

Housing and Generality in Palestine Studies

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Abstract

This paper argues that housing in Palestine might both require and productively enable wider analytical approaches in Palestine studies. Drawing on ethnographic material on privatization and state building in the West Bank, this paper raises questions about the local and more general meanings of class, homeownership, and private property. It discusses some changing ideas of the land in Palestine that can be blurred by place-specific approaches to real estate development. This paper proposes to make a method intervention and to add a more processual understanding of political economy and geography to academic work on housing and on Palestine. It expands outward to argue occupation is not only present through the physical, visible state apparatus, but functions to invisibly and mutually orient Palestine's relationship to capital, to the rest of the world, and to Israel. Occupation is a matter not just of closure but of unequally distributing openings in ways that affirmatively produce and reconfigure the relationships between Palestine and Palestinians, and possible futures. Thus, present forms of building are not simply about emulating a coherent structure and imposition. Instead, housing appears as an outcome of larger processes through which different classes of Palestinians are implicated with international actors and phenomena. Housing is a realization of uneven, generalizing material processes that inform contexts and social relations, and continually shape political economic interventions.

Keywords

Housing; capital; neoliberalism; real estate; development; Palestine.

Almost as soon as large-scale private and public-private developments became visible in the West Bank during the period of Salam Fayyad's premiership, academic work emerged to try to understand this new issue and new problematic within the contemporary context. In a situation largely determined by struggles over land, scholars have paid significant attention to landholding and the fight against displacement and dispossession. In the last decade, with foreign aid and Palestinian Authority (PA) priorities increasingly oriented toward the private sector through legal reform, eminent domain, and national planning, the West Bank has been moving in the direction of large-scale development. Chief among these developments is the famous new city of Rawabi that is being built about nine kilometers north of Ramallah at a cost of over one billion dollars, largely coming from the sovereign wealth fund of Qatar and with millions from the PA and development agencies for offsite infrastructure and for mortgage loan guarantees to its current and future residents.

In its short time on earth, Rawabi has accrued huge amounts of press attention; it is also the site for a burgeoning critical academic literature that analyzes its form and vernacular, the forms of power emanating from it, and its complementary or mimetic relationship to the occupation.¹ The new literature tends to see Palestine and investment in it as specific and shaped by the occupation today. As an exemplary piece posits, "that Rawabi's planning, financing, and architecture are shaped and molded in the image of the occupier begs the question of what implications it carries as a symbolic space."² In many ways this assertion is true; geographies, class politics, and possibilities in the West Bank have been greatly and obviously constrained by the occupation. Yet the implicit assumption is that the occupation is clear, and the rest is about implementation and cooptation, or aesthetic and symbolic "emulation" that "reproduces the occupation" as it orients Palestinians toward modernity and away from a consistent national politics around *sumud*.³

This new work does an admirable job describing and situating present conditions and affirms local conceptions of change and experience. It engages a kind of visible common sense about the specificity of capital once it enters the conflict, the specificity of place, and deeply rooted ideas about the land and national politics. My approach in this paper is a bit different. I attempt to analyze the occupation not only through the present as a physical, visible, state apparatus, but as something that invisibly and mutually orients Palestine's relationship to capital, to the rest of the world, and to Israel. Occupation is a matter not just of closure but of unequally distributing openings in ways that affirmatively produce and reconfigure the relationships between Palestine and Palestinians, and possible futures. In order to generalize my approach beyond the present condition, I attempt to incorporate analysis of changing historical forms of market and land defense, Palestinian relationships to land and ownership over time, and the continual process and change inherent to Israeli control of Palestine.⁴

Part of the context in Palestine today is due to the unevenness produced through dynamics of global capital and their impact on the West Bank. Here is how the scholar of land defense Paul Kohlby puts his critique of the way capital relations are mobilized in scholarship on Palestine:

While this body of scholarship has done a great deal to illuminate aspects of military occupation and state-building, it often rests on a problematic, essentialist set of binaries. On one side are occupation and neoliberalism, the latter defined by individualization, privatization, and marketization. On the other is Palestinian society (often represented by the village), defined by solidarity, collectivity, and commons. I find this framing unsatisfactory: since it only partially accounts for the long-standing and complex uses that Palestinians have made of private property, and the extent to which capital constitutes a multitude of social relations, it risks narrowing our understanding of the present and idealizing the past.⁵

Society and relations of production are historical and reflect rather than determine one another. Housing is important analytically as a form of place that combines social relations and allows us to uncover Palestine's relationships to the world via capital, and consequently to make links with other contexts of dispossession. New forms of housing development represent and materialize the efforts and attention of international, government, and capitalist actors. No matter the specifics of intentions and plans, practices and priorities are meaningfully and physically manifested in the landscape through large infrastructural projects such as housing developments. It may seem paradoxical, but academic work that emphasizes worldwide links beyond Palestine – the social relations that impact both everyday life and the occupation – can help uncover the mechanics and productive aspects of how Palestinians abroad, aid, investment, political ideologies from all over the globe, and class relations and aspirations come together productively in Palestine and Palestinian places. Housing can provide a lens and an opportunity to demystify Palestine, and to raise questions about how it might be exceptional, but also ways it might be unexceptional.

One of the primary approaches to analyzing Palestine in the world, especially after the Oslo accords, has been to look at foreign aid.⁶ It has long been understood that aid priorities have material effects on the state, Palestinians, and NGOs through practical orientations and consensus that come along with aid capital. Palestine is, needless to say, not a passive recipient; people's ideas, forms of value, and everyday practice are shaped alongside capital and continually reproduce the places where aid lands and subsequent directions it goes.⁷ But capital investment, too, presents a structured and unequal link between Palestine and the rest of the world. Part of how this works in everyday life is that, given the global distribution of production, and as local production and social reproduction are decoupled (as neoliberal state politics or otherwise), human social reproduction nevertheless must occur. And it must happen in those places people find themselves.⁸

Palestinian capitalists' investment in residential place-making and finance is part of a class and state project, but not a directional imposition. Housing is a fundamental aspect of contemporary state-scale political economy and mode of production, and it depends as much on state legal reform and foreign aid to banks and the public sector as it does on debtors and other people who can afford new housing. Mundane, everyday

qualities of life are produced through wider political economic and social relations – housing is as much a commodity and vehicle for accumulation and circulation as a place for people to live.⁹ Developments become important sites of much wider class reproduction – place, container, and site of social relations. Mode of production and social reproduction are inseparable, and they are place-dependent despite the ever-increasing mobility and speed of fleeting capital.¹⁰

Private developers in Palestine, like capitalists everywhere, have needs for accumulation, so they are driven to locate new markets and access to new products and vehicles to circulate capital. In a television interview, one of our most famous developers today describes his return to Palestine from diaspora in the United States to set up business. At first, he wanted to do something in manufacturing, but quickly realized that assembling finished goods would be prohibitive if they had to be disassembled at a checkpoint. So, he decided on real estate. If economic initiatives and private developments aim to turn the West Bank into a market and ensure ongoing accumulation, they use the only thing they really have available: the place they stand. Through the real needs for land defense and the existence of land markets, national symbols around the land and landholding become added values, and the scale of development ensures a large footprint that can generate political and economic energy, and greater and more stable access to the land through ownership.¹¹ Yet how much of this is unique to Palestine, and in what ways?

