Global Heritage and Memory Studies in the Present

REMAKING URBAN HERITAGE

Refugee Walking Tours in Berlin, Jaffa, and Tel Aviv

Michal Huss

Remaking Urban Heritage

Global Heritage and Memory Studies in the Present

This ground-breaking series examines the dynamics of heritage and memory from a transnational, interdisciplinary and integrated approaches. Monographs or edited volumes critically interrogate the politics of heritage and dynamics of memory, as well as the theoretical implications of landscapes and mass violence, nationalism and ethnicity, heritage preservation and conservation, archaeology and (dark) tourism, diaspora and postcolonial memory, the power of aesthetics and the art of absence and forgetting, mourning and performative re-enactments in the present.

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Remaking Urban Heritage

Refugee Walking Tours in Berlin, Jaffa, and Tel Aviv

Michal Huss

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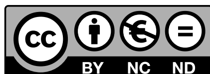

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This book is dedicated to my beloved grandparents
Hava Kern Huss and Avraham Huss,
and to anyone who has lived through forced displacement.

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Glossary of Terms

German:

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:

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

Suṃūd – '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 ʿala al-aṭlāl – stopping by the ruins

Yaffa – Jaffa

Hebrew:

ʿAliyah – immigration

Ashkenazi/m – Jew/s of European origins
Galuti – diasporic
Galut – exile, diaspora
Histadrut – General Organization of Workers in the land of Israel
Mizrahị/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

Introduction

Abstract: The introduction critiques the dominance of state-centric approaches in displacement studies, which often emphasize borders, infrastructure, and national sovereignty – portraying refugees as either threats or passive victims. It calls for a re-theorization of forced displacement by shifting focus to the everyday urban experiences and spatial agency of displaced persons. Building on emerging interdisciplinary work, it argues for a closer integration of refugee studies, urban studies, and memory studies. To advance this approach, the introduction proposes a collaborative 'walk-along' ethnographic methodology, expanded through artistic practices such as photography, montage, and drawing. This framework foregrounds refugee agency and highlights how displaced individuals actively reshape urban space, memory, and belonging beyond the limits of nation state narratives.

Keywords: Forced displacement, spatial agency, walk-along methods, participatory research, artistic methods

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. He grew up in the impoverished former borderland between Jaffa and Tel Aviv (south Tel Aviv), an area that has housed many newcomers and undocumented people over the years.

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My grandfather's stories sparked my interest in how the themes of 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 displays of urban heritage. This was the departure point for my research into the politics of the landscapes and representations of displacement and heritage. The book also concerns the politics of spatial commemoration, especially as related to the traumas of the Holocaust and the Nakba, events that have shaped my own family's history, and that I continue to grapple with from a position of both a cross-generational victim and a perpetrator.

At the turn of the twenty-first century, forcibly displaced Palestinian 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'. Over two decades later, the number of people who experience displacement is on the rise. According to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), at the end of 2023, an estimated 117.3 million people globally were forcibly displaced due to persecution, conflict, violence, and human rights violations; as such, around 1.5 per cent of the entire world's population is forcibly displaced, and these numbers are increasing.[1] In the context of pending environmental catastrophe, a rise in the frequency and intensity of armed conflict, increased competition for housing and resources, and a global rise in support for sectarian and anti-immigrant parties, the future of the global forcibly displaced becomes ever more precarious.

Within the spell of writing this book, there have been two episodes that were depicted in public discourse as an unpresented 'refugee crisis'. The first wave was caused by the tragic civil war in Syria, and the second by those escaping the violent Russian invasion of Ukraine. Simultaneously, people have been escaping devastating wars and conflicts in many other places, such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan, 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 legacies of ethno-national disputes from the 1970s to the 1990s also resonate today, as people from places such as Balkans, South East Asia, and East Africa remain displaced. 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

1 See full report: https://www.unhcr.org/uk/global-trends.

and temporary phenomenon'.[2] Theoretically and politically, this longevity requires a move beyond the current focus on the geography of emergency accommodation, borders, and camps. Instead, the book draws on the lens of post/colonial theory, urban studies, and memory studies, to offer an analysis of the cross-generational causes and impacts of forced displacement.

Though written beforehand, the book is published in the aftermath of Israel's war on Gaza, launched after the 7 October 2023 attack on Israeli by the militant group Hamas. During that initial incursion, Hamas killed 764 Israeli civilians and migrant workers, as well as 373 Israeli military personnel, and seized 248 hostages. Israel has since dropped over 75,000 tonnes of explosives on Gaza, purposefully annihilating its built environment, killing at least 45,000 people, with thousands more buried under the debris. Around 1.9 million of Gaza's population have been forcibly displaced, many of them descended from families forcefully displaced by Zionist militias during the 1948 Israeli-Arab war. While the current scale of killing and destruction is unprecedented, it demonstrates the cyclical and enduring implications of al-Nakba ('the catastrophe' in Arabic) – a term that refers to the uprooting of Palestinians from their homes and lands in 1948 and the formation of the state of Israel on 78 percent of the territory of Mandatory Palestine (Sa'di and Abu-Lughod, 2007). This is a horrifying reminder that mechanisms of forgetting of al-Nakba, as studied in this book, enable its continuation – and that violence will be perpetuated until the root causes of forced displacement are properly addressed, to achieve de-colonial justice and a right of return. In the face of inconceivable tragedies, and the tragedy of their reoccurrence, the book is written in the hope that walking practices as a form of political education and memory activism can offer tools towards accountability, justice, and repair.

As the theme of forced displacement is receiving growing academic and public attention, the term 'refugee' remains ambiguous. It is increasingly difficult to draw a clear boundary 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 (Rea, A., et al., 2019; Hagelund, 2020; Kalir, 2015). Moreover, the legal definition of refugees as developed within the Geneva Convention (and its 1967 Protocol), which remain the key legal framework to sanctify the allocated rights of refugees,[3] is outdated and inadequate. Crucially, it

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

3 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.

fails to protect the rights of most of the world's current forcibly displaced people. This includes those who did not cross an international border, known as internally displaced people (IDPs), and those who are awaiting a decision on their request for refuge, officially named asylum seekers. According to UNHCR, in 2023, the former accounted for 67.8 percent of the world's forcibly displaced people, and the latter for 6.86 percent. Because the refugee definition is contested, the book uses the terms refugees, forcefully displaced people, asylum seeker, or internally displaced person as all-encompassing titles to describe those who claim refuge or asylum – irrespective of their official status or whether they have crossed a state border.

A central approach to studying the phenomenon of people seeking refuge – relevant across law, media studies, and political science – examines how international laws, prevailing ideologies, and global power dynamics shape border control and reception policies (e.g., Baldaccini et al., 2007; Khan, 2016; Ramji-Nogales, 2017). Studies identify a deterioration of the universal discourse of human rights and a rise in nationalist-populist discourses that frame displaced people as a threat, which translate into policies that seek to exclude and scrutinize them (e.g., Borneman and Ghassem-Fachandi, 2017; Cowling et al., 2019; 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., Fawaz, 2017; Martin et al., 2020; Scott-Smith, 2020; Baumann, 2020) Similarly, research in the growing fields of critical border studies chart the elastic architecture of exclusion and violence which is directed towards those who seek asylum and refuge (e.g., Augustova et al., 2023; Bird et al., 2021; Yuval-Davis et al., 2019).

Yet, the existing focus of research on the administration of forced displacement, with its architecture of border zones, confinement facilities, and emergency accommodation 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 dominate public discourse, especially since 2015 (Gattinara 2017; Triandafyllidou 2018; Rea 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 – or worse, as a threat to national sovereignty and social cohesion (Greussing and Boomgaarden, 2017; Houston and Morse, 2017). A perception that is enhanced since too often the perspectives of individuals and groups subjected to this legal and cultural categorization are absent

from the very organizations, decision-making processes, research, and representations that concern them (Fine, 2019).

Hence, the book argues that the geo-temporal scope of analysis of forced displacement needs to be expanded and better grounded theoretically and methodologically in the perspectives of displaced people. It joins an emerging multi-disciplinary trend that utilizes participatory methodologies to shift the focus onto refugees' lived experiences, voices, and acts of agency (e.g., Field et al., 2020; Veronese et al., 2020; de Vries, 2016). Agency here indicates a capability 'of acting otherwise' (Giddens, 1984: 14). By studying the geopolitical condition of forced displacement through a focus on agency, the book seeks to move beyond formal politics and analysis of transnational and national structures towards a rethinking of political action that begins with humans (Kuus, 2019). Problematizing the tendency to measure agency through its positive-versus-negative implications for individuals (Cavazzoni et al., 2023), the focus is on the political and collectivized impacts of the agency of refugees. One pertinent strand of inquiry into the political agency of refugees examines how they disrupt pre-existing formulations of citizenship (e.g., Ataç, 2016; Darling and Bauder, 2021; Nyers, 2015). Another relevant direction of research maps the spatial agency of refugees in impacting the environments they inhabit (e.g., Field et al., 2020; Katz, 2017; Yassine et al., 2019). It builds on the notion of spatial agency that seeks to illuminate the power of agents to re-negotiate existing structures and inequalities through spatial actions, visions, and solutions (Awan et al., 2013; Lorne, 2017).

To advance these debates and to broaden the possibility of locating the manifestation of agency, the book focuses on guided walking tours, a less overtly political performance which blends tourism, creativity, and activism. Following Michel de Certeau's (1984) analysis of the agency of pedestrians to navigate and re-write the order of the city which urban planners impose from above, the book considers walking tours as a design practice that can cultivate new visions for the city. For de Certeau (1984: 115), 'Every story is a travel story – a spatial practice'. City walking tours are public performative events that weave together time and place to produce an interactive narrative (Macdonald, 2006; Wynn, 2011). They thus optimize de Certeau's association of the art of storytelling with the tactic of walking, through which pedestrians inscribe urban tales. As such, walking tours offer an exemplary opportunity to study the exchange between agency, memory, and cities. Building on this, the book investigates the subaltern agency of refugees to visualize erased and overlooked aspects of the city's heritage and to offer more transcultural readings of its memory sites and infrastructure.

The book places in dialogue and advances the interdisciplinary areas of refugee studies, urban studies, and memory and heritage studies. By integrating the urban lens and the themes of memory and heritage, the aim is to expand the geo-temporal depth of research on forced displacement – advancing the understanding of how refugees are impacted by *and* affect the multiple and prolonged conditions of division, colonialism, and war that they live within. Studying the city from the novel perspective of displaced persons as subjects contextualized within its history, the book offers two key contributions to urban studies. Firstly, by theorizing how cities are shaped by intersections of the cumulative effects of historical and contemporary processes of disposition and displacement; secondly by illuminating how those who face displacement and dispossession resist it through everyday forms of urban place-making and transgressions of normative memory. The focus is on how guided tours, as situated within deeply divided and politicized urban contexts, re-narrate the meanings and representations of those cities as they are acted out through heritage industries.

Indeed, since migration from and into cities is intertwined within geographic histories of violence (Gilroy, 2005; Hall, 2012; Johnston and Pratt, 2019), memory is a vital resource for refugees to navigate their acceptance, identity, and relation to old and new home(lands) (Butler, 2017; Hawari, 2018; Tirosh, 2018). Analysing how displaced people reference and expand urban heritage, the book proposes a dual conceptual contribution to memory and heritage studies: (1) recovering the voices of refugees and their spatial and mnemonic agency, and (2) highlighting the spatial and embodied repertoires of transcultural memory. Existing debates on the mobility and transculturalism of memory successfully undermine an assumed static and singular bond between nationality, place, and memory (Crownshaw, 2016; Erll, 2011; Rothberg, 2009); however, they tend to overlook the spatiality and performativity of memory, thereby negating a range of transcultural practices and interactions, especially ones that are more informal and marginalized.

Towards this aim, the book focuses on the empirical context of heritage walking tours that are led by or facilitated in collaboration with refugee-activists in 'wounded cities', where histories of exclusion and violence continue to shape 'urban socio-political life and topographies of displacement' (Till, 2012). Chosen from across the 'Global North and Global South' divide, the intention is to learn through the differences and similarities between case studies, without universalizing cities. 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 municipality officially named Jaffa-Tel Aviv,

comprising two cities violently joined following the 1948 Arab-Israel War and the ethnic cleansing and spatial obliteration it entailed. These cities are dominated by a conflicted public discourse around the presence of refugees and categorized by their strong orientations towards traumatic memories – which nonetheless involves mechanisms of forgetting and denial. The book contributes to our understanding of how urban memory politics play an integral role in shaping the conflicting attitudes towards refugees, and to unpacking complex interactions between the agency of refugees and the seen and unseen local and global aspects of urban memory.

The differences between these cities allows for an exploration of how the different political-cultural contexts of cities – such as their variable attitudes towards refugees and the internal divisions that shape them – shape places of displacement in different ways. The plurality of cases also demonstrates the diversity of legal framings and experiences of forced displacement, and the multiplicity in the voices and agencies of refugees as they impact urban politics and heritage – ranging from struggles for more equal participation in the city, to recovering the indigenous city, and claiming the legal and cultural label of 'refugee'. The book further reflects different aspects of enforced (im) mobility and displacement beyond borders, as they are inflicted through processes such as gentrification or integration. Yet, by studying refugees' walking interventions from different geographies in one analysis, it also suggests a larger global significance to this practice, and to the agency of refugees as it correlates with the politics of their (im)mobility and (in) visibility. Together, these case studies stress the enduring coloniality of forced displacement regimes.

Description of the Chapters

The first chapter of the book will argue for the need to expand the geo-temporal scope of forced displacement research and representation through the lens of post/colonial theory, urban studies, and memory and critical heritage research. The subsequent three chapters will each address the central aim of the book by studying the impact of refugee activists on cities and their memory politics – operating as different yet interrelated perspectives.

Chapter Two will focus on walking tours guided by Syrian and Iraqi refugees in Berlin, a local and global site of remembrance of the scars of twentieth-century tragedies. Through this, it will unpack how refugees affect the public memory of historical division and conflict in their host city and

illuminate its entanglement with the lingering colonial past. Chapter Three will move from enforced mobility to internal displacement, and from the lingering colonial past to the urban settler-colonial present. It will examine tours of Jaffa guided by second- and third-generation Internally Displaced Palestinians, to theorize how refugees influence the public memory of a colonized city. Chapter Four will study 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. Through this, it will stress the plurality of ongoing ethnic, national, and cultural conflicts that refugees can be impacted by and affect themselves. Within this entanglement, the chapter will show how the guided tours' political intervention involves animating the missing spatial context on the presence of refugees and illuminating the streets' trans-local history.

Utilizing walking as the method and theme of research, as expanded on below, each chapter will present a close examination of the plurality of the geopolitical contexts, the narratives, and the political and personal agendas that the tours encompass. Through this methodological and theoretical approach, the book aims to cultivate a more nuanced understanding of the politics of seeking refuge beyond borders, as shaped by the mutual constitution of external national and transnational factors as well as inner-urban socio-cultural reality.

Walking as a Theme and Method of Research

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 Scout 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 localized 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.

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, 1999) *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. 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 walking' that includes routes, shortcuts, and detours, 'wanderers' re-write the city and turn it into a lived space.

However, in contrast with these celebrated walking figures of modernity that evade markers of class, race, and gender, this book 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 (Greenberg and Avni, 2020; Guldi, 2012; Singer and Bickel, 2015). Studies on the geopolitics of tourism further demonstrate how touristic performances such as guided tours can reiterate nationalistic formulations of place and memory, colonial power hierarchies, and oriental constructions of 'otherness' (Feldman, 2016; Pfoser and Keightley, 2019b; Rowen, 2014; Shtern, 2022). They often invite the consumption of urban migratory and marginalized segments – whilst depoliticizing the histories that produce urban inequality (Maitland, 2013; Matoga and Pawłowska, 2018). These voyeuristic tendencies are a reminder of the colonial legacy embedded in the very formation of the tourism industry (Giblin et al., 2019; Wilson, 2001) that has long been a key means to cultivate what Said (1995) calls 'imaginative geographies' that render certain places and cultures as exotified 'others'. To this day, the tourism industry epitomizes the connections between

post/colonialism and neo-liberalism (Linehan et al., 2020). Hence, tourism encounters are a useful site of analysis to unpack the enduring implications of entangled colonial histories.

Subversive Walking Styles

As an additional prism of research demonstrates, walking tours can facilitate a counter-practice that elevates the agency and resistance of those subjected to colonial processes of 'othering'. Subversive walking tours generate antiracist portrayals of the urban margins by inverting the usual host–visitors power relations, generating structural analysis of histories of institutional discrimination, and illuminating the everyday resistance to it (Drew, 2011; Huss, 2024). This is demonstrated in Chin-hung Wang and Yu-Ting Kao's (2017) analysis of walking tours of the city of Taipei, Taiwan, guided by activists who protested against the city's regeneration in the 1990s, campaigners against forced evictions of residents, and homeless individuals. Obrador and Carter (2010) further illustrate how anarchist history tours in Barcelona tactically manipulate the strategies of official tourism to illuminate the marginal histories of the city.

Relevant studies also demonstrate the importance of walking as a political representational strategy and a means for displaced populations to enact a reclamation of place. As Maggie O'Neill and Phil Hubbard (2010: 50) conclude in their analysis of a series of walks by a network of asylum seekers, artists, and activists in the East Midlands of England: 'the act of walking allowed participants to engage in the routes and mobilities of others'. Similarly, Anna-Kaisa Kuusisto-Arpone's (2009) analysis of the Trail of the Displaced, a walk to commemorate the Karelian evacuation in Eastern Finland, frames walking to enact rootedness and belonging. Bonilla's (2011) analysis of memory walks organized by labour activists in Guadeloupe further demonstrates how the historical intimacy generated by such site-specific walks can be harnessed for protest. These walks, she highlights, arrange historical events such as slave and anticolonial uprisings within a common trajectory leading to present-day politics. In a similar vein, Yara Hawari (2018) studies how Palestinians conduct commemorative guided tours and marches in their cities and villages of origin as a form of resistance to the Israeli denial of their history and a symbolic execution of the right of return.

The book contributes to these debates by investigating the micropolitics of representation that exist in the liminal spaces between tourism, commemoration, and resistance. Towards this end, I utilized the qualitative participatory method of walk-along ethnography, which refers to being

on site whilst being on the move. I discovered the power of walking as a means of creatively engaging with a wider community when I initiated an Alternative After-School Art Club for numerous schools in the Elephant and Castle area in south London. One of our projects revolved around an artistic mapping of the local neighbourhood by walking and looking into its patterns and textures. This walking methodology was used by students to visually articulate the process of rapid gentrification that the area was undergoing as it impacts on their daily lives. I further encountered the transformative power of collaborative walking during a tour of a destroyed Palestinian village guided by a Palestinian second-generation refugee. Experiencing how the tour completely altered my geographical conception of the landscape of my childhood, my history, and my politics is what inspired this theoretical and methodological investigation into guided tours as a form of memory activism.

The Benefits of the 'Walk-along' Method

As part of my walk-along ethnographic research for this book, I contacted walk-along interviews with tour guides about the process of designing their tours. I also joined their tours as a participant observer and conducted walk-along interviews with the audience. In addition, I joined more official heritage tours in Berlin, Jaffa, and Tel Aviv, to familiarize myself with their hegemonic displays of memory. I documented these tours through the artistic mediums of drawing and photography. During five weeklong trips to Berlin, I participated in ten walking tours and conducted seventeen interviews with tour guides, NGO workers, and tour participants. During three two-months-long visits in Tel Aviv and Jaffa, I joined twelve tours in Jaffa and other Palestinian cities and villages within Israeli territory and conducted fifteen interviews with tour guides and tour participants during or after tours. I also joined ten walking tours in south Tel Aviv and connected nineteen interviews with activists, tour guides, and tour participants. 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 in which these tours intervene.

Indeed, as existing studies demonstrate, the added value of walking ethnography is that it generates richer data prompted by meanings and connections to the surrounding environment, with its emotional, symbolic, ideological, spatial, and sensual characters (Evans and Jones, 2011; Macpherson, 2016; Ingold and Vergunst, 2008). 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. 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). I deployed this embodied approach as an empirical framework to research forced displacement and how it interacts with urban conflict, inequalities, and memory politics.

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 in which Joseph S. Robinson's (2020) informers guide him along the Irish border, narrating their everyday landscape, with its segments, twists, and turns as located on a perceived spectrum of risk. Through these tours, Robinson learned 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 (Edensor, 2008; Robinson and McClelland, 2020).

Les Back (2017) further demonstrates that this walking pedagogy, when practiced collaboratively, 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, colonization, 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, I employed qualitative fieldwork to produce a detailed inventory of several streets and the interactions they foster between memory cultures from multiple geographies and scales.

The above-outlined benefits of walking as a spatial critical pedagogy apply in two ways to this book. In addition to contextualizing my methodology, they help theorize the potential of walking tours to enact a collaborative mode of memory activism, as I expand on in the following chapters.

Expanding the 'Walk-along' Method

This book develops existing research that utilizes walking ethnography to study everyday usages, experiences, and senses of place or processes of place-making by using it to study a strategic performance and its political implications. I expanded traditional qualitative participatory walking methods through artistic mediums. Thus, I used drawing as a method to capture behavioural sketches of participants' bodily activities and compositions during the guided tour experience. To supplement this, when I wished to focus more on the surroundings to further unpack the contribution of space and architecture to the guided tour performance, I used photography. I also used the artistic medium of collage 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.

I sought inspiration in a long 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. I examined the work of artists such as Richard Long, Hamish Fulton, Sophie Calle, Marina Abramovic, and Janet Cardiff 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. 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. This extended creative walk-along method proved essential in locating themes and theoretical insights for the book.

To deal with the ethical issue of consent, I coordinated my participatory research and interviews in advance, presented myself as a researcher in front of participants, and maintained transparency. The 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. Similarly, tour guides arrived with the intention of publicly educating people about their experiences and were happy to extend this gesture towards my research. Drawing on a collaborative approach to walking ethnography, as articulated by Sarah Pink (2008) and Tim Ingold (2016), I actively participated in tours rather than merely observing them; this approach enabled me to gain insights into the sensorial and social dimensions of the shared walking tour experience and how it shapes bodies, minds, and places. The participatory and visual data gathering methods were triangulated with interviews and informal

conversations with activists, tour guides, and non-governmental organization (NGO) workers. These focused on their self-defined aims and strategies.

Being an active walking participant, it was important for me to remain alert to the ways my own positionalities and social entanglements impacted the research process and my interpretative framework (Aoki and Yoshimizu, 2015). 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. Being personally invested in the Israel-Palestine context and being myself an activist in the struggle to de-colonize this region also impacts my interpretation of the tours, which centres on their political potentials.

To protect the anonymity of tour guides and tour participants, I used drawings or long-shot photographs and changed names and other definable details. Nevertheless, some tour guides are established political leaders and NGO workers who preferred their names to be published in the book, especially so that they would receive the appropriate credit for their tour design and its political content. Indeed, it is important to note that the voices of refugees featured in this research are disproportionally well-resourced in terms of education and political experience. In all cities, there were far fewer female tour guides, which also means that their voices are not equally represented. Nonetheless, it is also worth stressing the sensitivity of researching a population that has undergone trauma and is subjected to mediated and academic attention, such as refugees. As one interviewee, Amir (Interview, 2019), explains in relation to an unpleasant encounter with journalists: ‘my story is not for sale and I tell it my way, to whom I want’. 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. Similarly, our conversations and interviews during and after the tours focused on the self-defined aims and strategies of tour guides. I

also shared my findings and academic literature with activists to receive constructive feedback from them and to ensure that they were pleased with the way they were portrayed; and for them to use in funding applications and educational campaigns. By placing the self-choreographed public gestures of displaced people 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, and between subaltern tour guides and privileged tour participants (hooks, 1990). This is not to suggest that these disparities can be overcome, and indeed the book reflects on how they manifest during tours. Nevertheless, the tour guides' choice to lead and educate more privileged participants and researchers such as myself is an interesting means to stress but also temporally undermine societal division and hierarchies.

In terms of the implications drawn out of this ethnographic process, Adam Saltsman and Nassim Majidi (2021: 2523) 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.

Building on this, the following chapters will closely consider what refugees do with their stories and how they use them for political objectives – and will outline the insights this provides for theorists, practitioners, and activists in the fields of refugee studies, urban theory, and memory and heritage studies. First, I outline the theoretical framework of the book.

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1. Expanding the Geo-Temporal Scope of Forced Displacement Research and Representation

Abstract: Chapter One engages with contemporary scholarship on refugees in the fields of law, media studies, political science, geography, and architecture to identify existing trends within the current public discourse on forced displacement. It stresses a key lacuna in the literature on forced displacement: the legal-administrative and the architectural approaches highlight global power structures and emergency solutions that portray refugees and asylum seekers as voiceless victims or threats. Instead, the chapter uses the lens of post-colonial theory, urban studies, and memory studies, to propose a more dynamic, transnational, and agency-focused approach that seems more adequate to studying this rapidly changing, prolonged, and transnational reality.

Keywords: Borders, camps, geography, refugee studies, urban studies, memory studies

The interdisciplinary area of refugee studies has developed since the 1980s and has gained greater prominence in the past decade, due to both the rising number of people who experience forced displacement, and the increase in the conflicted public discourse around this phenomenon. To identify existing trends within the current public discourse on forced displacement, and within the rich and interdisciplinary field of forced displacement research, the chapter will survey the common understanding of the time and geography of seeking refug. It will stress the inclination to focus on moments of 'crisis', state power, and border crossing, along with the tendency to focus on the administrative aspects of the phenomenon of people seeking refuge. To supplement this focus, the book proposes a three-part theoretical intervention. Firstly, it advances the body as a

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crucial analytical site to produce research that captures the subjective impacts of the violence of border regimes and the acts of resilience, mobility, and spatial disobedience of displaced people. Secondly, it progresses the urban-everyday as a promising analytical arena to study long-term forced displacement beyond borders – linking different scales of displacement and illuminating their prolonged causes and impacts. Thirdly, it proposes the useful lens of memory and heritage studies to address the cross-generational and transcultural impacts of the phenomenon of people seeking refuge in a post/colonial context.

