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Los Angeles

Suburban Occupation:

Contradictory Impulses and Outcomes of Life

in Israeli Settlements in the Occupied West Bank

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Geography

by

Sara Nichole-Salazar Hughes

2017

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2017

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Suburban Occupation:
Contradictory Impulses and Outcomes of Life
in Israeli Settlements in the Occupied West Bank

by

Sara Nichole-Salazar Hughes

Doctor of Philosophy in Geography

University of California, Los Angeles, 2017

Professor John A. Agnew, Chair

The hundred-year conflict in Israel/Palestine is, at its core, a struggle over competing territorial claims and narratives. But this is not just an asymmetrical territorial conflict between two competing national groups—it is a settler colonial struggle between colonizer and colonized. Since 1967, the conflict has centered on the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt), which include the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem. Israeli settlement in the occupied territories began in 1967 following the Arab-Israeli War, despite the fact that the occupation and transfer of civilian population into the Palestinian territories is illegal according to the Fourth Geneva Convention and often criticized under international law. Since the beginning of the military occupation of the West Bank (or “Judea and Samaria”) in 1967, the settler population there and in East Jerusalem has risen to well over half a million Israeli Jews. Despite the fact that this

territory remains contested and in a constant state of war and violence, settlement residents describe their communities as safe, desirable places to live. My dissertation analyzes the considerable discursive and material *work* required to construct and maintain settlements as desirable places to live; the ways in which territorial control is utilized to make the occupation possible and sustainable; and how settlers are responding to and shaping their physical and social environment in relation to the Palestinian “other.” In three substantive chapters, in addition to a chapter examining the history of settler colonialization, I deal with various contradictions of settler life in the West Bank. This research is based on seven months of ethnographic fieldwork in the occupied West Bank, over 100 in-depth interviews with settlement residents and local council officials, participant observation at community events, and document analysis of settlement periodicals, literature by and about settlers, newspaper articles, and marketing materials. In my research I am interested in the conceptual frameworks that settlement residents use to make sense of their lifestyle in a military-occupied, contested area, and also in critiquing their interpretation of the world and in understanding how it is linked to geopolitics, settler colonialism, and unequal relations of power.

The dissertation of Sara Nichole-Salazar Hughes is approved.

Lieba Faier

Adam Moore

Gershon Shafir

John A. Agnew, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2017

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Group Terry Jordon-Bychkov Award for outstanding paper by a doctoral student and the 2016 Association of Pacific Coast Geographers Tom McKnight and Joan Clemens Award for Excellence in Area Studies for versions of Chapter 5 – Domesticity and Diasporic Homeland; and the 2017 Political Geography Specialty Group Award for Best PhD Student Paper for a version of Chapter 6 – Unbounded Territoriality. I am of course solely responsible for any errors or shortcomings that remain herein.

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view, but they let tell me so with clarity and admirable honesty). Many settlers I spoke to were wary—they had been “burned before” by critical scholars and journalists—but most of them spoke to me anyway, even though many surely felt that I would twist their words and go home to write whatever I want anyway. Therefore, given this challenge and responsibility to represent them truly and fairly, I have written carefully, and tried very hard to put all statements and events within the context that they occurred. And so maybe, maybe, should they read what I have written, the residents of eastern Gush Etzion will face up to the implications of the things they told me, the things I saw, and the way they choose to live. Much of what follows was made possible only by their generosity with their time and their willingness to answer my many questions. They were exceedingly kind and open with me, and in return I will present the facts honestly and as I experienced them.

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Vita/Biographical Sketch

Sara Nichole-Salazar Hughes

EDUCATION

University of California, Los Angeles

Ph.D. Candidate, Geography, expected May 2017

B.A. Arabic, 2009 (Minor: Political Science)

University of San Francisco

M.A. International Studies, 2011

PUBLICATIONS

Hughes, Sara (2016). "With a Wink and a Nod: Settlement Growth Through Construction as Commemoration in the Occupied West Bank." *Geopolitics*: 1-23.

Hughes, Sara (2013). "The Border Multiple: The Practicing of Borders between Public Policy and Everyday Life in a Re-Scaling Europe, edited by Dorte Jagetić Andersen, Martin Klatt, and Marie Sandberg. 2012. Farnham, UK and Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing. 260+ xii. ISBN 978-1-4094-3708-6, \$99.95." *Journal of Regional Science* 53.5 (2013): 946-948.

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Hughes, Sara (in preparation). "Diaspora and Domesticity: constructing 'home' in West Bank settlements." *Settler Colonial Studies*.

AWARDS AND GRANTS

2017: PGSG PhD Student Paper Award for "Unbounded Territoriality" (\$250)

2017: Political Geography Specialty Group Student Travel Grant (\$200)

2016: APCG Tom McKnight and Joan Clemens Award for Excellence in Area Studies for "Domesticity & Diasporic Homeland" (\$200)

Cultural Geography Specialty Group Terry Jordan-Bychkov Award for outstanding paper by a doctoral student for "Suburban occupation" (\$250)

Association of Pacific Coast Geographers Student Travel Grant (\$200)

UCLA Dissertation Year Fellowship (2016-2017) (\$20,000 + tuition/fees)

AAG-NSF Travel Grant to IGU Regional Conference in Beijing, China (\$2000)

2015: APCG Tom McKnight and Joan Clemens Award for an Outstanding Student Paper for "Construction as Commemoration" (\$500)

Association of Pacific Coast Geographers Women's Network Travel Grant (\$200)

Association of Pacific Coast Geographers Student Travel Grant (\$200)

Society of Women Geographers National Fellowship (\$8000)

UCLA Center for Jewish Studies Summer Roter Research Travel Grant (\$2500)

UCLA International Institute Fieldwork Fellowship (\$3000)

Cultural Geography Specialty Group (CGSG) Denis E. Cosgrove Research Grant (\$1000)

2014: UCLA Geography Department's Research Travel Grant (\$5000)

- Foreign Language and Area Studies Academic Year Fellowship for Hebrew Language Study (2014-2015) (\$15,000 + tuition/fees)
 Graduate Student Affinity Group of the AAG Travel Award (\$250)
 American Geographical Society Council Fellowship (\$1000)
- 2013: UCLA Graduate Research Mentorship Fellowship (2013-2014) (\$20,000 + tuition/fees)
 APCG Larry Ford Fieldwork Fellowship in Cultural Geography (\$500)
 Foreign Language and Area Studies Summer Fellowship for Hebrew Language Study (\$2500 + tuition/fees)
- 2012: UCLA Geography Department Fellowship (2012-2013) (\$20,000 + tuition/fees)

SERVICE AND AFFILIATIONS

Reviewer, *Geopolitics; Political Geography; Territory, Politics, Governance*
Organizer, Emerging Research Session, Society of Woman Geographers Triennial, 2017
Co-organizer, (Extra)territoriality Sessions, AAG Annual Meeting, 2017
Graduate Representative, UCLA Geography Faculty Search Committee, 2016-2017
Co-organizer, Critical Geographies of the Home(land) Sessions, AAG Annual Meeting, 2016
Member, Middle East Studies Association, 2015-present
Graduate Representative, Political Geography Specialty Group Governing Board, 2015-2016
Coordinator, UCLA Geography Grad Student Association Brown Bags, 2014-2015
Member, Society of Woman Geographers, 2014-present
President, UCLA Geography Grad Student Association, 2013-2014
Member, American Association of Geographers (Political Geography Specialty Group and Cultural Geography Specialty Group), 2013-present
Member, American Geographical Society, 2013-present
Member, Regional Studies Association, 2013-present
President & Founding Member, UCLA Near East Studies Grad Student Group, 2012-2013

SELECTED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- “Unbounded territoriality: a re-examination of territorial control in the occupied West Bank.”
 AAG Annual Meeting & PGSG preconference, Boston, MA, 4-9 April 2017; 33rd
 International Geographical Conference, Beijing, China, 21-25 August 2016
- “Domesticity & Diasporic Homeland: Constructing ‘home’ in West Bank settlements.” Society
 of Women Geographers Triennial Meeting, Asilomar, CA, 26-29 May 2017; APCG
 Annual Meeting, Portland, OR, 5-8 October 2016
- “Suburban occupation: constructing ‘home’ in West Bank settlements.” AAG Annual Meeting &
 PGSG preconference, San Francisco, CA, 28 March-2 April 2016
- “Construction as Commemoration: Memorializing Violence through West Bank Settlement
 Construction.” APCG Annual Meeting, Palm Springs, CA, 21-24 October 2015; AAG
 Annual Meeting & PGSG preconference, Chicago, IL, 20-25 April 2015; Indigenous and
 Decolonial Practices and Imaginaries Symposium, Huntington Library, San Marino, CA,
 8 April 2015
- “Fetishizing the Fence: Bordering beyond the border in Israel/Palestine.” Society of Women
 Geographers Triennial, Pittsburg, PA, 23-25 May 2014; AAG annual meeting, Tampa,
 FL, 8-12 April 2014

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction: Suburban Occupation

The hundred-year conflict in Israel/Palestine is, at its core, a struggle over competing territorial claims and narratives, and has been described by Agnew and Muscarà (2012, p. 35) as “the most geographical of contests.” Since 1967, the conflict has centered on the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt), which include the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem. Israeli settlement in the occupied Palestinian territories began in 1967 following the Arab-Israeli War, despite the fact that the occupation and transfer of Israeli population into the Palestinian Territories is illegal according to the Fourth Geneva Convention and often criticized under international law. Since the beginning of the military occupation of the West Bank (or “Judea and Samaria”) in 1967, the settler population there and in East Jerusalem has risen to well over 500,000 Israeli Jews. Despite the fact that this territory remains contested and in a constant state of war and violence, settlement residents describe their communities as safe, desirable places to live.

In my research I am interested in the conceptual frameworks that settlement residents use to make sense of their lifestyle in a military-occupied, contested area, and also in critiquing their interpretation of the world and in understanding how it is linked to geopolitics, settler colonialism, and unequal relations of power. My dissertation research is based on seven months of ethnographic fieldwork in the occupied West Bank, over 100 in-depth interviews with settlement residents and local council officials, participant observation at community events, and document analysis of settlement periodicals, literature by and about settlers, newspaper articles, and marketing materials (**Chapter 2 - The Setting and the Research**). It offers a close and detailed explanation of how contemporary Jewish Israeli settlers are domesticating the violent

project of occupation and dispossession in the West Bank. My findings reveal that Israeli settlement residents are managing several dissonances of their lifestyle in the occupied West Bank: in the juxtaposition between bucolic suburban life and constant threat and securitization, in their relationship with the Palestinians who build their communities but who threaten their lives and national territory, and in their desire to build both home as domesticity and home as diasporic homeland. These tensions produce incongruous impulses and outcomes where the imperative of security and the need to place oneself in danger for the good of the nation are held in constant tension.

The conflict in Israel-Palestine is, at its core, a conflict over land and its control. Noam Chomsky (2003, p. 83) has framed it as a “conflict between two nations that claim the right of national self-determination in the same territory, which each regards as its historic homeland,” and numerous scholars agree with this assessment (Gelvin, 2005; Roy, 2006; Yiftachel, 2002; Zertal & Eldar, 2009). But the Israel-Palestine Conflict is not just an asymmetrical territorial conflict between competing national groups—it is a settler colonial struggle between colonizer and colonized. In Part I of **Chapter 3 - Settler Colonialism: Review of the Field and Locating Israel/Palestine**, I extensively review the emerging field of comparative settler colonial studies, tracing the morphological continuity of (mainly white European) settler colonial formations beginning in the 16th and 17th centuries onward, and the theoretical work of scholars contributing to the field. In Part II of the chapter I place the case of Israel/Palestine squarely within the settler colonial framework, arguing that this is the appropriate framing of the conflict—not as one of two competing nationalisms inhabiting the same territory, but rather as a settler colonial encounter marked by a severe imbalance of power and by the settler logic of elimination of native sovereignty. The logic and practices of settler colonization are apparent in the ongoing

Israeli occupation of the Palestinian West Bank, described in various aspects throughout the dissertation.

Jewish Israeli life in the occupied West Bank is a study in contrasts and extremes. Suburban tranquility is juxtaposed with imminent danger (in the form of kidnappings, stabbings, shootings, etc. both within the settlements and on the roads). The title of this dissertation—Suburban Occupation—draws attention to these contrasts. This phrase brings very different images to mind: a military occupation with checkpoints, roadblocks, armed patrols, etc., and bucolic suburban life complete with large single-family homes with yards, public parks, swimming pools, grocery stores, and so on. In three substantive chapters I deal with various contradictions of settler life in the West Bank. I analyze the considerable material and discursive *work* required to construct and maintain settlements as desirable places to live (**Chapter 4 - Domesticity and Diasporic Homeland**); how settlers are responding to and shaping their physical and social environment in relation to the Palestinian ‘other’ (**Chapter 5 - With a Wink and a Nod**); and the ways in which territoriality is utilized to make the occupation possible and sustainable (**Chapter 6 - Unbounded Territoriality**).

What holds the chapters of this dissertation together is that each deals with different aspects of the conflicting impulses and outcomes of life for Jewish settlers in the occupied West Bank. **Chapter 4 - Domesticity and Diasporic Homeland: Constructing “Home” in Israeli Settlements in the Occupied West Bank** examines how zones of occupation and conflict are constructed as desirable places to live—how settlement residents can be both rugged pioneers and suburban housewives and mothers; how they can crave the peace and quiet of desert living while being willing to cope with constant violence and indigenous resistance; how settlements can be both the safest place to raise a family and in need of constant military protection; and how

the presence, belonging, and legitimacy of one group is affected by the disavowal, dispossession, and displacement of another. **Chapter 5 – With a Wink and a Nod: Settlement Growth**

Through Construction as Commemoration in the Occupied West Bank analyzes how the “slow” violence of the settlement movement frames, responds to, and benefits from the explicit violence of resistance by the colonized—how the Israeli government can claim to restrain the settlers while lending them both tacit and material support; how belonging is constructed and asserted (and who is excluded and how that exclusion is effected); and what viewing these clashes through the lens of settler colonization reveals about the relationship between Palestinian resistance, settlement growth, and Israeli government policy. **Chapter 6 – Unbounded**

Territoriality: Territorial Control in the Occupied Palestinian Territories examines how territoriality is exercised through military occupation in settler colonial contexts (taking Israel/Palestine as a case study)—how this territory is both inside and outside of Israel (not formally annexed, but effectively governed); how the contradictions and inequalities of the occupation are maintained and perpetuated; how the “only democracy in the Middle East” has maintained an illegal 50-year military occupation; and what this tells us about the temporal and spatial dimensions of this half century-long “temporary” military occupation. Finally, I close the dissertation with some concluding remarks summarizing the contributions of each chapter.

1.2 Settling the Occupied Palestinian Territories Post-1967

Before describing the Israeli Occupation and birth of the settlement movement, I will, in very broad strokes, trace the history of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. Though in popular culture the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is often framed as tracing back thousands of years to the original (biblical) Jewish settlement of the territory, most scholars trace the Israeli-Palestinian conflict’s

origins back to Palestine under the Ottoman Empire and the birth of modern Zionism in Europe, and would say that the conflict in Israel/Palestine boils down to a conflict over (national) territory. The conflict began with the Jewish *aliyyot* [waves of immigration] between 1882 and the onset of WWII (Gelvin, 2005, p. 56). Historically, this conflict has not been isolated to Israelis and Palestinians, but has directly involved the Arab states in the region, the United States, the United Nations and other Western and non-Western states.

The State of Israel came into existence with the 1948 War, known to Israelis as the “War of Independence,” and to Palestinians as *al-Nakba* [the Catastrophe]. Prior to the war, the United Nations had put forward a partition plan for the creation of two states: one Jewish and one Palestinian. This plan was not accepted by the Palestinian representatives due to the perception that the allocation of lands and resources was unfair and disproportional to population size. During the 1948 War, the newly-declared state of Israel claimed even more land than had been allocated by the (already disproportionate) UN partition plan. The armistice agreement reached by Israel and its Arab-state neighbors following the war created the 1949 Armistice Line, or Green Line, which is the internationally recognized border of the state of Israel.

The Israeli general staff believed the army could have conquered the West Bank and East Jerusalem in 1948, but didn’t for several reasons (Beinin, 2013, p. 27). This would have risked a confrontation with the United Nations, whose partition plan legitimized the Jewish state but which called for a neighboring Arab state (and to the UN’s chagrin Israel had already conquered about half the territory of the would-be Palestinian state) (Beinin, 2013, pp. 27-28). Prime Minister Ben-Gurion also sought to avoid a clash with the United States, “which he presciently saw as the principal international protector of Israel in the future” (Beinin, 2013, p. 28). Further,

before 1967 most modern Orthodox Zionists were dovish, territorial moderates who were willing to wait for the Messiah to restore Jerusalem and the Kingdom of David.

Between 1949 and 1967, the West Bank and East Jerusalem were held by Jordan and Gaza by Egypt. Also from 1949 to 1967, “Israeli settlement authorities launched several campaigns to incorporate territory conquered in 1948 into the settler space, such as the ‘Judaization of the Galilee’ (*yehud ha-galil*) and ‘the conquest of the desert’ (*kibosh ha-shmama*)” (Beinin, 2013, p. 16). Throughout this period the importance of agricultural settlement gradually diminished, as settlement campaigns focused increasingly on urban development (Beinin, 2013, p. 16). But despite the preponderance of urban settlement, “the Zionist ideal was pioneering settlement on the rural frontier” (see **Chapter 3 – Settler Colonialism**, and **Chapter 4 – Domesticity and Diasporic Homeland**, particularly the section on “Pioneering/Frontier Spirit”) (Beinin, 2013, p. 19).

In 1967, Israel and its neighbors went to war again (the Six Day War/Arab-Israeli War), and in June Israel occupied and gained military control over the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula and the West Bank. The debate over what should be done with these territories began almost immediately (Feige, 2009, p. 283). Israel annexed East Jerusalem and the Golan, eventually returned Sinai to Egypt, and has occupied Gaza and the West Bank (internationally known as the “occupied territories”) ever since. Settlers “see these territories as Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip, referring to them with the acronym of ‘Yesha,’ which is also the Hebrew word for ‘salvation’” (Feige, 2009, p. 3). East Jerusalem and the hill country of the West Bank (Judea and Samaria in Israeli/settler parlance) form the geographical core of biblical *Eretz Yisra’el* [the land of Israel], and as such “[a]ll currents of Zionism aspired to include these areas in the Jewish state” (Beinin, 2013, p. 27). The settlers’ leadership and activist “employ

discursive strategies to construct Yesha as the true place of Zionism and Israel, and use similar strategies to construct Yesha as the true place of Zionism and Israel” (see **Chapter 4 – Domesticity and Diasporic Homeland** and **Chapter 5 – With a Wink and a Nod**) (Feige, 2009, p. 3). Despite this aspiration, “the central current of Labor Zionism—Mapai and its successor the Labor Party—agreed to partition the country in order to establish a state on the maximum amount of territory whose borders could delimit a Jewish majority” (Beinin, 2013, p. 27). Thus was born the vision of Israeli territorial maximalism while avoiding the annexation of large numbers of Palestinians who continue to represent a “demographic threat” to the Jewish majority (addressed more explicitly in **Chapter 6 – Unbounded Territoriality**).

Settlement expansion in the occupied Palestinian territories began in 1967 following the Arab-Israeli War, despite the fact that the occupation and transfer of Israeli population into the Palestinian Territories is illegal according to the Fourth Geneva Convention and often criticized under international law. In September 1967, Kfar Etzion, the first Jewish settlement in the occupied territories, was built (Feige, 2009, p. 283). Since the beginning of the military occupation of the West Bank in 1967 the settler population there and in East Jerusalem has risen to well over half a million Israeli Jews. Joel Beinin (2013, p. 15) argues that the renewed settlement drive in the territories conquered in 1967 “was primarily urban and accompanied by a sustained, high level of urban violence, especially in Hebron and East Jerusalem.” He goes on to argue that the post-1967 settlement drive in the occupied Palestinian territories exemplifies the long-term structure of violence and coercive settlement in the Zionist movement, and the dynamic and changing character of the Zionist invasion (Beinin, 2013, pp. 15-16).

The 1967 war “marked the beginning of the hegemony of Labor Zionism in Israel and the rise of militant, religious Zionism, which actively sought annexation of all of the West Bank”

(Beinin, 2013, p. 28). In the mid-1960s a small group on the fringe of the National Religious Party gathered around Rabbi Kook who taught that they were living in a messianic age and should drive out all the inhabitants (Palestinians) from Judea and Samaria and “liberate the Land of Israel” (Beinin, 2013, p. 28). For his followers, Israel’s victory in the war confirmed Kook’s prophetic stature, and they “sought to hasten the messianic redemption by settling all of Eretz Yisra’el” (Beinin, 2013, p. 28). Other government ministers at first joined with Rabbi Kook’s followers in the Movement for Greater Israel, “[b] the élan and ideological rationale for the post-1967 settlement drive came primarily from the religious settler movement, which established Gush Emunim (Bloc of the Faithful)” (Beinin, 2013, p. 28). In April 1974, Gush Emunim was established as a political movement (Feige, 2009, p. 283). Though most settlers do not belong to Gush Emunim, this movement “was the most consequential in the establishment of Israeli presence in the West Bank, bringing a clear ideology, impressive organization, political connections, and workforce with motivation, dedication, and commitment” (Feige, 2009, p. 4). But despite the importance of seizing rural land and more remote territory for maintaining physical control over the entire West Bank (the main focus of Gush Emunim), Beinin notes that the main demographic thrust of post-1967 settlement centered on the Zionist “national consensus” on annexing East Jerusalem and expanding the stock of suburban housing for Tel Aviv and Jerusalem in nearby West Bank regions (Beinin, 2013, p. 29). This dissertation in part shows that the more “remote” settlements of the Judean hills, originally established by Gush Emunim, have themselves become suburban commuter towns where Jerusalem and Tel Aviv are only a ten-minute drive away, leading to their rapid growth and suburbanization/normalization (see especially **Chapter 4 – Domesticity and Diasporic Homeland**).