Adam Hanieh has argued that housing and real estate in the Middle East and in Palestine – local vernacular, land tenure, and forms of building – drive planning and foreign investment. They are not the sole form of economic and spatial development, but they are large and foundational.¹² In the case of a Palestine that has seen its various capacities for production, labor, and access to goods and markets compressed by colonial rule, real estate finds itself in a vacuum and with a proportionately greater impact than it might have in other states or state-scale markets. Housing is a political economic problem: “The shape of housing is always the outcome of struggles between different groups and classes. Housing necessarily raises questions about state action and the broader economic system” because the contemporary contours are of “a conflict between housing as *home* and as *real estate*.”¹³ Issues in housing – distribution, physical placement, and so on – are related to the contours of class society, political organization, and polity, as well as to capital circulation, fixity, and accumulation everywhere.

The everywhere part is relevant because “the built environment cannot be exported; capital must come to it – in amounts of increasing size, enmeshed in cross-border flows, and mediated through neoliberal regulatory change.”¹⁴ Part of the reason those aspects of housing are difficult to see is that capital is abstract *for a reason*, and it developed historically through specific types of production in order to obfuscate social life within it and as a mechanism for exchange, surplus, and perpetual growth. Looking at housing as a general category enables questions about how it utilizes international development and aid – no wonder planners and NGOs cultivate it as a method of economic and social stabilization. It is real, solid, and generates possibilities for labor

and circulation and accumulation that are not otherwise available in an occupied market or territory.

In what follows I attempt to demonstrate why housing might require a less place-bound analytical approach, and what that approach can do. I begin from field research on privatization and state building in the West Bank I conducted on and off between 2007 and 2017, and with some exemplary interviews about how Palestinians interested in living in large scale developments conceive of the move and of their future. I use those interviews to raise questions about the local and more general meanings of class, homeownership, and private property. Next, I briefly discuss some of the changing ideas of the land in Palestine that can be blurred by narrow approaches to real estate development. Finally, I end with a more speculative section on some of the productive consequences of looking at housing differently.

My goal in this article is simple: to make a method intervention and ask if it might be valuable to add a more processual understanding of political economy and geography to academic work on housing. I suggest that doing so clarifies how present forms of building are not simply about emulating a coherent structure and imposition. I argue that housing appears as an outcome of larger processes through which different classes of Palestinians are implicated with international actors and phenomena. Housing is a realization of uneven, generalizing material processes that inform contexts and social relations, and continually shape political economic interventions.

Potential Buyers, Debt, and Politics

One potential buyer I interviewed in the early stages of the project to develop Rawabi was gung ho from the start. He became an active participant and informal booster since he met market researchers in 2006 or so at one of the upscale supermarkets in Ramallah and participated in their studies every few months. He is an IT specialist with an NGO and is well-versed in housing politics and homebuyer education initiatives. He explains: “It all comes down to the necessity to own . . . to stop renting,” which he understands as an indicator of, and contributor to, his personal instability. For him, in the West Bank owning is “essential” both because rents in Ramallah are high and because he wants to stabilize as many aspects of his life and work as possible. He tends to work in three-month, project-based contracts, and he believes that newly available loans will give him, his wife, and his six children the ability to immediately occupy and eventually own a home, which, in turn, will insulate them from economic instability and rapid changes in the rental market. Borrowing gives him immediate stability that would otherwise come at the end of years of saving.

Despite his short-term contracts, he barely mentioned the potential complications that could emerge from taking on massive debt; he wants a change that is both immediate and lasting, and a mortgage gives him both. He sees debt as an opportunity within the political situation, one he chooses willingly. He feels it is time to move out of Ramallah and away from “no system and chaos” into a “new, modern” house

in a place without Ramallah's disadvantages. Ramallah, he says, has not been able to cope with growth after Oslo, with the proliferation of NGOs and PA ministries and in-migration of Palestinian workers like him. A move to Rawabi will be a move away from crowds and to good, functioning services in a "neighborhood." At the time of our interview, he was renting an apartment in a building with five floors and twenty units. It was large and cumbersome, on its own almost like a severely underserved neighborhood. It was built in an area "without planning and zoning," and the roof leaks. He endures these conditions because finding another rental in the current market would be "a financial catastrophe."

He continues: Rawabi will give him a bigger, cheaper place with a "modern layout," public space and greenery for the kids, strong IT infrastructure, schools, hospitals, easy movement, and "calmness and quietness." His neighbors – and the prospective consumers for Rawabi – will be engineers, doctors, and others in the middle to upper classes. And the infrastructure will be superior to Ramallah's: the transportation and the streets will be better, and there will be better distribution of services *within* Rawabi; developers claim that it will have functioning water, sewer, electrical, and communications systems. And, while there are "a lot of obstacles," "if it is done as planned, it will be just delightful." He is already thinking about the potential for change, the potential for a different life, and Rawabi is giving him a framework to imagine it. He is so enthusiastic about Rawabi that he "plans" to move even though he had yet to visit the site when we spoke in 2010. He knows the political climate is uncertain, but he insists that Rawabi is humanistic and, as a private initiative, apolitical.

According to one young marketing engineer and former Rawabi employee I interviewed, Rawabi will provide "the most current thing" in terms of services. And it will help toward the political goal of "saving the hilltops" from settlements. But she is clear: "This generation's requirements are high," and Rawabi must meet them. No one, she says, would move there solely for national or anti-occupation reasons; politics are a secondary motivation to developers and potential buyers alike.