The Geo-Temporal Scope of Forced Displacement Studies

Though the phenomenon of forced displacement cuts across multiple cultures, geographies, and time periods, its prevalent geo-temporal conception within public discourse is limited to instances of the penetration of borders and short spells of crisis. Surveying relevant literature, this section will stress how this conception reduces refugees to objects that threaten national security, or victims in need of humanitarian aid. It will further discuss how this conception translates into a set of laws, ideologies, and power dynamics that seek to exclude and scrutinize refugees, which materialize as camps, borders, and detention facilities. The section will argue that the existing literature provides morally and empirically significant insights into the institutional failure to protect those fleeing war and persecution; yet, paradoxically, it duplicates the inclination in mediated and public discourses to favour the administrative aspects of forced displacement and the national concern with borders.

The Temporality of Forced Displacement

As studies proclaim, the current temporal conception of forced displacement relates to it as a 'crisis' (Gattinara, 2017; Heidenreich et al., 2019; Triandafyllidou, 2018). The inclination to reduce forced displacement to acute moments of disaster abstracts from the structural causes behind this phenomenon. To exemplify, Martina Tazzioli (2016) demonstrates how the representation of rescue operations of refugees at sea reduces them from people escaping wars into shipwrecked persons needing rescue. As such, the tendency of media, advocacy, and humanitarian groups to focus on moments of 'crisis' contributes to the reduction of the subjectivity of displaced people to that of mere victims (Esses et al., 2013; Greussing and Boomgaarden, 2017).

Another aspect of this politics of representation is that politicians might also seek to enhance the visibility of their humanitarian actions towards victimized refugees to advance their global reputation, as Umut Korkut (2019) demonstrates in the Turkish context. Similarly in Germany, the welcoming of contemporary refugees has been framed as atonement for the Nazi past or a chance for a positive transformation of German self-definition (Bock and Macdonald, 2019). Hence, to navigate their cultural and legal acceptance, refugees are forced to accentuate their victimhood and/or perform certain identities that appeal to humanitarian organizations, donors, and/or governments (Holmes and Castañeda, 2016; Shuman and Bohmer, 2014). 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.

As Ariella Azoulay (2014) asserts, the humanitarian focus on acute spells of trauma and its victims depoliticizes trauma – by underplaying the 'perpetrators'' responsibility in inflicting it and the connivance of temporary solutions, such as emergency accommodation, in its perpetuation. The framing of refuge as an unprecedented time of trouble and danger also contributes to the reduction of displaced people to objects of an ontological demographic, cultural, and security threat (Gray and Franck, 2019; Kalir, 2015; Léonard and Kaunert, 2019). This gives rise to a culture of fear that is fuelled by racial stigmatization of displaced people as criminals, sexual predators, and/or potential terrorists (De Genova, 2017). For instance, John Borneman and Parvis Ghassem-Fachandi (2017) describe the rise of xenophobia in the seemingly welcoming country of Germany during 2015, following a series of sexual assaults by migrants on German women in Cologne – though the police repeatedly stressed that the frequency of sexual attacks by migrants does not exceed that perpetrated by Germans.

The media plays a key role in promoting the public perceptions of refugees as a threat (Heidenreich et al., 2019; Triandafyllidou, 2018). 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. This racialized politics of fear marks a new phase in racism that is no longer driven by biological factors

as much as by aesthetic and spatial ones; it is about the visible presence of outsiders walking through the streets (Yacobi, 2011).

The temporal inclination to depict refuge as a 'crisis' does not merely contribute to the framing of the mobility and presence of refugees as a threat but also as something 'exceptional' that justifies authoritarian remedies (De Genova, 2018). Research charts the proliferation of exceptional policies, laws, and regulations at national and regional scales that seek to manage, monitor, and deter the bodily movement of displaced people (Ambrosini, 2018; Rea et al., 2019; Bourbeau, 2011). Important contributions to these debates emerge from the cross-disciplinary mobilities paradigm that attends to the socio-politics of different modes of movement (Cresswell, 2011; Sheller and Urry, 2006; Urry, 2007). As relevant studies articulate, the securitization and restriction of the mobility of 'undesirable identities' such as refugees is now emerging as a new transnational form of governance (Cresswell, 2006; Rygiel, 2011b).

As the control of mobility is an essential tool of national and transnational authorities, so is the control of sight. Marieke Borren (2008) highlights for the case of refugees that technologically enabled regimes of exposure produce a type of 'harmful visibility' that reinforces policies of exclusion, dehumanization, surveillance, and violence. As Michel Foucault (1977: 200) writes in his analysis of the birth of state disciplinary power, 'visibility is a trap'. The connection he articulates between the management of power with the control of sight – by which power is exercised through rendering subjects visible so as to monitor, survey, and categorize them – is pertinent in contexts of transnational migration management. Technologically enabled regimes of exposure and surveillance reinforce exclusion and violence towards people forced to move, which violates and infiltrates their lives, bodies, and psyches (Presti, 2020).

The politics of refugees' (in)visibility therefore involves a play between regimes of visibilization, surveillance, and invisibilization versus their agency to manoeuvre these – to blend in or resist visibility, claim visibility, and determine its parameters (Kallio et al., 2019; de Vries, 2016). As Jacques Rancière (2006) proclaims, politics is inherently aesthetic, as it defines the relationship between what is permitted to be seen, and how, while political resistance occurs through a disruption of this relationship. A key argument of this book is that disrupting the public framing of forced displacement by illuminating its prolonged and structural aspects is analytically crucial to better comprehend forced displacement, and is politically vital to promote accountability, reparation, and reform within societal responses to this phenomenon. Indeed, as will be explained in the following, in keeping with the temporal conception of a 'crisis', the current spatial responses

to refugees' mobility promote exceptional and violent measures through the architecture of border zones, confinement facilities, and emergency accommodation.

The Geography of Forced Displacement

The growing field of critical border studies and the related field of camp studies demonstrate how people fleeing war, persecution, and human rights violations are increasingly met with an elastic regime of border enforcement and confinement, instead of protection (Hung and Lien, 2022; Scott, 2020; Tazzioli and Walters, 2016), a regime that subjects people to violence and exclusion (Davies et al., 2019; de Vries and Guild, 2019; Dhesi et al., 2018). Camps, emergency accommodation, and border facilities are commonly built in remote locations such as deserts or off-shore islands, which render refugees invisible to the public eye and visible to managers who work for by international humanitarian actors, enhancing and concealing the violations of human rights these sites uphold (Halabi, 2016; Kuftinec, 2019; Mountz, 2011). As Foucault (1977: 187) advises, disciplinary power aims to remain invisible, whilst the mere possibility of being visualized and surveyed is what 'maintains the disciplined individual in his subjection'.

Utilizing the lens of the mobilities paradigm that retheorizes spaces as constituted through movement, relevant debates point to the stretching, multiplication, and mobility of bordering practices and detention facilities (Andersen et al., 2016; Andrijasevic and Walters, 2010; Raeymaekers, 2013). For example, Martina Tazzioli and Glenda Garelli (2020) theorize 'hotspots' not merely as sites of confinement, but also as channels of enforced and disciplined mobility. They demonstrate this through analysing how migrants are forcefully transferred from the Italian cities of Ventimiglia and Como to the hotspot of Taranto, where they are contained, surveyed, and categorized.[1] Such territorially flexible approaches provide a new and urgent understanding of the layout of border rule which cannot be limited to the edges of states or an outside/inside ordering. Rather, research demonstrates that borders involve a plenitude of localized apparatuses in workplaces, housing, and schools (Yuval-Davis et al., 2019).

In parallel, as Francis L. Collins (2021) advises, relevant debates on the sociotechnical platforms that enable migration help chart the multiple

1 Hotspots are places initiated as part of the European Commission's Agenda on Migration to process asylum applications and enforce return decisions. For more information see: https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/italy/asylum-procedure/access-procedure-and-registration/hotspots/.

actors, institutions, networks, and applications that enable, shape, or constrain mobility beyond obvious actors such as nation states and individuals. The intersection of border and mobility studies therefore helps articulate the embeddedness and groundedness of movement and migration (Blunt, 2007). Relevant studies further introduce the notion of (im)mobility to account for the waiting, confinement, and postponement that are equally integral to migratory mobility (Georgiou et al., 2022; Schewel, 2020; Smets, 2019).

Certainly, attuning to the flexible and dynamic nature of border regions also requires greater sensibility to the ways actors and institutions use time, in both linear and non-linear senses, to regulate borders and civic membership (Dotsey and Lumley-Sapanski, 2021; Tefera, 2021). This helps outline the 'slow' (Nixon, 2011) and 'chronic'(Pain, 2019) elements of violence, as they play out in border regimes. For instance, Leonie Ansems de Vries and Elspeth Guild (2019) demonstrate how the slow violence of migration management works through a 'politics of exhaustion' by which spaces of transit, such as railway stations, parks, informal settlements, and hotspots become prominent sites for people seeking refuge.

Nonetheless, the violence of border regimes also operates through speed, as Daria Davitt (2018) shows in the analysis of how the EU's hotspots aim to fast-track the processing and forced return of people to places where they are unsafe. Davitt builds on Giorgio Agamben's (2008) biopolitical theorization of the camp as a site constructed by a sovereign power as 'state-of-exception', whereby legality is suspended and inhabitants' lives become bare, in-between the natural and the human realms. Similarly, Davitt argues that the 'crisis' framing allows the EU to normalize a 'state-of-exception' within its border enforcement policies, by which an emergency requires exceptional and swift measures that jeopardize the lives of migrants.

Indeed, the fields of critical border studies and camp studies are theoretically dominated by the prisms of citizenship and biopolitics, which foster an analysis of how these sites determine the boundaries of civil membership and exercise the power to regulate life and expose some to death (Davitti, 2018; Parker and Vaughan-Williams, 2012; Zaiotti, 2016). The field of camp research also builds on the theorization by Hannah Arendt (1973) – 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. However, whilst biopolitics theory helps attest to the violence of contemporary border regimes, there remains an analytical need to better theorize the structural causes of this violence – as it impacts and is experienced by those subjected to it.

De-Colonizing Forced Displacement Research

A noteworthy recent theoretical direction within human geography provides an avenue to address the underlying roots of contemporary border violence. It utilizes post/colonial theory to demonstrate how the legacy of race, othering, and empire underpin its exclusionary logics (Davies and Isakjee, 2019; Farrier, 2011; Mayblin, 2017). This continuity is also spatial, since the camp as a contemporary architectural tool of confinement was developed during the late colonial era, implemented in European colonies, and later imported into Europe by totalitarian regimes (Katz, 2017b). The type of violence migration spaces facilitates extends from the colonies, as Achille Mbembé's (2003: 11) notion of 'necropolitics' helps articulate. He designates necropolitics as the converse of the Foucauldian (1990) biopower that regulated living and dying – instead, regulating 'who may live and who must die'. Mbembé (2003: 40) further defines 'death-worlds' as sites whose subjects are designated as 'living dead' who are not actively killed but reduced almost to death by prolonged cruel conditions.

Building on this, studies demonstrate how borders operate as death-worlds in which states render the letting die of migrants and refugees as permissible (Davies et al., 2017; Davies and Isakjee, 2019; Mayblin et al., 2020). In such death-worlds, violence is enacted through the usage of suggestive and deferred acts of physical force to reduce public criticism and enable the continuation of these oppressive regimes (Azoulay and Ophir, 2012). By stressing that border violence is a logical progression of a historically embedded colonial/modern perception, the post/colonial lens helps destabilize the temporal framing of an exponential 'crisis' as it used to justify extreme border violence (Davies et al., 2017). Instead, it offers a means to articulate the multiple geo-temporal colonial entanglement of forced displacement regimes (Genova, 2017). For instance, by mapping how the contemporary mobility of refugees into Europe is deeply shaped by the European colonial past as well as by the United States-dominated colonial present (Gregory, 2004), or by noting the enduring coloniality and racialized subjugation of contemporary border regimes (Tazzioli and De Genova, 2020).

Yet, as Lucy Mayblin, Mustafa Wake, and Mohsen Kazemi (2020) stress, there is a great deal of potential in advancing direction by unpacking the colonial and post/colonial every day. Indeed, a valid criticism that has long been levelled at post/colonial thinking relates to its abstract scale of analysis, which overlooks the lived reality and resistance of the colonized. This book builds on urban and memory studies to conduct a 'contrapuntal analysis' of forced displacement (contrapuntal analysis being a concept developed by Edward Said [1994] in response to criticism that his book *Orientalism*

overlooked the agency of the colonized [Chowdhry, 2007]). It therefore offers an interpretation of colonial texts that captures the perspectives of the colonizer and the colonized, of imperialism and the resistance to it – thereby demonstrating that resistance is not located outside hegemonic orders, but in a relational dialogue with them.

Similarly, a recent strand of research has emerged out of criticism of the way biopolitical theory reduces the subjectivity of refugees to that of victims and objects of control (Ramadan, 2013), a reduction that the post/colonial lens duplicates when it favours an analysis of colonial measures of control without registering the way these are experienced and defied by the colonized. Instead, this strand of research registers the subjective and daily implications of the violence of border management regimes as well as the agency of displaced persons to survive and defy them (Martin et al., 2020; O'Reilly, 2018; Singh, 2020). Indeed, feminist geographers have long contended that illuminating the political dynamics and agencies that transpire at the finer scale of the body fosters new understandings of politics and power relations (Hyndman, 2004; Marston, 2000; Mountz and Loyd, 2014).

For instance, analysing an informal refugee camp in Calais, Irit Katz (2017a) illustrates the spatial agency of its inhabitants in assuming an active role in its design and in forming a sense of place by allocating humorous names to sites within the camp (such as 'the Jungle Books' or 'David Cameron Street'). The Autonomy of Migration (AoM) is another promising theoretical framework that foregrounds the agency of migrants and forcibly displaced people (Tazzioli et al., 2018; Tazzioli, 2014). It utilizes the notion of 'autonomy' to stress the acts of spatial disobedience of forcibly displaced people, and 'the turbulence' of migrants' mobility tactics (Casas-Cortes et al., 2015), without romanticizing autonomy as a pure act of subversion or emancipation (Tazzioli et al., 2018). AoM therefore adds to an understanding of migration as a subjective act that involves a wide spectrum of human creativity and agency, which in turn impacts on the dynamics of the restrictive regime of border enforcement (Nyers, 2015).

Conducting such critical and fine research benefits from participatory and creative approaches. Amalia Campos-Delgado (2018) relies on cognitive maps drawn by Central American migrants of their journeys across the Mexico–US border as informative 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. Additional scope and methods for analysis are advanced through the digital turn in geography, which attends to geographies of the digital and to the influence of the

digital on geography (Ash et al., 2018). Studies show how forcibly displaced people 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 (Alencar et al., 2019; Presti, 2020; Zijlstra and van Liempt, 2017).

The body therefore emerges as an important site to advance our understanding of contemporary border regimes, by retheorizing them as sites of exclusion, confinement, and violence but also of life, creativity, autonomy, and resistance. By assuming creative and participatory approaches that foreground the voices and actions of displaced people, research provides a more holistic understanding of colonial border violence as it both impacts and is affected by those subjected to it. Yet, the agency and autonomy of displaced people are not restricted to movements of border crossing and emergency accommodation. The following sections consider the urban as a useful site to enhance the geo-temporal scope of forced displacement research and complement the analysis of biopolitical and racial violence with additional types of formal and informal responses to forced displacement. The aim is to advance Patricia Ehrkamp's (2017: 819) observation regarding 'the importance of moving researchers' attention from borders to border crossers' by expanding our awareness of the agencies and subjectivities of displaced people across more varied geo-temporal scales.

Re-Theorizing Urban Forced Displacement

In 2019, the UNHCR estimated that around fifty-eight percent of all documented refugees and eighty percent of internally displaced persons resided in cities. The rapid urbanization of forced displacement also includes camps that are increasingly integrated within cityscapes, and the increased urbanization of camps themselves (Martin et al., 2020; Sanyal, 2012, 2014). 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 (Fawaz, 2017; Muggah and Abdenur, 2018; Sanyal, 2012). Another source of appeal is the top-down globalization they foster, shaped by migratory transcultural communities and sites of trans-local connectivity (Amin and Thrift, 2017; Sassen, 2011; Stürner and Bendel, 2019). In parallel, refugees greatly contribute to cities' formal and informal economies, altering their visibility from objects of humanitarian relief into neo-liberal urban enterprising subjects (Crisp et al., 2012; Esen and Oğuş Binatlı, 2017; Jonathan and Abel, 2015; Lenner and

Turner, 2019). The urban therefore emerges as a crucial arena where the realities of forced displacement are most apparent.

As this section will illustrate, it is also analytically crucial for expanding the dominant theoretical vocabulary of the phenomenon of people seeking refuge – moving beyond notions of citizenship, states of exception, and biopolitics towards notions of solidarity and political participation.

The City of Refuge?

As conflicting political principles and powers are invoked to deal with people seeking asylum, cities have become focal in fostering welcoming and solidarity initiatives (Ataç et al., 2020; Darling and Bauder, 2019; Koos and Seibel, 2019; Selim et al., 2018). Prominent examples of urban welcoming 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. In action and theory, the notion of urban citizenship has been formulated as an important counterweight to national measures of exclusion and the refusal of protection towards displaced persons. Particularly relevant is Jacques Derrida's (2003: 149) analysis of the contradictions between the hospitable city and the sovereign state. Also pertinent is Henri Lefebvre's (1996) declaration of the 'right-to-the-city', which challenges national citizenship as the basis for rights (Pierce et al., 2016), and formulates a demand for equal rights to be extended to all urban inhabitants and users for the co-habitation and co-creation of urban space (Brenner and Schmid, 2015; Blokland et al., 2015).

Indeed, urban municipalities, community networks, civil society organizations, local businesses, and religious institutions act as leaders in the reception and welcoming of displaced people (Muggah and Abdenur, 2018; Sanyal, 2012). Institutional reception policies are often complimented by urban solidarity initiatives, forming different topologies of relations and collaborations. Óscar García Agustín and Martin Bak Jørgensen (2019) demonstrate that solidarity can be autonomous (e.g., City Plaza Hotel, a self-organized housing project for homeless refugees in Athens); a supplementation of 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 formed to oppose obstacles placed by the Spanish government). Myria Georgiou et al. (2022) further describe smaller-scale 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. 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 (Hayden and Saunders, 2019).

Architects and architecture are also important elements in accommodating displaced people within cities and in fostering a culture of welcome and solidarity. For instance, shipping containers have become a popular solution for mass displacement. They were used on the old site of Berlin's Tempelhof Airport (originally built by the Nazis in 1923), which was converted into an urban refugee camp as part of the German policy of welcoming refugees. Yet the containers' material qualities of permanence and mobility – their low cost and durability as well as ease of transport, set-up, modification, relocation, and eventual removal – also make them an ideal technology for distributing and redistributing displaced people in accordance with fluctuating refugee policies (Baumann, 2020). Another example of the way welcoming architecture works to both contain *and* displace populations is the Parisian *Yellow Bubble*, commissioned in 2016 by the mayor of Paris to accommodate homeless asylum seekers that inhabited the city in growing numbers. The shelter's architect, Julien Beller, who was renowned for designing quick and temporary projects, was able to design a colourful, playful, and artistic humanitarian shelter in just a few months. Yet, this symbol of hospitality and emblem of a move towards aesthetically influential humanitarian interventions became a sorting and dispatching centre, appropriated by the national project of clearing informal dwellers from the streets (Scott-Smith, 2020).

Hence, the theoretical situating of the city as a strategic arena outside the boundaries of national citizenship is too simplistic. It overlooks how national and transnational policies of exclusion impact urban policies – and the limitations and contraindications within urban attempts to design spaces and cultures of welcome. In another example, 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 et al., 2014). Relevant debates further note the power imbalances between hosts who chose to offer newcomers their hospitality (Squire and Darling, 2013; Wilson, 2014), and how this is often jeopardized by fluctuations in public opinion and hierarchies between 'grateful' and 'ungrateful' refugees (Holmes

and Castañeda, 2016). Harald Bauder (2021) also stresses the difficulty of practising the abstract concept of solidarity within campaigns on the ground, with activists and community leaders often feeling uncertain of its meanings and implication.

The urban-versus-national duality further understates urban levelled material and cultural hostility towards refugees (Bolzoni et al., 2015; Cohen and Margalit, 2015; Kikano et al., 2021). Crucially, a world Refugee Council Research Paper written by Robert Muggah and Adriana Erthal Abdenur (2018) finds that in most cities worldwide, displaced persons face stigma, racism, xenophobia, marginalization, discrimination, and poverty, alongside cultural and spatial segregation. The paper also notes that around eighty-five percent of refugees worldwide dwell in underdeveloped cities that experience political turbulence and poverty. It is therefore problematic to reduce urban identities to an oversimplified contrast between poor and marginalized non-citizens versus established and metropolitan welcoming citizens (Smith and Guarnizo, 2009).

Multiple Scales of Urban Displacement

The prevailing dichotomy between the hospitable city and the exclusionary state is especially inadequate in our current urban contexts of austerity and inequality, where gentrification and urban renewal displace both citizens and non-citizens from neighbourhoods and cities. Displacement at the scale of the city is commonly attributed in the literature to the neo-liberalization of cities – a process which privatizes the planning, production, supply, and allocation of the built environment and renders housing a commodity rather than a basic human right (Clark, 2005; Sager, 2011). Yet, a more critical theoretical stance illuminates the role of national and municipal authorities in facilitating gentrification to alter the ethnic and class configuration of neighbourhoods, leading to the forced displacement of marginalized and 'othered' communities (Fullilove, 2016; Stabrowski, 2014; Wallace, 2015).

Taking another critical step beyond Euro-American epistemologies and perspectives, pertinent research illuminates how these processes correlate with prolonged colonial logics (Ahmad 2022; Genc 2021; Yiftachel, 2020). For instance, Jeff Garmany and Matthew Richmond (2020) theorize a particular form of urban displacement in Brazil that is informed by legacies of colonialism, informality, and racial and class divisions. The urban colonial analysis therefore helps unpack the ways colonial dispossession, displacement, and violence manifest through the production of neoliberal urban spheres (Blatman-Thomas and Porter 2019; Blomley 2004; Kent-Stoll 2020; Porter and Yiftachel 2019; Simpson and Bagelman 2018). Contributing to these

debates, this book offers a place-based situational analysis of different spatio-temporal interactions between historical and contemporary processes of disposition and displacement as they occur at transnational, national, and urban scales.

In order to achieve this goal, the book utilizes a trans-local approach that builds on the methodological and theoretical stance of comparative, global, and post-colonial urbanism; this places cities from across and in between the Global North and Global South on an equal footing in urban theorization (Edensor and Jayne, 2012; Mcfarlane, 2010; McFarlane, 2021; Robinson and Roy, 2016). Looking at cities from across the Global North and Global South divide, the following empirical chapters will unpack how urban policies of touristification, gentrification, and marginalization in specific neighbourhoods shape as well as obscure memories, in ways that impact the reception of newcomers and produce varied and intersecting forms of displacement across generations. The book therefore aims to illuminate what Rachel Pain (2019) names 'chronic urban trauma' – referring to the intersection of cumulative effects of historical trauma and current processes of displacement due to gentrification. It will stress what Mindy Thompson Fullilove (2016) refers to as the 'root shock' caused by these multiple and prolonged assaults.

As well as reflecting on the intersections of different scales of urban forced displacement, the book aims to theorize its politics by registering the acts of agency and autonomy of forcefully displaced people, as the following section expands on.

Political Participation and Visibility

Jacques Rancière's (2006) consideration of politics as inherently aesthetic has inspired a body of literature that highlights the importance of cities as stages for refugees to appear and act politically. Of further relevance is Rancière's (2004) commentary on the Arendtian and Agambenian division between bare life and public political life. Drawing from the example of women's participation in the French Revolution, Rancière proposes that through public political performances, those without rights simultaneously demonstrate their exclusion from political life as well as their ability to act and therefore be political. Politics is thus mobilized in the 'gap' between the absence of rights and the performative demand of a right to have rights. This adds 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, Jonathan Darling (2017) advises that whilst cities cannot fully oppose national and transnational systems of exclusion of

displaced people, they foster a type of politics that operates within the gaps of such systems. This politics, Darling 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. In a similar vein, Nicholas De Genova's (2010) concept of the 'queer politics of migration' notes the affinity between the radical politics of migrant presence and the politics of queer presence; both assert not merely their fact of presence but undermine the existing social order. Vicki Squire (2010) illustrates this in her analyses of a café in Sheffield in England run by asylum seeker volunteers who are 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 hierarchies of exclusion.

Refugees also claim a key role in fostering urban welcoming initiatives. In the Ouzaii neighbourhood of Beirut, a home for various displaced groups over different periods, refugees host other, more recent arrivals (Yassine et al., 2019). Similarly, Ammar Azzouz (2019) describes communal forms of solidarity that tackle conditions of internal displacement in the Syrian city of Homs. This involves people who have left the city or own more than one property hosting internally displaced family and friends, and people who share their houses with homeless relatives.

Greater academic attention is also directed towards refugees' more acutely political claims to visibility. These range from artistic political expression through art and theatre (Kuftinec, 2019; Martiniello, 2019; Rotas, 2012), to marches and performances (Lecadet, 2016; Rosenberger et al., 2018), and acts of self-harm that publicly attest to and protest the voicelessness of being labelled a refugee, such as lip-sewing (Rajan, 2019), or hunger strikes (Pellander and Horsti, 2017). Theoretically, studies note how protests by displaced persons re-mobilize 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 (Rygiel, 2011a, 2011b).

Similarly, studies use participatory methods to trace the political mobilization for the-right-to-the-city undertaken by those subjected to urban displacement due to gentrification (Arcilla, 2023; Luke and Kaika, 2019; Maharawal, 2023). Under the current politics and governance of blame (Flinders et al., 2024), the acute housing crisis in many cities worldwide is often blamed on non-citizens (Lima, 2021). Yet, as refugees demonstrated when they occupied abandoned buildings in the city centre of Athens (Tsavdaroglou and Kaika, 2022), housing shortages which are commonly

attributed to migrants are better explained by property speculation and lack of investment in housing. There is therefore an urgent need for a politics of housing justice and urban belonging that is inclusive of citizens and non-citizens, and which stresses institutional responsibility for causing as well as tackling the crisis of housing, displacement, and urban neglect.