In 1993 the first protocol of the Oslo Accords called for letters of mutual recognition to be exchanged between Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin. In his letter, Arafat recognized the state of Israel, therefore effectively conceding that the pre-1967 borders of Israel are non-negotiable—that the land claimed by Israel in 1948 is forever lost to the Palestinians. Therefore, all future negotiations over the border between Israel and a future Palestinian state would concern the West Bank and Gaza Strip territories (Gelvin, 2005, p. 234). Then, in August 2005, Jewish settlers were evacuated from twenty-two settlements in the disengagement from Gaza and north Samaria and their villages are destroyed (Feige, 2009, p. 285). The settlement movement now centers exclusively around the occupied West Bank, the topic of this dissertation.

1.3 Why Study Settlers?

This project addresses the need, identified by Lorenzo Veracini in his *Theoretical Overview of Settler Colonialism*, for research examining settler consciousness, or research focusing “on what [settlers] do, and how they think about what they do” (Veracini, 2010, p. 15).

To quote him at length:

“It is important to focus on the settlers, on what they do, and how they think about what they do. True, they have been the traditional subject of historical inquiry, and only recently the experience of indigenous people in settler contexts has been the subject of extensive scholarly activity. And yet, there are also risks intrinsic in focusing primarily on indigenous peoples and their experience. In a seminal essay, and in another context, but underlying a similar dynamic, Ava Baron noted that if we only investigate women, ‘man’ ‘remains the universal subject against which women are defined in their particularity’. We should heed this advice, and similarly focus on settlers as well in order to avoid the possibility that, despite attempts to decolonise [sic] our gaze, we continue understanding the settler as normative” (Veracini, 2010, p. 15).

But despite this call for research on settlers, there hasn’t been much ethnographic research on this topic—though notable exceptions include Michael Feige’s (2009) work on the religious fundamentalist settler movement Gush Emunim, Sara Yael Hirschhorn’s (2014a, 2014b, 2015,

2017) work on Jewish-American settlers in the occupied territories, and Callie Maidhof's work on "secular settlements" (2013). In various ways these works examine the everyday lives of Jewish Israeli settlers in the occupied Palestinian territories.

In my work, I assert that in exploring settler consciousness we should not assume that "settlers" are a singular category that can be studied, that they are a homogenous sociopolitical entity with a stable, consensual "settler mindset." Rather, disaggregating settlers through close, extended ethnographic research allows us to examine contextually *why* they say and do what they say and do. Research on settlers and settlements needs to present a more nuanced picture of settlement policy and settlement drivers, by examining the diversity of Israeli settlers and motivations for settling, by studying the normalization and banalization of the Israeli presence in the West Bank, and by unpacking settlement drivers in their diversity, context, and multidimensionality. Settlement "policy" is more of an open field than a concerted plan. My work therefore also contributes to recent scholarly work examining in earnest the normalization and banality of the occupation and settlement growth (Handel, Allegra, & Maggor, 2017; Hirschhorn, 2017).

David Newman, who contributed one of the first scholarly examinations of Israeli settlement early in his academic career (Newman, 1985), asked those gathered at a conference in Tel Aviv in 2014 why younger scholars are working on the banal and not on the political questions surrounding the settlement movement (Newman, 2014). The argument put forward by the scholars examining normalization was that this process was being taken for granted, but Newman pointed out that the questions being asked had more to do with the mechanics of normalization and less to do with the political framework. Today's research agenda, he noted, had more to do with mechanics and normalization than with ideology and emotion. This study—

Suburban Occupation—examines the “normalization” of the settlement movement through the frame of settler colonial studies in order to keep the political framework upfront in questions of banality and suburbanization. By examining the “ideological” settlements of eastern Gush Etzion (increasingly developed as suburban commuter towns), the tension between fundamentalism and pragmatism is also forefront in the research.

The puzzle of Israeli settlement in the occupied territories has attracted a lot of journalistic and other nonacademic attention of late, with a surge of interest in the everyday lives of Israeli settlers. The recent uptick in coverage includes several very good examples of investigative and documentary research, such as the seven-chapter piece “Meet the Settlers” by the *Telegraph* (Simons, 2014), and the 2016 documentary film *The Settlers* by director Shimon Dotan (Democracy Now, 2016). This interest also includes fiction novels like Assaf Gavron’s *The Hilltop* (2013), which gives a comic glimpse into life in a West Bank settlement, young adult fiction blended with a personal memoir around disengagement from the Gaza settlements, such as Orit Arfa’s *The Settler* (2013), and nonacademic nonfiction, like Frank Mecklenburg’s *The Face of Samaria: The History and Life of Jews in the Heartland of Israel* (2013). And each of these pieces captures something of the madhouse complexity of settlement life, but each is limited. There continues to be very little scholarly, ethnographic research conducted within West Bank settlements to explore the complex, personal reasons that Israeli Jews choose to reside there—a gap this work seeks to fill.

Michael Feige (2009), whose book *Settling in the Hearts: Jewish Fundamentalism in the Occupied Territories* analyzes the Gush Emunim (Bloc of the Faithful) movement, says that there are several reasons why there isn’t much ethnographic research on settlers. He notes that, among other things, (1) the occupied territories are dangerous, so researchers don’t go there; (2)

most Israeli social scientists strongly dislike the settlers and don't care to hear their reasoning; and (3) settlers are not considered "exotic" enough (Feige, 2009, p. 10). Additionally, as a general rule, settlement residents don't talk to researchers and journalists (see **Chapter 2 – The Setting and the Research**, particularly 2.2 Field Sites, Access, and Representativeness).

Expanding on his second point, Feige recounts: "A left-wing friend told me that there is not much point in studying the settlers' discourse: what difference does it make what rationales they provide for their colonial project and violent actions?" (Feige, 2009, p. 12). This statement, which is not alien to me, suggest that the effects of the settlement project—the violence it visits upon Palestinians—is what is important, not the reasoning behind this violence. Because social scientists generally want "to give voice to deprived people and to enable the subaltern to speak," settlers have not received much scholarly attention (Feige, 2009, p. 11). Feige notes that the settler viewpoint is over-presented in every possible media, and therefore has become frustratingly redundant (Feige, 2009, p. 10). Recognizing this reality, my project is aimed at those thoughts and feelings that are not generally presented as the "party line"—at getting inside the minds and everyday lives of "ordinary" settlement residents to the extent possible. Israeli settlers are not voiceless, they are "probably the most vocal and articulate group in Israeli society today" (Feige, 2009, p. 11). Therefore, though I was often encouraged by interviewees to "spread the good word," I do not intend to function as a mouthpiece for my interlocutors; rather, I want to reach a better understanding of who they are day-to-day and what their lives are like, offering a nuanced explanation of how Israeli settlers are domesticating the violent project of occupation and dispossession in the West Bank. My commitment in this work is to represent the settlement residents fairly (and *critically*) without being a mouthpiece for them—to represent them on their own terms without recreating their hegemony.

Taking a close look at the settlements and their residents, I am interested in the stories that settlers tell about who they are and what they're doing. In my case, as in a lot of postmodern research, this means taking seriously people who I maybe don't like or don't agree with, and trying to explain groups that seem inexplicable. According to Susan Harding, if I can avoid essentializing—if I don't assume I already know who "they" are—and don't presume settlement residents are significantly homogenous in regard to "religious belief, interpretive practices, moral compass, and socioeconomic condition," then I—situated, implicated, and self-reflexive—"can come up with more nuanced, complicated, partial, and local readings of who they are and what they are doing" and from there I can "design more effective political strategies to oppose directly the specific positions they advocate" (Harding, 1991, pp. 374, 393). I agree with Harding that this is better politics than one grounded in totalizing and uncritical opposition. It is crucial to understand settler motivations, as "knowledge about a situation is a critical tool to dismantling it" (Frankenberg, 1993, p. 53).

Where are the Palestinians?

One critique that I get a lot, and that I truly appreciate, asks "where are the Palestinians in your study?" Why not conduct a comparative study of settlers and West Bank Palestinians? As Svirsky notes in reference to comparative settler colonial studies and the need to include indigenous resistance in these analyses: "To exclude resistance from the analysis of Palestine is tantamount to excluding Palestine from the analysis" (Svirsky, 2017, p. 30). Cognizant of this shortcoming, there are several reasons why I did not interview Palestinians for this project.

First, in the context in which I was conducting my research it could have put the safety and livelihoods of Palestinian interlocutors at risk to include them in the study. Many

Palestinians living near settlements make their living in construction and maintenance of the settlements. They would not be able to speak openly with me about their experiences with their settlement neighbors, for fear of reprisal and of damaging working relationships they rely on to survive. Additionally, why would they trust me as a researcher in that particular context? Though I did my Master's research in Palestinian resistance tactics, have many Palestinian friends and connections, and speak passable Arabic, I am a white American named "Sara" (which could be of either Hebrew or Arabic origin) who speaks Hebrew and was living in a settlement outpost—of course they would assume I had some connection and affinity to the settlers.

Which leads to the second reason I did not interview Palestinians for the study—given the circumstances, I don't believe it could have been done well. Again, given my positioning, outward appearance, gender, and the fact that I was living in the settlements while conducting the research, I don't believe that Palestinians could have spoken with me openly and honestly. And finally, building on this point, I don't believe that achieving some sort of scholarly "balance" in such an asymmetrical conflict is even possible. Would conducting an equal number of interviews with Palestinians as with Israelis be "balanced" given the superior influence supporters of Jewish Israel have over the media and framing of the conflict worldwide? The "subaltern speaks" in a variety of ways, and scholarly work on and within Palestinian communities is being done by a number of scholars better positioned than I am to do that work justice. This particular research project focuses instead on settlers.

In a study that focuses on settlers there is always a danger overestimating their power. But Palestinians are not "absent" from this story any more than they are absent from Israelis' everyday lives. Settlers—and the wider Israeli state and society—have to grapple with the presence of Palestinians every day. This study, in part, examines how they do so. This work

doesn't contribute to the need for the history of Israel/Palestine to be re-written as a shared history rather than as parallel, oppositional histories and narratives—a Palestinian voice is (I think necessarily) absent. In trying to see things from the perspective of “the settlers,” in some ways this work adopts their conceptual blind spots—the erasure of the indigenous people. The best this work achieves is laying out how “the Arab” sometimes enters into the settler consciousness, and how “the Palestinian” in many ways never does. But in pointing out this erasure, in making the gap visible in all its Grand Canyon grandeur, I attempt a sort of *critical hermeneutics*, examining the conceptual frameworks settlement residents use to make sense of their lifestyle in a military-occupied, contested area while also critiquing their interpretation of the world and in understanding how it is linked to geopolitics and settler colonialism (see **Chapter 2 – The Setting and the Research**). In this work and in work going forward, I explore how people in such close and intimate contact can be kept so far apart. In a variety of ways Palestinians are resisting the occupation and appropriation of their land, forcing the settlers to adjust their tactics, backtrack, and constantly reassure themselves of the rightness of their project in the face of evidence to the contrary. The presence of Palestinians is not at all inconsequential to the form that the Israeli settler colonial state, both within and without its recognized borders, takes.

I'll close this section by stating that it is also important to recognize our role as “outsiders” in the conflict. The international community, largely, is not doing much of anything to help the Palestinians. Palestinians living in the Occupied Territories “are subject to various surveillance practices that render them fully visible to Israeli monitoring eyes, [and] they are also subject to the hypervisibility imposed on them by both the global media and human rights organizations as their suffering becomes a ‘news item’ and an instrument meant to facilitate the

ethical response of others” (Hochberg, 2015, p. 119). The suffering of Palestinians living under occupation is hyper visible—has become a spectacle played out in news outlets as well as academic research. This urge to inform the world—to bear witness—is based on the assumption that if the international community knew what was happening then it would not remain silent, but this is obviously untrue. Atrocities are carried out as the world sits by and watches. In fact, Hochberg argues that “the world spends too much time seeing, and that this seeing secures no political intervention” (Hochberg, 2015, p. 119). This project, therefore, turns the gaze on the settler, examining why s/he does what s/he does, and how s/he thinks about settlement, dispossession, and belonging. I believe that awareness and understanding of a situation, even of the “side” you disagree with, is necessary for social change. Hopefully, as stated in the Acknowledgements, this will open up some ways forward and will hold up a mirror to the settlers themselves.

1.4 Positioning

It was not easy living in a *caravan* [mobile home] in an Israeli settlement outpost in the occupied West Bank for seven months, having friendly conversations over tea, or beer, or dinner, with residents whose beliefs I am largely morally opposed to. The beginning of my academic and activist work in Israel/Palestine revolved around working for Palestinian human rights organizations and studying Palestinian resistance tactics against the Israeli Separation Barrier and settlement expansion. It was not easy listening to and challenging politely positions that were sometimes abhorrent to me—particularly when referencing Palestinians, who are framed as nonindigenous marauders, as terrorists, as intrinsically hate-filled people who can never be trusted, as objects that need to be removed or killed. But the approach I took is about

understanding a situation and position that seems inexplicable. Gloria Anzaldúa once said of indigenous people in the United States' settler colonized Pacific southwest that different cultures communicate their own versions of reality, with conflicting messages:

“But it is not enough to stand on the opposite river bank, shouting questions, challenging patriarchal, white conventions. A counterstance [sic] locks one into a duel of oppressor and oppressed; locked in mortal combat, like the cop and the criminal, both are reduced to a common denominator of violence. The counterstance [sic] refutes the dominant culture's views and beliefs, and, for this, it is proudly defiant. All reaction is limited by, and dependent on, what it is reacting against. Because the counterstance [sic] stems from a problem with authority—outer as well as inner—it's a step towards liberation from cultural domination. But it is not a way of life. At some point, on our way to a new consciousness, we will have to leave the opposite bank, the split between the two mortal combatants someone healed so that we are on both shores at once and, at once, see through the serpent and eagle eyes. Or perhaps we will decide to disengage from the dominant culture, write it off altogether as a lost cause, and cross the border into a wholly new and separate territory. Or we might go another route. The possibilities are numerous once we decide to act and not to react” (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 78).

As scholars we are driven by ideology, emotion, and commitment. I am committed to the belief that the occupation is illegal and unjust, but this project is an attempt to leave the bank of my reality—a position from which the occupation is illegal under international law, a settler colonization, immoral, and unjust—and to ask questions about the other position rather than just shouting at it from across a divide. My hope is that understanding the settler position might offer new ways forward that don't fit into the zero-sum game that is the ongoing settler colonization of the Palestinian Territories.

Residents sometimes assumed that I was interested in their perspectives and experiences so that I could promote a more positive image of settlement residents to the world—because I was on their side, or as one interviewee assumed, because I “really believed that [they] have a right to live here” (field notes summer 2015). I avoided confirming or denying these assumptions, though if asked directly I would say that I believe the settlements violate international law. I explained honestly that my study was about how settlers think about and understand their lives in the West Bank, and I suppose the fact that I was asking them directly

(rather than vilifying them without any personal experience, as they feel most scholars, the media, and the international community do) they assumed I am sympathetic. One thing is certainly true: as one settlement resident said to me, “You’re part of the story now, you’re not just an innocent bystander” (field notes 7/26/14). And I take that responsibility very seriously—to present what I saw and heard honestly yet critically.

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2. The Setting and the Research

2.1 Community Settlements in the Occupied West Bank

Community settlements (or “communal settlements”) are a type of town in Israel in which the residents must be members of a cooperative and can veto the sale of a house or business to an undesirable buyer. Unlike *kibbutzim* [collective communities based on agriculture and socialist ideology] and *moshavim* [another type of cooperative agricultural community consisting of individual farms], though, the economic cooperation between residents of community settlements is very loose. Most residents work outside the settlements and pay only minimal property taxes to the cooperative to maintain the town and its public facilities. Unlike *kibbutzim* and *moshavim*, community settlements lack an agricultural economic base, and in most cases lack any significant economic base, instead relying on residents commuting to nearby regional and metropolitan areas (Rosen & Razin, 2008, p. 2904). These communities function more like American homeowners associations, and less like earlier Zionist agricultural and socialist cooperatives.

These “community” or “private” settlements evolved as a form of rural and exurban development during the “third wave of frontier settlement” (in the late 1970s and early 1980s) when the fading of socialist-cooperative ideologies reduced the feasibility of establishing new *kibbutzim* and *moshavim* (Rosen & Razin, 2008, p. 2904; Yiftachel, 1997, p. 513). The establishment of these settlements “was represented in policy and public discourse as a renewed effort to ‘Judaize’ Israel’s hostile frontier” (Yiftachel, 1997, p. 513). They have thus also been referred to as “frontier” settlements, developed particularly in rural locations where Zionist and socialist ideologies play a major role (Rosen & Razin, 2009, p. 1707). Though the seizure of rural and more remote territory was not the main demographic thrust of post-1967 settlement

(which tends to center around the Jerusalem metropolitan area and to hug the Green Line), it is important in maintaining physical control over the entire West Bank (Beinin, 2013, p. 29). Of the estimated 498,000 settlers living in the West Bank and East Jerusalem in 2012, about 198,000 lived in exclusively Jewish neighborhoods in East Jerusalem and nearby suburbs—areas which will be annexed in any peace deal with the Palestinians according to a Zionist “national consensus” (Beinin, 2013, p. 29). In contrast, Beinin wrote in 2013 that “some fifty settlements with a few tens of thousands of settlers and about one hundred unauthorized ‘outposts,’ whose total population is about ten thousand, are located in the central mountain ridge of the West Bank, the South Hebron Hills, and the Jordan Valley” (Beinin, 2013, p. 29). Though these settlements are located in a geographically precarious area, where the Israeli consensus is for eventual evacuation and withdrawal, they are an integral part of the “matrix of control” Israel extends across the West Bank (Halper, 2006). According to Matt Evans, “Israel’s population dispersal policy is one of the longest ongoing attempts to defend territorial sovereignty by directing population settlement to areas of strategic national importance” (Evans 2006, 578).

Early on (in the 1970s and 1980s), most of these ex-urban settlements were populated by those affiliated with the religio-national Gush Emunim movement (Yiftachel, 1997, p. 515).

Writing in 2009 Feige noted:

“Of the approximately two hundred thousand Jewish residents of [the occupied territories], most do not belong to [the Gush Emunim movement]. Gush Emunim, however, was most consequential in the establishment of Israeli presence in the West Bank, bringing a clear ideology, impressive organization, political consensus, and workforce with motivation, dedication, and commitment. Currently, most of the Gush Emunim supporters reside in the so-called ideological settlements on the mountain ridge of Judea and Samaria and are still the most active in the project of appropriating the land and struggling against territorial compromise” (Feige, 2009, p. 4).

While still considered the more “ideological” Israeli settlements, these communities are located within commuting distance of the Jerusalem and Tel Aviv metropolitan areas and draw residents

for a variety of reasons which include more “practical” (economic and quality-of-life) considerations (Figure 2.1: Development Towns and Ex-urban Settlements in Israel).

Community settlements are mainly “attractive, suburban-like ‘gated communities’, scattered between Arab villages and development towns, both within Israel and in the Occupied Territories” which attract middle-class suburbanites (Yiftachel, 1997, p. 513). Rosen and Razin (2008) describe community settlements as follows:

“Physically, most of these settlements are fenced, gated, and sometimes guarded at night, whereas socially most are formally organized as communal (but not cooperative) associations. In practice, these are enclosed communities that retain strong social and cultural cohesion. This is achieved by keeping the communities relatively small (usually under 500 families) and applying social screening mechanisms (tests and interviews that serve to sort candidates). Accepted residents are obligated to follow certain local rules and codes of behavior. In the early 2000s there were 120 community settlements that accommodated 74 800 people (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2005). About half of these community settlements were developed in the occupied West Bank territories. Some of the West Bank enclaves were essentially suburban neighborhoods—offering real-estate opportunities for middle-class populations looking to improve their quality of life (Gonen, 1995)” (p. 2905).

Today the population of community settlements, both within Israel and in the West Bank, is 91.9 thousand (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2015). They are based on principles of shared community life and high standards of living (Rosen & Razin, 2008, p. 2904). Social screening mechanisms used to “sort” prospective new residents include a selection process which ensures that residents have a particular shared ideology, religious perspective, or desired lifestyle which they wish to perpetuate by accepting like-minded individuals. For example, the selection committee may (often does) prioritize young couples with children in order to ensure that the community will experience natural growth. Once new residents get through the selection process, they then enter a probationary one-year period after which residents vote on whether or not they can join the community.