She became visibly emotional when describing the project and Bashar Masri, the lead Rawabi developer and owner, its public face, and her former boss. His perfectionism and strength of vision reflected in Rawabi "is like a dream come true." If it works out, there will be "no disadvantages" to the project. She is not only a supporter, she loves the idea and clearly imagines a Rawabi-inspired future for herself: a normal, well-provisioned new lifestyle in Palestine. Ideas of individual normalcy contribute to and are shaped by the dynamics of capital accumulation. Palestinians are said to desire certain kinds of services that do not yet exist there (3-D cinema, American franchises). For her, given the political instability and disorganization in the West Bank, the building and central control of services and distribution systems is a benefit of privatization.

The first buyer is a bit more cautious in that regard; he is "politically neutral," but nevertheless has worries – will he be an "ongoing customer" rather than an owner? Will the Israelis stall the project? But in the end, the desire to extract individual

stability from an unstable situation, overrides those concerns. He imagines Rawabi will be durable, wealthy, and part of the nature and specific character of Palestine. He believes that it offers potential buyers an alternate future. Or at least it offers them a long-term commitment and an orientation toward politics of the future by ameliorating the conditions in the present through non-political means.

The economics invoked is local and specific: the marketing engineer told me that for Masri, “the return will be huge . . . not twice, not triple, even more”; but it will also be a “good investment” for buyers, and prices will only go up. She believes – contrary to the firm’s surveys that I had access to – people are relatively stable and do not *need* to move to Rawabi; rather they will come to desire it. “People will come to prefer Rawabi” because “it will look like a new place like in Dubai.” “*Anyone* would prefer a good environment . . . and would like to have buses, public Wi-Fi, parking. Just look at the UAE [United Arab Emirates].” It will be so successful that it will prove a new model for building in Palestine. She is certain that there will be “a Rawabi 2, 3, 4.”

When I tried to expand outward from Masri and asked the employee about the critiques of Rawabi both generally and in terms of normalization, the former employee said, “Palestinians only like whining,” suggesting that, instead, they should “go and do something” rather than criticize. For her, the national dimensions of the politics in Rawabi are about the ability and individual responsibility to do something, not to acquiesce. Yet, the wider occupation does not necessarily play a role in the development: Masri “doesn’t care about [Areas] A, B, C.” Masri is presented as a hero in ways that make sense given the individualist ethic that emerged out of the real lack of capacity in the PA, the dissolution of the national movement, and the absence of cohesive politics within the West Bank (let alone between the occupied territories, Palestinian citizens of Israel, or Palestinians in the diaspora). The scale of figures like Masri makes it difficult to look past him toward the wider context. Thus, the cultural changes that developers invoke, and potential buyers seek, are tied to investment alongside forms of situated cultural change. Buyers are making logically coherent decisions about – and help shape – the opportunities that target them, within a context of capital investment that combines aspiration, security, personal politics, and family life and comfort.

Large mortgage funding programs emerged through large-scale developments like Rawabi, because such projects enabled titles clear enough to be used for collateral, a built-in population of people who need mortgages, and were otherwise lender friendly. Housing debt is a temporal relation, but it is also geographical: it is a form of aspiration and deferral that is also about forms of stability in new spaces.¹⁵ It is, as Christopher Harker suggests drawing on David Graeber, an attachment and a promise quantified, and it can bring aspiration to bear quickly, especially through new developments and apartments entering the market.¹⁶ Moreover, tying Palestinians to new developments changes spatial relations and regional distribution in terms of work, family, and place in the West Bank. For example, debt may make it more difficult to travel back to home

villages on the weekend or debt payments may take the place of remittances.¹⁷ (It also enables legal solidification of land tenure through development that might not be possible elsewhere, especially in areas in closer proximity to Israelis and settlements).

Regional variation in the West Bank is marked and produced by cultural difference, as well as patterns of displacement and class stratification that manifest in terms of stable access to land and property. Today this happens through development and debt. But it not new, as demonstrated by Lisa Taraki and Rita Giacaman's demographic surveys of West Bank urban life.¹⁸ Taraki and Giacaman propose a tentative history of ethical commitment and cultural change, and the structural conditions that enable "modernity" in Ramallah and something more "inward" in Nablus and Hebron, raising valuable questions about the relationship of history and culture to the distribution of labor across the West Bank region. Combining work in geography on region and scale with Beshara Doumani's "social space," they demonstrate how difference is produced and lives along cultural lines – and can be traced through things like homeownership.¹⁹ In contemporary housing, difference does not emerge solely out of preexisting cultural relations; culture and labor are mutually produced with occupation and the uneven development of place, labor, and market.²⁰ It also shapes opportunities for investment in physical space and aspiration. Large-scale housing is quite clearly a part of the regional distribution and redistribution of settlement patterns and economic migration in the West Bank, within the occupation.

So, putting these thoughts into conversation with one another, the question that emerges is: what do private development and property, central dynamics for social stratification in Palestine as everywhere, have to do with everyday life under occupation?

From the perspective of many potential buyers, debt is an opportunity for stability; for developers it is a requirement in order to fill the apartments they are building. But not everyone is as willing to take on family debt. Lenders told me that long-term loans have been difficult in Palestine for reasons related to occupation. Political and economic instability makes Palestinians reluctant to tie themselves to loans; social preference is to save and to build on existing houses. Moreover, land tenure is complicated, and plots of land can be held collectively and without clear title, meaning that land cannot easily be used for collateral. But clear titling is difficult: PA law, Israeli civil or military law, Jordanian law from 1967, or Ottoman law can govern what happens in certain places. Moreover, banks view existing law as quite tenant friendly. Thus, lenders and developers believe they need and are successfully pushing for legal change, eminent domain, and so on. They also, along with their peers in the UN and World Bank, carve out a role for private development in the government's national planning. They articulate a convoluted mathematics demonstrating a housing shortage that only they can fill. They create a demand for homeownership that is less about Palestinians and houses, and more about accumulation through big investment in big real estate.²¹

Class, Culture, and Debt

In order to make mortgages appealing, banks are working to, as one loan promotion NGO told me, “teach people to accept” long-term loans. Social change at the base is necessary for accumulation at the top, and this social change must happen by targeting potential buyers’ ideas of their material conditions and class, but also their political conceptions about life and property. If the political situation is understood as fundamentally unstable, the bankers argue, people do not think in terms of a stable future and long-term debt lasting ten, twenty, twenty-five years is undesirable. So, they work to produce the conceptions we see among my interlocutors – personal calculations about their own lives and capacity to take on debt, based on the existence and availability of projects at a large enough scale to enable feelings of stability and cultural appeal.