As this book argues, such a radical politics of urban belonging necessitates generating new representations, memories, and imagination of cities, and should be led by the voices and activism of displaced people themselves. The following section stresses the potentials for the lens of memory and heritage studies to offer additional notions of belonging, locality, and participation existing outside the boundary of urban or national citizenship.

The Geography of Travelling and Transcultural Memory

Forced displacement involves a painful awareness of places that no longer exist, and complicated relations to homes, homelands, colonized lands, ruined lands, and/or host lands. Within these complex maps of temporal and spatial relations, the interdisciplinary fields of memory and heritage studies offer a useful prism for theorizing the structural causes and impacts of forced displacement across generations and the agency of displaced people. As this section will demonstrate, the recent transcultural turn in memory studies provides a lens for studying the exchange and transmission that occurs as refugees carry their memories across time and place. The book seeks to advance this turn through a dual theoretical contribution: (1) advancing it by paying greater attention to the materiality and performativity of transcultural memory; and (2) politicizing it by demonstrating how refugees enact a transcultural memory activism to impact and expand the public memory of the contested national and urban contexts they inhabit or traverse.

Why Memory Matters to Refugee Studies

For academic research to consider the experiences and agency of displaced persons, it is necessary to devote greater attention to the memories they carry and transfer across time and place. Memory is a vital resource for refugees to maintain attachments to remembered environments that they can no longer access, serving as an anchor for longing, identity preservation, and commemoration (Bender and Winer, 2001). As Edward Said (2013: 148) writes: 'both the new and the old environments are vivid, actual, occurring together contrapuntally'. With time, remembered sites are charged with

altering emotional and symbolic attributes, and places of misery become sites of desire (Halilovich, 2013; Hirsch and Miller, 2011). Memory is also crucial in refugees' attempts to navigate their acceptance in host lands. For instance, they are required to retell their traumatic memories in order to receive an official refugee status (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, such as giving interviews to media outlets (Tirosh, 2018), and launching online campaigns (Butler, 2017), or composing visual online archives (Antosik-Parsons, 2019). Memory is also key to the struggles for political and human rights of internally displaced persons, especially in prolonged contexts of war, spatial disputes, and settler-colonial dispossession. By commemorating their lost home(lands), they resist institutionalized attempts to deny their connection to these places and ignore the atrocities they endured (Charron, 2020; Hawari, 2018; McRae, 2019). For instance, Azzouz (2019) describes how in response to extensive postwar regeneration plans in Homs, local architects and internally displaced citizens form online archives that include the smallest details, such as doors or windows, to commemorate the pre-war city, their identity, and heritage.

The transcultural turn in memory studies provides an avenue for analysing the exchange, transmission, and appropriation that occurs as memories travel across time and place (Bond and Rapson, 2014; Crownshaw, 2016; Erll, 2011). For instance, by tracing a transcultural archive that consists of Holocaust memory travelling within anti-colonial writings, Michael Rothberg (2009) formulates a theory of 'multidirectional memory' that consists of borrowing, dialogue, and revisions between seemingly distinct traumatic memories. Further unpacking the travelling of memory across time through an analysis of literary and visual legacies of the Holocaust, Marianne Hirsch (Hirsch, 2012) formulates the influential theory of 'postmemory', a theory that captures the enduring and transmitted impacts of traumatic histories on familial and cultural scales across the globe. Daniel Ley and Natan Sznaider (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.

The travelling metaphor which underpins the above debates is influenced by Eduard Said's (2007) essay *Traveling Theory*, in which he explores the ways that ideas and theories travel and circulate between persons, geographies,

and periods – which James Clifford (1997) further applied to the realm of culture. Nevertheless, as Clifford himself has observed, the notion of 'travel' has associations with middle-class recreational activity and adventure. In contrast, studying travelling theory from the perspectives of migration and/or activism initiatives complicates these imaginations and politicizes the notions of travelling and cosmopolitan memories. For instance, Kelly Butler (2017) illustrates how the transcultural mnemonic practice of survival testimony can reiterate divides informed by colonial legacies, by analysing how presentations of testimonies of Aboriginal peopleand asylum seekers in Australian literature and media reduce them to objects for white settlers' compassion. Jihwan Yoon and Derek H. Alderman (2019) further show how memory activism initiatives assume new meanings and scales as they circulate across geographies in their analysis of a trans-local campaign to commemorate the atrocities committed against Korean women by the Japanese.

Adopting a transcultural approach to memory studies is therefore useful to examine the ethical constraints and possibilities related to the travelling of memory cultures and practices. Yet, the current scope of analysis focuses on archives of transcultural memory (e.g., books, media, and other written or illustrative source), thereby overlooking its spatial and performative manifestations. Paying greater attention to what Aline Sierp and Jenny Wüstenberg (2015) describe as the 'simultaneous groundedness' of travelling memory can advance the transcultural turn by fostering a contrapuntal analysis on the interplay between top-down and bottom-up constructions of cultures *and* spaces. For instance, through attention to transcultural spatial and embodied elements, Haim Yacobi's (2015, 2016) research traces an 'architecture of diasporic memory' that undermines the Israeli modernist formal landscape that centres Ashkenazi (Jews of Eastern European origin) narratives. Analysing Netivot, a peripheral southern city in Israel with a majority Mizrahi (Jews of Middle Eastern and North African origin) population, Yacobi describes how the grave of Rabbi Israel Abuhatzeira (known as the Baba Sali) is inspired by a *mellah* (Jewish quarters in Moroccan cities); and how this popular pilgrimage site echoes the practice of visits to tombs amongst both Jews and Muslims in Morocco.

As a study by Gruia Bădescu (2019a) 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 from professional networks and memory regimes. Taking this notion one step further, the book considers urban city walking tours as additional mnemonic design agents. It therefore

wishes to link the transcultural turn in memory studies with the spatial turn in memory studies, as the following section explains.

Memory and Heritage in Disputed Cities

Pierre Nora's (1989) notion of *lieux de mémoire* (sites of memory) has influenced a spatial turn in memory studies, which considers the spatiality of cultural process of commemoration and the storage of memory. Pertinent studies demonstrate the role of cities – with their monuments, street names, archaeology, architecture, and 'old' quarters – as 'theatres of memory' (Samuel, 1996). Theatres that manifest scripted versions of the past that are anchored in the needs and ideologies of the present – fashioned by numerous bodies, objects, and actors, which determine what will be built, signposted, destroyed, renovated, or preserved (Staiger et al., 2009; Yacobi, 2016).

As Paul Stangl (2008) observes, 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), and the boundaries between these two styles of mnemonic expression are 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; Sternberg, 2017).

Cities with past or ongoing ethno-national disputes are especially rich with *lieux de mémoire* such as ruins, graves, and border zones, memorials, and scarred landscapes (Drozdzewski, 2014; Schramm, 2011; Till, 2005; Viggiani, 2014). Over time, there is increased commodification and touristification of these sites of trauma (Macdonald, 2006; Sturken, 2007; Weissman, 2018)). Nonetheless, the selectivity of such embellished marking of memory also instigates forgetting. As studies demonstrate, in addition to the acute violence of wars, ethno-national conflicts in cities are prolonged through land occupation and postwar reconstructions which represent the memory of only one group whilst other memories are left in ruins or deliberately obliterated (Bădescu, 2019b; Bakshi, 2017; Staiger et al., 2009). Yet, existing debates remain focused on the analytical categories of nation states and an assumed static and singular bond between nationality, place, and memory. By revisiting urban heritage sites and their memory politics from the novel perspective of refugee-led walking tours, the book works to complicate this assumed bond.

The existing research on the spatiality of memory in disputed cities also tends to overlook the experiences of users of conflicted sites of memory, including their agency to inform oppositional spatial practices around

these memory sites. This reiterates a broader tendency in literature on the spatiality of memory to privilege material forms, thereby reaerating 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). As Karen Till (2008) notes, this tendency contributes to an arbitrary separation of time/space, inner/external, and personal/collective.

In contrast, heritage and tourism studies suggest a fruitful way to address this lacuna, as they successfully theorize how touristic performances mediate between the voided past and the material present (Dekel, 2009; Macdonald, 2010). As Jackie Feldman (2002: 90) notes in his study of the popular Israeli youth *Shoah* trips to Poland, students' sensory and emotional experiences cultivated through performative interactions with traumatic sites are an 'important means by which experiences become imprinted on students' imaginations'. This book builds on these debates to frame performative practices such as walking as inseparable aspects of the experience *and* politics of memory sites. Performance theorist 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.

For instance, analysing a field near the village of Lovas in Croatia where a massacre took place in 1991, Jessie Fyfe and Maximilian Sternberg (2019) demonstrate how communal memory work – such as regularly ploughing the field – can overcome institutional disregard and the landscape's natural regenerational capacity. Bodily practices around memorials such as placing flowers or images of loved ones can also minimize the gaps between personal-versus-institutionalized and collectivized accounts of memory (Edkins, 2008). Yet, as Alena Pfoser and Emily Keightley (2021) argue, although tourism performances are key facilitators of memory politics and encounters with the traumas and histories of 'others', they remain understudied within the literature on transcultural memory. Addressing this gap, this book theorizes how refugees appropriate a touristic performance of city walking tours to enact a transcultural mode of memory activism.

Indeed, relevant studies demonstrate how tour guides/activists tactically manipulate the strategies of official tourism to illuminate the marginal histories of the city and/or histories of resistance and political action (Obrador and Carter, 2010; Wang and Kao, 2017).

Pfoser and Keightley (2021) demonstrate how tour guides in Tallinn in Estonia act as transcultural memory agents that manoeuvre memory disputes with Russian audiences regarding the Second World War and

the Soviet Union. These debates probe the importance of the city and the moving body as relevant for a future-oriented debate in memory studies that examines how activists voice silenced memories (Gutman, 2017), and/or commemorate histories of activism (Reading and Katriel, 2015; Rigney, 2018). As Rebecca Sheehan et al. 2021) further demonstrate in their analysis of memorial landscapes in the American South, promoting just socio-spatial futures requires a regenerative memorial paradigm constituted through the geographic and affective mobility of networks associated with people, ideas, and materiality. This book contributes to these debates and highlights the importance of place, architecture, and performances to advancing a transcultural mode of memory activism.

Concluding Reflections

The existing analysis of the national and transnational laws, ideologies, and powers related to forced displacement, alongside vital research on borders, camps, deportation processes, and asylum bureaucracies, provides valuable insights into the violent implications of demarcating the boundaries of civil membership. Such studies capture the geographical fluidity and multiplicity of contemporary border regimes and the plenitude of actors, institutions, and networks that are explicit in implementing its violence. Nevertheless, the prevailing conception of the time and geography of forced displacement also reflects a state-centric discourse on the boundaries of the nation state and acute moments of distress. This, in turn, contributes to the reduction of the subjectivity of displaced people to objects of management, risk, and/or victimhood.

There is therefore an urgent political and theoretical need to decentre the camp and the borders of nation states as the primary foci of analysis in the literature on the phenomenon of people seeking refuge, and to better integrate it with debates on urban displacement as correlated with processes of gentrification, regeneration, and austerity. Aiming to highlight new fields *and* new methods within which forced displacement can be researched and agencies identified, this chapter has demonstrated the contribution of the theoretical prism of the mobilities paradigm, the digital turn, and performance research. It has further reflected on the importance of creative and participatory methodologies to our understanding of forced displacement. As argued, focusing on the embodied interactions of displaced people helps retheorize the necropolitical and colonial violence that underpins contemporary politics of exclusion and displacement, without

duplicating the reduction of individuals to mere objects of management and assessment.

Zooming into street-level interactions in specific urban spheres from across the globe further offers a more situational and relational understanding of urban forced displacement. An understanding that views cities as constitutive of biopolitical and colonial systems of control, exclusion, and displacement – and of the acts of survival, navigation, and disobedience of forcefully displaced people. Building on Said's (1994: 19) notion of 'contrapuntal analysis' that maps 'a set of intertwined and overlapping histories', this book sets out to explore intertwined and overlapping prolonged histories of colonialism, displacement, and resistance as they are enacted through the urban sphere and its heritage sites. To unpack the complex maps of temporal and spatial relations that constitute the experience of forced displacement, the chapter notes the importance of placing refugee studies, urban studies, and memory and heritage studies in dialogue. Utilizing this framework, the following chapters closely examine walking performances of displaced people to register the subjective implications of forced displacement and the experiences and agency of those subjected to colonial processes of exclusion and othering. Building on the theoretical debates presented in this chapter, the guided tours' performative enactments will be theorized as a political intervention in a Rancièrian sense, of making space within the space of official public visibility.

A useful term to consider, one proposed 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. Building on existing debates in memory studies, and forming a bridge between them, as discussed above, this book frames heritage tours guided by or facilitated in collaboration with refugees as a transcultural mode of memory activism. The transcultural perspective on memory is inherently subversive as it undermines hegemonic terms, such as the nation state or globalization (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 (Gutman, 2017; Gutman and Wüstenberg, 2022). Adding the descriptive adjective 'transcultural' to this term further indicates political actions that reframe culture and heritage as derived from histories of movements and displacements. The focus on guided tours and the motion of walking provides a means for unpacking the bodily and spatial manifestations of transcultural memory, as the following chapters will closely outline.

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2. Refugees Show Their Berlin

Abstract: Chapter Two focuses on walking tours guided by Syrian and Iraqi refugees in Berlin, a local and global site of remembrance of the scars of twentieth-century tragedies. It unpacks how refugees affect the public memory of historical division and conflict in their host city and illuminate its entanglement with the lingering colonial past. The chapter begins by examining Berlin's official heritage trails and the memories they reveal or conceal, and the broader context of Berlin's ambivalent hospitality towards refugees. Within this conflicted context, the chapter stresses how refugee-guided tours reference Berlin's memorials and expand their meaning to curate a site of solidarity and cultural exchange to replace unequal notions of welcoming and integration.

Keywords: Germany, memorials, Cold War memory, Holocaust commemoration, migration.

This chapter looks at city walking tours guided by refugees from Syria and Iraq in Berlin, specifically in the migratory neighbourhood of Neukölln and in the central area of Mitte. It does so to theorize how refugees can affect the public memory of historical division and conflict in the cities they inhabit. As the chapter will demonstrate, these tours use Berlin's sites of memory to draw analogies with traumatic experiences of war and displacement in other times and places.

Berlin is embedded with multiple remnants of the various transformations, reconstructions, and conflicts the city has witnessed, especially from the twentieth century. This difficult legacy includes the time it served 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 German Democratic Republic (GDR). Meanwhile, the allies took over Berlin's western side, which became part of Federal Republic of Germany (with its capital in the city of Bonn). Subsequently, Berlin became a key site of Cold War tensions, and the wall

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built to divide the city in 1961 became an iconic symbol of the period. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the following designation of Berlin as the unified capital of a united Germany marked a new chapter in the city's story and its resurrection as the 'New Berlin', a centre of tourism and investment (Cochrane, 2006).

The establishment of the New Berlin involved a construction boom, gentrification in eastern neighbourhoods, and large reconstruction projects across the historic central districts – coupled with a rapid disinvestment in social housing that has led to a sharp rise in housing prices, and mounting inequality (Colomb, 2013; Calbet and Elias, 2017). It further 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 (Lee, 2010). The grappling with these traumatic legacies has materialized in a multifaceted landscape of memory that expresses mixed desires to remember and forget (Till, 2005), which is further experienced and renegotiated through a highly popular landscape of heritage walking tours. Such tours, this chapter stresses, reinforce as well as revise existing displays of public memory and conceptions of locality and belonging.

In its latest incarnation, the New Berlin has also become a trendy cosmopolitan city that draws an influx of visitors with a global circulation of memory cultures and preservation practices. However, as the chapter will demonstrate, the city fails at conveying its heritage in ways that are inclusive of transcultural identities and histories. The need to pluralize 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.[1] 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, there are new concerns emerging around coexistence and belonging. Within this conflicted context, refugee-guided tours are a potential path towards a transcultural co-inhabitation of today's globalized cities, such as Berlin, and their present-absent histories.

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

(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 centralized district of Mitte visiting commemorative sites related to the Holocaust. Numerous other guided walking tours follow the same path and we are surrounded by many other tourists at each stop. 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.

Berlin's Excessive Memory-Scape

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 Berlin's emblematic status 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', that is, 'a past that is recognized 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, vocalizes, and navigates the city's memorials further turns this 'difficult heritage' into a live immersive interaction and a commodity. This correlates with a global rise of 'dark tourism' that seeks embodied, affective, and socio-cultural interaction with death and its representations (Martini and Buda, 2020).

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: walking tours that deal with the city's difficult heritage seek to render a traumatic absence visible and comprehendible. 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 present-absent 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 three large red sandstone blocks carved with Jewish symbols (such as a broken violin symbolizing the destruction of Jewish culture) beside a couple embracing. Like many of the city's memory sites, it assumes monumental capabilities in the sense that it is composed, large in scale, and formalized.

Besides 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 *Stolpersteine* scattered across the city, designed by artist Gunter Deming. The *Stolpersteine* 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. As Nimrod

tells us, prior to 1942, most residents in this building were Jews; however, by the time of the bombings, they had been evicted, displaced, and murdered.

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 visualizing a traumatic void. Passing along the city's many memorials, the compulsion of New Berlin – to imprint local difficult memory within the urban fabric so that it is not forgotten – is highly noticeable. Nonetheless, efforts to address difficult heritage through memorials are inherently inadequate, as such commemorations inevitably involve crises of memory, legitimization, and representation (Till, 2005). Memorials are a means for sterilizing local traumatic memories by sealing them in a concrete structure and linear narrative that articulates a trajectory of redemption (Edkins, 2008; Landzelius, 2003; Till and Kuusisto-Arponen, 2015).

The extensive construction of memorials and their dramatization through tourist practices thus supress 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). Hence, whilst Berlin's memory sites communicate a local history, they speak to and are inspired by a global circuit of narratives and values informed by an international bureaucratic regime of preservation (Allais, 2018). Moreover, the audience that experiences the vast landscape of memory in Berlin is also international.

Tensions between Remembering and Forgetting

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. These global visitors bring with them diverse values, mnemonic cultures, and consumerist expectations, which often clash 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 presence-absence adds to a multitude of scars, voids, and memorials that make up the urban sphere of the 'New Berlin'. An open-air exhibition beside Checkpoint Charlie further commemorates the notorious shootings of East Berliners trying to cross to 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 GDR capital, contrasts with the local hegemonic narrative, which underlines a unified German identity and privileges a West German perspective (Souto and Benjamin, 2011). In fact, since re-unification, the city has been rebuilt and its history retold from the perspective of its western side (Lee, 2010). The controversial reconstruction of the Berliner Schloss 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 GDR destroyed its remains and subsequently built the Palast der Republik on the spot, a symbol of socialism's triumph over monarchism. As part of the recent restoration work, designed by Italian architect Franco Stella, the Palast der Republik has been eliminated (Costabile-Heming, 2017), and the façade of Berliner Schloss was reconstructed, at the cost 590 million euro (Werning, 2012).

The tension between the ambition to restore a glorified pre-Nazi past and the attempt to reinvent New Berlin as cosmopolitan and inclusive came to the fore when plans were announced in 2017 (but eventually overturned) to restore a cross on the dome of the palace and a band of text calling for people to submit to Christianity, instigating opposition from leftists, Muslim, and Jewish communities. Criticism has further arisen over the Humboldt Forum collection that is now housed in Berliner Schloss , which contains looted objects from former colonies generalized under the category of 'non-European artifacts' (El-Tayeb, 2020; Steckenbiller, 2019). 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).

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 deutschmark, is a similar attempt at architecturally citing the past and another emblem for the urban renewal of the New Berlin. Like Berliner Schloss'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 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).

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 beside it. Nimrud describes how the Gestapo destroyed the cemetery and turned the school and home for the elderly 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. As our tour nears its conclusion, it becomes apparent that despite the promise that it would teach us about the city's Jewish heritage, the latter is hardly mentioned, and instead the tour mainly focuses on its horrific destruction.

The tour therefore caters to an international touristic obsession and fetishization of 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, 1999: 3). Nevertheless, a similar practice of urban walking tours is used in the city to expand, problematize, and question its public mnemonic displays.

Alternative Heritage Tours

Fabian (Interview, 2018), a German tour guide and educator, explains that tour guiding in Berlin does not require formal training and registration. On the one hand, this authorizes an unregulated market in which large international tourism companies hire cheap and inexperienced guides, reducing the salaries of those who are 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.

Yet, adds Fabian, such 'alternative' tours are also co-opted as markers of its urban alternative trendy image, 'even while the city's underground culture is undercut by gentrification'. Moreover, as the example of the Kreuzkölln

neighborhood in the marginalized district of Neukölln illustrates, alternative tours can also contribute to processes of gentrification that lead to urban displacement; the area that has been nicknamed 'Hipster Ghetto' and has become a popular destination of 'slum' walking tours seems to derive its desired edginess and popularity from the stigmatization of the rest of the borough (Ikeda, 2017). This illustrates how politicized tours cannot fully evade the consumeristic, voyeuristic, and even divisive logics that are embedded in the tourism industry – a theme that will be further examined in Chapter Four.

The social walking tour company Berliner Spurensuche ('A Berlin 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*. They also offer tours that deal with Berlin's marginalized, difficult colonial heritage. 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 to Herero and Nama victims on the grounds of the 1907 memorial for the very German soldiers who committed the genocide.[2] Furthermore, our tour guide notes, the memorial does not use the term genocide and instead honours 'the victims of German Colonial Rule in Namibia'.

Similarly, Berlin Postkolonial's tour of the city's African Quarter in English and German narrates the histories of Prussia's enslavement trade and of anti-colonial resistance against the German Empire, linking these with recent de-colonial initiatives (Förster et al., 2016). Such tours speak to the German tendency to overlook and trivialize its difficult colonial heritage (partly since it consisted of a shorter period in comparison with other colonial regimes).[3] More broadly, this correlates with a pan-European memory culture which disregards the injustices of colonialism (Engler, 2013; Gilroy, 2005). To problematize these tendencies, activists deploy 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 (Mbembé, 2001). The engagement with this difficult European legacy through

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

3 Germany's colonial rule began in 1884 and ended during the First World War, when its colonies were seized by Britain and South Africa.

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.[4]

In what follows, the chapter will focus on the ways walking tours of Berlin guided by refugees from Syria and Iraq offer much-needed avenues for opening the city's public memory to more inclusive and transcultural standpoints. To begin with, these tours will be situated within the broader context of Germany's ambivalent hospitality towards refugees, and compared with other initiatives that try to bridge newer and more established Berliners.

Berlin's Ambivalent Welcoming Infrastructures

Standing near Woolworth at Karl-Marx-Straße, the meeting-point for a *Refugees Show Their Berlin* tour (Map 2.1 Stop 1), a young participant (Interview, 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, 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 2.1 Stop 2). He further describes his personal experience in Tempelhof, which was mentioned above: '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'.[5] As such, Hussein intervenes in the politics of refugees' (in)visibility through a performative process of self-representation

4 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).

5 For more on this controversial camp, see Parsloe, 2017.

Map 2.1. Central features in Hussein's tour, December 2018, 2.83 km, 1 hour 58 minutes,8°C. ⏎

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.

From Welcoming to Co-Habitation

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.[6] A driving force behind 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 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 GDR'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 (Vollmer and Karakayali, 2018). The *Heimatvertriebene* were some twelve million ethnic Germans expelled from parts of Central and Eastern Europe due to the Second World War. Whilst their experiences were publicly acknowledged in the early postwar 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 Sznaider, 2005). 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; Vollmer and Karakayali, 2018). However, over half a decade since the governmental 'open arms' policy was announced, the numbers of new arrivals in Berlin are declining, emergency volunteer work has scaled down, refugees are more settled in the city, and a fatigue and waning of the initial welcoming enthusiasm is being felt (Selim et al., 2018). Nevertheless, new concerns are now emerging around notions of integration, breaking

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

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 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*.

A Path for Political Visibility

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 euro per individual; alternatively, they can be privately booked for a group at the price of 175 euro. Michelle (Interview, 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 in 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 utilizes an autobiographical approach to showcase the multifaceted and varied journey refugees have undergone and their personalized ways of navigating Berlin. To recruit tour guides, Querstadtein approaches 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 its 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 personalized tours, Refugee Voices has 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, 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 euro, with no booking required. Since 2020, tours can also be booked via the travel company Contiki, as part of its 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). Besides these people, the area has become the home of those displaced from gentrified inner city districts, as part of the reconstruction of the 'New Berlin', which coincided with cutting of subsidies for public housing and municipal housing companies (Kadıoğlu, 2024). As well as offering refuge to displaced peoples, Neukölln has been a key site where monetized power relations coupled with state and municipal interventions continue to produce and naturalize debt-led urban displacement (Soederberg, 2018).

Today Neukölln remains known for its large Turkish and Arab minorities, high welfare dependency, low levels of education and income, and acute housing insecurity.

It is invoked to exemplify a 'failed integration' that is blamed on migrants themselves for maintaining a 'parallel society'. This imagination was greatly supported by a book written by the former district's Mayor Heinz Buschkowsky (2012), entitled *Neukölln ist überall* (Neukölln is Everywhere), which criticizes multiculturalism. These territorial and racial stigmatizations overlap to enable and justify gentrification processes (Kadıoğlu, 2024). Places of stigmatization and housing insecurity, such as Neukölln, have become more divided as attempts to allocate shelter for refugees drain the already limited resources to tackle forced disablement (such as hostels which have been used to shelter the city's growing homeless populations due to the lack of state-owned shelters) (Ikeda, 2017).

The tours seek to address these societal divisions and assumed failure of integration from the perspective of newcomers. 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 in 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'.

Indeed, 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 in order for you to stay here longer?', and 'Where do you work?'

These repetitions speak to an attempt to comprehend an intangible geopolitical 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 (1993) 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.

