before unification (Fig. 10). Following this, Wael talks about the divisions brought by the civil war to his home city Aleppo. He notes that those who try to cross checkpoints risk being shot at from either side. He shows us additional photos, of the currently divided Aleppo and images of the city before the war (Fig. 11). Images and other elements such as maps or historical documents make up a 'portable exhibition' that is an evocative means by which heritage tour guides elicit emotions and imaginations to inspire historical empathy and narrow the gap between the past and the present (Till 1999). Looking at tour guides of the Nazi rally grounds in Nuremberg, Sharon Macdonald (2006) observes how they lead tourists through different ways of seeing the site, enacting a type of 'façade peeling'. This façade peeling invites participants to see past the actual site, and instead imagine the grounds in use during rallies in the 1930s and '40s. Similarly, Wael's usage of photographs visually assists the façade peeling of the Tränenpalast, and he combines the gaze that sees beyond the site's present with a gaze that sees beyond the site's geographical location. This collapses the temporal distance between the past and the present *and* the geographical distance between this site and other troubled sites, rendering local history *and* contemporary sites of division elsewhere more vivid.



Figure 10: Friedrichstraße Railway Station before unification.



Figure 11: Wael Holding Images of Aleppo.

The tours thus create a highly complex felt space through the overlapping of sensual experiences and emotions provoked by the site itself and the multiple memories that are linked to it. The site-specificity of the refugee-guided tours' performance therefore 'arises precisely in uncertainties over the borders and limits of work and site' (Kaye 2013: 215). Beyond a pedagogical impact, this overlapping of site-specific and traveling memories has an emotional effect, as comes across in a participant's (Interview 33, 2019) statement: 'the tour guide connects his personal experiences with the city and its history; this is unique because it is not only fact and history but also you learn in a different level, more emotional level'. As part of this site-specific performance, tour guides channel the sensations, symbolisms, and auras of authenticity generated by local sites of traumatic memory in their attempts to testify to their own traumas. Therefore, an additional manifestation of the tours' multidirectional engagement with the Holocaust is that they entail a testimonial event. In Germany, testimonies with Holocaust survivors (live or recorded on video) are a central pedagogical resource used in schools, museums, and other cultural institutions to tackle the local troubled past (Pagenstecher and Wein 2017). Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter One, within the post-Holocaust era, the survival testimony has emerged as a powerful tool to document and protest genocides and human rights violations across the world.

Refugees undergo complex and multiple traumas: in their home countries, as part of their life-threatening journeys to reach safety, and when finally reaching their destination. At a group and individual level, though trauma is impossible to speak of, it nonetheless refuses to be buried (Caruth 2010; Saul, 2013; Hübl and Avritt 2020). Therefore, trauma survivors may benefit from testifying provided they have a receptive audience (Felman and Laub 2013). The tours enable such acts of listening by pairing the primary eyewitness with an audience who becomes part of a testimonial exchange. The testimonial exchange is thus a process founded on a power difference that can produce an 'ethical encounter' (Rose 2004). In terms of the testifiers, this event can be experienced as a moral responsibility that allows others to become second-hand witnesses. Nonetheless, as Wael (Interview 1, 2018) observes, this moral responsibility can be incredibly challenging for testifiers. He notes that leading tours is 'difficult...especially if you have a big crowd, because you have to face them and you have to speak, and sometimes you're stressed or afraid...especially when you're telling your own story'. Despite this, he notes that by engaging in this difficult task, 'you feel literally that you're making a change, you feel that right away, [and] that's something priceless to me'. All refugee tour guides that I interviewed describe their participation in the tours as a moral obligation that is vital despite the difficulty in testifying to their traumas.

In another example, Amir (Interview 28, 2019) says: 'I wasn't sure at first if I wanted to be a tour guide [and] if I could even share my story'. Nevertheless, he is confident that by engaging in this 'small' intervention 'every week, time after time' he is making an impact. As he explains, 'at least the majority it touches them, and they will tell friends, and then I do something, it becomes big'. Hussein (Interview 19, 2018) further highlights the transformation that this testimonial event generates for participants: 'I notice that people who participate in the tour, it changes something for them, I can see it in their eyes'. Critical for this transformative exchange between testifiers and second-hand witnesses is proximity which enables what Brian Massimi (1987: xvi) describes as 'an ability to affect and to be affected'. As a tour participant (Interview 29, 2019) says during a tour guided by Yasmin: 'it's gone to the heart. I feel it, I feel with her'. Proximity is also a means for 'strangers' to familiarise with each other in an urban context (Sennett 2012; Ahmed 2013). Through proximity, the testimonial exchange further enables a direct participation in the transmission and reproduction of memory and the transformative affect it generates.

The mobile, dynamic, and conversational testimonial performance enacted as part of the guided walking tours is also informed by participants' questions. For instance, one tour participant asks Amir, 'How did you arrive, on the plane?' He answers:

No, by car and by walking. I had to help families with children... They [people smugglers] convince people to pay and go on a journey, telling them it will only take three days and that is not true. Then it is too late to go back. They lie that the journey is short.

In another example, a participant asks Hussein during his tour: 'How long did it take you to get here? What was the hardest part?' He answers:

Three months. I took a train, plane, car, everything. The hardest part was crossing the sea. We are at the mercy of smugglers. We are sent to sea alone and it is very easy to get lost. The journey on the boat lasted maybe three days but it felt like three years. It's like the judgment day, people cry, shit on themselves. Everyone was sure this is the last day of their life.

Once again, we see how the tours deconstruct the distribution of the sensible as it relates to the depiction of the experience of forced displacement by challenging a hegemonic focus on borders. Instead, refugees' self-narrated testimonies stress the agency in arriving, in crossing against all odds, and vocalise the in-between of the penetration of borders and the life before and after. An emphasis is further made on the body itself as integral to the experience of forced movement.

Moreover, by testifying around local sites of memory, the tours undermine the distribution of the sensible as it relates to Berlin's existing landscape of commemoration. As

mentioned earlier, the local orientation towards traumatic history inspires German expressions of solidarity towards refugees. However, it also maintains existing hierarchies of inclusion and exclusion. The German public reckoning with local history serves as a form of reference for belonging through the rejection of the Nazi past, which excludes those who migrated to the country afterwards (Loewy 2002; Harjes 2005; Huyssen 2003). Together with this exclusion, migrants, especially those identified as Muslims, are often blamed for their alleged indifference to the topic of Holocaust (Rothberg and Yildiz in Crownshaw 2016). This double bind in the remembrance of the Holocaust further links with the white-German identity of the perpetrators. Non-white populations of Germany are therefore excluded from the moral obligation to remember and from Germany's public memory (Rothberg and Yildiz 2011). Newcomers are also excluded from the post-unification new German identity of *ein Volk* (one people) that focuses on the traumatic memories of the Cold War for similar reasons. Thus, paradoxically, the focus on guilt within Germany's collective memory disseminates key elements of this past; namely, it reinforces the self-conception of German identity as ethnically based. However, by physically visiting and narrating Berlin's memorials, the tours symbolically reject this ethnic-based exclusion.

As Zafer DSenocak and Bülent Tulay (2000: 6) accurately observe, immigrating to Germany (or visiting it) means entering the realm of German's recent past. Nevertheless, rather than merely visiting this memory realm as outsiders, the refugee tour guides add their own perspectives to Germany's public memory and its spatial configurations. As Wael (Interview 1, 2018) highlights, Berlin is a prolific setting for his transcultural walking intervention due to its arrangement of numerous memory sites in proximity:

The good thing about Berlin is that all the monuments, they're close to each other, and they have so much monuments, and every monument has a story...and every story is a deep story because it relates to Hitler or this and that. And you can look upon the story you have on this monument and then you can come up with your own personal story, creating a story, creating a tour.

Like de Certeau (1984), Wael equates the art of storytelling with the art of walking, through which pedestrians can re-write the city and its memory lanes. Through a 'rhetoric of walking', refugee tour guides self-curate a space of solidarity informed by collective memory, instead of being passive recipients of an ambivalent welcoming culture inspired by local traumatic memories. Moreover, by weaving their own perspectives and stories onto existing spatial configurations of public memory, tour guides problematize and expand their meanings. In fact, the effects of this transcultural memory mixing are not merely planned or harmonious rather, they entail what Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing (2011: 4) names 'friction', namely, 'the

awkward, unequal, unstable, and creative qualities of interconnection'. For instance, deliberately or inadvertently, through their appeal to the traumas of the Cold War, refugee tour guides undermine the above-contextualised post-unification German memory culture that privileges a West German perspective and overlooks the traces of DDR history.

Furthermore, the appeal to local Holocaust memorials symbolically challenges a universal post-holocaust discourse of commemoration with the pretence of keeping memory alive to prevent the reoccurrence of atrocities. This discourse, for instance, is evident in the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) framing of their Holocaust education: 'Holocaust education, remembrance, and research strengthen humanity's ability to absorb and learn from the dark lessons of the past, so that we can ensure that similar horrors are never again repeated'. Nonetheless, as the testimonies refugees perform by such memorials demonstrate, atrocities are continually committed across the world. As one tour participant (Interview 30, 2019) observes: 'I think it is very interesting to connect the past with now, and her [the guides] personal experience connected to the past; it shows that there are no differences between the past and now, and this is sad'. The refugee-guided tours thus indicate a moral failure within the very premise of spatial commemoration of trauma - acting as an embodied version of what James Young (1992) refers to as a 'counter monument'. The term describes a diversion from traditional memorials by artists in Germany during the Nineties to tackle the complexity of Holocaust memorialisation.¹⁸

The tours resemble the counter monument in their attempt to replace memorials' indexing impulse with ever-changing, ever-vanishing, interactive gestures that question the very premise of memorialisation. In addition, the tours reframing of Holocaust memorials offers a more fragmented and heterogeneous transcultural memory narrative instead of a singular or universal one. Indeed, as Marianne Hirsch (2012) highlights, presubscribed haunting 'post-memories' provoked by mediated images, objects, stories and ceremonies related to the Holocaust tend to solidify a selective universal memory narrative. For example, Karen Till and Anna-Kaisa Kuusisto-Arpone (2015) observe how the Westerbork Camp Memorial Museum in the Netherlands communicates a singular universal Holocaust narrative at the expense of other site-specific silenced stories. For them, a more ethical form of remembrance is one that uses the material landscape to articulate a complex understanding of

¹⁸ Scholars continue to apply this term to describe a variety of structures and practices across the globe that offer a critical representation of the past and invite a multisensory engagement with its representation (Stubblefield, 2011; Rojinsky, 2013; Eröss, 2016; Stevens, Franck and Fazakerley, 2018).

place as layers and linkages of trans-local meanings. The example of refugee-guided tours offers a possibility for such ‘ethical remembrance’ since they open a fixed and singular spatial memory by transforming local memorials into transnational sites, relevant to other similar experiences.

As this section has demonstrated, the refugee-guided tours entail a testimonial exchange that is site-specific and co-performative. This testimonial exchange is based on a collaborative interaction between morally driven testifiers and second-hand witnesses. Equally, it relies on a dialect between architecture, site-specific history, and refugees’ testimonies. These testimonies, the section has illustrated, do not compete with the local traumatic legacies inscribed onto the urban fabric which are also narrated at each tour stop. Rather, the tours re-mobilise the understanding of both the local history and the traveling memories of refugees. As such, the tours operate as a mode of memory activism that challenges current politics of forgetting, in the form of reconciliation with past traumas or overlooking present atrocities. More specifically, the refugee-guided tours engage in a transcultural mode of memory activism that entails the transformation of local memorials into transcultural sites relevant to other similar experiences.

The following and final section of this chapter advances the analysis of the tours as a mode of transcultural memory activism. It argues that in addition to opening national sites of memory into transcultural signifiers, the tours’ activism involves the mapping of the plural and diasporic nature of urban space, replacing the ontology of locals with urban wayfarers. It also considers the constraints of this tactic of urban resistance.

Tracing Paths of Transcultural Memory

Yasmin patiently waits whilst tour participants take ‘selfies’ with the striking Memoria Urbana Berlin, designed by Spanish artist Juan Garaizabal in 2012 (Map 4, Stop 3). She explains that it commemorates the Bohemian Bethlehem Church that was destroyed by air raids during the Second World War. Memoria Urbana Berlin is a reconstruction of the destroyed church silhouette in its exact location and size which consists of lines made from steel tubes. It involves a play with absence and presence to convey site-specific layers of memory and loss. Showing us an image of the original site, Yasmin notes that the church was built in 1732 by Bohemian refugees to thank King Frederick William I of Prussia for welcoming them to the district. ‘They were invited to practice their religion and bring their culture’, she emphasises. As such, her tour articulates a continual history of migratory

movement as inherent to Berlin's development. In Yasmin's (Interview 27, 2019) words: 'I think this mirroring is a good way to show, this is nothing new, this is part of history, part of human development, people move'. Similarly, this section argues that an important aspect of the refugee-guided tours' transcultural memory activism is the reframing of urban identity and heritage as inherently mobile.



Map 6: Central features in Yasmin's tour, May 2019, 3.56 km, 1 hour 52 minutes, 15°C.

As much as the refugee label flattens the many differences within the designated group, it can also create a false sense of cultural unity amongst those beyond its boundaries. Accordingly, in much of the discussion around the arrival of refugees into European cities, they are understood as homogenous entities, erasing important ethnic, cultural, and religious differences (Ross 2015). The refugee tour guides deconstruct this assumption, demonstrating that European borders have always been subjected to the flow of people, cultures, and goods. Moreover, the tours stress the importance of these flows to the formation of a city like Berlin. For instance, the first stop of Amir's tour is the beautiful neoclassical *Französischer Dom*, built in the Seventeenth century (Map 4, Stop 1). As Amir explains, it served as a place of worship for Huguenots who fled to Berlin to escape religious-based persecution.

Amir links this history with the more recent wave of refugees who have arrived in the city since 2015:

This was 100 years ago, but recently, Germany also took in a large number of refugees, not just doctors, everyone...I remember a German friend telling me how his wife went to volunteer in a refugee camp that opened next to their house, but they sent her back because there were too many volunteers. There were more volunteers than refugees!'

Signifying a similar idea, the final stop of the *Why We Are Here* tour is the middle of Gendarmenmarkt. From this standpoint, the full architectural ensemble of the square becomes visible, including the *Französischer Dom* and the *Deutscher Dom* (German Cathedral), standing across from one another, appearing identical from the outside (Fig. 12).

During a walk-along interview (26, 2019) Ahmed describes why he included Gendarmenmarkt square in his tour design:

From there we go to the last point, which is basically showing that this is not something new, to Europe to Germany, and particularly to Berlin. Because around this square that you're going to see right now, a lot of French refugees were not only welcome, but they were actually invited to come and find refuge around that neighbourhood, and they were escaping a bloody conflict.... They were welcomed and seen as part of this community to the extent that they built this Church...some people felt threatened that they were losing their land, their identity. So, the church on the other side was built for Germans. But I see it as a very positive thing because they are nearly identical both cathedrals, and I see it as: ok we are going to stand here, tall, on an equal level, as part of this land.

Like Amir and Yasmin, Ahmed emphasizes a long history of refuge and cosmopolitanism in Berlin. He further explains that the goal of this gesture is to counter the framing of the arrivals of refugees into Berlin as a 'crisis'. Ahmed (Interview 26, 2019) says: 'Just look at the last one hundred years, Germany was either a refuge or a place to flee from...The same

with Syria, it was a refuge for many people, especially in the last 100 years...and now Syrians are seeking refuge'. He thus concludes: 'So, we should not see it as a crisis, that is a main point here'. Hence, the tracing of a trans-local history is used by tour guides to deconstruct a naturalized distribution of the sensible that frames contemporary flows of refugees as unprecedented.



Figure 12: A Panorama of Gendarmenmarkt Square.

Another one of Yasmin's tour stops is a memorial plate for the romantic French-German poet Adelbert von Chamisso, on the site of his former home (Map 6, Stop 5). Yasmin translates the quote which is inscribed onto the plate:

*I am a Frenchman in Germany and a German in France.
A Catholic among the Protestants, Protestant among the Catholics.
A philosopher among the religious.
Jacobin among the aristocrats, and to the democrats a nobleman.
Nowhere am I at home.*

Yasmin explains why this quote resonates with her:

He cited three main components that we still use today to 'other' people: religion, nationality, and social class. Even though no one talks about German-French integration at this point in history, these are still the same components that we still use.

As Yasmin highlights, whilst certain migratory movements have long been seen as integral to Berlin's history, the criteria that divide different urban identities persists across time. Despite these prevailing hierarchies of exclusion and inclusion, Yasmin stresses that von Chamisso

was ‘very important to the story of Berlin’. As such, Yasmin reframes urban particularity and locality as informed by the interactions between multiple identities and cultures.

The depiction of Berlin conveyed during the refugee-guided tours is thus of an entangled intersection of multiple identities and trajectories of movement. Much like Ingold’s (2007) phenomenological theory, the tours hint at the replacement of the ontology of ‘locals’ with a notion of ‘urban wayfarers’ whose paths inform its ever-shifting identity and story. As Ingold (2007: 104) argues, with particular relevance to the practice of walking tours, ‘Wayfaring is neither placeless nor place-bound but place-making’. Accordingly, through their auto-spatial designs (or walking tours) refugees inform and re-form Berlin. A tour participant (Interview 31, 2019) succinctly captures the importance of the tours’ tactical appropriation of the city to redefine its parameter of belonging:

For me it is very interesting the way she found a way to appropriate the city; it is my city, my story and I know about these places. All that is very powerful. It is always such a struggle; I am an immigrant myself in another country. It is a special moment when you feel that the place you are living is also your place.

There is a need for transcultural perspectives within heritage and tourism practices. In fact, academic debates inspired by post-structuralist, feminist, queer, and post-colonial thinking have begun to deconstruct racialised and national forms of identity, belonging, and common origins since the 1960s.

In parallel, as mentioned in Chapter One, a phenomenological tradition inspired by Heideggerian philosophy has sought to rethink cities as dynamic assemblages of movements. Nevertheless, to a large extent these trends in academia have not diffused into popular consciousness, which tends to see heritage and notions of belonging as fixed and permanent. This conception of heritage continues to define the ways in which sites are preserved and memorials are designed, while official tourism practices reaffirm broadly accepted understandings of the meanings of such sites, and how they fit into the prevailing national story. However, the refugee-guided tours serve to deconstruct these frames. As Amir (Interview 28, 2019) explains, participants ‘see the city differently’ after his tour. Accordingly, a German tour participant (Interview 32, 2019) says: ‘what Amir told us about the Protestant Church as a symbol of acceptance, I did not know about it. It’s a place I love but I did not think about it from this angle at all’. Another participant similarly observes: ‘I am from Berlin, and I did not know any of the things he taught us about the buildings, I knew for example that this area has French names, but I did not know why; it is nice to know that there is a long history of welcoming refugees in the city’. This diffusion of narratives which

challenge perceived assumptions about place and belonging within cities is especially important as these tours find a wide audience through using the commercially popular genre of city walking tours.

Acting as an embodied counter-monument, the tours utilize the popular city tour format to initiate debates around who has the power to assign meaning and significance to heritage sites and memorials. In another example from Yasmin's tour, she observes that unlike the fully renovated *Französischer Dom* and *Deutscher Dom*, the Bohemian Bethlehem Church was only partially reconstructed as part of a temporary installation (later made permanent). For her, 'this speaks to the notion of heritage, and who decides what is really heritage, who decides ok this is important to the history of the city or the community and this is not'. Yasmin further relates this issue – which lies at the heart of the politics of memory and preservation - with her personal experiences. She says: 'As a personal reflection, the job that I found a few blocks away is related to archiving and working with Syrian culture and heritage...In Syria for example this is a very current discussion'. To illustrate, Yasmin mentions the current international attention directed to renovating the ruins of the ancient city Palmyra, which were heavily damaged by ISIS during the Syrian Civil War. However, Yasmin notes, what remains forgotten within the international discourse about these famous ruins is that 'there was a local community living among the ruins, and they were evacuated by the French that were involved in the area, to create this city of ruins that everyone knows'. Here Yasmin refers to a colonial spatial process of destroying occupied places to reshape 'the world as exhibition', out of a particularly European concern with rendering space commodified, viewable, and categorised (Mitchell 1989a).

Such vocalising of an overlooked trans-national colonial legacy is another way in which the tours demonstrate the entanglement of Berlin with other places and times. In another example, Amir's last tour stop is a viewpoint of the Berlin Museum of Islamic Art within the south wing of the Pergamonmuseum. The Museum, located in the much-visited Museum Island, presents the art and archaeology of Islamic societies ranging from the Eighth to the Nineteenth century. Showing us an image of the original Ishtar gate from Babylon (an ancient city located in current day Iraq), Amir describes his first encounter with the gate, in the Berlin's museum of Islamic Art (Map 4, Stop 6):

I didn't come to the gate until I felt ready, I knew it would be difficult. When I was learning German, they took us on a tour of the city, we visited the museum, and I wasn't sure if I should walk into the room to see the gate. Finally, I came in and saw the gate and stood there for an hour without words.

Amir's account of an ambiguous attachment to a cultural object in a German museum undermines an essentialist reading of German culture by pointing to its adaptation and appropriation of other cultures. Moreover, it points to the difficult European legacy of imperial looting and dispossession. Wael's tour also includes the Museum of Islamic Art, yet, he references it as a symbol of an essentialising and orientalist depiction of the Middle East (Said 1995). To contrast this depiction, Wael speaks of a Syrian cosmopolitanism, assembled out of multiple identities, cultures, and religions. He adds, 'we are not all Muslims with beards like people think'.

Through such critical reflections on colonial legacies and orientalist perceptions and by mapping a local history of migration, the tours portray Berlin as a site of 'entangled modernities' (Randeria 1999a, 1999b). Namely, a site shaped by an ongoing history of entanglement between European cities and former colonies, and between Western and non-Western societies. This is another means by which the tours expand and problematize local public memory: as mentioned, German hegemonic heritage practices largely disregard the German colonial legacy and the history of migration from the colonies to the metropole. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the colonial legacy embedded in European museums, as indicated by Amir and Wael, is similarly linked with the historical formation of touristic practices. In Europe, cultural institutions and exhibitions were established during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries, coinciding with the expansion of European colonial empires, which also facilitated the rise of tourism for European elites (Andrews, 1989; Cormack 1998). Moreover, like museums, tourism practices have been the products and producers of orientalist and colonialist ideologies that render certain places and cultures as exoticised 'others' (Giblin, Ramos, and Grout 2019; Bennett 2004; Linehan, Clark, and Xie 2020). Therefore, a question arises regarding the appeal to the tourism practice of guided walking tours, and whether it can truly restore agency to those subjected to 'othering' and orientalisising perceptions.

Still, the refugee-guided tours' borrowing from the power-infused repertoire of tourism practices does indicate towards a possibility for a shift in agency. As discussed in Chapter One, tour guides are important memory and culture agents that hold an authority over the past and its interpretation, and shape participants' experiences of memory sites. By appropriating the guided tour mode of performance, refugees borrow this authority to re-enact and deconstruct existing displays of public memory and enact a 'right to the city' and its heritage (Lefebvre 1996; Harvey 2012). Moreover, the refugee-guided tours entail a subversive role-shift by which noncitizens or newcomers perform the role of the city experts.

Amir (Interview 28, 2019) alludes to the humorous nature of this role-shift, ‘it is strange to tell Germans about places they know; it is funny that I am doing this, I have only been here a few years...It is nice to tell them about *their* capital’. As theorists of gender, race and sexuality demonstrate, parodic performances threaten the stability of racial, sexual and class categorization, and disrupt fixed identity formulations (Butler 2011; Bhabha 2012). The tours’ role-shift is similarly subversive as it calls into question restrictive categorizations of city-dwellers as ‘locals’ versus ‘foreigners’. This role shift further undermines the distinctions between ‘hosts’ and ‘guests’ as they are traditionally played out within tourist encounters.

Nevertheless, hierarchies between more established and newer residents of Berlin do manifest in the everyday managing of Querstadtein tours (which are not self-run by refugees). A division exists between the tour guides who are all refugees and Querstadtein’s office staff who are settled Berliners. The latter are those who conduct interviews to determine the suitability of refugee-candidates to become tour guides, and run a training course for the guides (focused primarily on handling journalists and uncomfortable questions from the audience). Michelle (Interview 20, 2018), for instance, describes the interview process in which she asks candidates: ‘what do you want to share?’ She believes that ‘something you cannot train is a willingness to share from yourself and to show something’. Office workers further take an active role in what Emma (Interview 25, 2019) describes as the ‘brainstorming’ process of designing the tours. She initiates this ‘brainstorming’ by asking tour guides, ‘what are the subjects you want to talk about? What are the places that are important for you? [and] What do you want to tell? Together, they ‘try to make a tour out of it’. However, Emma further notes that when guides have a clear design concept for their tours, such as Yasmin, office workers merely act as ‘partners’ to think through practical constraints, such as the ‘views of participants’, or in Yasmin’s case, ‘how to translate her academic ideas into a tour’. This demonstrates how spaces of solidarity can jeopardise the autonomy of refugee voices or reiterate the divisions they seek to undo.

Both Michelle and Emma express their unease about the separation that has formed between refugees and office workers. They hoped to undo this distinction by offering tour guides a job in Querstadtein’s office. However, tour guides are either studying in higher education or have further employment. Furthermore, they are not interested in this type of work which does not involve appearing in front of an audience. Indeed, despite the power hierarchy that exists between office workers and the refugee tour guides, during tours refugees are the those at the centre and in control of their political visibility (in contrast with

the example mentioned in the first chapter where No Borders activists spoke for refugees, dominating the public stage of political visibility). Additionally, office workers are not usually present during the tours, which enhances tour guides' freedom of expression. Similarly, Amir (Interview 28, 2019) highlights with regards to the process of designing his tour with Emma's assistant: 'I wrote everything, all the explanations, it's all from my memory'. More broadly, as Michelle stresses, the mixture of political education with a commercialized touristic practice enables Querstadtein to function as a sustainable social enterprise instead of depending on governmental funds, which allows for greater freedom of expression. Dependency on government funds can further come at the price of being subjected to a nationalised model of integration, as the above-mentioned Multaka project demonstrates.

Despite of the benefits of a greater autonomy, the hybridity of tourism and activism does introduce certain sets of limitations. For instance, participants' expectations and behaviours of a standard city tour often interrupt the delivery of tours, as Amir (Interview 28, 2019) observes:

On yesterday's tour, there were some participants that bothered me and then it's hard to keep going, and it's hard for me to get the message across. Germans for example do not interfere, they are speechless and sometimes they ask nothing. But yesterday there were too many interruptions, so I had to give up the last stop.

Amir further describes how in a separate incident a participant asked questions that were unrelated to the tour's themes and wanted to buy beer. In a similar vein, Emma (Interview 25, 2019) says: 'We had guests from one of our foundations, political activists, and they were the ones who said we are too tired and let's get in the car'. Based on participation in a dozen tours, the tendency to interrupt tour guides is more prevalent during the privately booked group tours (these disruptions usually amount to asking unrelated questions or taking 'selfies' with landmarks). This may relate to the prior familiarity of participants with one another and to a sense of 'ownership' deriving from private bookings. Nevertheless, a benefit highlighted by both office workers and tour guides with regards to private group bookings is that the audience is more diverse.

Since the private group tours are mostly booked by companies and educational bodies, their participants have not necessarily made an active choice to join. This allows tour guides to reach a broader audience and engage with individuals who hold more ambiguous or negative views around the presence of refugees in Berlin. In contrast, the audience of the

publicly open tours are mostly Germans in their thirties, with a slightly higher number of woman than men. As Michelle (Interview 20, 2018) observes, ‘most of them are open Berliners, wanting to learn something, people that are already liberal, already open to the topic’. Therefore, she notes, a criticism commonly voiced about these tours is that they are ‘preaching to the converted’. Similarly, a tour participant (Interview 24, 2018) says during a walk-along interview: ‘I know this topic well, so it is not changing my opinions much, my brother should have been here’. Nonetheless, as Michelle (Interview 20, 2018) highlights, Querstadtein operate out the belief that even liberals and those that are generally more supportive of refugees have a lot to learn about refugees’ experience of their shared city. Similarly, Emma (Interview 25, 2019) says with regards to ‘those who say I’m really tolerant’ that they can nonetheless ‘discover new things, or places that they were not aware of’. Indeed, as this chapter argues, the tours’ political intervention does not merely relate to the politics of refugees’ reception and perceptions, but further amounts to a reframing of Berlin’s identity, heritage, and memory.

This section has focused on another democratizing gesture enacted during the refugee-guided tours: the depiction of Berlin as an entangled intersection of multiple identities, cultures, and religions. As has been demonstrated, the refugee-guided tours operate as a mode of transcultural memory activism which uses a local history of cosmopolitanism as a resource to expand the parameters of belonging to urban space in the present. Moreover, they undermine essentializing notions of urban identity and heritage by demonstrating the entanglement of Berlin with other places and times *and* with its difficult colonial legacy. In the parallel, this section has highlighted some of the unique advantages as well as constraints that arise from the mixing between activism and tourism practices.

Conclusion

Expanding the geo-temporal depth of forced displacement research, this chapter has illustrated the agency of refugees as ostensible “others” and “new-comers” to participate within and impact not merely the urban domain but also its memory culture. As shown above, officialised tourism and heritage practices in Berlin - arguably the world’s capital of memorials - are nonetheless inadequate at commemorating its transcultural identities and histories. Nevertheless, by analyzing a mobile and temporary performance of refugee-guided tours, this chapter has illuminated the potential to open Berlin’s landscape of memory to a broader variety of experiences and cultures through a mundane intervention of walking and

talking. Hence, the hybridity of activism and tourism can be useful for democratizing processes of memory production and diffusing critical discourses around the politics of heritage and memory. Nevertheless, the chapter has also reflected on how catering to a tourist curiosity about migratory neighbourhoods can reinstate existing urban geographical and cultural divisions. This highlights the importance of location to urban acts of resistance and subversion. In this case, the relocation of the guided tours to the central district of Mitte has allowed refugees to continue problematizing hierarchical notions of integration *and* inventing new cosmopolitan associations for the city and its architecture. To paraphrase Rancière, by performing as tour guides (the city experts) refugees simultaneously demonstrate their exclusion from the politics of the city's heritage *and* their ability to influence it and therefore claim membership and political participation. The very act of placing a supposed outsider as a city tour guide undermines hierarchies between guests and hosts as well as newcomers and locals. Moreover, it demonstrates a potential to remobilise tourist performances and heritage sites beyond their tendency to echo fixed formulations of locality as tied to specific cultures, nationalities, and ethnicities.

Feminist and postcolonial thought have influenced an important critical discourse related to questions regarding who holds the power and authority over the representation of the culture of 'others'. In a slight departure, this chapter has engaged with another question related to the politics of representation that arises within our era of increased mobilities and entangled geographies. Namely, what power does the 'other' have over the representation of the local culture and heritage? Dealing with this issue, the chapter has illustrated that opening sites designated for the recollection of particular historical events to reinterpretation by 'others' opens new cosmopolitan possibilities of urban identity and belonging. Hence, site-specific memories can become a resource to expand contemporary possibilities of belonging to urban spaces - rather than merely being a tool to exclude certain identities, nationalities, and ethnicities. This theoretical shift in thinking about official memory sites as indexing national memory to potential placeholders for transcultural memories can advance existing research and heritage design initiatives. The tour guides examined in this chapter further offer a path to localise transcultural memory by addressing its historical presence in the city, by mixing refugees' traveling memories with Berlin's sites of memory, and by addressing the city's overlooked colonial legacy. Indeed, a reorientation in the cultural of commemoration of European cities such as Berlin towards their colonial legacies is an ethical act of accountability that also rhetorises the so-called refugee reception or crisis and offers more inclusive urban belonging.

The central theme explored in this chapter concerned the ways refugees as seeming outsiders are nonetheless impacted by and affect their ‘wounded’ host city *with* its heritage and cultural memory. With the intention of expanding the geo-temporal scope of analysis further, the following chapter turns to examine the agency of displaced persons to impact the politics of urban space and memory in their ‘wounded’ home cities. Advancing the lens of de-colonial and post-colonial theory as appropriate means to conceptualise the politics of forced displacement, Chapter Three examines a city undergoing a colonial process of dispossession of time and place. To examine these two themes, the next chapter focuses on memory tours in *Yafa* (Jaffa), guided by second and third generation Internally Displaced Palestinians (IDPs). It closely examines how these tours extend architectural ruins to the realms of performance to resist the erasure of Palestinian modern urban history.

Chapter Three: Abstraction and Resistance in the Streets

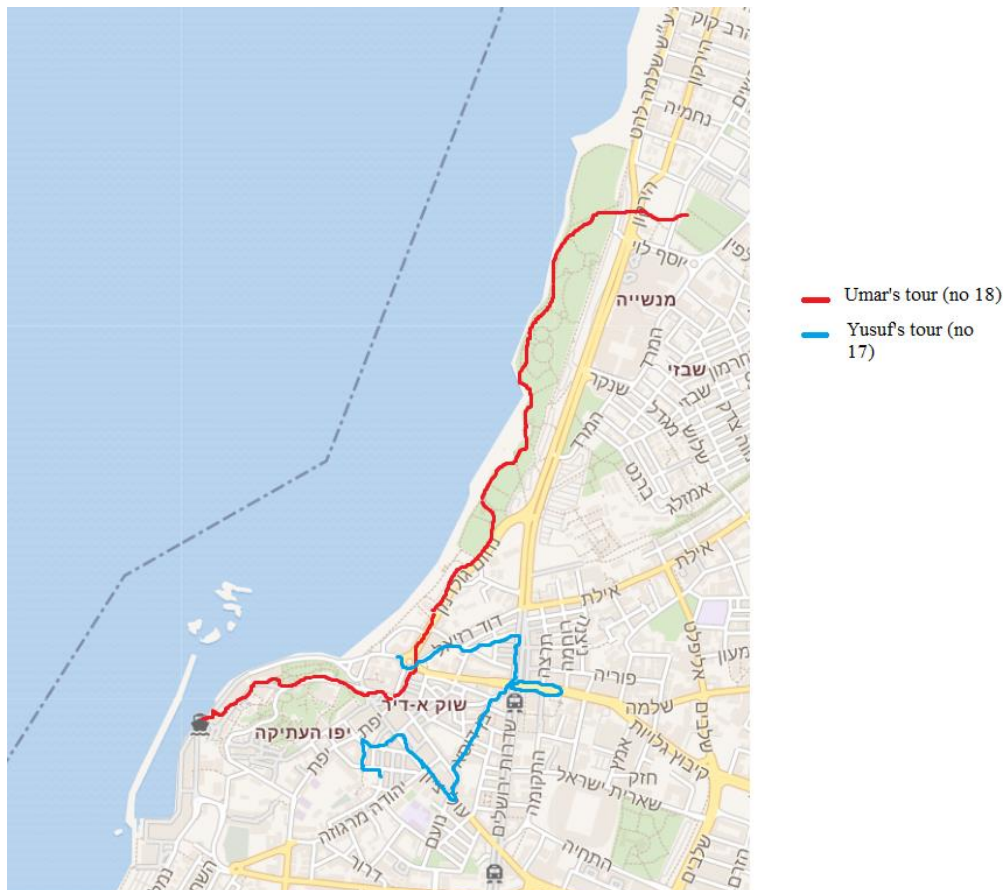


Figure 13: Neuberg, T. 2020. *Protest in Jaffa this Week*. [Accessed 27 July 2021]. Available from: <https://www.ha-makom.co.il/post-masha-jaffa-new>.