A “cultural shift” is required to get Palestinians into new housing developments that are big enough to generate changes in land tenure and contain apartments expensive enough to generate profit for developers. This process is not always clear, nor is it uniformly successful, but it is important nevertheless. Jamil Hilal, a sociologist of the Palestinian middle class, told me that the middle class is characterized in part by the diversity of positions within it. Middle-class Palestinians are part of the PA, of political parties, of NGOs, of the private sector, and hold a wide number of political affiliations: national, pan-national, socialist, liberal.²² The development of a middle class can only occur through the development of *shared culture*.²³ Forms of shared culture change over time and as the Rawabi case shows, they can be encouraged, targeted, and potentially cultivated.

The “middle class” being brought into existence and invoked via development comprises people who mostly live in Ramallah and are educated workers in the PA or development sectors (or potential employees of the high-tech sector long-desired by the same classes and actors brought together in the Rawabi project). Despite barriers imposed by current iterations of Israeli settler colonial imperatives, the middle class that is emerging in the present is bound – and to the extent possible, unified – by dependence on “installment aid” such as PA wages.²⁴ Perhaps more importantly, developments are targeting a potential or aspirational middle class, people with the desire to orient themselves, their families, and their lives in relation to the political, economic, and consumerist promises such developments make. The idea of something like Rawabi as a private form of governance, and the fact of its existence, provides a site for the spatialization of a middle class defined through it.²⁵ Hilal’s idea of class as a unity of cultural values is important to understanding housing and aspiration, precisely because they are not fixed entities acted upon or compelled to emulation. They shift in relation to wider social and political economic changes in Palestine, via personal calculations, and through interventions like housing developments that presuppose, need, or cultivate and instantiate certain forms of class cultural values. For real estate developers, the middle class means single family homebuyers *and* urbanization and vernacular.²⁶

Paradoxically, because of political instability and lack of production, in an environment where public sector employment, remittances, and foreign development aid/wages are foundational, local labor, taxation, property, and other internal matters are not determinative in the ways they might be under different state-scale political economies. The cultural conception of how political economy exists in Palestine is a crucial corrective to understanding how outside capital investment, the emergence of new places, cultural affinity, and changing social relations are mutually constituted.

Localization is sometimes articulated as a solution to this kind of problem, given the necessities for social reproduction and the reality of occupation. The notion of a “resistance economy” that emerged during the first intifada has been popularized recently. Its adherents tend to focus on localizing production, perhaps collectivizing it, and building local markets for Palestinians that can help minimize dependence on Israel.²⁷ It appears in some of the Rawabi work as an articulation of resistance to private development at scale.²⁸ There is nevertheless a question purposefully left open about how to expand that approach toward a broader analysis of capital, motion, and connection. With regard to the circuit of capital, production often receives disproportionate attention at the expense of circulation. This makes it difficult to visualize the ways to create political capacity out of productive capacity, and greater sufficiency in a context where so much energy and attention is being pushed towards capital growth in fields like service and tech that can function under a border, standards, and customs regime that enables the movement of capital and information, but not people and goods. This is without mentioning that Palestinians are limited in their capacity to provision or produce without investment in fixed capital for production or access to raw materials, given the historical fact of uneven geographical development and dependence on an aid apparatus that increasingly funds privatization.

Land and Homeownership

Those Palestinians I interviewed understood homeownership as a mechanism for security, a type of land defense and protection against the vicissitudes of both settler colonial domination and class-based appropriation and dispossession. Ownership is in part a set of ethical and political questions around the unequal distribution of possibility and security, and the absolute need for both. And it is shaped by market and private property relations.²⁹

For many, ownership is a strategy to protect against dispossession and expropriation; what Kohlbry calls “land defense.”³⁰ The term has been used as far back as the 1920s and 1930s in the Galilee and more widely in 1970s and 1980s in the West Bank.³¹ Kohlbry proposes it as an alternative to *sumud* that illuminates the relationship between property, capital, and land, as well as a concrete point of comparison to other situations of colonial control or dispossession. Thus, ownership is not only a way to keep land and guard against dispossession, but it is a market logic that has changed over time. And in Palestine, homeownership and landownership has been just as much

a calculation about currency fluctuation and regimes' historical legal reforms as a vehicle for anti-occupation steadfastness.³²

Market mechanisms to exclude Palestinians and their consequent use of private property as security go back at least to the Ottoman period. For rural Palestinians, land holding and asset accumulation were forms of protection not just against colonial dispossession, but from fluctuations of markets, season, and currency. And when Ottoman reforms enabled consolidation and large landlordism, it was a way for agricultural laborers to remove themselves from exploitative sharecropping arrangements with Palestinian owners. Ownership was a form of resistance to colonial encroachment but also to economic exploitation.³³

Yet, ownership did not ameliorate class and political disadvantage; Palestinian labor and capital was subordinate and excluded from Zionist markets, and localized or household production stopped being viable for reasons including but not limited to colonization.³⁴ Economic dislocation of laborers from their land through predatory purchasing and other legal mechanisms was part of what generated displacement and the need for return. Political economy and long histories of colonial domination have resulted in Palestinian displacement, but they are often absent from the national imaginary around return.³⁵

Once again, capitalism is not a specifically local matter, and Palestine has been subject to piecemeal and ongoing processes of differentiated separation rather than absolute exclusion. Historians have long since overturned the conviction that Palestine only became capitalist through British colonialism or Zionism.³⁶ Sherene Seikaly clearly demonstrates how conceptions of politics and accumulation – and class stratification and stability – have long been intertwined with shifting conceptions of Palestinianness, colonization, and return.³⁷

A more contemporary category of homeownership found worldwide purchase through the post-war “consensus” that emerged as a liberal political project and through international development projects. As the historian Nancy Kwak has shown us, this happened through projects to create and encourage a “very specific, ‘modern’ version of debt-driven, state-regulated ownership that gave at least the illusion of growing affluence and security.”³⁸ Work in and through that consensus “could help governments court international aid and navigate domestic political pressures while wooing foreign investors and seeking competitive advantage in a global marketplace.”³⁹ The same is true in Palestine today.