Marking Urban Divisions

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 are 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 itself is under no obligation to learn about the cultures of newcomers. 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 the atmosphere has shifted since 2016: '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 its 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 to be harder to integrate due to cultural differences (Borneman and Ghassem-Fachandi, 2017).

In another stop in Hussein's tour, we visit Sonnenallee, commonly known as 'Arab Street' (Map 2.1 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 emphasizes 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 reflects the cultural legacy of various Arab migratory waves, including the *Gastarbeiter* who began arriving in the 1950s, followed by Lebanese and Palestinian refugees fleeing the civil war in Lebanon between 1975 and 1990. Hussein interprets the material traces of the Arab 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. In addition to re-mapping and re-contextualizing the local welcoming infrastructure, Hussein assumes the role of a transcultural educator.

The final stop on Hussein's tour is the café Refugio where he now lives with people from all around the world (Map 2.1 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'. What Hussein alludes to is that mediated framings increasingly tie the labels 'refugee' with negative connotations of illegality or falsehood.

Fostering Transcultural Dialogues

Interestingly, Querstadtein is 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 *Route 44 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 adapting to a homogeneous conception of the local culture.

As Michelle (Interview, 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 orientalizing and exoticizing this migratory district and reducing its inhabitants to their identities as Muslims or Arabs. In contrast, the project called *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 marginalized 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 for other refugees. Bernadette Lynch's (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 fact, Querstadtein itself notes the limitations of its tours in Neukölln. Michelle (Interview, 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'. A more promising meeting point between cultures is constructed during

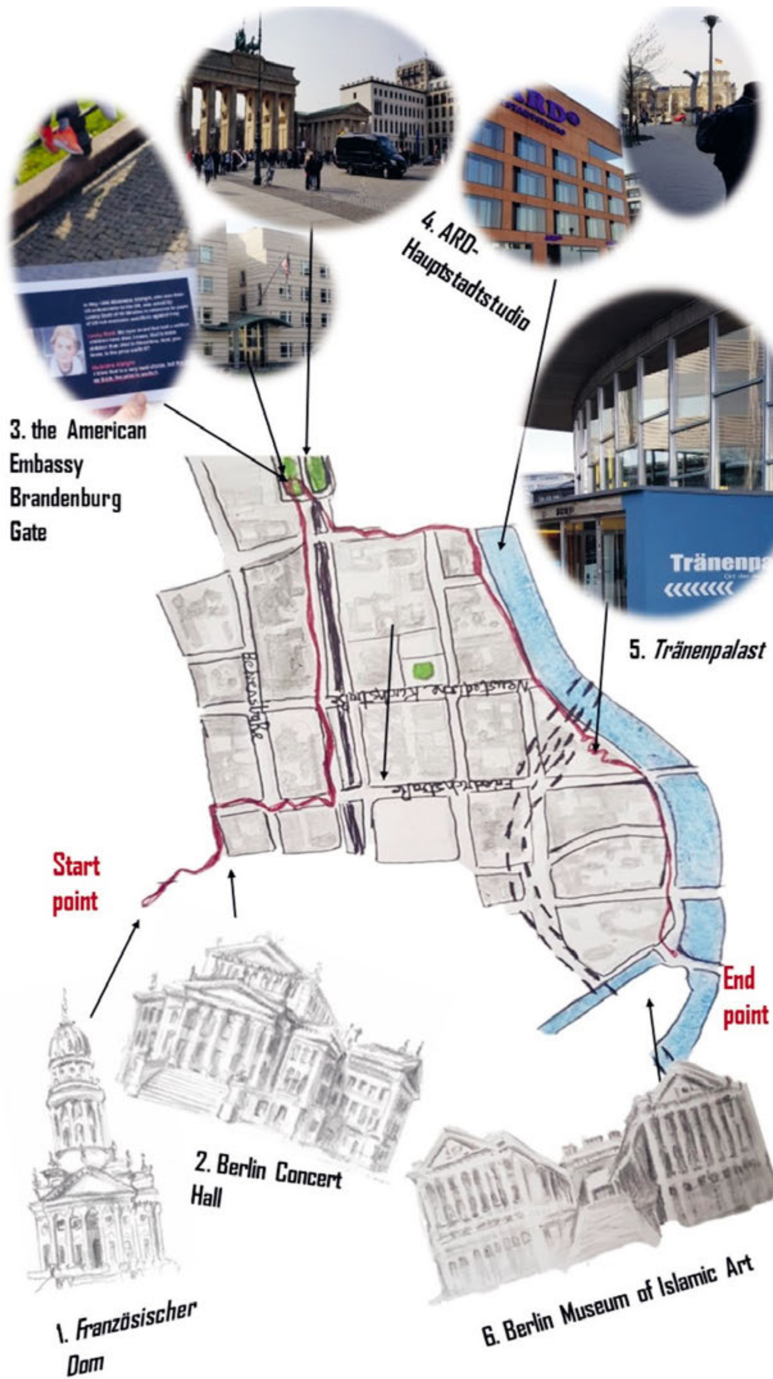
refugee-guided tours of Berlin's memory-scape in Mitte district (such as Amir and Ahmed's tours, as well as other tours described in the following sections). The name Mitte (centre) alludes to the district's geographical and cultural significance. Mitte houses Berlin's historic core and the Museum Island cultural compound (a UNESCO World Heritage Site). It is also popular amongst sightseers as one of two boroughs which encompass both former East and West Berlin, and the old Jewish Quarter.

Emma (Interview, 2019), another Querstadtein administrator, 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, 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 of Mitte, as Ahmed describes and the following sections will detail, they communicate a perspective of these sites that is informed by memories of other places and times.

In the context of Germany's ambivalent hospitality toward refugees – marked by a tension between a morality shaped by local traumatic memories and fluctuating public moods, xenophobic fears, and uneven integration – the need to break cultural barriers and redefine the parameters of urban belonging is more urgent than ever. The following section will reflect on the potentials of refugee-guided tours as an avenue to promoting a more transcultural and multidirectional practice of memory making in Berlin, beginning with providing more context on the tours' formation and delivery.

The Geopolitics of Refugees' Traumatic Stories

Much like more traditional walking tours that pass through Mitte, Amir's walking tour focuses on local sites of memory and heritage. However, Amir uses these sites to echo a personal story of displacement that is tied in 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 on Gendarmenmarkt where Amir heard his first-ever concert at the age of twenty-eight (Map



Map 2.2. Central features in Amir's tour, May 2019, 2.38 km, 1 hour 47 minutes, 13°C.

2.2 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 was impossible to go to a concert'. It is through the notion of (im)mobility that Amir articulates how he familiarized himself with Berlin, *and* 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.

Navigating Cities and Memories

(Im)mobilities, in their everydayness, offer a comprehendible means to communicate the complex experiences of forced displacement. For instance, Amir (Interview, 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, 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 seventy-five percent of my journey to Germany … you walk ten hours a day then you feel exhausted. The next day you realize that walking for ten hours is not enough, and you need to walk more …. 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.

Walking thus 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 individualized

Refugees Show Their Berlin tours starts with guides identifying certain locations in the city that are meaningful to them. Amir's starting point for his tour design was the Concert Hall (that later became the second stop of his tour). As Michelle (Interview, 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.

Amir (Interview, 2019) describes how, while walking around the Concert Hall, he accidently stumbled upon the Französischer Dom (French Cathedral), now the first stop of his tour, and realized 'it was perfect' (Map 2.2 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 hence requires tour guides to work with and around the materiality and topography of the city, alongside the regulations of the genre of city tours.

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, 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 emphasizes, the city is integral to the guided tours' 'autotopography' (Heddon et al., 2009). Other guides find it easier to convey their personal story in relation to the city.

For instance, Yasmin (Interview, 2019), a tour guide, urban planner, and refugee from Syria, notes that once she realized 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 accidently discovered on 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, 2019) describes: 'the tour made me feel closer to the city'. Walking is equally integral to the tours' participatory delivery; this comes across in one participant's (Interview, 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, 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 a bond and solidarity and allows participants to become habituated within the performance.

Political Education and Protest

'The walk to our next landmark is the longest', says Amir during his tour, and he 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, while others immerse themselves in the urban surrounding, photographing different elements. Such 'in-between' moments resemble María Lugones's (2003) descriptions of the spatial practice of 'hang-outs', as 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. These 'in-between' moments might appear as

a 'break' from the tour; however, they are in fact integral to it. As Ingold (2016: 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 tour stops and themes allow participants to observe the content of the tours and reflect upon it, individually, with other participants, or with the tour guide.

After walking for fifteen minutes along the busy streets we arrive at our next destination, the American embassy (Map 2.2 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 Madeleine 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); she 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 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. Over time, such temporary embodied interventions inscribe new associations to places that permanently alter their meanings in public imagination (Endres and Senda-Cook, 2011). This history is also 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. 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.

Re(framing) Refuge

From the embassy, we walk for around five minutes along the river until we reach our next stop, the front of the 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 2.2 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.

As part of the semiotic divide created by the 'refugees' label and its harmful visibility, the actions of a few are understood as an expression of the qualities of an entire group.

Due to this burden of representation, Yasmin had an 'issue' with Querstadtein's tours being titled *Refugees Show Their Berlin*. Yasmin (Interview, 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 realized 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 roundplaza on the southern segment of the Friedrichstadt neighbourhood (Map 2.4 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 that she did 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 the 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 2.4 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'. Using an analogy, Yasmin reflects: 'I had this problem with the label and this name refugee and what I could do, what I wanted to do'. Yet through her new job, located just ten blocks from where we now stand, she has reclaimed 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).

Re-Contextualizing Forced Mobility

In contrast, supervising tours that are titled refugee-guided 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-contextualizes 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. Emphasizing 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 transnational 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, 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.

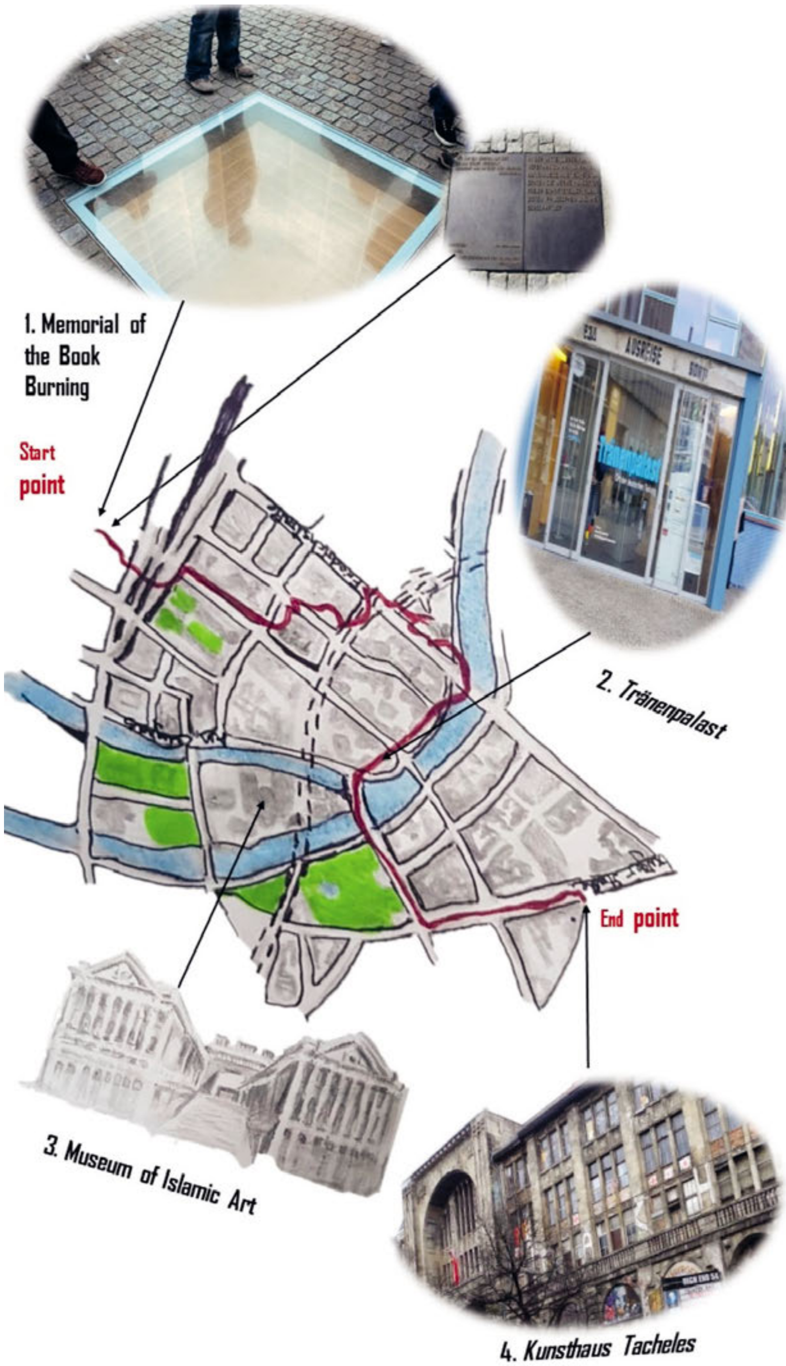
In another example, from a tour guided by Wael, we visit the Kunsthaus Tacheles building, a nondescript block of flats (Map 3.5 Stop 4). He explains that it was originally built as a department store in the Jewish quarter, later used as a Nazi prison, and in the post-unification period was occupied by an artists' collective (which is now facing eviction). The guest room of this

artists' 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 emphasizes 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'. As such, the tours record a constant movement from the individual experience to a collective perception and public memory.

Through the sharing of a common movement, direction, and perception, the tours stress the structural causes of personal stories of displacement and extract a collectivized 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. Like other modes of activism, the tours mobilize the city and its symbolism to claim public visibility and extract a political message out of their autotopographies. The next section elaborates on another collectivizing 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 2.3 Stop 1). This memorial is another example of the 'architecture of absence' since it has no notable presence within the cityscape. In fact, it only becomes visible when one turns one's gaze downwards, through a glass panel set in the ground – instead of the usual vantage point of looking up at 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. The memorial is a highly symbolic setting for what Wael tells us next: he describes how Syria gradually 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 traumatic memories from different places and times, contextualizing them as a transcultural site-specific testimonial encounter and a mode of memory activism.



Map 2.3. Central features in Wael's tour, March 2018, 2.29 km, 1 hour 34 minutes, 12°C. ⏎

Multidirectional Memory

Heritage sites of historical trauma bear an aura of authenticity and credibility derived from their site specificity (Souto and Benjamin, 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, 2017). Hence, as part of a transcultural circulation of mnemonic practices, traumatic heritage 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; Feldman, 2002). 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 personalize 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, 2018) explains: 'it's about also putting the people who are attending the tour into 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 2.4 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 guards prisoners in a shed in the backyard, March 6, 1933'.[7] 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, 2019) saw it as a fitting setting to discuss the current rise in xenophobic sentiments that make refugees feel unwelcome. Both the removal of this memorial and Yasmin's subsequent usage 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

7 Translated by the author.

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. 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.

Linking Places and Times

At other times, tour guides invoke the memories of the Cold War to establish a sense of solidarity with German suffering. As Wael (Interview, 2018) describes, 'I can concludethat 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, 2019) describes a similar equation when explaining the decision to include Checkpoint Charlie in his tour design:

> Checkpoint Charlie in the 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 2.2 Stop 5; Map 2.2 Stop 2; and Map 2.4 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 the symbolism of these places, 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, 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 2.3 Stop 2). After describing the site’s history, Wael enacts a creative gesture to render it more vivid: he shows us an image of what the train station looked like before unification. Following this, Wael talks about the divisions brought to his home city Aleppo by the civil war. 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. 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 1940s. 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. 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 travelling memories has an emotional effect, as comes across in a participant's (Interview, 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.

Co-Performative Testimonial Exchange

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). 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 they finally reach their destination. Though trauma is impossible to speak of, it nonetheless refuses to be buried (Caruth, 2010; Hübl and Avritt, 2020; Saul, 2013), and hence 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 that 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, 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, 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, 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'. Tour guides see their work as political, as Amir (Interview, 2019) states, 'I hate politics, but that's what happened. I like to have fun, but now politics dominates our life and that's why it is at the forefront [of his tour]'. He further notes that the tour is especially 'meaningful' for Germans, since 'it is about this place and being in it', as well as a chance for them to 'see the city differently'. For Yasmin (Interview, 2019), the main goal of her tour is to challenge the perception of the city. She stresses that her tour is not suitable for 'standard tourists who want to go to Checkpoint Charlie and the East Side Gallery on the Wall'; rather she looks at an area of Berlin and 'how it has changed a lot, and it is continuing to change'. She sees a political significance in stressing 'how, as cities develop, change is always there'. She further notes that her aim is 'to reflect how one city can have so many narratives; same way any person or refugee group can have so many different narratives'.

Further linking the tours with a political aim, Wael (Interview, 2018) says he began leading tours as he was keen 'to do something'; stressing to me, 'if I will tell you to fight for your right you will be vicious about it'. He also speaks most explicitly about the tours as a form of testimony, describing it as a way for tour guides to 'face their own trauma', as well as to 'create awareness' amongst participants. Hence, he adds, 'it is a mutually beneficial relationship and that serves something.' Critical for this transformative exchange between testifiers and second-hand witnesses is proximity, fostering an ability to affect and to be affected (Massimi, 2002). As a tour participant (Interview, 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 familiarize with each other in an urban context (Ahmed, 2013; Sennett, 2012). Through proximity, the testimonial exchange further enables 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, by 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 were 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 was 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 vocalize the in-between of the penetration of borders and the life before and after. An emphasis is further placed on the body itself as integral to the experience of forced movement.

Transgressing Mnemonic Divisions

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 (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, 2011). 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, 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 many 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.

The effects of this transcultural memory mixing are not merely planned or harmonious. Rather, they entail what Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing (2011: 4) names 'friction': '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 post-unification German memory culture contextualized above that privileges a West German perspective and overlooks the traces of GDR 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's (IHRA) framing of its 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, 2019) observes: 'I think it is very interesting to connect the past with now, and her [the guide's] 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', which describes a diversion from traditional memorials by artists in Germany during the 1990s to tackle the complexity of Holocaust memorialization.[8] 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 memorialization.

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-Arponen (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 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 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

8 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 (Erőss, 2016; Rojinsky, 2013; Stevens et al., 2018; Stubblefield, 2011).

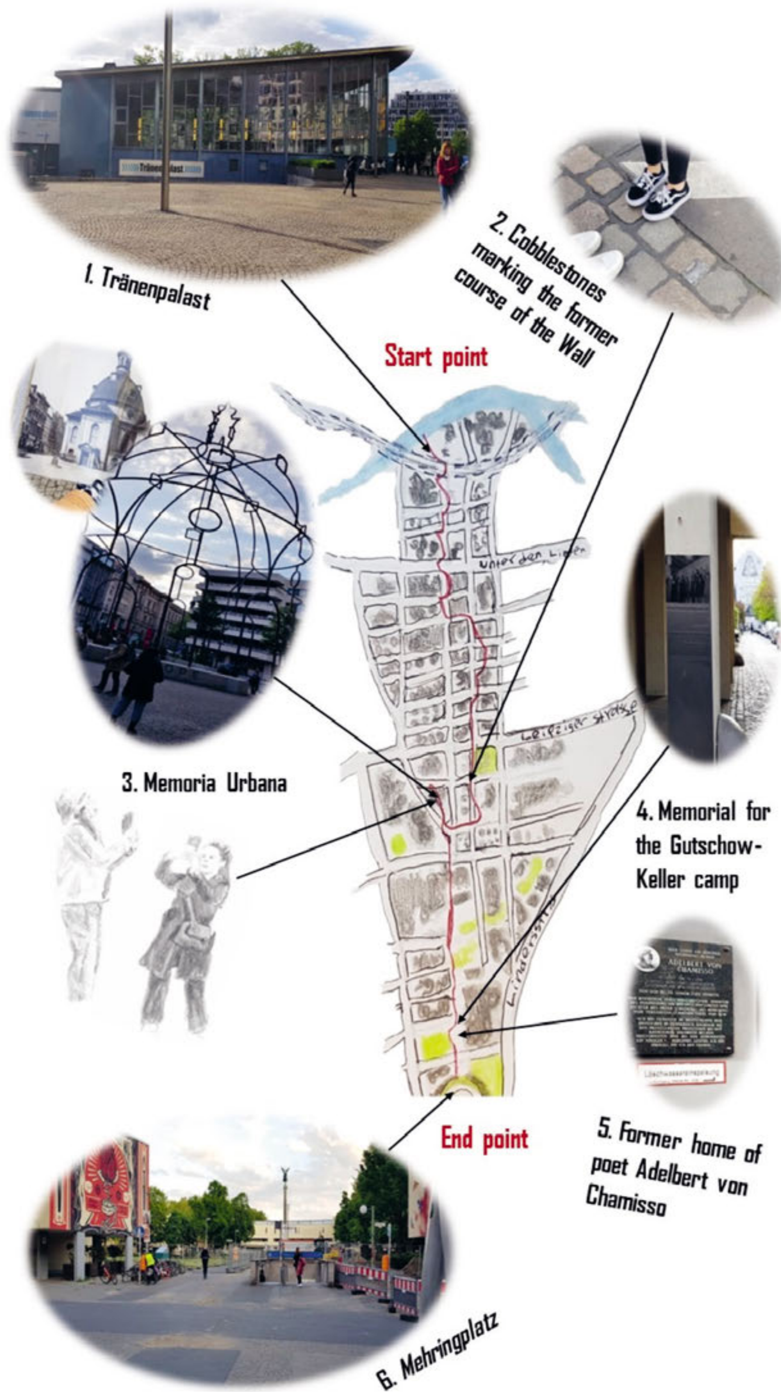
tours engage in a transcultural mode of memory activism that entails the transformation of local memorials into transcultural sites relevant to other similar experiences – recording a move from individual experience to collective perception and from personal trauma to public memory. As the following section discusses, another key aspect within this mode of activism involves the mapping of the plural and diasporic nature of urban space.

Tracing Berlin's History of Refuge and Migration

Yasmin patiently waits whilst tour participants take selfies with the striking Memoria Urbana Berlin, designed by Spanish artist Juan Garaizabal in 2012 (Map 2.4 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, consisting of lines made from steel tubes. It involves a play on 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 emphasizes. As such, her tour articulates a continual history of migratory movement as inherent in Berlin's development. In Yasmin's (Interview, 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'. Accordingly, the 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.

Tracing a Transcultural Urban History

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, 2018). 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



Map 2.4. Central features in Yasmin's tour, May 2019, 3.56 km, 1 hour 52 minutes, 15°C. ⏎

century (Map 2.2 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. 2.1).

Figure 2.1. A panorama of Gendarmenmarkt Square. ⏎

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, 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 one hundred years … and now Syrians are seeking refuge'. He concludes, 'So, we should not see it as a crisis, that is a main point here'. Hence, tour guides use the tracing of a trans-local history to deconstruct a naturalized distribution of the sensible that frames contemporary flows of refugees as unprecedented.

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 2.4 Stop 5). Yasmin translates the quote which is inscribed on 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 persist 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.

(Re)framing Urban Heritage

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 (2016) 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 (2016: 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, 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.

As her words convey, there exists a need to expand the framings of urban heritage and memory to account for the movement of people and cultures.

The refugee-guided tours serve to deconstruct and challenge static and exclusionary conceptions of place, culture, and identity. As Amir (Interview, 2019) explains, participants 'see the city differently' after his tour. Accordingly, a German tour participant (Interview, 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 of 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'.

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 categorized (Mitchell 1989a). Such vocalizing of an overlooked transnational 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 2.2 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 essentializing 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', shaped by an ongoing history of entanglement between European cities and former colonies, and between Western and non-Western societies (Randeria, 2007).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.

Shifting Roles

A criticism commonly voiced in relation to these tours is that they are 'preaching to the converted'. As a tour participant (Interview, 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'. Indeed, the audiences of the individually booked tours tend to be young liberals. As Michelle (Interview, 2018) notes: 'most of them are open Berliners, wanting to learn something, people that are already liberal, already open to the topic'. Nonetheless, she adds, Querstadtein operates 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, 2019) says with regard to 'those who say, I'm really tolerant' that they can nonetheless 'discover new things, or places that they were not aware of'. Indeed, the key argument of this book is that these tours' political intervention does not merely relate to the politics of refugees' reception and perceptions, but further amounts to a reframing of Berlin's heritage and memory. Furthermore, through group bookings by companies and educational bodies, tour guides reach participants that have not made an active choice to join – including individuals who hold more ambiguous or negative views on the presence of refugees in Berlin.

Nevertheless, hierarchies between more established and newer residents of Berlin do manifest in the everyday management 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 the people 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 form the audience). Michelle (Interview, 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 of yourself and to show something'. Office workers further take an active role in what Emma (Interview, 2019) describes as the

'brainstorming' process of designing the tours. Both Michelle and Emma express their unease at 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, spaces of activism are not immune to the politics of (in)visibility. For example, Joe Rigby and Raphael Schlembach's (2013) research of a weeklong protest camp by European No Border Network activists in the Jungle (informal refugee camp in Calais) illustrates how practices of border policing penetrated the socio-political space of the camp. Assuming a Rancièrian lens, they analyse an instance of the French police preventing undocumented migrants from joining a planned protest in the centre of Calais by No Border activists as a policing of the distribution of the sensible. This distribution divides documented people from undocumented people and excludes the latter from the political public domain. Moreover, Rigby and Schlembach show how No Border activists themselves reinforced this sensible distribution of exclusion, by speaking *for* migrants. Hence, solidarity initiatives can reiterate the very divisions they wish to undo when they bypass the political agency of displaced people. In contrast, and despite the power hierarchy that does exists between office workers and the refugee tour guides, during the tours, the refugees are the ones who are at the centre and are in control of their political visibility. As Amir (Interview, 2019) highlights with regard 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, Michelle stresses that 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. Yet, 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, 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 silent 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, 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, by referencing a touristic performance and appropriating the role of the tour guide who holds authority over the city's heritage, refugees enact a subversive role-shift. Amir (Interview, 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 (Bhabha, 2012; Butler, 2011). The tours' role-shift is similarly subversive as it calls into question restrictive categorizations of city dwellers as 'locals' versus 'foreigners' and distinctions between 'hosts' and 'guests', as they are traditionally played out within tourist encounters. This subversion also undermines the hierarchies that subside on the micro level of the tour event, between subaltern refugees who guide and educate more privileged and established city dwellers.