In the summer of 2020, Tel Aviv-Jaffa municipality began construction work in Jaffa's ancient Al-Isaaf Muslim cemetery to replace it with a homeless shelter, despite opposition from local Palestinians (since 1948, Israel has destroyed hundreds of Muslim cemeteries across the country). In response, Jaffa's streets filled with protesters who organized mass prayers near to the burial site, burned litter bins, and marched across the city (Fig. 13).

Revealing the contradictions within the projected image of Tel Aviv-Jaffa as a liberal model of coexistence, protesters were met with armed police and shock grenades that injured a 14-year-old Palestinian passer-by. Sami Abu Shehadeh (2020), Internally Displaced Palestinian from Jaffa and a member of the Knesset (unicameral legislature of Israel), wrote in Haaretz Newspaper that this incident reflected a 'deep wound' resulting from 'a policy of ignoring, erasing, and destroying the city's Palestinian Arab culture and history'.¹⁹ The dynamic between the obliteration of space and memory and the resistance to it which this anecdote reflects is the key theme of the chapter. It asks how can displaced people affect the public memory of a city undergoing ethno-national division and colonialism. To answer this, it focuses on city walking tours of Jaffa guided by second and third generation Internally Displaced Palestinians (IDPs) (Map 7). Like the above-described protests, these tours use the urban fabric of the city to resist the ongoing assault on Jaffa's Palestinian heritage and identity.

¹⁹ Translated by the author.



Map 7: Jaffa and the paths of the tactical tours closely examined in Chapter Three.

One of the oldest port cities in the world, Jaffa has long been a site for exchange and cosmopolitanism as well as conflict and violence, having been conquered over thirty times. Most recently, following the 1948 Arab-Israel War, it was annexed to Israel's largest metropolis and became part of a united Tel Aviv-Yafo municipality (despite its designation to remain a part of Palestine according to the 1947 UN resolution no. 181). *Yafo* is the Hebrew word for Jaffa which is distinct from the Arab word *Yafa*.²⁰ This was part of a broader process which Palestinians refer to as *al-Nakba* (the catastrophe) – a disaster that included the loss of homeland and the uprooting of 80 percent of Palestinians with the formation of the state of Israel over 78 percent of Mandatory Palestine (Sa'di and Abu-Lughod 2007). Many scholars, including revisionist Israeli historians, describe *al-Nakba* as 'ethnic cleansing' and 'spaciocide' since it entailed a systematic spatial annihilation (Hanafi 2006; Pappe 2007). Accordingly, Jaffa's post-war reconstruction was subordinated to Jewish spatial

²⁰ After outlining this politicised semantic distinction, the chapter uses the title Yafa, or alternatively, when referring to official discourse about the city the English name Jaffa or the Hebrew name Tel-Aviv-Yafo municipality.

monopolizations and design mechanisms that erased its Palestinian identity and history. Closely analyzing official walking tours of Jaffa, the chapter will demonstrate how this process is continually enacted through tourist trails and performances. In parallel, it will demonstrate how the adaptation of the tourist performance by IDPs can disrupt these orientalist, colonialist, and nationalist tendencies. By focusing on the memory activism of IDPs in Jaffa, the chapter highlights an aspect of refuge that is less acknowledged, of those who have not crossed state borders and remain under the jurisdiction of the government responsible for their displacement. Accordingly, 150,000 IDPs remained in Israel after the war, of which around 3,647 stayed in Jaffa.

From being a majority within a Palestinian “mixed city” with a Jewish minority (a term coined by the British authorities to measure and manage the local populations), they become a marginalized minority (Yacobi 2002, 2009; Yacobi and Pullan 2014). From a Palestinian socio-cultural-economic centre, Yafa became a poor neighbourhood in Tel Aviv - constituting an urban margin that is nonetheless located in Israel’s core. The recent ruination of Al-Isaaf Cemetery is a reminder that *al-Nakba* transcends simplistic binaries of past and present. Rather, it formed a rupture in time for Palestinians that marks a continuous reality of displacement, spaciocide, and denial of history (Sanbar 2001; Hawari 2018). As the chapter will argue, the tours of Yafa guided by IDPs extend the commemoration of *al-Nakba* to the realm of activism by demonstrating that it is ongoing. This chapter hence works to expand the geo-temporal scope of forced displacement research by stressing cross generational political struggles related to prolonged conditions of displacement. It will advance the discussion in the previous chapter on collaborative testimonial events by highlighting the importance of architecture as a source of authenticity in lingering conditions of assaults on memory where survivors are absent. As will be demonstrated, the cultural influences, agents and actors involved in the tours of Yafa that are guided by IDPs are varied. Whereas the tours examined in the previous chapter mark paths in a new locality, the tours in Yafa retrace trails in the spaces displaced persons were forced to leave. Retracing, suggests Paul Carter (2009: 9), is to ‘engage with the leftovers of history and harness their potential to indicate different paths into the future’. Accordingly, this chapter will argue that the tours’ retracing of memory is a political project of resisting colonial spatial orders and geographical imaginations towards harvesting new visions for the future. As such, it will continue to investigate the complex interactions within ‘wounded’ cities between remembering, forgetting, renovation, and distraction from the novel perspective of displaced persons.

The chapter draws on participation in nine political tours in Yafa and other Palestinian cities and villages within Israeli territory, alongside fourteen interviews with tour guides and tour participants. Snapshots from these tours will be used to illustrate the macro-performances, encounters, and creative interventions they encompass. Collages will be utilized to represent their paths and the ruins that they reference, further allowing the readers to orientate themselves spatially and visually. The analysis will situate these tours as part of a broader spectrum of commemoration events and tactics of spatial resistance. It will also theorize the formation of Jaffa as a tourist-site and the broader geopolitical context and memory disputes of the region. Conducting a ‘contrapuntal analysis’ analysis of the city, the chapter will begin by analysing Yafa’s official memory lanes and paths of erasure as they are enacted through heritage tours supported by Tel Aviv-Yafo municipality. This will provide a chance to conceptualise the enduring links between the spatial violence of colonialism *and* tourism as modes of nationalistic communication that mark physical and cultural passages of domination. From this, the chapter will turn to analyse the actors and networks that are involved in Yafa’s tactical memory tours and the global and local commemoration rituals and tourist genres they are inspired by or problematize. The subsequent section will demonstrate that Yafa’s Judaization is constantly countered by modes of resistance, including guided walking tours. It will also outline the importance of site-specificity and ruins to the tours’ testimonial events. Advancing this debate further, the following section will frame the tours’ re-mapping of a lost urbanity and cosmopolitanism as a transcultural mode of memory activism and situate the tours as part of a broader struggle for the “Palestinization” of Yafa. The final section will further consider the importance of the walking body within this political performance and reflect on participants’ positionalities.

(In)visible Memory Lanes in Jaffa

The meeting point of an English-speaking tour entitled *The Original FREE Walking Tour of Tel Aviv's Most Visited Area, Old Jaffa, with a Local Guide* is the Clock Tower (Fig. 14).²¹ The tour is available weekly and supported by Tel Aviv-Yafo municipality in partnership with Sandmans New Europe tour company. Dana, our Israeli-Jewish tour guide, tells us that Moritz Schoenberg, a Jewish clock maker trained in Europe, designed the tower in 1903 as a symbol of modernity, marking the 25-year rule of Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II over the land of Israel. She further asks if we can see the two red mailboxes nearby, ‘abandoned legacies’, she says, ‘from the next empire to rule the land of Israel, the British Mandate’ (Fig. 15). Dana’s tour highlights the architectural legacy of old Jaffa’s various colonisers. Yet, as this section further illustrates, her tour ignores the spatial and cultural impact made by generations of Palestinian inhabitants, their memories, and voices. Closely analysing this tour and the heritage paths it traverses, the section outlines how Israeli official historiography obscures the memory, geography, and identity of Yafa and its Palestinian inhabitants.



Figure 14: Yafa’s Clock Tower.

²¹ Participants are invited to leave a tip at the end.



Figure 15: British mailboxes.

Disputed cities are rich with spatial reconfigurations of traumatic memories, such as ruins, graves, and border zones. Nonetheless, their embellished marking of memory, in its selectivity, often instigates forgetting (Yacobi and Fenster 2016; Bakshi 2017). As the previous chapter showed, urban theaters of memory represent scripts of national history edited with a global vocabulary for a mixture of local and international audiences. The importance of these selective scripts is amplified in disputed cities. Heritage is a term filled with ambiguities around notions of identity, memory, history, and culture. These tensions come to the fore in cities undergoing ethno-national conflict such as Yafa. For example, Dana uses the term ‘land of Israel’, a Zionist counter-term to Palestine that aims to naturalize a Jewish ownership over the region whilst ignoring alternative claims. Her emphasis on the Jewish population of Yafa further obscures their minority status in the “mixed city” before 1948. This demonstrates the importance of official guided tours in enacting selective scripts of urban memory and national ideology.

Moreover, the paths and heritage trails such tours pass through are themselves powerful conveyers of ideological trajectories and mnemonic frames. For instance, Feldman’s (in Yacobi and Fenster 2011) research illustrates how a path that interlinks the Mount Herzl Military Cemetery with the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem forms a symbolic linkage between the traumatic memory of the Holocaust and Israel’s wars against its Arab neighbours. Feldman adds that, compared with the explicit ideological messaging of monuments, paths allow the Zionist narrative to be integrated into the landscape

more naturally. The need for less explicit national signifiers is amplified by the current deterioration of the secular national Zionist ethos as an all-encompassing story. This process links with the neoliberal individualisation that Israeli society is undergoing and the formation of a local identity politics from marginalized perspectives, such as Ethiopian, Russian, or Mizrahi Jews, that problematize the national ethos (Maron and Shalev 2017).

The need for less overt ideological markers further links with the constant tensions that inhabitants and visitors who traverse disputed cities such as Yafa have to navigate, between spatially imposed national myths, spatial references to memories that differ from this narrative, and the city's lived reality (Bakshi 2017). Within this context, the municipality-supported walking tours add to a host of actors (such as the Government Names Committee, and the Israel Nature and Parks Authority) that reconstruct and circulate Zionist ideology through its translation into daily spatial life, for instance through their allocation of park and street names. As such, besides explicit spatial signifiers such as monuments, the Israeli Zionist ideology and memory culture is transmitted through the usage of place names, orientation through maps, walking, and looking. These spatial daily activities help ease the inherent tension between Israel as a place for everyday life versus Israel as a mythologized place for the realisation of Zionist ideology.

The streets we pass along on Dana's guided tour are rich in history, architectural styles, and symbolic attributes. As we climb Gan Hapsiga (Garden of the Peak), we merge with a large group of tourists - Israeli and non-Israeli, individuals, families and guided groups - who wander around enjoying the panoramic view as the Mediterranean Sea and Tel Aviv's skyline appear before our eyes. As Feldman (2016) notes, drawing on his experience as a pilgrimage tour guide, Israeli tour guide training attributes importance to panoramic viewpoints, as a means to reinforce and naturalize selective readings of space through a sense of visual superiority. Nadi Abusaada (2020) describes a similar visuality of colonial spaces achieved through the warfare-induced practice of aerial photography, widely used by the British authorities in Mandatory Palestine. Birdseye-view imagery and viewpoints similarly reaffirm ideology by abstracting space, obscuring its details. Furthermore, as image captions affect the parameters of what we see and how, Dana's narration of the view imbues it with specific meanings.

Pointing at the skyline, Dana describes Tel Aviv as the 'first Hebrew city founded in the modern day', and a 'proud and fully alive party of modernity, authenticity, and liberalism' (Fig. 16). Her description naturalizes and underpins a well-recited Zionist dichotomy that frames Tel Aviv as a European-inspired "modern" city and a counterpoint to

the “old” Jaffa. This rendering of indigenous spaces as backward and anachronistic is a means to legitimize colonial rule, by associating it with modernity and progress (Fabian 2014). As the following chapter expands on, Tel Aviv’s architectural styles, especially the International Style that bestowed its title the White City, have been a key means to enhance this Zionist dichotomist framing. Nevertheless, as Sharon Rotbard (2015) highlights in his influential book *White City, Black City*, ironically, despite their association with Tel Aviv’s ostensible modernity during the 1930s to 1940s, the International Style’s buildings were mostly found in Yafa.



Figure 16: Tel Aviv's panorama.

Moreover, at that time, Yafa was undergoing an extensive process of modernization and urbanization. Some modern European town-planning principles were deployed, whilst acclaimed Arab urbanists such as Egyptian town planner Ali Mas'ud were hired to develop detailed modernization plans for Jaffa (Levine, 2005). Nevertheless, our tour does not mention Yafa’s modern architecture or rapid urbanization. Instead, it adds to a history of tourists and colonizers that categorize it as archetypal of the native or biblical (Allweil 2016; Fuchs 1998). This categorization continues a long trans-national tradition of Christian pilgrimages to the region in search of an immersive experience in an imagined biblical

landscape. Pilgrimage revived during the Late Ottoman era and peaked during the Mandate period, enabled by the growth of a global tourist industry and the development of local modernized transport and infrastructure (Cormack 1998; Searight and Wagstaff 2001; Wharton 2006; Vogel 2010). Yet despite these infrastructural advancements, the modern pilgrim gaze understands the region as peripheral and its landscape as rustic.

In fact, the modern pilgrim gaze, inspired by nineteenth-century romantic orientalism, contrasted with the premodern Christian cartographic depictions of the Holy Land as a cosmic centre (Bar and Cohen-Hattab 2003). By walking and gazing, our tour advances a similar neo-biblical orientalist reading of Old Jaffa. For instance, we learn how Jonah the prophet fled God through Jaffa's Port; the same site, according to Dana, through which King Solomon imported the cedars used in the construction of the First Temple. We also visit St. Peter's Church, which Dana describes as, 'the center of Christianity in Jaffa for hundreds of years, built in 1654' (Fig. 17). The tour's linkage of mythologies with specific geographical locations lends them a spatial authenticity and renders them more vivid and emotionally accessible. This is part of a circular dialect in conflicted landscapes by which 'place legitimises historical claims and history vindicates place' (Pullan et al. 2013: 31). Therefore, in addition to using distant panoramic viewpoints, our tour abstracts space by referencing distant history and mythology whilst ignoring the more recent Palestinian history.

At another tour stop we gaze at Andromeda's Rock, decorated with an Israeli flag, where according to Greek mythology Andromeda was to be sacrificed to a sea monster (Fig. 18). We also visit a gate left by the Egyptian Empire in the Late Bronze Age, named after Rameses II (Fig. 19). Nationalism appeals to such archaeological features since they ease the inconsistency between space and history that it seeks to establish. This inconsistency arises since, whilst history is easy to mould according to national ideologies, space includes mnemonic triggers, expressions of fiction, and a lived reality that often contradicts national ideology (Feige 2017: 86-116). In the Zionist case, the importance of archeology has been amplified by the striking inconsistency between the Palestinian space and the Zionist narrative. As such, Zionism uses archaeology to imagine a local Jewish history and national myths, reclaim territory, and assert the local Jewish historical roots (Pullan et al 2013; El-Haj 2008).



Figure 17: St. Peter's Church.



Figure 18: Andromeda's Rock.



Figure 19: Rameses II Gate.

Moreover, archaeology is weaponized as a mechanism for ongoing Palestinian land dispossession (Pullan and Sternberg in Staiger et al. 2009). The commercial *Tarbush Tours of Old Jaffa* that follow a similar tour design as our tour further exemplify this paradoxical abstraction and objectification. Tour guides wear a Tarbush (also named fez), a symbol of Ottoman modernity, exoticized and romanticized in the West. Beyond “orientalising” the tour performance, the emphasis on the Ottoman rule allows the tours to engage with aspects of site-specific and spatial memories whilst obscuring their Palestinian component. Similarly, during our tour, we visit spatial *basamat* (imprints, in Turkish) left by Ottoman rule. For instance, Dana points at coastal cannons on display telling us that they were imported by the Ottoman government in the early-Eighteenth century to protect the city from raids by Bedouins and pirates (Fig. 20).

At another tour stop, we visit what Dana tells us is called a *Satil* (fountain in Turkish) built by Muhammad Abu Nabbut, the Ottoman governor of Yafa and Gaza at the beginning of the Nineteenth century (Fig. 21). The landscape *and* the indigenous population are further co-opted as a feature within the orientalised scenery, as the Tarbush Tours’ website illustrates. It juxtaposes through collages images of a tour guide wearing a *Kaffia* (another orientalised object) and making exaggerated facial expressions, with two backgrounds of old

picturesque black and white images: one of Jaffa's landscape, and one of its landscape and fishermen (Figs 22-23). These visual framings invite the gaze to include Jaffa's landscape as an archeological spectacle as well as the spectators on the landscapes, the indigenous fisherman, 'as objects of picturesque delectation' (Nochlin, 1989).



Figure 20: Coastal Cannons.



Figure 21: *Satil*.

Figures 22-23: Screenshots from Tarbush Tours website



As we cross the Bridge of Wishes, Dana notes that according to an old local legend, ‘if you make a wish while facing the Mediterranean it should come true’. However, she does not clarify the identity of the “locals” who upheld this myth. In fact, Dana does not use the words Palestine or Palestinians once during the tour. This creates a false impression that the Ottomans ruled over an empty land, and the tour replicates the colonialist gaze that views indigenous land as empty, a *terra nullius* (nobody's land) free for acquisition (Nanni 2011). Nevertheless, the “locals” partly intrude upon the tour’s screen of forgetting when we visit the *kishle* (jailhouse, in Turkish), Jaffa’s Ottoman Police Station that operated until 2005 (initially built as a Crusader fortress and currently a luxury hotel (Fig. 24). Dana notes that it served as ‘the Arab forces’ headquarters during a war that broke out in 1948, due to the British attempt to divide the land between Israelis and Arabs’. The designation “Arabs” reduces distinct national and cultural identities, and the tour transforms the experience of the landscape into a ‘world as exhibition’ that reaffirms symbolic beliefs and ideological orders (Mitchell 1989b).

Our next tour stop is a public sculpture of an uprooted orange tree, entitled *The Last Jaffa Orange*, and constructed by artist Ran Morin in 1994 (Fig. 25). Dana explains that Jaffa was once globally-renowned for its oranges. This industry, she adds, no longer operates and the brand-name Jaffa Oranges was sold off to companies overseas. The uprooted sculpture, she suggests, is a reminder that when Muslim and Jews did work together, they were able to transform the global orange industry. Once again, Dana blurs the Palestinian identity with the vague description “Muslim”. She also neglects to mention that Jaffa's orange business, part of the border *mazra'as* (plantations) industry, operated in a Palestinian city; or how the formation of this industry in the late Nineteenth century transformed Jaffa into the financial, political, and cultural centre of Palestine, fueling its rapid urbanization and industrialization (Scholch, 1981; Gilbar, 1990). Whilst the erasure of Palestinian villages from the realms of memory and geography enables the Zionist imaginary of *terra nullius*, the erasure of Palestinian cities and urbanity further aides its mythology of ‘a land without a nation given to a nation without a land’ (Eyal 1993).



Figure 24: The *kishle*.



Figure 25: *The Last Jaffa Orange*.

Our tour ends at Jaffa's Port, a bustling tourist spot with restaurants, boutique stores, and a large Israeli flag draped on the harbour wall (Fig. 26). Whilst the presence of the Palestinian fishermen is celebrated as a touristic folkloric feature, their tangible work-related needs are ignored by the municipality (Avni, 2017). Dana highlights the Port's significance within the modern Jewish tale of redemption and nation-building. She describes how since the Nineteenth century the port has served as a gateway for Jews returning to their homeland after two thousand years in *galut* (exile). As Dana further explains, the Hebrew word for Jewish migration to the homeland is *aliya*, which literally translates as 'to rise', and signifies the importance of this migratory trajectory. However, as we stand at this highly rich *lieux de mémoire*, Dana does not mention the port's central role in the Palestinian culture and economy. Moreover, the tour's attention to the ways colonizers, crusaders, and pilgrims have repeatedly, in Dana's words, 'destroyed and rebuilt Jaffa', ignores the event that led to its most radical transformation: the forced displacement of 95 percent of its Palestinian residents due to the 1948 War.

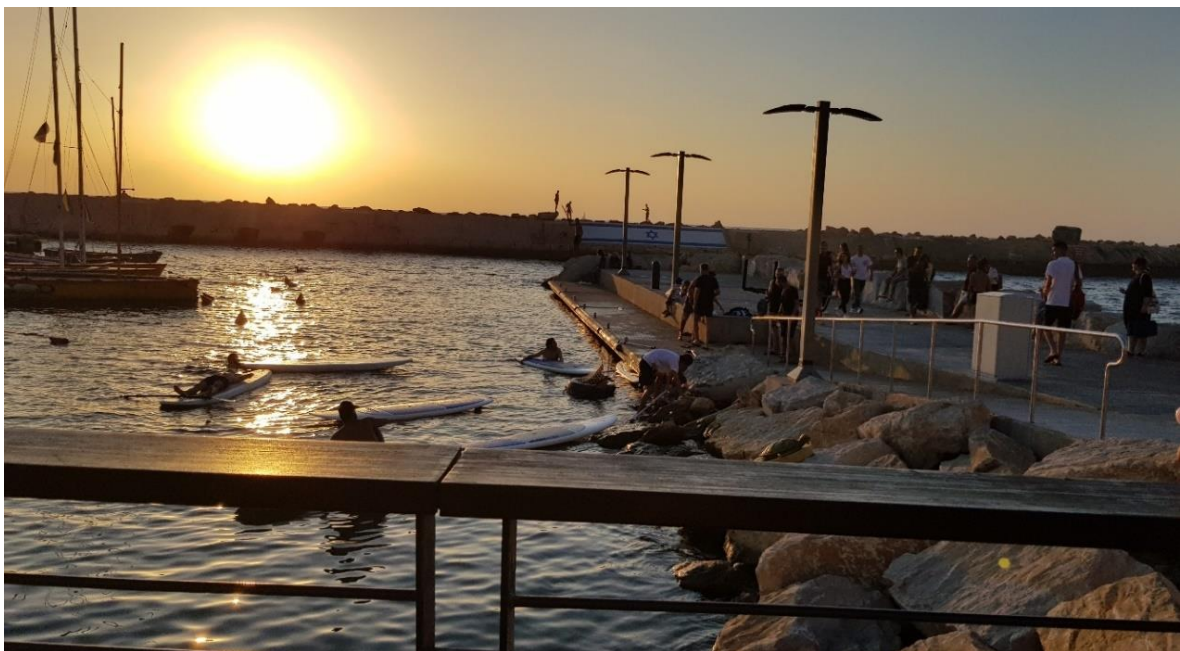


Figure 26: The port and a large Israeli flag draped on the harbour wall.

The tour thus adds to a long repertoire that Raja Shehadeh (2010: xvii), whose family fled Yafa in 1948, describes in his book *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape* as: ‘travelers, cartographers and colonizers whose walks in the Holy Land confirmed their political and religious views whilst erasing and blurring the land’s Palestinian population’. As much as this selective way of seeing and walking is informed by the landscape, it also informs it and translates into the concrete. This, in turn, further stabilises the selectivity in which the landscape is seen and experienced. For instance, Wendy Pullan and Max Gwiazda's (2009) analysis of the City of David archaeological park in East Jerusalem demonstrates how spatial modes of display and preservation cultivate a selective framing of space. They discuss, for instance, how the site’s streetlamps illuminate biblical tourist aspects of Jerusalem whilst relegating Palestinian heritage and contemporary urban life to a backdrop. In fact, a similarly selective and oriental conception of Old Jaffa which celebrates its picturesque vernacular features saved it from demolition and secured its preservation.

To explain, after the 1948 War, Yafa’s emptied space was used to solve the housing needs of war refugees, Tel Aviv's slum's inhabitants, discharged soldiers, and Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, North Africa and the Balkans (Golan 2009).²² Old Jaffa especially became a densely-populated site of marginality, neglect, prostitution, and crime, which was nicknamed the ‘big zone’ (Rotbard 2015). A 1949 report by the Engineers’ Commission 1949 deemed the area uninhabitable by modern standards and designated it for slum clearance (Alfasi and Fabian 2009). In response, Israeli bohemians embarked on a campaign to save Old Jaffa, led by archaeologist Samuel Yevin, urban planner Eliezer Brutzcus, and architect and painter Marcel Janco (Alfasi and Fabian 2009). Brutzcus petitioned the Prime Minister's Tourism Affairs Adviser, emphasising the potential of the Middle Eastern vernacular architecture as a tourist attraction; meanwhile Janco, joined by nationally-regarded painter Reuven Rubin, suggested transforming it to an artist colony (Paz 1997). Their endeavour was successful, though by the time of its approval, 70 percent of houses were already destroyed.

Janco was similarly involved in the establishment of an artists' cooperative community in the forcefully emptied Palestinian village Ein Houd, now renamed Ein Hod. As Susan Slyomovics (1998) writes, the village's stone houses have been stripped of their

²² Around 66 percent of the 190,000 Jewish immigrants who arrived in Israel 1948-1949 were settled in abandoned Palestinian houses in “mixed cities” such as Jaffa (Morris 1989).

memory and reduced to their “primitive” aesthetic, meanwhile the IDPs that originated from the village live only two kilometres away. Old Jaffa was subjected to a parallel reduction; Aaron Horowitz's new masterplan for greater Tel Aviv, issued between 1953-54, designated it for preservation as an archaeological park and artists’ quarter. At that stage, Greater Tel Aviv included Yafa, the Jewish neighbourhoods on its outskirts that are now known as south Tel Aviv, and eight destroyed Palestinian localities. Subsequently, Old Jaffa was “polished” as a neat simulation of a typical Middle Eastern city for tourist consumption, decorated with restaurants, cafés, art galleries, and artists’ studios. Meanwhile, the rest of Yafa has undergone waves of demolition and suffered institutional neglect (Golan, 2009).

The re-design of Old Jaffa was executed with standards that match the ‘increasingly homogenous tourist-historic cities across the globe’ (Pullan and Gwiazda 2009: 36). For instance, a network of organized, clean, and well-lit paths was laid out; it was decorated with tourist signs that highlight certain viewpoints, features, and memories; and features stands selling tourist memorabilia and postcards (Figs 27-29). This “immaculate” reconstruction process entailed what Lefebvre (1992) designates as the ‘the violence of abstraction’; a complex process of reduction to homogeneity and commodification of a richly differentiated socio-spatial reality with diverse experiences, identities, and histories. The notion of ‘abstraction’ further relates to the fragmented grid of private and national players that enact this process. For instance, Old Jaffa’s abstraction included the state, Tel Aviv-Yafo municipality, artists, archaeologists, urban planners, and tourist agents. In the context of colonial spaces, Yacobi and Pullan (2014: 517) describe a related colonial planning assumption by which ‘a sense of community is taken to refer to the same ethnic, national, racial or class group’.



Figure 27: A Map of Old Jaffa.



Figure 28: Tourist-signs in the Old City.



Figure 29: Postcards.

In 1985, Yafa's abstraction spread beyond its old segment to the rest of the city, with the launch of Jaffa's Urban Planning Team. Their refurbishment plan initiated an extensive process of gentrification and regeneration. First came the artists, then leftists seeking co-existence, and finally international real estate developers along with global capital, aesthetics, and construction standards (Monterescu and Fabian 2003). This meant a rise in exclusion, cultural tensions, and rent prices for existing residents - especially Palestinians - forcing many out of the city. Crucially, many IDPs live under a protected tenancy scheme of the semiprivate-semipublic Amidar housing company, which leaves them with weak claims to ownership. This current reality stems from the post-war period when the homes of Yafa's IDPs were taken from them under the Absent Property Law. The law, from 1950, designated Palestinian refugees who fled during the war 'absentee' and their property an 'absentee property' which belongs to the state. This prevented the 194 (III) United Nations resolution according to which refugees should be permitted to return to their homes.

In fact, for the first two years after the 1948 War, Yafa's IDPs were concentrated in the Ajami neighborhood, surrounded by barbed wire fencing and patrolled by the Israeli Defense Force (IDF). Influenced by their experiences in Europe, the Jewish immigrants that were housed in Yafa named Ajami a "ghetto" (Abu-Schada and Sheveita 2010). Whilst confined to a "ghetto" and forced to live in properties that belonged to other Palestinian refugees, IDPs were categorized "present absentees" and their houses were sub-contracted by the state to Amidar. The categorization present absentees is a clear testament to the

paradoxical existence of IDPs in a state that overlooks and marginalizes them; whilst the Israeli cultural reframing of IDPs as “Israeli Arabs” attempts to disconnect them from a Palestinian identity and memory culture (Masalha 2013). Though nowadays the military rule over Yafa is officially over, IDF bases, its radio station headquarters and Attorney’s Office remain permanent features of the cityscape.

To this day, IDPs continue to live under a semi-public protected tenancy which makes extending and repairing their homes illegal and forbids tenants from passing their houses to future generations. These “illegal” repairs and the consideration of tenants as ineligible property heirs serve as excuses for constant waves of demolitions and evacuations without compensation (Abu-Schada and Sheveita, 2010; Plonski, 2017). Moreover, the 2009 Land Reform that permits Amidar to sell “absentee” properties in the public market paved the way for a steep rise in the prices of these properties, making it impossible for residents to buy their homes. Hence, the abstract neo-liberal market law maintains long-existing circles of marginalization in Yafa that correspond with Israeli colonial relations. Palestinians in Yafa are therefore forced into what Oren Yiftachel (2009: 243) names ‘grey spaces’, which intermediate ‘the “lightness” of legality/approval/safety and the “darkness” of eviction/destruction/death’.

The ongoing gentrification and house evacuations are evidence that Yafa’s abstraction continues, as is the repeated enactment of commercial walking tours in Old Jaffa. As shown above, through a combination of lingering material senses of history with a hyper-real interactive representation of the Israeli national order that ignores the local Palestinian heritage, the tours re-form Old Jaffa as an archaeological theme-park. As was equally demonstrated, traditional heritage and spatial agents such as tourist authorities and housing companies have left permanent sites, infrastructural inequalities, and paths that abstract Yafa’s memory. Moreover, the immersive experience of the tours continually re-enacts the redaction of this rich and cosmopolitan space, with its multiple identities, memories, and histories, into a homogeneous and commodified urban sphere. This, in turn, reaffirms the colonial ethnocentric project of Judaizing the land (Yiftachel 2006). Hence, to gain a holistic understanding of the geopolitics in conflicted and colonized cities, it is useful to consider less conventional memory agents, such as tour guides, and less obvious spatial acts, such as walking.

This section has walked the reader through the interplay between looking and overlooking, forgetting and remembering, that makes up the official framing of memory and space in Jaffa. As demonstrated, heritage trails and walking tours compliment the impactful

work of authoritative mnemonic spatial agents and actors, such as memorials and architects, in the production of ideology. However, in contrast with the latter, the former disseminates and circulates ideology in a more interactive and informal manner, which arguably contributes to its impact. Analysing the way officialised and commercialised walking tours interact with heritage sites, regeneration, and preservation practices, this section has argued that Yafa is a city undergoing a continual process of abstraction whilst its Palestinian residents are forced into a grey space. Nonetheless, as Lefebvre (1992) maintains, nationalist, capitalist, and colonialist claims for exclusivity in spatial design are always insufficient in their attempts to abstract places. Similarly, Yiftachel (2009: 243) stresses that those forced into grey spaces use them ‘as bases for self-organization, negotiation, and empowerment’. The following sections consider such modes of negotiation and resistance, focusing on a network of tactical walking tours in Yafa led by IDPs.

To investigate the transformative potential of these walking tours as a mode of memory activism and urban resistance, the next section examines the global and local contexts which inspire, enable, and constrain them and reflects on the broader political and mnemonic atmosphere in which they operate.

Local and Global Repertoires of Walking

Rana (Interview 7, 2018) describes a grassroots group she belongs to of IDPs who run monthly walking tours in different Palestinian towns and villages for Palestinian women only. She says: ‘I want to explain to you first that it is not a kind of organization like Zochrot. We have no financial support; it is completely personal and intimate. We go a maximum of thirty or forty women’. Rana further describes the source of the group’s name, based on a traditional habit that they aim to revive:

Someone who participated in several meetings by Zochrot learnt of a habit of Palestinian women before *al-Nakba*: that they would one day of the week sit together and talk about the news politically, and economically, what’s going on, how they can help. It was a female meeting and they called it *halaqat istiqlal*, which means a round table ... and she took that idea and said she wanted to renew it, to continue to do it.

As this anecdote demonstrates, walking tours can assemble and transmit choreographies of meanings, traditions, and influences. This section investigates such influences, at a global and local scale. Taking a slight detour from the focus on Yafa, it maps the actors and networks involved in the *al-Nakba* commemoration tours and contextualises the politics of the region’s trails and walking habits.

Interestingly, the memory activism of Halaqat Istiqbal operates on two levels: resisting the public erasure of Palestinian space and memory *and* adding a feminised perspective to the dominant male historiography of *al-Nakba*. As Rana (Interview 7, 2018) explains:

We want to hear the stories in the language of the women. We do not want to hear once again a man talking about *al-Nakba*, and how he survived. So, we make sure that women do the tour for us, that they prepare the tour in advance, and take us to places they think we need to get to know.

Indeed, the perspectives of female bodies are often forgotten in national commemorations of war and conflicts (Till 2017). Nevertheless, simultaneously, Israeli and Palestinian national myths (like other national traditions) associate the land with an objectifying conception of female body and motherhood (Rogoff 2013). The NGO Zochrot, which Rana mentions, also deploys a feminist framework of counter-commemoration. Their name is the female plural form for “remember” in Hebrew, suggesting a contrast to the masculine verb's association with Israeli nationalism and militarism. Zochrot aim to promote recognition and accountability for *al-Nakba* among Jewish Israelis, by conducting political tours in ruined Palestinian cities and villages, creating workshops, exhibitions, film festivals, petitions, maps and apps.

As Rana highlights, Zochrot exemplify a more officialised network of *al-Nakba* commemoration tours, whereas Halaqat Istiqbal are more intimate and informal. Indeed, the landscape of walking tours that seek to retrace the Palestinian space that was ruined following the 1948 war is varied and multifaceted. Tours are facilitated by NGOs, grassroots groups, or individuals; some focus solely on Yafa or other specific localities, whilst others tour the remains of different Palestinian cities and villages. Several IDP tour guides collaborate with Jewish Israeli audiences and/or tour guides, whilst others target a Palestinian audience alone. However, their overall resemblance is the usage of walking to retrace site-specific memory, and the usage of the past as ‘a dynamic resource in imagining urban futures’ (Till 2012: 7). Therefore, the chapter frames these tours as a mode of site-specific memory activism. As much as they are multifaceted, so are the commemorative and tourist traditions that they echo or problematize, on local and global scales.

For instance, these tours echo a local Palestinian tradition of *awda* (return) trips by individuals, families, and groups to their cities and villages of origin. In early post-*Nakba* years, *awda* manifested mostly as a longing for the pending liberation of the homeland, a frozen and idealised vision realized through art, poems, and nationalist historiography; yet, in later years, it materialized into a physical touristic act, embedded

with new meanings and political realism (Tamari in Monterescu and Rabinowitz 2007). Significantly, with the formation of the Palestinian National Authority in the Occupied Territories in 1994, many exiled activist-intellectuals were given permits by Israel to conduct personal return visits. Between 1997-98, many published their accounts of *awda* in *Al-Karmil* magazine, which reiterated the pain generated by the political will to return which conflicts with the material current reality. Indeed, these symbolic executions of the right of return are well-documented in photography, art, academic research, literature, and cinema (Davis in Sa'di and Abu-Lughod 2007).