In addition to the fact that they select their own residents, community settlements generally share a number of features. As noted above, they are predominantly rural and exurban,

aimed at populating the Occupied Territory's peripheral areas. Houses are predominantly, if not exclusively, single-family homes and not apartment buildings, as the communities aim to bring in young families that will stay, and whose children will hopefully grow up, marry, and raise their own kids in the community (Figure 2.2: Single-family Homes in Tekoa, July 2015). In fact, the availability and affordability of single-family homes with a yard is one of the main attraction points for these towns. Community settlements are usually, though not always, small, with a few hundreds of residents. They grow slowly through natural growth and by selecting new families. I was told by many heads of the local councils in these settlements that there is not enough available housing to meet the demand, and that there are often long waiting lists of potential residents waiting for more units to become available.

Community settlements also attract new residents with the number of amenities they offer. According to Lehari, community settlements reflect market preferences for exclusive consumer residential club amenities (Lehari, 2005). Public facilities include: preschools, synagogues, grocery stores, sports facilities, youth clubs, swimming pools, etc. (Figure 2.3 Community Swimming Pool in Tekoa, July 2014). Many residents described Tekoa as being "like a country club." Developed as commuter towns, the settlements are increasingly marked by various economic and social activities. For example, Alon Shvut hosts a microbrewery and winery. Tekoa boasts a horse farm offering riding lessons, an organic mushroom farm, other organic produce, a dentist's office, restaurants, concerts, and a number of other small- and medium-sized businesses (Figure 2.4: Van for Tekoa's Organic Mushroom Farm). Sde Bar is well-known for its goat farm and organic cheeses (Figure 2.5: Sign at the Gated Entrance of Sde Bar Advertising Sde Bar Farm, July 2014).

Residents of community settlements are typically very involved in their community. They know their neighbors well, volunteer for various committees which run the town and its facilities, and often meet for various events and celebrations (Figure 2.6: Kfar Eldad Thirtieth Birthday Celebration, August 2015). This strong sense of community is fostered by the small size of the towns (for example, several residents lamented to me about the growing size of Tekoa and the fact that they no longer knew all their neighbors), and by favoring applicants who are interested in being part of a community rather than staying at home and never seeing their neighbors. When I spoke with members of the selection committee for Tekoa, they stressed that the selection process is not about keeping people out, per se, but about making sure new residents are “the right fit” for the community life of the settlement.

Rather than establishing completely new settlements, settlement growth is often achieved through the founding of new “neighborhoods” added on to existing settlements. These neighborhoods may be incorporated into existing communities, or may have independent local committees and selection committees. For example, the Tekoa settlement consists of Tekoa Alif (the original settlement), Tekoa Bet, Tekoa Dalet, Tekoa Gimmel, and, for a short period in the summer of 2014, Tekoa He. These designations stem from the Hebrew alphabet, essentially meaning Tekoa A, B, C, and D. Earlier communities tend to be larger, more established, and recognized as legal by the Israeli state, while in newer communities fewer families are often housed in *caravanim* [mobile homes] and are awaiting approval from the Israeli government to build legally-recognized housing units (Figure 2.7: The New Neighborhood Tekoa He, July 2014).

Most community settlements are too small to form their own separate formal municipalities in the form of local councils or cities. Therefore, the residents’ cooperative is

recognized by the state of Israel as a local committee. Several such local committees can form together a regional council, which is one of the three types of local government in Israel. In practice, the regional council has more impact on the residents' lives than the local committee of their settlement. It is the regional council (*mo'itza* in Hebrew) which normally runs schools, builds roads, collects property taxes, and even runs its own screening process for new residents. The settlements in this study are administered by the Gush Etzion and Mateh Binyamin Regional Councils.

2.2 Field Sites, Access, and Representativeness

All of the settlements included in the study are community settlements (except for the two in the central Gush and Sde Bar), and those in eastern Gush Etzion are also “mixed,” meaning that religious and secular Jews live together and share in community life. Residents move to mixed communities because they want their children to experience the diversity of Jewish life—secular, national religious, and Orthodox Jews all sharing one community. The settlements included in the study consist of the five communities in the eastern Gush Etzion settlement bloc (Tekoa, Nokdim, Kfar Eldad, Sde Bar, and Ma'ale Rechavam), Efrat and Alon Shvut in the central/historic Gush Etzion settlement bloc, and Talmon and Neria¹ in the Mateh Binyamin settlement bloc (Figure 2.8: Field Sites). Figure 2.9 shows the population of each settlement as of 2015 (Figure 2.9: Description of Settlements Included in Study). All of these settlements are located along the “Mountain Strip,” or the Judean Hills (Figure 2.10 B'Tselem map of the West Bank divided by geographical dispersion of settlements and ramifications for

¹ Sometimes transliterated as “Nerya.”

the Palestinian population and Figure 2.11: The Mountain Strip).² Most of the settlements in the central mountain ridge that crosses the West Bank from north to south were initiated by Gush Emunim and tend to hug Route 60, the main north-south traffic artery ("Analysis of the map of the West Bank," 2011). The population of these settlements totaled 34,000 as of 2002 ("Analysis of the map of the West Bank," 2011). Of all the settlements included in the study only Efrat and Alon Shvut are located west (or on the "Israeli side") of the separation barrier. The Israeli West Bank barrier (referred to variously as the separation wall, security barrier, or apartheid wall) is constructed roughly along the path of the Green Line, the internationally recognized border between Israel and the West Bank (except that in many places it digs deep into the West Bank, over the Green Line, in order to encompass settlement blocs and underground aquifers). According to the Israeli national consensus, settlements on the Israeli side of the barrier would be annexed in any final-status agreement with the Palestinians, while settlements east of the barrier would be evacuated. Additionally, settlement residents are not just Israeli-born, but have national origins in the US, Russia, Germany, France, South Africa, Spain, and so on.

² As an aid to analyze the map of West Bank settlement in terms of the geographical dispersion of the settlements and their ramifications for the Palestinian population in the Occupied Territories, B'Tselem (The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories) divided the map into four areas (Figure 2.9: B'Tselem map of the West Bank divided by geographical dispersion of settlements and ramifications for the Palestinian population). Three of these are longitudinal strips extending from north to south, and the fourth is the Jerusalem metropolitan area, which has its own unique characteristics ("Analysis of the map of the West Bank," 2011). The settlements in which I conducted my research are located within the "Mountain Strip" of the B'Tselem map (Figure 2.10: The Mountain Strip).

During seven months of fieldwork, I lived in a *caravan* [mobile home] in Kfar Eldad, a settlement outpost³ in the eastern Gush Etzion settlement bloc (Figure 2.12: My Caravan in Kfar Eldad). This settlement bloc is located near Mount Herodion in Herodion National Park, the summer fortress and tomb of Herod the Great (74-4 BCE), a Roman client king of Judea (Figure 2.13: Mount Herodion and the settlements of eastern Gush Etzion). Eastern Gush Etzion—which is considered a separate “bloc” from Gush Etzion, but which is administered by and receives municipal services from the Gush Etzion Regional Council—is located east of the path of the separation barrier and is physically separated from Israel proper by large Palestinian population centers. Driving on the highway from Jerusalem to eastern Gush Etzion, residents pass at least ten of the giant red signs warning Israelis that it is both illegal and potentially fatal to enter Palestinian villages in Area A, and they are literally a stone’s throw away from Palestinian homes—their daily routine is saturated with reminders that they live in contested territory, surrounded by indigenous Palestinians fighting for their self-determination (Figure 2.14: Red Sign Warning Israelis Not to Enter Palestinian Villages in the West Bank). In addition to concerns about their physical security, their geographic positioning (isolated from larger settlement blocs and outside the separation barrier) makes a future of formal inclusion within the State of Israel precarious as well. It is generally accepted that those settlement blocs encompassed within the barrier will be retained by Israel in any final political settlement with the Palestinians, while others would have to be evacuated.

³ Israeli law distinguishes outposts from settlements as unauthorized or illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank, constructed without the required authorization from the Israeli government in contravention of Israeli statutes regulating planning and construction. Settlements, on the other hand, have Israeli government authorization. This distinction is not endorsed by international law, which consider all outposts and settlements to be illegal.

While living in the eastern Gush I interviewed residents of all its settlements (Tekoa, Nokdim, and Kfar Eldad), including Sde Bar Farm and the outpost Ma'ale Rechavam. All of these settlements, except for Sde Bar which is a farm and youth rehabilitation settlement, are mixed community settlements where religious and secular Jewish Israelis live together. Tekoa is the largest settlement in the bloc (Figure 2.15: Tekoa, July 2015). Five miles south of Bethlehem at the foot of Mount Herodian, the settlement is located on the top of a hill among ruins of the site of Biblical Tekoa, an area renowned for being the birthplace of the Old Testament prophet Amos (Book of Amos 1:1) (Figure 2.16: Mosaic located at the entrance of the Tekoa settlement depicting the Prophet Amos, also included in Chapter 4: Domesticity and Diasporic Homeland). Tekoa is in the municipal jurisdiction of the Gush Etzion Regional Council, and is situated in the immediate vicinity of the Arab village of Tuqu'. The modern settlement of Tekoa was established in 1975 as a Nahal outpost⁴, and was handed over to civilian residents in 1977. Tekoa became infamous for one of its residents, the "Peace Rabbi" Froman, who died in 2013.

Nokdim is the second largest settlement in the eastern Gush (Figure 2.17: Central Roundabout in Nokdim, June 2015), the third being its "sister settlement" Kfar Eldad (Figure 2.18: Kfar Eldad from the Main Road, June 2015). As described in Chapter 5: With a Wink and a Nod, El-David was an outpost established in eastern Gush Etzion in response to the murder of Tekoa resident David Rosenfeld in 1982. Later the outpost was moved by the Israeli army and split into "El-David Permanent" and "El-David Temporary" which were later renamed Nokdim and Kfar Eldad (field notes 7/5/15). Today both are permanent settlements housing hundreds of Israeli families. Both are mixed community settlements with their own local committees.

⁴ Nahal refers to an Israeli Defense Forces program that combines military service with the establishment of new agricultural settlements, often in outlying areas.

Nokdim is home to Avigdor Lieberman and Kfar Eldad to Ze'ev Elkin, ministers in the Israeli Knesset.

Sde Bar is a goat farm and was a youth rehabilitation center (which closed in 2010) located in eastern Gush Etzion that sells cheeses, yogurt, and other dairy products. It hosts a restaurant that overlooks the Judean desert. When I was last there in 2015 construction had begun on permanent housing units for its residents to replace their *caravanim* [mobile homes]. Finally, Ma'ale Rechavam is an unauthorized Israeli settlement outpost in eastern Gush Etzion (Figure 2.19: *Caravanim* [mobile homes] in Ma'ale Rechavam). The outpost was founded in 2001 with help from Amana (an Israeli association aimed at developing communities in the occupied Territories) in reaction to the assassination of Rehavam Zeevi, for whom it is named. The *caravanim* and other temporary housing units are sometimes removed by the Israeli military because they are located inside an area designated as a nature reserve. Like the other settlements of the eastern Gush, Ma'ale Rechavam is organized as a mixed community settlement. Unlike the other settlements, the residents of Ma'ale Rechavam voted to include only Jewish labor in the construction of their community.

(Central) Gush Etzion: Efrat, Alon Shvut

Gush Etzion is a cluster of Israeli settlements located in the Judean Mountains south of Jerusalem and Bethlehem in the West Bank. The Gush Etzion Regional Council headquarters is located adjacent to Alon Shvut. Gush Etzion was originally founded in 1940-1947 on property purchased in the 1920s and 1930s, but was destroyed by the Arab Legion before the outbreak of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. These settlements were “rebuilt” after the 1967 Six Day War, along with new communities that have expanded the area of the Etzion bloc. Today there is a museum

located at the Gush Etzion Junction, just west of interstate Route 60 and Route 367 between Efrat and Alon Shvut, commemorating the early settlement and rebuilding of the community (Figure 2.20: Poster in the Gush Etzion Visitor Center depicting the oak tree). The museum includes a “Light Show” telling the history of Gush Etzion before 1948 and after 1967 (Figure 2.21: Still from the Gush Etzion Visitor Center “Light Show”). All of the settlements of the central Gush, except for Karmei Tzur, are located within the planned and constructed path of the separation barrier and are connected to Jerusalem via a continuous swath of Israeli settlements and built-up settlement areas—their inclusion within the body of the State of Israel appears to be all but complete. Residents of settlements west of the barrier often claim that they don’t feel like settlers at all. In the words of one informant from Nokdim (in the eastern Gush): Israelis in settlements on the Israeli side of the barrier “don’t believe they live over the Green Line” (field notes summer 2014).

I conducted interviews in two settlements in central Gush Etzion: Efrat and Alon Shvut. Efrat is a settlement and local council in the Judean Mountains, located south of Jerusalem between Bethlehem and Hebron, inside the Separation Barrier (Figure 2.22: Map of Efrat Hanging in One of the Settlement’s Synagogues, July 2015). Local councils⁵ are one of three types of local government found in Israel, the other two being cities and regional councils. Though Efrat is located within the central Gush and considered its capital, as a local council it is independent from the Gush Etzion Regional Council. Efrat’s population, unlike the settlements in the eastern Gush, is not mixed but mostly religious Zionist, with a smaller number of ultra-Orthodox and secular residents. Efrat is the largest settlement in the Gush Etzion settlement bloc,

⁵ Local councils should not be confused with local committees, which are lower-level administrative entities. Each settlement has a local committee, and they are discussed above in reference to the local administration and selection process for community settlements.

and the Israeli government asserts that it would be annexed to Israel in any final-status agreement with the Palestinians.

Alon Shvut (meaning “oak of return” in reference to the return of the Jews expelled from Gush Etzion in 1948 by the Jordanian Arab Legion) is a settlement located southwest of Jerusalem (Figure 2.23: Residential Street in Alon Shvut, July 2014). Established in June 1970 in the heart of the Gush Etzion bloc, Alon Shvut became the prototype for Jewish communities in the region (Katz, 1998, p. 274). Alon Shvut’s growth is tied to the presence of the Yeshivat Har Etzion, which draws students from across Israel.

Mateh Binyamin: Talmon, Neria

The Mateh Binyamin Regional Council administers two *moshavim*, nearly thirty community settlements, the Sha’ar Binyamin Industrial one, and around fifteen outposts, at least two of which are also organized as community settlements. I conducted interviews and spent Shabbat in two settlements in Mateh Binyamin: Talmon and Neria. Talmon is a community settlement under the jurisdiction of the Mateh Binyamin Regional Council. The settlement was founded in 1989. The settlement of Neria was originally built in 1991 on land designated for Talmon and was set up as a neighborhood of Talmon (Talmon Bet), but is now an independent community settlement. Neither are mixed settlements, but rather are national-religious community settlements.

Site Selection, Access, and Representativeness

Field site selection was originally based on access. I have often been told by settlement residents and elected officials that they don’t talk to outsiders, researchers, or journalists because

they had been “burned before.” In fact, settlements often have official and semi-official spokespeople who liaise with the public both in Israel and abroad. The subtext was clear: *you look like a nice girl, but don’t make us regret talking to you.* When Israeli novelist Amos Oz visited Tekoa to conduct interviews with residents for his book *In the Land of Israel*, probably in the late ‘80s or early ‘90s, he was told: “we don’t talk to the newspapers. We don’t talk to strangers at all—we’ve been burned in the past” (Oz, 1993, p. 54). This note in Oz’s book is particularly ironic because I was told on numerous occasions by people living in Tekoa that he had severely misrepresented them as crazy fundamentalists, and they were quite angry about it: “*His name was mud, absolute mud*” (field notes 6/30/15). Over a decade later the residents he interviewed were still seething. In July 2015 one interlocutor (we’ll call him Baruch) was helping me arrange an interview with one of the founders of Tekoa (we’ll call him Aaron Abrahamson), who is often quoted in the media, and I could hear him asking Baruch over the phone: “Is she hostile? Find out who she is first. Is she Jewish?” Baruch replied that he did not find me to be hostile, but that no, I am not Jewish (which meant that some potential interviewees assumed that I was indeed hostile, and wouldn’t speak with me at all). Abrahamson continued to be hesitant and to ask questions, ending the call with “I like to know who I’m talking to. Find out what you can.” After he got off the phone, Baruch smiled at me, somewhat apologetically, and told me this story to explain the founder’s reluctance to be interviewed:

“Early on, when there were less than 40 families in Tekoa, over 30 years ago, a female journalist came. I think it was Aaron Abrahamson and his wife, or the Goldsteins, and they were trying to be hospitable so they brought out Skippy peanut butter. It was like liquid gold, [they had it only for special occasions]. And she wrote a *NASTY* article about these un-indigenous implants who even have to bring their own peanut butter” (field notes 7/13/15).

Later, Baruch tried to arrange another interview, this time with a man who considers himself to be a spokesperson of sorts for the settlements. He asked Baruch again: “Is she hostile? What organization is she with? Google her! Find out.” Baruch explained to me:

“They’re very paranoid. I think it’s in our chromosomes, the Jews, to be paranoid that people will hate us for no reason. The reasons to hate us are the same as the reasons to hate anyone else. We have the same faults. But there’s this underlying Jew hatred. I think it’s also in the chromosomes of gentiles—certain gentiles [he says catching my eye] to hate Jews. What other explanation is there?” (field notes 7/16/15).

Again, the not-so-subtle hint was that I should not disappoint my interlocutors by writing critically about what they said and what I saw—to not vilify them in the way the media and journalists so often did. Given this level of insularity, and the hesitance with which several residents agreed to speak with me, it was thanks to luck, timing, and (I think in no small part) my non-threatening external demeanor that I was able to arrange to live in the eastern Gush at all.

In 2013 I went on an “alternative tour” of West Bank settlements with Green Olive Tours, a group that is openly anti-occupation and anti-settlements. However, the tour I went on was led by a resident of Kfar Eldad who said he gave the tours to offer an alternative perspective on the settlements and because, despite their obvious political and ideological differences, he is friends with the owner of the tour company. The guide took us to his ex-wife’s house in Tekoa. She is a real-estate agent for the settlement, and provided me with an abundance of information on housing, the selection process, marketing, etc. I was told many times by the two of them that the motivations of the settlers are “misunderstood” or even “vilified” in Western, and specifically US, media. After several of these conversations, I simply asked if I could come spend a few months in the settlement and see what life is like there for myself, reporting back to the US through academic publications. They agreed, and the guide rented me a room in his *caravan*, where he sometimes hosted couch surfers.

Though I got lucky in finding an “in” to the communities in and around the eastern Gush, this is not the only reason for selecting these settlements as case studies in an exploration of the normalization and suburbanization of the Israeli settlement movement. This project began with a puzzle: how does the military-occupied West Bank become a safe, desirable place to raise a family? Drawing on Flyvbjerg (2006), these settlements represent a “critical case.” The benefit of a “critical case” is roughly that if a certain phenomenon [the claim that residents chose to live there because it is a safe, desirable place to live] can be found *at this particular site* [a religious/ideological settlement deep in the West Bank, far from the Green Line and surrounded by “hostile” Palestinians], then it is likely that it exists at other sites [in other West Bank settlements] (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 230). A detailed investigation of the variety of motivations that lead Jewish Israeli families to make this choice was only possible via an ethnographic study. Only through closely examining the daily practices and experiences of settlement residents can one develop a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of their lives and communities. But ethnography contains an implicit intellectual tradeoff that favors intensive analysis over extensive comparison—depth trumps breadth. The representativeness of the following analysis is thus something of an unavoidably open question. But I argue that the concerns and justifications for living in the settlements of the Judean Hills speak to a broader set of issues for the settlement movement as a whole, about how Israeli Jews become enrolled in the project of territorial expansion (through, for example, appeals to ideology, economic incentives, and hope for a better life for their children), and how settlers construct understandings of community and security. In a sense, these communities represent an extreme case—located east of the separation barrier, surrounded by Palestinian population centers, and originally settled by religious ideologues—if they can be normalized as bucolic suburban neighborhoods, then any of the settlements can.

The cases and stories recounted here are not intended to be representative of all aspects of the settlement movement. I chose to investigate settlement blocs that are considered “fringe” even within the movement, because the juxtaposition between ideological reasons for settling and practical considerations is particularly acute in these communities. If not even these “fanatical” settlers are immune from considerations of price, security, and accessibility, then the stereotypical image of extremist settlers on the hill willing to risk anything starts to fall apart. I chose my interviewees with race, gender, age, religious observance, class, national origin, and other intersections of diversity in mind. These interviews are illustrative of some of the facets of this diverse, complex, and evolving movement, which has its roots in the religious Gush Emunim movement.

2.3 Methodology

I employ a methodological approach I term *critical hermeneutics* because while I am interested in the conceptual frameworks settlement residents use to make sense of their lifestyle in a military-occupied, contested area, I am also interested in critiquing their interpretation of the world and in understanding how it is linked to geopolitics and settler colonialism. My goal is to find a way to represent the world that captures participants’ understandings, feelings, and choices, and to understand the conceptual frameworks settlers use to make sense of their lifestyle in a military-occupied, contested area. I examine four types of data (discourse, action, local history, and the material environment) gathered through interviews, analysis of various written sources, and participant observation over seven months in settlements in and around eastern Gush Etzion. In addition to ethnographic evidence gathered while residing in Kfar Eldad, the research is based on over 100 extensive interviews with settlement residents, representatives, and

elected officials; on publications and newspaper reports produced for consumption within the settlements and for marketing in Israel and abroad; and on literature (both fiction and non-fiction) about and by settlers.