Conclusion

Expanding the geo-temporal depth of forced displacement research, this chapter has illustrated the agency of refugees as ostensible 'others' and 'newcomers' to participate in and impact not merely the urban domain but also its memory culture. As shown above, officialized 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 analysing 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. As demonstrated above, the refugee-guided tours also interfere in the politics

of refugees' (in)visibility through a performative mode of self-representation and contextualization of the local welcoming infrastructure. 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 heritage. 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. To paraphrase Rancière, by performing as tour guides (i.e., 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. As shown above, opening sites designated for the recollection of particular historical events to reinterpretation by 'others' opens new cosmopolitan possibilities of urban identity and belonging. 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 following chapter intends to expand the geo-temporal scope of analysis further, by examining 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 conceptualize the politics of forced displacement, Chapter Three will examine memory tours in Yaffa (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.

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3. Refugees Reclaim Jaffa

Abstract: Chapter Three examines tours of Jaffa guided by second- and third-generation Internally Displaced Palestinians, to theorize how refugees influence the public memory of a colonized city. It begins by analysing the Zionist reformation of Yaffa as a tourist site – illustrating how capitalist, colonial, and nationalist logics intersect to fuel continued erasure of Palestinian place and memory. From this, it turns to examine counter-memory tours, noting the global and local commemoration rituals and tourist genres they are inspired by or problematize, and their use of vernacular architectural ruins to resist the ongoing colonial erasure. The chapter further stresses the future-oriented vision of these commemorative tours and reflects on participants' positionalities as they impact on the tours' political intervention.

Keywords: Israel-Palestine, gentrification, Nakba, settler colonialism, ruins, indigenous resistance

This chapter theorizes how displaced people affect the public memory of a city undergoing ethno-national division and colonialism, focusing on city walking tours of Jaffa, guided by second- and third-generation internally displaced Palestinians (IDPs). The chapter will closely illustrate how these tours use the urban fabric of the city to resist the ongoing assault on Jaffa's Palestinian heritage and identity.

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, ninety-five percent of its Palestinian population fled or was forcibly displaced from the city, which was annexed to Israel's largest metropolis of Tel Aviv (despite being designated to remain a part of Palestine according to the 1947 UN resolution no. 181). 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 eighty percent of Palestinians

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with the formation of the State of Israel on over seventy-eight percent of Mandatory Palestine (Sa'di and Abu-Lughod, 2007). Scholars describe al-Nakba as 'ethnic cleansing' and 'spaciocide' since it entailed a systematic spatial annihilation (Hanafi, 2006; Pappe, 2007).

This included the de-urbanization of Palestine and the erasure of Palestinian cities' history of socioeconomic advancement and cosmopolitanism (Blatman and Sabbagh-Khoury, 2022; Hasan, 2019; Tamari, 2008). Also lost was the Palestinian publicness, including the encounters it enabled and, more symbolically, the political capacity of a centralized representation of Palestinian will (Zureik, 2007). The names, stories, cultures, and worlds associated with particular places were also dispossessed. Jaffa (in English), and Yaffa (in Arabic), was renamed Yafo (in Hebrew).[1] The change in name reflects the substantial subordination of the city to Jewish spatial monopolizations and design mechanisms that erased its Palestinian identity and history (LeVine, 2005; Monterescu, 2015). From a Palestinian socio-cultural-economic centre, and a 'mixed city' with a Jewish minority, Yaffa became a poor neighbourhood in Tel Aviv. The term 'mixed city' was coined by the British authorities to measure and manage the local populations and describe Jewish neighbourhoods in Palestinian cities – it now defines a reversed situation (Yacobi, 2009).

Though Yaffa's architecture largely prevailed (except for neighbourhoods bordering Tel Aviv) the city's 'living essence' was gone (Hasan, 2019). In 1950, the Absentee Property Law designated Palestinian refugees 'absentee' and their lands and property as 'absentee property' belonging to the state. Yaffa's emptied homes were sub-contracted to the semi-private, semi-public Amidar housing company and used to meet the housing needs of Jewish war refugees, slum inhabitants, discharged soldiers, and immigrants (Golan, 2009).[2] In the subsequent decades, the municipality subjected Jaffa to enforced decline and the destruction of built space under the guise of evacuation/construction plans, followed by a shift in 1985 towards urban renewal and gentrification (Monterescu, 2015). These different approaches to the urban planning of Yaffa nonetheless maintain the settler-colonial logic of achieving territorial and demographic superiority and the 'ethnocratic' project of Judaizing the land (Yacobi and Tzfadia, 2019; Yiftachel, 2006).

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

2 Around sixty-six percent of the 190,000 Jewish immigrants who arrived in Israel in 1948–1949 were settled in abandoned Palestinian houses in 'mixed cities' such as Jaffa (Morris, 1989).

Setting out to conduct a 'contrapuntal analysis' (Said, 1994) of urban heritage, this chapter will demonstrate how IDP tour guides disrupt this colonial domination and symbolically reclaim Palestinian Yaffa and its urbanity. Focusing on the memory activism of IDPs in Jaffa, the chapter expands the geo-temporal scope of forced displacement research. It will draw out the cross-generational political struggles that emerged in reaction to prolonged conditions of displacement of those who have not crossed state borders and remain under the jurisdiction of the government responsible for their displacement (150,000 IDPs remained in Israel after the war, of which around 3,647 stayed in Jaffa). This chapter argues that these tours extend the commemoration of al-Nakba to the realm of activism by demonstrating that it is ongoing, and by stressing the enduring links between displacement and gentrification and between settler-colonialism and neo-liberalism. It will advance the discussion in the previous chapter on collaborative testimonial events by highlighting the importance of ruins as a source of authenticity in lingering conditions of assaults on memory where survivors are absent.

Yet, whereas the tours examined in the previous chapter mark paths in a new locality, the tours in Yaffa retrace formerly familiar paths. 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, the chapter argues that the tours' retracing of memory is a political project of resisting colonial spatial orders towards harvesting new visions for the future. This correlates with a broader 'return of history' in current Palestinian mobilizations in Israel (Rouhana and Sabbagh-Khoury, 2015), which assumes a cyclical temporality that hosts a future of liberation in the present through activating the past (Abu Hatoum, 2021). Complicating an arbitrary separation between site/body, time/space, and personal/collective, this analysis will consider how heritage tours from across the spectrum of official and grassroot political industries enhance but also challenge official memory lanes and paths of erasure. The analysis will further situate these tours as part of a broader spectrum of commemoration events and tactics of spatial resistance.

(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 (participants are invited to leave a tip at the end). The tour is available weekly and supported by the municipality of Tel Aviv-Yafo 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 twenty-fifth anniversary of the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II's rule 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'. Dana's tour highlights the architectural legacy of old Jaffa's various colonizers. 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, this section outlines how official Israeli historiography obscures the memory, geography, and identity of Yaffa and its Palestinian inhabitants.

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 and colonization such as Yaffa. For example, Dana uses the term 'land of Israel', a Zionist counter-term to Palestine that aims to naturalize Jewish ownership over the region whilst ignoring alternative claims. Her emphasis on the Jewish population of Yaffa further obscures their minority status in this 'mixed city' before 1948. This demonstrates the importance of official guided tours in enacting selective scripts of urban memory and national ideology. These 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.

Sensing Disputed Heritage

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 realization 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. Bird's-eye view imagery and viewpoints similarly reaffirm ideology by abstracting space and obscuring its details. Furthermore, image captions and tour guides' narration of the view similarity affect the parameters of what we see and how.

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'. 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, 2014a). As the following chapter details, Tel Aviv's architectural styles, especially the International Style that earned it its title of the White City, have been a key means to enhance this Zionist dichotomist framing. Nevertheless, as Sharon Roṭbard (2015) highlights in his influential book *White City, Black City*, ironically, despite their association with Tel Aviv's ostensible modernity during the 1930s and 1940s, most buildings in the International Style were found in Palestinian Yaffa.

Moreover, at that time, Yaffa 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 Yaffa'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). This categorization continues a long transnational tradition of Christian pilgrimages to the region that peaked during the Mandate period, enabled by 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. By walking and gazing, our tour advances a similar neo-biblical orientalist reading of Old Jaffa.

Forgetting through Archaeology

In addition to using distant panoramic viewpoints, our tour abstracts space by referencing distant history and mythology whilst ignoring the more recent Palestinian history. For instance, we learn how Jonah the prophet fled from God through Jaffa 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 centre of Christianity in Jaffa for hundreds of years, built in 1654'. 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. 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 legitimizes historical claims and history vindicates place' (Pullan et al., 2013: 31).

We also visit a gate left by the Egyptian Empire in the Late Bronze Age, named after Rameses II. Nationalism appeals to such archaeological features since they ease the inconsistency between space and history that it seeks to establish. This inconsistency arises because, 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 archaeology 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). Moreover, archaeology is weaponized as a mechanism for ongoing Palestinian land dispossession (Pullan and Sternberg, 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, exotified and romanticized in the West. Beyond 'orientalizing' the tour performance, the emphasis on 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. 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 Yaffa and Gaza at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Obscuring Indigenous Memory

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). 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, 1989).

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. 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 that the formation of this industry in the late nineteenth century transformed Jaffa into the financial, political, and cultural centre of Palestine, fuelling its rapid urbanization and industrialization (Gîlbar, 1990; Scholch, 1981). 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).

Our tour ends at Jaffa Port, a bustling tourist spot with restaurants, boutique stores, and a large Israeli flag draped on the harbour wall. Dana highlights the port's significance within the modern Jewish tale of

redemption and nation building. She describes how the port has served since the nineteenth century 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 *lieu 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 ninety-five percent of its Palestinian residents due to the 1948 war. The tour thus adds to a long repertoire that Raja Shehadeh (2010: xvii), whose family fled Yaffa 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'.

Materializing the Colonial Gaze

This selective way of seeing and walking also makes and stabilizes the selectivity in which the landscape is seen and experienced: between the 1948 war and the 1980s, the municipality of Tel Aviv-Yafo subjected Jaffa's built environment to wilful neglect and waves of demolitions (Margalit and Vertes, 2015). The Old City especially became a densely populated site of marginality, prostitution, and crime (Roṭbard, 2015), and it was deemed uninhabitable and designated for slum clearance (Alfasi and Fabian, 2009). Nevertheless, its picturesque features saved it from planned demolition; Israeli bohemians embarked on a campaign to save the Old City (though by the time this received approval, seventy percent of houses had already been destroyed) (Paz, 1997). The campaign was 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, emphasizing the potential of the Middle Eastern vernacular architecture as a tourist attraction; meanwhile Janco, joined by nationally regarded painter Reuven Rubin, suggested transforming it into an artist colony (Paz, 1997).

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 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 master plan for greater Tel Aviv, issued between 1953–1954, designated it for preservation as an archaeological park and artists' quarter. 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. Its re-design was executed with standards that match the 'increasingly homogenous tourist-historic cities across the globe' (Pullan and Gwiazda, 2009: 36). 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.

In line with the colonial practice of preserving an old 'anachronistic' section to stress its association with modernity and progress (Fabian, 2014; Mitchell, 1989), the preservation of the Old City assisted the Zionist contrast between the seemingly 'modern' and 'European' Tel Aviv and 'unmodern' Jaffa. Meanwhile, material evidence of the rapid urbanization and modernization that Yaffa had undergone in the late nineteenth century was ignored, destroyed, and erased from public memory (LeVine, 2005). This 'immaculate' reconstruction process thus entailed what Lefebvre (1992) designates 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, the municipality of Tel Aviv-Yafo, artists, archaeologists, urban planners, and tourist agents.

However, in 1985, a new municipal policy initiated a shift from destruction and negligence of Yaffa to urban renewal and gentrification to attract the Jewish elite and international capital – and Yaffa's abstraction spread beyond its old segment to the rest of the city. The municipality initiated costly touristification of several public spaces and buildings, and the implementation of a neo-orientalist architectural style to construct prestigious complexes in collaboration with the private sector (Monterescu, 2009). This included a costly refurbishments of the port, the Clock Tower complex, and the flea market, rebranding these areas as a historical theme park and desirable real estate detached from their Palestinian heritage (Avni, 2017; LeVine, 2007). This demonstrates how the settler-colonial logic adjusted in symbiosis with the neo-liberalization of Israeli economy and the privatization of space and planning since the 1980s – a regime which Erez Tzfadia and Haim Yacobi (2019) name 'neo-settler colonialism'. Ethno-gentrification

(Shmaryahu-Yeshurun and Ben-Porat, 2021) in Jaffa continues to lead to a sharp rise in housing prices and a continual displacement of older inhabitants – especially Palestinians (Huss, 2023; Monterescu, 2009).

Around 3,647 Palestinian IDPs remained in Yaffa after the 1948 war. For the first two years, Israel imprisoned them in the Ajami neighbourhood, surrounded by barbed-wire fences patrolled by soldiers (Abu-Shehadeh and Sheveita, 2010). Whilst confined to Ajami and forced to live in properties that belonged to other Palestinian refugees, they were categorized as 'present absentees' and their houses were also confiscated as 'absentee property' (Ziv, 2007). To this day, they continue to live under semi-public protected tenancy, with weak ownership claims that only extend to the third generation and prohibits extending and repairing homes (Ariav and Ziv, 2022). 'Illegal' repairs and the fact that tenants are deemed ineligible to inherit property then serve as excuses for constant waves of demolitions and evacuations without compensation (Abu-Shehadeh and Sheveita, 2010; Plonski, 2017). Palestinians in Yaffa 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'. As such, the abstract neo-liberal market law maintains long-existing circles of marginalization in Yaffa that correspond with Israeli colonial relations.

Nonetheless, as Lefebvre (1992) maintains, nationalist, capitalist, and colonialist claims to 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 section charts such modes of negotiation and resistance, focusing on a network of tactical walking tours in Yaffa led by IDPs. To investigate the transformative potential of these walking tours, 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 describes a grassroots group of Internally Displaced Palestinian women she belongs to, who run monthly walking tours in different Palestinian towns and villages. As Rana (Interview, 2018) explains, it is named Halaqat Istiqbal (a round table) after a traditional habit that they aim to revive, by which Palestinian women before al-Nakba 'would one day of the week sit together and talk about the news, politically and economically, what's

going on, how they can help'. 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 Yaffa, it contextualizes the politics of the region's trails and walking habits. The section further maps the varied actors and networks involved in the al-Nakba commemoration tours facilitated by NGOs, grassroots groups, or individuals; some focus on specific localities, whilst others tour the remains of different Palestinian cities and villages; and some collaborate with Jewish Israeli audiences and/ or tour guides, while others do not. As the chapter argues, their consistent feature is their use of walking to retrace site-specific memory, and as a dynamic resource to imagine an urban future of accountability and return.

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

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 the female body and motherhood (Rogoff, 2013). The NGO Zochrot similarly deploys a feminist framework of counter-commemoration, aiming to promote recognition and accountability for al-Nakba among Jewish Israelis by conducting political tours in ruined Palestinian cities and villages (alongside creating workshops, exhibitions, film festivals, petitions, maps, and apps). Their name is the female plural form for 'remember' in Hebrew, suggesting a contrast with the masculine verb's association with Israeli nationalism and militarism. Indeed, the multifaceted landscape of walking tours that seek to retrace the Palestinian space that was ruined following the 1948 war echoes and problematizes various commemorative, political, and tourist traditions.

Awda Trips

Nakba commemoration tours echo a local Palestinian tradition of *awda* (return) trips by which individuals, families, and groups return 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 idealized 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, 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 1997–1998, 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. Such symbolic executions of the right of return are well-documented in photography, art, academic research, literature, and cinema (Davis, 2007). For instance, 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). The varied archives of return trips inform and broaden knowledge about villages and cities, and their ethnic cleansing.

Like in audiovisual storytelling of al-Nakba, *awda* trips and their visualizations demonstrate the 'Palestinian diaspora's struggle to establish narratives of home and identity in the present of exile' (Saloul, 2008: 112). For some, the ephemeral experience of *awda* 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. 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'. Palestinian intellectual Lila Abu-lughod (in Sa'di and Abu-Lughod, 2007: 83) further describes her father's tour of Yaffa:

> 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.[3]

Indeed, whether they have a helpful or agonizing impact, these trips amount to a powerful political experience of spatial reclamation.

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

As Salim Tamari (2007) further notes, Yaffa is a meeting point for diverse *awda* experiences and memories of al-Nakba, and multiple cross-generational visions for reconstructing and commemorating its iconography. As well as encounters between different Palestinian identities and memories, *awda* trips often involve encounters with Israeli residents. Umar (Interview, 2018), an IDP and Zochrot's landscape and space coordinator (who guides their tours and accompanies *awda* trips) describes the complexity of these meetings: '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'. This ritual that has become a feature of the local landscape and landscape of memory corresponds with a global shift in the meaning of tourism practices.

New Tourism Practices

Traditionally, tourism signified a journey away from home and everyday life. However, current processes of increased mobility and displacement suggest new meanings and implications for tourism (Sheller and Urry, 2006; Urry, 2007), such as return visits, that position the memory-loaded home as the destination (Marschall, 2017). The notion of return, whether permanently or temporarily, whether conceivable or impossible, whether in the 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; Marschall, 2017). 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 and cater to curiosity about the ancestral homeland, as the flourishing industry of 'roots' tours to Africa

demonstrates. 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, 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, but 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. 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, since they were governed by Israeli military rule until 1966 (Darweish and Sellick, 2017; Sorek, 2015). Their resistance was therefore quiet and hidden (Sa'di, 2016), and reclamation of identity occurred through symbolic acts such as singing of national songs during religious celebrations (Darweish and Sellick, 2017). Later, IDPs received regular citizenship rights, but simultaneously their history and national symbols were erased (Rouhana and Sabbagh-Khoury, 2015), and state budgets, policies and plans limited their well-being, civic engagement, and development (Yiftachel, 2006). In the early years, Palestinians in Israel also lacked stable political, social, and religious organizations, and experiences of al-Nakba have been continually marginalized by Israeli, and within the separated Palestinian spheres (Molavi, 2013; Rouhana and Huneidi, 2017). However, with 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.

As Rana (Interview, 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' experienced by their grandparents that led them to remain silent about the past. Nowadays, ADRID conducts tours and runs training courses for guides of destroyed towns and villages and organizes 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 'socialization' and 'materialization' of Palestinian places of origin that empower the struggle for return (Boqa'I, 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, 2004). This demonstrates the importance of a multi-sensory embodied reciprocity with space to preserving memory.

Hiking To Claim Place

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. As Umar (Interview, 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'aretz* (Knowledge of the Land) lessons (Gretel, 2016). This experiential pedagogy has a transcultural component, as 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 for

Palestinians, the same fruit (*sabr* in Arabic) symbolizes their destroyed villages, since flora is often their only physical remnant (Sa'di, 2002). The Israeli idealized 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 realize 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: 172–176). Today, as the ministry of education website states, hikes are considered an 'experiential learning' method leading to 'partnership, involvement and a sense of ownership'.[4] 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).

Relative to its size, Israel now has one of the largest hiking trail networks in the world, and the IDF continues to utilize it to amplify Israeli presence near and beyond the Green Line (the 1949 armistice line established between Israel and its neighbours after the Arab-Israeli War, which became widely referenced as the de facto boundary between Israel and the Palestinian territories after 1967) (Dvir 2000). An especially popular track in Israel is the 1000-kilometre cross-country *Shvil Israel* (Israel National Trail), which was launched in 1995. It enables the practice, through walking, of a phenomenological receptivity to landscape as an affinity with the nation (Collins-Kreiner and Kliot, 2017). 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, 2011).

Nonetheless, societal 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 in this European-inspired hiking culture, as they were

4 Translated by the author.

excluded from the Ashkenazi-centred Zionist memory culture (Lehmann and Siebzehner, 2006). Their apparent lack of interest in the practice of *tiyulim* was attributed to their 'traditionalism' (Katriel, 1996). Dalya Yaffa Markovich's (2016) analysis of school field trips demonstrates that this exclusion remains; she describes how Mizrahi youth enact a sense of not belonging by contesting and undermining the field trip which trivializes Ashkenazi culture.

Rewriting Paths as a Political Intervention

In another example of the frictions that are played out on the land's hiking trails, illegal settlers expressed their discontent with the route of the National Trail (which remains within the borders of the Green Line), by marking an alternative *Shvil Israel* that passes through the West Bank (Troen and Rabineau, 2014). Two Palestinian tourism organizations similarly redesigned trails as a form of political intervention. In 2000, they initiated the grassroots Nativity 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 single Peace Trail that forms the 'foundation for the future of our children and our lives, based on mutual recognition, friendship and a common path'.[5]

The tactical memory tours in Yaffa thus operate as part of a local activism tradition of marking, traversing, and rewriting paths to problematize officialized ideological trajectories. This correlates with a growing global trend that expands the traditional association of tourism with leisure and discovery to include visits to places with past or ongoing conflicts; poplar sites include Northern Ireland (Leonard, 2011), or South Africa (Amerom and Büscher, 2005). 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 on its website, 'reveals the injustices of the realities of the Occupation in which we took

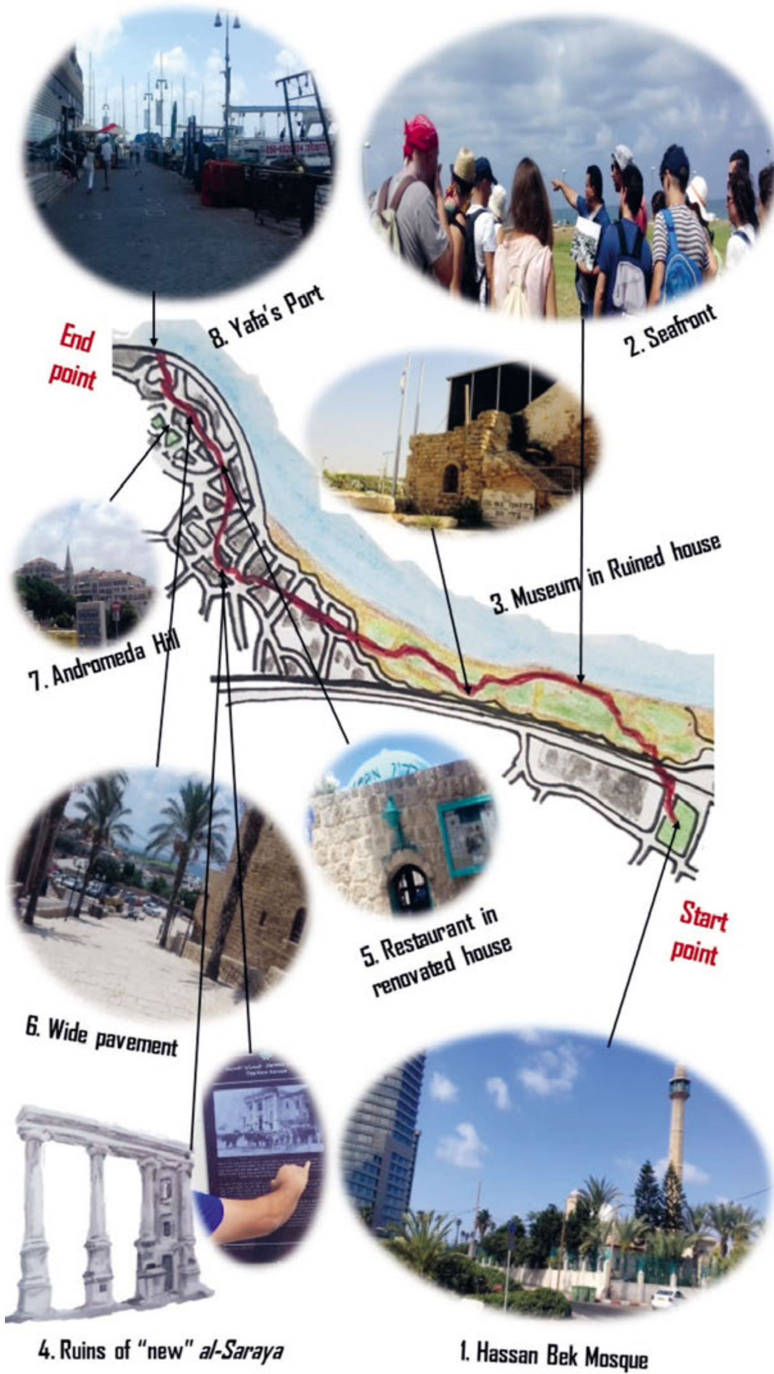
5 Translated by the author from a news report: https://www.makorrishon.co.il/nrg/online/54/ART2/209/401.html.

part'. Similarly, the Palestinian NGO Grassroots Al-Quds in East-Jerusalem leads a tour which, as its 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 Yaffa (and other cities and villages destroyed in 1948) does not cover any 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. Within the context of a heightened usage of landscape and walking to convey a Zionist ideology and memory culture, the following section closely examines how the adaptation of a tourist walking style can also 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 Clock Tower, is the meeting point for a tour of Yaffa by twenty participants, facilitated by Zochrot and led by Umar (Map 3.1 Stop 1). Umar explains that the mosque was once the communal heart of Yaffa'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, Israel is able to obscure the systematic erasure of Palestinian spaces by preserving a few token Palestinian traces. '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'. Over 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 3.1. Central features in Umar's tour, August 2018, 2.85 km, 3 hours 18 minutes, 29°C.

Making Ruins

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 ʿala 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 against Winston Churchill's suggestion to preserve an entire village in its state of 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: 79), states that Palestinian ruins from 1948 raise 'harsh associations that cause considerable political damage'.[6] Hence in 1965, a second wave of demolition of Palestinian ruins was initiated (Golan, 1997).

The fragmentary qualities of ruins 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

6 Translated by the author.

things *are* remembered and *will be* remembered in the future. Priority was therefore given to ruins 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.