The varied archives of return trips inform and broaden knowledge about villages and cities, and their ethnic cleansing. Furthermore, photographs of Palestinians pointing at the remains of their houses have become a pivotal Palestinian visual language that symbolizes a demand for justice (Slyomovics 1998). Yet, for some, this ephemeral *awda* experience confronts the inconsistency between memory and the passing of time, often triggering feelings of alienation, sadness, or exhaustion (Sa'di 2002). For others, *awda* visits can be a positive experience of reunification. For instance, renowned Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish (in Slyomovics 1998: 16) describes his first encounter with his home after twenty-six years: 'I touched the trees and the stones and felt as if I hadn't left. Time had stopped, and the circle was closed'. Whether they have a helpful or agonizing impact, these trips amount to a powerful political experience of spatial reclamation.

For example, Lila Abu-lughod (in Sa'di and Abu-Lughod 2007: 83) describes her father's tour of Yafa:

His tour, the same one he gave anyone who came to visit, was about claiming and reclaiming the city in which he had been born, the sea in which he had swum as a boy, and the home he had been forced to flee in 1948.²³

In fact, people originating from across Palestine often visit Yafa during their *awda* trips as a national ritual of re-connecting with the lost homeland. Hence, as Salim Tamari (in Monterescu and Rabinowitz, 2007) further notes, Yafa is a meeting point for diverse *awda* experiences and memories of *al-Nakba*, and multiple cross-generational visions for reconstructing and commemorating its iconography. For instance, he observes how first-generation survivors struggle to deal with Yafa's transformation that contrasts with their remembered lost paradise; whilst Yafa's IDPs, Tamari adds, accuse these visitors of ignoring the city's present-day realities and obscuring their experiences.

²³ Ibrahim Abu-Lughod ultimate's return was sadly only possible after his death, when he was buried in Yafa.

As well as encounters between different Palestinian identities and memories, *awda* trips often involve encounters with Israeli residents. Umar, an IDP and Zochrot's Landscape and Space coordinator (who guides their tours and accompanies *awda* trips) describes the complexity of these meetings. Umar (Interview 3, 2018) says: 'sometimes they [Palestinian refugees] dare to approach, or not, they knock on the door, or not, they are accepted nicely by the Israeli family that lives there or not, and this is another trauma'. With regards to current Israeli residents, he states that their 'mechanism of denial and removal' include statements such as: 'I did not know', 'I bought it from the state or a third party', or 'I was not here when it happened'. Interestingly, this ritual that has become a feature of the local landscape corresponds with a global shift in the meaning of tourism practices. Whilst traditionally tourism signified a journey away from home and everyday life, current processes of increased mobility and displacement suggest new meanings and implications for tourism (Sheller and Urry 2006; Urry 2007).

This shift includes return visits, a tourist performance that positions the memory-loaded home as the destination (Marschall 2017). The notion of return, permanently or temporarily, conceivable or impossible, in imagination or physically, is in fact vital in diaspora consciousness (Knott and McLoughlin 2013). These emotionally- and symbolically-charged pilgrimages, inspired by longing for real, ancestral, and symbolic home(lands), sustain national imagined communities and personal identities (Coles and Timothy 2004). For instance, amongst German refugees from Central and Eastern Europe, a trend of *heimattourismus* (homeland tourism) emerged in the 1970s and has gained further prominence with the fall of the Soviet Union. Return trips can be painful, often involving visits to sites imbued with traumatic memories, such as Holocaust survivors' return trips - a means to perform rituals of mourning, testifying, or symbolic revenge that impact survivors' bodies, souls, and senses in often unexpected or unwanted ways (Cole 2013).

For family members of survivors of trauma, these tours enact identification with the difficult past and a bonding experience, complicating sacred/mundane and home/away binaries (Kidron 2013). Return trips thus inform cross-generational cultural identities as well as curiosity about the ancestral homeland, as the flourishing industry of "roots" tours to Africa demonstrates (Lelo and Jamal in White and Frew 2013). Nevertheless, encounters with the motherland and its spatial reminders of traumatic sites such as slaving forts, can also raise tensions around host-guest relationships and notions of authenticity (Mensah 2015). Yet, in contrast with the above-listed examples, Palestinian return visits take place in the context of an ongoing colonialization and enduring spaciocide amounting to a

fragmentation of space and the political system: this creates inconsistent legal statuses, labels, and passports for Palestinians, as well as variations in human rights violations, modes of resistance, and daily life.

This fragmentation, prompted by Israeli divide-and-rule policy, impacts the accessibility of return visits. For example, the post-1967 Open Bridges Policy (which enables restricted movement to the Occupied Territories and Israel via the Allenby and Adam bridges) provides a possible path for return trips for refugees in Arab countries. Yet, it is difficult and expensive, and requires hard-to-obtain permits. Furthermore, since 1994 the Lebanese government has forbidden travel to the Occupied Territories and Israel. Hence, for Palestinians outside Israel and Palestine, the possession of a non-Arab passport remains the easiest way to conduct *awda* tours. For Palestinians in Gaza, who remain under a dual Israeli and Egyptian siege, return is practically impossible. Meanwhile, Palestinians in the Occupied West Bank can go on *awda* trips, however, their access is determined by the strict and arbitrary Israeli permit system. This is another reminder of the acute violation of Palestinians' basic rights of movement.

In fact, IDPs who reside amongst the ruins from the 1948 War are the most able to conduct return visits. Since the formation of the Association for the Defence of the Rights of the Internally Displaced (ADRID) in the 1990s, IDPs' private commemorative rituals have become more public and institutionalized. Prior to this, in early post-*Nakba* years, IDPs experienced a degree of self-silencing about their memories. This was partly due to shame, but mostly out of fear, especially as they were governed by Israeli military rule until 1966 (Sorek 2015). Moreover, IDPs, and their distinctive experiences of *al-Nakba*, have been continually marginalised by the discriminatory Israeli state and within the separated Palestinian spheres (Molavi 2013; Rouhana and Huneidi 2017). However, as Rana (Interview 7, 2018) notes, her generation 'feel that there is hate, feel sparks of a certain tension', yet they do not share the same 'deep fear of the Israeli police' held by their grandparents that led them to remain silent about the past.

Nowadays, ADRID conduct tours and run training courses for guides of destroyed towns and villages and organize annual *al-Nakba* commemoration marches (such as the Return March, held on the same day as Israeli independence celebrations); additionally, IDPs regularly return to these sites to run family picnics, summer camps, preserve mosques, and conduct public prayers (Masalha 2008). Furthermore, IDPs organize commemoration events held in their original towns and villages on the specific dates of their dispossession that include walking tours, storytelling, marches, and rallies (Hawari, 2018). These varied

performative events amount to a ‘socialisation’ and ‘materialisation’ of Palestinian places of origin that empower the struggle for return (Boqa’I in Masalha 2013). They include embodied gestures such as searching for ruins, touching them, pulling out weeds, and picking fruit to smell or taste (Ben-Ze’ev in Lien and Nerlich, 2004). This demonstrates the importance of a multi-sensory embodied reciprocity with space to preserving memory.

For Jewish Israelis who participate in *al-Nakba* commemoration guided tours, the bodily-familiar practice mirrors and problematizes the Israeli culture of *tiyulim* (hiking) as an intimate mode of knowing and loving the land (Cohen and Sasson 2011). As Umar (Interview 3, 2018) notes, ‘this practice is very significant for Israeli society; it is not by chance that the founders of Zochrot, Jewish Israelis, thought about a tour as something that could attract an Israeli Jewish audience’. Indeed, as early as the 1920s, the *Histadrut* (General Organization of Workers in the land of Israel) used guided tours as part of *yedi’at ha’arets* (Knowledge of the Land) lessons (Gretel 2016). This experiential pedagogy has a transcultural component, it was inspired by the German youth movement culture between the world wars (especially a Jewish strand of youth movements named Blau-Weis) and its ethos of return to nature (Katriel, 1996). These hikes aimed to unify the diverse Jewish ethnic groups that emigrated to the “promised land” and shape their bodies and souls in line with the image of the ‘new Jew of the land of Israel’, the ‘*Sabar*’ (prickly pear) (Troen and Rabineau 2014).

The *Sabar* metaphor expressed a desire to dissociate it from the image of the *Galuti* (diasporic) Jew, moulded in European anti-Semitic tradition as “uprooted”, “cowardly”, and “helpless”; in contrast, the idealized *Sabar* was “fit”, “strong”, and “brave” (Zerubavel 2002). Yet, it is worth noting that the same fruit (*sabr* in Arabic) symbolizes for Palestinians their destroyed villages, since flora is often their only physical remnant (Sa’di 2002). The Israeli idealised strong body, cultivated through hiking, was also militant. For instance, during the 1936-1939 Arab Revolt, hiking served as a secretive means for Jewish guerrillas to train and gather military intelligence (Troen and Rabineau 2014). Hiking has also been a key means to realise the Zionist interlacing of national redemption with the reclamation of the land, as the common Israeli phrase “conquering the land through the feet” demonstrates (Zerubavel, 1997). In 1947, an Israeli tradition of trail-marking as land seizing was born, on the main route to Masada, undermining Bedouin territorial claims (Almog, 2000: 172-76).

Today, as the Ministry of Education website states, hikes are considered an ‘experiential learning’ method leading for ‘partnership, involvement and a sense of

ownership’.²⁴ Moreover, the Israeli tour guide, a mentor of Israeli civil-national religion, remains militarized through his or her fit body, clothing style, and vocabulary (Markovich, 2016). In fact, relative to its size, Israel now has one of the largest hiking trail networks in the world, and the IDF continues to utilise it to amplify Israeli presence near and beyond the Green Line (Dvir 2000). An especially popular track in Israel is the 1000km cross-country *Shvil Israel* (Israel National Trail), which was launched in 1995. It enables the practice, through walking, of a phenomenological receptivity with landscape as an affinity with the nation (Kliot and Collins-Kreiner 2018). This is particularly the case since Israel’s trails are dotted with collectivized and personalized monuments, viewpoints, and forests, in memory of fallen Israeli soldiers or Holocaust victims. Nerveless, these mnemonic features are often located on the grounds of unmarked and un-commemorated erased Palestinian villages.

Like the practice of *tiyulim*, the usage of trails as commemoration has a transcultural component, it is influenced by the global Holocaust commemorative walking culture of trips to Poland and the annual March of the Living from Auschwitz to Birkenau (Feldman in Yacobi and Fenster 2011). Within this context of a heightened usage of landscape and walking to convey a Zionist ideology and memory culture, the *al-Nakba* commemoration walking tours create a moment of suspension that conflate the Zionist narrative adorned onto the Israeli body and landscape with the present-absent local Palestinian trauma and space. Indeed, societal and cultural frictions, traces of overlooked histories, and political disputes are also manifested and acted-out along the region’s trails. For instance, in the early years of the state, Mizrahi Israelis were not included within this European-inspired hiking culture. Equally, they were excluded from the Ashkenazi-centred Zionist memory culture (Lehmann and Siebzehner 2006).

Moreover, Mizrahis’ apparent lack of interest in the practice of *tiyulim* was attributed to their oriental “backwardness” and “traditionalism” (Katriel 1996). Dalya Yafa Markovich’s (2016) analysis of school fieldtrips demonstrate that this exclusion remains; she describes how Mizrahi youth enact a sense of not belonging by contesting and undermining the field trip which trivializes the Ashkenazi culture. Another example of a friction is the discontent of illegal settlers with the National Trail’s route that remains within the borders of the Green Line. In protest, settlers marked an alternative *Shvil Israel* that passes through the West Bank (Troen and Rabineau 2014). Two Palestinian tourism organizations similarly redesigned trails as a political intervention. In 2000, they initiated the grassroots Nativity

²⁴ Translated by the author.

Trail to challenge the Israeli monopoly over what part of the land is presented to Christian pilgrims along the official Gospel trail.

Similarly, in 2011 Palestinian and Israeli Fighters for Peace activists marked a grassroots Palestine National Trail in the West Bank. Their hope is to one day connect these trails and form a singular Peace Trail that forms the 'foundation for the future of our children and our lives, based on mutual recognition, friendship and a common path'.²⁵ The tactical memory tours in Yafa thus operate as part of a broader local activism tradition of marking, traversing, and rewriting paths to problematize officialized ideological trajectories. Yet the increased politicization of tourism practices is also a transcultural phenomenon, like the usage of tourism to reconnect with lost homes and lands. A growing trend expands the traditional association of tourism with leisure and discovery to include visits to places with past or ongoing conflicts. Popular destinations include Northern Ireland (Leonard, 2011), South Africa (Amerom and Büscher 2005), Egypt (Milman, Reichel and Pizam 1990), North and South Korea, and Cyprus (Timothy, Prideaux, and Kim 2004).

Accordingly, international visitors travel to Israel and Palestine, with their sites of contention, to gain exposure, develop knowledge, and/or enact solidarity with one side of the conflict (Chaitin 2011). They join Separation Wall tours or conflict tours run by a variety of Palestinian and Israeli actors, situated on different ends of a spectrum between activism and entrepreneurship. For instance, the Israeli NGO Breaking the Silence runs a tour of South Hebron Hills led by former IDF soldiers that, as stated in their website, 'reveals the injustices of the realities of the Occupation in which we took part'. Another example is a tour led by the NGO Grassroots Al-Quds in East-Jerusalem which, as their website states, 'covers the different Israeli policies designed to displace Palestinians from Jerusalem'. However, in contrast with these tours, the grid of tactical tours in Yafa (and other cities and villages destroyed in 1948) do not cover a noticeable site of conflict, such as the Separation Wall, East Jerusalem, or the Hebron Hills. Rather, the *al-Nakba* commemoration tours illuminate disputed sites located within the pre-1967 Green Line borders (Israel's internationally recognized territory) that are overlooked on the international radar.

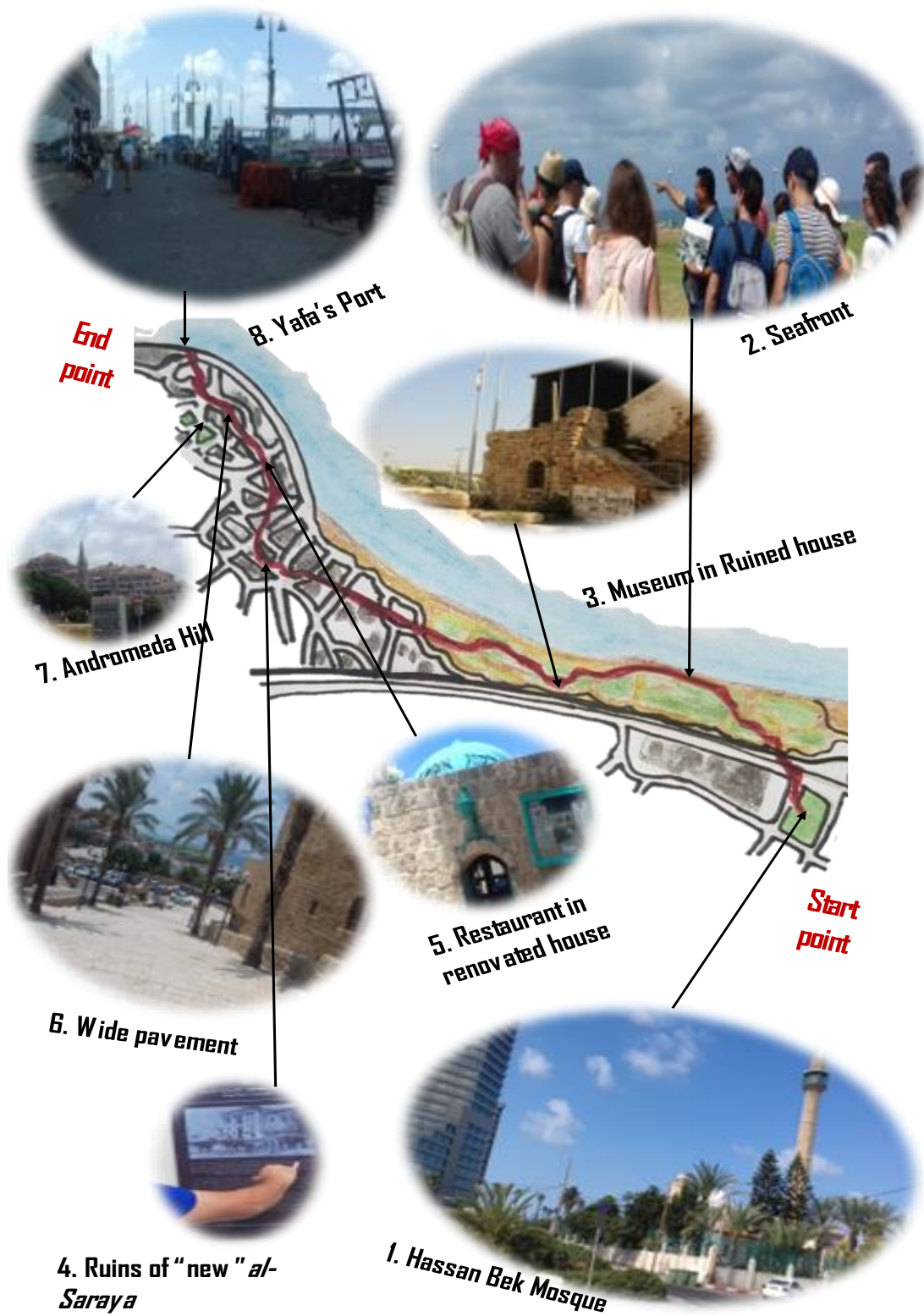
The walking habits, trails, and paths that were outlined in this section demonstrate how national and cultural memory is inscribed onto the body through space. The section has presented some of the actors and networks that guide *al-Nakba* commemoration tours in Yafa

²⁵ Translated by the author from a news report:
<https://www.makorishon.co.il/nrg/online/54/ART2/209/401.html>.

and elsewhere, demonstrating the plurality of their organization style and agendas. Besides this plurality, the section has further demonstrated a variety of mnemonic and tourism practices that the tours echo or problematize. As such, it situated them within a broader context of local and global displaced return rituals, national commemoration and hiking cultures, and a market of conflict tourism. The next section returns to Yafa, closely examining how the adaptation of a tourist walking style can problematize the official Israeli historiography as it is scripted within the urban landscape. It further highlights the importance of site-specificity and architectural ruins to the *al-Nakba* memory tours' testimonial exchange.

Witnessing and Dramatizing Ruins

Hassan Bek Mosque, a prominent feature among the high-rise buildings of Tel Aviv, half a kilometre north of the clocktower, is the meeting point for a tour of Yafa by twenty participants, facilitated by Zochrot and led by Umar (Map 5, Stop 1). Umar explains that the Mosque was once the communal heart of Yafa's coastal Manshiya neighbourhood and is amongst its only remnants. Due to its international importance, it has escaped the fate of the rest of the surrounding architecture, which was partly destroyed during the 1948 War and completely erased by subsequent waves of demolitions. Furthermore, Umar highlights, by preserving a few token Palestinian traces, Israel can deny the systematic process of their elimination. 'Israelis reside amongst and within such Palestinian traces and ruins', says Umar, 'some are unaware of this, some openly discuss it, whilst others raise questions about it; they do not connect these ruins with the Israeli crimes'. In the next two hours, we walk around such remains, unpacking their history and meaning. This section frames this interaction as a performative testimonial exchange.



Map 8: Central features in Umar's tour, August 2018, 2.85 km, 3 hours 18 minutes, 29°C.

Ruins have long been regarded as evocative materials and symbols. The Islamic State's spectacle of the obliteration of myriad temples and statues in Syria and Iraq is a recent harrowing reminder of the cultural significance of ancient ruins *and* the prevailing violent impulse to cause ruination (Harmanşah 2015). Despite the ambiguity of these objects, national myths use ruins in their quest for origins. Yet, beyond a nostalgic lure, the “ruin gaze” comments on the fragility of power, as seen in the classical pre-Islamic trope of *wuqūf ‘ala al-aṭlāl* (stopping by the ruins), a reoccurring metaphor in the history of Arabic poetry. Ken Seigneurie (2011) demonstrates the persistence of this trope across time, noting its remobilization by Lebanese cultural agents in the post-civil war period as an aesthetic elegiac and mode of resistance to sectarian conflict. Indeed, the insignia of urban ruination as historical materialism renders it a useful mourning device *and* a provocation for ‘historical awakening’, especially in the context of an enduring trauma of wars, imperialism, and disposition in the Twentieth and Twenty First centuries (Rangel 2010).

This physical metaphor that spatializes history and temporalizes architecture is powerfully affective (Huyssen 2006). Hence, Belgian civilians protested Winston Churchill’s suggestion to preserve an entire village in its ruination to commemorate the First World War Battle of Ypres, as they found it unbearable to reside among these constant reminders of loss (Simine 2015). Similarly, Yael Navaro-Yashin (2009:15) uses the phrase ‘spatial melancholia’ to describe the discharging effect that the ruins of displaced Greek Cypriots generate for Turkish Cypriots who reside within them. In Freudian (1922) terminology, melancholy arises when the attachment to the object of loss is ambivalent, causing an added conflict. The Israeli state was conscious of this ambivalent affect. For instance, an evacuation directive from 1957 by the Foreign Minister at the time, Golda Meir (in Kadman 2008), states that Palestinian ruins from 1948 raise ‘harsh associations that cause considerable political damage’.²⁶ Hence in 1965, a second wave of demolition of Palestinian ruins was initiated (Golan 1997).

Ruins’ fragmentary qualities renders them difficult to weave into a coherent narrative (Edensor 2005). Accordingly, their removal in Israel was a way to rid the uncertainty they induce. Moreover, as the case of Bosnia demonstrates, ethnic cleansings are prolonged after war by the denial that displaced populations *and* erased architecture ever existed (Bakshi 2017). Equally, the Israeli erasure of Palestinian remains aimed to manipulate how things *are* remembered and *will be* remembered in the future. Priority was therefore given to ruins

²⁶ Translated by the author.

exposed to the public eye, in the heart of Jewish communities, major road arteries, and tourist sites; meanwhile, the Jewish settler society reimagines ruins in the rural landscape as neo-biblical or exotic features (Kadman 2008). Similarly, in ‘mixed cities’, Yacobi (2002: 172) notes that Israel ‘constructed its imagined sense of place while deforming the content and meaning of the local vernacular and transferring it into a subject of “local” and “authentic” but “non- Arab” belonging’. Hence, Nadia Abu El-Haj (2008) notes with reference to the Israeli landscape, ruins are not merely found; they are made. Nonetheless, as Umar observes above, Israelis live among Palestinian ruins that make up their everyday space.

We walk towards a public garden near the Mosque and sit in a shady spot to escape the harsh sun. After a brief explanation about Zochrot’s mission, Umar presents us with a drawing by the Israeli artist Nachum Gutman from 1936. The painting captures the essence of the Zionist spatial imagination, depicting the historic core of Tel Aviv surrounded by white sand; he juxtaposes it with a photograph of the neighbouring densely-populated Manshiya that Gutman ignored, located between Tel Aviv and Yafa (Fig. 30). Umar observes that after 1948 this imagination materialized into concrete and Manshiya is now erased. As this chapter has argued, the official scripting of national mythology by and through space generates visual, perceptual, and emotional impacts on those who traverse through it. As such, the attempt to resist this scripting requires new ways of seeing, feeling, being, perceiving and imagining. The *al-Nakba* commemoration tours suggest a promising path for an alternate mode of perception and imagination.

Pointing at a car park near the Mosque, Umar invites us to imagine the space as it used to be, a school amid a bustling neighbourhood. To assist the process of collective imagination, Umar hands out photographs of Manshiya before and immediately after the 1948 War (Fig. 31). Participants photograph these visual elements, often including in their frames the site in its current condition, creating a collage that links the past and present (Fig. 32). As such, the tours form a ‘scenario’ that blends ‘the material objectivity of the archive and the body memory of the repertoire...’ (Till 2017: 36). In the context of Yafa’s systematic re-writing, this cataloguing of spatial elements further holds a future-oriented role of archiving. Najwan, a third generation IDP who leads Zochrot’s Media and Testimonies department, notes that the photographic and filmed documentation of the tours also provide an opportunity for those who cannot join the tours (due age, physical ability, or restrictions on Palestinian rights of movement) to partially experience the return event.

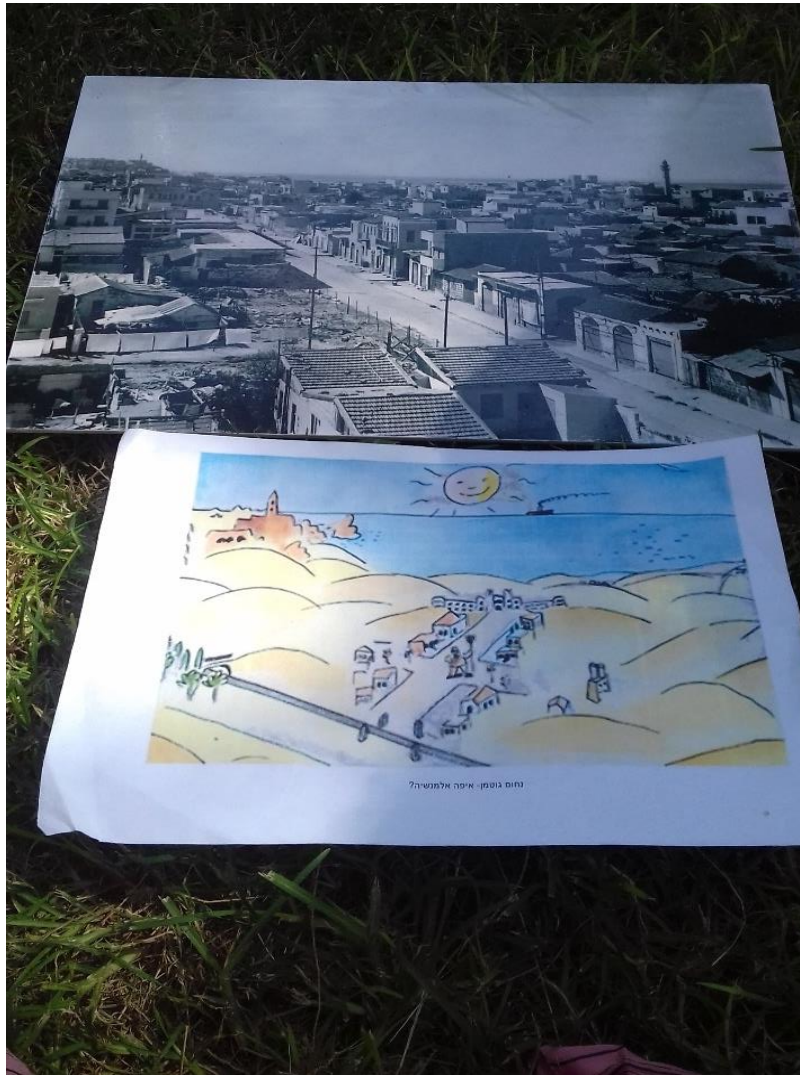


Figure 30: Gutman's painting contrasted with Manshiya neighbourhood.



Figure 31: Manshiya before and after the War.



Figure 32: Participants photographing visual material with the landscape.

Another mode of archiving during Zochrot's tours are pre-prepared printed leaflets handed out to participants, with historical information, poems, images, and written testimonies of *al-Nakba* survivors related to the visited sites (Fig. 33). Additionally, Najwan (Interview 6, 2018) films all the tours and posts them on Zochrot's website. As she describes:

My eye catches hundreds of things and I'm constantly trying to capture everything on camera: the space, the people, how people look, the place, the stones, Umar's explanations, the little kids playing with families who come on tours.

The tours' repertoire is informed by, performs with, and contributes to the archive. In an interview, Umar (Interview 3, 2018) highlights the importance of site-specificity to this imaginative performance with the archive: 'To stand in a place that does not exist anymore, there is nothing to see, and to start imagining, restore in your mind what it used to look like; this is a shuddering experience from every direction'. The tours thus produce an affective exchange between tour participants and memory-loaded sites.



Figure 33: Zochrot's leaflet.

As we approach our next tour stop, Tel Aviv's scenic southern seafront, a pleasant breeze welcomes us (Map 8, Stop 2). Umar explains that the seafront's rocks were taken from the mountains of ruins of the destroyed Manshiya neighbourhood. This demonstrates how such tours' site-specificity brings participants into sensuous contact with 'spectral traces' of a silenced local trauma (Jonker and Till 2009). As such, the tours enact a co-performative testimonial exchange in collaboration with the audience and the site, much like the tours examined in the previous chapter. Some of these traces are not visibly evident and are outlined by words or gestures of the tour guide, others are ordinary features hardly identifiable to an untrained eye, and some are easily noticeable. Like Benjamin's *flâneur*, we interpret and reconstruct the local history through these traces and ruins. Yet, in contrast with his aloof and lonesome aimless walks in the city, the tours' walking style is collaborative and collective, following a pre-determined path.

An emphasis is further made on the current unmarking and un-guarding of these remains, which renders them such fragile mnemonic provocations. For instance, we visit a cynical usage of ruins to celebrate Israeli triumph, a partly destroyed Palestinian home, converted in 1983 to a museum commemorating the conquest of Yafa (Map 5, Stop 3). A dark glass casing has been added to the site, which highlights and celebrates its partial ruination. Another stop on Umar's tour is the remains of the "new" *al-Saraya* (Governor's House) building (Map 8, Stop 4). He reads aloud the official sign placed next to it by Tel Aviv-Yafo municipality: 'on January Fourth, 1948, the building was blown up by members of the Lehi (Irgun)'. However, what the sign ignores, Umar highlights, is that the building also housed an orphanage. Thus, even when Palestinian ruins penetrate the screen of abstraction, they are officially deployed to mark Israeli victory whilst disregarding the massacres, lootings, and deportations that caused them.

Next, Umar leads us to a Palestinian home in the Old City turned into a touristic "authentic" Israeli restaurant (Map 8, Stop 5). At another tour stop, we gaze at the Andromeda Hill gated community in Ajami, built in 1995 as part of a deal between the Canadian Jewish entrepreneur Murray Goldman, Tel Aviv-Yafo municipality, and the landowners, the Greek-Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem (Map 5, Stop 7). Umar says with pain that this gentrified project erased the Palestinian identity of Ajami, replacing its architecture with 'a poor ugly imitation of the local style'. Indeed, this imitation echoes a global oriental imagery of Yafa, whilst simultaneously appearing new and expensive (Monterescu 2015). These commodified quotations of the past 'involve the erasure of the indigenous landscape whilst preserving architectural fragments of it or imitating its style. The

aim is to tame the ruins' authentic aesthetics whilst emptying their historical and political content (Yacobi 2002).

The different modes of ruin-appropriation that the tours highlight involve mimicry common in the colonial arena, where the desire to create oriental landscape and architecture serves as a symbolic indigenisation of the settlers (Bhabha 1984). However, in the tours, ruins are transformed from mute witnesses to the past into contemporary artifacts that generate dialectics between past and present. The tours' emphasis on the Israeli state overlooking, appropriation, and fetishization of Palestinian ruins visualizes an officially omitted history and the ongoing history of its omitting. As Umar notes in our interview (3, 2018):

Zochrot invites the public to come and see a place that was lively until 1948, there were people and buildings, and review its condition today. To get an impression of a process that this place has undergone, mainly by the state officials, and to observe its conditions today.

As such, the tours deploy ruins as a 'claim about the state of a thing, and a process affecting it' (Stoler 2008: 195).

The inability to draw a clear line between multiple processes of ruination, including war, post-war reconstruction, and gentrification is a testament to the ongoing dispossession of Palestinian space within the Israeli Green Line. In fact, the tours' mode of presentation that records a constant movement between multiple pasts and the present befits the transcending qualities of trauma that exceed the linearity of time, refusing to be buried in the past, haunting individuals and communities. *Al-Nakba* especially continues to profoundly shape the lives of Palestinians born after its aftermath that are still defined by state violence, displacement, expropriation, and occupation. For instance, BADIL estimates that there are currently over seven million displaced Palestinians worldwide. Many of them reside in refugee camps to this day, hold no national citizenship, and/or experience prolonged conditions of state violence, discrimination, and occupation (Knudsen and Hanafi 2010; Hanafi, Hilal and Takkenberg 2014; Takkenberg and Albanese 2020).

As discussed in chapter one, Marianne Hirsch (2012, 2008) uses the term 'post-memory' to describe the impacts of traumatic histories that endure and transmit across generations. Yet, in the case of the Palestinian continuous forced displacement, the distinctions between post-memory and memory are blurred. This raises a timely representational matter: as members of the survivors' generation become fewer, how might we continue to testify to such enduring traumas to demand justice? This abstract issue impacts the everyday running of *al-Nakba* commemoration tours. Until recently, they would rely on first-generation

survivors to convey their mental maps of ruined sites.²⁷ However, in recent years, these ‘guardians of memory’ are becoming too old to walk and fewer in number (Al-Hardan 2016). Meanwhile, Palestinians born after *al-Nakba* into the time of its memory do not hold the same vivid recollections of these destroyed cities and villages.

Instead, when guiding such tours, they use ruins as material evidence and spatial markers for a performative remapping of the Palestinian landscape. As Najwan (Interview 6, 2018) describes:

So, if we do not have refugees how do we build the tour? Sometimes we use second generation because they know from stories in their family... but the strong thing is space. The story is important, but to me the space is more important. It's enough that you pass between a group and tell them, see this little hill, there was a big village of 5000 people here. That's it. You do not need to say more.

Indeed, in wounded places, memory-loaded sites and architecture are meaningful provocations of memory for later generations and highly accessible through their materiality (Till 2008). Stripped to its most fundamental meaning, to testify is to produce one's own speech as material evidence or truth (Felman and Laub 2013). The adapted *al-Nakba* tours demonstrates this importance of architecture and space as material evidence of trauma.

Nevertheless, as described earlier, these provocations of memory are easily manipulated. Indeed, as Thomas Keenan and Eyal Weizman (2012) demonstrate, objects as a testament (or sites and architecture) do not evade aesthetic, political, and ethical complications; rather, the subjective complexities associated with the testimonial event are echoed in the presentation of objects. The performative process of the objects' narration during the tours is therefore crucial for their political gesture. This is not to contradict approaches like the actor-network theory and their suggestion that things and architectural elements have agency of their own (E.g. Murdoch 1998; Guggenheim 2009; Fallan 2008). Instead, this section seeks to emphasise the significance of the performative relation between body and site. The ruins and spaces without bodily gestures have a vague meaning whilst these gestures without the site-specificity and ruins would have even less meaning and effect.

Nick Kaye's (2013: 57) definition of site-specific work, although formulated in relation to art, is useful for further contextualising this relationship between body and site; he suggests that site-specificity ‘tests the stability and limits of the very places it *acts out*, at once relying on the order of the sites it so frequently seeks to question or disrupt’. The tours similarly both rely on *and* disrupt the space in which they are performed. For instance, at another tour stop (Map 5, Stop 6), Umar points our attention to an uncharacteristic wide

²⁷ For an analysis of Zochrot's former tour format see Gutman 2017.

pavement in Old Yafa. He explains that the narrow-crooked allies of Old Yafa served an ideal refuge for Palestinian rioters during the 1936-1939 Great Palestinian Revolt (against the British Mandate in Palestine and in demand for independence and a halt to the unrestricted Jewish migration and land purchase under the stated aim of building a Jewish National Home). Consequently, the British authorities decided to demolish the area and evict its residents. Umar adds that though some demolition took place in 1936, the plan never fully materialized; however, it set a precedent for the Israeli demolition of neighbourhoods on security grounds during and after the 1948 War.