As Feige noted in his critical study of Gush Emunim, “ethnography serves as a means of grasping the deeper meaning of the settlement project—an opportunity to interview the people involved and a trigger for understanding documental accounts” (Feige, 2009, p. 15). The goal of ethnography is to translate phenomena into a realm we understand intuitively (Abbott, 2004); in this case, I hope to make sense of the perplexing phenomenon of Israeli Jews residing in a military-occupied zone in the West Bank because it is a good, safe place to raise a family. Ethnography “involves fairly lengthy contact, through participant observation in relevant settings, and/or through relatively open-ended interviews designed to understand people’s perspectives, perhaps complemented by the study of various sorts of document—official, publicly available, or personal” (Hammersley, 2006, p. 4).

Interviews

In-depth interviews with settlement residents, local settlement council members, and regional council elected officials were my primary method for generating data and proceeded via snowball and purposive sampling: beginning with the contacts I had (through professional and personal acquaintances and those established during preliminary field work in summer 2013), I sought out informants identified as especially knowledgeable and/or active in the community, which tended to include founders and local committee members, and I sought out a range of interviewees in terms of age, origin, and length of residence in the settlements. Interviewees therefore include: residents who recently arrived in the blocs, community and local committee

leadership, settlement founders, real estate agents, residents born and raised in the West Bank, and men and women both single and with families. Most interviews were one on one, while others are multiple-person, such as with couples/families within the community or when the presence of a translator was required (this was rare, as most residents are English-speaking and I speak passable Hebrew). All told, I conducted over 100 in-depth interviews which lasted anywhere from 1-3 hours, sometimes including follow-up interviews (interview protocols can be found in the Appendices).

To get at settlement residents' local experiences and patterns of life I ask, for example, where they came from, what conditions they left behind and came to, and why this place, located in a military-occupied, contested territory, strikes them as "safe" (field notes summer 2013 and field notes summer 2014). I also ask about their experiences living in the settlement bloc in terms of security, connectivity with Israel proper, and day-to-day life. In framing my questions, I try to use the terms residents themselves use to describe their communities. For example, I will say "Judea and Samaria" in place of "West Bank," and will refer to the settlements as *yishuvim* ("communities").⁶ But when explaining my interest in interviewing them in the first place, I tell them that I am trying to understand why people go to live in a place that is considered by much of the world to be violent and contested—why they go to live in "West Bank settlements" in an area under occupation—and I point out that much of the world considers settlement expansion to be in violation of international law. This usually elicits a response whereby they either deny that they are settlers and explain why not, or they explain why they are "proud to be settlers," thereby

⁶ In the text of the dissertation, depending on whether I am speaking or I am relaying information from my interlocutors, I move between using the word "settlements" when referring to the Jewish Israeli communities located in the occupied West Bank and the Hebrew *yishuvim* (*yishuv* for the singular). *Yishuv* is a more benign term than the English "settlement," meaning "community" or "town," and can be used to refer to any community anywhere, not just those located in the West Bank. Residents prefer it because, as they often note, "settlement" is a loaded term whose connotations they disagree with. In Hebrew, the more "loaded" word for West Bank settlements is *hitnachlut*, conveying a judgement of illegitimacy.

beginning to get at the question of how they identify and see their relationship to Israeli society in Israel proper.

I also ask residents to describe their community and the surrounding environment, their experiences with local Palestinians, and the security measures in the settlement, which gets at feelings of (in)security and at feelings of isolation or connectivity to the wider Israeli public. Through this project I examine how infrastructure, mobility, and connectivity socialize settlers into distinct political experiences; for example, how access to Israel proper might lead to either feelings of being the isolated vanguard of the settlement movement or of being completely integrated into the Israeli polity. Without having to be asked directly, residents tend to explain their justifications for living in the “West Bank,” because they assume that as a non-Jewish American I need to be convinced. In this way they address the question of how they frame their sociopolitical interests and actions in a way that allows them to see particular courses of action as permissible, reasonable, and right based on their distinctly local experiences. I hypothesize that notions of security play a role in several ways: immediate, physical security in the sense of protecting the community from the surrounding Arabs, as well as security in the *longue durée*, i.e. whether or not they have a future as part of the Jewish state based on the precariousness of their geographic location (inside or outside the path of the barrier).

I also address the issue of framing through discourse analysis of interview transcript responses to all questions, focusing on questions of why residents decided to live in their communities, how their friends and family within Israel proper and abroad react to their decision to live in the West Bank, experiences with “Arab neighbors,” feelings of security and insecurity, and what they anticipate would happen to their community in the event of a peace agreement ending the conflict. By focusing carefully on word choice (both shared terms and the stories

residents repeat to themselves and to new residents), and listening for categories of person, setting, or action that people use in contrast with other categories (Lichterman, 2002, pp. 138-139), interviews reveal how residents of each bloc make political claims through experience in a specific place—both the lived environment of the settlement and their perceived position in Israeli society.

Interviews with local and regional council members (who are also residents of these blocs) focus on the circumstances around the establishment of each settlement, local history, resources the local and regional councils can draw on for support (within Israel and abroad), politics, security, marketing to prospective new residents, physical growth and construction, and demographic balance. These interviews contribute to the broader knowledge of the history and social structure of settlement expansion in each of the settlement blocs.

Written Sources: Primary and Secondary

The fieldwork phase of data collection is augmented with records-based analysis and analysis of written sources. I translated a number of written sources which include (but are not limited to): regional council and settlement bloc periodicals and publications, community bulletins, marketing material (mostly found online, on real estate websites), archival documents, and reports on both blocs. I also draw on secondary sources in which authors, academic and otherwise, interviewed settlement residents about their lives and experiences, and on both literature by settlers and literature about settlers [see Arfa (2013); Feige (2009); Gavron (2013); Mandell (2003); Mecklenburg (2013); Rosenthal (2003); Simons (2014)].

Some publications deserve particular attention. I have made much use of the newspapers and bulletins published in the settlements for consumption by settlement residents because they

reflect both ideology and everyday life. These periodicals and news updates from the regional council provide a source for local experiences and patterns of life (social events, local tragedies, new settlement construction, the establishment of new schools, etc.) which contribute to answering questions about daily life in the settlement blocs. I paid particular attention to the monthly *Nekuda* (meaning “full stop” or “dot on the map”) which was first published at the end of 1979 (Feige, 2009, pp. 15-16). As Feige describes, “*Nekuda* presents itself as the organ of the Judea, Samaria, and Gaza Strip settlements, and also as an expression of the political position of the Israeli Right” (Feige, 2009, pp. 15-16). I also relied extensively on Gush Etzion’s *Gushpanka* (a play on words signifying ‘Gush’ of Gush Etzion and ‘holding rights’) which included contributions from residents of the eastern Gush Etzion settlement bloc where I lived. These publications were of particular interest to me because, as Feige describes,

“These publications are internal organs that are not intended for the eyes of strangers. As Gush Emunim is a committed ideological group, most of the discourse with others is well controlled and not easy to penetrate. Some of these internal media of communication provide researchers with a glimpse into the inner working of the settlers’ communities” (Feige, 2009, pp. 15-16).

Gush Emunim as an organization no longer exists, but it continues to be true that the leaders of the settlement movement stick to a particular script when addressing outsiders. These publications provide a view into the internal politics, framing, and everyday concerns of Gush Etzion settlement residents. Settlement periodicals were obtained from my host in Kfar Eldad (eastern Gush Etzion) in the summers of 2014 and 2015. He also provided me with older publications that he had on hand. Periodicals also contain opinion pieces written by residents of the settlement bloc, which provide a window into their identifications, relations with both the regional council and the Israeli government, security concerns, concerns they have about their communities and the way they operate, and relations with local Arabs, all of which provide data

for answering the question of how settlers' local experiences impact their identifications and actions.

In addition, marketing material for each of the blocs shows how these communities, their locations, and their values are packaged for potential new residents. And each of the settlement blocs has a website (in Hebrew) which I have translated portions of, and which includes local history, community amenities, and social events. Several residents also keep regular blogs, which I track and translate. Occasionally, settlements within the blocs I am studying are also featured in Israeli and American news sources, which contribute to the overall picture of these two places.

Participant Observation

The validity of findings and discourse analysis of interviews and written sources is reinforced by seven months of residence and participant observation in the eastern Gush. Living in the community for an extended period allowed me to listen to people "talking in their own settings, on their own time" in order "to glean the everyday meanings, tacit assumptions, ordinary customs, [and] practical rules of thumb that organize people's everyday lives" (Lichterman, 2002, p. 138). I observed and noted firsthand everyday life (interactions at community events and local/regional council meetings, everyday interactions between residents, and everyday interactions between residents and Palestinians working in the settlements) and the physical environment (signage in and around the communities, how residences and public spaces are designed, how gating functions in the community, and proximity to Palestinian population centers, to other settlements, and to Israel proper). Participant observation contributes to answering questions about local experiences and patterns of life, specifically around security, landscape, and connectivity to Israel proper, and to answering questions about how residents'

sense of place both reflects and produces a location and a sense of isolation or connectivity to Israel proper. I experienced and witnessed the physical and material environment, such as the amount of friction (road signs warning them to stay out of Palestinian villages, checkpoints, mosques, hearing the call to prayer echoing throughout the settlement, the closeness of Palestinian homes, etc.) residents encounter when traveling to and from the settlement blocs—how some places very easily flow and are connected to Israel, while others are replete with material reminders that you are “on the outside” in a sense. In this way, participant observation verifies the findings from interviews and written materials.

2.4 Interlocutors: Who are the Settlers?

In their fantasy and comedy novel *Good Omens*, Neil Gaiman and Terry Pratchett write: “It may help to understand human affairs to be clear that most of the great triumphs and tragedies of history are caused, not by people being fundamentally good or fundamentally bad, but by people being fundamentally people” (Gaiman & Pratchett, 2011). When I read this quote, I’m reminded of the settlers I interviewed and lived with in and around eastern Gush Etzion. I’m reminded of all the ways in which they are not very exceptional, despite how they are often depicted in research and journalism (as crazy fundamentalists and religious zealots on a hill). It’s too reductionist to say that they are bad people, like this explains why they settle. They are also kind, and smart, and good neighbors to one another. The tragedy of the ongoing dispossession, displacement, and elimination of the Palestinian people stems from the settlers being “fundamentally people.” People who believe that they are in the right, and the (Palestinian) other is in the wrong—a position that is much more comfortable than one that allows for doubt, nuance, and guilt. People are generally not good at empathy when it goes against their self-

interest. We tend to put the interests of ourselves, our family, our community, and our nation before the needs of others. Though I am personally morally opposed to the Israeli settlement movement, I think it is important to recognize in our scholarship and our activism that settlers are people, in all their complexity and contradictions.

In much of the academic and activist research on settlers they are sorted into “types” based on what their primary motivation for living in the territories is. For example, Settlement Watch, an arm of the anti-occupation Israeli organization Peace Now,⁷ notes that there are three main categories of settlers: ideological settlers who use religious and nationalist arguments to justify living in the West Bank; quality-of-life settlers who are motivated primarily by economic reasons; and ultra-orthodox settlers who are seeking cheap, segregated housing (Friedman & Etkes, 2007). Numbers vary (particularly because settlers in illegal outposts are not counted in the official census), but Peace Now estimates that around 28% of West Bank settlers move there for “ideological” reasons (Simons, 2014), and Shimon Dotan, director of *The Settlers*, estimates that of the roughly 400,000 settlers living in the West Bank, 80,000 of them are ideologically, religiously, or politically driven, while the vast majority are there for quality-of-life reasons (Democracy Now, 2016). I believe that these distinctions are oversimplified and overdetermined. In my experience conducting an ethnographic study in the Gush Etzion, eastern Gush Etzion, and Mateh Binyamin settlement blocs (settlements considered to be “ideological”), settlers have multiple, complex, and sometimes contradictory reasons for choosing to reside in the West Bank.

At a research workshop on West Bank settlements in Tel Aviv in June 2014, the opening speaker noted that research focusing solely on settlements tends to focus on the radical religious/fundamentalist block. The speaker noted that this is only one specific profile and is not

⁷ Peace Now is an Israeli NGO and activist group that promotes a two-state solution to the Israel/Palestine conflict. They regularly publish reports detailing Israeli settlement and military activity in the occupied West Bank.

representative of the settler population (Allegra, 2014). Looking at the religious and ideological drivers for living in the West Bank potentially risks missing the banality of settlements (Newman, 2014). In this sense, I expand on the work of authors like Feige (2009) by interviewing average residents of the settlement blocs, rather than just their leadership and spokespeople (who are well-versed the official “party line”), and by showing that even those settlers considered to be the most “ideological” are often balancing ideological and practical considerations when they decide to live in the occupied West Bank.

2.5 Figures

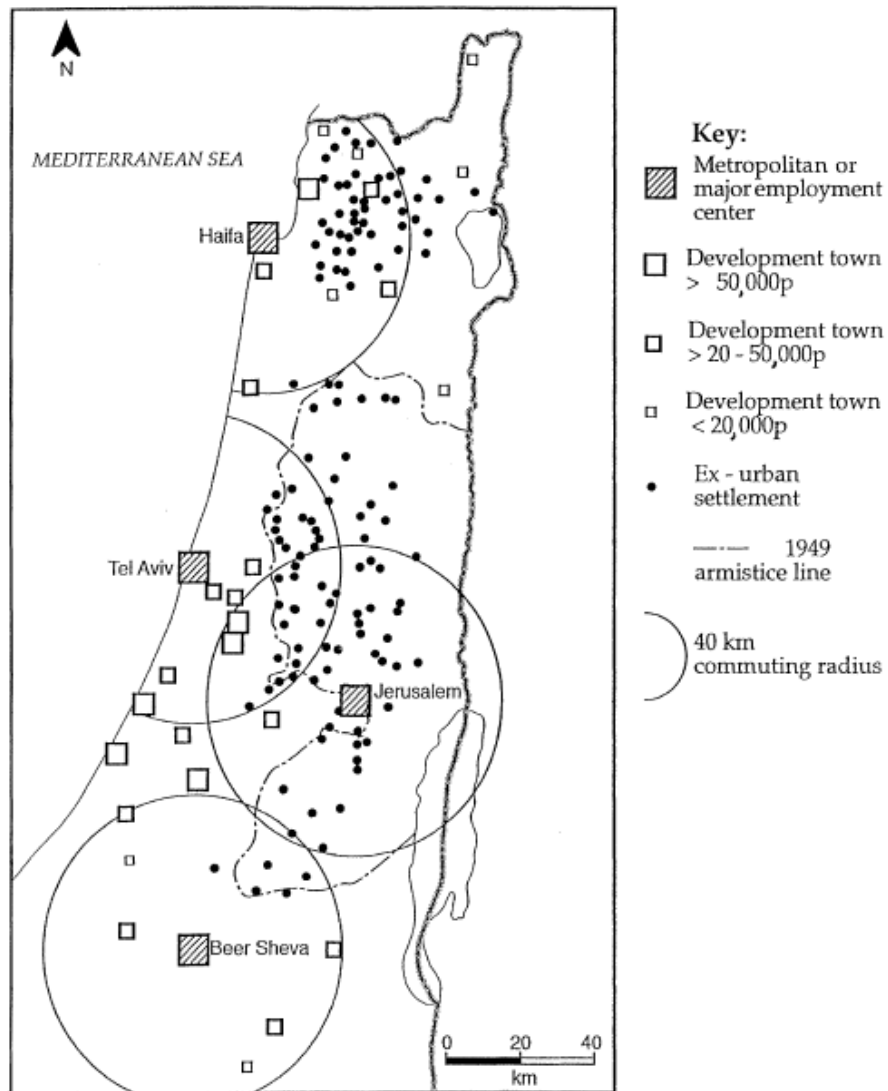


Figure 2.1: Development Towns and Ex-urban Settlements in Israel. Source: Yiftachel (1997, p. 514).



Figure 2.2: Single-family Homes in Tekoa, July 2015. Source: Author's collection.



Figure 2.3 Community Swimming Pool in Tekoa, July 2014. Source: Author's collection.



Figure 2.4: Van for Tekoa's Organic Mushroom Farm. Source: Author's collection.



Figure 2.5: Sign at the Gated Entrance of Sde Bar Advertising Sde Bar Farm, July 2014. Source: Author's collection.



Figure 2.6: Kfar Eldad Thirtieth Birthday Celebration, August 2015. Source: Author's collection.



Figure 2.7: The New Neighborhood Tekoa He, July 2014. Source: Author's collection.

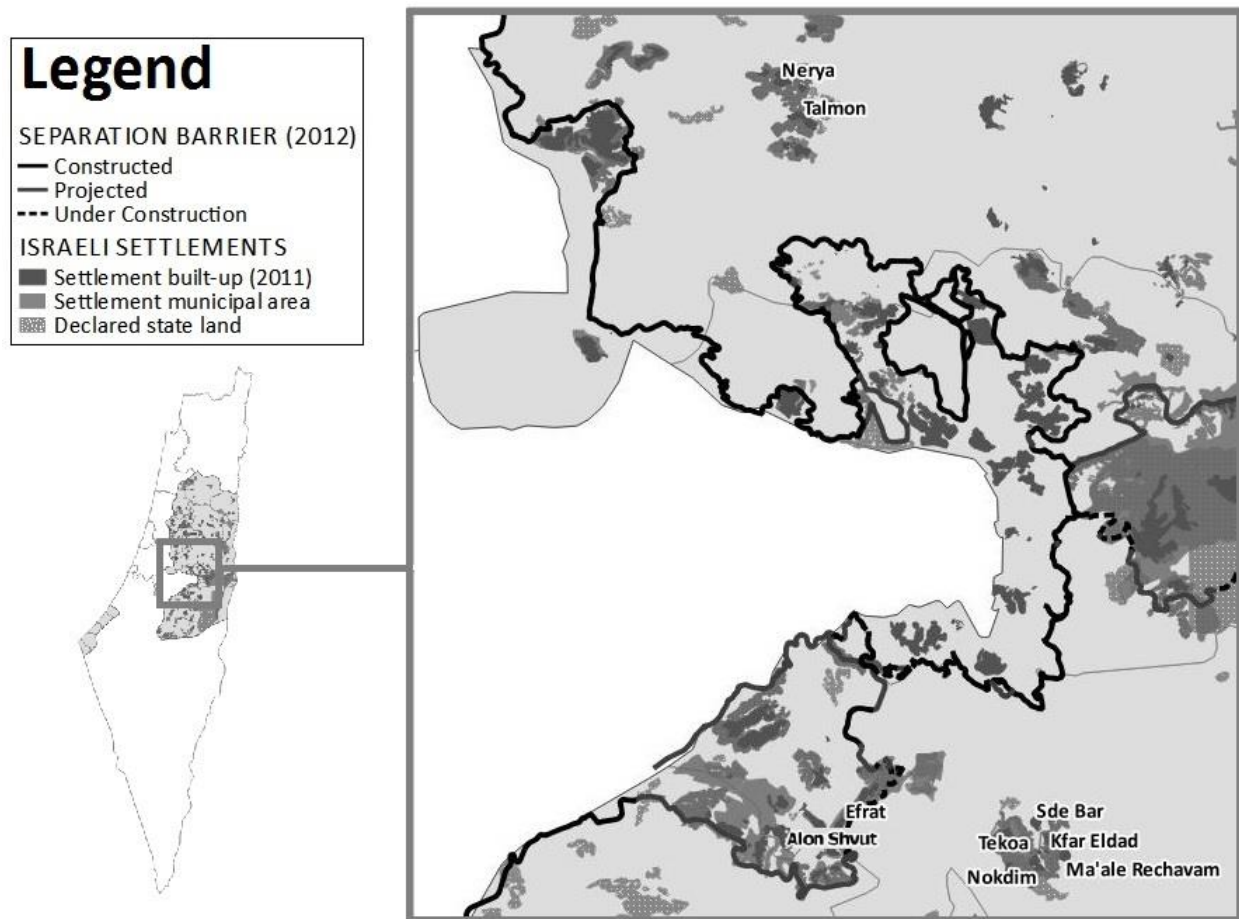


Figure 2.8: Field Sites.

Name	Settlement bloc	Population (2015, Israel Central Bureau of Statistics)	Legally recognized (i.e., by Israel) settlement (y/n)	Description
Tekoa	Eastern Gush Etzion	3,495	Y	Mixed community settlement, located east of the separation barrier
Nokdim	Eastern Gush Etzion	1,937	Y	Mixed community settlement, located east of the separation barrier
Kfar Eldad	Eastern Gush Etzion	Not listed	N	Mixed community settlement, began as a neighborhood of Nokdim but has its own local committee, outpost, located east of the separation barrier
Sde Bar	Eastern Gush Etzion	Not listed	N	Farm and youth rehabilitation center, located east of the separation barrier
Ma'ale Rechavam	Eastern Gush Etzion	Not listed	N	Mixed community settlement, outpost, located east of the separation barrier
Efrat	Gush Etzion	8,301	Y	Settlement and local council, located west of the separation barrier
Alon Shvut	Gush Etzion	3,218	Y	Settlement, located west of the separation barrier
Talmon	Mateh Binyamin	3,704	Y	Community settlement, mostly religious, located east of the separation barrier
Neria	Mateh Binyamin	Not listed	N	Community settlement, mostly religious, began as a neighborhood of Talmon but not has its own local committee, outpost, located east of the separation barrier

Figure 2.9: Description of Settlements Included in Study. Source: Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (2015).