Landholding and distribution have meaningful impact on the political system and everyday life today. Class, international ideology, geographical differentiation, and state planning as a form of development are tied together and to capital as forms of management. Hiba Bou Akar historicizes the mutual emergence of development and planning and asks what can happen when planning narrows and “loses its ethical basis in socioeconomic development” –

that is, in efforts to address social inequality, poverty, spatial justice, and the redistribution of resources . . . it becomes little more than a tool for

ordering space in the interest of those in power, devoid of the normative attributes of equity and social justice that are usually attributed to planning practice.⁴⁰

State-scale planning through privatization occurs in a context where private property has long served multiple roles for different Palestinians. Today, that means ideas of equity are already structured by class and aspiration. Political economic stability gets distributed by the private sector; inclusion is structured by housing markets and housing types. Homeownership can be many things at once: a vehicle for capital accumulation, a mechanism for state-scale and personal stabilization, a way to self-provision, and on and on.

Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor describes “predatory inclusion” of Black Americans in which planning for finance and privatization meant granting certain kinds of access in order to generate new sales and new payment vehicles.⁴¹ She describes a form of abstraction that is also a real, material process: tiered inclusion was premised on disinvestment and predation; real estate practices represented the political economy generated out of, in the United States, residential segregation. In the West Bank, they emerge in the subordinate and suspended West Bank market within Israel. For example, villagers who had little political capacity to use their land were forced to sell land to developers at market prices pre-development, thus denying them the opportunity for accumulation and a different role in the circuit of capital.

Generality and Diaspora

If political economy and market relations are fundamental elements in how land and politics are conceived and meaningful within Palestine, land and class are parts of how Palestinians relate to one another wherever they are. Those more general relations are difficult to apprehend through approaches that take the stability of the existing context as their origin. Analytical emphasis inward and on locale (or locatedness) has deemphasized the ways Palestinians everywhere have been shaped by occupation, and how they are not exclusively determined by it. The occupation has bound Palestinians to one another wherever they are. Accounts that place undue burden of structure on the present forms of post-1967 occupation or within the contemporary West Bank cannot capture our “present actuality” as a people, “the story of [our] existence in and displacement from Palestine, later Israel,” as Edward Said put it.⁴²

That experience of displacement has largely been structured by the demographic and territorial imperatives fundamental to settler colonial power, a scale of semi-permanent displacement without assimilation that necessarily requires the question of Palestine to exist beyond its borders. As Doumani argued more than a decade ago, the denial of existence to a Palestinian political community and tension between identity and territory meant that localizing Palestine or struggle inward toward the state was inadequate and happened within the asymmetric power manifest as an “iron

cage.”⁴³ Scholars have still only provisionally heeded Doumani’s call for sorting out the politics around “Palestine” and “the Palestinians.”

Oslo brought a significant cultural and spatial reorientation, and one way to view it is as shifting the center of gravity of the worldwide Palestinian diaspora and bringing institutions and aggregating authority to the narrow enclave of PA Palestine. (It also diluted the Arab boycott and eased capital circulation into Israel.)⁴⁴ It was an incomplete project of diaspora organizing for return. In shifting attention toward the West Bank and, initially, Gaza, it weakened diaspora-scale politics in favor of piecemeal access to return. Most Palestinians did not or could not return through it. Nearly three decades on, the material effects of Oslo have also rendered many Palestinians living outside of the West Bank outside of analysis. There are few scholars and activists, with Noura Erekat a notable exception, working to bridge this framework, and in general academic work reproduces a dichotomy in which there is *sumud* in the West Bank and international law for the diaspora.⁴⁵

Inside of Palestine, the possibilities for “normal” life are highly structured by Israeli state control alongside social relations and class power, defined with reference to the abroad, and increasingly limited to the West Bank and to Ramallah (with all of its spatial and class and vernacular and ID questions and on and on and on), something Ghada Karmi has written movingly about as a kind of striving for ever diminishing Palestinian place in Palestine.⁴⁶ Colonial settlement by primarily Jewish people of European origin with ambitions toward generational remaking means both consequent generational displacement, and generational social reproduction in places outside Palestine. The diaspora includes Palestinian voices who are absent – who have been made absent – from Palestine, precisely due to Zionist settlement and colonization, demography, and elimination of Palestinians *as Palestinian* in Palestine. For many in the diaspora, asserting and maintaining Palestinianness is a generational struggle. In a very real sense, Palestine remains home – and not merely national identity – because of the fact of displacement from it.

Oslo was not about the absolute right of return, but it did shape access to return and forms of possibility among Palestinians. Among diaspora Palestinians, not everyone has the desire or capacity – the family situation, the privilege, the money, the papers – to live or return there; it is ironic and undeniable that in a situation in which so many Palestinians are trapped and subject to Israeli and Palestinian state violence, one dimension of the structure of possibility for return is class. (That very same class dynamic is important for the vernacular, amenities, image, aesthetics, and potential success of new upper middle-class housing development that needs to be filled with residents). Exile has structured relations, links, and disconnections between Palestinians. And it has oriented Palestinians’ ideas and relationships to Palestine via practical differences related to access, class position, and place of exile.

Life for Palestinians outside is easier for many in most ways. But it is also hard in different ways – it is not as though the iron cage of Palestinian history, politics, subordination, and identity suddenly reverts to the saint’s light cloak upon exiting Palestine. Histories and forms of settler colonial power undergird our diaspora and

define us everywhere we are. So too does another phenomenon brought to bear everywhere – worldwide capitalism. Moving outward and relinking Palestine might help us to analyze the relationships between colonial origins and – to join Rashid Khalidi and Doumani in thinking through iron cages – the ways we are forced to comport with the tremendous cosmos and conditions that emerged around them.

Here is another way of putting it. Analyses of Palestine too often assume the shape of occupation (and Palestinian life before it), rendering too much about life there as particular to it. E. P. Thompson showed us that people do not just reflect superstructure; they think and experience and practice and shape it.⁴⁷ Categories are not pure, and consciousness is historical. A general approach to Palestine emphasizes the continual production of its relationships to Israel and the rest of the world, and the local environment in which abstract political phenomena are formed and reformed continuously, though not always coherently. This is not meant to be complicated or obscure: the idea that categories for understanding and organizing the world are not pure or discrete, that people are not merely local subjects, simply tells us that global economic phenomena and place are bound with and inseparable from social life.