Hence, as the ruling powers in Yafa shifted - from the Ottoman Empire to the British Mandate and onto the Israeli regime - the desire to colonize the local population *and* architecture remained. As we walk around the Old City, Umar points our attention to tourist signs in the silhouette of Napoleon, dotted around by the Municipality. He stresses that the French only ruled Yafa for a brief and bleak period; yet this history is inflated to fill the emptiness left by the abstraction of the Palestinian local history (Fig. 34). Indeed, settler colonialism in an endeavour to dominate both material space and immaterial time (Gallois 2013). Similarly, Elias Sanbar (2001: 90) writes: 'by departing from space, the Palestinians, about whom the whole world agreed to say "they do not exist", also departed from time'. Hence, despite the above-noted colonial legacy that is embedded in tourism practices, the usage of the format of a tour that condenses time and space to convey a perception of place and historical narrative can provide a useful strategy of de-colonization.



Figure 34: Sign in Napoleon's silhouette.

Like the municipally-supported tour, Umar's tour ends at Yafa's Port (Map 5, Stop 8). Contrastingly, however, he does speak of the thousands of residents who fled during the 1948 War, boarding any ship they could, regardless of its destination, to save their lives. Using our imagination, Umar's narration turns the pastoral viewpoint into a monument to Yafa's uprooted residents. He presents us with images of Palestinian refugees boarding on boats and reads aloud a testimony of a Palestinian refugee and his painful *awda* visit from the leaflet we were given at the beginning of the tour (Fig. 35). Though the group has been lively throughout the tour and Umar at times struggled to get their attention, everyone is now quiet, as we bow our heads (Fig. 36). Through such bodily interaction, tour participants become contributors of the performative event and are cognitively involved and habituated within it. The *al-Nakba* memory tours consist of numerous such macro and micro rituals, some planned, and others improvised, from the perspectives of perpetrators or victims.

For example, in another tour, an old Jewish participant shares with us his memory of playing in the ruins of the village *Al-Aditha* in 1949, where residents left all their possessions behind, including food on the tables: ‘my hand reached out to grab some food, and I thought to myself whoever had left it would probably come back, and so I felt guilty for taking it’. In another tour in Jerusalem to commemorate the massacre of the Palestinian village Dir Yasin, a Palestinian passerby who works in the area and overhears Umar's vocal narration tells us that his family are from the village. Umar invites him to share with us his familial *al-Nakba* story. He says:

I am from the village of Deir Yassin. We now live in Shuafat area in Jerusalem. The truth is that few members of my family are still alive. We come to visit this area, but we are not allowed to enter. Someone lives in my grandfather's house; it is the house opposite the psychiatric hospital here.

Therefore, these rituals create a sense of partnership, emotional affect, and a ceremonial aura.



Figure 35: Umar presenting images of refugees.



Figure 36: Participants bowing heads.

An IDP tour participant also decides to share with us his personal story spontaneously:

My father's family lived in a neighboring village and my grandmother is from Deir Yassin. The villages are so close, that my grandmother would ask her uncles from the nearby village to accompany her on her errands. I participated in this tour of the past, and I want the next tour to be conducted in an atmosphere of peace and justice. Justice means that we get our villages back. I see my grandfather's land every day, but I am prohibited from approaching it.

This testimonial exchange acts as a mode of memory activism in the sense that it articulates a call for justice and accountability, much like the testimonies examined in the previous chapter. However, in contrast, Muhammad speaks to Israelis who are responsible for his forced displacement, rather than to his “hosts”. Those who do not hold personal and familial memories of sites are also invited to contribute to the performance by reading aloud survivors’ testimonies or poems from the above-described printed leaflet (Fig. 37).



Figure 37: Participant reading aloud a testimony from a leaflet.

The improvised commemorative ritual combined with our bodily movements (such as bending heads, facial expressions, and vocal narrations) intensify the tour experience. Furthermore, the very practice of walking from ruin to ruin stimulates a sense of witnessing, generating an affective experience of a transition through time, place, reality, and imagination. As a tour participant describes (Interview 10, 2018), ‘it is really to walk in the spirit of the place, feel the spirit of the place; and it's also kind of revitalizing the place and preserving it in some way’. Another participant (Interview 49, 2019) notes: ‘it feels like really being inside...not just thinking about it, being there is something else emotionally, mentally, and physically’. Tours thus induce what Brian Massumi (2002) refers to as ‘movement-vision’; a vision that involves losing sight of yourself and passing into the space of utter receptivity, absorbance and intensity - a space of affect. Through the movements of bodies, limbs, voices, and eyes the tours therefore extend ruins into the realm of performance, what Carl Lavery and Richard Gough (2015) define as the ‘dramaturgy’ of ruins.

This section has focused on the tours’ performance, with its components that include space, ruins, imagery, participants, guides, movements, gazes, and creativity. It has highlighted the importance of spatial remains to the tours political aim of testifying to the continual trauma of *al-Nakba*, especially as first-generation survivors are becoming fewer. As highlighted, the tours relate to ruins as both a verb and a noun, offering an ontogenetic pedagogy that addresses the cause of these ruins and their current conditions and meanings. As further demonstrated, in their site-specific creative interactions, the tours extend ruins into the realm of performance, at once relying on and deconstructing place with its landscape of memory. Indeed, the section stresses that the tour format, in its condensing of time and place, suggests a potential for resisting coloniality in its aim to regulate both landscape and memory. The following section continuous to unpack the relationship between abstraction and resistance in disputed territories, and how the walking tours’ “dramaturgy” of ruins entails a performative re-claiming of place, heritage, and identity.

Traces of Memory and Paths of Resistance

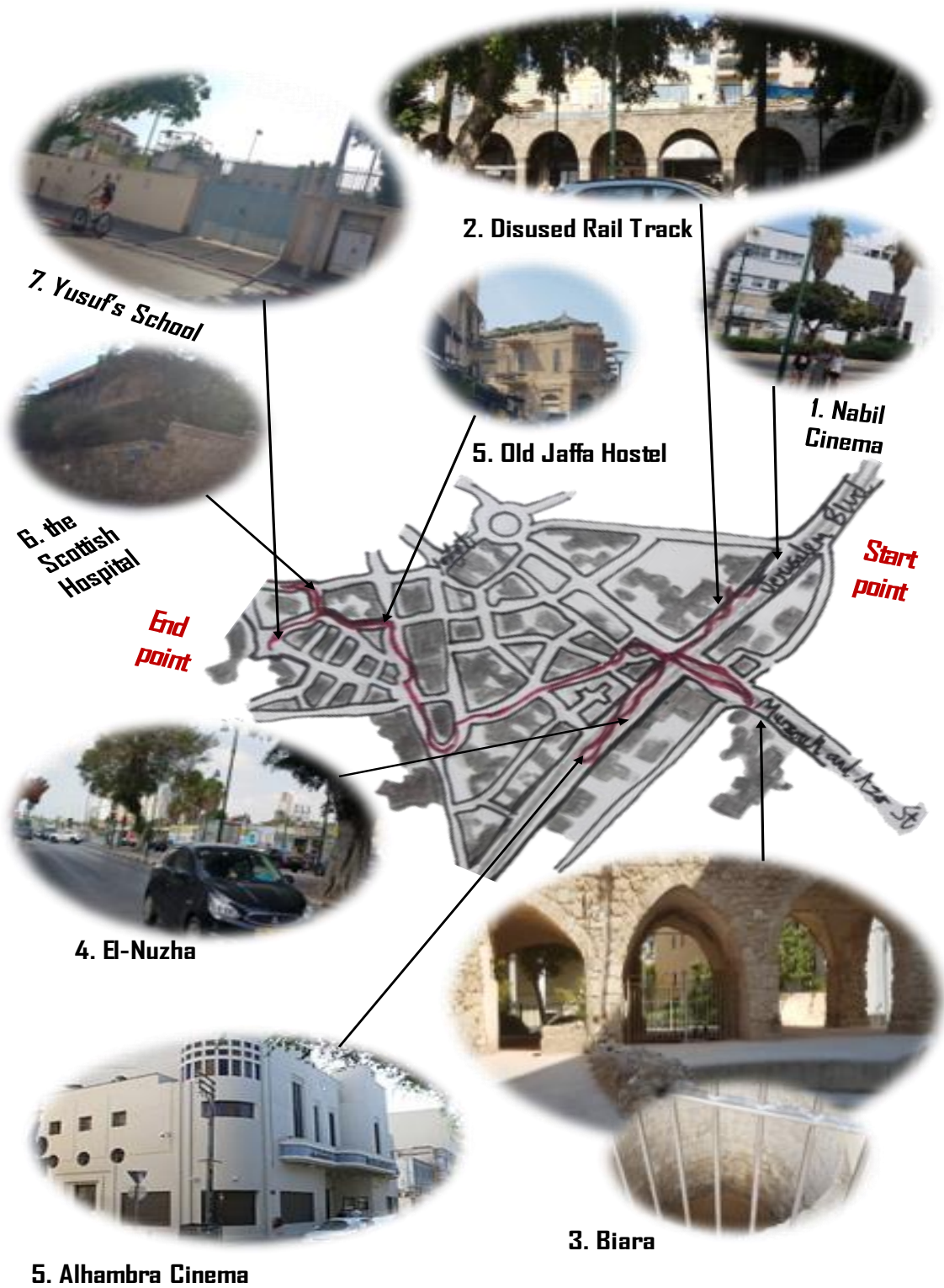
Yusuf, a Palestinian born and raised in Yafa, is a history teacher, and improvised tour guide. He explains why he chose to begin his tour half a kilometre northeast of Yafa’s Clock Tower (Map 9, Stop 1):

I decided to begin exactly here for several reasons. Firstly, sadly, today people come to Yafa on the bus from Tel Aviv thinking this is not part of Yafa. This used to be Yafa’s “downtown”. It connected several areas: Old Yafa where people lived until 1871; the first neighbourhood built outside of Old Yafa’s walls;

and “new” Yafa. I chose this spot because it saddens me to stand here and see the tourist buses continuing to Tel Aviv or turning right, to the Old Segment. So, welcome to Yafa’s tour. Throughout you will be asking yourself - is Yusuf leading you on a tour or is he fighting the Zionist narrative?

The starting point of Yusuf’s tour is designed to problematize the Israeli distorted perception of Yafa’s geography and memory. As he highlights from the outset, his guided tour blurs the boundaries between a pedagogical tourist experience and a tactic of memory activism. Through a close analysis of Yusuf’s tour design, presented during a walk-along interview (Interview 37, 2019), this section stresses the political importance of remapping Yafa’s erased urbanity and cosmopolitanism.²⁸

²⁸ All of Yusuf’s statements presented in this section are from this walk-along interview.



Map 9: Central features in Yusuf's tour, August 2019, 1.62 km, 2 hours 10 minutes, 34°C.

Yusuf began using walking tours in 1996 to capture his students' attention and imagination. He found it was an interactive way to inspire young Palestinians with Israeli citizenship to learn about their history and identity, hitherto silenced in the Israeli discourse and public-school curriculum (including Arab public schools). Alongside his students, Yusuf delivers tours to other audiences and has written a guidebook based on his tour design. Yusuf attributes his realisation that the Oslo Accords were an 'assassination of the Palestinian story' led him to decide that he must 'do something'. Hence, he developed an "autotopographiey" to spatially convey his personal story. His family are amongst the 3,647 Palestinians that remained in Yafa after the war, having to co-habit their city with the people who seized it.²⁹ Yusuf notes that for IDPs in Yafa, 'the Absent Property Law created a sad situation that you could see your home but could not return'. His entire family was forced to move to his great uncle's two-story house; yet, they only received half a floor and had to share it with a Jewish family.

We walk towards a disused rail track, built in 1892 and used to connect Yafa with Jerusalem (Map 9, Stop 2). Yusuf notes that it is a spatial reminder of the former border between the violently adjoined Yafa and Tel Aviv. Throughout his childhood, it served as an inner-city seamline that defined the boundaries of his sense of place. For instance, he recalls building a raft with his childhood friends, and how instead of taking it to the sea, he brought it here, to the edge of his world. This anecdote provides a sense of daily life in 'frontier urbanism' in which urban habitation, spaces, and structures foster power and division (Pullan 2011). Additionally, it demonstrates that despite the annexation, Yafa and Tel Aviv remain separate urban entities and IDPs do not feel integrated into Tel Aviv. Indeed, the Municipality's continual lack of infrastructural and cultural investment in Yafa upholds the border between these cities (Margalit and Vertes 2015). As Yusuf further clarifies, his tour also aims to tell the story of 'those who aren't here', since 'there are people that live in refugee camps for over seventy years, and no one does anything'. Hence, like the tour guides examined in the previous chapter, Yusuf aims to extract a political collective message out of his personal autotopographiey.

As we walk across a wide boulevard Yusuf says: 'we call it *El-Nuzha* ['the boulevard' in Arabic]. The Turks named it after the Ottoman governor Jamal Pasha, the British named it King George Boulevard, and the Israeli government came and called it Jerusalem Boulevard'

²⁹ This number includes Palestinian residents of Yafa and refugees from nearby villages. After the 1967 war, they were joined by IDF collaborators from Gaza and the West Bank (Monterescu 2010).

(Map 9, Stop 4). Yusuf describes that this entire area was filled with hotels and businesses, all abandoned in 1948. He adds that Yafa's urban sphere was embellished with cafés, restaurants, bars, theaters, cinemas, factories, public parks, and libraries. Another important aim of Yusuf's tour is the retelling of Yafa's urbanity and its truncated Golden Age. Besides the financial and infrastructural ruin, Yusuf conveys the loss of Palestinian publicness, as he states: 'in Arabic we call it *alfada' aleamu* [the public space] - was just gone'. As Rafi Zreik (in Monterescu and Rabinowitz 2007) writes, the destruction of Palestinian publicness, informed by the above-described Israeli divide-and-control policy, amounts to a loss of the encounters it enabled, and more symbolically, the political capacity of a centralised representation of Palestinian will.

The political project of performatively re-mapping Yafa's urbanity involves the adaptation of an in-depth gaze. As Yusuf notes, he seeks to show 'what people miss out when they look'. Instead of an aloof viewpoint, as the one cultivated in the municipally-supported tour of Old Jaffa, we gaze into the details of the street, whilst Yusuf's vocal narration articulates the changing density and quietude of sites and buildings. For instance, Yusuf points at a building and explains that it now serves as an Israeli center for Scientology, yet it originally housed the famous Alhambra Cinema (Map 9, Stop 5). Yusuf describes how celebrated Arab artists such as Umm Kulthum performed in the beautiful Art Deco building, designed by the Lebanese architect Elias Al-Mor in 1937. We also walk past the renowned Russian Israeli Gesher Theater (Map 9, Stop 1). As Yusuf expounds, the International Style building was designed as Nabil Cinema in 1922 and named after its Palestinian owner. Thus the gaze Yusuf cultivates in his tour contrasts with the distant tourist fostered both spatially and historically by the municipal-supported tour.

Like Umar's tour of Yafa, Yusuf's anecdotes, sparked by different spatial signifiers, move along multiple pasts and the present. In contrast with the officialized tone of the municipal tour, he mixes personal and collective memories (as do Zochrot's tours through their above-outlined participatory nature and collaboration with the archive). For example, when Yusuf points at another building he observes that it was designed as an Armenian monastery; later, it became the Yugoslav Embassy and in 1967 the same building turned into a private school free of state supervision, where Yusuf developed his political consciousness and Palestinian identity (Map 9, Stop 7). As Yusuf further describes, it was where he first heard the songs of Darwish, and this experience inspired him to become a teacher. Yusuf adds, 'I lie and say it's a profession that doesn't make money, then people will ask: "your big

belly, from what?''' . Once again, Yusuf asserts his marginalized personal memory into the public arena to extract a collective political impact from it.

Yusuf says towards the end of our walk-along interview/tour: 'Now, we have seen schools, we've seen cinemas, we've seen houses - but a few things are missing for it to be urban. And here it was, the Scottish hospital. There were hospitals, and there were schools' (Map 9, Stop 6). Yusuf's political project of asserting his Palestinian heritage and identity involves the retracing of Yafa's urbanity and modernity that Israeli official historiography ignores. In a similar vein, at another tour stop, we visit the remains of a *bayāra* (well house) which belonged to Armenian sugar merchants (Map 9, Stop 3). Yusuf says: 'it is important for me to show this well house, it is important for me to show that its arches and building style characterize this area'. He further explains that the *bayārāt* were luxurious palace-like houses of wealthy plantation owners which evolved from wells irrigating agricultural lands. This *Biara* is one of the few spatial reminders of the above-mentioned once thriving *mazra'as* (plantations) industry.

It is equally important for Yusuf to deconstruct through his tour the misreading of the vernacular architecture, as he explains:

I recognize Old Jaffa through its architecture, usually one floor, thick walls...And when I look at Ajami, I see houses that people think are Arab style, but that's not true, it's Italian style. There was a Renaissance period in the late Nineteenth century and early Twentieth century where people began to copy this architectural style.

This is another indication for the importance of architectural features as political actors in memory activism, and a testimonial device to retrace a publicly omitted local heritage. As Yusuf's statement further demonstrates, another aspect of Yafa's lost urbanity that can be retrieved through walking tours is its cosmopolitanism. He states: 'this was a cosmopolitan city before they even thought of this idea in Tel Aviv'. To further demonstrate this, Yusuf points at an engraved writing on a house entrance: 'in memory of Beirut 1941', which was built by a Lebanese family in resemblance of their home in Beirut (Fig. 38).

In fact, the cosmopolitanism that Yusuf illuminates differs from both the cosmopolitan history ascribed to Yafa in the municipal tour – with its focus on its maritime heritage and succession of conquerors – and the celebrated cosmopolitanism of Tel Aviv, where affluent Israelis can access cultures, cuisines, and corporations from around the world. By contrast, Yafa's cosmopolitanism is engendered by the legacy and continued presence of many different cultures domiciled in the city. In another example, we visit a house that belonged to a Jewish family (Fig. 39). Yusuf explains: 'here, in this

place there were also Jews, there were Jewish merchants, and I must not come and say that there were no Jews because this is a form of fascism'. Indeed, the Israeli abstraction of Yafa also obscures its trans-local history with the various cultures that shaped its urban sphere and the mixed world of different identities it housed.



Figure 38: House inspired by Lebanon.



Figure 39: Engraving.

As we walk through Yafa's alleys and paths, Yusuf describes a post-war national renaming process, in which Israel replaced Yafa's streets with numbers. For instance, he lived in street 357. More recently, they have been replaced with names that cite Zionist, Jewish, and biblical figures, acting as inscriptions of national myth and ownership in space. However, in addition to marking this process of erasure, Yusuf also demonstrates that this erasure is incomplete and constantly undermined by local habits, spatial memory, and planned resistance. For instance, Yusuf points at an Israeli street-sign, Ben Azriah Elazer (named after a First century Jewish Mishnaic sage); alongside it, he points at an Arabic engraving onto a house column of the original homeowner's name left intact for its decorative qualities (Fig. 40) Yusuf also points at an engraved sign stating: Rue Negib Bustros, a testament to the street's original name, after Najib Bustrus who built it (Fig. 41). He adds that it used to house an ophthalmology clinic and goldsmith shops. As such, Yusuf's tour relies on and communicates 'native counterclaim' imprints that persist through time and resist the colonial re-writing of space (Wolfe 2006).



Figure 40: House owners' name in Arabic besides a Hebrew street-sign.



Figure 41: Original street name.

As we walk around, Yusuf points to the existence of Jewish neo-oriental luxury enclaves surrounded by the shrinking and neglected Palestinian neighbourhoods and says: ‘now we are beginning to feel the gentrification’. At another tour stop, he asks, ‘have you heard of Old Jaffa Hostel? everyone loves it, but there is a sad story here of identity blurring, since it used to be a Palestinian home’ (Map 9, Stop 5). As Yusuf explains, in Yafa the global process of gentrification has an added ethno-national dimension. He further states:

And the saddest is that you find that today's ownership, those who live here, are Jewish leftists. I am for coexistence, but this coexistence comes at the expense of a certain truth. So, I say, acknowledge your responsibility, and as far as I'm concerned, you can live in my home.

As well as reviving a lost urban sphere, the in-depth gaze Yusuf cultivates in his tour visualises the current “splintering” of urban space in Yafa (Graham and Marvin 2002).

Yusuf explains that the feeling that Yafa is continuously ‘being pulled off his legs’ saddens him *and* pushes him to be ‘more of an activist’. In an example of this ongoing disappearance, we visit the location of a Palestinian factory before 1948 to see its original sign that remained intact; however, upon our arrival we discover it is hidden by a construction site, the building soon to be erased altogether. ‘You see how they flatten the narrative’ Yusuf says and adds: ‘I keep living in fear that it will all disappear’. We sneak into the site and climb a fence to take some photographs (Fig. 42). As such, Yusuf’s tour demonstrates how regeneration and gentrification are explicit in the continual abstraction of Palestinian Yafa. The tour records a constant move between the past and the present, testifying to a traumatic history *and* to its current manifestations, like Umar’s above-described tour. As Yusuf highlights: ‘there are no check points in Yafa, and no Arabic and no history, and this rapid process of spatial alteration is big, its *al-Nakba*’. In fact, Yusuf is not alone in being pulled towards activism.



Figure 42: Soon to disappear factory sign.

Importantly, the *al-Nakba* commemoration tours in Yafa are part of a broader landscape of activism to assert its Palestinian identity and memory, as well as the rights of the local Palestinian population. For instance, two Palestinian grassroots organizations formed in Yafa to foster communal and infrastructural restoration and fight home demolitions and evacuations. Al-Rabita was established in 1979 and the Popular Committee for the Defense of Land and Housing Rights (PCDLH) formed in 2007. The latter also includes tour guiding in their varied strategies. Some of their tangible victories include stopping the municipality from turning Yafa's beach into landfill, applying pressure on Israeli authorities to build some housing units for Palestinians, and the establishment of independent Arab education institutions from 2003 (Plonski 2017). The above-mentioned Yafa party member, Sami Abu Shehadeh, and Paddy Shivita (2010: 145), both members of PCDLH, write that their struggle is driven by “the need for recognition in the Palestinian-Arabs of Yafa as a group with a historic right to the land of the city and its assets”.³⁰ A minority in Israel's core, these activists adopt subversive *and* pragmatic methods.

For example, they appeal to the Israeli courts, *and* join efforts with Mizrahi tenants of south Tel Aviv's Absentee Properties to protest their common experiences of evictions (Plonski 2017). In fact, Mizrahi tenants' struggles involve proving that their parents' generation were not “squatters”, but that the state intentionally housed them in these absentee

³⁰ Translated by the author.

properties to prevent the return of their Palestinian owners. For instance, recently, Mizrahi residents of Lifta have been recognized by the Israeli court as legitimate property heirs who deserve compensation for their eviction in 2017, based on the claim that their parents were not intruders. This demonstrates another way in which urban traumatic histories manifest within the present of wounded cities such as Yafa. Hence, the struggle to resist the persistent “Israelization” or “Judaization” of Yafa and assert its “Palestinization” is enacted in the concrete, through disputes of ownership over land and renovation processes, and performativity.

For example, a performative enactment of Palestinian *sumud* (steadfastness) in Yafa is cultivated through theatre, poetry nights, folk dance, graffiti, and the decoration of homes with Palestinian symbols (Kaddar and Monterescu 2021; Monterescu 2010). Additionally, residents are also involved in direct modes of civil disobedience. As noted in the beginning of this chapter, protesters often transform Yafa’s streets by obstructing pavements and filling otherwise empty public space. Such demonstrations commemorate pivotal dates on the Palestinians mnemonic calendar such as *al-Nakba*, protest the Israeli violence in the Occupied Territories, and resist local discrimination that manifests in housing evictions and the destruction of landmarks such as the Al-Isaaf Cemetery. When assembling as a crowd, marginalized bodies gain power by becoming ‘too large and too mobile to be contained by police power’ (Butler 2015: 74). This is crucial since walking can be a painful and dangerous activity for bodies scrutinized due to ethnicity or race.

For instance, writer Ta-Nehisi Coates (2015), recalls his fear of walking to school as a black youth in the United States, being wary of how he walks and the number of walkers around him. Abed Abu Shehadeh (2018), a Palestinian activist from Yafa, comments on this text to highlight a similarity in his experiences, in terms of ‘what it is like to be a young Palestinian Arab in Jaffa, who has to take care of his body from violence that can come from criminals on the streets, from school, and from the police’.³¹ The most important lesson he took from the book, Abu Shehadeh writes, is that ‘we are not victims, but warriors struggling to change reality’. This imbues marches and protests by marginalised groups with the political significance of contesting the dominant symbolic order of the city. The *al-Nakba* commemorative tours of Yafa that do not follow the touristic and ideological roots marked in the city, as this chapter has illustrated, enact a similar transgression, symbolically and literally. These varied modes of urban resistance listed-above highlight the importance of

³¹ Translated by the author.

materiality and performativity to informal political expressions and identities (Salih and Richter-Devroe 2014).

In fact, Yafa's Palestinian revival and the politicisation of its urban sphere link with wider trends within Palestinian historiography since the mid-1990s of a return to the urban repressed and a strengthening of Palestinian identity amongst the so-called "Israeli Arabs" (Hassan 2019). Yusuf further explains:

I am a generation that was very activist and then came a generation that became Israeli Arabs and did not want to learn, and then the Second Intifada came and slapped them, and they woke up and realized that they would never be Israelis, and today there is the Nation-State Law.

Yusuf lists two pivotal events in the further politicization of a younger generation Palestinians in Yafa, the 2002 Second Intifada (Palestinian popular uprising) and the passing of the Israeli Nation-State Law in 2018. This law asserts that the right to exercise 'national self-determination' in Israel is 'unique to the Jewish people', downgrades the Arabic language from its status as an official language in Israel, and frames Jewish settlement as 'a national value'. It therefore enhances the existing discrimination against Palestinians in Yafa and elsewhere within the green-line borders.

Walking through Yusuf's tour design and comparing it with other urban tactics of resistance, this section illustrated how the street of conflicted cities contain intricate layers of memories and interpretations that transcend the simplified binary of remembering and forgetting. As the section closely observed, Yusuf's tour acts as a mode of memory activism by rendering visible the city's history of colonization and displacement *and* its current manifestations through gentrification. As argued, Yusuf's memory struggle (or tour) concerns the reclamation of his identity and memory that are actively denied by the Israeli state, on a collective and personal level. As such, his tour alters the distribution of the sensible as it related to the public visibility of "Israeli Arabs" *and* as it relates to the public scripting of memory in Yafa. As was further demonstrated, his activism involves a transcultural component in the sense that it problematises the fixed Israeli script of national identity and retraces an abstracted cosmopolitan history that has shaped Yafa's urbanity. The final section further considers the implications of the tours' memory activism as a future-oriented political action, including its potentialities, constraints, and inner politics.

Paving Paths of Imagination

At the end of another tour facilitated by Zochrot, our group of twenty-five participants (consisting of seventeen Jewish Israelis, five Palestinians, and three internationals) sit in a circle for a concluding discussion. One Jewish participant observes: ‘because there is no signage then it is easier not to notice’. Umar responds: ‘it is possible to say *they* did not teach us, *they* did not tell us, but the question is what do we do?’. A Palestinian participant notes, ‘the point here is not just memory retention but a change of consciousness, making people want to listen and remember’. Another Jewish participant summarizes:

Thank you so much, this whole journey, this whole tour was important. But look how many young people there are here, how many Mizrahi? We are unable to reach young people and Mizrahi people who are dealing with questions of identity just like us. How do we change collective consciousness and make people want to know and ask questions?

This debate succinctly captures the challenge of walking tours as memory activism to alter collective consciousness in the face of ongoing *al-Nakba*, as well as issues related to the positionalities of participants.

In contrast with the above-outlined trans-local conflict tourism industry, the *al-Nakba* commemoration tours target an Israeli and Palestinian audience and are run in Hebrew and Arabic only (though a few international visitors do attend). The attachment of most of this audience to the trauma of *al-Nakba* is ‘distinguished from memory by generational distance and from history by deep personal connection’ - from the perspective of perpetrators or victims (Hirsch 1992: 8). For instance, a Jewish participant (Interview 8, 2018) says: ‘I lived the hiding and silencing of these stories’. A young IDP tour participant (Interview 34, 2019) observes: ‘My grandmother used to live here when she was little, but I’m not just here because of my personal story, but because it’s important for me to learn about this history and because I live here’. Another participant (Interview 5, 2018), a third generation *al-Nakba* survivor from Chile, describes the bodily impact of the tour: ‘This is my first time in destroyed village and it really feels like something physical happening, to me at least’. Her account is another indication of the strong embodied impact of spatial return rituals for cross-generational survivors of trauma.

Arguably, participants’ personal connection to the landscape and history that these tours address strengthens their political potential, as an avenue for cross-generational accountability, mourning, and reclaiming of identity and memory. Nevertheless, as a tour participant mentions in the debate presented above, the Israeli audience that joins these tours is selective in age, politics, and ethnic orientation. Infrastructural solutions might help, such

as organizing buses to allow residents of Israel's periphery to join the tours or conducting them on weekdays to include a traditional Shabbat-keeping audience. However, a bigger problem remains concerning the association of left-wing agendas with the Ashkenazi upper-middle-class, which antagonizes working-class and traditional populations, such as Mizrahi, Ethiopian, and Russian Jews (Mizrachi 2016). Hence, these tours risk “preaching to the converted”: a liberal, secular left-wing audience (in line with the criticism made of refugee-guided tours in Berlin).

However, since the state of Israel was constructed largely by a left-wing Ashkenazi elite, to the exclusion of the Palestinian residents of the land, it could be argued that this demographic is most in need of the kind of historical corrective provided by the tours. Hence, the tours undermine the framing of the Israeli Left as morally superior or less accountable for the injustices of Israeli colonialism. Moreover, the memory of *al-Nakba* remains marginalized in peace and conflict resolution initiatives and left-wing discourses in Israeli and international circles. As such, the *al-Nakba* tours undermine a prevailing temporal-geographical perception of a conflict that seemingly started with the Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza (known as *al-Naksa*) after Israel won the 1967 war against Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. In fact, Zochrot is the only Israeli NGO that deals with the legacy of *al-Nakba*. Furthermore, Nora (Interview 36, 2019), one of Zochrot’s founders, describes how when she facilitates conflict-resolution meetings between Jewish and Palestinian youth, ‘simply mentioning 1948 raises opposition on the Jewish side, even among people who are willing to talk about 1967’. Hence, she ‘came the realization that *al-Nakba* is something that must be brought up and talked about’.

Similarly, an Australian tour participant (Interview 48, 2019) who has been campaigning internationally against the Israeli Occupation for years, notes at the end of another tour guided by Umar: ‘I’m angry at myself for not engaging fully with *al-Nakba* and even strategically focusing on 1967’. Indeed, although the Green Line borders mark a huge disparity in basic human rights, the post-67 temporality ignores crucial aspects of the regions’ disputes and histories of Israeli space, history, and liability. As Nora (Interview 36, 2019) further describes: ‘the realization that the conflict is not there, rather, it is here was very strong for me. I also love to travel and some of the places I know well, and then to understand the meaning of these places, that it not just a landscape’. Furthermore, the post-67 temporal-geographical perception maintains a disregard for the tangible issue of Palestinian refugees’ right of return that has characterized the 1993 Oslo Agreements (Hill, 2008). During that period, organizations such as the Bethlehem-based Resource Centre for Palestinian

Residency and Refugee Rights (BADIL) in Palestine and the ADRID in Israel, formed to protest the repression of Palestinian refugees' voices and rights.

Therefore, the *al-Nakba* tours make a significant contribution to expanding knowledge of a traumatic history and landscape, which can lead to greater political accountability. They can therefore be seen as part of a broader struggle to voice the memory of *al-Nakba* and reassert the rights of Palestinian refugees, which are marginalized within local and global discourses and practices of peace and conflict resolutions. Nevertheless, another issue arising from the inner-politics of these tours links with the broader context of ongoing *al-Nakba*, colonialism, and abstraction of Palestinian space. Within this framework, any joint commemorative activity by Israelis and Palestinians risks reiterating the socio-political divisions that exist between them. For instance, when approaching a Jewish Israeli tour participant (Interview 35, 2019) to ask about her experiences, she says: 'don't ask me, speak to the Palestinians'. Her well-intentioned statement highlights some of the problematic binaries that persist between those seeking to act for or be in solidarity with marginalized populations and these populations.³²

To curate a space of joint Israeli-Palestinian solidarity and resistance requires an acknowledgment of these power dynamics, and the present conditions under which *al-Nakba* is remembered. Moreover, it is crucial to avoid the dual narrative approach that has prevailed since the post-Oslo period with its flood of foreign aid for peace initiatives that has altered the local landscape of activism. As Salim Tammri (2005) highlights, these post-Oslo 'people-to-people communication' initiatives trivialize 'the rule of Israel as a colonial project and the systematic inequality towards Palestinians'. Similarly, Najwan who has guided many tours for a mixed audience of Jews and Palestinians describes how Jewish participants' seek to establish a false sense of symmetry in victimhood. Najwan (Interview 6, 2018) says: 'it is important for them that I say that Jews were also scared, they also escaped'. Despite the complexity of interacting with the Jewish audience, Najwan highlights a benefit in the communication through a tour format. Namely, unlike in political debates, the audience is asked to listen to the tour guide.

Assuming the role of the city expert therefore lends activists authority in their attempt to undermine existing perceptions of place and heritage, in line with the discussion in the former chapter. This is crucial in the context of a comprehensive denial of memory and identity which Palestinians refugees experience. Furthermore, that the guides who lead,

³² These binaries are also relevant to researcher-researched dynamics, as highlighted in the methodology section.

narrate, and curate this collaborative imagination are cross-generational IDPs suggests a fruitful avenue for Israeli-Jews to be in solidarity with the Palestinian struggle without imposing a Jewish rhetoric or agenda onto it. Crucially, the tours invite Israelis to acknowledge their responsibility for a continuing *al-Nakba*, instead of framing it as an alternative Palestinian version of history. As a Palestinian participant (Interview 9, 2018) on a joint tour notes: ‘I support Zochrot and want them to continue, since Israelis, there are many things that they don’t know...Israelis must take responsibility for taking land from people. And if people can return that will be great’. As he alludes to, the tours can pave a path for linking the past and the future.

In fact, Zochrot now conclude their tours by reading aloud their Vision Document of Return that envisions what the application of the return might look like. As Umar (Interview 3, 2018) explains:

Zochrot started to tell the past, and along the way we got stuck with the questions, what we do with this knowledge, with this trauma? When we questioned ourselves politically, we decided that those who talk about injustice should talk about how to do justice. There were serious and profound discussions here about Zochrot's position and we decided that we support the refugees’ right of return as a main part of the justice process.

The tours’ re-mapping of a traumatic site-specific memory is therefore grounded in a future-oriented call for Israel to acknowledge its responsibility for the ongoing Palestinian refugee problem. Zochrot had undergone a process of modification of their activism tactics; much like Querstadtein who advanced their activism tactics over the years - for instance by altering the location and focus of their tours from migratory neighborhoods, as discussed in the former chapter.

Najwan (Interview 6, 2018) further observes that the materiality of space, in addition to assisting the process of testifying to a traumatic past is equally crucial for invoking a future orientated imagination:

Zochrot recently started talking not only about the past and memory but also about the future...We stopped seeing these tours as commemoration but as a return...there are all kinds of returns, to visit a place is another kind of return...We are constantly jumping between the past and the future, and this space, these villages and cities, help us in this transition. This space allows us to see the past, but it also gives us an opportunity to imagine or think about the future.

Imagination here refers to a political exercise, not the realm of fantasy, of laying the groundwork for a shared and just place where people can live in freedom and equality. A political exercise which relates to what Said (1994: 6) defines as a ‘struggle over geography’, one that ‘is not only about soldiers and cannons, but also about ideas, about forms, about

images and imaginings'. Imagination also captures the creative essence of the political intervention that these guided tours enact, to alter the given framework of the distribution of the sensible.