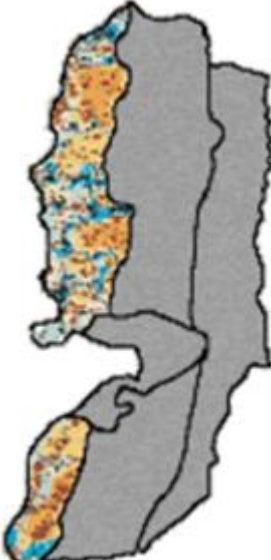
Eastern Strip	Mountain Strip	Western Hills strip	Jerusalem metropolis
			
Settler population (as of 2002): Approx.. 5,400	Settler population (as of 2002): approx. 34,000	Settler population (as of 2002): approx. 85,000	Settler population (as of 2002): approx.. 248,000

Figure 2.10: B'Tselem map of the West Bank divided by geographical dispersion of settlements and ramifications for the Palestinian population. Source: B'Tselem ("Analysis of the map of the West Bank," 2011).



Figure 2.11: The Mountain Strip. Source: B'Tselem ("Analysis of the map of the West Bank," 2011).



Figure 2.12: My Caravan in Kfar Eldad (fourth from the left in the second row from the front).
Source: Author's collection.



Figure 2.13: Mount Herodyon and the settlements of eastern Gush Etzion. Source: Author's collection.



Figure 2.14: Red Sign Warning Israelis Not to Enter Palestinian Villages in the West Bank.
Source: Author's collection.



Figure 2.15: Tekoa, July 2015. Source: Author's collection.



Figure 2.16: Mosaic located at the entrance of the Tekoa settlement depicting the Prophet Amos, also included in Chapter 4: Domesticity and Diasporic Homeland. Source: Author's collection.



Figure 2.17: Central Roundabout in Nokdim, June 2015. Source: Author's collection.



Figure 2.18: Kfar Eldad from the Main Road, June 2015. Source: Author's collection.



Figure 2.19: *Caravanim* [mobile homes] in Ma'ale Rechavam. Source: Author's collection.



Figure 2.20: Poster in the Gush Etzion Visitor Center depicting the oak tree. Source: Author's collection.

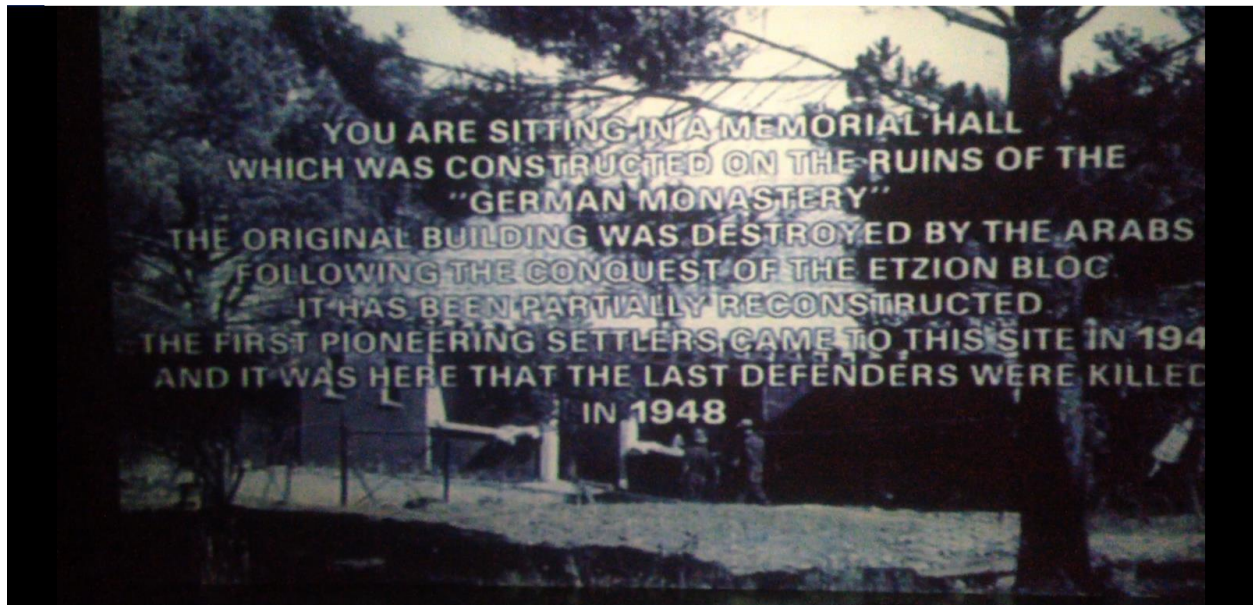


Figure 2.21: Still from the Gush Etzion Visitor Center "Light Show." Source: Author's collection.



Figure 2.22: Map of Efrat Hanging in One of the Settlement's Synagogues, July 2015. Source: Author's collection.



Figure 2.23: Residential Street in Alon Shvut, July 2014. Source: Author's collection.

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3. Settler Colonialism: Review of the Field and Locating Israel/Palestine

3.1 Introduction

The emerging field of settler colonial studies investigates the replacement of an indigenous population with an exogenous one *on the land* as a category analytically distinct from colonialism, which is primarily the control of an exogenous polity over an indigenous population (Degani, 2014; Piterberg, 2011; Veracini, 2010; Wolfe, 1998, 2006). Though in reality colonial and settler colonial forms constantly interpenetrate each other and overlap in a variety of ways, analytically they are distinct and there are a number of structuring contrasts. The distinction is premised on a morphological difference between (metropole) colonialism and settler colonialism. The former's object is the surplus value to be derived from the mixing of native labor with the land (domination of a native population), while the latter's object is the land itself, leading inevitably to fantasies of emptying the land of its native population by a variety of means. Additionally, settlers, by definition, stay, while colonial sojourners such as administrators, missionaries, military personnel, entrepreneurs, and adventurers return. And third, the colonizing effort in settler colonial contexts is exercised from within the bounds of the colonizing political entity, while colonialism is driven by an expanding metropole that remains separate (Veracini, 2010, p. 6). While settler colonial formations are each unique and have their particularities, they are not singular. They share a morphological continuity and an imaginative coherence that distinguishes them from other colonial formations despite their diverse contexts and outcomes.

The study and theorization of a form of colonization based on settlement is not necessarily novel. Though they placed colonialism and settler colonialism within the same analytical frame, traditionally studies on colonial orders and their historiographies have

acknowledged the distinction between *colonies of settlement* and *colonies of exploitation*, and between internal and external colonialisms (Veracini, 2010, pp. 6; see: Horvath, 1972; Finley, 1976; Fredrickson, 1988; Osterhammel, 1997). In fact, classificatory attempts have repeatedly stressed this separation. For example, George M. Frederickson's definition of colonialism distinguished between "occupation colonies," "mixed colonies," and "settler colonies," and is regularly cited by scholars of settler colonialism (Fredrickson, 1988, pp. see, for example: Piterberg, 2011; Veracini, 2010; Shafir, 1989). But one result of the acknowledgement of this difference has been that settler colonial phenomena have generally been seen as a subset, albeit a distinct one, of colonial phenomena, rather than as a distinct configuration of citizenship, territory, economy, and cultural politics (Cattelino, 2010; Piterberg, 2008; Veracini, 2010). It is this subordination of settler colonialism to colonialism as an analytical frame that scholars in the emerging field seek to address.

In Part I of this chapter I trace the morphological continuity of (mainly white European) settler colonial formations beginning in the 16th and 17th centuries onward and the theoretical work of scholars of comparative settler colonial studies. Though drawing on a range of settler colonial formations, the review focuses heavily on the cases of Australia and the continental US, and to a lesser degree on South Africa, Ireland, New Zealand, Canada, and Hawaii. This is because these are often considered the paradigmatic examples of settler colonization, and because there is a wide range of scholarly and nonacademic writing in English from the time of colonization onward concerning these cases. In Part II of this paper, I place the case of Israel/Palestine squarely within the settler colonial framework. My purpose is to frame the so-called "Israel-Palestine conflict" not as one of two competing nationalisms inhabiting the same

territory, but rather as a settler colonial encounter marked by a severe imbalance of power and by the settler logic of elimination of native sovereignty.

In what remains of the introduction, I describe the historical context in which land became the object of white settler colonization between the 16th and 19th centuries. Part I traces the morphological continuity of settler colonization and development of the settler colonial paradigm with reference to the population economy, sovereign entitlement, consciousness, and narrative, and concludes with possible outcomes of the settler-native encounter and scholarly efforts to challenge hegemonic narratives. Part II places Palestine/Israel within the settler colonial analytical framework, challenging notions of Israeli exceptionalism through reference again to the centrality of land, population economy, sovereign entitlement, consciousness, and narrative form. Throughout this analysis in Part II I draw on ethnographic data from field work conducted over seven months mainly in the eastern Gush Etzion settlement bloc in the occupied West Bank.

Land, Capitalism, and Settler Colonization

The process of enclosing the commons and creating private property in England began during the 16th century, and was mostly completed by the 19th. Marx called this process “primitive accumulation” to describe the way land once held in common became private property, a type of capital employed in the emerging capitalistic market economy. In other words, land became a factor of production following the process of enclosure. In this process English peasants were displaced from the land and their means of subsistence and forced to sell their labor for a wage in the capitalist market. This was felt as the robbery from peasants of their means of production and the beginning of capitalist exploitation and the “slavery” of wage labor.

Onur Ulas Ince and other economic geographers have argued that capitalism is an irreducibly colonial formation with global inceptions—the politico-legal framework in which global capitalism could and did develop was not that of the nation-state, but rather the early-modern colonial empire (Ince, 2014; Sheppard, 2005; Sparke, 2012). According to Partha Chatterjee, cited by Ince (2014), primitive accumulation is “nothing else but the destruction of the precapitalist community, which, in various forms, had regulated the social unity of laborers with their means of production” (Chatterjee, 1993, p. 235). Ince designates colonialism to be coeval and intertwined with the origins of capitalism because the historical conditions of possibility for the industrial revolution and emergence of capitalism lay in colonial linkages. He says: “The co-constitutionality of colonialism and capitalism necessarily directs us to the moment of primitive of ‘originary’ accumulation” (Ince, 2014, p. 10). Land is a special form of capital (a “fictitious commodity” in Polanyi’s words) because of its inalienable qualities, chiefly among them the fact that land is finite (Marx, 1867; Polanyi, 1944). Conquest is implicit in the notion of the scarcity of land, since the only way to accumulate more is through conquest, enclosure, and privatization. Therefore, primitive accumulation is linked to settler colonialism as a specific social formation (Piterberg & Veracini, 2015).

Enclosure and the displacement of peasant Englishmen might have led to revolution, but this was preempted by means of a population escape valve—by transferring landless Englishmen to *terra nullius* elsewhere (Piterberg & Veracini, 2015). Edward Gibbons Wakefield, the chief architect of “systematic (settler) colonization,” thought that establishing settler colonies around the globe was a good idea because they would allow the metropolitan mother country to escape over-capitalization and associated revolutionary tensions (Ballantyne, 2011; Piterberg & Veracini, 2015). Though he misses the significance of enclosure, Fredrickson describes how “[a]

penchant for settler colonization was also encouraged by the growing awareness of a population crisis in England itself”:

“Beginning in the early sixteenth century, a rapid increase of mouths to be fed outran the ability of the economy to provide sustenance and employment—a situation that lasted until the middle of the next century. The result was pauperization, vagabondage, and fear of social upheaval. The notion of an outlet for the surplus of ‘sturdy beggars’ could be found through planting lower-class Englishmen abroad was one motive for early interest in both Irish colonization and American settlement” (Fredrickson, 1982, pp. 16-17).

Landless Englishmen came to North America and other settler colonies following the enclosure of the commons in England, when they were displaced from the land and sought to attain their own rights to private property—therefore displacing Native Peoples.

A number of justifications for why natives could be dispossessed of their lands, while English peasants should not be, are detailed in the section titled “Sovereign entitlement” in Part I. Briefly, though, Lockean principles state that once a person invests his labor in the land he is entitled to enclose the plot and it becomes private property. What constituted “working the land” was narrowly defined as European methods of agriculture, writing off any native uses of the land as inherently “wasteful.” Locke’s justification for the appropriation of native land is that “the market system produces a greater quantity of conveniences” (Tully, 1994, p. 187)—land brought into commercial cultivation will reach its productive capacity, feed more people, and allow for the diversification of labor. His descriptions of labor, value, and commodities “are designed to legitimize and to celebrate the superiority of English colonial market agriculture over the Amerindian hunting, gathering, and replacement agriculture that it forcibly displaced” (Tully, 1994, p. 188). As Ince describes, “Locke’s reduction of the land to the monetary value of its yield was aimed at justifying the colonization of America by the English, which he argued would be in the ‘benefit of mankind,’ Native Americans not excluded” (Ince, 2014, p. 23). By relocating to the New World and establishing homesteads settlers were avoiding the slavery of

wage labor in England, but by the end of the 19th century white settlers in North America and Africa “had successfully appropriated most of the land for their own use by extinguishing the communal title of premodern native societies and transforming the soil into private property within a capitalistic economy” (Fredrickson, 1982, p. 4). Land and capitalism were thus intricately intertwined in white settler colonization from the start, and justifications for land appropriation in settler contexts from the 16th century through the 20th alike reference ideas of proper use, yield and profitability, and progress.

3.2 Part I: The Morphological Continuity of Settler Colonialism

Settler colonialism is a global and transnational phenomenon, a situation not restricted to a specific group, location, or period, with a structure and outcomes distinct from what might be termed “metropole colonialism” (Veracini, 2010, p. 6). As historian Gabriel Piterberg (2011) notes, European expansion and conquest from the sixteenth century onwards produced two related but clearly distinguishable forms of colonialism: metropole colonialism (ex: British India), “in which European powers conquered and ruled vast territories without immigration of Europeans seeking to make these territories their national home,” and settler colonialism (ex: U.S., Australia), “in which conquest brought with it substantial waves of European settlers who, with the passage of time, sought to make the colony their national patrimony” (Piterberg, 2011, p. 3).

According to Fredrickson, variation in the “specific ways that white power-cum-prejudice manifested itself in the face of comparable challenges or opportunities”—variation in settler colonial formations and strategies across space and time—stems from three key variables (Fredrickson, 1982, p. xxi). The first is demography: the ratio of white settlers to the indigenous

nonwhite population determined the strategies taken by the settlers in staking their sovereign claims. The second variable that exerted influence on the nature of race and class relationships, and which also affected the demographic situation, “is the physical or geographical environment and the possibilities that it has offered for economic development” (Fredrickson, 1982, p. xxii). And the third area of variation “might be described very broadly as the semi-autonomous realm of government and politics”—the degree to which settlers were able to manage their lives, and encounters with the native, independently from the metropole (Fredrickson, 1982, p. xxiii). What all settler colonial formations had in common, though, was the need to divest the original inhabitants of their land in order to ensure the material success of the settler society (Fredrickson, 1982, p. 5).

Therefore, though settler colonial formations are not all the same, they share a morphological continuity and an imaginative coherence that distinguishes them from other colonial formations, despite their diverse contexts and outcomes. Settler colonial societies face similar challenges, and therefore share common features and a sense of shared destiny (Greenstein, 2016). For example, settler colonial formations are premised on complete control of the land, and therefore “fantasies of ultimately ‘emptying’ in one way or another the indigenous section of the population system inevitably recur” (Veracini, 2010, p. 25; see also: Wolfe 2001; 2006). The imaginative coherence of settler colonial situations has led to a number of comparative approaches to the field—examining (among other things) legal history, international law, land tenure, judicial institutions, environmental histories and literature (see: Banner, 2009; Coombes, 2006; Dunlap, 1999; Edmonds, 2010; Evans, 2003; Ford, 2010; Foster, Berger, & Buck, 2008; Griffiths & Robin, 1997; Karsten, 2002; McHugh, 2004; McLaren, Buck, & Wright, 2001, 2005; Miller, 2010; Russell, 2001; Trigger & Griffiths, 2003; Weaver, 2003).

Lorenzo Veracini's *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (2010), though not the first work to identify settler colonialism as a distinct analytical category, aimed to codify settler colonialism as a scholarly field in its own right, and to develop an interpretive framework and language to serve as a starting point for future, contextualized research on settler colonial phenomena. The book takes stock of the existing body of literature and synthesizes it in order to open up various ways forward. Veracini does so by discussing four themes: population, sovereignty, consciousness, and narrative. He argues, on the one hand, that "the settler colonial situation is characterized by a settler capacity to control the population economy as a marker of a substantive type of sovereignty," and on the other that "this situation is associated with a particular state of mind and a particular narrative form" (Veracini, 2010, p. 12).

Here I rely on Veracini's review of the field and a broad and deep review of (comparative) settler colonial scholarship over the last several decades to trace the morphological continuity of settler colonial formations across space and time. Borrowing from, but expanding on, Veracini's four broad themes, I flesh out: (1) population economy—the need for settlers to biopolitically manage their domestic domains; (2) sovereign entitlement—on what settlers base their sovereign claims; (3) consciousness—how settlers perceive their predicament and arising paranoiac dispositions; and (4) narrative—the stories settlers tell themselves about themselves. Some of the dividing lines I draw between these themes are somewhat subjective. For example, I discuss *terra nullius* and ideas around "proper use" as part of the basis of settler sovereign entitlement, but they could also be considered narratives legitimizing settler claims. Similarly, though I discuss the absence of the native from the "settler gaze" as feeding into settler consciousness and perceptions of their situation, this could also be discussed under population economy as one more means of "eliminating" the native. Therefore, I have drawn distinctions

between these themes where I thought most logical, but since all of them (population economy, sovereign entitlement, consciousness, and narrative) stem from the fact that the object of settler colonization is the land, overlaps inevitably occur. Finally, given that settlement is a structure rather than an event, I will outline possible outcomes and discuss the persistence of the native generally before turning in Part II to settler colonialism in Israel/Palestine.

Population Economy

The morphological continuity of settler colonialism is apparent, first, in the way settler polities manage their respective population economies. First, settler colonialism is marked by a three way system of relationships between settler, metropole, and indigenous other. Second, the emphasis on acquiring land in settler colonial contexts leads to a “logic of elimination” in order to remove any competing native title. This “elimination” (what Veracini terms “transfer”) can be achieved through a variety of modes and strategies, also described below. Finally, the logic of elimination also leads to race and miscegenation policies that are particularly settler colonial, aimed at reproduction, gender, and biopolitics.

1. The three-way system of relationships. Settler colonialism is not “colonialism with settlers” because it refers to *autonomous* collectives that claim both a sovereign charge and a regenerative capacity; therefore, the system of relationships in settler colonialism is different than in colonialism (Veracini, 2010, p. 3). Historical and postcolonial literature on the colonial situation highlights its premise on the sustained reproduction of a series of dichotomies (good and evil, civilized and savage, developed and primitive, etc.) which ultimately separate colonizer from colonized. Influential and oft-cited definitions of colonialism insist on foreign domination and rule over a colonized demographic majority (Balandier, 1966; Osterhammel & Frisch, 1997),

an interpretive framework that pits colonizing metropole against colonized periphery. For example, Jürgen Osterhammel defines colonialism as

“a relationship of domination between an indigenous (or forcibly imported) majority and a minority of foreign invaders. The fundamental decisions affecting the lives of the colonized people are made and implemented by the colonial rulers in pursuit of interests that are often defined in a distant metropolis. Rejecting cultural compromises with the colonized population, the colonizers are convinced of their own superiority and of their ordained mandate to rule” (Osterhammel & Frisch, 1997, pp. 16-17).

Conversely, Veracini and other scholars argue that settler colonial phenomena complicate this dyad “by establishing a fundamentally triangular system of relationships, a system comprising metropolitan, settler, and indigenous agencies” (Veracini, 2010, pp. 6; see also: Piterberg, 2011). And even after breaking from the metropole, the settler colonial situation continues to establish a three-way system of relationships between the settler colonizer, the indigenous colonized, and a variety of variously categorized exogenous Others (Veracini, 2010, p. 16).