Conclusion

The primary question left is, I believe, how much is the situation of Palestine about its absolute separation from rather than its uneven incorporation into the world? Much of what keeps Palestine suspended vis-à-vis Israel depends not only on military occupation but also on Palestinian-led class projects to enhance global investment and aid, and accumulation. Housing is valuable as a site for analysis because it materializes funding and ideology in the landscape and between classes of people, the state, and international actors. These projects are simultaneously about aspiration, private property, accumulation, and scales of political stability.

It would seem the settler regime is quite comfortable with a form of governance that does not affect the sovereign state, allows territorial and practical control, creates new opportunities for accumulation, and does not incorporate any of the native population as it consolidates and limits their space and capacities directly but also indirectly through credit and debt. Today in Palestine, forms of housing and housing development can tell us a great deal about the economy, accumulation, and processes that regulate and instantiate Israeli control over territory. The editors of this issue have asked, what does housing have to do with the “twin engines of the conflict – territorial appropriation and demographic displacement” and simultaneous international development and capital investment initiatives?⁴⁸ What does it have to do with structural change and forms of management over territory? This paper proposes that in answering these questions, a large-scale methodological approach can help us understand how historical relationships between land, capital, occupation, and social life are part of the context in which occupation operates and life is lived and conceived. Moreover, the specific nature of housing as a context for social reproduction, and

the forms of investment and activity it requires, makes wider phenomena uniquely visible. The case here might provide a rough example of the validity of more general, less geographically particular, analysis of Palestinians and Palestine.

To many, talking about worldwide productive relations and capital will surely seem needlessly abstract for analyzing a situation of such pressing, visible dispossession. But capital and markets are not immaterial or distant. This is perhaps a vulgar gloss on some of the least vulgar Marx, but abstraction is the process by which material things, social relations, use values, human labor, and so on are translated into universal forms that can circulate and be exchanged with one another to generate surplus value. Capital is then, in David Harvey's formulation, value – human labor – quantified and abstracted and put into motion.⁴⁹

Rigorous attention to specific aspects of the post-1967 occupation skews analysis inward and toward experiences in the present. For housing, that means a logical structure in which new urban trends are either deemphasized or flattened into questions of conflict.⁵⁰ Such approaches have a geography to them. They are oriented toward locale, and to area literature, and thus overprivilege investment as directional imposition. They are interested in intention and specificity over process and structure. Moreover, implicit assumptions about the totalizing qualities of occupation can have the unintended secondary effect of dehistoricizing its changes over time.

In their excellent paper in defense of the critical framework of planetary urbanization, Hillary Angelo and Kian Goh make a case against work that articulates narrow particularity as the solution to supposed problems of large-scale method:

[In positing] a manner of *difference* against a mode of *abstraction*, [critics] conflate two sets of questions: an ontological question of *scale* (how do we understand the relationship between small-scale, often local, and large-scale, often global, processes and phenomena?); and an epistemological question of theory-making (how and when do we move between the abstract and concrete in our analyses?). For Type 1, this takes the form of empirics against grand theory; for Type 2, situated, embodied, or positional knowledge against supposed objectivity.⁵¹

In work on Palestine, an additional problem emerges – it becomes difficult not to see social production as narrowly confined, and “social difference” becomes limited to occupation (and, perhaps, resistance to its aesthetic qualities or forms of investment). Instead, the approach to housing here offers an attempt to link scales, to see social difference as produced and practiced alongside phenomena and ideas that may not be narrowly or visibly present in occupied Palestine. The occupation framework has oriented discourse on Palestine largely toward analyzing it through opposition and separation.⁵² The overt violence of occupation and its fragmented geographies obscure Palestine's links to the rest of the world, but that does not mean those links are irrelevant. But colonization by a modern settler movement of European origin that conscripts Jewish people throughout their diaspora, and long histories of foreign presence, trade, aid, regional capital investment, and so on are not local questions or

received in any consistent or predetermined way.

The case of capital investment in housing shows Palestine's uneven and unequal global integration. From Adam Smith's waterways to Marx's "Chinese walls," through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC, now the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, DFC) support of private developers, capitalism has from its inception been geographical, about movement and circulation, growing markets and arbitrage. It has always been premised on enhancing and strengthening forms of violence and inequality, including by race and private property relations. It presupposed and produced planetary spread and differentiation. In this understanding, colonialism was not an epiphenomenon, nor did it simply localize capitalist forms of production in new places: it created a mesh network that consolidated the whole.

Perhaps most importantly, a general approach enables political questions around solidarity beyond local subjectivity. The social historian Rana Barakat has written compellingly on narrative and against the ham-handed and unidirectional ways the framework of settler colonialism has been applied to Palestine. She reproaches non-specialist academics for working within a form emphasizing "settler triumph" and "native defeat," and consequently flattening the native to a symbol.⁵³ The mode of operation that Barakat describes derives partially from the practical aspects of occupation and movement to which most of us are subject, but also, significantly, from assumptions about the visibility and cohesiveness of occupation. It is an analytical framework in which the occupation is visible and immediate, and can comprehensively be experienced, witnessed, and described (and that seems to generate expertise out of commitment). It also, perhaps, partially accounts for critiques of housing and the wider situation that begin with aesthetics and allow them to stand in for wider phenomena. It is a way of understanding Palestine that proposes site and method, and subsequently enters into description and theory where it is validated and reiterated.