As Najwan (Interview 6, 2018) describes, 'participants use the visual, seeing, imagining, and drawing a place in their imagination'. Alongside the gaze, camera, drawings, and photographs that assist participants in this collaborative process of retracing and imagining, participants bodies act as an additional spatial-visual tool within the tours' imaginative creation. Maurice Merleau-Ponty's unfinished work *The Visible and the Invisible* (1968) articulates the embodiedness of the gaze as an encountering of the world that occurs via the body's position in time and space. This is useful in order to stress the way participants are self-assembled and performed via the movement through space (Wylie 2006). Like de Certeau's (1988: 84, 101) figure of the wanderer, participants' walking bodies re-write and manipulate the authoritative ordered architecture, creating 'shadows and ambiguities within them', giving 'shape to spaces', 'weaving them together', and dramatizing them. Zochrot's tours enhance this spatial-visual intervention by carrying signs with the names of victimises of Israeli' massacres or erased Palestinian spaces and planting them in the landscape (Figs 43-44).

Figures 43 - 44: Placing signs in the landscape



As a tour participant notes, ‘the signage action is another extra that reinforces the activism, to add the layer of information that is missing...I think it a kind of war against this big lie we lived with, that we were told’. Indeed, by gathering to look at, signpost, or photograph ruins that might seem to an outsider as arbitrary, the tours’ performance marks momentary memorial sites, befitting a sort of embodied temporary counter monument that problematizes the nationalistic framework of monuments, as closely examined in the former chapter. The tours’ visual language further extends photographs to the realm of performance, in addition to dramatizing ruins. For instance, during Umar’s tour, we walk past a large tourist frame at the top of Gan Hapsiga, placed by the municipality for people to take a framed photo with Tel Aviv’s panorama; encouraging the same distant gaze as prompted by the municipal guided tours of Old Jaffa. Umar decides to place on top of it a photograph of the coastal Manshiya that was violently erased from Tel Aviv’s cityscape; participants photograph this gesture, forming a collage that links past, present, abstraction and resistance (Figs 46-47).

Figures 45- 47: Creating a site-specific collage





Through such improvised acts the tours creates a temporary but significant intervention in the highly-controlled tourist landscape. These performative interventions are political in a Rancièrian sense of deconstructing “the distribution of the sensible” and what is possible to be heard, sensed, seen, felt, *and* done about it. As this chapter has demonstrated, memory sites, old quarters, memorials, trails, forests, and viewpoints form a highly interactive and dominant landscape of memory that disseminates the Israeli national identity. Against this backdrop, marking the present-absent memory of *al-Nakba* is a significant political action. Furthermore, since 2011, the Israeli Nakba Law prohibits ‘commemorating Independence Day or the day of the establishment of the state as a day of mourning’, de-facto barring Palestinians with Israeli citizenship from commemorating the traumatic events of *al-Nakba*. Paradoxically, in a demonstration of the complex interaction between collective forgetting and remembering, the law in fact familiarized younger Jewish Israelis with this term, reinstating it within public discourse.

Nonetheless, the Law does invoke a tangible fear of publicly engaging with the memory of *al-Nakba*. For instance, the Yafa Theatre lost its state funding over the violation of this law. Within this conflicted reality, the tours’ commemoration of *al-Nakba* constitutes a form of memory activism, protest, and civil disobedience. Additionally, in disputed cites, the mere presence of some groups in specific is a form of resistance, as much as the voicing of silenced memories (Pullan and Sternberg 2012). Moreover, the movement across the city can enact a symbolic transgressing of urban frontiers. This transgression is mobile,

temporary, and concerns being noticed (Cresswell 1996). For instance, in Belfast during marching season, the annual walks by the Orange Lodge commemorate the victory of William of Orange at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690 and exacerbate conflict by proceeding through Catholic neighborhoods. Similarly, during a commemorative tour of the Deir Yassin Massacre led by Zochrot in Jerusalem, our presence brings angry responses from passersby, who shout ‘they also murdered Jews here, stop’, ‘go to Gaza’, or ‘our soldiers also died you know’.

The political tours of Yafa that do not follow the touristic and ideological roots marked in the city enact a similar transgression, symbolically and literally. As well as momentarily altering the local space, participants describe how the tours impact them in the long run. For instance, Rana (Interview 7, 2018) describes how Halaqat Istiqbal tours strengthen her political identity and vocabulary:

I joined in the tour and I started to understand my identity more and build political knowledge, build in my head what I think and what my opinions are. So yes, I was looking for places I could learn in order to formulate something... if someone presents an argument, I didn't know how best to answer, so I stayed silent. Then I decided I must feel these holes.

Najwan (Interview 6, 2018) further notes how her tours broaden IDPs socio-cultural knowledge:

It's something you are not taught in school; it is also not spoken about in the street... Yafa or Haifa, these cities flourished before 48, it is important for me to explain, with pride, what a Palestinian city was before 48 ... I talk about newspapers and associations, and women's organizations that existed. I talk about Palestinian cinemas and theatres and that today there are hardly any Palestinian theatres and cinemas.

Hence, by retracing Palestine’s abstracted urbanity and dramatizing ruins, the walking tours strengthen Palestinian identity and heritage.

Jewish Israeli participants often describe a retrospective alteration of the landscape of their childhood. For instance, one participant (Interview 4, 2018) says:

The experience was very emotional especially in the sense that there is nowhere to escape...you see things in your landscape, rocks, that you didn't think are part of a village. Walking in a place that for you is your childhood landscape, where you would go on hikes and suddenly you ask yourself, would I go to enjoy it after I know the story? Just a very personal example, we are looking for a place to get married. We really love a place in Jaffa that was an Ottoman hospital; so, now I think I should check the history of the place, see what happened there.

Another Jewish participant (Interview 10, 2018) notes, ‘it opened many horizons for me about how our world is running, what my great-grandfather really did, and whether he lied to me: did he massacre?’. In sum, the tours transform participants’ horizons, sense of place,

historical perception and inform their political vocabularies and imaginations. Their participatory function is therefore dual: in the structure that involves walking, listening, imagining, and performing together around ruins; and in the mission of testing the limits of spatial collective modes of commemoration and representation, to seek future possibilities for justice.

This section has considered the embeddedness of tour participants' bodies with their different positionalities in the local socio-political structure of ongoing *al-Nakba* and colonialism. As highlighted, spaces of solidarity and resistance can reiterate some of the divisions that make up the colonial power structures. However, the use of guided tours in the world of activism lends displaced activists authority over the city and its memory. Additionally, the tours' movement between a spatially-grounded past, present, and possible future suggest a politicised call for reparation and justice for an ongoing history of forced displacement. As well as positionalities and entanglement, the section has further examined the creative agency of participants' bodies to interact with, deconstruct, and reshape spaces. In addition to temporarily altering the city, the tours were shown to transform participants' horizons and sense of place, inform their political vocabularies, and lead them to consider how mundane activities are complicit in the abstraction of Yafa.

Conclusion

Expanding the geo-temporal scale of forced displacement research, the chapter has considered the political agency of displaced groups that have not crossed state borders as it persists across generations. Utilizing the lens of post-colonial and de-colonial theory, the chapter mapped the capitalist and nationalist logics that fuel preservation and tourism practices as a continual form of heritage omission in a neo-colonial city. In parallel, it has traced persistent indigenous counterclaims that form a productive ground for activism, and demonstrated how collaborative walking methodologies can help revive the erased geographies of colonized displaced populations. Transgressing the existing analytical categories of nationality and territory that dominate the discourse on spatial and memory politics in Israel-Palestine, the chapter has also stressed a transcultural component in Yafa's *al-Nakba* walking tours. Firstly, in their re-tracing of a lost cosmopolitanism and urbanity, and secondly by considering these tours as part of a broader spectrum of trans-local traditions of return trips and conflict tourism. The collaborative commemorative modes of protest that

were examined in this chapter also probe the need to transgress beyond simplistic formulation of memory and post-memory in the context of forced displacement. Instead, the genre of the guided walking tours allowed for a constant move between a past, present, and future grounded in the urban fabric of the city with its ruins and remines. The fragmented and dynamic style of their presentation further articulates the plural spatiality and non-linearity of the streets and its attached memories and urban identities. Such complex and dynamic temporal representations are useful for unpacking the root shock caused by forced displacement and considering avenues for political and reparational work that is needed in such acute conditions of injustice.

Nevertheless, the chapter has also reflected on the complexity of forming joint rituals of commemoration between perpetrators and victims, and the self-selecting, class-and-ethnic nature of the cross-generational perpetrators who are willing to acknowledge their accountability for ongoing trauma. However, in line with the ethos of Zochrot, the chapter argues for the importance of such practices, *if* they acknowledge the conditions under which these events are remembered; the lingering implications of displacement; and the need for future-oriented solutions. Whilst the current reality on the ground is far from just, these tours provide a proactive and productive means for Israelis and Palestinians, living within or visiting Israeli territories, to challenge current political, cultural, and spatial orders. The tours' various performative gestures - from walking to placing signs or photographs in the landscape, sensing, marking, documenting, and dramatizing its ruins - demonstrate the agency of spatial users to re-write landscape and architectural syntax. In addition to generating new ways of seeing, the tours inform new modes of remembering and being within space. The tactic of guided tours therefore exemplifies the importance of site-specific creativity to activism and its ability to inform alternative imagery, vocabularies, and actions that challenge hegemonic discourses and perceptions. Finally, as much as forcefully displaced people are often perceived as outsiders and are therefore excluded from the politics of the city, this chapter has also demonstrated the exclusion of displaced Palestinians within narratives of peace and justice in the region. In contrast, this study maintains that to truly decolonize Israel-Palestine, the root of the conflict, *al-Nakba*, and the ongoing refugee problem it created need to be at the foreground of justice initiatives.

The IDP tour guides examined in this chapter were shown to act within an environment whose memory of conflict is inextricably linked to their current experience of multi-generational displacement. Nonetheless, the multifactorial reality of displacement and current-day warfare means that displaced populations also seek refuge in areas impacted by

the legacies of conflicts unrelated to themselves. Thus, another related question that arises concerns how displaced persons, as a seemingly uninvolved third party, are impacted by and affect the spatial memory of a disputed city? To address this, I turn to the neighbourhoods immediately adjacent to Yafa to the north, in the liminal space between Yafa and Tel Aviv proper, currently known as south Tel Aviv. This former border zone between two conflicted cities has turned with their reunification in 1950 into an internal urban frontier that marks class, cultural, ethno-national, internal ethno-Jewish, and political differences. More recently, this deprived area has become the home of African asylum seekers (mainly from Eritrea and Sudan) and a site of ongoing confrontation around their presence there.

Chapter Four: Transcultural Memory Frictions in the Streets

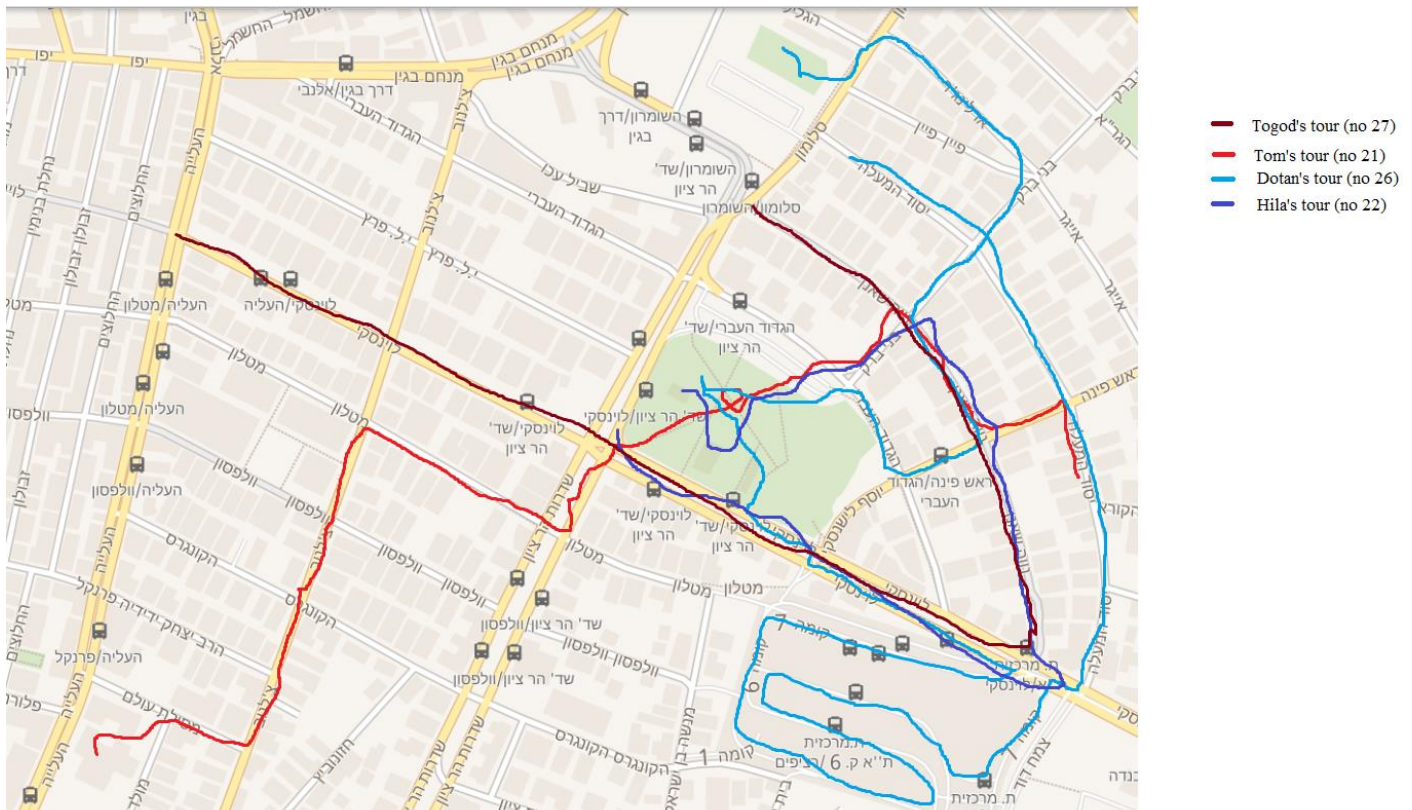


Figure 48: Rotem, E. 2020. *South Tel Aviv Flooded*. [Accessed 27 July 2021]. Available from: <https://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-5653924,00.html>

A flash flood in the winter of 2020 served as a tragic reminder of the long-standing infrastructural neglect of south Tel Aviv, the borderland between Jaffa and Tel Aviv (Fig. 48). The flooding resulted in the collapse of urban infrastructure and the death of a young couple trapped in the elevator of their residential building in the southern impoverished neighbourhood of Hatikva Quarter. This tragedy sparked great public outrage over the failure of the drainage infrastructure and the overall neglect of southern neighborhoods. In response, Mayor of Tel Aviv Ron Huldai declared (in a daily current affairs programme with Amnon Levy) that the problem is not ‘drainage and infrastructure’ but rather that southern neighbourhoods suffer from a more serious issue of ‘infiltrators’. By infiltrators Huldai referred to asylum seekers from Sudan and Eritrea who reside in the area - their classification as infiltrators de-legitimizes their claim for refuge in Israel. Moreover, Huldai’s statement exemplifies a deflecting logic that blames asylum seekers for the problems in the south. National and municipal politicians across the political spectrum co-opt this narrative to evade their responsibility for the neglect of the area that is in fact rooted in the historical formation of Tel Aviv. This interconnection between the plight of asylum seekers and the ongoing history of urban division and inequality in their host city is the key theme of the chapter. It asks how the arrival of displaced people – an ostensibly uninvolved third party - affect the politics of public memory in a host-city undergoing ethnic and national conflicts and divisions.

To answer this question, the chapter examines city walking tours facilitated by a variety of actors and networks in the impoverished neighbourhoods of south Tel Aviv (Map 10). Their commonality, and their relevance to this study, is that they address the much-disputed presence of asylum seekers in south Tel Aviv and help illuminate the history of discriminatory development that produces unequal urbanisation. As the chapter will demonstrate, on the one hand these tours animate a broader tale of a city-level material and cultural discrimination that long predates the arrival of African asylum seekers. Yet, on the other, these guided walking tours also break down the “outsider” status of African asylum seekers and situate them as part of the story of south Tel Aviv, which they depict as an area formed and reformed through various waves of migratory trails. Whereas the previous two chapters focused on highly touristic segments of the city, this chapter examines an urban area that suffers economic and infrastructural underdevelopment and disregards. Culturally, it is absent from the official story of Tel Aviv and largely devoid of official memory markings such as memorials or tourist signs. This is another important aspect of this strand of tours’

memory activism, as they illuminate the memory of an area that is marginalised from the official story of the city. Moreover, the chapter will illustrate that the streets of underdeveloped parts of the city and mundane infrastructure such as bus stations, restaurants, and groceries are valuable memory signifiers. Signifiers that serve as physical testaments to chronic institutional neglect, but also as evidence of communal attempts to overcome it and of trans-local memories woven into the street's patterns of everyday life.



Map 10: South Tel Aviv and the paths of the tactical tours closely examined in Chapter Four

Examining the ways different actors enact urban, national, and transcultural memories by and through south Tel Aviv's public space in their struggle over its story and identity, this chapter will advance Chapter Three's discussion on the mobilization of streets and their materiality for resistance. As with the tours examined in Chapter Two, the walking tours in south Tel Aviv emphasise the diasporic nature of urban space. Hence, the chapter will frame these guided tours as a mode of transcultural memory activism. However, in contrast with the tours of Berlin that are guided by newcomers, these tours are mostly guided by Israeli youth movement workers, creative freelancers, and NGO workers. Instead, asylum seekers' collaboration in the tours is in the form of testimony delivered at the beginning or end of the

tour. The testimonies last around an hour, including audience questions, and take place in different sites in south Tel Aviv, such as NGO buildings, the central bus station, or a community garden. As the chapter will argue, this is an important aspect of the tours' memory activism, in which African asylum seekers weave their memories into the local public memory-scape, appealing to and expanding its vocabularies and gestures. Through this testimonial exchange, they turn their traumatic life-memories into a public political performance to claim the recognition that is denied them through their prevailing classification as "infiltrators". However, for logistic and financial reasons, not all walking tours in south Tel Aviv include testimonies by asylum seekers, and very few refugees are tour guides. The tensions that arise between the political and commercial agendas of these tours will be closely analysed.

The chapter draws on participation in ten walking tours in south Tel Aviv and nineteen interviews with activists, tour guides, and tour participants, facilitated by three main agencies: youth movements, charities for refugees, and creative freelancers. Snapshots from tours that represent each of these three categories will be introduced to convey the plurality of stories, agendas, and creative gestures they encompass. Collages will be further utilized to represent the tours' paths and the infrastructure they reference and allow the readers to orientate themselves spatially and visually. As well as analysing these tour performances, the chapter will conceptualise the sites and infrastructure they visit and the cultural atmosphere in which they operate. Additionally, it will contextualise Tel Aviv's memory politics and the historical formation of its urban frontiers. The chapter will further situate these tours within the context of a broader repertoire of tactics African asylum seekers deploy as part of the memory battle over their legal and cultural perception and political (in)visibility.

It will begin with a review of a tour facilitated by the Tel Aviv-Yafo municipality, to examine the official scripting of Tel Aviv's memory and identity as well as the gaps and fissures within it. The next section will contextualise the "site" of the guided tours' performance and highlight the interdependency between the marginalization of south Tel Aviv and the marginalisation of African asylum seekers. After establishing this entanglement, the next section will highlight the importance of walking to the tours' animating of the missing spatial context on the conflicted discourse around the presence of asylum seekers in south Tel Aviv. The following section will continue to analyse the entanglement between refugees and the local environment, focusing on its memory culture. The final section will further reflect on the representational issues that arise within this grid of tours, and the tensions between their political and touristic aims.

(In)visible Memory Lanes in Tel Aviv

On a pleasant April morning, I arrive at the Tel Aviv Founders' Monument and Fountain (Fig. 49), located on the iconic Rothschild Boulevard. This is the starting point of a Hebrew-speaking tour entitled *White Cube Houses - A Tour of the Bauhaus and the White City*. The tour is facilitated by Tel Aviv-Yafo municipality on a weekly basis and available to book on their website at the cost of sixty shekels. Shlomit, our tour guide, confirms that all fifteen participants have paid. Next, she notes that we are standing at the city's historic core, where *Ahuzat Bayit* (Mansion Home) was founded and later renamed Tel Aviv. She explains that on our tour today we will walk across Rothschild Boulevard, 'a museum without walls to the city's construction styles, which represents the leading architects and their changing aesthetics'. Moreover, she says: 'we will learn today how a city was born with the same height, the same space, the same structure of a cube'. Presenting a close reading of the tour and the architectural and preservation practices it references, this section maps the official scripting of Tel Aviv's memory and identity, the fragmentations within it, and its multiple layers of forgetting.

Through preservation, renovation, destruction, street names, memorials, and walking tours, a city continually writes, affirms, and disseminates its story. As Shlomit briefly mentions above, Tel Aviv's official story begins with sixty-six Jewish families, residents of the Ottoman-ruled Jaffa, who purchased a nearby plot of land in 1906 to build a garden-suburb named Ahuzat Bayit. It was later renamed Tel Aviv after a Hebrew translation of Theodore Herzl's 1902 book *Altneuland* (old-new land).³³ The location of The Founders' Monument, built in 1949, is highly symbolic. This is where Akiva Arie Weiss, a Zionist architect and city planner, held a lottery to divide the land of Ahuzat Bayit between the founding families. As Shlomit details, the Monument is engraved with a relief, made by sculptor Aharon Freiberg, that illustrates the city's formation in three layers: the first marks the conquering of sand dunes through manual labour; the second paints the establishment of Ahuzat Bayit with its low-rise houses; and the top layer depicts Tel Aviv in the 1940s, with its high-rise buildings in the acclaimed modern International Style (Fig. 50).

³³ *Tel* being the Hebrew word for mound, signifying the ancient, and *Aviv* meaning spring, symbolizing renewal.



Figure 49: Tel Aviv Founders' Monument and Fountain.

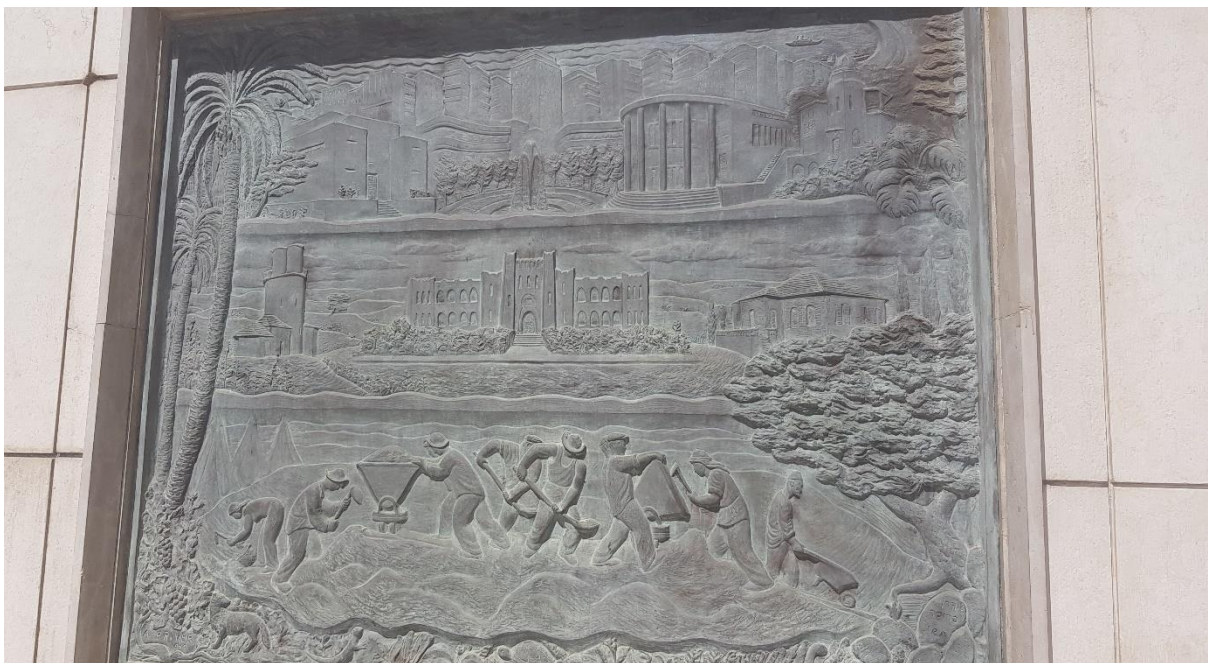


Figure 50: Relief by Aharon Freiber.

From its very formation, Tel Aviv emerged as a purposeful act of separation from the Palestinian Yafa. The design of Ahuzat Bayit was inspired by the European Garden Suburb, as well as the European colonies' urban settlements that were detached from the indigenous population (Zaidman and Kark, 2016; Bigon and Katz, 2017). The aspiration for separation comes across in a statement written by Weiss:

We must soon acquire a decent piece of land on which to build houses for us. Its location should be near Jaffa, and it will be the first Hebrew city, 100 percent inhabited by Hebrews, where Hebrew will be spoken, where purity and cleanliness will be maintained, and we will not walk in the ways of the Gentiles.³⁴

As argued, the Zionist enterprise envisioned Tel Aviv as “pure” and “clean”, a contrast to the “mixed” and “messy” cosmopolitan Jaffa. Tel Aviv's evolving architectural styles which our tour and the Founders' Monument celebrate, from the Garden Suburb to the International Style, aimed to underline this contrast between the seemingly “modern” and “European” Tel Aviv and “unmodern” Jaffa. This demonstrates how the colonial identity and authority is reliant on establishing a culturally and spatially inferior other.

We begin our walk across the Rothschild Boulevard, glancing at a mixture of beautifully renovated historic buildings that house restaurants, cafés, and luxury residences alongside tall skyscrapers, the headquarters of big firms and banks. Shlomit explains that the Balfour Declaration from 1917 ‘instilled great hopes’, and precipitated waves of Jewish migrations to the region, among them ‘architects with diplomas, mostly from Eastern Europe’.³⁵ In the early Twenties, these architects tried to form a hybrid between the influences they brought from Europe and the local style. To demonstrate, Shlomit points at a striking house (Fig. 51), designed by Yehuda Magidovitch who graduated from Odessa, which includes a slit in an Italian renaissance style and a “Jaffian” rounded window. She concludes: “this mixture of cultures and combination of East and West is named Eclectic Architecture”. Indeed, the Eclectic Architecture, popular across European colonies, established a modern style with an orientalist genealogy; by referencing classical motifs, it formed a sense of continuity with the past empires of Greece and Rome (Longair, 2016).

However, says Shlomit, from the second half of the 1920s, Jewish architects began to search for a predominantly Hebrew architectural style. ‘Where can we see it?’, she asks, and points at another Eclectic house (Fig. 52). Here, the decorations on the balcony resemble the Jewish symbol of a Menorah and a large ceramic mural designed by Ze'ev Raban that

³⁴ Translated by the author, quoted from Yekutieli and Akiva 2010.

³⁵ The Balfour Declaration was a public statement by the British government in support for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.

features Zionist symbols such as pioneers harvesting. Shlomit stresses that the house thus embodies ‘a message of the realization of Zionism’. Moreover, she notes: ‘we call these houses dream homes because suddenly in the dunes of sand appeared urban villas, like in Rome’. As mentioned, residential buildings are important conveyors of identities and ideologies. Additionally, the attempt to form a Hebrew variation of the Eclectic Style is an apt metaphor for the Zionist identity that is split between East versus West and mimicry versus authenticity. As Bhabha (2012) notes, the colonial power is ‘always ambivalent, split between its appearance as original and authoritative and its articulation as repetition and difference’. Accordingly, the Zionist enterprise is torn between a claim to indigeneity versus the adaptation of Western colonial practices; and between a longing for an ancestral homeland versus a desire to thoroughly redesign it.



Figure 51: House designed by Yehuda Magidovitch.



Figure 52: Eclectic house.

The above depiction by Shlomit of dream homes appearing in the dunes of sand solidifies the popular myth of Tel Aviv as a city that emerged out of empty patches of white sand. However, this myth, a tragic realization of Guttman's painting mentioned in the former chapter, forgets that Tel Aviv grew in the heart of a cultivated district with neighbourhoods, villages, farms, roads, vineyards, and orchards. In his book *All That Remains*, Palestinian historian Walid Khalidi identifies twenty-three villages and towns in the Jaffa district that were ruined following the 1948 War. Moreover, as mentioned in the former chapter, present-day Tel Aviv stands over eight Palestinian localities that existed before 1948, including villages such as Salama and Yafa's northern neighbourhood Manshiya. Hence, like the municipal tour of Jaffa analyzed in the previous chapter, the *White Cube Houses* tour replicates a colonialist gaze that views indigenous land as empty, free for taking and re-designing. Additionally, in its attempt to forget Yafa, Tel Aviv's official story of formation overlooks the Jewish neighbourhoods that have been established since 1869 on its outskirts, before Ahuzat Bayit, from which south Tel Aviv evolved.

As we continue our stroll along Rothschild Boulevard, Shlomit describes how the British authorities granted Tel Aviv an official status of a township in 1921. Subsequently, the Zionist leadership commissioned Sir Patrick Geddes, a Scottish town-planner and biologist, to design a masterplan for Tel Aviv. As Shlomit details, Geddes' plan extended the Boulevard to link the historic core with an area designated as a centre for cultural institutions to matches those of European cities (and emblemize Tel Aviv's identity as a bourgeois metropolis). Pointing at the gaps between the houses around us, Shlomit further notes how Geddes' meticulous plan of an ordered grid of streets standardized the gaps between buildings and their heights. The commission of a renowned European town-planner to design Tel Aviv's masterplan is another indication of the Zionists' desire to spatially mimic a European modernity. This mimicry was important in winning concessions from the British authorities that were normally antagonistic to the Jewish acquisition of Arab land since they were themselves concerned with creating spatial "order" in the region (Levine 2007).

Walking further away from the city's historic core, Shlomit points our attention to a change in the 'architectural dictionary'. According to her, the architects that arrived in the 1930s, fleeing the terror of the Nazis in Europe, felt that the Eclectic houses had no architectural value. Instead of ornamental "dream homes", they designed minimalistic cube-shaped houses with a machine-like aesthetic. Shlomit explains that these architects, who arrived from Brussels, Berlin, London, and Paris, formed a synthesis between the design influences that developed across Europe, in the German Bauhaus tradition and other avant-

garde schools. Shlomit adds that these avant-garde architectural approaches, which ‘crossed continents and cultures’, are named the International Style as coined at a 1923 exhibition of New York’s Museum of Modern Art (curated by Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson). Tel Aviv’s architects thus turned away from the pursuit of a localized Hebrew style towards the citation of a globalized symbol of modernity. This shift occurred at a period characterized by the exacerbation of tensions between Jews and Palestinians as well as between Jaffa and Tel Aviv.

Shlomit points at a house (Fig. 53) and says: ‘we see here another key principle in the architecture of that period, a play between a cube and a cylinder’. She points at the exterior of a stairwell of another house (Fig. 54), with rounded windows that reference a ship, to celebrate modern scientific advancement. Moreover, Shlomit notes that these windows were designed to maximize the infiltration of natural light, implementing a ‘new architectural technology’ which relies on an iron frame to hold the building in place rather than relying on the walls. This technology, she stresses, enabled the creation of openings in the wall according to the functions of the rooms, the entry of light, and the direction of the air. Furthermore, Shlomit says: ‘the installation of natural light in the hallway, where everyone said hello to each other, emphasises a collaborative way of life’. Shlomit therefore concludes: ‘these are houses with a Zionist ideology, of simplicity, modesty, and cheap uniformed construction’. As such, our tour emphasises an overlap between the utility and minimalism that characterized the International Style and the Socialist ideology, turning architecture into a Zionist ideological tool. Indeed, Zionist texts during that period highlighted the role of architecture and planning in forming a sense of place and collective home as well as national identity (Yacobi 2002).



Figure 53: A play between a cube and a cylinder.



Figure 54: Rounded windows.

As we walk around a renovated beautiful white building (Fig. 55), Shlomit observes: ‘Le Corbusier, one of the forefathers of modern architecture in France, influenced Tel Aviv more than the Bauhaus school’. As she explains, the building exhibits Corbusier’s architectural principles, such as a flat roof and column ground-level and was designed by his disciple Zeev Rechter (Fig. 56). Moreover, Shlomit notes that the beaming whiteness of houses, which gave Tel Aviv its nickname the White City, follows Corbusier’s design philosophy: ‘Le Corbusier established that the white plaster is trivial, it emphasizes that the shell of the house is just a casing of space that curates it’. As Shlomit further describes, during the 1930s and 1940s, an entire area was built to the north of the historic core ‘in a sequence of International Style houses’. Incidentally, this area was populated with wealthy migrants from Central Europe and is nicknamed the “Old North”, which inspired the common expression "Northerner" as a designation of an upper-class snob. Thus, despite the linkage Zionist historiography draws between socialism and the International Style, it has become a marker of urban divide along the lines of wealth.



Figure 55: Renovated white building.



Figure 56: Column ground-level.

At our next tour-stop, Shlomit points our gaze downwards to an engraving on the ground that reads: ‘The White City of Tel Aviv, World Heritage Site 2003’ (Fig. 57). She says with excitement, ‘here, an official ceremony was held to mark the declaration of the White City as World Heritage Site, with Tel Aviv’s Mayer Ron Huldai, the Israeli president Moshe Katsav, and representatives of the Geddes family’. Since the declaration, Shlomit notes, ‘hotels and restaurants are filled with tourists from Germany and around the world that come to view our White City’. Furthermore, in 2015, the German government donated 2.8 million euros towards the preservation of the White City. As such, the White City has become a profitable tourist attraction and costly real-estate that grants the city an international acclaim. Prominent institutions that celebrate the heritage of the International Style are the Tel Aviv Bauhaus Centre, opened in 2000, and The White City Centre (WCC), launched in 2019 (co-founded by Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality and the German government). Besides talks and exhibits, they offer walking tours as a popular means to narrate and dramatize the White City. For instance, according to the Bauhaus Centre’s website, their tours have been attended by over 30,000 people to date.



Figure 57: Engraving on the ground.

As Shlomit details, the White City Heritage Site includes three areas (A, B, and C), and our tour revolves around area B, which contains 250 designated for preservation. Shlomit explains that UNESCO’s standards of preservation are rigorous, however, ‘Israel said that we are a Holocaust generation, and we want to live in continuity with future generations’. She adds that this is ‘not a joke, but really’. (As a compromise, it was agreed that architects can extend houses in the White City providing they maintain a contrast with the original structure, so that the extensions are visibly demarcated.) This anecdote illustrates the centrality of the Holocaust in the Israeli collective memory and identity. Moreover, the commemoration of a style that was introduced to the city by architects who fled the Nazi regime reinforces the framing of the Holocaust as Israel’s “founding trauma”. Yet, this framing embodies a spatial paradox, since the Holocaust happened elsewhere, and the Jewish victims belong to a different time and place (Feldman in Yacobi & Fenster 2011). Nevertheless, the celebrated White City suggests a means to overcome this paradox, by providing a spatial tangible link with this other time and place.

The White City therefore reinforces the predominant Ashkenazi memory narrative underlining Tel Aviv’s official story, and Israel’s official historiography more broadly. However, in recent years the “melting pot” Zionist ideology that underpins this over-arching

Ashkenazi memory narrative is being problematized (Kizel in Soen and Shechory 2014). Two newly-launched municipally-supported walking tours, *The Yemeni Home Tour of Gilo* and *The Bukhari House*, represent attempts to insert the marginalized Mizrahi migratory memory trails that have shaped Tel Aviv within the public arena. Both tours take place in the aforementioned Hatikva Quarter. Nevertheless, such southern neighbourhoods – like Mizrahi culture in general - remain excluded from the celebrated White City and the recently launched mile-long National Independence Trail that connects ten historical points in the city to tell the story of Tel Aviv's formation (Fig. 58). Hence, Tel Aviv's heritage trails maintain the city's inner border: between what is officially part of Tel Aviv's story, versus the city's southern region that is visited as part of the “off-the-track-tourism” trend.