Because a self-constituted settler body is established through a foundational movement across space, two negatively defined alterities are brought into existence: “they comprise those who *have not* moved out to establish a political order (migrants who are not settlers), unlike those who belong to the settler collective, and those who *have not* autonomously moved in, unlike those who belong to the settler collective”—they are the exogenous and indigenous Others (Veracini, 2010, p. 17). In other words, the settler collective, having come from elsewhere and seeing itself as permanently situated, is both indigenous and exogenous at the same time, and due to this imaginary there are conflicting tendencies operating on the settler collective at the same time: “one striving for indigenization and national autonomy, the other aiming at neo-European replication and the establishment of a ‘civilized’ pattern of life” (Veracini, 2010, pp. 20-21). Similarly, in their contribution to *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*, Johnston and Lawson (2000) conceptualize a specifically settler form of postcolonial theory, in which the

settler subject is always committed (or condemned) to desire and disavow two kinds of authority and two kinds of authenticity—the authentic imperial culture from which he is separated and an indigenous authenticity that he desires as a marker of his legitimacy (Johnston & Lawson, 2000, p. 369). Theoretically, the settler is “uneasily occupying a place caught between two First Worlds, two origins of authority and authenticity”—the Imperium (the source of cultural authority) and the First Nations (whose authority they both replaced and effaced but also desired) (Johnston & Lawson, 2000, p. 369). Therefore, settler colonial representational regimes (in which the settler self is both indigenous and exogenous) need a triangular system of relationships, because the dual self needs two dialectical counterpoints—an indigenous and an exogenous one—where the colonial self needs only one (Veracini, 2010, p. 30). In contrast, “[c]lassical colonialism also does not have a desire to become native – in fact, Britain’s classic colonialists coined the phrase ‘to go native’ used in a strictly pejorative sense” (Zreik, 2016, p. 356).

2. Logic of Elimination. Within this system of relationships, substantive settler sovereignty depends on the capacity of the settler to manage the population economy of the settler locale, where “population economy” refers to “the recurring settler anxieties pertaining to the need to biopolitically manage their respective *domestic* domains” (Veracini, 2010, p. 16). “Management” of this domain typically entails a circumstance whereby indigenous and exogenous Others progressively disappear in a variety of ways—what Wolfe (1998) calls settler colonialism’s “logic of elimination” (Veracini, 2010, p. 16).

Veracini cites Patrick Wolfe’s *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology* as a crucial moment in the extrication of settler colonial studies from colonial and postcolonial scholarly endeavors, a moment in which the development of a dedicated interpretive

field accounting for a structuring dissimilarity began (Veracini, 2010, p. 9). Wolfe's definition of settler colonialism distinguishes structurally between colonial and settler colonial formations, emphasizing the *dispensability* of indigenous people in the settler colonial context (Wolfe, 1998). He argues that because settler colonial projects entail zero-sum contests over land, they are necessarily eliminatory (though not necessarily genocidal), and therefore settler colonialism is based on what he terms the "logic of elimination":

"[The logic of elimination,] in its specificity to settler colonialism, is premised on the securing—the obtaining and maintaining—of territory. This logic certainly requires the elimination of the owners of that territory, but not in any particular way. To that extent, it is a larger category than genocide" (Wolfe, 2006, p. 402).

Because it can be achieved by a variety of means (such as conquest, removal, reservation, allotment, assimilation, co-optation, termination, and even self-determination), elimination is not invariably genocidal (Wolfe, 2001, pp. 870; see also: Veracini, 2010). That said, Wolfe notes that elimination is often achieved violently, and states that:

"The question of genocide is never far from discussions of settler colonialism. Land is life—or, at least, land is necessary for life. Thus contests for land can be—indeed, often are—contests for life" (Wolfe, 2006, p. 387).

Elimination is necessary because in settler colonial situations the primary object is the land itself, not the surplus value to be derived from mixing native labor with it, and in that context indigenous peoples are obstacles to exclusive settler territorial control and sovereignty (Wolfe, 1998).

3. Modes of transfer. As stated above, settler projects are foundationally premised on fantasies of ultimately "cleansing" the settler body politic of its (indigenous and exogenous) alterities (Masalha, 1992; Shahak, 1989). Therefore, the original settler transfer (a collective sovereign displacement and foundation of a new sovereign polity) is mirrored by an array of other forms of transfer aimed as displacing the native (Veracini, 2010, p. 33). Though settler

formations share the need to eliminate indigenous peoples in order to access the land, Wolfe argues that scholars shouldn't seek to find coherence in the *form* removal takes across settler colonial contexts. Rather, there is coherence in the intention, the need to acquire land at all costs. The options available for emptying it and the plans to do so may change, but the intention does not (Wolfe, 2011).

The majority of the first chapter of Veracini's theoretical overview of settler colonialism is devoted to outlining twenty-six forms of transfer (or removal) of native peoples. Without enumerating all twenty-six, some examples include: (1) *necropolitical transfer*, the military liquidation of indigenous communities; (2) *ethnic transfer*, the forceful deportation of indigenous peoples; (3) *transfer by conceptual displacement*, when indigenous people are not considered native to the land; (4) *civilizational transfer*, whereby indigenous peoples are represented as putative settlers; and (5) *perception transfer*, where indigenous peoples are disavowed in a variety of ways and their actual presence is not registered—as when they are represented as part of the landscape rather than as human subjects (Veracini, 2010, pp. 34-37). In an example of what Veracini terms *transfer by conceptual displacement* (in which the indigenous people are not considered native to the land), removal in the US was naturalized with claims to the nomadic nature of Amerindians. Removal was justified by denying its inherent violence, asserting that “[p]eople who were routinely on the move would not be unduly inconvenienced” (Wolfe, 2011, p. 18). There was no recognition of the fact that these groups had been agriculturalists for millennia, forced to learn “wandering ways” when their homes and crops were burned by land-hungry invaders (Wolfe, 2011, p. 18).

As an illustration of Wolfe's argument that there is continuity and coherence in the *intention* to remove to native peoples even when the form of removal changes, in the US after the

“closure” of the frontier, “US Indian affairs discourse shifted from international relations – the fledgling republic’s initial foreign policy having been treaties with Indian tribes – to a depoliticized arena of domestic administration” (Wolfe, 2011, p. 13). In other words, “[t]he settler colonial logic of elimination in its crudest frontier form, a violent rejection of all things Indian, was transformed into a paternalistic mode of governmentality which, though still sanctioned by state violence, came to focus on assimilation rather than rejection” (Wolfe, 2011, p. 13). Removal, though quicker than assimilation, was temporary—“[s]ooner or later, the frontier caught up with the new tribal boundaries and the process had to start all over again” (Wolfe, 2011, p. 14). So the policy of elimination shifted from removal (by treaty or by force) to post-frontier assimilation (with Indians playing in the same property market by the same rules, breaking territorial contiguity) with its twin centerpieces allotment (individual ownership in which the tribe ceases to exist as a community) and blood quanta (the removal of “Indianness” and communal claims to the land). According to Wolfe, assimilation is a more effective means of elimination than either homicide or spatial device (Wolfe, 2011, p. 34). Assimilation is total, “it eliminates a competing sovereignty” because assimilated natives do not exist, they “are only White people, settlers, bereft of memory” (Wolfe, 2011, p. 34).

Elimination also took the form of destroying Indigenous peoples as a political unit. Following Bulag (2010) and Kimmerling (2003), Merav Amir defines politicide as “the destruction of the capacity to produce or reproduce a polity with the eventual aim of eliminating the ‘political identity’ of an ethnic group” (Amir, 2016, p. 3). Politicide does not refer to mass killings, “but to a wide spectrum of processes, ranging from the social and cultural to the military, which are intended to deny communities of people the possibility of realizing their aspirations for self-determination, thus destroying their political and national existence” (Amir,

2016, p. 3). Because the political and national existence of native groups is a direct challenge to that of settlers, settler colonial strategies of elimination often included politicide. Amir links politicide to “the triad constellation of state-sovereignty-territory”—arguing that it is driven by the idea that statehood entails territorial exclusivity and the unfeasibility of overlapping sovereignty (Amir, 2016, p. 3). Indigenous sovereignties must be denied, destroyed, and prevented from asserting themselves or they risk challenging notions of settler sovereign entitlement (discussed below). As Settler societies are considered successful when the native can no longer make claims to indigeneity:

“A settler society can be considered fully sovereign only when it frees itself from imperial bonds and when the combination of physical and assimilatory erasure policies bring the natives to a state of political insignificance. If natives are still capable of claiming the land and its resources in the name of an autonomous indigenous entity, then full settler sovereignty has yet to be gained. Conversely, a settler-society’s ability to absorb the natives as formally equal citizens, whether they like it or not, attests to a high level of settler sovereign capacity” (Degani, 2014, p. 4).

Therefore, settler polities strive to eliminate native sovereign title through acts of politicide, in addition to other techniques of removal, transfer, and elimination.

4. *Race and miscegenation policy.* In his article “Land, labor, and difference: Elementary structures of race” Wolfe addresses the role of race in colonialism and settler colonialism. Race is central to both, but racist discourses function in different ways in the two analytical types. As Wolfe argues, while both colonialism and settler colonialism absorbed racial theories to justify their treatment of native peoples, calling both racist obscures very different “structures of race” (Wolfe, 2001). Colonial empires used racist institutions and racial discourses premised on the essential difference and hierarchy between colonized and colonizer to justify exploitation of the populations they controlled. To ensure the continuation of exploitation, these institutions and discourses were sustained and eventually reified essential differences (Degani, 2014, p. 3). Settler-colonial nations, on the other hand, are more interested in the native’s land than in his

labor, “so they historically displayed a diminished tendency to sustain ‘othered’ indigenous populations” (Degani, 2014, p. 3).

Rather than exploiting the labor of indigenous populations, successful settler-colonial projects erased these peoples, and consequently “settler-colonial racial attitudes often enabled acts of ethnic cleansing and genocide” through physical liquidation, deportation, and/or assimilation (Degani, 2014, p. 3). The settler colonial paradigm is characterized by a determination to erase colonized subjectivities rather than reproduce their subordination. Unlike colonial formations, settlers aim to supersede rather than reproduce the colonial rule of difference—“settlers win by *discontinuing* unequal relationships rather than maintaining them” (Cavanagh & Veracini, 2016, p. 3).

In other words, the crucial difference in which miscegenation policy will be used—reduction or enlargement—pivots on the object of colonialism. Wolfe notes that when the colonial relationship is based on land (as between settlers and Aboriginals in Australia and between settlers and Native Americans in the US) the miscegenation policy will favor assimilation and/or other forms of elimination, reducing the indigenous population that has rival claims on the land. However, when the colonial relationship is based on labor (like black slaves in the US, for example), the miscegenation policy will follow a strategy which enlarges the enslaved labor force (Wolfe, 2001, p. 867). In the US, Indigenous peoples obstructed settlers’ access to land, so their increase was counterproductive, whereas black slaves extracted value from the land, so their increase was profitable (Wolfe, 2006, p. 388).

The Australian solution to the problem of persistent indigenous societies was to absorb them, but it is significant that in this example the indigenous peoples were numerically overwhelmed by the settler population (Wolfe, 2001, p. 874). Cultural assimilation and

biological absorption were aimed at making the “Aboriginal problem” and Aboriginal people disappear. These strategies were used in conjunction with separation, whereby Aboriginals were contained and controlled in a series of missions and reserves. As Edmonds and Carey note, in Australia,

“[o]nce they had achieved responsible government [the rise of self-governing settler states], and with the so-called closure of the frontiers, colonial governments turned their attention to controlling Indigenous people by legislation and increasing the level of bureaucracy. Authorities sought to ‘protect’ Indigenous peoples by either segregating them away from the settler population or by assimilating them into it” (Edmonds & Carey, 2016, p. 378).

The idea of “absorption” led to a number of violent strategies, such as the removal of Aboriginal children from their families in many states:

“‘Miscegenation’ then, became a strategy of elimination, via the removal of ‘half-caste’ children from their mothers for the purpose of forcibly incorporating them into the settler population. From 1910 to 1970, tens of thousands of Aboriginal children were removed from their families under these policies, becoming what are now known as the Stolen Generations” (Edmonds & Carey, 2016, p. 380).

Miscegenation policy—the intentional interbreeding of people considered to be different racial types—is linked directly to reproduction, gender, and biopolitics. Edmonds and Carey argue that studies of settlers have failed to address what feminist scholars consider the true settler “revolution”—“one that is biopolitical and dependent on new colonies being made through Indigenous and white women’s bodies” (Edmonds & Carey, 2016, p. 382). They argue:

“Immigration alone was not sufficient to secure the future of the white settler nation. The nation needed to reproduce itself. This was a highly gendered ambition, focussed [sic] primarily on white women’s reproductive capacities. As Jane Carey has asserted, if the history of settler colonialism was ‘driven by the ‘logic of elimination’ in relation to Indigenous populations, then the imperative of vigorous white propagation was its necessary corollary” (Edmonds & Carey, 2016, p. 382).

In addition to encouraging white women to reproduce, ‘half-caste’ women would marry white men, and the ‘Aboriginal problem’ would just be ‘bred out’ of existence—“Aboriginal people would become white” (Edmonds & Carey, 2016, pp. 379-380).

Similarly, Adele Perry has argued that at the heart of dispossession and colonization was the management of white and Indigenous women's bodies and the state's intervention into both the intimate and mixed relations of settler empire. These were linked to obsessions with preventing white racial "degeneracy" or effecting white racial "improvement" (Perry, 2001). This "reached its apogee, or at least was most explicitly articulated, in settler-colonies where the maintenance of white supremacy was seen to be imperative to national identity and even survival" (Edmonds & Carey, 2016, p. 382). As Perry notes,

"That colonizers settle implies more than residence. It denotes a reproductive regime dependent on the presence of settler women who literally reproduce the colony" (Perry, 2001).

For example, Australia was seen by government administrators and statisticians as a "large and sparsely-populated territory," an "ideal land, wherein the people might prove fruitful and multiply" and they were greatly concerned by declining birth rates among the settler population (Edmonds & Carey, 2016, p. 383). The concern was for the possibility of maintaining a "White Australia" which depended on "whether we shall be able to people the vast areas of the continent" (Edmonds & Carey, 2016, p. 383). Therefore, the logic of elimination, miscegenation policy, and biopolitics all play a role in managing the population economy in settler colonial contexts—maximizing the settler population while destroying the indigenous one.

Sovereign Entitlement

Settler formations are also marked by a specifically settler form of sovereign entitlement. Here I describe the logics on which settlers base their sovereign claims. First, by describing how settlers are distinct from both migrants and colonizers because settlers come to stay and establish their own political orders—they establish a "settler contract." Second, by laying out the four

conventions through with John Locke legitimized both dispossession of native land and the elimination of the native, and by turning to the (eerily similar) justifications that Richard Windeyer theorized for the settlement of Australia. And finally, by describing how settlers frequently pushed the limits of authorized settlement, justified by reference to settler sovereign entitlement and precipitating independence from the metropole.

1. The settler contract. Settler colonial phenomena are closely related to both migration and (metropole) colonialism—to the first because these formations involve permanent movement and reproduction of communities, and to the second because they also necessarily involve the dominance of an exogenous agency over an indigenous one; however not all migrations are settler migrations and not all colonialisms are settler colonialisms (Veracini, 2010, p. 3). Rather, settler colonialism is structurally distinct from both. While both settlers and migrants move across space and tend to end up residing permanently in a new locale, settlers are distinct from migrants because settlers are made by conquest, not just by immigration (Mamdani, 1998). Migrants move to another country, lead diasporic lives, and are appellants to a political order that is already constituted; settlers, by contrast, move (or “return”) to their own country, and are founders of political orders who carry their sovereignty with them (Veracini, 2010, p. 3). As 18th century English jurist, judge, and politician Sir William Blackstone stated, settlers “carry” law with them: “if an uninhabited country be discovered and planted by English subjects, all the English laws then in being, which are the birthright of every subject, are immediately there in force” (Blackstone, 1899, p. 107; Pateman, 2007, p. 55).

Settlers are differentiated from colonizers in that they claim a special type of sovereign entitlement—an *animus manendi*—that derives from their intention to stay permanently, and which is manifested by residency, suitable reproduction, and possession (Veracini, 2010, p. 53).

Settlers carry their sovereignty with them through the doctrine of “squatter sovereignty,” espousing the natural right to move to a vacant territory and self-govern—eventually breaking with the metropole (Veracini, 2010, p. 62). It is through this sovereign entitlement that facts on the ground (or *de facto* sovereignty) eventually evolve into legal (*de jure*) sovereignty in settler colonial contexts.

Carole Pateman describes an “original settler contract” which comes into being at the moment settlers “plant” themselves in the new world—the “original” moment marking the founding of a settler polity (Pateman, 2007, p. 55). At this moment, a civil society is created out of a “state of nature” which is understood to have its origin in an original contract. In the case of *terra nullius*, the original contract takes the form of a *settler contract* which is both racial and social, and to which Natives peoples are not part, though they are henceforth subject to it (Pateman, 2007, p. 56). The settler contract also excludes the metropole from which the settlers came, as it “sets up new (civil) political institutions... that mark the beginnings of a new state that will in due course, in its own right, be part of an international commercial network and system of modern, sovereign states” (Pateman, 2007, p. 56).

2. Locke, dispossession, and elimination. By the early 17th century, the accepted justification for the assertion of sovereignty in European international law was “the discovery, occupation, and defense of any part of America not already occupied by a Christian ruler” (Tully, 1994, p. 174). The justification of this form of sovereign right required that the colonizers ignore the natives and characterize America (and other sites of settler colonization) as *terra nullius* (vacant land), or else downgrade the natives to the status of beasts or savages (Tully, 1994, p. 174). There were two core principles that animated the doctrine of discovery. The first was “the imbalance between the diminished right of territorial possession or occupancy that it

assigned to Natives and the overarching dominion that it assigned to European sovereigns,” and the second was “the fact that discovery, along with the law of nations as a whole, concerned relations between European sovereigns rather than between Europeans and Natives” (Wolfe, 2011, p. 15). In combination, native occupancy was detachable from sovereign title, while European occupancy was not.

John Locke is arguably the most important thinker for American settler colonialism, and his ideas about possession, ownership, and proper use are also used in other settler colonial contexts, such as Australia, with echoes down through the 20th century. Locke’s political philosophy is a “delegation theory of popular sovereignty built out of two concepts: political society and property” (Tully, 1994, p. 165). Sovereignty was defined in this way in contrast to Amerindian forms of nationhood and property in order to justify the dispossession and elimination of the native. James Tully is a historian who pulls out several conventions transmitted by Locke (Tully, 1993). The first is the convention of Eurocentric thinking, from which Locke concluded that Amerindians did not constitute a recognizable or legitimate political society. Locke ranks societies on a scale of world-historical development in comparison to European society, and within this convention “in the beginning all the world was America,” the most “primitive” stage preceding civilization and private property—the state of nature (Tully, 1993, p. 264). According to Locke, the state of nature are the Amerindians—whatever they are is a state of nature and a state of nature is whatever they are. Being in a state of nature, Amerindians did not constitute a political society in the way European settlers did. Settlers have a sovereign claim to the land because they “planted themselves in the New Worlds to establish their own civil societies and could do so because they were English and so already ‘civilized’ beings” (Pateman, 2007, p. 55).

The second convention is called the “agriculturalist argument” which made a case for what constitutes possession by asserting that Amerindian societies are based on hunting and gathering, and thus they “have rights only to what they catch, gather and cultivate, and anyone has the right to appropriate uncultivated land without consent” (Tully, 1993, pp. 264-265). According to Locke, God gave the earth to men in common, and anything the earth naturally produces belongs to all mankind (Locke, 1993, p. 274). It is only through labor, then, that man makes the earth his property, exclusive of other men: “Whatsoever, then, he removes out of the state of nature hath provided and left it in, he hath mixed his labour with, and joined to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his property” (Locke, 1993, p. 274). And this transformation of common earth into private property through the application of labor is not robbery, it is his right to possess it exclusively because he mixed his labor with it, while Amerindians did not have any rights of ownership because they left the earth in the state of nature (Locke refers specifically to the “uncultivated waste of America, left to nature”) (Locke, 1993, p. 279).

The third convention Locke used in justifying settler sovereignty is the superiority of European commercial agriculture to Amerindian hunting and gathering, as “commercial agriculture uses the land more efficiently (versus Amerindian ‘waste’), supports a larger population, engenders the division of labour and trade and, the most influential standard of modern times, produces more commodities” (Tully, 1993, p. 265). Therefore, the agriculturalist justification for appropriating native land is that it is wasteful not to labor on the land and gain dominion over it, because land untouched by labor has not met its productive capacity. Locke argues that it is labor that imbues land with value, therefore land not mixed with labor is not worth anything. Because man is master of himself, “proprietor of his own person and the actions

or labour of it,” everything he mixes with his labor also belongs to him, and is no longer held in common to others (Locke, 1993, p. 283). Settlers had, therefore, a God-given, natural right to the land.

Fourth and finally, Locke argues for the instrumental use of war, rather than its glorification, and the politics of preservation, thereby justifying violence against native peoples (Tully, 1993, p. 266). Any violence against the natives was defensive in nature and aimed at preserving the superior political society of the settlers. According to his conventions, the land is, in a sense, *vacant*, and therefore the native peoples have no right to resist encroachment. To do so would be to violate the laws of nature. These arguments served to justify English colonization in America: “to dispossess aboriginal peoples of their land, on the ground that they have no rights to it because they do not cultivate, and no sovereignty because they lack institutionalized ‘political societies’, and to ‘destroy’ them by war if they resist, because resistance proves them to be ‘savages’” (Tully, 1993, p. 265).