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Endnotes

- 1 See, for example: Tina Grandinetti, "The Palestinian Middle Class in Rawabi: Depoliticizing the Occupation," *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 40, no. 1 (2015): 63–78; Arpan Roy, "Reimagining Resilience: Urbanization and Identity in Ramallah and Rawabi," *City* 20, no. 3 (2016): 368–88.
- 2 Grandinetti, "Palestinian Middle Class," 68.
- 3 See Roy, "Reimagining Resilience."
- 4 Put another way, other approaches to contemporary Palestinian housing tend to emphasize categories in Lefebvre, over the ways he puts them in relation and sees process or dialectic.
- 5 Paul Kohlbry, "Owning the Homeland: Property, Markets, and Land Defense in the West Bank," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 47, no. 4 (Summer 2018): 30–45, quote at 31.
- 6 See, for example: Toufic Haddad, *Palestine Ltd: Neoliberalism and Nationalism in the Occupied Territory* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2016); Mandy Turner, "The Power of 'Shock and Awe': The Palestinian Authority and the Road to Reform," *International Peacekeeping* 16, no. 4 (2009): 562–77; Mandy Turner, "Completing the Circle: Peacebuilding as Colonial Practice in the Occupied Palestinian Territory," *International Peacekeeping* 19, no. 4 (2012): 492–507; Alaa Tartir, "Securitized Development and Palestinian Authoritarianism under Fayyadism," *Conflict, Security, and Development* 15, no. 5 (2015): 479–502; and Linda Tabar and Sari Hanafi, "The Intifada and the Aid Industry: The Impact of the New Liberal Agenda on the Palestinian NGOs," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 23, no. 1 (2003): 205–14.
- 7 Julia Elyachar, *Markets of Dispossession: NGOs, Economic Development, and the State in Cairo* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005).
- 8 As Cindi Katz writes: "Social reproduction is the fleshy, messy, and indeterminate stuff of everyday life. It is also a set of structured practices that unfold in dialectical relation with production, with which it is mutually constitutive and in tension. Social reproduction encompasses daily and long-term reproduction, both of the means of production and the labor power to make them work. At its most basic, it hinges upon the biological reproduction of the labor force, both generationally and on a daily basis, through the acquisition and distribution of the means of existence, including food, shelter, clothing, and healthcare." Cindi Katz, "Vagabond Capitalism and the Necessity of Social Reproduction," *Antipode* 33, no. 4 (December 2001): 709–28, quote at 711.
- 9 Madden and Marcuse, *In Defense of Housing*.
- 10 Katz, "Vagabond Capitalism"; Tithi Bhattacharya and Lise Vogel, *Social Reproduction Theory: Remapping Class, Recentering Oppression* (London: Pluto Press, 2017). Although he favors particularity and is critical of approaches from "on high," Harker (2011), argues for the necessity of not narrowing the scope of occupation to the occupation itself, and demonstrates how financial calculations are part of "debt ecologies," combinations of spatial arrangements, topographies, and relations that co-constitute debt and are "entangled with other geopolitical, economic, and cultural processes." See Harker, "Debt Space," 614; also Christopher Harker, "Geopolitics and Family in Palestine," *Geoforum* 42, no. 3 (June 2011): 306–15. Khatam and Haas propose an intermediate step in their comparative work on Palestine and Iran, with the goals of understanding the complex ideological, political, cultural, social, and capital logics mobilized at the local scale. See Azam Khatam and Oded Haas, "Interrupting Planetary Urbanization: A View from Middle Eastern Cities," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 36, no. 3 (2018): 439–55. I build on that broader entanglement; I argue cultural conceptions of history and class, and local housing debt, are linked to the movement of capital far beyond Palestine or its economy. "The economy" is generally shorthand for the national economy, and part of the work it does is to make itself intelligible as specifically national and foreclose and obscure possibilities for understanding its geopolitical and global links. It is a body of knowledge that obfuscates; the autonomous economy is itself a form of representation. And common sense around the economy – or anything, really – as local and coherent makes it hard to see processes of dispossession that are indirect, invisible, or processual, economic, and political. See: Hannah Appel, "Toward an Ethnography of the National Economy," *Cultural Anthropology* 32, no. 2 (2017): 294–322; and Timothy Mitchell,

“Fixing the Economy,” *Cultural Studies* 12, no. 1 (1998): 82–101

- 11 As it manifests physically, the scale of building, site, and investment is important for its potential to incorporate and help shape a polity. Large-scale building does not negate the existence of the small-scale, but it operates in different ways to incorporate cultural effects (perhaps of “depoliticization” or contra *sumud*) and big capital, and to realize them in ways that are widespread, potentially productive, and meaningful. As Fredric Jameson writes: “Of all the arts, architecture is the closest constitutively to the economic, with which, in the form of commissions and land values, it has a virtually unmediated relationship. It will therefore not be surprising to find the extraordinary flowering of the new postmodern architecture grounded in the patronage of multinational business, whose expansion and development is strictly contemporaneous with it . . . these two new phenomena have an even deeper dialectical interrelationship than the simple one-to-one financing of this or that individual project.” But those relations are manifest physically in the landscape as politics, the superstructural expression of worldwide politics. And, “as throughout class history, the underside of culture is blood, torture, death, and terror.” Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991), 5.
- 12 Adam Hanieh, *Money, Markets, and Monarchies: The Gulf Cooperation Council and the Political Economy of the Contemporary Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).
- 13 David J. Madden and Peter Marcuse, *In Defense of Housing: The Politics of Crisis* (New York: Verso, 2016), 4.
- 14 Hanieh, *Money, Markets, and Monarchies*, 150.
- 15 Christopher Harker, “Debt and Obligation in Contemporary Ramallah,” *Jadaliyya*, 19 October 2014, online at (jadaliyya.com) bit.ly/32vJu16 (accessed 27 August 2020)
- 16 Christopher Harker, “Debt Space: Topologies, Ecologies, and Ramallah, Palestine,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 35, no. 4 (2017): 600–619.
- 17 Harker, “Debt Space.”
- 18 Lisa Taraki and Rita Giacaman, “Modernity Aborted and Reborn: Ways of Being Urban

- in Palestine,” in *Living Palestine: Family Survival, Resistance, and Mobility under Occupation*, ed. Lisa Taraki (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2006), 1–50.
- 19 On “social space,” see Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700–1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).
- 20 On the impact of the fragmentation of the Palestinian territories on labor migration and markets, see Leila Farsakh, *Palestinian Labor Migration to Israel: Labor, Land, and Occupation* (New York: Routledge, 2005).
- 21 Kareem Rabie, *Palestine Is Throwing a Party and the Whole World Is Invited: Capital and State Building in the West Bank* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, forthcoming in 2021).
- 22 Pamela Ann Smith, “The Exile Bourgeoisie of Palestine,” *Middle East Report (MERIP)* 142 (September 1986): 23–27.
- 23 Jamil Hilal, *al-Tabaqa al-wusta al-Filistiniyya: bahth fi fawda al-hawiyya wa-l-marja’iyya wa-l-thaqafa* [The Palestinian Middle Class: A Study in Confusion of Identity, Authority, and Culture] (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2006); Jamil Hilal, “Palestinian Class Formation under Settler Colonialism,” paper presented at the New Directions in Palestinian Studies: Political Economy and the Economy of Politics workshop, Brown University, 28 February 2014.
- 24 Hilal, *al-Tabaqa al-wusta*; Hilal, “Palestinian Class Formation.”
- 25 For a comparative example of this process at work, see Li Zhang, *In Search of Paradise: Middle-Class Living in a Chinese Metropolis* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010).
- 26 Jamil Hilal and Abaher el-Sakka, “A Reading on the Socio Urban Changes in Ramallah and Kufur Aqab” (Birzeit: Center for Development Studies and Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, 2015), online at hdl.handle.net/20.500.11889/210 (accessed 17 June 2020).
- 27 Alaa Tartir, Sam Bahour, and Samer Abdelnour, “Defeating Dependency, Creating a Resistance Economy,” *al-Shabaka: The Palestinian Policy Network*, 13 February 2012, online at (al-shabaka.org) bit.ly/3lkysnP (accessed 27 August 2020). Dana and Arafah view it as potentially, if not fundamentally, revolutionary, an elaboration of historical forms of development under occupation,