As Shlomit observes during our tour, it is the significant presence and concentration of the International Style in the urban fabric, unprecedented in comparison with Europe, which led to the announcement of the White City as a world heritage site; however, paradoxically, ‘over the years, this high concentration led to a reduction in the value of the Style’. She further states: ‘did our parents’ generation know they lived in houses designed according to the Bauhaus or International style? No!’. In fact, much like with the preservation of Old Jaffa, it was Israeli bohemians who campaigned for the preservation of the White City. Architectural historian Michael Levin and artist Dani Karavan led a campaign to stress the distinctiveness of the long-overlooked ‘architecture of modernity’ (Alfasi and Fabian, 2009). An exhibition curated by Levin in 1984 entitled *White City: International Style Architecture in Israel, a Portrait of an Era* proved a seminal event in sparking a renewed public interest in the International Style (Fig. 59). Evidence for the successes of this campaign came in 1994, when Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality initiated a conference of the International Style, co-sponsored by UNESCO. The conference, attended by leading architects, researchers, and academics from around the world included exhibitions, walking tours, lectures, and a signposting operation to mark important buildings across the city.



Figure 58: An illustrative map of the National Independence Trail.

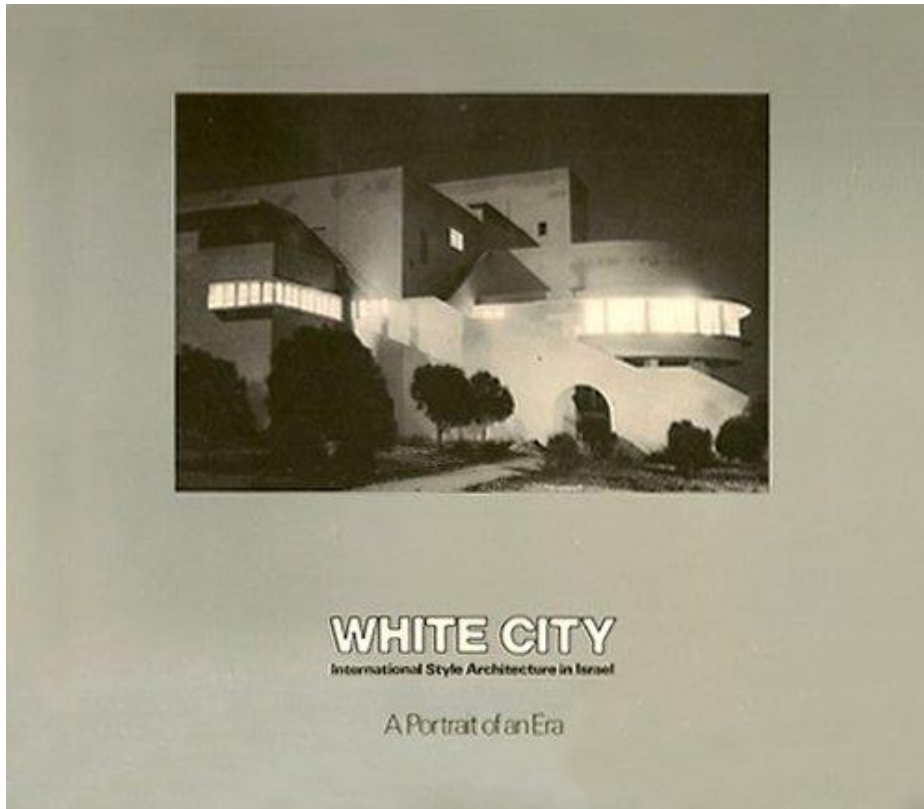


Figure 59: Levin's book.

The conference contributed greatly to the mythologization of the White City and constituted a public call to renovate the deteriorating Intentional Styled structures. The 1990s thus marked a turn away from the long fascination with the vernacular and Mediterranean architecture that emerged in the 1960s - as evident in preservation of Jaffa's Old City that was closely examined in the previous chapter. That chapter detailed how the renovation of Old Jaffa entailed a process of abstracting the localized Palestinian architecture and re-imagining it as a neo-biblical oriental "Disneyland". However, the First Intifada between 1987 to 1993 re-politicized the local landscape. Another reminder of the local Palestinian identity within the borders of the Green Line were the October 2000 Events, a series of protests in Arab towns and mixed cities, including Yafa, against Israeli oppression and violence in Jerusalem and the Occupied Territories (during which the Israeli police killed 13 Palestinian citizens of Israel and injured hundreds of others). These events can explain the renewed interest in the seemingly a-historical and a-political International Style (Nitzan-Shiftan 2000). This further demonstrates how the escalation of tensions between Yafa and Tel Aviv and Israelis and Palestinians are played out through architecture.

This section has highlighted the political role of architectural historiography, architecture, and architects within conflicted landscapes as constructors of urban memory and

identity. Walking the reader through the infrastructure and preservation practices of the White City, the section has traced the official scripting of Tel Aviv's story and identified the cracks that exist within it. As demonstrated, Tel Aviv is a city with conflicting ambitions as both a Zionist utopia and a spatial mimicry of Europe. Additionally, Tel Aviv's evolving architectural styles and preservation processes serve to create a deliberate juxtaposition with its neighbouring city of Yafa. However, despite this co-dependency, Tel Aviv seeks to forget and abstract Palestinian Yafa. Overall, the section has argued that the celebrated and renovated White City reinforces the association of Tel Aviv with the Ashkenazi, upper-class, liberal elite. Moreover, it maintains a distribution of the sensible that centres the Ashkenazi memory trails in the city, with the local Palestinian memory being altogether erased. As such, the official story of Tel Aviv's formation further ignores the Jewish neighbourhoods that formed on its border with Yafa, that now make up south Tel Aviv.

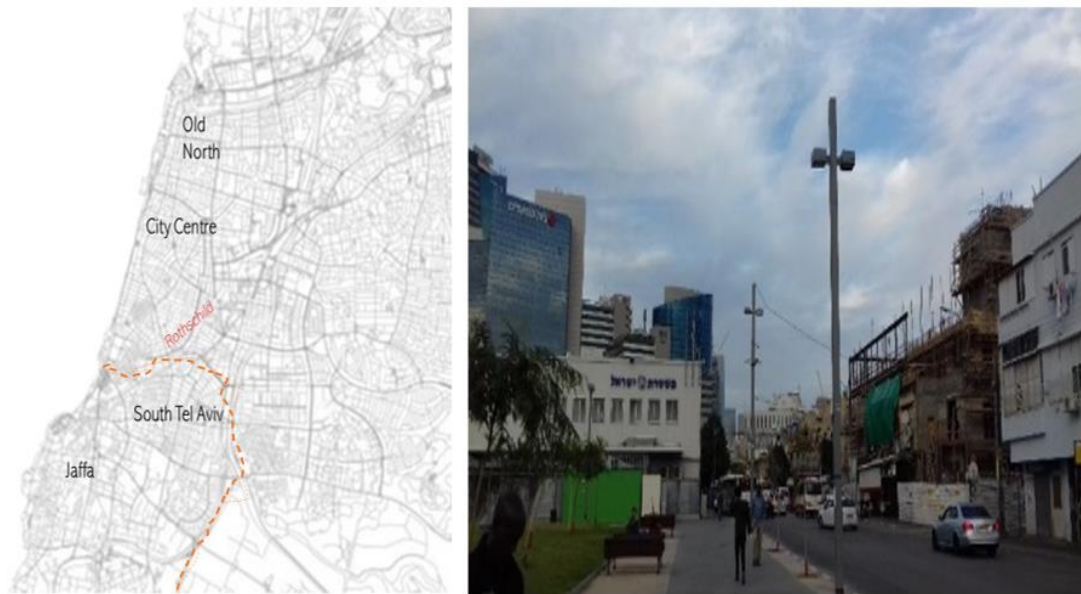
The following section turns to look at the historical formation of south Tel Aviv, and how this history of urban division impacts the current conflicts around the reception of asylum seekers in the city. The section also details the formation of a grid of walking tours in south Tel Aviv that narrate the overlooked story of the area. Through these tours, the chapter demonstrates how the political agency of urban infrastructure and city walking tours can be used to undermine existing mnemonic frames rather than merely reinforce them in the manner that this section has outlined.

Tel Aviv's Urban Frontiers and Topographies of Racial Fear

(Pointing at skyscrapers, see Map 11) In the early days when I arrived here, I used these signs of Bank Hapoalim to go to the sea and back to this area (south Tel Aviv). I suddenly found out that this is a separation line to all intents and purposes, that nobody was stopping you from going there, but actually it is there. Sometimes I also stand on the top of buildings in Neve Sha'anani, and I see the difference, which is the border. So, I really realized that this is the limit because no one from there is coming here and no one from here goes there. I've never seen anyone Sudanese or Eritrean who wants to go to Rothschild for coffee, and vice versa. You don't feel comfortable, you don't feel that you belong, you just feel alien.

Togod, a tour guide, activist and Sudanese asylum seeker, highlights an inner-city seamline, marked by the high-rise banks in Rothschild Boulevard, which runs between Tel Aviv and its southern segment. As the section demonstrates, this urban frontier that defines Togod's mobility and sense of belonging in Tel Aviv long precedes the arrival of African asylum seekers into the city. Nevertheless, as this section equally establishes, the marginalisation of African asylum seekers is entangled with the marginalization of south Tel Aviv in an auto-perpetuating cycle. Within this entanglement, the section maps a newly emerged grid of

tactical guided walking tours in south Tel Aviv that suggest a path to illuminate the local spatial historical context of unequal urbanization as it relates to the reception of refugees.



Map 11: The inner-city (in)visible seamline.

Asylum seekers from Sudan and Eritrea such as Togod have been arriving in Israel via its southern border with Egypt since 2005, fleeing persecution, civil wars, genocide and other atrocities occurring in their home countries. For instance, inhabitants of the Darfur region in western Sudan have escaped genocide and ethnic cleansing perpetrated by the Arab Khartoum regime against non-Arab peoples (Vehnämäki, 2006; Johnson, 2014). Meanwhile, Eritreans flee a non-democratic country with lifelong national service that includes manual labour (Kibreab, 2009). Asylum seekers' extremely dangerous journey to seek protection in Israel involves crossing the Sinai desert, where Bedouins kidnap, torture and ransom Africans. According to a 2016 report by the Hotline for Refugees and Migrants, around seven thousand asylum seekers in Israel are survivors of the torture camps in the Sinai desert, and carry these scars on their bodies and souls. Yet, much like other host countries, Israel's asylum policy is unwelcoming and exclusionary (Kritzman-Amir 2009; Kalir 2015). In fact, Israel completed a barrier in 2012 that effectively halts the crossing of the border with Egypt.

Nevertheless, Israel's superficial acceptance of the 1951 UN Geneva Convention (discussed in Chapter One), of which it is a signatory, prevents it from actively returning asylum seekers that crossed the border back to their home countries. Notwithstanding this superficial acceptance, Israeli state officials evade the legal and moral obligation of assessing asylum requests properly. The State Controller's Report from 2018 regarding the Israeli

asylum system found many flaws, including: instant rejection of asylum applications without any assessment; denying the submission of applications; eliminating applications for asylum requests in long and unregulated queues; and denying information about the asylum policy and its changes. As such, less than one percent of Eritreans and Sudanese have received refugee status in Israel (and eight hundred Darfurians received temporary residency without Israel checking their asylum requests). Hence, thousands of asylum seekers live in Israel in a legal limbo, without status recognition, work permits, access to essential health and welfare services, legal aid, or housing.

According to the Population and Migration Authority, out of the 35,000 asylum seekers in Israel, around 14,000 live in southern Tel Aviv (the rest live in significantly lower numbers in cities such as Ashdod, Eilat, and Jerusalem). The arrival of the marginalised populations of asylum seekers into the marginalised area of south Tel Aviv has intensified ongoing infrastructural and cultural problems. Baric (Interview 15, 2018), an activist and asylum seeker from Darfur, highlights that these problems are now blamed solely on the recent arrivals:

What matters to me about south Tel Aviv is that people think we are the problem in south Tel Aviv, that we caused the crime in south Tel Aviv, the drug dealers, and that residents of south Tel Aviv, their children cannot go to parks. I know that historically south Tel Aviv has always been a place that suffered from poverty, from crime, a place that has always been as it is today. It's not we who caused it.

As Baric notes, a dominant narrative now links the association of south Tel Aviv with crime, poverty, and marginalisation to the arrival of asylum seekers. This, in turn, increases the dispute over their presence in the area. However, the infrastructural, cultural, and institutional neglect of the south is not a new phenomenon. Rather, it is rooted in the historical formation of Tel Aviv.

With the establishment of Ahuzat Bayit in 1906, the Jewish neighbourhoods on the outskirts of Jaffa (from which south Tel Aviv evolved) turned into a borderland between two conflicted cities. These neighbourhoods consisted of a mostly Mizrahi working-class population and were considered a separate entity from both Jaffa and Tel Aviv before the 1948 War (Golan 2009). Receiving limited municipal services from either city, residents were forced to solve infrastructural issues themselves, 'constructing makeshift wells and drilling ad hoc cesspits whenever necessary' (Rotbard 2015: 89). As mentioned, from its very formation Tel Aviv emerged as a purposeful act of spatial separation from Yafa. Equally, the Zionist establishment aimed to separate from these Jewish neighbourhoods on its fringe, which they deemed like Yafa an "unmodern" threat to the ordered and planned Tel Aviv

(Marom 2014). For instance, a newspaper report from 1936 referred to these communities as the ‘world of the Oriental neighbourhoods, the world of the ghetto, of poverty, filth, and social stress’ (in Golan 2010: 156). Following the 1948 War and the profound violent change it brought to the region, these neighbourhoods were officially annexed to Tel Aviv as its southern segment, along with the ethnically-cleansed Yafa.

Subsequently, south Tel Aviv grew immensely, absorbing nearby displaced Palestinian villagers and housing around a hundred thousand Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and North Africa. Its geography comprised of dense residential areas, factories, fields, shanty towns, and transit camps (Marom 2014). As such, a spatial distinction formed between the planned North and historical core of the city (outlined in the section above) and the informal urbanism of the south. In 1953, a new masterplan for a Greater Tel Aviv named the Horowitz Plan designated parts of the south as slum areas for demolition and reconstruction; however the plan never fully materialized, and no alternative urban policy was conceived for the southern development (in contrast with the development of rest of the city and the gentrified parts of Yafa) (Margalit 2013). Architect Adam Mazor’s later masterplan for Tel Aviv from 1978 acknowledged the north–south divide as a problem, but his neo-liberal solution, which lacked a fair allocation of housing or infrastructural rehabilitation, largely failed (Margalit 2013). A continual lack of planning, investment, and services solidifies the urban frontier between Tel Aviv and its southern segment to this day.

Togod (Interview 38, 2019) describes how the walk from Rothschild Boulevard to the southern street Neve Sha’anan is only seven-minutes long, yet ‘the population changes, the buildings change, the language, the culture, it all changes’. Indeed, south Tel Aviv’s disproportionately dense and neglected houses greatly differ from Rothschild’s high-rise renovated buildings, and the ordered grid of streets to its north (Fig. 60). Nevertheless, as Rotbard (2015) highlights, the rich architectural history of south Tel Aviv demonstrates a wealth of styles, including the sought-after International Style; however, it is excluded from the boundaries of the re-painted White City and thus these houses remain in decay. Rotbard designates the area of south Tel Aviv as part of “black” Yafa, due to cultural and geographical proximity. He further notes that the persistent urban frontier between the “white” Tel Aviv and the “black” south Tel Aviv maintains distinct urban identities: in contrast with the White City’s association with the Ashkenazi liberal elite, the south remains associated with working-class conservative Mizrahi Jews. In fact, the paradoxical inclusion/exclusion of the southern segment of the city mirrors a history of a contradictory inclusion/exclusion of the Mizrahi identity.



Figure 60: A house in south Tel Aviv and high-rise building in Rothschild in the background.

Like the old Jewish neighborhoods between Tel Aviv and Yafa, the Mizrahi identity, in its proximity with Palestinian culture, was seen as a transgressive threat to the ethno-separation system of the Zionist project and its mimicry of “white” Europe. The assimilation of Mizrahi Jews into the Israeli collective therefore required them to forsake their Eastern Arabic culture (Shenhav and Hever, 2012). Nevertheless, despite this process of de-Arabization, socio-economic and cultural boundaries between Mizrahi and Ashkenazi Jews remain (Mizrachi 2016). Crucially, the ethnic, financial, geographical, and cultural divides in Tel Aviv influence the conflicting reception of asylum seekers the city. As Maayan Ravid (in Sabar and Shir 2019) writes, the NGOs, academics, and social activists working for asylum seekers are associated with the wealthy “white” North of the city where most of them live. They deploy a post-Holocaust global moral discourse of human rights, whilst overlooking the ongoing discrimination and exclusion of south Tel Aviv and its Mizrahi working-class population. Ravid further demonstrates that the southern Mizrahi residents, in turn, experience this moral human rights discourse as illusory and exclusionary; they compare the budgets these NGOs receive with their own limited resources.

Another manifestation of the city’s uneven geography is that state officials directed asylum seekers to south Tel Aviv. When refugees began crossing the border in 2005, the government placed them on buses that dropped them off at the Levinsky Garden near the impoverished southern street Neve Sha'anani, with no additional institutional guidance or help. As Togod (Interview 38, 2019) says, ‘suddenly six thousand black people came here, and the state knows this place, so why didn't it send us somewhere else? It is a policy towards this place’. Indeed, this “policy” is another indication of the association of the south with what constitutes as the urban “other”. Moreover, the policy reveals the Israeli effort to control refugees’ spatial presence, in terms of preventing their crossing the Israeli border and, once these “outsiders” have penetrated inside, containing their bodies in confined spatial boundaries and sites of marginality. As Yacobi (2011) articulates, Israeli policy is driven by a ‘racialized politics of fear’ that is not biological but rather aesthetic; it is about asylum seekers’ visible presence in Israeli spaces. This presence constitutes a form of ‘sensory disruption’ for many Israelis that undermines their sense of ‘a homogeneous Jewish imagined community’ (Willen 2007: 24).

In 2008, due to the spatial-racial politics of fear, the Ministry of the Interior announced the Gedera-Hadera regulation, which restricted the movement of refugees to a specific geographical confinement (the regulation was named after the two peripheral cities marking its boundaries) (Yacobi, 2011). This regulation prevented refugees from residing,

working, or simply being visible in Tel Aviv, where there are more employment and housing opportunities and substantial networks of community and NGO support. Yet, the Gedera-Hadera regulation was rapidly overturned due to pressure by NGOs and the residents of these peripheral cities. Another attempt in 2013 to reduce the presence of refugees in the public domain came when the state began to place male refugees in the *Holot* detention facility. The facility was built near the Israeli-Egyptian border with the hope that it would encourage asylum seekers to voluntarily leave Israel. However, after a long legal battle, the Israeli Supreme Court ordered the closing of the facility in 2017. This led the state to sketch a new plan, to deport East African refugees to Rwanda and Uganda. Nevertheless, the scheme failed since the Israeli Supreme Court questioned its legality and because it stimulated great public opposition. Furthermore, Rwanda and Uganda backed out of the deal due to international pressure.

The topographies of the spatial-racial politics of fear in Israel vary in size, from the level of the country or city to the much smaller scale of the street. In recent years, some older residents of south Tel Aviv have initiated a campaign and established organizations in support of the expulsion of asylum seekers from the south. One such organization, Haer Haivrit (the Hebrew City) write on their Facebook page: ‘illegal infiltrators from Eritrea and Sudan have entered our neighbourhoods...opening illegal businesses, threatening passers-by, and spreading fear and terrorism by committing crimes’.³⁶ The othering of asylum seekers is therefore based on spatial-racial categories *and* their association with the overall neglect and criminality of the southern neighbourhoods. As Togod (Interview 38, 2019) observes, ‘it seems to me that the state is using this space to scare people away from us’. At the same time, he notes that refugees are used to scare people away from south Tel Aviv: ‘I suppose the Israeli media actually destroyed this place, used us to scare people and prevent them from coming here’. A co-dependency thus exists between the public perception of refugees and that of south Tel Aviv.

Media and political debates are strong contributors to the racial-spatial politics of fear surrounding African refugees and south Tel Aviv. For instance, politicians name asylum seekers a ‘cancer in our body’, ‘carriers of disease’, ‘rapists’, or ‘criminals’ (Hotline for Migrant Workers Report 2012). Moreover, Israeli newspapers deploy visual techniques that enhance a spatial-racial dialect that frames refugees as faceless victims or, worse, a threatening mob taking over the streets (Tirosh and Klein-Avraham 2017). Nevertheless,

³⁶ Translated by the author.

refugees find different ways to manoeuvre the politics of their public (in)visibility. For instance, Johnny (Interview 14, 2018), an activist and Eritrean asylum seeker, describes how around two hundred Eritreans used to gather in the Levinsky Garden every Saturday to grieve the deaths of family and friends back home. Yet Johnny told them: ‘Our culture remains in Eritrea, [but] we are here in Israel....We must do as much as we can to understand the culture of the State of Israel; otherwise, this picture here on Saturday, it will ruin things for us’. Johnny’s warning regarding a harmful public visibility convinced the community to move this public mourning ritual indoors.

On other occasions, asylum seekers find ways to resist the culture of racial fear that seeks to keep them out of the streets and the country. In recent years, they have become a politically active minority in the Israeli public arena, organizing non-violent acts of civil disobedience. Some, such as Togod, bring years of activism experience from their home countries. For instance, the first large political campaign by asylum seekers was launched between 2013-2014 in response to their imprisonment in Holot. It began with a spontaneous action, where 150 detainees left Holot and marched to the southern city of Beer-Sheva and from there to Jerusalem, where the Israeli Knesset (parliament) is located. This more than 150-kilometre-long walk became known as the Freedom March (Figs 61-62). A refugee from Darfur, Mubarak Ali Mohammed (in Shirley Seidler and Roi Chiki Arad 2013), stated at the time in an Israeli newspaper, ‘We decided to do something and walk’. The march sparked a national strike and waves of protests in cities across Israel; including a protest in the centre of Tel Aviv attended by around twenty thousand people.



Figure 61: Hershkovitz, E. 2013. *Immigrants walk on Route 40*. [Accessed 27 July 2021]. Available from: <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/education/.premium-1.2192246>



Figure 62: Reuters. 2013. *Immigrants march from Holot facility to Be'er Sheva*. [Accessed 27 July 2021]. Available from: <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/education/.premium-1.2192246>

Another way in which refugees demand a political public visibility is by guiding or participating in the newly-emerged industry of tactical walking tours in south Tel Aviv. For instance, Togod began incorporating tour guiding into his repertoire of activism tactics as part of a collaboration with an Israeli friend. 'Before arriving in Israel', Togod (Interview 38, 2019) says, 'I never even heard of this thing that I can take a group of people and walk around together'. Today, he views tour guiding as an important means to implement change, and a way to investigate the role of place as an ideological mechanism of classification through which identities form. In Togod's (Interview 38, 2019) own words: 'public space can play this kind of role, I cannot say important or not, but it can characterize people'. Indeed, as demonstrated thus far, south Tel Aviv characterizes the public perception of African refugees and vice versa. As Tim Cresswell (1996) writes in relation to homeless people, when addressing those who are deemed 'out of place', diverging the perspective of place can eliminate relevant socio-political aspects. In a similar vein, the very ontology of forced displacement implies dislocation, and the framing of African asylum seekers as infiltrators depicts them as threatening outsiders.

Similarly, as Cresswell suggests, what is missing from the conflicted discourses around the presence of asylum seekers in south Tel Aviv is the spatial-historical context of unequal distribution of social and material resources prompted by the establishment. If this perspective of place is included, it can simultaneously diverge the responsibility for the neglect of the south from asylum seekers, while also taking into consideration the issues faced by both older and newer inhabitants of the area. Taj (Interview 11, 2018), an activist, tour guide, and asylum seeker from Darfur, describes how the tours illuminate this missing spatial context:

Looking at the media and the campaign against asylum seekers creates this image of a terrible place and when we take people to south Tel Aviv, we literally tell them it's not a terrible place. It's a place that is considered poor and neglected, but we are not like this, it is not because of us. It was there before us and it will definitely remain like this after us.

Taj began delivering guided tours after partaking in an activism course by Amnesty International that taught him about Israeli society, its laws, and divisions, and about activism strategies such as photography.

In fact, the audience of Taj's first ever tour in 2008 were the Israeli border police, who approached him to learn about African asylum seekers in Israel. Taj thus decided to take them on a tour of Neve Sha'anani, 'so they can see that reality'. In recent years, he notes, 'it has become a tourist destination, a lot of people want to come and learn about this issue and

it's a hot topic in the media, so a lot of people are contacting us'. Indeed, the tours in south Tel Aviv are well-attended by Israelis and get booked by high schools, universities, youth movements, professional organizations, and tourists. Some tour guides also collaborate with the Taglit Birthright Israel programme that brings young adult Jews from around the world for a free ten day educational tour of Israel. Yet Taj no longer delivers tours himself. Instead, like most asylum seekers that partake in the tactical tourism industry of south Tel Aviv, he collaborates with Israeli tour agents by delivering a testimony about his traumatic life story.

The Israeli actors and networks behind this emerging industry of tours in south Tel Aviv differ in their financial and ideological agendas and can roughly be divided into three categories: those led by creative freelancers, those initiated by social youth movements, and those initiated by NGOs and charities for refugees. The key similarity between these tours, and their relevance for this study, is their attempt to re-contextualise the story of south Tel Aviv and refugee presence in the area. For instance, Yuval (Interview 50, 2019), a creative freelancer and founder of a tour company in south Tel Aviv, notes:

The image of southern Tel Aviv neighbourhoods is very negative. Sharon Rotbard [the aforementioned architect and southern resident] says that a neighbourhood is actually the story of the neighbourhood. We took this sentence very seriously and started inviting people for tours.

Yuval therefore designed an overarching tour structure that concerns the southern neighbourhood's planning, architectural conditions, and the presence of asylum seekers in the area. Nevertheless, it is equally important for him that his tour guides, all residents of south Tel Aviv, express their own distinctive experience of the area.

In contrast, youth movements have a more consistent pre-planned tour structure, and their guides are mostly not residents of south Tel Aviv. A tour coordinator of one youth movement, Shir (Interview 39, 2019), explains that their tours started seven years ago as a small initiative, 'aiming to raise an awareness to an area in the country, a population in the country, that as long as there is no story in media, are under the radar'. From a few tours, it became a dozen, and in 2019 alone they had over three hundred tours. NGOs and refugee charities similarly use the tactic of guided tours, primarily guiding international and local benefactors. Like the youth movements, their tour guides are usually not residents of south Tel Aviv. All three strands of tours offer the option to include a testimony by an asylum seeker. However, most tour agencies, except for NGOs charities for refugees, charge a higher price to include these testimonies and some participants are unwilling to pay. A question that therefore arises when analysing this network of tours as a form of memory activism is the

extent to which asylum seekers are given agency through them, as the following will expand on.

This section has provided relevant context on the state-led policies towards asylum seekers and towards south Tel Aviv. Drawing from Yacobi's (2011) theory, it has discussed a culture of racialised fear that is interlinked with spatial visibility in the public domain. The section has further demonstrated how the story of refugees' marginalization in Israeli society is deeply embedded with that of south Tel Aviv's marginalisation in an auto perpetuating cycle. The chapter therefore argues that the political project of undermining the distribution of the sensible as it related to the public visibility of African asylum seekers in Israel requires shifting the distribution of the sensible as it relates to the history of south Tel Aviv, and vice versa. Within this entanglement, the section has mapped an array of tactical walking tours in south Tel Aviv that encompass a dual political potential: altering the public visibility of refugees *and* voicing the overlooked story of south Tel Aviv. To advance the analysis on the ways in which these tours achieve this dual goal, the next section pays close attention to their creative gestures and walking style.

Walking to Historicise the Neighbourhood

At nine in the morning on a hot August day, I arrive at a park near Nava Sha'an'an's police station where a group of men and women are injecting heroin (Map 12, Stop 1). The area, a gathering spot for addicts, dealers, homeless people, criminals, and the police, is the antithesis of the utopian, clean, and ordered White City. This is the starting point of a tour of south Tel Aviv for 15-year-olds, guided by Dotan. He explains the tour's goal: 'We will try to see everything, the good, the bad and the ugly, the beautiful things, and the hard things, to get a broad picture'. Dotan also describes the walking style he asks participants to adopt during the tour today: 'When we walk, there is a tendency to walk fast and look at our feet, I ask that today you walk with curious eyes, like this' (he shows how to walk slowly and turn your head in all directions). As this section will demonstrate, this attentive mode of observation works to illuminate a history of uneven developments that produces an unequal urbanisation.

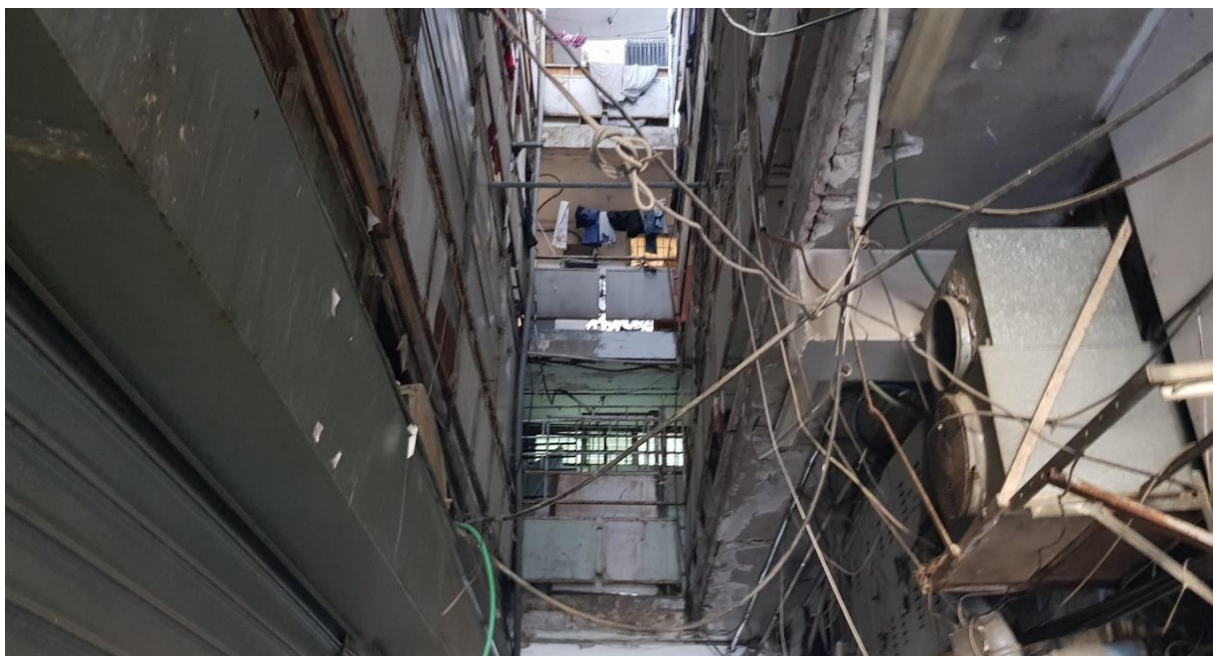


Map 12: Central features in Dotan's tour, August 2019, 2.35 km, 2 hours 45 minutes, 29°C.

Before we begin our walk, Dotan asks participants to name their preconceived associations of south Tel Aviv. They say: 'rape', 'prostitution', 'drugs', 'dirty space', 'black space'. When asked who lives here, they say: 'immigrants', 'a population that does not have' (meaning money), 'a difficult population'. They also describe 'a sense of fear walking down the street' and comment on the street's strong 'smell of piss'. This demonstrates how closely participants reflect media and official discourses about south Tel Aviv and its inhabitants. Yet the tour's prolonged walking style and attention to detail reveals other stories about this area, beyond these initial impressions. As a participant (Interview 45, 2019) notes: 'Being an Israeli, I didn't know there was a story behind this place, I just knew that there are a lot of junkies and prostitutes in Neve Sha'anani and that it's unpleasant to walk there'. To suggest a different contextualisation for the area, tour guides in south Tel Aviv deploy a spatial visual dialect, their hand pointing at different elements to be gazed upon, repeatedly asking participants to look.

Tour guides' stated aim is to show a 'broader picture', suggest 'a different framing of things', or 'show reality without a filter'. However, this is not achieved by stepping back; instead, tour guides in south Tel Aviv seek to draw observers closer into the street and its features. This attention to detail is simultaneously associative and conceptual. By directing attention to specific details (such as rundown buildings, courtyards, synagogues and churches, public gardens), the tours signify a much broader and complex tale of uneven urban geographies. As various guides suggested to me, this history of inequality 'speaks for itself' through materials, their accumulation, and their conditions (such as the smell of running sewage, the makeshift hanging of laundry outside homes, exposed plumbing and wiring, or the decaying of houses) (Figs 63-64). Like the much-cited walking figure of Western modernity, the *flâneur*, the tours practice a phenomenological study of the street. Yet, in contrast to his solitary walking style, the tours entail a collective critical pedagogy.

Figures 63 – 64: Urban infrastructure in south Tel Aviv



This chapter has already demonstrated that south Tel Aviv is excluded from the official story of the city. Furthermore, in contrast with the renovated and signposted White City, south Tel Aviv is empty of official commemorative designs such as monuments and signs to reveal its history. Nonetheless, overlooked areas such as south Tel Aviv are not without memory. Rather, sites that are marginalized from state-led commemoration provide opportunities for more informal and performative memory work (Fyfe and Sternberg 2019). Since a top-down spatial order has yet to fully impose its standardising logic, they provide fertile grounds for memory that is associative, overlapping, un-explicitly referenced, and comprised of traces left by patterns of everyday life. Walking in such disregarded sites can thus provide a chance to reach beyond socially explicit mnemonic artefacts and experience what has been spatially silenced or overlooked (Edensor 2016). This requires a distinctive mode of walking that involves slowing down, gazing, and attuning to the sensorial, material, and social details of the street, as Dotan demonstrates to his tour participants.

As we begin our walk around the park, Dotan asks us to imagine the bustling old Central Bus Station that operated here from 1941 until 1993 (designed by architects Werner Joseph Wittkower and Nahum Zelkind). To make this imagining more vivid, he reads a poem that describes the old bus station and the market formed around it, selling anything from clothes and shoes, to video tapes and spices. Yet as Dotan further explains, the market area attracted drugs and prostitution, causing those who could afford it to move elsewhere. Like the tour guides considered in the previous chapters, Dotan begins with a site. Next, he articulates its depth and unmarked histories and connections through creative gestures that activate a collective process of imagination. At our next tour stop, the Levinsky Garden (Map 12, Stop 2), Dotan asks us to imagine: ‘If you would have visited this garden in 2008, you would have seen many asylum seekers sleeping here. The state threw people in the garden and gave them no help’. Thus, through unofficial landmarks, such as parks or bus stations, the tours commemorate aspects of everyday life and everyday neglect to animate the history of south Tel Aviv.