3. Richard Windeyer and Australia. In Australia, Lockean ideas about “vacant” land became enshrined in law, in contrast to the US where not all land was declared empty (though eventually all the land was taken). In the US, the metropole and later the settlers often made treaties with the natives, but this was never the case in Australia. Though the British government was well aware of the presence of Aboriginal people when they set out to colonize Australia in 1787, they proceeded as if the land was *terra nullius* – “land that belongs to no one.”¹

Richard Windeyer, a journalist, barrister, and Australian politician, explored the possibility of Aboriginal title in a lecture in 1844, observing that “Aborigines ‘wander’, have no ‘fixed dwelling place of any kind’, there is no ‘bond of union between families’, and even *within* the family, rape and violence are fundamentally shaping all relationships” (Cavanagh & Veracini, 2011, p. 196). Having been educated in Britain, Windeyer drew on Hobbes, Vattel, and Blackstone rather than on Locke, “to hold that property in land was derived from one having laboured [sic] on it and hence that the Aborigines had no claim to it” (Windeyer, 2011, p. 168).

His arguments are important because they reveal a number of distinctively Australian settler claims, as well as discursive refrains that are typical of settler discourse generally—it is clear, for example, that he reached many of the same conclusions as Locke. Windeyer’s characterization of Aboriginal customs approximates the Hobbesian “state of nature,” a barbarous life of war against all, and therefore “the Aboriginal custom is that *there is no custom*”

¹ Though Fitzmaurice and other scholars have shown that *terra nullius* was not employed as a concept or doctrine in the early 18th and 19th centuries to justify dispossession in Australia (and therefore was also not used to justify dispossession in North America either), the concept “was produced by the legal tradition that dominated questions of the justice of ‘occupation’ at the time that Australia was colonised [sic]” (Fitzmaurice, 2007, p. 2). Though the term *terra nullius* was not used, and therefore its use to describe the appropriation of land in Australia and other settler colonizations prior to the late 19th century is somewhat historically anachronistic, the idea that the land was empty, that it was not “occupied” in any meaningful sense (at least not by a Christian civilization) was used to justify dispossession, and is the basis from which the term *terra nullius* emerged in the late 1800s and early 1900s in reference to the polar region. As the English began to settle, “they began to argue that the Amerindians neither occupied and used in the appropriate manner the lands they claimed, nor did they live in political or civil societies;” therefore, most of the land was “vacant” (Tully, 1994, p. 175).

(Cavanagh & Veracini, 2011, p. 197). According to Windeyer, because Aboriginals are living in a state of nature, they have no laws, and because they have no laws they can have no property rights. In Windeyer's estimation, Aboriginal life is characterized by three fundamental deficiencies: (1) "Aboriginals wander *without* any specific appreciation of territory (that is, they lack *dominion*)," (2) "they are so independent of each other that they *do not* recognize any particular authority or organize into identifiable polities (that, they lack *imperium*)," (3) "and they *do not* invest labor in the land or erect fixed dwellings (that is, they lack *property*)" (Cavanagh & Veracini, 2011, pp. 197-198). All of which is to say that the land is not theirs, they have no property rights, it is therefore *terra nullius* despite their physical presence. According to Windeyer, elsewhere Europeans encountered *different* societies, which they conquered, but in Australia they encountered *no* society (Cavanagh & Veracini, 2011, p. 198).

Yet no one imagined that Australia was in fact uninhabited, and the first British Governor of the Colony of New Wales bore a letter from the King that explicitly referred to the Aboriginal people and gave him instructions about policy towards them (Edmonds & Carey, 2016, pp. 372-373). The fact that Australia was inhabited was made unavoidably apparent by the fierce contestation by indigenous peoples, despite the fact that Britain declared it "unpeopled and therefore unreservedly open to immigrant populations" (Edmonds & Carey, 2016, p. 373). Ideas about proper use and the backwardness of native people continued throughout settler colonial history and across settler colonial contexts. In arguing that indigenes in Alaska had no legitimate claim to the land, Alaska's congressman, Ralph Rivers, declared in 1967 that "They wouldn't use it" so "It would just lie there" (Hixon, 2016, p. 173). Ideas about "empty lands" and what constitutes "proper use" will be evident again in the exploration of Zionist settler colonization in Part II.

4. *Pushing the limits of authorized settlement.* Another trend that appears again and again in settler formations is that settlers often push beyond the limits of authorized settlement. This happened, for instance, in many contexts during the phase of settler colonization prior to settler independence from the metropole. In Australia, settlers often pushed beyond the limits set by the colonial government:

“From the small colony of Tasmania, settlers’ eyes soon turned to the abundant lands across Bass Strait. Despite the nullification of the attempted Batman treaty and a proclamation by NSW [New South Wales] Governor Richard Bourke to deter land grabbing, it was impossible to stem the tide of settlers to new pastoral lands at Port Phillip, even though it was outside the limits of authorized settlement” (Edmonds & Carey, 2016, p. 375).

With increased immigration to Australia in the 1850s “came settler land hunger and increasingly strident calls of white settlers on their entitlement to take up lands” (Edmonds & Carey, 2016, p. 377). As Moses points out, “Settlers often outstripped the regulatory capacity of the metropolitan authority, which in Australia was anxious to prevent frontier bloodshed” (Moses, 2004).

Similarly, the delicate balance of native, French, and British power in colonial North America “was continuously threatened by settlers, speculators and colonial assemblies encroaching on Indian lands and causing the natives to defend their property by force of arms and to support the French” (Tully, 1993, p. 269). British attempts to protect the first nations from the “unbridled land-hunger of the colonists” in order to secure and maintain stability had the effect of alienating the settlers (Tully, 1993, p. 269).

In North America in 1676, Bacon’s Rebellion broke out in response to tensions in the settler vision of empire and the continued presence of Native peoples on desired land in western Virginia. After attacking Native groups in proximity the revolt turned against the colonial government, teaching government elites “a terribly important lesson about the volatility of a disappointed white settler population” and demonstrating “the potency of settler liberty as an

emerging ideological framework organized around the security, self-governance and self-possession of the common white male freeholder” (Crow, 2016, p. 99). Crow argues that when farmers and their sons went to war for the Union during the American Civil War, “they did so to save the democratic promise of settler colonialism from the equally powerful colonialism of plantation-owning settlers” in the ongoing westward expansion of the nation (Crow, 2016, p. 105). The goal of policy in a democratic country, said Lincoln, “should be to nurture the mutually reinforcing relationship between the farmer’s cultivation of the land with his body and his capacity for cultivation of himself with his mind and body” (Crow, 2016, p. 105).

In the American context, the concept of “Indian country” goes back to the Royal Proclamation of 1763, which established the first official boundary line between British colonial territory and Indian country: “As such, the Royal Proclamation constitutes the first specification of a bounded zone, beyond the limits of colonial settlement, that belonged generically to Indians,” though this did not stop land-grabbers and speculators (Wolfe, 2011, p. 16). Settlers railed against the limits to settlement set by the British government, and assertions of settler sovereign ownership—in opposition to limits set by the metropole—were often legitimated through citation of Lockean claims; for instance, “that the colonists collectively had improved the colonies absent substantive aid from England and thus held property rights to their lands and the right to govern themselves as distinct (if not fully independent) polities” ” (Rifkin, 2013, p. 329). As Pateman has noted, “restrictions on expansion and appropriation of land were anathema to colonial elites and the Proclamation became a precipitating cause of the American Revolution” (Pateman, 2007, p. 58).

US democracy was thus built on settler colonial narratives and sovereign title. The US mission was to make the world safe for a very particular vision of liberty. Settlers in North

America demanded from the British government the right to expand and claim territory. The calls for greater access to land were framed as “a pre-political, human right” whereby access to the frontier served as “a means of gaining access to enough land for existing modes of agricultural production as well as to the kind of personal independence (for White men) that constituted the basis for political subjectivity and participation (as opposed to being a slave, servant, or apprentice)” (Rifkin, 2013, p. 329). By tracing settler sovereign claims in this way, “One can see, then, a historical interdependence among the assertion of an ostensibly extra-political form of personal independence through landholding (which also indicated qualification for political participation), the assertion of exclusive US sovereignty over ‘domestic’ space (whose boundaries were asserted to be self-evident), and the erosion/displacement/erasure of Indigenous sovereignty and landedness” (Rifkin, 2013, pp. 329-330).

Consciousness

Because independent, settler democracies are built on particular visions of liberty which entail the displacement and dispossession of native peoples, the settler consciousness must manage a number of inherent contradictions. The radical potential of George Fredrickson’s book *White Supremacy: A Comparative Study in American and South African History* is in revealing the bifurcated nature of settler consciousness. On the one hand, settlers have the story of who they are (liberty, the constitution, free speech, all men created equal, etc.), and on the other their interaction with the natives and what they did (dispossession, removal, elimination, etc.) (Fredrickson, 1982). In the settler consciousness these two stories never meet—can never meet. Fredrickson’s book collapses these two stories into one, arguing that there is not a history of the US or South Africa that is not a history of white supremacy. Liberal settlers don’t like this story,

and prefer to believe that what they did is not who they are. Therefore, one of the most appealing things about comparative settler colonial studies is in its ability to expose liberal segregationism.

In this section, I first describe what Mark Rifkin has called “settler common sense,” exploring how settler strategies, narratives, and actions become internalized and lived as given—allowing settlers avoid questioning their goals (both means and ends) and close examination of the connection between who they are and what they do. Then I describe three features of settler consciousness: the disavowal of foundational violence, the ideal of settler fixity, and the disavowal of native presence.

1. *Settler common sense.* Mark Rifkin defines “settler common sense” as “the ways the legal and political structures that enable non-Native access to Indigenous territories comes to be lived as given, as simply the unmarked, generic conditions of possibility for occupancy, association, history, and personhood” (Rifkin, 2013, pp. 322-323). In a sense, we might think of settler common sense as the internalization of claims to sovereign entitlement (discussed above) and various legitimizing narratives (discussed below). As Rifkin argues,

“Characterizing settlement as operating as a form of embodied ‘common sense’ suggests that the normalized legalities and geographies of settler policy – its displacement, containment, and erasure of Indigenous landedness and implementation and routinization of modes of non-Native dwelling – function largely as background, as unacknowledged conditions of emergence for textual representations in which other issues occupy the foreground” (Rifkin, 2013, p. 331).

Rifkin’s paper examines settlement as a “structure of feeling” by asking “how emotions, sensations, [and] psychic life take part in the (ongoing) process of realizing the exertion of non-Native authority over Indigenous peoples, governance, and territoriality in ways that *saturate* quotidian life but are not necessarily present to settlers as a set of political propositions or as a specifically imperial project of dispossession” (Rifkin, 2013, p. 323). He argues that in current scholarly characterizations of settler colonialism, “the contours of settlement often appear

analytically as clear and coherent from the start, as a virtual totality, and in this way, the ongoing processes by which settler dominance actively is reconstituted as a set of actions, occupations, deferrals, and potentials slide from view” (Rifkin, 2013, p. 323). Rifkin argues that ideas around private property ownership lead to affective belonging and emplacement—as possession, home, and sovereignty turn on assumptions of private property (Rifkin, 2013, p. 325). The settler common sense functions through the two predominant features of the settler consciousness described by Veracini: (1) the disavowal of violence and (2) the ideal of settler fixity. Both of these features are supported by the way the native presence itself is denied, or relegated to the past, for example through the use of extinction narratives.

2. *Disavowing foundational violence.* In the settler fantasy the society is constantly striving to live a peaceful, stable life. This is because, on the one hand, settlers perceive themselves as members of hard-working, peacefully-living communities in a regenerative world—despite the fact that settler projects “are inevitably premised on the traumatic, that is, *violent*, replacement and/or displacement of indigenous Others”—and on the other because, in addition to an inevitable founding violence, settler collectives are also escaping *from* violence and are determined to produce a settled political body with a secure future (Veracini, 2010, pp. 75, 76-77). For example, in South Australia in the 1830s, British government officials asserted that

“‘far from being an invasion of the rights of Aborigines’, South Australia would be settled by ‘industrious and virtuous settlers’ who would protect Aboriginal people from ‘pirates, squatters and runaway convicts’. Ultimately, however, Aboriginal peoples were dispossessed in a similar manner to those in other colonies and their rights disregarded” (Edmonds & Carey, 2016, p. 377).

Settler colonial societies need to disavow foundational violence for a variety of reasons, one of which is “a recurring narcissistic drive” which demands that a settler society be represented as an ideal political body so that “even when settler colonial narratives celebrate anti-indigenous

violence, they do so by representing a defensive battle ensuring the continued survival of the settler community and never as founding violence per se” (Veracini, 2010, pp. 77, 78).

Any foundational violence, then, is necessarily framed as defensive in nature. In the newly independent US, it was argued that the natives “could not be left in possession of their country because this would leave it a ‘wilderness’, and they could not be governed conventionally because they were ‘brave’, ‘high-spirited’, and ‘fierce’” (Tully, 1993, p. 278). Therefore, the settlers had “no choice” but to enforce their claims by the sword (Tully, 1993, p. 278). Locke’s ideas about property asserted a “natural right of self-defense to proceed with force against the violators of natural law”—the right to destroy native peoples who resisted the theft of their land because “[w]hen a person violates natural law he loses his natural rights and may be enslaved or killed” (Tully, 1994, pp. 170-171).

In Australia, “[e]xtensive settler incursion into Aboriginal lands was met with Aboriginal resistance across the new regions of settlement, frequently resulting in the frontier homicide of many Aboriginal groups,” framed as a defensive act (Edmonds & Carey, 2016, p. 373). Locke’s ideas licensed not only dispossession of native lands but also wars of extermination if Indigenous people resisted the loss of their land and customary ways: “By breaking natural law in defying the perceived European right to the land and rejecting European entreaties to enter civilization, so the case goes, ‘native’ rejected ‘friendship’ and ‘trade,’ as it was articulated by apologists for English colonists in the seventeenth century” (Moses, 2004). This was the theory of just war—the “justice” of crushing Indigenous resistance—to defend against Indigenous attacks on the rightful presence and claims of white settlers. From the perspective of settlers on the frontier, the logic of colonization was this:

“driven by market forces, they seized the land of Aboriginal groups without compensation or negotiations, and excluded them from their sources of food. A struggle

for survival ensued in which, from the European perspective at the time, the Aborigines had to be subdued, and, if necessary, exterminated” (Moses, 2004).

As settlers progressively appropriated their lands and food sources, Aboriginal resistance in Australia began almost immediately with raids against settlers and ambushes of exploration and foraging parties. Military detachments and garrisons were established to defend agricultural lands from these incursions, accompanied with orders to shoot an Aboriginal person on sight and to hang the bodies as a warning to others, and several brutal frontier wars raged (Edmonds & Carey, 2016, pp. 373-374). Many colonists in Australia openly described the frontier conflict with Aboriginals as war, and in 1824 Governor Thomas Brisbane proclaimed martial law on the Bathurst Plains after some of the most violent frontier incidents of the period (Edmonds & Carey, 2016, p. 374). Several periods of martial law were declared across the continent “against the ‘Black or Aboriginal natives,’” and settlers retaliated aggressively with massacres of Aboriginal groups by vigilante settler groups (Edmonds & Carey, 2016, p. 374).

Settler fear was intense, and some sought to give up their land grants and leave. In 1830, the British Lieutenant Governor of Tasmania launched operation ‘Black Line,’ “whereby civilian, police and military detachments moved through the ‘settled’ areas and drove Aboriginal people out” (Edmonds & Carey, 2016, p. 374). This 15-month military-style campaign was the largest force ever assembled against Aboriginal people in Australia, and afterwards Aboriginal survivors were incarcerated at the reserve where their population plummeted. Thus, “the original Tasmanian Aboriginal was ‘nearly wiped off the face of the earth within a generation’” (Edmonds & Carey, 2016, p. 374). But it worked, as

“State-sanctioned retributive violence against Aboriginal peoples served to pacify them and open new lands for settlers. Moreover, the implementation of martial law served to formalized the frontier as a ‘legal space of violence’ and was thus crucial to the furtherance of the settler project” (Edmonds & Carey, 2016, p. 375).

As Veracini argues, because “settler society” is a fantasy “where a perception of constant struggle is juxtaposed against an ideal of ‘peace’ that can never be reached, settler projects embrace and reject violence *at the same time*” (Veracini, 2010, p. 77). As a result, the settler colonial situation is “a circumstance where the tension between contradictory impulses produces long-lasting psychic conflicts and a number of associated psychopathologies” (Veracini, 2010, p. 77).

3. *The ideal of settler fixity.* The second major feature of the settler consciousness identified by Veracini is the need to emphasize settler fixity, a need which encourages the perception of indigenous and exogenous Others as “unsettled” and which results typically in a settler colonial inversion “where indigenous people are nomadified and settlers can perform their indigenization and express their nativism” (Veracini, 2010, pp. 78, 79). Therefore, “a people without history in a place without history” is a recurring trope in many settler colonial formations (Veracini, 2010, p. 79). Settlers are often framed as natives who are coming home—they “move to return – return to a pristine social order disturbed by modernity, return to appropriate social mores disturbed by gender and other revolutions, return to the land and return to the ability of genuinely owning it, an ability disturbed by enclosures and other dispossessions” (Cavanagh & Veracini, 2016, p. 6).

Settler colonial projects are predominantly about territory, and therefore settler citizenship is conditioned on property of, and residency on, the land—a territorialization of the settler community which is necessarily premised on the deterritorialization (transfer) of indigenous outsiders (D. Gregory, 2004, p. 88; Veracini, 2010, pp. 80-81). Settler sovereignty is only made possible by the comprehensive disavowal of the presence and sovereignty of indigenous groups, disavowal of their very existence and the persistence of their presence and

claims (Veracini, 2010, pp. 81-82). This necessarily results in the perception of emptiness, the application of *terra nullius*, and the systematic removal of indigenous peoples from the settler gaze. The systematic disavowal of both founding violence and any indigenous presence that informs settler consciousness means that the only encounter that is registered is between man and land (Veracini, 2010, p. 84).

In Australia the fact that Aboriginals “wander” was part of the reasoning behind denying them any property rights. The fact that “[t]hey are inherently transient” meant that their interest in the land was also transient, and one cannot be dispossessed of something one does not own (Cavanagh & Veracini, 2011, pp. 198-199). Windeyer reasoned not only that Aboriginals had no claim to the land, but more importantly that the white settlers *did*. This was accomplished through a flattening of time and space. According to his logic, the settler claim is not just superior, “it is actually *original* and ultimately based on prior occupancy”:

“The settlers are, after all, the very first to ‘inhabit’ (rather than range over) ‘an evergreen country [...] surpassing all others in salubrity’. This is a uniquely settler colonial reflex: not only settlers want the land of indigenous peoples; they also want to own it *as if they were indigenous*. Indeed, claiming a special relationship with the land is the way settlers become indigenous (one may acquire ownership of land without necessarily fantasizing about being the first to really own it; settlers, on the other hand, claim the land in culturally specific ways)” (Cavanagh & Veracini, 2011, p. 200).

But a sense of unease and apprehension remained for Windeyer, conscious as he was that settler claims were based on denying Aboriginal title, and therefore the settler claim will “remain imperfect” until the Aboriginals are transformed (by the civilizing settlers) into a people who can go elsewhere and acquire property rights of their own. The consummation of this settler logic, then, is that the settler and the indigenous person must swap places (Cavanagh & Veracini, 2011, pp. 200-201).

4. Disavowing native presence. Piterberg and other scholars argue that in the settler imagination the natives are inconsequential to the form each settler society takes—“the conflict

with the natives is not denied, but the pivotal role that this conflict has played in shaping the identity of the settler nation is written off” and more liberal expressions of hegemonic white settler consciousness keep separate “what we have done” and “who we are” (Piterberg, 2011, p. 25). Subsequently, the need to distance the indigene from the discussion of “who we are” as a political entity leads to “the colonial anxiety... of the colonized becoming an intrinsic part of the colonizing society’s identity” (Piterberg, 2011, p. 28). Settler colonial relational formations are therefore marked by what Veracini has called “a settler colonial ‘non-encounter’”—a recurring need for settlers to disavow the presence of indigenous others (Veracini, 2011, p. 2).

Piterberg emphasizes the role of the “settler gaze” in relation to the necessary elimination of the native. In the works of settler colonial literature he analyzes, this elimination is accomplished through what Veracini termed perception transfer, “where indigenous peoples are disavowed in a variety of ways and their actual presence is not registered; for instance, by only seeing them as part of the landscape” (Veracini, 2010, pp. 36-37). As Piterberg convincingly argues, indigenous people “have no existence that is independent of the settler perspective and gaze”—so if they are out of sight they are effectively out of existence (Piterberg, 2011, p. 34). This is accomplished in the Zionist literature he examines, for example, by reminiscing about a lost past and landscape of which Arabs *were* a part—effectively erasing them from the present.

The erasure (either discursively or physically) of the native from the present is due to the persistent drive in settler colonialism to ultimately supersede the conditions of its operations—after taming the wilderness, establishing independent nations, extinguishing native alterities, and managing ethnic diversity, settlers see themselves as putatively settled and postcolonial (Veracini, 2011, p. 3). But for settlers to stop being settlers, they have to do away with the native:

“Settlers and natives belong together. You cannot have one without the other, for it is the relationship between them that makes one a settler and the other a native. To do away with one, you have to do away with the other” (Mamdani, 1998).

As Veracini notes, “unsettling anxieties remain,” so settler colonialism must cover its tracks by “extinguishing” itself—erasing the relationship of settler and native by erasing the native (Veracini, 2011, p. 3). I discuss the account whereby settlers cease to be settlers further in the section below titled “Narratives,” but the very presence of the native is often removed from the settler consciousness, for example through extinction narratives which paint indigenous peoples as naturally fading from history.