- resistance, and land defense. See: Tariq Dana, “Localising the Economy as a Resistance Response: A Contribution to the ‘Resistance Economy’ Debate in the Occupied Palestinian Territories,” *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* (May 2020); and Nur Arafeh, “‘Resistance Economy’: A New Buzzword?” *Journal Für Entwicklungspolitik* 34, no. 1 (2018): 91–102.
- 28 See, for example: Grandinetti, “Palestinian Middle Class.”
- 29 Once again, ideas around the ethics of landholding are not a recent phenomenon. Ideas of development and land improvement have been a fundamental aspect of capitalism since it emerged. See: Ellen Meiksins Wood, *The Origin of Capitalism: A Longer View* (New York: Verso, 2002); Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); and Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975). Within a system of colonial domination in historic Palestine, Bhandar demonstrates how such logics of improvement enabled property by title and culminated in a practical and juridical system of racial ownership. Brenna Bhandar, *Colonial Lives of Property: Law, Land, and Racial Regimes of Ownership* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018).
- 30 Kohlbry, “Owning the Homeland.”
- 31 Munir Fakher Eldin, “Communities of Owners: Land Law, Governance, and Politics in Palestine 1858–1948” (PhD diss., New York University, 2008); Kohlbry, “Owning the Homeland.”
- 32 Kohlbry, “Owning the Homeland”; Salim Tamari, “The Dislocation and Re-Constitution of a Peasantry: The Social Economy of Agrarian Palestine in the Central Highlands and the Jordan Valley, 1960–1980” (PhD diss., University of Manchester, 1983).
- 33 Tamari, “Dislocation and Re-Constitution.”
- 34 Tamari, “Dislocation and Re-Constitution,” 13–14.
- 35 See, for example: Ted Swedenburg, “The Peasant as National Signifier,” *Anthropological Quarterly* 63, no. 1 (1990): 18–30; Lisa Taraki, “The Development of Political Consciousness among Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, 1967–1987,” in *Intifada: Palestine at the Crossroads*, ed. Jamal R. Nassar and Roger Heacock (New York: Praeger, 2006); Salim Tamari, “Soul of the Nation: The Fallah in the Eyes of the Urban Intelligentsia,” *Review of Middle East Studies* 5 (1988): 74–83.
- 36 See: Sherene Seikaly, *Men of Capital: Scarcity and Economy in Mandate Palestine* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015); Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine*; Alexander Schölch, *Palestine in Transformation, 1856–1882: Studies in Social, Economic, and Political Development* (Washington: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1993); Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy, 1800–1914* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1993).
- 37 Seikaly, *Men of Capital*.
- 38 Nancy H. Kwak, *A World of Homeowners: American Power and the Politics of Housing Aid* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 2.
- 39 Kwak, *World of Homeowners*, 212.
- 40 Hiba Bou Akar, *For the War Yet to Come: Planning Beirut’s Frontiers* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2018), 147.
- 41 Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *Race for Profit: How Banks and the Real Estate Industry Undermined Black Homeownership* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019).
- 42 Edward Said, “Permission to Narrate,” *London Review of Books*, 16 February 1984, online at (lrb.co.uk) bit.ly/3jkca3P (accessed 27 August 2020).
- 43 Beshara Doumani, “Palestine Versus the Palestinians? The Iron Laws and Ironies of a People Denied,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 36, no. 4 (Summer 2007): 49–64; Rashid Khalidi, *The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006).
- 44 Adam Hanieh, “Class, Economy, and the Second Intifada,” *Monthly Review* 54, no. 5 (1 October 2002), online at (monthlyreview.org) bit.ly/3lqoiSD (accessed 27 August 2020).
- 45 Noura Erakat, *Justice for Some: Law and the Question of Palestine* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2019).
- 46 Ghada Karmi, *Return: A Palestinian Memoir* (New York: Verso, 2015).
- 47 E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1966).
- 48 Doumani, “Palestine Versus the Palestinians?” 50. See also “The 2019 Workshop: Palestinian Homes and Houses,” online

- at (palestinianstudies.org) bit.ly/3hzcDyI (accessed 27 August 2020).
- 49 David Harvey, *The Limits to Capital* (New York: Verso, 2006).
- 50 Marco Chitti and Sarah Moser, "Emerging Trends in Urbanizing Palestine: Neglected City-Builders beyond the Occupation," *Urban Geography* 40, no. 7 (2019): 1010–17.
- 51 Hillary Angelo and Kian Goh, "Out in Space: Difference and Abstraction in Planetary Urbanization," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* (May 2020): 6.
- 52 Social historian Rana Barakat has critiqued ham-handed, unidirectional applications of the settler colonial framework to Palestine that emphasize "settler triumph" and "native defeat," and consequently flatten the native to a symbol. The mode of operation that Barakat describes derives partially from the practical aspects of occupation and movement to which most of us are subject, but also from assumptions about the

visibility and cohesiveness of occupation. It is an analytical framework in which the occupation is visible and immediate, and can comprehensively be experienced, witnessed, and described (and which seems to generate expertise out of commitment). It may also partially account for critiques of housing that begin with aesthetics and allow them to stand in for wider phenomena. It is a way of understanding Palestine that proposes site and method, and subsequently enters into description and theory where it is validated and reiterated. A general approach, by contrast, enables political questions around solidarity beyond local subjectivity. Rana Barakat, "Writing/Righting Palestine Studies: Settler Colonialism, Indigenous Sovereignty, and Resisting the Ghost(s) of History," *Settler Colonial Studies* 8, no. 3 (2018): 349–63.

53 Barakat, "Writing/Righting Palestine Studies."