Sensing Ruins

From the outset of the tour, Umar emphasizes that he is 'not a tour guide, but a history teller', and that Zochrot's primary goal is to recount the history of al-Nakba. As we walk toward a public garden near the mosque and settle in a shady spot to escape the harsh sun, his narrative begins to unfold. 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 Yaffa. Umar observes that this imagination materialized into concrete after 1948 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. Hence, the attempt to resist this scripting requires new ways of seeing, feeling, being, perceiving and imagining. Towards this goal, the al-Nakba commemoration tours suggest a promising path for an alternative 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. 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. 3.1). 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). This informs a mnemonic 'travel' that attends to the temporal gap between past and present (Saloul, 2007), in this case through archival images, their presentation during tours, and the documentation of these gestures.

Figure 3.1. Participants photograph visual material with the landscape. ⏎

In the context of Yaffa'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 provides an opportunity for those who cannot join the tours (due to age, physical ability, or restrictions on Palestinian rights of movement) to partially experience the return event. Additionally, Najwan (Interview, 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'. In an interview, Umar (Interview, 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 tour's repertoire is thus informed by, performs with, and contributes to the archive to produce an affective exchange between tour participants and memory-loaded sites.

As we approach our next tour stop, Tel Aviv's scenic southern seafront, a pleasant breeze welcomes us (Map 3.1 Stop 2). Umar explains that the rocks on the seafront 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 walking style of the tours is collaborative and collective.

Commemorating Erasure

An emphasis is placed during tours on the current unmarking and un-guarding of 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 into a museum commemorating the conquest of Yaffa (Map 3.1 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 3.1 Stop 4). He reads aloud the official sign placed next to it by Tel Aviv-Yafo municipality: 'On January 4, 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 that has been turned into a touristic 'authentic' Israeli restaurant (Map 3.1 Stop 5). These commodified quotations of the past 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 an oriental landscape and architecture serves as a symbolic indigenization of the settlers (Bhabha, 1984). However, in the tours, ruins are transformed from mute witnesses to the past into contemporary artefacts that generate dialectics between past and present. The tours' emphasis on the Israeli state overlooking, appropriating, and fetishizing Palestinian ruins visualizes an officially omitted history and the ongoing history of its omission.

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'. 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, postwar reconstruction, and gentrification, is a testament to the ongoing dispossession of Palestinian space within the Israeli Green Line. Indeed, the tours' mode of presentation that records a constant movement between multiple pasts and the present befits the transcending qualities of trauma – and especially the continuity of al-Nakba that profoundly shapes the lives of Palestinians born after born after it, defined by state violence, displacement, expropriation, and occupation. In the aftermath of the climactic formative event of Al-Nakba, 'Palestinian society was transformed from a thriving society into a "nation of refugees" scattered over multiple geopolitical borders' (Saloul, 2008: 5). BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights 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 (Bowker, 2003; Hanafi et al., 2014; Knudsen and Hanafi, 2010; Takkenberg and Albanese, 2020). Hence the notion of 'post-memory' fails to grasp the catastrophe that subsequent generations of Palestinians continue to experience, and the closeness between their past and present (Saloul, 2012).

This raises a timely representational matter: as members of the survivors' generation become fewer and fewer, how might we continue to testify to such enduring traumas to demand justice and repair? This seemingly abstract issue impacts the everyday running of al-Nakba commemoration tours, which used to rely on first-generation survivors to convey their mental maps of ruined sites.[7] However, these 'guardians of memory' (Al-Hardan, 2016), in recent years are becoming too old to walk and are fewer in number. Meanwhile, Palestinians born after al-Nakba and in 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, 2018) describes: 'So, if we do not have refugees how do we build the tour? Sometimes we use the 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.' Indeed, in wounded places, memory-loaded sites and architecture are meaningful provocations of memory for later generations and highly accessible through their materiality (Bakshi, 2017; Till, 2008).

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

Testifying through Ruins

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 demonstrate 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 'its suggestion that things and architectural elements have agency of their own (e.g. Fallan, 2008; Guggenheim, 2009; Murdoch, 1998). Instead, this section seeks to emphasize the significance of the performative relationship between body and site. The ruins and spaces without bodily gestures have a vague meaning whilst without the site specificity and ruins these gestures 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 contextualizing 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 3.1 Stop 6), Umar draws our attention to an uncharacteristically wide pavement in Old Yaffa. He explains that the narrow, crooked alleys of Old Yaffa served as 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 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.

Umar illustrates how, as the ruling powers in Yaffa shifted from the Ottoman Empire to the British Mandate and then the Israeli regime, the desire to colonize the local population *and* architecture remains. 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 Yaffa for a brief and bleak period; yet this history is inflated to fill the emptiness left by the abstraction of the Palestinian local history. Indeed, settler colonialism is 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'. The usage of the format of a tour that condenses time and space to convey a perception of place and historical narrative can thus provide a useful strategy of de-colonization.

Like the municipally supported tour examined above, Umar's tour ends at Yaffa Port (Map 3.1 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 Yaffa's uprooted residents. He presents us with images of Palestinian refugees boarding 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. Though the group has been lively throughout the tour and Umar at times struggled to get everyone's attention, everyone is now quiet, as we bow our heads. Through such bodily interaction, tour participants become contributors in the performative event and are cognitively involved and habituated in it.

Dramatizing Ruins

The al-Nakba memory tours consist of numerous macro and micro rituals, planned and improvised, from the perspectives of perpetuators or victims, which create a sense of partnership, emotional affect, and a ceremonial aura. In another tour, an old Jewish participant shares with us his memory of playing in the ruins of the village of Al-Aditha in 1949, where residents had 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 a tour of Jerusalem to commemorate the massacre of the Palestinian village of Dir Yassin, a Palestinian passerby who works in the area and overhears Umar's vocal narration tells us that his family is 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 the Shuafat area in Jerusalem and the truth is that few members of my family are still alive'. He adds painfully, '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'.

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

> My father's family lived in a neighbouring 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 pre-prepared printed leaflets handed out to participants. This additional mode of archiving during Zochrot's tours includes historical information, poems, images, and written testimonies of al-Nakba survivors related to the visited sites. The improvised commemorative ritual, combined with archives and our bodily movements (such as bending heads, facial expressions, and vocal narrations), intensify the tour experience (Fig. 3.2).

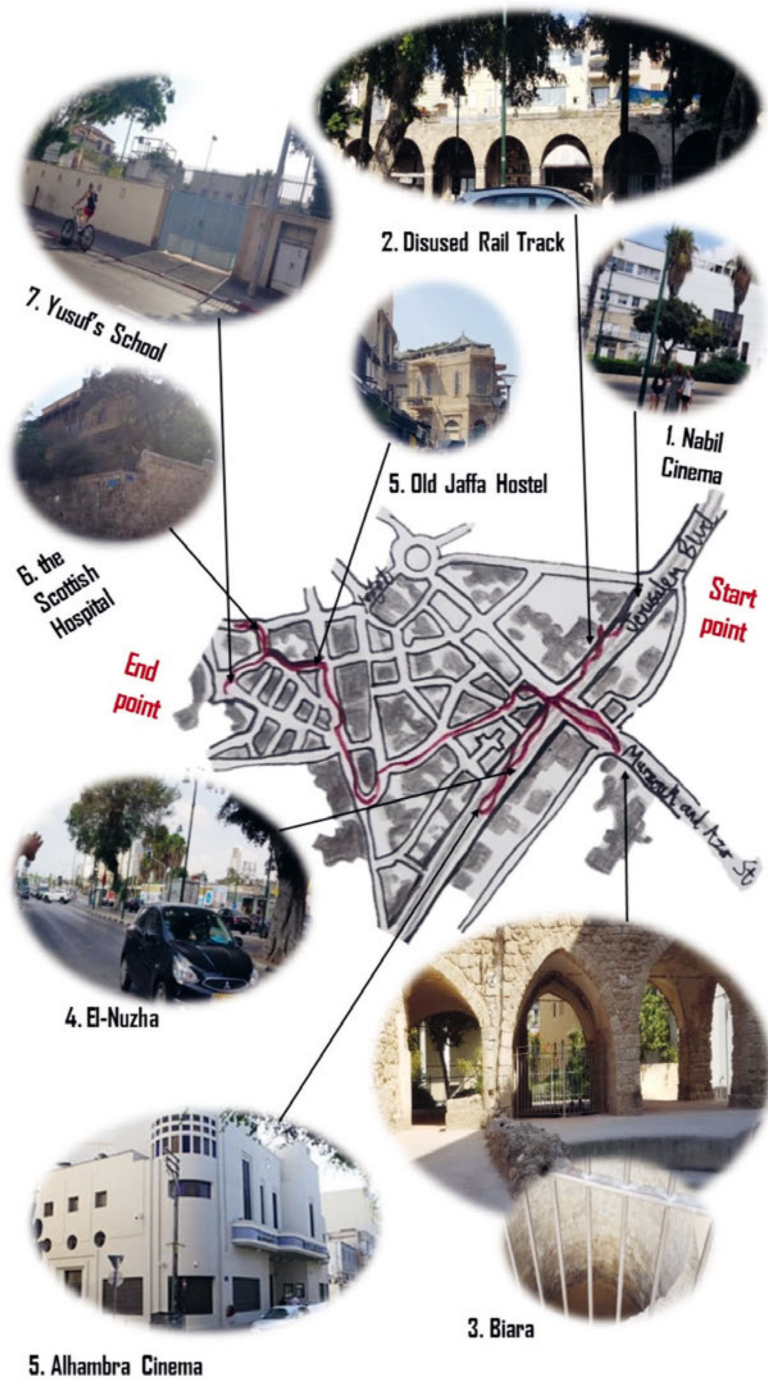
Figure 3.2. Participants' behaviours. ⏎

The very practice of walking from ruin to ruin further stimulates a sense of witnessing, generating an affective experience of a transition through time, place, reality, and imagination. As a tour participant describes (Interview, 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, 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. A dramatization that facilitates acts of remembering the loss of homeland through 'exilic narratives' and acts of telling this loss in 'perfective narrativity' (Saloul, 2012), which allow differently positioned participants to move the memory of al-Nakba from the past into the present and future.

The tours' site-specific testimonial exchange – as it incorporates ruins, imagery, participants, guides, movements, gazes, and creativity – is crucial to the political aim of protesting the continuation of al-Nakba, especially as first-generation survivors are becoming fewer. The following section continues 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 Yaffa, is a history teacher and improvised tour guide. He explains to me that he chose to begin his tour half a kilometre northeast of Yaffa's Clock Tower (Map 3.2 Stop 1), 'since, sadly, today people come to Yaffa on the bus from Tel Aviv thinking this is not part of Yaffa, but this used to be Yaffa's "downtown"'. The starting point of Yusuf's tour is thus designed to problematize the Israeli distorted perception of Yaffa's geography and memory – as well as to blur the boundaries between a pedagogical tourist experience and a tactic of memory activism. In Yusuf's own words: 'so, welcome to Yaffa's tour, throughout you will be asking yourself: is Yusuf leading you on a tour or is he fighting the Zionist



Map 3.2. Central features in Yusuf's tour, August 2019, 1.62 km, 2 hours 10 minutes, 34°C.

narrative?' Through a close analysis of the tour design (presented during a walk-along interview, no. 37, 2019), along with other relevant tours, this section will stress the political importance of remapping Yaffa's erased urbanity and cosmopolitanism.[8]

Tracing Urban Divisions

We walk towards a disused rail track, built in 1892 and used to connect Yaffa with Jerusalem (Map 3.2 Stop 2). Yusuf notes that it is a spatial reminder of the former border between the violently united Yaffa 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, Yaffa and Tel Aviv remain separate urban entities and IDPs do not feel integrated into Tel Aviv.

Yusuf began using walking tours in 1996 to capture his students' attention and imagination, as an interactive way to inspire young IDPs to learn about their history and identity – hitherto silenced in the Israeli discourse and public school curriculum (including Arab public schools). In addition to his studentsYusuf delivers tours to other audiences and has written a guidebook based on his tour design. Yusuf notes that his realization that the Oslo Accords were an 'assassination of the Palestinian story' was what led him to decide that he must 'do something'. Hence, he developed an 'autotopography' to spatially convey his personal story. His family are amongst the Palestinians that remained in Yaffa after the war, having to co-habit their city with the people who seized it.[9] Yusuf notes that for IDPs in Yaffa, 'the Absentee 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-storey house; yet they only received half a floor and had to share it with a Jewish family. 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'.

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

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

Like the tour guides examined in the previous chapter, tour guides in Yaffa aim to extract a political collective message out of their personal autotopography. Similarly, Abed Abu-Shehadeh, a third generation IDP and a municipal council member for the opposition Yaffa Party describes how after the war an Israeli official visited his mother's family home in Ajami to ask if she was the owner. He stresses, 'she could have said yes, but she said no, my brother is the owner'; since her brother was in Jordan the house was declared absentee property and Amidar seized it. A tour participant states in disbelief 'so they just walked around your house and it was yours, but they took it?' Abed summarizes that today the house, 'which is a castle', is worth about fifteen million shekels; in contrast, he explains, 'we started with zero, there isn't the capital that should or could help people'. As such, the tours demonstrate how the current economic disparities in the city reflect its settler-colonial legacy.

An important aspect of their political gesture is to stress the cumulative effects of a historical trauma of dispossession as it relates to contemporary processes of urban displacement of the Palestinian community and erasure of its heritage. For instance, as we walk through Yaffa's alleys and paths, Yusuf describes a postwar national renaming process, in which Israel replaced Yaffa'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. Now, erasure takes a more subtle form, under the guise of urban development. In an example of this ongoing disappearance, we visit the location of what was 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. This demonstrates how regeneration and gentrification are complicit in the continual abstraction of Palestinian Yaffa.

Gentrification as Dispossession

Yusuf explains that the feeling that Yaffa is continuously 'being pulled off its legs' saddens him *and* pushes him to be 'more of an activist'. Visualizing the current urban 'splintering' (Graham and Marvin, 2002), as it shapes Yaffa, Yusuf points to the existence of Jewish neo-oriental luxury enclaves surrounded by the shrinking and neglected Palestinian neighbourhoods. He says: 'now we are beginning to feel the gentrification'. At another tour stop, Yusuf 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 3.2 Stop 5). As Yusuf explains, in Yaffa the global process of gentrification has an added ethno-national dimension, adding that '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'. During his tour, Abed further distinguishes between Jewish liberal gentrifiers, who are 'the consequence of urban planning', versus 'the settlers [Grain-Tornani] who want to affect the urban planning systematically over a period of decades'. The latter are organized groups of middle-class religious Zionists who receive state and municipal encouragement to settle in Israel's socioeconomic periphery and 'mixed cities' (Shmaryahu-Yeshurun, 2022).

Abed also describes that Yaffa was associated with poverty, crime, and prostitution until the 1980s, and Jews left if they could afford to. He adds that the Palestinian community was in a deep state of trauma, and many sought refuge in alcohol and drugs, pointing to the spot where his uncle was found dead from an overdose. Yet, in the 1990s, a new urban plan designated Ajami for gentrification by a Jewish population – 'they even used the words "rich Jews"', Abed explains. A tour participant asks, 'what would you say to a young Jewish Israeli who wants to live in Jaffa?' He answers, 'don't romanticize us', and explains that many Jewish gentrifiers who seek co-existence 'come with an orientalist conception of what it means to live next to Arabs, and then they find out that living next to a poor community is challenging'. To exemplify, he describes a recent dispute over roosters, 'who have always been a part of Jaffa', which began when a Jewish resident complained in a communal Facebook group: 'why do the Arabs bring roosters into the city?' He states, 'this post had hundreds of comments and then people brought a bunch of roosters and let them free into the city'. For Abed, this illustrates that 'when we are ignored from urban planning and the way the city is built, the consequence is that there will be clashes between the old and new inhabitants'.

On a tour for a group of Israeli activists guided by Amna Asfour, a third-generation IDP, educational activist, and law student, we visit one of the most striking sites of gentrification in the city – the Andromeda Hill gated community. It was built in 1995 as part of a deal between the Canadian Jewish entrepreneur Murray Goldman, the municipality of Tel Aviv-Yafo, and the landowner, the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Andromeda Hill's style echoes a global oriental imagery of Yaffa, whilst simultaneously appearing new, expensive, and equipped with security measures to ensure its separation from the urban fabric (Monterescu and Fabian, 2003). Amna

calls the security guard and asks permission to enter for passage, noting that Andromeda was built on public land. As we enter, she tells us that as a young girl she used to run around this hill, and that when the construction of Andromeda began, she knew that it was not meant for her, noting the 'state of mind of the oppressed that sees invisible markers of borders'.

Amna points our attention to the loud background noises of the nearby Arab Scouts Movement. As she explains, the developers ultimately lost money on the project as its premise of exclusivity could not isolate it from the surrounding soundscape. This tactic of symbolic transgression, she later explains to me during our interview (no. 51, 2023), seeks to 'emotionally incorporate participants in activism', since 'we are all slaves of capitalism' and whilst there is a 'colonial aspect, the story of Andromeda is also very capitalistic'. The emotions, sensations, sounds, and smells that the space invokes are 'the power of guided tours', Amna concludes. Through this power, tour guides demonstrate the institutional and ethnic dimensions of gentrification as it impacts their daily lives. 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 tour described above. As Yusuf highlights: 'there are no check points in Yaffa, and no Arabic and no history, and this rapid process of spatial alteration is big, its al-Nakba'.

Trails of Resistance

However, in addition to marking a continual process of erasure, tour guides also demonstrate 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 engravement on a house column of the original homeowner's name, left intact for its decorative qualities. Yusuf also points at an engraved sign that says Rue Negib Bustros, a testament to the street's original name, after Najib Bustrus who built it. 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).

As we walk across a wide boulevard Yusuf says: 'we call it the boulevard, 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' (Map 3.2 Stop 4). Yusuf describes that this entire area was filled with hotels and businesses, all abandoned in 1948. He adds that Yaffa's urban sphere was embellished with cafés, restaurants,

bars, theatres, cinemas, factories, public parks, and libraries. The retracing of Yaffa's urbanity and its truncated Golden Age is another important political gesture enacted in these tours. This requires the adoption of an in-depth gaze, both spatially and temporally, that contrasts with the aloof viewpoint that is cultivated in the municipally supported tour of Old Jaffa. As Yusuf notes, he seeks to show 'what people miss out on when they look'.

For instance, we gaze at a building, and he explains that the building now serves as an Israeli Scientology centre, though it originally housed the famous Alhambra Cinema (Map 3.2, Stop 5), which also hosted live performances. 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 Theatre (Map 3.2 Stop 1). As Yusuf expounds, the International Style building was designed as Nabil Cinema in 1922 and named after its Palestinian owner.

Abed centres his entire tour around the (Jerusalem) Boulevard, as an emblem of all the key elements of Yaffa's pre-1948 urbanization, including infrastructure, trade, and culture. As he states, 'what is important about this street is that it is the first urban construction in the city'. He further details, 'this was the first street to be built with electricity and a sewage system', and the first floors of the buildings on the boulevard were used for trade. As we walk around the boulevard, much like Yusuf, he points our attention to beautiful buildings that testify to the rich cultural life of the city prior to 1948, including theatres, cinemas, banks, and postal services. Emphasizing Yaffa's cosmopolitanism as another feature of its urbanity, he notes that the buildings display an array of urban architectural influences, ranging from Egypt to Syria and to the German Bauhaus style. Similarly stressing cosmopolitanism as another aspect of Yaffa's lost urbanity, Yusuf states, 'this was a cosmopolitan city before they even thought of this idea in Tel Aviv'. To demonstrate this, he points at an engraved writing on a house entrance: 'In memory of Beirut 1941', which was built by a Lebanese family to resemble their home in Beirut.

The cosmopolitanism that Yusuf and Abed illuminate differs from both the cosmopolitan history ascribed to Yaffa 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, Yaffa's cosmopolitanism is engendered by the legacy and continued presence of many different cultures domiciled in the city. In another example, we visit the remains of a *bayāra* (well house) which belonged to Armenian

sugar merchants (Map 2, Stop 3). Yusuf explains that *bayarāt* were luxurious palace-like houses of wealthy plantation owners which evolved from wells irrigating agricultural lands. This *bayārā* is one of the few spatial reminders of the once-thriving *mazra'as* (plantations) industry mentioned above. At another tour stop, we visit a house that belonged to a Jewish family. 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 Yaffa also obscures its trans-local history with the various cultures that shaped its urban sphere and the mixed world of different identities it housed.

Through these architectural remains of Yaffa's urban development and cosmopolitanism, tour guides deconstruct the misreading of the vernacular architecture, as Yusuf explains, 'I see houses that people think are Arab style, but that's not true, it's Italian style'. This is another indication of the importance of architectural features as political actors in memory activism, and a testimonial device to retrace a publicly omitted local heritage. 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 3.2 Stop 6). As Abed explains during his tour, the Palestinian histography focuses on the figure of the *fellah* (peasant) as a counter to the Zionist emphasis on the figure of the Israeli farmer who cultivated the allegedly empty land. Yet, by retracing the city's urban modern legacy such tours enrich the Palestinian historiography to include the 'urban repressed' (Hasan, 2019). This further works to problematize the Zionists claim for modern superiority through the built environment.

Reclamations of Yaffa

Importantly, the al-Nakba commemoration tours in Yaffa are part of a broader landscape of activism that utilizes a range of strategies 'in and around cities' to reference pre-1948 urban life and establish an 'indigenous urbanizing' that predates and may outlive settler-colonial violence (Rouhana and Sabbagh-Khoury, 2019). Their struggle also exemplifies how habits of *sumud* (steadfastness) complicate the elimination of Palestinian spaces and identity (Hammami, 2015; Joronen et al., 2021; Tawil-Souri, 2011). Tactics of *sumud*, which vary from mundane activities that sustain agency, hope, mobility, and liveability to direct action and protest are shaped by *and* continuously shape sites of settler-colonial violence (Amir and Kotef, 2015; Griffiths, 2017; Griffiths and Repo, 2021; Hammami, 2019). They show remarkable resilience against ad hoc techniques of colonial violence (Joronen, 2019);

against the effects of time as it is deployed to colonize through slowness, delay, and 'theatres of recognition' (Joronen, 2017); and against affective futures of precarity, such as the certainty that house demolition will occur alongside an uncertainty of when (Joronen and Griffiths, 2019).

The struggle to reclaim Yaffa and assert its 'Palestinization' is enacted through theatre, poetry nights, folk dance, graffiti, and the decoration of homes with Palestinian symbols (Kaddar and Monterescu, 2021). These acts highlight the importance of materiality and performativity to informal political expressions and identities (Salih and Richter-Devroe, 2014). Residents are also involved in direct modes of civil disobedience, utilizing their fragile citizenship (Zureik, 2003) to protest the Israeli violence in the Occupied Territories (Plonski, 2017). In these moments, the city of Jaffa acts as a stage where Palestinians imbue citizenship with a progressive meaning (Jabareen, 2014b). As Areej Sabbagh-Khoury (2022) articulates, in a context where citizenship within settler states operates as a vehicle for a fragmented process of accumulation/dispossession, IDPs utilize their citizenship to challenge the settler-colonial project, demanding a 'state for all its citizens' and invoking citizenship to fight dispossession, with varying degrees of success.

Palestinians in Jaffa further protest the ethno-spatial segregation and land confiscation they experience at an urban scale and the discrimination of their urban rights (Jabareen, 2014b; Sabbagh-Khoury, 2022; Yacobi, 2002). Two key Palestinian grassroots organizations have formed in Yaffa 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) was formed in 2007. The latter includes tour guiding in its varied strategies. Some of its tangible victories include stopping the municipality from turning Yaffa's beach into landfill, applying pressure on Israeli authorities to build some housing units for Palestinians, and establishing independent Arab education institutions from 2003 onwards (Plonski, 2017). 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 Yaffa as a group with a historic right to the land of the city and its assets'.[10]

Fighting for their right to the city, IDPs in Yaffa stage countless protests and fund lawsuits to protect their land and housing (Huss, 2023), and burial sites (Huss and Margalit, 2024). A minority in the heart of Israel, Palestinian activists in Yaffa adopt subversive *and* pragmatic methods – appealing to the Israeli courts *and* joining efforts with Mizrahi tenants of south Tel

10 Translated by the author.

Aviv's absentee properties to protest their common experiences of eviction (Plonski, 2017). In fact, Mizrahi tenants' struggles to prove that their parents' generation were intentionally housed in absentee properties in order to prevent the return of their Palestinian owners is another way in which al-Nakba continues to shape the present (Leshem, 2016). Yaffa's Palestinian revival and the politicization of its urban sphere are linked with the 'return of history' in IDPs mobilizations, in which they increasingly frame their current inequality as stemming from the al-Nakba logic of Israeli settler-colonialism (Rouhana and Sabbagh-Khoury, 2015). As Yusuf 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'.

The street of conflicted cities therefore contains intricate layers of memories and interpretations that transcend the simplified binary of remembering and forgetting. Tours guided by IDPs in Yaffa utilize walking to visualize these layers and illuminate the enduring links between past and present, erasure and resistance. The final section will further consider 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. A Jewish participant notes how informative the tour has been for her, and yet she adds: '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?' A Palestinian participant adds, 'the point here is not just memory retention but a change of consciousness, making people want to listen and remember'. This debate succinctly introduces the challenge of the tours' memory activism, which this section seeks to unpack, in terms of the ability to elicit political action from these tours in the face of ongoing al-Nakba, as well as issues related to the positionalities of participants.

Positionalities of Tour Participants

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. In contrast with the trans-local conflict tourism industry outlined above, 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, 2018) says: 'I lived the hiding and silencing of these stories'. 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.

Yet, 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. More broadly, the tours undermine the marginalization of the memory of al-Nakba and the ongoing refugee problem it has created within peace and conflict resolution initiatives and left-wing discourses in Israeli and international circles (Hill, 2008). In fact, Zochrot is the only Israeli NGO that deals with the legacy of al-Nakba.