Dotan uses an interesting metaphor to describe the tour’s craft, telling the students: ‘The tour is like a quilt, presenting seemingly separate components, some of you are already making the connections and others are not. I promise we will talk about this, like a good seamstress, I promise I’ll sew the patches together’. As Dotan highlights, the knowledge production of the tour is fragmented, involving a slow realisation of how different elements interact and relate to one another. Dotan’s simile of a quilt resembles the metaphor of assemblage theory, influenced by Deleuze’s writing that examines the interactions, flows and

synergies between different parts as an assemblage of dynamic and contingent complex configurations (DeLanda in Fuglsang 2006). Assemblage Theory is useful in contextualising the city as a relational and constituted assemblage of social relations, cultures, materials, and actors (Amin and Thrift 2016; McFarlane 2011). Accordingly, the street-level gaze that is practiced during tours provides a means to unpack the assemblage of social relations, materials, and actors that make up south Tel Aviv.

Our next tour stop is the “new” Central Bus Station (Map 8, Stop 3), a spatial signifier of the discriminatory capitalistic logic that has long disregarded south Tel Aviv and its residents. Dotan describes how the 2.5 million square feet station was planned to be the biggest in the world, and its construction lasted from the 1960s to the ‘90s. He remarks that such a colossal source of pollution and noise would never have been built amid a residential area in north Tel Aviv. The private developers behind this environmental hazard are Israeli civil engineering company Solel Boneh, Egged Israel bus company, and Plitz Company. It was initially designed by renowned architect Ram Karmi. The modern urban planning principles of order and heterogeneity that influenced the station’s design come across in Karmi’s (in Hader 1992) public statement about the project: he described Neve Sha'anani as ‘a ghetto’ which the station aimed to ‘wipe clean’. Nevertheless, Karmi’s utopian modernist vision has failed. Midway through completion, the private investors ran into financial difficulties and labour disputes. The station’s design was only completed in 1993 by architects Yael Rothschild and Moti Bodek.

As well as the problematic location of the project and the financial difficulties it encountered, another failure Dotan lists is the very layout of the station. It was designed as a confusing maze, inspired by Jerusalem’s historic Old City and its chaotic small alleyways. The station was meant to house thousands of stores and entertainment facilities, and investors believed that a maze of corridors would lead visitors to linger in the shopping area and spend more money. However, Dotan notes, the investors did not factor how unfunctional a disorientating layout would be for those rushing to catch their bus. Hence, instead of the station contributing to the improvement of south Tel Aviv, it degraded it further. The expected hordes of shoppers never materialised, and shops were slowly abandoned. Nowadays, only two of the station’s seven levels are still functioning. As Dotan highlights, southern residents that invested their life savings to buy shops in the station are now left in huge debt, causing two suicides. From the street-level, Dotan thus traces the lived impacts of urban planning that are abstracted in planners and investors’ bird’s eye view.

Dotan adds that businessperson Kobi Peretz is currently buying sections of the station and proactively neglecting them to reduce the price of the entire site. This way, he will be able to buy it cheaply as a future real estate investment. However, we do not merely hear about the site's planning failure and deliberate decline, we *sense* it as we walk across the deserted, cold, and dark levels that make up the huge complex (Figs 65-67). Participants describe the experience of walking in this area as 'creepy' or 'scary'. As we wander the intricate corridors of the station, Dotan directs our attention to the traces of various cultures that make use of this neglected site. On the third floor, we glance at a Filipino food market (Map 12, Stop 4). On the fifth floor, we visit the *Jung Yiddish*, a social centre that seeks to preserve the disappearing Yiddish language and culture (Map 8, Stop 5). In fact, like other aspects of Jewish diasporic culture, the Yiddish language has been rejected by the Israeli Zionist enterprise and is spoken by hardly anyone in Israel (except for ultra-orthodox communities). As we learn, the liminal space of the "new" Central Station has become a refuge for a variety of cultures marked as not belonging within the Israeli public arena.

Figures 65 – 67: Deserted levels of the “new” Central bus station



During Dotan's tour, the "new" Central Station also becomes a stage for a public political performance and a testimonial exchange. On the second floor, we meet Baric and sit in a quiet corner to listen to his life story for forty minutes (Map 12, Stop 6). Baric begins by recounting his childhood in a small village in Darfur, violently disrupted by the government-supported Janjaweed militias, who came to his village and killed his sisters and grandparents. He explains, 'it happened because we are black Africans, and they don't want us there'. Baric and his parents managed to escape, yet, after the militias kidnapped three of his friends to recruit them to the army, his mother begged him to run away. Hence, he says, 'at the age of nine I took myself and left with other children who became like brothers to me'. The group headed to Libya with the intention of reaching Italy. However, when they learnt how dangerous a sea voyage would be, they decided to travel to Israel (on foot) instead. Baric then describes the crossing of the Israeli-Egyptian border, under the fire of Egyptian snipers, which killed a member of their group.

On the other side the Israeli border police were waiting, and the group were sent to a prison in the southern Negev desert. Baric stresses that upon his realisation, police officers instructed him to go to south Tel Aviv: 'This is why there are so many asylum seekers in the area now'. Baric continues: 'I got off the bus, here, in the central station, and got very confused in the building'. We all nod in recognition, having just struggled to navigate this confusing site ourselves. Baric tells us that he slept in the Levinsky Garden for a week, until someone from the Sudanese community took him to a shelter they had set up. After studying Hebrew diligently, he began school in Israel. Nowadays, Baric is nearing completion of his undergraduate degree in International Relations. Baric also engages in activism, explaining: 'because the Israeli community does not know us and our story'. Next, Baric urges us to think what we can do in response to his story. He says, 'Israel is a democratic state, it was one of the first countries to sign the refugee convention because of Jewish refugees, but the Israeli government does not respect this, and you as citizens can influence it'. We all nod in agreement.

Baric turns his traumatic memories into a public political performance, asserting, in a Rancièrian sense, his political subjectivity and agency. As discussed above, Baric's testimony occurs in the context where the Israeli state evades assessing asylum requests properly. Similarly, Baric describes during our interview (15, 2018):

From the beginning, the government had no organized plan to check who is a refugee and who is not. And we all arrived, the Sudanese, Eritreans, and more people from African countries. And we all just got

the same visa status that says you are infiltrating and have no rights and we were all thrown in south Tel Aviv.

A survey from 2018 by Social Television demonstrates the importance of the official recognition of refugees as such. It found that whilst most Israeli residents of southern Tel Aviv assume that the deportation of asylum seekers will improve their quality of life, 71 percent of them oppose its execution without assessing asylum applications properly. Moreover, 78 percent believe that those who are truly at risk in their home-countries should receive asylum. Hence, by refusing to process asylum requests, the state directly contributes to incitement against African refugees.

The narration of refugees' life stories during tours is therefore an active resistance to the state's obscuring of their life memories and legal category. As Taj (Interview 11, 2018) describes:

If someone ran away from genocide, made a difficult journey, made it into Israel, it is a very different story from someone who came to work here and sends money home. Because no-one has a home to go back to, and this clarifies the issue of "infiltrators". That is why we take this as a very important part of the tour.

The aim, Taj further highlights, 'is for Israeli society to know us and to support us'. However, achieving this aim entails answering audiences' difficult questions, such as 'why did you ruin south Tel Aviv?', or 'why don't you go back to your country?'. Asylum seeker activists tell me they encourage such questions, as they would rather provide answers themselves, instead of leaving it at the hands of the government. Furthermore, like refugee tour guides in Berlin, asylum seekers in Israel note how painful it is to revisit traumatic memories. For instance, Johnny (Interview 14, 2018) says 'every time you tell, it gets harder...you already know how to tell, but emotionally it's very hard...it brings you back to the memories of what happened'. Nonetheless, as in Chapter Two, all refugee activists I interviewed highlight the importance they place on joining guided tours to make their voices heard.

The tour's successful undoing of stereotypes about south Tel Aviv *and* asylum seekers comes across in participants' comments during our walk-along interviews. For instance, one student (Interview 43, 2019) says:

I kept hearing about it on TV or the news, I didn't really understand, I didn't see what was going on here. Now I got a hit of reality and gained awareness about this place and about Sudanese and Eritreans that are really murdered in their own countries and the state really abandons them.

Another student (Interview 44, 2019) observes:

I learned about definitions, what does it mean someone who is foreign... The issue of rights, I didn't know, I thought everyone had their basic rights. I think first of all you should not be afraid, like everyone, I was once afraid of... its ok to walk around here, there are communities and life here.

As these observations reflect, the tours' memory activism is twofold: raising awareness of the marginalised stories of asylum seekers and voicing the unheard tale of south Tel Aviv. Moreover, students indicate that the tours imbue them with a critical understanding of definitions and rights.

Indeed, Dotan stresses during our interview (40, 2019) that he does not wish for participants to walk out of his tours with the sense that 'we were in Neve Sha'anani, and we saw prostitutes and drug addicts'. Rather, he frames the goal of his tour as 'exposure to a place, exposure to phenomena, and development of critical thinking towards the system and towards society'. Similarly, Baric (Interview 15, 2018) describes:

I remember I once met a group of senior students from Ashdod, on the top of the central bus station... As I came to sit with them before the tour guide explained who I was, they started saying, "Ugh, Sudanese, I do not want to listen!"...so, some even moved away and did not want to hear me...so I start telling my story, and slowly, slowly they got closer. I think for someone who doesn't know the story, from the beginning until now, it is difficult for him to understand, and it is difficult for him to imagine where all this "problem" has started. When I told them, everyone understood the situation and even said that the government is wrong.

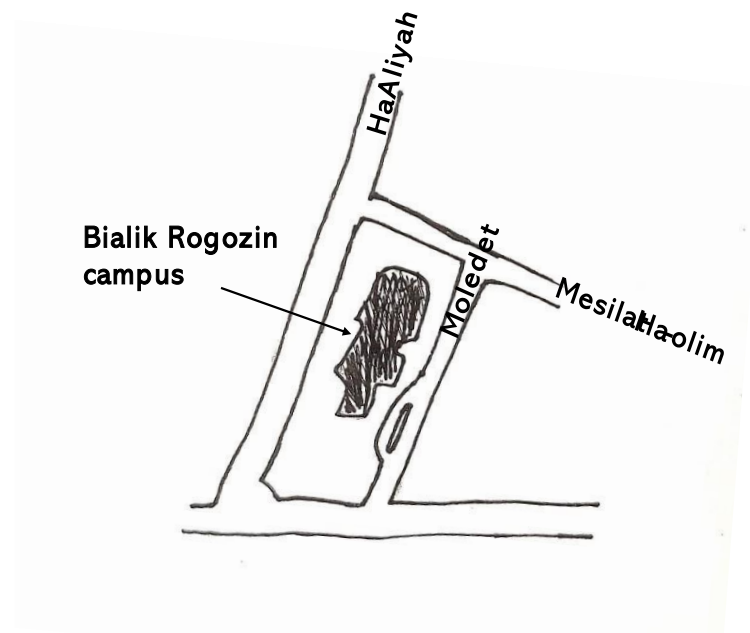
Therefore, the topographies of racial-spatial fear extend to the intimate encounters during guided tours. Nevertheless, by telling his story and recontextualising the "problem" of refugees' presence in the south, Baric inspires his audience to think critically about state systems of marginalization.

This section has illustrated how the tours' prolonged encounter with the street constitutes a form of memory activism that asserts an overlooked history of urban divide and marginalization, and weaves refugees' traveling memories into the local arena. By walking, the tours attend to why and how multiple bits and pieces align over time in a particular street, and how this links to local and global unequal relations of power and resources. As shown, the political agency of architecture and infrastructure as potential testifiers to a history of negligence prompted by state officials, private investors, and urban planners is crucial to this memory activism. Equally important is the political agency of asylum seekers to reclaim their life-memories that the state denies. To advance the analysis of the tours as a form of memory activism, the following section contextualises the importance of collective memory within the conflicted public debate around refugees' presence in south Tel Aviv. It further situates the

tours as part of a broader struggle over the southern streets' memory and identity, in which various actors reference, reframe, and mix layers of global, transcultural, and local memory.

Memory Clashes in the Streets

Bialik Rogozin campus, a school for the children of migrant workers and asylum seekers is the meeting point of a tour of south Tel Aviv with a group of twenty potential Israeli donors. Our tour guide Tom, an Israeli NGO worker, notes that this is an ideal starting point for our tour: between Moledet (Jewish homeland) Street, HaAliyah ('the migration', referring to Jewish migration to the 'homeland') Street, and Mesilat Ha-olim ('the immigrant track') Street (Map 13). Tom adds that the school, which represents the recent waves of non-Jewish migration to Israel, reconstructs the meaning of these collective symbols. Therefore, he reflects, the urban fabric embodies the very tensions around local, global, and national identities that our tour intends to unpack. As Tom alludes, the conflicted public debate in Israel concerning asylum seekers has at its core a struggle over collective memory and identity. This section will chart the manifestation of this struggle on the streets. Besides memorials, architecture, and street names, it will demonstrate how public memory is expressed via the urban fabric through more informal and temporal expressions.



Map 13: Bialik Rogozin campus.

The above-listed street names exemplify the centrality of the ethos of Jewish migration to the ‘homeland’ in Israeli public memory, especially following the Holocaust. Israel’s orientation towards traumatic memories impacts its current attitudes towards asylum seekers, much like the case of Germany that was discussed in Chapter Two. As Yacobi and Ram (2012: 155) write: ‘different political and public interest groups deploy national memories to construct different narratives that support the exclusion or inclusion of asylum seekers’. For instance, they discuss a campaign by the NGO Anu Plittim (We are Refugees) under the slogan ‘call your grandmother an infiltrator’, referencing the grandparents of many Israelis, who escaped the horrors of the Holocaust by infiltrating illegally into British Mandate Palestine. Yacobi and Ram note the NGO’s name and the slogan deliberately draw a parallel between African refugees and the local collective memory (and personal-familial history for some Israelis). Alongside Israeli activists, asylum seekers themselves appeal to the local memory culture. For instance, Yacobi and Ram provide the example of a mass demonstration in 2010 where asylum seekers wore a yellow Star of David to invoke the Jewish collective memory of prosecution by the Nazis.

Nonetheless, the impact of the local memory culture also takes an oppositional course. Israeli official historiography forms a common trajectory between the Holocaust, Israel’s formation, and the wars against its Arab neighbours to entrench a perception of continual victimhood and ontological threat (Zertal 2005; Sand 2012). This perception translates into concrete legal implications: the Law of Return, which enables Jews from around the world to immigrate into Israel and receive full citizenship and, conversely, Israel’s strict policies towards non-Jewish migrants and refugees (Kritzman-Amir 2009).³⁷ Moreover, political and mediated discourses reference Israel’s entrenched sense of victimhood to frame asylum seekers as an existential threat to the Jewish nature of the country (Kalir 2015). As Togod (Interview 38, 2019) notes: ‘the media presented us so ugly in this country, as infiltrators, those who have no purpose in life, who just came here to work...that these people are just Muslims and may want to murder us’. Campaigners for the eviction of asylum seekers echo these mnemonic framings. For instance, the Haeer Haivrit Facebook page uses the memory signifiers of ‘ghetto’ and ‘terror’ to describe the experience of Jewish residents of south Tel Aviv since the arrival of Africans.

³⁷ In line with the ethno-national attitudes of the Law of Return, Israel does not recognize work migrants as legitimate immigrants or residents.

Following Tom's introduction, we walk into the Bialik Rogozin campus to meet its head-principal. He tells us about the racism his students encounter on the streets, outside the safe space of the school and the demonstrations against asylum seekers that regularly take place in south Tel Aviv. The head-principal further notes that the sense of safety the school instils was violently interrupted when one morning teachers and students were greeted with graffiti that read: 'infiltrators go home'. A variation of embodied and visual tactics are used as a mode of protest in south Tel Aviv, constituting a form of spatial and embodied dialogue over the contested spatial issue of the presence of refugees in south Tel Aviv. Graffiti, posters, and protests calling for the elimination of asylum seekers from the streets or alternatively for solidarity with them continually use the streets to claim public political visibility. In both instances, their struggle concerns the material street in the attempt to articulate who belongs within it.

As we continue our walk during Tom's tour, we suddenly notice that someone is following us, shouting 'why are you only hearing one side of the story'. Tom explains that this is Shefi Paz, a local resident and a leader of the campaign against asylum seekers, who holds three police charges for violent attacks against refugees. Despite the attempt to regulate public memory through street names or heritage sites, the street as a public site of memory is uncontrollable and volatile. Paz's interference further demonstrates that the tours involve a mixture of walking genres, linking the political march with a touristic walking style. At first glance, participants seem to be ordinary tourists; they wear hats, comfortable clothes, walking shoes, and gather at each stop around the tour guide (Fig. 68). Although tour guides do not present participants with the usual touristic sites or viewpoints, they enact many familiar touristic gestures. For instance, Tom recommends African restaurants in the area. Simultaneously, however, our presence in the streets invokes public reaction and adds to the conflicting battle over the story and identity of this place. There is thus an inherent spatiality to the tours since they use public space 'for representation', like the above-described protests and graffiti (Lefebvre 1992).



Figure 68: Touristic walking styles.

Similar to the Freedom March discussed above, the tours use walking to articulate a political message through the public domain. Marches bring about a faster movement and a claim to visibility through the multitude; in contrast, the guided tours involve a smaller group and entail slowing down, gazing, and talking. Togod (Interview 38, 2019) highlights the importance of this distinction:

In my experience, one of the most powerful things that can [create] change is these tours. What happens at a demonstration? You bring people, and they barely hear anyone talking, and after they do not remember what you said. But, as soon as you get to a certain place, take them to the public space, talk to them and walk with them, and as you walk, someone has a question... you are talking to him in such a personal way, there is such intimacy. So, it's really this feeling of intimacy you cannot find in a demonstration.

As Togod notes, utilising guided walking tours as a tactic of activism creates a communicative, intimate, and prolonged site of resistance. As his statement suggests, the street and the collaborative movement through it are essential to this site of resistance.

In fact, the anti-refugee campaign also leads walking tours in the south, which is another indication that guided walking tours are locally perceived as an impactful mode of direct action. In recent years, activists for the expulsion of refugees from the south deliver tours for ministers and other public figures that are widely documented in the Israeli media. For instance, Knesset Member Danny Danon of the right-wing Likud party joined such a tour and issued a public statement, based on his ‘findings from the field’, that ‘the infiltrators do

not seek asylum, they seek employment’.³⁸ Similarly, in August 2017, former Prime Minister Netanyahu participated in a tour guided by Paz. During the tour, Netanyahu met with local Jewish residents but no asylum seekers, making the declaration: ‘They are not refugees but illegal infiltrators...I hear of a terrible distress; people are afraid to leave their house’.³⁹ The commonly used term “infiltrators” is also memory-loaded: in the Israeli collective imagination, it refers to Palestinians who entered Israel to return to their homes or commit terror attacks (Yaron, Hashimshony-Yaffe, and Campbell 2013). Using this memory-loaded term links African asylum seekers with the “Palestinian ultimate other”, deeming them as an additional enemy or existential threat.

Hence, although refugees arrived as a third uninvolved party into a conflicted region, unwillingly, they are co-opted into the disputed local reality and its memory culture. This is another layer of the entanglement between African refugees and the local environment that was discussed in previous sections. For instance, Yusuf (Interview 37, 2019) who campaigns for African refugees (whose tour of Yafa was described in Chapter Three) notes: ‘I think the refugees from Sudan and Darfur are also victims of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict’. He explains that many asylum seekers from Sudan change their Arabic sounding names, and ‘to survive, their mothers become Christian [rather than Muslim]’. Yusuf adds, ‘in their protests, there will be an Israeli flag, they will sing the Israeli anthem; I understand them, because they are victims of the local conflict’. This multifaceted socio-political entanglement also operates at a micro-level, as part of the everyday dynamic of the tours in south Tel Aviv. In another example, Taj describes the complexity of meeting a pro-Palestinian group who visited the region as part of a conflict tour (the region’s popular landscape of conflict tourism was analysed in Chapter Three).

Taj (Interview 11, 2018) says:

They tried to connect us to the Palestinian issue, and we were like no, we are asylum seekers and our issue is completely different. Palestinians have their own issues, it is complicated, and we don’t want to get into that. They think you are a minority, they are a minority, why can’t you work together, and we were like no, it’s a different issue. So, we have to know what are the agendas of the specific groups that we are meeting...we have to stick to our point of view on our situation and not to get to the very complicated situation of the Israeli society.

Therefore, as part of the politics of tactically manoeuvring their public visibility, asylum seekers are fearful of being associated with the Palestinian cause. This exemplifies broader strategic choices minority groups are often forced to make to become more acceptable to the

³⁸ Translated by the author from: <https://www.hakolhayehudi.co.il/>.

³⁹ Translated by the author from: <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/education/premium-1.4404742>

hegemony. Nevertheless, though African refugees are clearly impacted by the local disputed reality, their experiences of the conflict or impacts on it are rarely considered within mediated, academic, and political discourses. This is another layer of the politics of refugees' (in)visibility.

In contrast with Paz's anti-refugee tour, during Tom's tour we spend an hour listening to a testimony delivered by Asim, an Masters student in International Relations, activist, and asylum seeker from Darfur. Asim begins his story with his early childhood days, noting that his father was the head of the village, and so many people would visit their home to seek his advice. Asim recalls: 'from a young age, I loved to hear the conversations of the elders of the village'. However, in 2003, the adults started using words he did not understand, such as 'weapons', 'murder', 'rape', and 'slaughter'. Asim continues: 'my father did not answer when I asked about these words, and I asked myself how a father does not answer his son's questions'. Nevertheless, Asim says, 'I got answers in the middle of 2008, when the Sudanese armed militias that attack villages in Darfur came'. These militias killed his father and brother, yet, before they broke into their home, Asim's mother dressed him in his sister's clothes. He recalls: 'They asked my mother where your sons are, and she said I have no sons. They beat her, and she said I have no sons. So, they took the food, the money and went outside'.

Asim tells us that he recently went on a Holocaust trip in Poland, facilitated by his university. There, he says, he heard a story of survival, remarkably like his own, regarding a woman who saved her daughter from being sent to the gas chambers by dressing her in adult clothes. Asim continues his story, describing how his mother and himself managed to escape to a nearby refugee camp. Subsequently, at the age of 14, he embarked on a journey alone to Libya and, from there, to Egypt. As Asim explains, he could not stay in Egypt for long: 'at that time there was cooperation between the Egyptian government and the Sudanese government, and if you are caught, they return you to Sudan where they kill you or send you to prison indefinitely'. In Egypt, Asim says, 'I heard for the first time about the Jewish people and the State of Israel in general'. Asim adds that he heard this story from a Jew, in a language that he understands, and asks us to guess what that language was. Someone guessed Arabic, and Asim said yes, explaining that everyone in Sudan speaks African Arabic.

Asim notes, 'I very much sympathized with their story...they were refugees and moved from state to state as we do today'. Hence, he decided to go to Israel, using the help of a smuggler called Muhammad: 'we crossed the border by night and three of us were caught by the Egyptian soldiers and nine arrived at Israel'. Asim spent a month in prison in the

Negev (south). Upon his release, older refugees recommended that he go to Tel Aviv, where there are organizations that can help him. After spending weeks in the Levinsky Garden, and months at a shelter set up by the Sudanese community, Asim found a temporary home in a Jewish religious boarding school. He says, 'After graduating from high-school, I continued to my next station, I got accepted to study politics and governance in University, and I just graduated'. The audience claps their hands with excitement and appreciation. Asim responds: 'thank you, thank you. I really believe in the educational pathway so now I am doing my Masters degree'. Next, Asim invites us to ask questions.

Someone in the audience enquires if Asim is in touch with his mother. Asim answers that he talks to her once a month because there are no diplomatic ties between Israel and Sudan, so calls are very expensive. Someone else asks: 'do you experience racism in the streets, not at the university where people know you'. Asim answers: 'I also experience racism there, even at the university'. Asim's testimonial exchange produces new knowledge and understanding about the reasons that forced him to leave his home and the plights of refugees in Israel. In similarity with Baric's aforementioned testimony (in which he suggests that Israel which absorbed Jewish refugees after the Holocaust should help other refugees), Asim's testimonial exchange entails explicit references to the traumatic Jewish memory. Moreover, their survivor testimonies performatively reference Holocaust survivor testimonies that are a dominant pedagogical tool in the Israeli commemoration culture (Gutman, 2017). This performative and vocal multidirectional reading of the Holocaust suggests a means to overcome geographical, cultural, and historical barriers between Israelis and Africans.

Asylum seekers deploy a dual tactic of appealing to the local host country's emphasis on the memory of the Holocaust as well as referencing a globalised discourse of human rights that formulated in response to the Holocaust. Taj (Interview 11, 2018) highlights the importance of this memory referencing: 'A lot of people immediately relate this to the Holocaust...that's very important to us because if someone relates to it, they take responsibility'. As Johnny (Interview 14, 2018) further highlights, 'you have to be smart, you have to use stories'. This demonstrates, in continuation from Chapter Two, that memories of past atrocities can inform contemporary transcultural calls for solidarity and justice. Furthermore, this multidirectional gesture constitutes a strategic means for asylum seekers to translate their struggle into terminology and values that are locally understood. However, it also suggests a way to frame their public visibility according to the accepted local hegemonic cultural terms. As such, the appeal to the local official memory culture can also be understood as another manifestation of the above-described strategic choice that minorities

make to become more acceptable to the hegemony. Indeed, the tours' mixing of local and traveling memories ends up reinforcing the local memory hierarchies that privileges an Ashkenazi viewpoint and forgets the Palestinian local history.

Nevertheless, this mixing of memory cultures simultaneously challenges and expands the local script of public memory and the values that are attached to it. These transcultural testimonial exchanges question the Israeli privileging of its own sense of historic victimhood and the particularity of the Holocaust to Jews. As Baric tells me during our interview (15, 2018), 'the history of the Jewish people is my personal story'. He adds:

There is this connection, something that is happening in Darfur, in my village, for example, it was completely burned, my grandmother and my older sister were killed there. My grandfather also burned in his own hut...And that's something that happened to the Jewish people. I'm not saying it's the same, it's different...but it's really this connection that I try to make people understand.

Hence, the testimonial performances that are enacted during tours act as a transcultural mode of memory activism since they articulate a more transcultural reading of the Holocaust. Additionally, they point to the reoccurrence of similar-different tragedies across different times and geographies. The interactions between local and traveling memories are not always planned or harmonious, rather, they entail a variety of frictions.

Nonetheless, activists are adamant that this dialectic interaction with Israelis and their memory culture has contributed to their struggle. As Baric (Interview 15, 2018) stresses, by speaking and mediating with 'the Jewish people', they have 'won' against the 'deportation'. In fact, following from the above-mentioned campaign against the Holot facility, the next big campaign that asylum seekers launched was in 2017, against their deportation to Rwanda and Uganda. As asylum seekers argue, the 2017 expulsion plan marked a turning point, directly linked with their long-term activism, by which the Israeli public became more aware and supportive of their struggle. For instance, Taj (Interview 11, 2018) says, 'it's the first time that we felt like Israeli society is completely different than the government'. He further describes how two Israeli high-school students that heard his testimony in 2012 then led the campaign against the deportation in 2017 at their university. Taj therefore observes, 'it makes a huge impact. And it could go from an individual to the family and the society around them...that's why when we had these demonstrations, a few months ago, thousands of people came'. Similarly, Togod remembers his excitement in 2017, when 25,000 people arrived at the Levinsky Garden for a demonstration he helped organize.

Besides the large protests that Togod and Taj describe, Israeli authors, academics, doctors, and Holocaust survivors wrote open letters against the deportation. Additionally, a group of pilots made a public declaration of refusal to partake in the expulsion. As Togod (Interview 38, 2019) observes: ‘this wouldn’t have happened without the tours and the visits’. Hence, he views refugees’ small-scale actions as a “game changer”. Indeed, as mentioned earlier, as with the closing of the Holot facility, the expulsion plan was overturned. Yet, many years of activism take their toll on asylum seekers. Togod, for example, says that he needs a break:

I need a moment to rest. I’m not like the Israeli activists who go on vacation in New Zealand. I’m here. I can’t go anywhere. During the eight years I have been here I have not gone anywhere else...It is very draining...it is very difficult to be an activist from the ‘community’. It’s different, we get no support, you need to support yourself. Sometimes you also have to choose, and I always chose activism over my job.

Similarly, Johnny (Interview 14, 2018) says, ‘because we worked hard, now everyone wants quiet. For almost eight years we have been doing demonstrations...It also weakens you’. As we have seen, asylum seekers’ activism in Israel requires great strength and sacrifice, and the burden between pro-refugee campaigners and refugee activists is uneven.

Sadly, despite the success of the campaign against the deportation plan and the growing public support for African asylum seekers, it seems that the state is “winning” in the longer term. Following on from the success to prevent the deportation, former Prime Minister Netanyahu secured a deal with the UN that included the resettlement of 16,000 refugees in Western countries and settlement of 16,250 asylum seekers in Israel as temporary residents. The programme also included an allocated budget for the infrastructural rehabilitation of south Tel Aviv. Yet, just hours after his office announced the deal, Netanyahu suspended it due to criticism from his right-wing voting base. Behind this chaotic policy shift were thousands of people and families alternating between despair and hope. Therefore, the situation has returned to the former status quo, where no active deportation occurs but “voluntary departure” is encouraged through bureaucratic abuse. Consequently, in recent years, thousands of asylum seekers have left Israel. Even within the three-year spell of conducting this research, key interviewees left: Togod returned to Sudan and Taj moved to Canada.

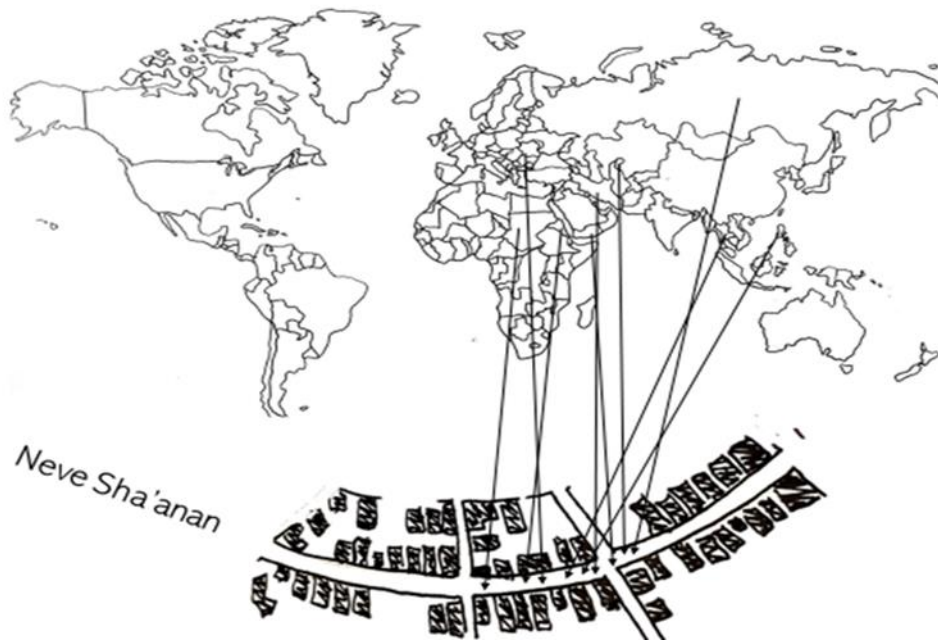
The section has contextualised the walking tours in south Tel Aviv as part of a series of spatial-visual messages that write conflicting stories about the south and its newest residents by and through these streets. It continued to investigate the entanglement between

African refugees and the south, demonstrating how they are impacted by the local conflicts and their attached memory cultures. Like south Tel Aviv or the Mizrahi identity that have been marginalised due to their proximity with Palestinians, this section has discussed how asylum seekers are named infiltrators to associate them as enemies. Nevertheless, the section has further demonstrated how asylum seekers appeal to the local memory culture and the Israeli-perceived sense of victimhood to form a sense of solidarity with the Israeli public. As argued, this transcultural referencing simultaneously reinforces and undermines existing memory hierarchies and framings. As discussed, evidence for the success of this transcultural mode of memory activism came in the recent campaign against the expulsion of refugees that was overturned. However, the campaign also reflects a lack of institutional commitment to resolving the issues of south Tel Aviv and the conflict around refugees' presence there in a just way.

The following section continues to conceptualise the tactical tours in south Tel Aviv as a mode of transcultural memory activism by focusing on their mapping of traces of the relational assemblage of different cultures that accumulates in the south. Additionally, it considers the contradiction that these tours embody, between a collective study of an unfiltered reality and a political spatial representational tool.

Sensing Transcultural Memory

Hila, an Israeli tour guide, artist, and urban activist begins her tour of south Tel Aviv with a group of German social activists by highlighting that Neve Sha'anán was founded by refugees; specifically, Jewish refugees that escaped Jaffa following the 1921 riots and purchased a plot of land from a Palestinian orchard-owner. Presenting us with a map of the neighbourhood – originally planned in the shape of a menorah by architect Yosef Tischler - Hila notes that it never fully materialised due to financial difficulties. Hila continues to describe the waves of migrants that accumulated in the area: in 1960s and '70s it became the home of Jews from Yemen and Uzbekistan, joined in the eighties by Iranian Jews; in the '90s came Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union and foreign workers from the Philippines, Romania, and Thailand; and then finally African asylum seekers. Hila's trans-local mapping highlights the migratory nature of south Tel Aviv (Map 14). Correspondingly, this section will focus on the tours' portrayal of the south as an entanglement of pathways of various communities as an important aspect of their transcultural memory activism.

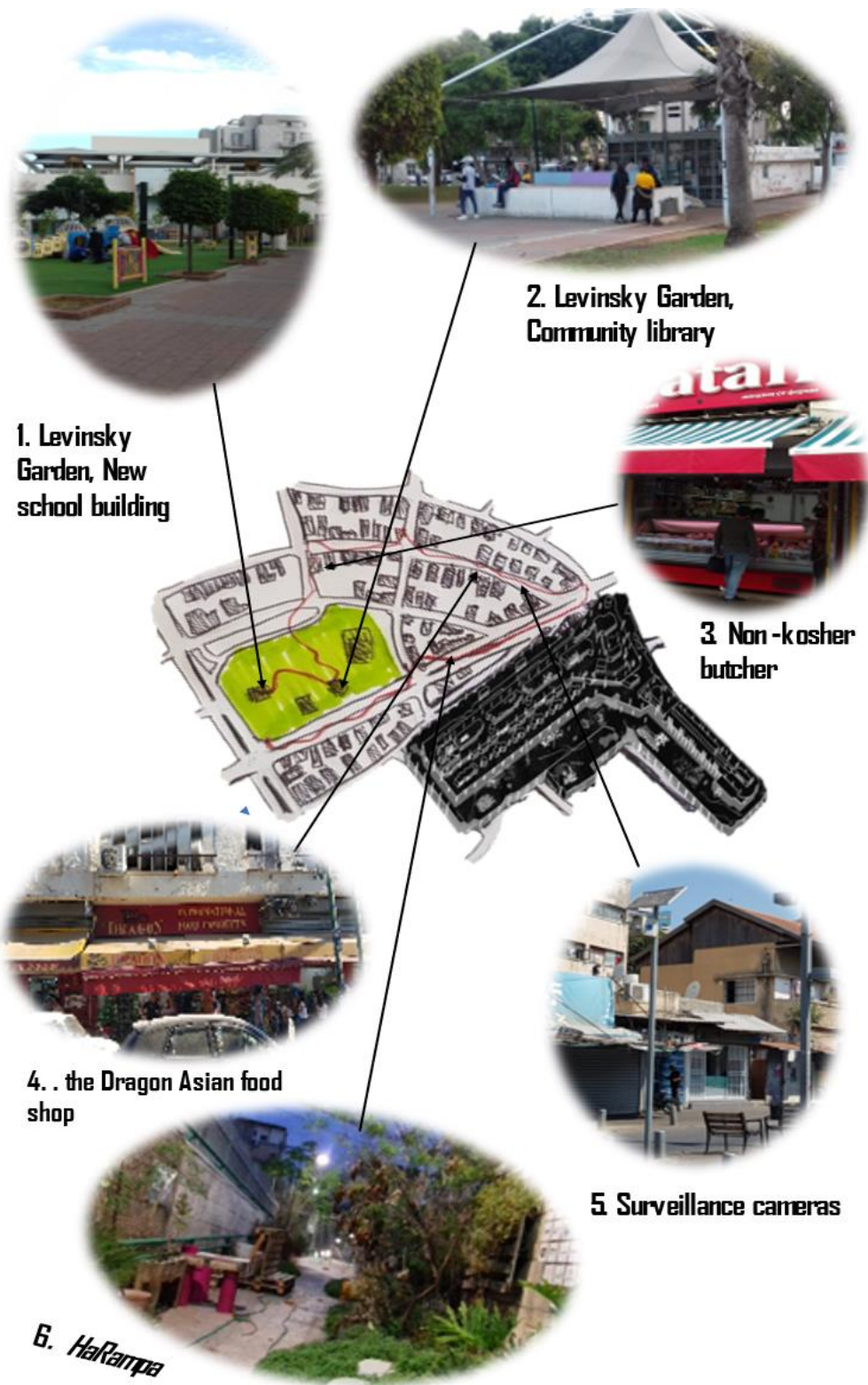


Map 14: The origins of Neve Sha'anani residents.