Nora (Interview, 2019), one of Zochrot's founders, describes that 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 to the realization that al-Nakba is something that must be brought up and talked about'. An Australian tour participant (Interview, 2019) who has been campaigning internationally against the Israeli occupation for years, similarly observes 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-1967 temporality ignores crucial

aspects of the region's disputes and histories of Israeli space, history, and liability.

Like the summary debate of the tour described above, the 'in-between' moments of walking from one tour stop to another allow participants to observe the content of the tours, reflect upon it, and even argue about it. For instance, a group of Israelis argue if al-Nakba amounts to ethnic cleaning. One participant shares that this term is difficult for him, and he initially found it hard to accept, but after joining several tours by Zochrot he now finds it appropriate. Another participant asks, 'why not call it deportation, which is what it was?' Whether or not Israeli participants accept the terminology of Zochrot fully, the tours are successful in undermining an Israeli epistemology that renders al-Nakba a Palestinian history, a conception that lies at the very heart of the disaster Israel continues to inflict upon Palestinians (Azoulay, 2014). In a manifestation of this ontology, when I approached a Jewish Israeli tour participant (Interview, 2019) at the beginning of the tour to interview her, 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.[11]

Power Dynamics of Commemoration

To curate a space of joint Israeli-Palestinian solidarity and resistance requires an acknowledgment of 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'. In this regard, the interactions between participants is an important part of their political education, which especially benefit from the presence of Palestinian audiences that add to and expand on the mediation of the Palestinian tour guide. For instance, when a 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?' The tours further offer a prism to do something and problematize the hegemonic consciousness as it is enacted via the public space.

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

Crucially, the tours invite Israelis to acknowledge their responsibility for a continuing al-Nakba, instead of framing this as an alternative Palestinian version of history. As a Palestinian participant (Interview, 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 suggests, the tours should pave a path for linking the past and the future. In fact, Zochrot now concludes its tours by reading aloud their Vision Document of Return that envisions what the application of the return might look like. As Umar (Interview, 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?' Theu thus decided 'to support the refugees' right of return as a main part of the justice process'. Zochrot had therefore undergone a process of modification of its activism tactics; much like Querstadtein which advanced its activism tactics over the years – for instance by altering the location and focus of its tours from migratory neighbourhoods, as discussed in the former chapter.

Najwan (Interview, 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.

Yet, the collaboration between Israelis and Palestinians also introduces distinct challenges in mediating the content of the tour. Najwan (Interview, 2018), who has guided many tours for both Jewish and Palestinian audiences,

notes that Jewish participants often seek to establish a false sense of symmetry in victimhood: 'it is important for them that I say that Jews were also scared, they also escaped'. Nonetheless, Najwan highlights a benefit in communication brought by the tour format: unlike in political debates, the audience is required to listen to the tour guide. Indeed, the identity and the body of the tour guide matters for this political intervention. That the guides who lead, narrate, and curate the tours are cross-generational IDPs suggests a fruitful avenue for Israeli Jews to act in solidarity with the Palestinian struggle, without imposing a Jewish rhetoric or agenda. Assuming the authoritative role of the tour guide as a mediator of cultural heritage and collective memory helps navigate the existing power imbalances, since it lends Palestinian tour guides authority in their attempt to undermine hegemonic perceptions of place and heritage, in the context of a comprehensive denial of memory and identity.

The Visual Language of Walking Tours

As well as facilitating these internal encounters, the tours are designed to manifest presence to the (mostly) Israeli passersby through the visual-spatial intervention of planting names of erased Palestinian localities within the landscape. As an Israeli 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 is 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 a photograph of coastal Manshiya on top of it, that was violently erased from Tel Aviv's cityscape; participants photograph this gesture, forming a collage that links past, present, abstraction, and resistance (Fig. 3.3).

Through such improvised acts, the tours create 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,

Figure 3.3. Creating a site-specific collage. ⏎

felt, *and* done about it. As Najwan (Interview, 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.

Due to the fluid and dialectical nature of the tour, passersby also intervene, inquiring into our actions or criticizing them, through remarks such as 'they also murdered Jews here, stop', 'go to Gaza', or 'our soldiers also died you know'. The tours therefore create different levels of participation and involve a mixture of walking genres, linking the touristic walking style with the political march. Indeed, in disputed cities, the mere presence of some specific groups 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 is about being noticed (Cresswell, 1996). Within the conflicted reality of Israel, the tours' commemoration of al-Nakba constitutes

a form of protest and civil disobedience.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 has instilled tangible fear of publicly engaging with the memory of al-Nakba. For instance, the Yaffa Theatre lost its state funding due to violating this law. The political tours of Yaffa that do not follow the touristic and ideological roots marked in the city enact a similar transgression, symbolically and literally.

Transforming Participants

As well as momentarily altering the local space, participants describe how the tours impact them in the long run. Jewish Israeli participants often describe a retrospective alteration of their sense of place and historical perception. For instance, one participant (Interview, 2018) says, '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?' Another Jewish participant (Interview, 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?' A third Jewish participant describes being moved by Abed 'talking about the history of his family specifically in Jaffa as a way of zooming out from there to tell the bigger picture but also integrating that within the present-day reality in Jaffa'.

For the Palestinian audiences, the tours amount to a political reclamation of their homeland and heritage. A third-generation al-Nakba survivor from Chile (Interview, 2018) attests to the strong embodied impact of the tour for cross-generational survivors of trauma: 'it really feels like something physical happening, to me at least'. A young IDP tour participant (Interview, 2019) describes a more complex feeling, in between personal victimhood and a collective political responsibility as an inhabitant of the place: '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 to me to learn about this history and because I live here'. Najwan (Interview, 2018) further

notes that her tours broaden IDPs' socio-cultural knowledge: 'It's something you are not taught in school, and it is also not spoken about in the street … Yaffa or Haifa, these cities flourished before '48, it is important for me to explain, with pride, what a Palestinian city was before '48…' The tours also strengthen the political identity and vocabulary of Palestinians. As Rana (Interview, 2018) explains: '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'.

In addition to altering the city and its heritage, the tours therefore 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 Yaffa.

Conclusion

Expanding the geo-temporal scale of forced displacement research, this chapter has considered the political agency of displaced groups that have not crossed state borders as it persists across generations. 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. Tracing the Zionist reformation of Yaffa as a tourist site detached from its Palestinian heritage, the chapter conceptualized the enduring links between the spatial violence of colonialism *and* tourism as modes of nationalistic communication that mark physical and cultural passages of domination.

In parallel, it has shown how Yaffa's Judaization is constantly countered by modes of resistance, and it traced persistent indigenous counterclaims that form a productive ground for activism. It has demonstrated how collaborative walking methodologies can help revive the erased geographies of colonized displaced populations and has outlined the importance of site specificity and ruins to the tours' testimonial events. The participatory function of these tours has been shown to be 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. The tours allow for a constant movement between a past, present, and future grounded in the urban fabric of the city with its ruins. Their political gesture correlates with a broader 'return of history' in current Palestinian mobilizations in Israel (Rouhana and Sabbagh-Khoury, 2015), which assumes a cyclical temporality that hosts a future of liberation in the present through activating the past (Abu Hatoum, 2021).

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. 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, the following chapter turns to the neighbourhoods immediately adjacent to Yaffa to the north, in the liminal space between Yaffa and Tel Aviv proper, currently known as south Tel Aviv. This former border zone between two conflicted cities that were reunified in 1950 has since turned 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.

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4. Refugees Re-Contextualize Tel Aviv

Abstract: Chapter Four studies tours of south Tel Aviv, the former borderland between Jaffa and Tel Aviv, and current home of asylum seekers from Sudan and Eritrea. It begins by reviewing the official scripting of Tel Aviv's urban identity and the gaps and fissures within it. It then highlights the interdependency between the marginalization of south Tel Aviv and the marginalization of African asylum seekers. Within this entanglement, the chapter shows how tour guides appeal to mundane infrastructure to illuminate a chronicle of urban neglect and the resistance of migratory communities to it. In parallel, it discusses how the subversive potential of these tours can be jeopardized by the neglect of indigenous histories, by commodification, and by elements of racial voyeurism.

Keywords: Israel-Palestine, International architecture, asylum seekers, borderlands, poverty tourism, urban inequality

This chapter examines a newly emerged group of guided walking tours, located on a spectrum between a tourist and educational experience, in the impoverished neighbourhoods of south Tel Aviv. In doing so, it theorizes how the arrival of displaced people – an ostensibly uninvolved third party – affects the politics of public memory in a host city divided by ethnic and national conflicts and divisions.

The tours of south Tel Aviv are facilitated by a variety of actors and networks, with different financial, educational, and ideological agendas, which can roughly be divided into three categories: creative freelancers, social youth movements, and refugee charities. Such tours are well-attended and booked by high schools, universities, youth leadership programmes, and professional organizations. 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. Their commonality, and their relevance to this book, is that they address the much-disputed

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presence of asylum seekers in south Tel Aviv and help illuminate the history of discriminatory development that produces unequal urbanization. The previous two chapters focused on highly touristic segments of the city; in contrast, this chapter examines an urban area that suffers underdevelopment and is devoid of official memory markings such as memorials or tourist signs. Nevertheless, the chapter will demonstrate how the tours utilize infrastructure such as bus stations, restaurants, and grocery stores as valuable memory signifiers of chronic institutional neglect but also as evidence of communal attempts to overcome this and of trans-local memories woven into the streets.

The marginalization of south Tel Aviv and the marginalization of African asylum seekers that reside there are interlinked in a self-perpetuating cycle: the government directed refugees to the south of the city, where they became perceived as another symptom of its chronic neglect and association with the urban 'other'. This, in turn, intensified the existing infrastructural and social problems of the area (Cohen and Margalit, 2015). Media and politicians then blame refugees for the neglected conditions of the south and its reputation for drugs, crime, and poverty, and their presence in the neighbourhood is disputed (Tirosh, 2018; Tirosh and Klein-Avraham, 2017). The area thus exemplifies the logics of Israeli populist politics, as it fuels emotions of fear, disgust, and resentment, to separate between different identities and play them against each other, instead of aiming to address inequality and institutional marginalization (Illouz, 2023).

Indeed, the marginalization of south Tel Aviv long predates the arrival of African asylum seekers. South Tel Aviv grew out of some Jewish neighbourhoods on the outskirts of Jaffa, which turned into a borderland between two conflicting cities with the formation of Tel Aviv – receiving limited municipal services from either city (Golan, 2009; Roṭbard, 2015).

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. Subsequently, south Tel Aviv grew immensely, absorbing nearby displaced Palestinian villagers and housing Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and North Africa. A spatial distinction formed between the planned north of the city and the informal urbanism of the south, comprised of dense residential areas, factories, fields, shanty towns, and transit camps (Marom, 2014). A continual lack of planning, investment, and services solidifies the urban frontier between Tel Aviv and its southern segment to this day (Margalit, 2013).

This chapter will map how the tours trace the overlooked spatial-historical context of the discourse around the reception of Asylum seekers

and will depict the south as informed by migratory agency. However, in contrast with the tours examined in the former chapters, these tours are mostly guided by Israelis. Instead, asylum seekers' collaboration in the tours takes 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' activism, in which African asylum seekers weave their memories into the local public memory-scape, appealing to and expanding its vocabularies and gestures. 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 chapter addresses the tensions that arise between the political and commercial agendas of these tours: through this, it seeks to understand how agency, belonging, and political participation in contemporary cities is shaped by multiple geographies and cultures, by racial and colonial histories, and lingering mechanisms of othering.

(In)visible Memory Lanes in Tel Aviv

On a pleasant April morning, I arrive at the Tel Aviv Founders' Monument and Fountain, 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 the municipality of Tel Aviv-Yafo on a weekly basis and is available to book on its website at the cost of sixty shekels. Shlomit, our tour guide, 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.

Tel Aviv's Story of Formation

Through preservation, renovation, destruction, street names, memorials, and walking tours, a city continually writes, affirms, and disseminates its

story. As Shlomit outlines, Tel Aviv's official story begins with sixty-six Jewish families, residents of 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).[1] The location of the Founders' Monument, built in 1949, is highly symbolic. This is where Akiva Arieh 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 Freiber, 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.

However, Tel Aviv's official story of formation as a city that emerged out of empty patches of white sand forgets that Tel Aviv grew in the heart of a cultivated Palestinian district with neighbourhoods, villages, farms, roads, vineyards, and orchards. As mentioned in the former chapter, present-day Tel Aviv stands on the site of eight Palestinian localities that existed before 1948, including villages such as Salama and Jaffa's northern neighbourhood Manshiya. Additionally, in its attempt to forget Jaffa, Tel Aviv's official story of formation overlooks the Jewish neighbourhoods that were established since 1869 on its outskirts, before Ahuzat Bayit, from which south Tel Aviv evolved (Roṭbard, 2015). Unlike these neighbourhoods, Ahuzat Bayit emerged as a purposeful act of separation from Palestinian Jaffa, and its design was inspired form the European garden suburb and the European colonies' urban settlements that were detached from the indigenous population (Bigon and Katz, 2017; Zaidman and Kark, 2016).

The aspiration for separation comes across in a statement written by Weiss, describing Ahuzat Bayit as 'the first Hebrew city, one hundred 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'.[2] As seen, the Zionist enterprise envisioned Tel Aviv as 'pure' and 'clean', a contrast to the 'mixed' and 'messy' cosmopolitan Jaffa. This demonstrates how colonial identity and authority rely on establishing a culturally and spatially inferior other. The preservation and renovation of

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

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

the northern and central segment of Tel Aviv have further solidified Tel Aviv's 'mythography', both as the 'the first Hebrew city', a model of Jewish separation and self-rule; and simultaneously as the 'the White City', a symbol of western modernity and a world cultural heritage site (Azaryahu, 2020). 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.

Equally, the Zionist establishment aimed to separate itself from the Jewish neighbourhoods on the fringes of Jaffa, which were deemed, like Jaffa, 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). Like these neighbourhoods, 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).

Tel Aviv's Architectural Styles

We begin our walk across 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 of 1917 'instilled great hopes', and precipitated waves of Jewish migration to the region, among them 'architects with diplomas, mostly from Eastern Europe'.[3] In the early 1920s, these architects tried to form a hybrid between the influences they brought from Europe and the local style. To demonstrate this, Shlomit points at a striking house, designed by Yehuda Magidovitch, who graduated from the Academy of 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, eclectic architecture, which was popular across European colonies, established a modern style with an orientalized genealogy; by referencing classical motifs, it formed a sense of continuity with the past empires of Greece and Rome (Longair, 2016).

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

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. Here, the decorations on the balcony resemble the Jewish symbol of a Menorah and a large ceramic mural designed by Ze'ev Raban that 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 (Huss, 2019).

As we continue our stroll along Rothschild Boulevard, Shlomit describes how the British authorities granted Tel Aviv the official status of township in 1921. Subsequently, the Zionist leadership commissioned Sir Patrick Geddes, a Scottish town planner and biologist, to design a masterplan for Tel Aviv. His 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). The commission of a renowned European town planner to design Tel Aviv's master plan is another indication of the Zionists' desire to spatially mimic European modernity. This mimicry was important in winning concessions from the British authorities, who 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; a term coined at a 1923 exhibition at 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 citing 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.

The White City

As we walk around a beautiful renovated white building, 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. 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.

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'. 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 Mayor 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 euro 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 international acclaim. The celebration of the International Style emblemizes Tel Aviv's desire to mimic European modernity.

The celebration 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'. A framing that embodies a spatial paradox, since the Holocaust happened elsewhere (Feldman, 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. As such, the White City personifies the cultural privileging of the predominant Ashkenazi memory narrative underlining Tel Aviv's official story, and Israel's official historiography more broadly. In a similar vein, as Sharon Roṭbard (2015) highlights, although south Tel Aviv demonstrates a wealth of styles, including the sought-after International Style, it is excluded from the boundaries of the re-painted White City; its houses remain in decay. Roṭbard therefore designates the area of south Tel Aviv as the 'black' side of the city, along with Jaffa, 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.

As has been seen, Tel Aviv is a city with conflicting ambitions as both a Zionist utopia and a spatial mimicry of Europe. Its evolving architectural styles and preservation processes create a deliberate juxtaposition with its neighbouring city of Yaffa, whilst abstracting its Palestinian heritage and the story of the marginalized border area between Yaffa and Tel Aviv. Cruelly, as the next section details, Tel Aviv's economic, cultural, and spatial divisions and borders also impact the conflicted reception of asylum seekers from Africa in the city.

Tel Aviv's Urban Frontiers and Topographies of Racial Fear

Togod (an activist, tour guide, and Sudanese asylum seeker) during a walk-along interview describes the focal point of his walking tours, an inner-city seamline that runs between the southern segment of Tel Aviv and the rest of the city (Map 4.1):

> (Pointing at skyscrapers, see Map. 1) In the early days when I arrived here, I used these signs of Hapoalim Bank to go to the sea and back to this area (south Tel Aviv) … I suddenly found out that this is a separation line for all intents and purposes, that nobody was stopping you from going there, but actually it is there … So, I really realized that this is the limit because no one from there is coming here and no one from here goes there …

Map 4.1. The inner-city (in)visible seamline.

Togod (Interview, 2019) further describes how the walk from Rothschild Boulevard to the southern street of Neve Sha'anan is only seven minutes long, yet 'the population changes, the buildings change, the language, the culture, it all changes'. Accordingly, this section stresses that although the urban frontier that defines Togod's mobility and sense of belonging long precedes the arrival of African asylum seekers in the city, the marginalization of African asylum seekers is entangled with the marginalization of south Tel Aviv. 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.

A Spatial-Racial Politics of Fear

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 (Johnson, 2014; Vehnämäki, 2006). 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 7,000 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 (Kalir, 2015; Kritzman-Amir, 2009), and it 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, 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 800 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, about 25,920 refugees and asylum seekers from Africa live in Israel today; of those around 10,042 live in south Tel Aviv (the rest live in cities such as Ashdod, Eilat, Bnei Brak, and Jerusalem). The arrival of the marginalized populations of asylum seekers in the marginalized area of south Tel Aviv has intensified ongoing infrastructural and cultural problems. Simultaneously, the pre-existing ethnic, financial, geographical, and cultural divides in Tel Aviv influence the conflicting reception of asylum seekers the city. As Maayan Ravid (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 of Neve Sha'anan, with no additional institutional guidance or help. As Togod (Interview, 2019) says, 'suddenly 6,000 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 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).

Topographies of the Politics of Fear

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, Haeer Haivrit (The Hebrew City) writes on its 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'.[4] 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, 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-dependence therefore exists between the public perception of refugees and that of south Tel Aviv.

In another aspect of this co-dependency, Baric (Interview, 2018), an activist and asylum seeker from Darfur, highlights that the problems of south Tel Aviv 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 marginalization to the arrival of asylum seekers. 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.

To demonstrate this, a flash flood in the winter of 2020 served as a tragic reminder of the long-standing infrastructural neglect of south Tel Aviv – and an example of a deflecting logic that blames asylum seekers for the problems in the south. The flood resulted in the collapse of urban infrastructure and the death of a young couple trapped in the elevator of

4 Translated by the author.

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 neighbourhoods. In response, the 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 – in a classification that de-legitimizes their claim to refuge in Israel. Infiltrators is also a memory-loaded term, referring in the Israeli collective imagination to Palestinians who entered Israel to carry out terror attacks or return to their homes in the 1950s. Using the term links African asylum seekers with the 'Palestinian ultimate other', deeming them to be an additional enemy or existential threat.

Nevertheless, refugees find different ways to manoeuvre the politics of their public (in)visibility.

Challenging the Politics of Fear

Johnny (Interview, 2018), an activist and Eritrean asylum seeker, describes how around 200 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 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 activist 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. 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 20,000 people. Another way in which refugees demand political public visibility is by guiding or participating in the newly emerged industry of tactical walking tours in south Tel Aviv.

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, 2019) says, 'I had 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, 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.

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. 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.

Contextualizing the Presence of Refugees

Taj (Interview, 2018), an activist, tour guide, and asylum seeker from Darfur, describes how the tours illuminate the missing spatial context in relation to the arrival of refugees in south Tel Aviv:

> 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.

As Taj emphasizes, despite the supposed de-territorialization of refugees, the public discourse maintains a negative view on the south of the city, with refugees regarded as the cause in a way that reinforces negative stereotypes about them. Walking tours, in their condensing of time and place

to produce a story, offer a means to contextualize this entanglement. This can simultaneously divert 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 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, his first audience 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'anan, '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'. Yet Taj no longer leads 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.

Explaining the aim of the tours as changing not only the image of asylum seekers but also of the southern segment of the city, Yuval (Interview, 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 Roṭbard [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, 2019), explains that their tours started seven years ago as a small initiative, 'aiming to raise awareness for 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 300 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 section will address. These tours also echo a broader trend of 'poverty tourism', which is heavily criticized for commodifying poverty and turning suffering into a spectacle for the voyeuristic tourist's gaze (Freire-Medeiros, 2014; Cardoso et al., 2022). Furthermore, whilst bringing marginalized places into the tourism narrative can increase their recognition and boost their economy (Iranmanesh and Kamalipour, 2024), the flip side is that it may also prompt gentrification and displacement (Spirou, 2011) (as was discussed in relation to Neukölln). Hence, in analysing this set of tours which visit less 'attractive' sites by comparison to those in Chapters Two and Three, a further question arises, regarding the extent to which they undermine or in fact contribute to the 'othering' of south Tel Aviv. The following sections will closely unpack the political and moral challenges that arise from these tours and their engagement with contexts of marginalization, harm, and suffering.

Tracing a Chronic of Urban Inequality

At nine in the morning on a hot August day, I arrive at a park near Nava Sha'anan's police station where a group of men and women are injecting heroin (Map 4.2 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 fifteen-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 urbanization.

Map 4.2. Central features in Dotan's tour, August 2019, 2.35 km, 2 hours 45 minutes, 29°C. ⏎

Attentive Walking

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, 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'anan and that it's unpleasant to walk there'. To suggest a different contextualization 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). Like the much-cited walking figure of Western modernity, the *flâneur*, the tours practice a phenomenological study of the street.

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 in 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 standardizing logic, they provide fertile grounds for memory that is associative, overlapping, 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, 2008).

This requires a distinctive mode of walking that involves slowing down, gazing, and becoming attuned to the sensorial, material, and social details of the street, as Dotan demonstrates to his tour participants.

Unpacking Urban Assemblage

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 4.2 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 realization 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 contextualizing the city as a relational and constituted assemblage of social relations, cultures, materials, and actors (Amin and Thrift, 2016; Brenner et al., 2011; McFarlane, 2011). Accordingly, the street-level gaze that is practised 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 4.2 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 1990s. 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, a graduate of the London AA School of Architecture and one of the key figures responsible for introducing the language of brutalism to Israel. Karmi sought to merge this architectural style with his ambitions in urban design – reimagining a building on the scale of a city. He envisioned the station as a utopian, futuristic urban space free of cars – a capitalist microcosm where the mix of commerce would be meticulously curated (Davidi and Horn, 2013). The goal was to create a structure that encapsulated everything a city offers, but without traditional streets. However, Karmi's modernist utopia ultimately fell short. Partway through construction, the private investors behind the project encountered financial difficulties and were further hampered by labour disputes, bringing the grand vision to a halt. The station's design was only completed in 1993 by architects Yael Rothshild and Moti Bodek.

Nowadays, only two of the station's seven levels are still functioning. As Dotan highlights, southern residents who invested their life's savings to buy shops in the station are now left in huge debt, which has caused 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. Participants describe the experience of walking in this area as 'creepy' or 'scary'. Yet, 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 to tell a different story about it.

Tracing Urban Liminality

On the third floor, we glance at a Filipino food market (Map 4.2 Stop 4). On the fifth floor, we visit Jung Yiddish, a social centre that seeks to preserve the disappearing Yiddish language and culture (Map 4.2 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 (expect for ultra-orthodox communities). As we learn, the liminal space of the new Central Bus Station has become a refuge for a variety of cultures marked as not belonging within the Israeli public arena. 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 4.2 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 learned how dangerous a sea voyage would be, they decided to travel to Israel (on foot) instead. Baric then describes crossing the Israeli-Egyptian border, under fire from Egyptian snipers, who 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 release, 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.

Reclaiming the Refugee Title

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 just got the same visa status that says you are infiltrating and have no rights and we were all thrown in south Tel Aviv'. Remarkably, 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, seventy-one percent of them oppose its execution without assessing asylum applications properly. Moreover, seventy-eight 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 inciting hatred 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, 2018) says:

> 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 to 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, 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 attach to 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, 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, 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 … it's 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 marginalized 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 (2019) that he does not wish for participants to walk out of his tours with the sense that 'we were in Neve Sha'anan, 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, 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.

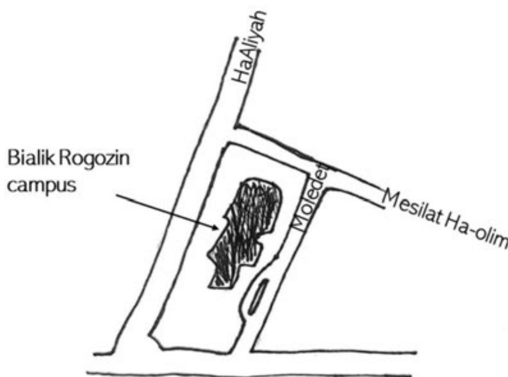
The topographies of racial-spatial fear extend to the intimate encounters during guided tours. Nevertheless, by telling his story and recontextualizing the 'problem' of refugees' presence in the south, Baric inspires his audience to think critically about state systems of marginalization.

By walking and talking, 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. The political agency of architecture and infrastructure as potential testimonies 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, which the state denies. To advance this argument, the following section 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 4.3). 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 suggests, 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, as it is expressed through informal and temporal expressions.



Map 4.3. Bialik Rogozin campus. ⏎

National versus Multidirectional Referencing

The street names listed above 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. Yacobi and Ram (2012) 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), which draws a parallel between African refugees and the local collective memory (and personal-familial history for some Israelis). For the annual Jewish festival of Passover, which celebrates the exodus of the Jewish people from slavery to freedom, African asylum seekers and Israeli activists commonly hold a 'Refugee Seder'. As Sarah Hankins (2018) demonstrates, through a ceremonial seder meal, storytelling, and dancing, the event draws a bond between Israelis and Africans based on similar experiences of persecution and exile – and references a global black pop music culture to reframe Africans' 'blackness' as a cultural asset. This is another indication to how paying greater attention to the scale of embodied and spatial interactions can advance our understanding of the politics of transcultural memory.