Interestingly, when approaching various tour agencies in south Tel Aviv to collaborate with them for this research, they would often stress that refugees are not the key theme of their tours; rather they tell a story of a place. This alludes to another important politicised gesture enacted during the tactical tours of south Tel Aviv: in contrast with the ontological marking of displaced people as “placeless” or “outsiders”, the tours regard them as part of the story of south Tel Aviv. As Yuval (Interview 50, 2019) notes: ‘From the 1920s, they established a neighbourhood that is always in transit, from Persians and Turks, later Romanians and Greeks, and whoever came was always accused of destroying the neighbourhood’. Nevertheless, the tours counter the prevailing story in Tel Aviv and many other globalised cities that blame newcomers for destroying neighbourhoods, their identity, and sense of locality. The tours frame the sense of identity and locality of south Tel Aviv as inherently diasporic. Moreover, the tours’ attention to the details of the street, with its ‘multiplicity of stories-so-far’, renders visible the agency of various actors and networks that continually re-write and re-form this area (Massey 2005: 189).

As we stand at the Levinsky Garden, Hila directs our attention to the strong smell that pervades the area, explaining it is an especially cheap drug called ‘hagigiat’, commonly trafficked and used here. Next, she points at a brand-new school for refugee children built by the council in line with the Free Education for All law (Map 15, Stop 1). This, for Hila,

demonstrates how the arrival of refugee families forced the municipality to implement minor improvements that contrast with the unwelcoming official stance. Hila further points our gaze to a community library in the garden that offers free Hebrew lessons for refugees, as an example of a bottom-up welcoming initiative that makes up for the top-down neglect (Map 15, Stop 2). Hila highlights that the municipality and state are not concerned with solving the problems of south Tel Aviv. However, she says, ‘through inhabitants’ improvisations, it is slowly becoming a more friendly place, even for tourists’. These tours’ street-level gaze demonstrates the assemblage of actors, relations of power, regulations, and bureaucracies that shape the local area and its reception of newcomers.



Map 15: Central features in Hila's tour, August 2019, 1.12 km, 1 hour 44 minutes, 31°C.

At our next tour stop, Hila points at the first non-kosher butcher in Israel, opened by Jewish migrants from the former Soviet Union (Map 15, Stop 3). She says, ‘the information is in the street and every store here has a story to tell’. The tours’ mark these overlooked memory carriers implicated in the making of a sense of place and community. Hila adds that everything in Neve Sha'an'an is improvised, with food being one of the first things that communities add to their new locality to create a sense of belonging. The tours thus invite participants to sense a local history that is informed by various transcultural memory trails. Nevertheless, it is also through senses that participants experience their unease about south Tel Aviv. In an example from another tour, when students are given time to buy food in the “new” Central Bus Station, one remarks, ‘it’s gross, I don’t want to eat here’. Another tour participant (Interview 18, 2018) shares: ‘I feel guilty because I have a phobia from germs, and it feels really unpleasant for me to be here’. In line with a broader global trend of “off-the-beaten-track tourism” that seeks to experience the urban margins, the tours involve the consumption of a strong multi-sensory experience of “otherness” (Maitland 2013; Matoga and Pawłowska 2018).

As Dotan (Interview 40, 2019) outlines, the tactical tours of south Tel Aviv are a ‘full-on’ experience, emotionally, pedagogically, visually, and audibly. He states: ‘you smell, you see, you don’t want to see, you don’t want to smell, you feel pleasant, you’re unpleasant, you’re hot, you’re cold’. Looking at themed heritage restaurants in post-Soviet cities, Eleonora Narvselius (2015) demonstrates the usage of memory triggered by multi-sensory encounters with “otherness”. Their aim, she highlights, is to communicate loss and trauma caused by war, displacement, division and genocide. These memory signifiers include the tastes and smells of “exotic” Jewish dishes or the naming of a restaurant in Wrocław Lwów Tavern after the former Polish cultural metropolis that remained on the other side of the redrawn post-war border. Like these restaurants, the tours in south Tel Aviv are in-between a political ambition to acknowledge “otherness” and transculturalism versus a commercial intent to consume it. Like these themed restaurants, the tours are a hybrid form of memory work that mix pedagogical mnemonic approaches (as found in museums) with personal memory carriers (such as food).

Our next tour stop is the Dragon Asian food shop, opened by two Israeli brothers who realized the business potential in importing food for migratory populations (Map 11, Stop 4). As Hila explains, the brothers invite Filipina women to open a street market outside the store every Friday, in a mixture of business endeavour and a welcoming initiative. We also walk past a *bureau de change* opened by a Philippine migrant worker, where refugees can send

money abroad cheaply. This demonstrates another important, often overlooked, layer within refugees' welcoming infrastructure, initiated by the flow of migrant workers that come and go. In a similar vein, during Tom's tour we visit My Sister's House, a feminist Mizrahi community centre founded by Shula Keshet, a long-time resident of the area. Tom explains that the centre housed refugees when they were homeless. The attention to details during such tours therefore complicates simplistic partial depictions of the area, for instance by tracing the local infrastructures that support refugees and countering simplistic perceptions of the settled residents as homogenously opposed to refugees.

Another stop on Hila's tour is *HaRampa* (the ramp), located opposite the "new" Central Bus Station (Map 15, Stop 6). As she stresses, this abandoned site has long been negated by the municipality and the owners of the station. Hence, Hila and a group of local artists, architects, and urban activists formed a joint initiative to transform it into a community garden. Yet, Hila further describes the complexities involved in such an endeavour:

We thought naively that we would build the garden and people from the various communities that live here will come. We also set up a library and a newsroom where a group of Sudanese activists broadcast alternative news to Sudan. It worked for a while, but it was hard to preserve it. We did not really understand the needs of the various local communities. We are trying to compensate the great vacuum left by the state and we had a naive dream that everyone would get along. Today we are in the process of turning the garden into a therapeutic garden for children from the neighbourhood.

Thus, the tours' attention to detail does not evade the setbacks and failures that are part of the attempts to overcome institutional urban neglect and discrimination.

Equally, the tours do not bypass tales of institutional scrutiny and bureaucratic abuse. As we walk across Neve Sha'anani Boulevard, Hila notes that up until recently, it housed a vibrant market formed by asylum seekers; yet, the municipality decided to close it, claiming it attracts thieves. She also points our attention to surveillance cameras placed here since 2014, when the government started arresting male asylum seekers on these streets and sending them to Holot (Map 15, Stop 5). 'The government has created a situation that people feel afraid to walk in the street', she observes. Indeed, for bodies that are marked as not belonging, the everyday motion of walking increases exposure to racism, police brutality, and state control. As many tour guides highlight during these tactical tours, incitement against asylum seekers prompted by politicians and media result in hate crimes occurring daily in the streets of south Tel Aviv. This includes cursing, spitting, racist slurs, and physical assaults against refugees and their businesses, homes and schools. Nevertheless, instead of a

simplistic portrayal of asylum seekers as mere victims, the tours emphasise their spatial and creative agency and resilience.

For instance, Hila describes initiatives by asylum seekers to renovate abandoned warehouses and turn them into shelters for their communities. Hila further directs our gaze at south Tel Aviv's informal economy of shops, hairdressers, restaurants, bars, and cafés owned by African refugees. In fact, this hints at another aspect of the politics of refugees' (in)visibility: becoming a 'neoliberal insider' allows them to counter their framing in host-cities as 'a burden' or 'a threat' (Georgiou, Hall and Dajani, 2020). In Togod's tour, he further compares coffee shops in Rothschild and Neve Sha'anani, stressing the political and communal significance of the latter:

There is a very strong social role in a café in Neve Sha'anani. When you get there, you meet a friend, and you hear what the news is, because not everyone understands the language. And if we have some kind of activity, then we get there, turn off the TV screen- 'we have a demonstration tomorrow at ten o'clock, you all have to come together', we also hand out flyers, and go. So, everyone knows in the café that on Thursday there is a demonstration... Sometimes there is some specific case, say someone is sick for example, and we need money for him, we will get there, explain the issue and then each person will give us five or ten shekels.

Togod therefore emphasises the importance of mundane infrastructure in the creation of community and resistance.

As we continue our walk, Hila points our attention to makeshift churches in rundown buildings, explaining that communities of asylum seekers and migrant workers collectively rent these rooms using them on alternate days for prayer. Whereas Hila emphasizes cross-ethnic solidarity, other tour guides see assimilation. During Tom's tour he emphasises how these churches changed their prayer day to Saturday, the Jewish day of prayer and the National Day of Rest. This illustrates the tours' fluid and fragmented style of historiography: each tour guide describes the story of the street in their own words, with their chosen emphasis, based on their specific knowledge. Some Israeli tour guides emphasise the contribution of non-citizens to the area, whilst others emphasise its otherness, describing it as an 'ex-territory', 'a different world', or a 'tragedy'. This fluidity raises a tension: on the one hand, the tours propose to show the reality of the area, outside of the prism of the commercial media and political rhetoric; however, the tours themselves involve a process of mediation that includes vocal narration, a spatial design, and embodied gestures. Dotan (Interview 40, 2019) concedes: 'I think that's kind of a basic tactic of where to walk and what you show and don't show'. Similarly, Togod (Interview 38, 2019) notes that he plans certain encounters during his tours, such as asking a friend to play the guitar when his tour group passes by, 'so

that they know that there is someone playing the guitar that is actually from Sudan'. Another striking indication of this tension is that the stated aim of both the pro-refugee and anti-refugee tours is the same, to show the "true reality" of the "backyard" of Tel Aviv. Both use walking to unmask framings of the street-level reality; however, like the inherent manipulation, editing, or cropping of imagery, different tours frame this reality differently.

Crucially, this mediation process can inform different ideologies. As mentioned earlier, many tour guides in south Tel Aviv collaborate with the Taglit Birthright Israel programme sponsored by private philanthropy and the Israeli government. The programme does not define itself as conflict tourism; rather, their stated aim is to strengthen participants' Jewish identity and connection to Israel (Abramson 2019). However, as highlighted by some participants in 2019 who walked off the programme in protest, it offers a one-sided depiction of the region that erases Palestinian memory and ignores the Occupation. In fact, the participants live-streamed this event on Facebook, in another example of mixing tourism with protest. In recent years, Taglit offers an optional one-day tour of Neve Sha'anani.⁴⁰ Visiting the multicultural south Tel Aviv appears contradictory with their emphasis on Jewish identity, yet this collaboration enables Taglit to appear more "open" and "honest." As one Taglit participant (Interview 12, 2018) tells me: 'so far we have only seen what they want to show us and now we see the truth'. Taglit narratives are more effective and better absorbed by participants if the tours are viewed as "open," as revealed in another participant's (Interview 13, 2018) comments: 'I was worried, especially coming to Taglit that we will be getting a one-sided perspective, it [south Tel Aviv] kind of gives you a complex picture of Israel which I think makes it more relatable'. Tours that voice African refugees' memories and trace the streets' trans-local history can therefore be used to silence the local memories of Palestinian-forced displacement.

The above demonstrates the entanglement of traveling and local memories with a constellation of actors, from the local to the global, with different ideologies and agendas (Feindt et al. 2014). A tension thus exists between the notion of authenticity generated by walking in the street, and the multitude of narratives, memories, and agendas attached to it. During Tom's tour he addresses this tension by presenting us with an Israeli newspaper describing south Tel Aviv as 'another country' and a French tourism article describing the same area as a trendy cosmopolitan neighbourhood. Tom further notes that south Tel Aviv

⁴⁰ Participants can choose this or a 'Graffiti Tour' of Florentine, another southern neighbourhood that has undergone a substantial process of gentrification and became a tourist attraction.

has always been a seamline: whilst the current official name of a nearby street is Shlomo (after the Jewish king Solomon), most people use its original name from when it was the Palestinian village Salama. For Tom this exemplifies how our understanding of space is dependent upon its contextualisation. Togod similarly weaves the multiplicity of the street's experiences into his tours by dedicating five minutes for participants to walk around and speak with different people.

By allowing space for different framings of the street to surface, tour guides offer an important type of authenticity that acknowledges the multiplicity of ways of seeing and contextualising space, and the range of subjectivities and memory narratives constructed through it. As Togod (Interview 38, 2019) states, 'you come on tour, and you meet me, but you meet someone else, and you meet the public space'. In fact, the public space, with its assemblage of actors, conditions, and situations, actively undermines tour guides' ability to filter and mediate its story. For instance, during Dotan's tour, a local Israeli resident who owns a hairdressing shop inside the new Central Bus Station interrupts the tour and asks to say a few words, telling us for half an hour about her personal life story, describing the beauty and complexity of this area. Dotan (Interview 40, 2019) notes there is 'power' in these encounters that 'space summons'. He further describes, 'when you go outside, a thousand and one things happen'. However, Dotan further adds that sometimes when leading participants to the Levinsky Garden, and it happens to be quiet, this too is beyond his control.

At other times, inhabitants protest the tours' objectifying mechanism. For instance, Shir (Interview 39, 2019) tells me how a resident broke the camera of a tour participant whilst shouting 'we are not monkeys'. She describes this incident as a 'wakeup call to the street becoming hostile towards the tours' (that January alone, her youth movement led 51 walking tours in this street). During another tour, guided by a different youth movement, a local Israeli resident interrupts us to state that it angers him that the guides are not from the neighbourhood; therefore, he believes they share incorrect information and make money at the locals' expense. Interestingly, tour participants raise a similar criticism of the tours. For example, one participant (Interview 46, 2019) says: 'I have a problem with the tours that we are kind of coming from our good place and are staring at *them*'. Another participant (Interview 47, 2019) comments: 'It's a feeling like a zoo, I think if people would come to my town and just look, I would not feel the most comfortable in the world'. The identity of tour participants amplifies this dichotomy: they are overwhelmingly Ashkenazi and upper-middle class, except for youth movement tours that include a more diverse audience since they collaborate with schools from across the country.

Tour guides equally raise a sense of conflict between the tours' political pedagogy and commodification. As Shir (Interview 39, 2019) further notes: 'To tell you about the moment I realized the tour was a product? Just today, our marketing woman tells me that she also pushed on them [a group booking a tour] a meeting with an asylum seeker'. Yuval (Interview 50, 2019) further discloses that he stopped leading tours in the southern neighbourhood Shapira as tour participants frequently inquired into its real estate prices. This led him to the realisation, 'that the tours are becoming a mechanism of changing the neighbourhood *not* in the way that I want'. Since, as noted above, the south has long constituted an "other" to Tel Aviv, a question arises as to whether having outsiders walk around inspecting the area breaks down or strengthens geographical divides. For instance, Togod (Interview 38, 2019) links the visual tourist performance of gazing at and photographing the area with a colonial way of seeing: 'It's like it's the same method of colonialism, a white man who flies to Africa and photographs deprived people'. Indeed, the colonial legacy that is embedded in tourism practices, as noted in Chapters Two and Three, heightens this problem.

Notions of voyeurism and othering of south Tel Aviv and its residents also manifest in participants' reactions during tours, such as: 'wow it's little Africa' or 'this is the backyard of Tel Aviv'. Similarly, Shir (Interview 39, 2019) describes: 'In a summary of a tour, once a teacher said that she expected to see more prostitutes, more drugs'. This objectification is enhanced when asylum seekers' voices are absent from the tours. For instance, Hila's tour did not include an asylum seeker's testimony since she charges a higher price for it, and the German group did not want to pay extra. Togod (Interview 38, 2019) highlights the importance of incorporating refugees as tour guides:

The moment I meet a group it is a really sacred opportunity for me. It is wrong to bring someone who is Ashkenazi to deliver the tour. There are questions only we can answer...We have such a talented people. The only problem is the language actually, so you teach us the language and we can do these tours.

Thus the attempt to counter urban discrimination cannot fully evade the complexity of power relations that characterize urban societies.

This section has demonstrated how the tactical walking tours in south Tel Aviv frame the area as a site of risk, illegality, and marginalization as well as liveability, hospitality, and opportunity. Within this mixed reality, the tours emphasise the resilience, creativity, and agency of southern inhabitants. The section has further tried to sketch the tension encompassed in these tours, which is well-outlined by a teacher (Interview 42, 2019) supervising her students during Dotan's tour:

These tours embody a complexity. On the one hand, there is the fear of walking around the streets looking at people as if they were monkeys. On the other hand, nothing compares to walking in the street and seeing accidental situations...These unmediated encounters happen only outside the classroom. And the important point, I think, is really the matter of mediation, how to construct the meetings and how we walk in the street...I have done this tour several times with all kinds of guides when I was their age, and still every time, I feel that I am learning from the start and refining things.

As she succinctly summarizes, the tactical walking tours embody contradictions: between a collective critical study of place, its history, and trans-local memories and a voyeuristic experience of “otherness”; between a situational immediate encounter with place versus a politicised mediation of the street; and between tourism and activism.

Conclusion:

From the perspective of the street, this chapter outlined the entanglement between apparently separate conflicts in the Middle East and Africa. Within this entanglement, the chapter has continued to investigate the agency of displaced people to inform transcultural recognition and interchange, reframe dominant memory narratives, and highlight the diasporic nature of cities. Expanding the geo-temporal scale of forced displacement research, it has demonstrated how the public struggle of African asylum seekers to seek shelter in a disputed region impacts its memory landscape in planned and unplanned ways. The “multidirectional” exchange enacted as part of the walking tours in south Tel Aviv - and the broader struggle over identity and belonging in this area - was shown to undermine existing mnemonic hierarchies in some ways; in other ways, it was also shown to reinforce them – especially in terms of the privileging of Ashkenazi memory trails and the erasure of local Palestinian history. However, as the present-absent local Palestinian history haunts the landscape of south Tel Aviv, it also haunts the broader discourse against African asylum seekers. It mitigates against the recognition of the claims of the asylum seekers by the Israeli state in case such recognition further encourages displaced Palestinians to seek the same rights. As well as adopting a more trans-cultural approach to study the politics of urban domains, the chapter demonstrates a need to consider how ethnic, national, economic, and racial divisions and struggles interact with and impact one another on the urban scale. This is the case in Tel Aviv but is also relevant in other cities around the world.

The chapter emphasises the necessity of spatial analysis to unpacking the politics of the reception of asylum seekers. To this end, it has illustrated the transgressive potential of guided tours to illuminate overlooked and chronic urban neglect which so often impacts the

reception of newcomers. This complicates the prevailing notion in existing research which tends to focus on western cities and simplify their role as sites of welcoming towards asylum seekers (as discussed in Chapter One). Instead, the chapter has revealed far more complexity, fragmentation, and contradictions. Rather than a duality between city and national policies, the street-level focus on guided walking tours helped trace an assemblage of practices, social structures, and conditions of inequalities that are linked with a range of differently situated actors, spatially and temporally. As argued, the tours' relational pedagogy, through the motion of walking, successfully sheds light on the complexity of refugees' lives and their reception by the host community embedded in ongoing conflicts and colonial conditions. Importantly, the tours situate the former as integral to the story of the latter, rather than something recently and externally imposed upon it. This is relevant for further research on forced displacement and/or urban conflict, which can benefit from considering the impacts and perspectives of apparent outsiders on urban political spheres. Nevertheless, the chapter argues that whilst the adaptation of a touristic walking style is useful for collectively studying urban and global issues and inequalities, to some extent it also risks reinforcing the geographical and cultural divisions that these inequalities inform. It has reflected on how the subversive potential of these tours is jeopardised by the neglect of the local indigenous Palestinian history; by commodification; and by elements of voyeurism. Notwithstanding these limitations, the situational relational pedagogy that these tours seek to practice is much needed as an empirical approach within academic debates on urban conflicts and the de-colonization of cities.

Conclusion

This study expands the geo-temporal scope of forced displacement analysis by demonstrating how histories of wars, divisions, and colonialism continue to shape the ways ‘wounded’ cities currently deal with forced displacement. In parallel, the chapters above have demonstrated how displaced persons’ multiple spatial attachments to cities influence the ways they navigate, manage, and affect urban environments and help them recast the public memories of lingering conflicts and colonial conditions. Within this context, the study has also provided new empirical understandings of how displaced persons turn their traumatic life-memories into a public political performance to claim visibility and participation and re-narrate the representations of those cities. The intention is not to romanticize the tragic memories of people who have been forcibly displaced. Rather, the aim is to politicise them as a proof that the ‘root shock’ caused by forced displacement requires prolonged acts of restoration and justice across generations. Acts which also stress the lingering effects of the political and spatial arrangements of colonialism in relation to present-day conflicts and migratory waves. Indeed, as much the argument regarding the need of expanding the geo-temporality of our representations of forced displacement is theoretical it is also political. As the activism invites of displaced persons closely analysed above have illustrated: expanding the ‘moment’ of forced displacement helps counter unsympathetic public portrayals of recent migration streams as an unprecedented ‘crisis’ and calls for the formation of new approaches to urban formulations of heritage and belonging.

In all three empirical chapters, the performative interaction between the testimonies of displaced people, audiences, and memory sites was shown to challenge dominant power relations, render places and peoples visible, and create networks of activism and solidarity with others to imagine better futures. This research thus argues for the importance of space and architecture to the Rancièrian debate on how those who are marginalized from political life deploy creative ways to protest their marginality and assert their political subjectivity. Building on a participatory close analysis of ‘autotopographies’ of forced displacement, the study was able to extract a new contextualized and interactive perspective to understand spatial memory. Besides the power of states, municipalities, urban planners, and architects to abstract, control, and dominate the design and memory of cities, the study had demonstrated how these processes can be resisted through collective modes of walking and talking. The co-combined research and practice-based theory presented in this thesis provides fruitful avenues for future research and action in cities shaped by the exchange and flow between

multiple geographies and by the looming presence of the past. The study makes a methodological contribution by expanding the possibilities of walk-along ethnography to study political performances by integrating artistic and spatial mediums. This expanded participatory and experimental approach to mixed methods is a contribution for future studies on forced displacement, urban, and spatial memory as well as a resource for policy and activism related to these themes. The impact of this research is thus to highlight new methods and fields within which forced displacement, urban spheres, and sites of memory can be researched and agencies identified.

As the following expands on, there are three subgroups across academic and non-academic spheres that are most likely to be interested in and benefit from this study. The first group are those who generate research and representations which tackles the phenomena of forced displacement. The second group of beneficiaries are urban theorists and practitioners. The third group are those engaged in research on spatial memory or in the cultivation of heritage sites and urban commemoration.

Contribution to Forced Displacement Knowledge and Representation

This study offers a theoretical and methodological contribution for those who generate research and representations which tackles the phenomena of forced displacement, such as academics, journalists, activists, humanitarian groups, and NGOs. Firstly, the thesis has demonstrated, these groups' often assume abstract and essentialising perspectives that reduces the agency of displaced persons. Overlooking the agency of displaced people in turn contributes to their exclusion from the very organizations, decision making processes, research, and representations that concern them (Fine 2019). To counter these tendencies in terms of generating research, policy, mediated representation, and political advocacy – the methods developed in this study maintain the importance of centring personal accounts of forced displacement whilst at the same time integrating broader structural causes behind these experiences. Secondly, the thesis has outlined how the academic and public conceptualization of forced displacement focuses on instances such as crossing a border or arriving in a camp. In contrast, this study argues for the theoretical and political need to expand the geo-temporal scope and depth of forced displacement research and representation. It further builds on postcolonial theory to enrich existing debates and de-colonize forced displacement knowledge. As Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, noted in 2019: 'forced displacement nowadays is not only vastly more widespread but is simply no longer a short-

term and temporary phenomenon'.⁴¹ This longevity requires greater accounts of the cross-generational causes and impacts of forced displacement and a geographical move beyond borders and camps. With this intention, the thesis has developed a trans-local approach grounded in the scale of the street that considers the urban every-day alongside the multiple cultural memories that accumulate in the streets and the histories of conflict and division that shape it. Hence, this study argues that the themes of memory and urban studies need to be better integrated within forced displacement studies. However, simultaneously, studying heritage sites in cities that encompass multiple histories of wars, colonialism, and divisions from the novel perspective of forcibly displaced activists further challenges the methodological nationalism of urban and memory studies. Hence, as much as urban theory can enrich forced migration studies, the former can also benefit the later, as the following expands on.

Contribution to Urban Theory and Practice

Studying the city from the novel perspective of displaced persons as subjects contextualized within its history, the study demonstrates the need to consider how different ethnic, national, economic, and racial divisions intersect and impact one another. It suggests that a focus on embodied and street-levelled encounters is useful with this regard. Through focusing on people who have moved from former colonies to the West or from African nations to the Middle East, this thesis highlights how the multidirectional exchange and entanglement between cities occurs across the globe. The thesis thus contributes a new trans-local approach in urban theory to trace the movement of practices and actors between cities and between local and global contexts, instead of focusing on a singular city or conducting a comparative study between several cities. Utilizing this approach, the study showed how refugees' memories from Iraq and Syria can impact processes of coming to terms with a difficult past in Berlin today; or how Sudanese and Eritrean refugees use their memories to negotiate their acceptance in south Tel Aviv, and in so doing, affect a memory culture related to Palestinian forced displacement. This approach contributes to current debates on the relationship between cities and forcibly displaced people by transgressing beyond the prevailing essentialising dichotomy that views the seemingly welcoming urban sphere as a counter arena to national policies of exclusion. Instead, by zooming into the scale of the street, the thesis has illustrated

⁴¹ See full report here: <https://www.unhcr.org/be/wp-content/uploads/sites/46/2020/07/Global-Trends-Report-2019.pdf>.

the dynamic and multiple relationships between cities and forcibly displaced people. It has shown how these relationships are shaped by the particularities of how trans-national and national politics and memories attach to specific urban spheres with their power dynamics and unequal histories. This trans-local approach can greatly benefit recent debates within comparative, global, and post-colonial urbanism which, as discussed in chapter one, seek to transgress the ‘north-south’ divide. Theoretically and politically, undoing the north-south divide can help depict traffic and agency as multi-directional and address the lingering colonial conditions of contemporary cities in the global south *and* north as they relate to forced displacement. Crucially, this research argues that those who experienced forced displacement are not outside the powers and struggles which shape urban sphere but within these and hence their voices are much needed in attempts to design just, decolonized, inclusive cities.

Contribution to Spatial Memory Research and Practice

Studying the spatial manifestations of traumatic histories and heritage from the novel perspective of the activism of forcibly displaced people, the study offers theoretical and methodological contributions to the field of memory studies. Crucially, it argues that field should transgress beyond modernist conceptions of time and place which chart a beginning and end and centre the analytical categories of state, nationality, and distinct identity groups. Instead, the ‘autotopographies’ of forced displacement examined in this study generate more complex temporal terms beyond memory and post-memory. They also offer decolonising and cosmopolitan understandings of the sites of memory, space-times, and geopolitics of the city. Through these ‘autotopographies’, the study thus demonstrates that transcultural mnemonic exchange is not merely discursive or textual but also performative and spatial. It also broadens the definition of memory sites and how they can be used and interpreted. Firstly, by considering streets, informal infrastructure, and the trails to and across memory sights as important mnemonic signifiers. Secondly, by arguing that architectural theory and memory studies research should include not only the built environment but also how marginalised groups animate it through their bodies, movements, memories, and stories. However, simultaneously, the study maintains that place and architecture are important political actors that do not merely contain activism initiatives or imbue them with meaning but are integral to processes of testifying to trauma and uncovering marginalised histories and memories. The dual research topic and method at the heart of this thesis, which utilises walking as a

representational and pedagogical tool, is also relevant for implementing this approach beyond academic research. It can be applied to cultivate sites of memory and heritage that are more inclusive, open-ended, and effective in today's trans-local urban context. For example, urban and cultural institutions can invite inhabitants and communities that are excluded from official discourses to lead tours that multiply, personalise, and de-colonize the readings of stable mnemonic sites. Furthermore, the thesis argues that the politics of space and design includes dramatization and representation of urban infrastructure and architecture. As well as theoretically increasing the possibilities of where to locate spatial agency, this calls to insert the voices of non-design experts, especially migratory groups that are often excluded from these debates into heritage design processes.

Future Avenues of Research and Action

There are several avenues for future research that emerge out of the above-noted theoretical and methodological contributions. Thematically, the ways in which refugees and migrants are impacted by and affect other ethnonational conflicts around the world needs to be further studied, with a greater emphasis on agency and subaltern counter practices. Such studies should transgress the national logic and the constraints of analytical categories such as state, nationality, and distinct identity groups. Instead, these studies should consider migratory journeys of people, objects, and ideas and examine how different spaces and processes are entangled and influenced by transnational and global trends. There is also much need for research on forced displacement that utilizes the lens of postcolonial and critical race theory. Such studies will benefit from expanding the geographic imagination of forced displacement beyond merely camps and borders to include, for instance, integration policies, activism spheres, and urban sites of encounter.

In urban theory, additional studies can illuminate how the geographic entities of "North" and "South" are connected through historical and ongoing migratory waves and through continuous interactions of cultures and memories. Within memory studies, further research can unpack the grounding of traveling and transcultural memories in other specific geographical contexts. Another potential direction for future research relates to the transcultural implications of creative and communal practices in urban spheres. As this study demonstrates, heritage and identity production in today's cities involves interactions between an assemblage of actors and networks, from the local to the global. Future research can advance the understanding of transcultural memory and its intended and inadvertent impacts

through the analysis of additional creative and communal events, such as exhibitory practices, protests, housing struggles, and solidarity initiatives. Finally, more research that centers the voices and performances of refugees is much needed across disciplines.

Policy makers and NGOs that deal with the theme of forced displacement should equally centre the insights and knowledge of refugees, without underplaying its structural causes as correlates with colonial, ethnic, and racial divisions. The expanded multilingual walk-along method developed in this study also offers a new lens through which NGOs, policy makers, researchers and other agents in the field, can understand urban activism initiatives as occurring within the specific spaces that they work within and for. The thesis had provided empirical insights into the ways urban activists and NGO worker reflect critically on their actions and undergo a process of modification of their activism tactics and sites of intervention. Important lessons can be drawn those seeking to act in transcultural cities shaped by lingering traumas of the past. Firstly, activism initiatives can benefit from paying attention to the location of public actions and researching and publicly stressing a spatial analysis as it relates to their struggles. For instance, the role of landscape and space coordinator that *Zochrot* use, and the tactic of guided walking tours, can contribute to other de-colonial initiatives and struggles for justice and ethical co-habitation. Secondly, another way to elevate the communication and appeal of political struggles is through creativity, both as an artistic gesture and in imagining alternate orders. Hence, workshops on photography, site-specific art, or local geographic history can benefit social movements just as much as workshops on more obvious themes such as the legal rights of protesters. Nevertheless, as the guided tours examined above teach us, creative spatial modes of resistance are complex sites that are co-opted into global and local representational and financial systems and hierarchies. It is therefore crucial for movements to reflect on how the representational hierarchies they seek to undo play within their movements and actions.

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List of Interviews

1. Interview with Wael, March 2018, café, Berlin.
2. Walk-along interview with tour Participant, March 2018, Berlin.
3. Interview with Umar, April 2018, Zochrot's offices, Tel Aviv.
4. Walk-along interview with tour Participant, April 2018, Jerusalem.
5. Walk-along interview with tour Participant, April 2018, Jerusalem.
6. Interview with Najwan, July 2018, Zochrot's offices, Tel Aviv.
7. Interview with Rana, August 2018, Tel Aviv university.
8. Walk-along interview with tour Participant, August 2018, Jaffa.
9. Walk-along interview with tour Participant, August 2018, Jaffa.
10. Walk-along interview with tour Participant, August 2018, Jaffa.
11. Interview with Taj, August 2018, WeWork Tel Aviv.
12. Walk-along interview with tour Participant, August 2018, Tel Aviv.
13. Walk-along interview with tour Participant, August 2018, Tel Aviv.
14. Interview with Johnny, August 2018, café Tel Aviv.
15. Interview with Baric, August 2018, WeWork Tel Aviv.
16. Interview with Tom, September 2018, café Jerusalem.
17. Interview with Asim, September 2018, café, Tel Aviv.
18. Walk-along interview with tour Participant, September 2018, Tel Aviv.
19. Interview with Hussein, December 2018, café Refugio, Berlin.
20. Interview with Michelle, December 2018, café Refugio, Berlin.
21. Interview with Fabian, December 2018, café, Berlin.
22. Walk-along interview with tour Participant, December 2018, Berlin.
23. Walk-along interview with tour Participant, December 2018, Berlin.
24. Walk-along interview with tour Participant, December 2018, Berlin.
25. Interview with Emma, April 2019, café Refugio, Berlin.
26. Walk-along Interview with Ahmed, April 2019, Berlin.
27. Interview with Yasmin, May 2019, café, Berlin.
28. Interview with Amir, May 2019, café, Berlin.
29. Walk-along interview with tour Participant, May 2019, Berlin.
30. Walk-along interview with tour Participant, May 2019, Berlin.
31. Walk-along interview with tour Participant, May 2019, Berlin.
32. Walk-along interview with tour Participant, May 2019, Berlin.
33. Walk-along interview with tour Participant, May 2019, Berlin.
34. Walk-along interview with tour Participant, August 2019, Jaffa.
35. Walk-along interview with tour Participant, August 2019, Jaffa.
36. Interview with Nora, August 2019, café Tel Aviv.
37. Walk-along interview with Yusuf, August 2019, Jaffa.
38. Walk-along interview with Togod, August 2019, Tel Aviv.

39. Interview with Shir, August 2019, café, Tel Aviv.
40. Interview with Dotan, August 2019, café, Tel Aviv.
41. Interview with Hila, August 2019, café, Tel Aviv.
42. Walk-along interview with tour Participant, August 2019, Tel Aviv.
43. Walk-along interview with tour Participant, August 2019, Tel Aviv.
44. Walk-along interview with tour Participant, August 2019, Tel Aviv.
45. Walk-along interview with tour Participant, August 2019, Tel Aviv.
46. Walk-along interview with tour Participant, August 2019, Tel Aviv.
47. Walk-along interview with tour Participant, August 2019, Tel Aviv.
48. Walk-along interview with tour Participant, September 2019, North of Israel
49. Walk-along interview with tour Participant, September 2019, North of Israel.
50. Interview with Yuval, June 2020, Skype.