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 (Sand, 2012; Zertal, 2005). 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 polices towards non-Jewish migrants and refugees (Kritzman-Amir, 2009).[5] 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, 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,

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

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.

These conflicting interpretations of the Holocaust, human rights discourses, and the presence of refugees are further expressed through a variation of embodied and visual tactics on the streets, constituting a form of spatial and embodied dialogue over the contested spatial issue of the presence of refugees in south Tel Aviv

Protests over and through the Street

Following Tom's introduction, we walk into the Bialik Rogozin campus to meet its principal. He tells us about the racism his students encounter on the streets, and the demonstrations against asylum seekers that regularly take place in south Tel Aviv. The 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'. Such graffiti statements, protests, and walking tours are inherently spatial since they use public space 'for representation' (Lefebvre, 1992; Mitchell, 2012). Calling for the elimination of asylum seekers from the streets, or alternatively for solidarity with them, their struggle concerns the material street in the attempt to articulate who belongs on it.

As we continue 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 has three police charges for violent attacks against refugees. This illustrates how uncontrollable and volatile the street is as a public site of memory. 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. 4.1). 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.

As with 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,

Figure 4.1. Touristic walking styles. ⏎

gazing, and talking. Togod (Interview, 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 afterwards 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, utilizing 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'.[6] Similarly, in August 2017, then former prime minister Netanyahu participated in a tour guided by Paz. During the tour, Netanyahu met local Jewish residents, but no asylum seekers, and declared: 'They are not refugees but illegal infiltrators

6 Translated by the author from: https://www.hakolhayehudi.co.il/.

… I hear of terrible distress; people are afraid to leave their houses'.[7] Leading tours to a site that is associated with 'otherness', poverty, crime, and long-lasting discrimination against Mizrahim is a powerful means to invoke the emotions of fear, disgust, and resentment that fuel the Israeli extremist ring-wing populism of Netanyahu and his government (Illouz, 2023).

Mnemonic Entanglements

Israeli populist politics draws on the local memory culture that blends Jewish trauma with fear of the Arab neighbours to generate powerful emotions of desire for separation and even disgust against the feared 'other' (Illouz, 2023). As such, rather than addressing the material inequalities that are present in south Tel Aviv, this politics works to create fear of and resentment against asylum seekers, as the commonly used term 'infiltrators' demonstrates. Hence, although refugees arrived as an uninvolved third party, they have been unwillingly 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 discussed in previous sections.

For instance, Yusuf (Interview, 2019) who campaigns for African refugees (whose tour of Jaffa 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, 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 …

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

> we have to stick to our point of view on our situation and not to get into 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 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.

Mixing Memories

In contrast with Paz's anti-refugee tour, during Tom's tour we spend an hour listening to a testimony delivered by Asim (a Master's 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 at 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 Master's degree'. Next, Asim invites us to ask questions.

Someone in the audience enquires whether 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 testimony mentioned above (in which he suggests that Israel, which absorbed Jewish refugees after the Holocaust, should help other refugees), Asim's testimonial exchange entails a multidirectional reference to the traumatic Jewish memory (Rothberg, 2009). 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.

Reinforcing and/or Expanding Local Memory

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 globalized

discourse of human rights that was formulated in response to the Holocaust. Taj (Interview, 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, 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 strategic choice described above that minorities make to become more acceptable to the hegemony. The tours' mixing of local and travelling memories also ends up reinforcing the local memory hierarchies that privileges an Ashkenazi viewpoint and forgets the Palestinian local history. This is another indication that the interactions between local and travelling memories are not always planned or harmonious, but entail a variety of frictions.

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.

Moments of Impact in a Prolonged Struggle

Activists are adamant that this dialectic interaction with Israelis and their memory culture has contributed to their struggle. As Baric (Interview, 2018) stresses, by speaking and mediating with 'the Jewish people', they have 'won' against the 'deportation'. In fact, following from the abovementioned 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, 2018) says, 'it's the first time that we felt like Israeli society is completely different than the government'.

Taj 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, 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, like 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, 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 successful bid 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 populist governance and chaotic policy shift, there were thousands of people and families alternating between despair and hope. The situation has since 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 during which this research was conducted this research, key interviewees left: Togod returned to Sudan and Taj moved to Canada. Meanwhile, in 2022, the mayor of Tel Aviv decided to withdraw at the last minute from plans to evacuate the highly polluting newentral bus station in south Tel Aviv.[8] This marks another return to the status quo, where urban governance fails to promote material remedies in south Tel Aviv, while African refugees provide a convenient scapegoat to blame for the area's problems.

Addressing this context of marginalization and 'othering' that entangles African refugees and south Tel Aviv, the following sections further discuss the tensions that these tours encapsulate – between the political act of marking and celebrating transculturalism and a voyeuristic attempt to consume it.

Sensing Tel Aviv's Migratory Trails

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'anan was founded by refugees; specifically, Jewish refugees who escaped Jaffa following the 1921 riots and purchased a plot of land from a

8 See full report by the Association for Civil Rights in Israel: https://www.acri.org.il/post/__788.

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 materialized due to financial difficulties. Hila continues by describing the waves of migrants that accumulated in the area: in 1960s and 1970s it became the home of Jews from Yemen and Uzbekistan, joined in the 1080s by Iranian Jews; in the 1990s 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 4.4). 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 4.4. The origins of Neve Sha'anan residents.

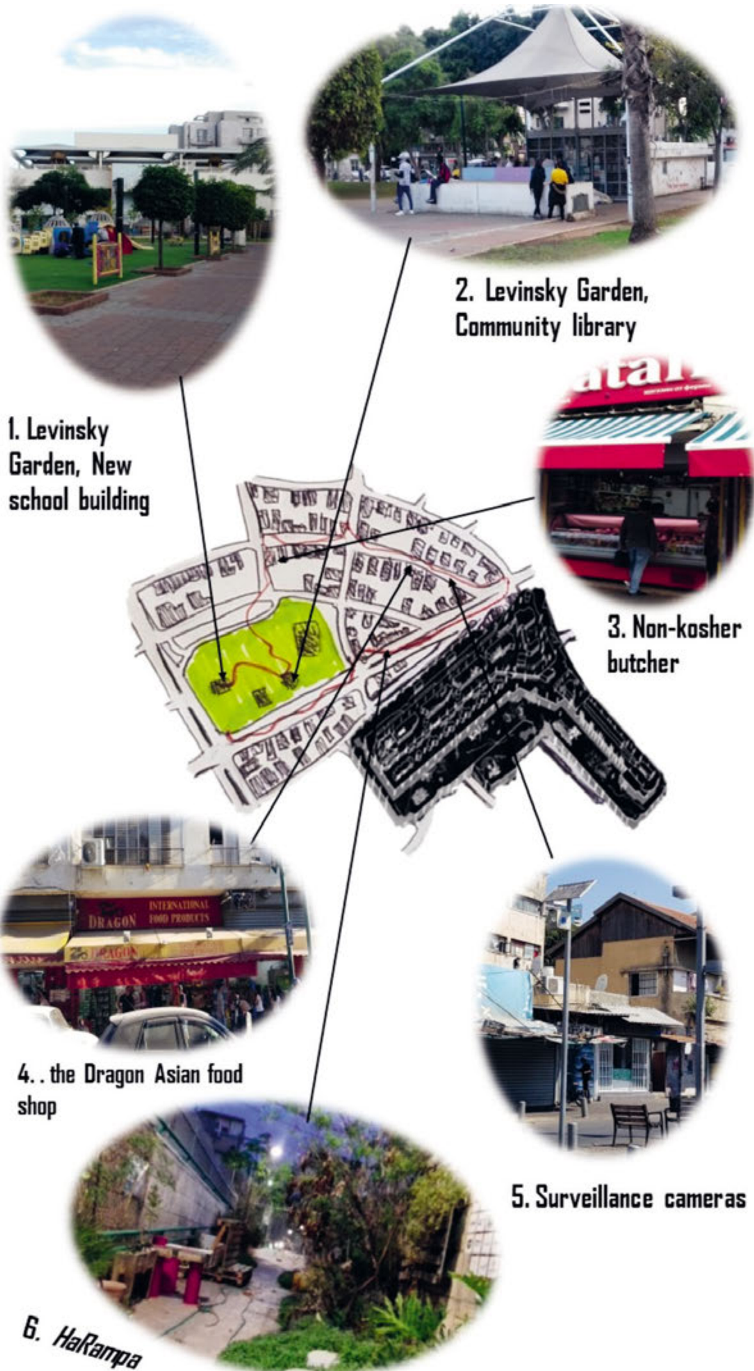
Locality in Transit

Interestingly, when I approached various tour agencies in south Tel Aviv asking them to collaborate in 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 politicized 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, 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 globalized cities that blame newcomers for destroying neighbourhoods, their identity, and sense of locality. Instead, 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 that 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 4.5 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 4.5 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. 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 4.5 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'anan 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.



Map 4.5. Central features in Hila's tour, August 2019, 1.12 km, 1 hour 44 minutes, 31°C.

Sensing 'Otherness'

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, 2018) shares: 'I feel guilty because I have a phobia for 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, 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 as Lwów Tavern, after the former Polish cultural metropolis that remained on the other side of the redrawn postwar 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 of importing food for migratory populations (Map 13, 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 Filipino 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.

Communal Mobilization against Setbacks and Scrutiny

Another stop on Hila's tour is HaRampa (The Ramp), located opposite the 'new' central bus station (Map 4.5 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'anan 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 4.5 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 of hatred against asylum seekers prompted by politicians and media results 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 emphasize 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 et al., 2020).

In Togod's tour, he further compares coffee shops on Rothschild and Neve Sha'anan, stressing the political and communal significance of the latter:

> There is a very strong social role in a café in Neve Sha'anan. 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 emphasizes the importance of mundane infrastructure in the creation of community and resistance. Similarly, 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.

Political Mediation

Yet, whereas Hila emphasizes cross-ethnic solidarity, other tour guides see assimilation. During Tom's tour he emphasizes 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 emphasize the contribution of non-citizens to the area, whilst others emphasize 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, 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, 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.

For instance, 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, its 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. 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'anan.[9] 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, 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, 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. This demonstrates the entanglement of travelling and local memories with a constellation of actors, from the local to the global, with different ideologies

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

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.

The Agency of the Street

During Tom's tour he addresses the different readings of the street 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 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 of Salama. For Tom, this exemplifies how our understanding of space is dependent upon its contextualization. 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 contextualizing space, and the range of subjectivities and memory narratives constructed through it. As Togod (Interview, 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 if she can 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, 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, 2019) tells me how a resident broke the camara 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 fifty-one 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.

Risks of Commodification and Voyeurism

Interestingly, tour participants raise a similar criticism of the tours. For example, one participant (Interview, 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, 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, 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 a meeting with an asylum seeker on them [a group booking a tour]'. Yuval (Interview, 2019) further discloses that he stopped leading tours in the southern neighbourhood of Shapira as tour participants frequently inquired about real estate prices. This led him to the realization '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, the question arises as to whether having outsiders walk around inspecting the area breaks down or strengthens geographical divides. For instance, Togod (Interview, 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'. 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, 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, 2019) highlights the importance of incorporating refugees as tour guides: 'The moment I meet a group it is a really sacred opportunity for me … there are questions only we can answer … the only problem is the language actually, so you teach us the language and we can do these tours'. The attempt to counter urban discrimination cannot fully evade the complexity of power relations that characterize urban societies.

These tours therefore encompass a tension, which is well-outlined by a teacher (Interview, 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 politicized mediation of the street; and between tourism and activism.

Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the official narrative around Tel Aviv's memory and identity, as well as the gaps and fissures within it, highlighting the interdependence with the marginalization of south Tel Aviv and the marginalization of African asylum seekers. In parallel, the chapter illustrated the transgressive potential of guided tours to illuminate the overlooked issue of chronic urban neglect which so often impacts the reception of newcomers, and to trace the trans-local development of cities. It has further situated these tours within the context of a broader repertoire of tactics deployed by African asylum seekers as part of the memory battle over their legal and cultural perception and political (in)visibility.

The implications of the findings presented in this chapter are significant for emphasizing the necessity of spatial analysis to unpack the politics of racial fear and the reception of asylum seekers. As the case of south Tel Aviv demonstrates, the situating of the city as a strategic arena outside the boundaries of national citizenship lacks geographical specificity, overlooking city-level asymmetrical power dynamics, unequal histories, or uneven burden-sharing that influence the reception of asylum seekers and compromise the rights of the city's marginalized long-term residents.

Rather than a duality between city and national policies, the street-level focus on guided walking tours reveals an assemblage of practices, social structures, and conditions of inequalities that are linked with a range of differently situated actors, spatially and temporally.

From the perspective of the street, the 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. The chapter further 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 jeopardized by the neglect of Palestinian history, by commodification, and by elements of voyeurism. Notwithstanding these limitations, the situational relational pedagogy that these tours seek to practise is a useful method to study and address urban conflicts and inequalities.

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Conclusion

Abstract: The conclusion challenges the framing of forced displacement as an exceptional crisis, advocating instead for a broader geo-temporal lens. Drawing on urban case studies from Berlin, Jaffa, and Tel Aviv, it shows how displacement shapes city life, political activism, and heritage. It highlights how refugee-led walking tours reclaim mobility as resistance – disrupting dominant narratives, surfacing erased histories, and reconfiguring belonging. Walking emerges as both a method and an activist practice, exposing tensions between commodified memory and tactical heritage-making. Ultimately, the conclusion advances a decolonial approach to urban space and transcultural memory, demonstrating how displaced persons contest the forces of nationalism, colonialism, and neoliberalism – not only surviving the city, but actively remaking it.

Keywords: Forced displacement, critical heritage, Berlin, Jaffa, Tel Aviv, walk-along methods

Though forced displacement is prominent within public, political, and media debates, too often it is perceived as an extraordinary moment of crisis, which contributes to the public image of forcibly displaced persons as voiceless victims or threats to national sovereignty. A survey of contemporary scholarship on the phenomenon of people seeking refuge in the fields of law, media studies, political science, geography, and architecture reveals a parallel lacuna, whereby forced displacement research tends to focus on instances of border penetration and emergency accommodation, thereby reemphasizing the boundaries of nation states and the administrative aspects of seeking refuge. This book has therefore argued that the geo-temporal conception of forced displacement needs to be broadened and deepened.

This is a theoretical as well as a political argument. Seeking refuge and displacement are not restricted to borders and the edges of the state, and despite the implication of dislocation, displaced people are very much part of urban spheres and their politics, memories, and histories. The analysis

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of the activism of displaced persons presented in this book illustrates how expanding the 'moment' of forced displacement helps counter unsympathetic public portrayals of recent migration streams as an unprecedented 'crisis' that justifies authoritarian policies of surveillance and confinement. It also demonstrates an urgent need to expand the framings of urban heritage to account for the movement of people and cultures, to readdress colonial violence, and to promote more equal formulations for urban belonging.

Utilizing post-colonial theory to expand the geo-temporal scope of forced displacement research and representation, the book has stressed the lingering effects of the political and spatial arrangements of colonialism in relation to present-day conflicts and migratory waves. It has visualized how the contemporary mobility of forcibly displaced people into Europe is shaped by the European colonial past as well as by the United States-dominated colonial present, and how Israeli settler colonialism perpetuates its dispossession of the Palestinians through neo-liberal logics. Giving voice to the people who live through displacement across generations, this book illustrates a more situational and relational understanding of the geographies and temporalities of forced displacement.

Focusing on the cities of Berlin, Jaffa, and Tel Aviv, we have seen the complex and multi-layered entanglements between the past and the present, and between the seemingly separate geographies of Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. From across and in between these geographies, the book suggests a de-colonial definition of agency, as a relational multidirectional act that transpires at the finer scale of the body, and in its motion through the urban every-day. The book therefore contributes a novel understanding to urgent contemporary questions around border and post/colonial violence and displaced peoples' efforts to (re)build lives and (re)claim cities by connecting seemingly mundane walking tours to broader structures of power and politics.

Unpacking forced displacement at the city level, the book reveals an assemblage of practices, social structures, and actors from global, national, and local scales that influence processes of exclusion, belonging, and place making – complicating a dichotomic contrast between the seemingly welcoming city and exclusionary national state. From the perspective of the street, it has shown how political dynamics of gentrification, (in)visualization, and competition over resources surface and obscure memories; and how enforced (im)mobility is inflicted upon people across nations *and* within the city, as guided by logics of colonialism, nationalism, and neoliberalism.

Indeed, the proposal by recently re-elected US President Donald Trump, himself a former real estate developer, to forcefully displace Palestinians

from the heavily ruined Gaza strip to neighbouring Arab countries demonstrates the ideological thread that runs across the logics of urban evictions for reconstruction and colonial ethnic cleansing. This is not to homogenize different forms of violence from different places and scales, but rather to draw attention to the underlying logic of forced displacement which aims to harm the life, connections, and memories sustained by cities, neighbourhoods, and homes.

Nevertheless, the book has also considered the political potential of mobility as a means to claim visibility and to reshape cities. As illustrated, tours led by forcibly displaced persons offer a significant de-colonial and cosmopolitan understanding of the city and heritage sites. As such, the book expands the scope of activism by and for displaced populations beyond the tactics – such as protests or political art – on which academic literature has traditionally focused. It also advances debates about the politics of urban space and heritage sites. Drawing upon Jacques Rancière's discussion of the political, the book argues that spatial analysis should include not only official memory sites (e.g., buildings, memorials, ruins, infrastructure), but also the streets, informal infrastructure, and trails around them – and how marginalized groups can animate those material landscapes through their bodies, movements, memories, and stories. Building on this, the book advances a spatiality-grounded reading of transcultural memory and contributes to a 'mobility turn' in memory and heritage studies.

Studying guided tours led by refugees in different urban contexts, the book reflects the multiplicity in their narratives and agencies. Yet, in combining walking interventions from different geographies in one analysis, it suggests a larger global significance to the practice of walking as a scholarly perspective and activist act. On the one hand, each of the empirical chapters mapped the ways commercialized walking tours re-affirm hierarchies of memory that privilege selective narratives, specific parts of the city, and certain ethnicities. On the other, each chapter charted the formation of tactical heritage tours that turn urban space into a stage for the critique, reformation, and diversification of public memory. Looking at this multifaceted landscape of urban tourism offers insights into the tensions in today's cities between erasure versus preservation and remembrance versus forgetting – as shaped by urban, national, and global actors, practices, and politics. Crucially, the accessible and collaborative style of presentation of walking tours allows different agentic actors to take part in the politics of (re)making the city and its heritage.

The book also provides empirical insights into the ways tour guides and the organizations that facilitate tours reflect critically on their actions

and undergo a process of modification of their activism tactics and sites of intervention. As discussed, initiatives for justice are complex phenomena that can be co-opted into (in)visibilization hierarchies. For those who seek to act in transcultural cities shaped by racial and colonial mechanisms of 'othering', it is crucial to reflect on how the divisions they seek to undo play within their organizations and actions. The book has also discussed how the different publics which participate in these tours affect their political impact; and the tensions in these tours' political intent to welcome cultural differences and the tourist intent to consume 'otherness' and commodify suffering. Despite these limitations, the dual research topic and method at the heart of this book, which utilizes walking as a representational and pedagogical tool, is an affective mode of memory-making and political intervention.

Using walking as a theme and method of research through and across different street-level contexts further raises some interesting differentiations. In Berlin, refugee tour guides appeal to the clearly marked official sites of the city's memory and weave their own perspective and culture within them. This demonstrates how walking practices can inform and deconstruct official displays of memory. In Yaffa, IDP tour guides mark (in)visible ruins to resist an ongoing colonial dispossession of indigenous place and memory, illustrating the importance of such embodied counter-gestures in the face of institutional forgetting. In south Tel Aviv, refugees that are denied legal and cultural recognition focus their political performance on narrating their experiences of forced mobility. Tour guides further appeal to mundane infrastructure to illuminate a chronicle history of urban neglect and the resistance of migratory communities to it. Here, walking becomes a means to link seemingly disconnected urban issues and to contextualize institutional responsibility for the marginalization of specific groups and areas in the city based on racial and ethnic hierarchies. The tours also assumed different geographical proximities with perpetrators. In Berlin and south Tel Aviv, refugees testify to traumas from elsewhere and reference established memory narratives to invoke a more universal sense of responsibility, whilst in Yaffa, Palestinian tour guides elicit accountability from direct victimizers that participate in the tour or walk.

In the process of researching and writing this book, I was able to connect the various organizations that I researched, to initiate fruitful dialogues around the similarities and differences in their tour practices, approaches, and styles of delivery. As walking continues to gain more recognition as a method of research and mode of political activism, such a trans-global exchange of knowledge is useful to better address the potentials as well as

the challenges of this practice. It is my hope that after reading this book, readers might feel inspired to experiment with walking methods in their own teaching, research, activism, and practices. I have personally been inspired by the tour guides I researched to reflect critically on the locations of conferences I organized, and in teaching students about the politics of architecture. Recently, I organized a guided tour of the slavery museum in Liverpool for my MA students. Our guide, a Liverpudlian of African heritage, walked us through all the failures she finds in the museum displays. This was another indication how walking tours, in their mobile and collaborative style of presentation, can effectively open sites of memory to critical dialogues around the inherent failures of commemoration and representation.

Indeed, by studying cities that are heavily geared towards commemorating traumatic histories, especially related to the transcultural Holocaust memory culture, the book speaks to a broader crisis of commemoration. In Berlin, the visualization of the city's traumatic and violent past can be selective, performative, and self-serving. Whilst it can also inspire gestures of welcoming towards refugees, a nationalistic grappling with past trauma ultimately enforces a sense of belonging based on white ethnicity. In Yaffa, the book has illustrated how archaeology and conservation are used to dispossess Palestinian people, places, and memory. In south Tel Aviv, it showed how architectural history enforces colonial imaginations at the expense of local Palestinian heritage; and how this forgetting contributes to the marginalization of the Mizrachi Jewish history and to the othering of African asylum seekers.

More broadly, as a descendant of German Jews who was educated with the slogan of remembering the Holocaust to prevent its recurrence, conducting this research has taught me that our world leans towards a politics of forgetting; a politics that entails reconciliation with past traumas instead of reflection on their enduring implications, overlooking present atrocities, and sustaining racial and colonial mechanisms of 'othering'.

Nevertheless, aside from the power of states, municipalities, urban planners, and architects to abstract, control, and dominate the design and memory of cities, the book illustrates a subaltern agency to recast the public memories of lingering conflicts and colonial conditions. In contrast with the nationalistic tendencies and competition over visibility and victimhood that characterize much of the world's official displays of memory, it showed how refugees' memories from Iraq and Syria can impact processes of coming to terms with a difficult past in Berlin today; and how Sudanese and Eritrean refugees reference the memory of the Holocaust to negotiate their acceptance in south Tel Aviv, and in so doing, problematize the nationalistic Israeli

memory culture. These fragmented and heterogeneous memory gestures offer me, and I hope the readers, a future-and-justice-oriented path to commemorate the Holocaust, al-Nakba, and other ethnic cleansings and atrocities across the world.

As the book has demonstrated, rather than being mere recipients of an ambivalent welcome, violent erasure, or hostility inspired by local traumatic memories, refugees appropriate, revise, and recontextualize urban heritage by appealing to its spatial manifestations. By publicly attesting to their traumatic stories of displacement they retell the stories of cities – showcasing their trans-local development, reclaiming indigenous urbanism, and contextualizing chronic urban neglect. These are highly transformative testimonial events for all those who partake, as I can attest as a researcher and participant. As seen in each chapter, performative interactions between the testimonies of displaced people, audiences, and memory sites challenges dominant power relations, renders places and peoples visible, and creates networks of activism and solidarity with others to imagine better futures.

To end with another familial story of displacement, on 15 April 1933, my great-grandfather recorded in his diary a family get-together in Munich, which had been held to celebrate his father's seventieth birthday. He writes:

> Everyone was depressed by the political events (30 January Hitler became prime minister, 27 February the burning of the Reichstag and the beginning of bloody persecutions, 5 March elections, 1 April confiscation of Jewish businesses). My father, formerly an ardent German patriot, could not get over the fact that 14 days before, SA men stood in front of his shop and shouted: 'Don't buy from a Jew!' … In protest, my father went to the synagogue in the morning with a top hat; he usually avoids going to the synagogue on Shabbat. The problem was, what next? How will this continue? This is what kept the birthday congratulators busy. Opinions were greatly divided and were undoubtedly a reflection of the concerns of the Jews in those days … Uncle Leo, the younger brother by a few years, said nothing will happen … 'I am loved by my patients and all the dignitaries of the city', etc., etc. My father and I were the most pessimistic: he was very hurt by the boycott; saying 'they will destroy us financially and what can we do?' … And in the family – all the time fights: my father and mother-in-law, Russian immigrants from 1905, were convinced that nothing would happen and reacted with anger and aggression when I talked about the possibility of a change of residence or immigration. The thought of a second migration was difficult for them …

In the end, the family members who stayed were murdered, and those who fled survived.

Belonging, like that which my family felt towards Germany and Munich, continues to be violently revoked based on ethnicity, class, and religion, all around the world. So many more families are torn by similar dilemmas around escape and relocation, often more than once. Today, sectarian, national, and settler-colonial powers sill destroy home(lands) and ethnic cleanse people – Gaza being a recent and particularly horrifying example. Despite the global proliferation of Holocaust memorials, the world remains largely hostile to refugees. There has never been a more urgent need for a radical politics of urban belonging from an inclusive and transcultural standpoint, and for redistributive justice and a right of return as a remedy to colonial violence. In a reality that seems far from it, perhaps we can begin by formulating new urban representations, memories, and imagination such as the ones this book has studied. It is dedicated to my beloved grandparents Hava Kern Huss and Avraham Huss, and to anyone who has lived through forced displacement.

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