In Australia, the settler historical imagination framed Tasmanian Aboriginals as an ‘extinct race’ as

“part of a broader phenomenon of extinction narratives and a belief that ‘native’ races would naturally die out, which pervaded settler societies in this period. Such extinction narratives serve a political purpose in settler societies, both to forget and move on from violence and to nullify current political claims by Aboriginal people” (Edmonds & Carey, 2016, p. 375).

In 1872 the novelist Anthony Trollope said of the Aborigines in Australia that “It is their fate to be abolished; and they are already vanishing,” and imperial ideologue Charles Dilke argued that the “aboriginal Australian blacks” were “rapidly dying out, and it is hard to see any other fate could be expected for them” (Moses, 2004). According to Wolfe, “[e]limination was inherently chronological – whether dead, removed, or assimilated, Indians would pass into memory” (Wolfe, 2011, p. 23). As nomads, for instance, they were bound to disappear, “subsisting on dwindling indigenous resources whose reproduction was finite,” in contrast to agriculture’s stake on the future (Wolfe, 2011, p. 23).

Through allotment in the case of the US, Indians became individuals and as such ceased to be Indian; detribalized, they could merge into settler society and pass from history (Wolfe, 2011, pp. 23-24). Describing this process in more detail, Rifkin argues:

“The figure of the vanishing Indian still remains prominent within US popular and scholarly discourses, both explicitly and implicitly. Within this narrative, Native peoples may have had prior claims to the land, but they, perhaps tragically, were removed from the area, or died out, or ceased to be ‘really’ Indian, or simply disappeared at some point between the appearance of the ‘last’ one and the current moment, whenever that may be. As against this tendency, scholars who seek to track the workings of settler colonialism face an entrenched inattention to the ways non-Native conceptions and articulations of personhood, place, property, and political belonging coalesce around and through the dispossession of Native peoples and the normalization of (the) settler (-state’s) presence on Native lands” (Rifkin, 2013, p. 324).

This theory of the “doomed race,” whereby according to the laws of nature backward societies gave way before advanced ones and Indigenous society “collapsed under the weight of its own pathologies,” was hegemonic until the Second World War, after which settler polities like Australia turned to assimilation as a policy of elimination (Moses, 2004)

Narrative

In his theoretical overview, Veracini argues that scholars need to focus on what settlers do and how they think about what they do. In other words, it is important to investigate settler myths, memories, values, and symbols—“[t]he stories settlers tell themselves about themselves” (Veracini, 2010, p. 103). These narratives intersect with and justify methods of managing the population economy (namely, elimination), settler sovereign entitlement, and settler consciousness in a number of ways. The settler contract and agriculturalist argument justifying sovereign entitlement are narratives already discussed above. Settler consciousness depends on narratives of defensive violence, settler indigeneity, and the foreclosed extinction of native peoples. In this section, I expand on these narratives and explain how, through their stories and myths, settlers describe themselves as a Chosen People, brave frontiersman, and a superior race/civilization, among other tropes. Also important to note, particularly related to the possibility of recognizing the ongoing structure of settler colonization, is how settlers narrate

their own end, a discussion which will lead into the final section of Part I, examining possible outcomes for settler colonial situations.

1. Chosen People. Settlers (particularly white European settlers) often depict themselves as a Chosen People, called on by God for an extraordinary task. This narrative is based on interpretations of the Hebrew scriptures and ideas around Manifest Destiny. In his historical comparison of Ulster, South Africa, and Israel, Historian Donald Akenson argues that Northern Ireland's Presbyterians, the Afrikaners, and most Israelis often speak in the same way, and hold in common several fundamental concepts. He notes that from the 17th to the early 20th century, Afrikaners (or Boers) and Ulster Presbyterians shared a common understanding of how the world works—an understanding that stemmed directly from the Hebrew scriptures (Akenson, 1992, p.

4). Akenson states:

“[w]hat events in Ulster and in South Africa since the seventeenth century, and in the state of Israel in the twentieth century, have in common is that they can be understood only by direct reference to the very oldest strands of the cultural fabric that is shared by western societies: the memory of events that occurred as much as four millennia ago and are recorded, sometimes in blurred form and other times with eerie sharpness, in the [Hebrew] scriptures” (Akenson, 1992, p. 4).

According to Akenson, the ancient Hebrew covenant was a primary, though not the only, basis of these groups' world-making and conceptual apparatus—the scriptures were taken as manuals of instruction and were accepted as reality (Akenson, 1992). At the heart of the scriptures is a deal, a covenant with God, asserting that if Chosen People follow God's rules they will be rewarded. The Boers in South Africa believed in a covenant, or divine decree, directing their actions (Jacobson, 1983), and Ulster Presbyterians also adhered to the idea of a divine calling, and in 1912 signed “Ulster's Solemn League and Covenant,” which took its doctrine of the reciprocal responsibilities of God and a righteous civil polity directly from the Hebrew scriptures (Akenson, 1992).

Dan Jacobson, the son of Jewish immigrants to South Africa, said that the Boers considered themselves “another Chosen People,” like the Israelites, and their national and collective myth about themselves owed almost everything to the Hebrew Bible:

“Like the Israelites, and their fellow Calvinists in New England, they believed that they had been called on by their God to wander through the wilderness, to meet and defeat the heathen, and to occupy a promised land on his [God’s] behalf” (Jacobson, 1983, p. 10).

Violence against the “heathen,” therefore, was divinely ordained. Similarly, Crow notes that in New England “the intensity of the theological identification of the colonial project and the powerful sense of divine mission into the wilderness that resulted fed what even by the standards of the history of settler colonialism was extraordinarily violent rage against the presence of people found to be by their very existence obstacles to [the] security of the settler project” (Crow, 2016, p. 99). Hobbes and Locke’s ideas about Natural Law, justifying the dispossession and elimination of native peoples in North America and Australia, were based on the idea that God had given the earth to men in common, but with certain expectations about political/civil polity and proper use that only Europeans adhered to. The natives, in fact, were violating Natural Law and God’s Covenant in the manner they inhabited the land, and therefore could be dispossessed and even killed.

This Chosen People trope manifested in the newly independent United States in the 19th century belief in manifest destiny—that settlers were destined to expand across North America because of the special virtues of the American people, the mission to redeem and remake the land in the image of agrarian America, and an irresistible destiny under God to accomplish this duty. Across settler colonial contexts, but particularly in the US, the idea that a Chosen People were tasked by God to go out into the wilderness and spread civilization led to several myths about the bravery and selflessness of frontiersmen and rugged pioneers.

2. *The frontier ethos.* Settler colonial formations are often marked by a frontier ethos. Settlers like to see themselves as rugged pioneers, roughing it and braving the wilds and indigenous violence in order to further the settler cause. For example, during the 19th century there developed a generalized perception of settlers and their societies, in which “the ‘frontiers’ of settlement eventually became sites of political experimentation and, typically, ‘manly’ regeneration” (Cavanagh & Veracini, 2016, p. 3). By “returning” to the land and drawing out its productive capacity through physical labor, settlers also perform a manly regeneration of their own polity. Because citizenship and landownership were linked in the newly independent US (at least for white males), going out and pioneering, establishing a homestead, and defending against native resistance were all markers of settler personhood.

Romance is also a common trope in the memorialization of the frontier—memoirs written in the late 1800s about Australian settlement rhapsodized about “the struggle and the glamour, the *camaraderie* and the fights against uneven odds, the romance of overlanding and mustering, the dirt and droughts and disease” (Moses, 2004). Settlers frequently and across settler colonial contexts lampoon humanitarians in the colonial capitals for their “ignorance of frontier realities,” arguing that the bleeding hearts bestowed so much pity on the “devastating and murderous savages, that they have none to spare for the white people” (Moses, 2004). This is also a narrative in which the settlers, by pushing the limits of the frontier, are defending civilization against indigenous savagery.

3. *Progress and superiority.* In addition to (and often intertwined with) religious justifications and stories of frontier bravery, settlers also rely on narratives of historical progress and superiority. Akenson argued that one of the “habits of mind” that follow from the “if-then” nature of the covenant (i.e., if you follow God’s law, then you will prosper) is a tendency to think

historically—to render time teleological (Akenson, 1992, pp. 26-28). And in Locke’s thinking (described above under “Sovereign entitlement” and used to justify dispossession of native land), a Eurocentric vision of the world ranked societies on a scale of world-historical development. The normative case, of course, was Europe, and the most primitive stage could be found in the “New World,” which was still in a state of nature (Locke, 1993; Tully, 1994, p. 264).

To overcome the anxiety of dispossessing native peoples of their land for commercial gain, and to reassure themselves of the virtue of their project, settlers frequently relied on myths of their superiority: “One of the most important ways was to inscribe native civilizations into a worldview in which they were seen as a primitive state in a fictitious world-historical scheme of development with European practices on top” (Tully, 1993, p. 280). With Locke’s premise that “in the beginning all the world was America,” British superiority was reassured (Tully, 1993, p. 280). With this guarantee, European settlers could even speak highly of native practices and distinctiveness with equanimity, “for they appear as unthreatening romantic nostalgia for forms of life that must convert or perish in the face of progress” (Tully, 1993, p. 280). Recall the extinction narratives relied on to disavow the presence of native peoples (described above under “Consciousness”)—with this narrative of inevitable extinction in place, settlers could even wax nostalgic for the “noble Natives” who were destined to fade from history, because as such they ceased to be a challenge to settler sovereign claims.

When “traces” of culturally advanced civilizations could not be ignored, as in 17th century America, colonial officials argued that the natives might have once been more developed but had since degenerated. As Crow argues:

“Recognizing the evidence of civilization in the histories of language and culture among aboriginal populations in North and South America alike, the image of Native Americans having possessed complex societies at some point but having lost that complexity long ago and devolved back into a state of barbarism, or even savagery, was itself a trope of imperial narratives of European conquest of the Americas” (Crow, 2016, p. 98).

This story of socio-cultural degeneration allowed for the considerable evidence of complex cultures and histories to be acknowledged while discounting its relevance to the contemporary project of empire (Crow, 2016, p. 98). Along with the narrative asserting the inevitability of native extinction in the forward march of history, these tropes allow settlers to recognize, and even “honor,” native presence without it being a threat—because it is a presence that is in the past. Therefore, “even if the land had been occupied, possessed, cultivated and traded from at some point in the past, so the argument would go, that was no longer the case, and whatever title might have been said to have existed had been surrendered” (Crow, 2016, p. 98).

In the mid-19th century, in response to rising humanitarian concerns and calls for a benevolent or ‘Christian colonization’ (a civilizing mission of moral enlightenment), emerging assertions of settler rights pushed the “doctrine of supercessionism”—“the notion that settlers had a right to replace indigenes” based on claims of British moral and racial superiority (Edmonds & Carey, 2016, p. 377). The settler ideology of expansion during the origins of the United States, for example, “rested on assumptions of the inevitability and natural laws of progress and linear development across time and on ideas of natural racial inferiority” (Crow, 2016, pp. 95-96). This narrative of historical progress and superiority was necessary to manage the contradictions and challenges posed by the continued presence of native peoples, “as settler ideas of liberty were articulated and measured against varying degrees of the lack of liberty to be observed in others, so Native Americans and African Americans, enslaved and free, posed problems to the security of those ideas and many of the subjects who held them” (Crow, 2016, pp. 95-96).

Therefore, through narratives of linear progress in which the natives naturally fade from history, Lorenzo Veracini argues that settler colonialism narrates its own end. Because the

category of ‘settler’ only makes sense in contradistinction to the category of ‘native,’ once the settler polity has erased the native (by various means), they cease to be settlers at all. The national narrative is thus re-written in a way that denies the settler character of the polity and its foundational violence against the native.

Possible Outcomes

This section explores possible outcomes of settler colonial situations. First, I describe the reasoning through which scholars of comparative settler colonialism assert that there is no “post” in settler colonization. Then I explore some critiques of this position, which argue generally that it is too “fatalistic.” Leading from these critiques, I examine the work of one scholar who has argued that decolonization is in fact possible in settler colonial contexts, before moving in the next section to examine the ways a critical approach to settler colonial studies challenges settler hegemonic narratives and (re)asserts native presence and rights.

1. No “post” in settler colonialism. Against settler narratives in which they overcome their origins and become “natives”—a narrative in which the independent settler polity is already inherently *postcolonial*—scholars of comparative settler colonial studies argue that there is no ‘post’ in settler colonialism. As described by Wolfe (2006), settler colonialism is a structure, an ongoing situation, rather than an event; therefore, the impact and legacy of settler colonialism carry on well past the actual colonization phase (Hixon, 2016, p. 169). In fact, “Wolfe’s formulation emphasizes the fact that [settler colonialism] cannot be localized within a specific period of removal or extermination and that it persists as a determinative feature of national territoriality and identity” (Rifkin, 2013, p. 324). Because settlers “rarely sail away,” “[s]ettler

colonialism is an ongoing phenomenon... [and] writing its history is charged with a presentist preoccupation” (Cavanagh & Veracini, 2016, p. 2).

Further, colonization persists because “the logic of elimination marks a return whereby the native repressed continues to structure settler-colonial society” (Wolfe, 2006, p. 390). Settler societies need to render anti-colonial struggles invisible—because they gained independence from the metropole and are therefore already “postcolonial,” because they disavow foundational violence against native groups, and because they, themselves, are “native” (among other reasons)—therefore there is no intuitive narrative of settler colonial decolonization (Veracini, 2010, p. 105). Within the settler consciousness and narrative form, the only way to end settler colonialism is by ending Aboriginal people as a political society, giving way to completed settler sovereignty (Macoun & Strakosch, 2013, p. 429). In successful settler colonial projects (where settler evacuation and/or indigenous reconciliation are avoided) there is a sustained denial of the settler colonial character of the polity (think, for example, of the United States and Israel), and therefore settler colonialism (and its structural inequality and violence) is ongoing (Veracini, 2010, p. 107).

2. Critique and counter-critique concerning fatalism. One critique of this approach is that it is marked by an underlying “colonial fatalism” that posits a structural inevitability to settler colonial relations (Macoun & Strakosch, 2013, p. 435). Macoun and Strakosch (2013) in particular note that settler colonialism “is unable to transcend itself precisely because it is conceptualized as a structure, where the only polarizing choices available to Indigenous peoples are either to be co-opted or hold a position of resistance/sovereignty, while anti-colonial action by settlers is foreclosed” (Snelgrove, Dhamoon, & Corntassel, 2014, p. 9). These scholars critique the way conceptualizing settler colonialism as a structure rather than an event “can tend

to construct existing political relationships as inevitable and unchanging” (Macoun & Strakosch, 2013, p. 427). They argue,

“while settler ways of thinking structure and dominate much of our contemporary reality, they are not equivalent to it. [Settler colonial theory] makes visible our own frames of reference, thus revealing possibilities and political visions that lie outside them. From this standpoint, the fact that settler colonialism struggles to narrate its own ending does not mean that it cannot end” (Macoun & Strakosch, 2013, p. 427).

Worded differently, the belief in the ongoing structure of settler colonial encounters closes off “the potentials for cultural transformation of settler subjectivities as part of the broader anti-colonial project” (Svirsky, 2017, p. 22).

While I appreciate this critique, I think it is somewhat misplaced. Along with Wolfe and Veracini, I think the settler colonial relationship never goes away—it is an intrinsic part of the resulting independent polities. As Mamdani describes the situation, “Settlers are kept settlers by a form of the state that makes a distinction – particularly juridical – between conquerors and conquered, settlers and natives, and makes it the basis of other distinctions that tend to buttress the conquerors and isolate the conquered, politically” (Mamdani, 1998). Neither Wolfe nor Veracini argue that the elimination of the native is a foregone conclusion—that is not the point in stressing the structural nature of settler colonization. Veracini notes that the structure of settler colonialism described by Wolfe can’t be reduced to its intention—while the settler colonial structure *attempts* to eliminate Indigenous peoples, it *fails* to do so. As he says:

“Far from equating settler colonialism with elimination, Wolfe’s ‘structure’ refers to a continuing relationship of inequality between Indigenous and settler collectives. Beside ‘structure’ and ‘event’, it seems important to note that Wolfe refers to a logic of elimination, not to elimination itself. After all, were Indigenous elimination to become an accomplished and irretrievable fact, settler colonialism would lose its logic” (Veracini, 2014, p. 311).

Though the goal of settlers is to erase colonized subjectivities and to supersede the colonial rule of difference—“winning” by discontinuing unequal relationships—I think it is critically

important that scholars, activists, and native peoples continuously draw attention to the ways settler colonial relationships continue to structure unequal relations in the resulting settler polity (Cavanagh & Veracini, 2016, p. 3). The concern voiced by Macoun and Strakosch that our contemporary reality might be reduced to equivalence with settler ways of thinking seems misplaced given that the dominant hegemonic narratives don't recognize the settler colonial nature of these polities in the first place.

Settler colonialists want to forget they are settlers, transcend the process of settling and eliminating the native, and bury their settler traces—only by reasserting of the persistence of the native and an ongoing unequal colonial relationship can scholars and activists prevent or challenge this process. As Svirsky has argued, if the settler colonial project is always incomplete then this incompleteness must be explained, and it can't just be explained in terms of the oppressor's self-error or strategic deferment. It must also take into account the forces that cause the settler structure to remain incomplete—namely, resistance and confrontation with the native (Svirsky, 2017, p. 24). Therefore, I think Veracini and Wolfe would agree, as I do, that “[e]xposing the settler colonial project as fundamentally incomplete – and unable to be completed in the face of Indigenous resistance – has the potential to be a profoundly liberating and destabilizing move” (Macoun & Strakosch, 2013, p. 432).

3. The possibility of decolonization? Raef Zreik has argued that decolonization in settler colonial contexts is achieved when the settler ceases to be a settler—when he leaves the category of settler and must be re-categorized (Zreik, 2016, p. 351). He argues that the settler stops being a settler (1) when he stops his expansion taking over more and more land and resources (this is also the moment he identifies as where decolonization begins, but not where it ends), and (2) when he gives up his supremacy and accepts full equality with the native (the settler stays but

colonization goes) (Zreik, 2016, p. 357). So, decolonization begins when the settler runs out of land to appropriate (the closing of the frontier), and ends when he accepts full equality with the native. Zreik then asserts that there is something unique about Palestine/Israel, because “[m]ost settler-colonial cases are now over while in Israel/Palestine the process is still going on at full force as well as the struggle against it” (Zreik, 2016, p. 356).

The problem with Zreik’s assertion regarding the ongoing nature of settler colonization in Israel/Palestine (contrasted against settler colonial cases that are now “over”), is that it ignores the way the racialization of the settler-native relationship continues to structure relations in the settler colonial polity. I doubt the Aboriginals of Australia or Native Americans in the US would agree that their settler colonial cases are “over,” or that they have full equality within the settler polity (which Zreik himself identifies as necessary for completing decolonization). It is clear that Zreik understands the difference between settler colonialism and colonialism—that the object is the land and the logic is eliminatory, drawing on Wolfe—but he misses Wolfe’s crucial argument that settler colonialism is a *structure*, rather than an event, and that the unequal relationship between the settler and the native does not go away with settler “independence.” Zreik even goes so far as to say, in apparent contradiction to his statement that settlers don’t stop being settlers until the natives are equals, that “[m]ost settler-colonial cases that one can think of have concluded either with the near-annihilation of the native as a collective group (as in Australia and the USA) or with the expulsion of the settlers, as in Algeria” (Zreik, 2016, p. 356). Overall, his argument fails to convince that settler colonization ends, settlers cease to be settlers, and everyone in the resulting polity is equal.

Zreik’s assertion that settler colonialism in the US and Australia “concluded” with the near-annihilation of the native as a collective group is troubling, not for its emphasis on

elimination, but for declaring these settler colonizations *over*. Would these be cases, then, where he would argue that the settlers have ceased to be settlers, and decolonization has been achieved? Veracini was concerned about this kind of reasoning, which privileges demography, because it posits that settler colonization “ends” when the natives are (mostly) eliminated. For example, in his classification of colonial types, Fieldhouse (1966) favors demography, placing “mixed,” “plantation,” and “pure settlement” colonies on an interpretive continuum: “in the ‘mixed’ colonies, settlers had encountered a resilient and sizeable indigenous population and asserted their ascendancy while relying on an indigenous workforce; in the ‘plantation’ colonies, settlers relied on imported and unfree workers; and in the ‘pure settlement’ colonies, the white settlers had eradicated and/or marginalized the indigenous population” (Veracini, 2010, p. 5).

Fieldhouse’s typology has been drawn on by a number of settler colonial scholars (including Veracini), but Veracini worries that using definitions of settler colonial formations that privilege demography means that colonizers cease being colonizers if and when they become the majority of the population, and conversely when indigenous people become the minority they cease being colonized (what Zreik calls their “near annihilation”) (Veracini, 2010, p. 5).

Veracini’s own definition of settler colonialism is therefore not premised on demographic ratios. The general theoretical argument he develops, and which I’ve used as a framework for tracing the morphological continuities of settler colonial formations in this paper, is two part: first, “the settler colonial situation is characterized by a settler capacity to control the population economy as a marker of a substantive type of sovereignty,” and “this situation is associated with a particular state of mind [consciousness] and a specific narrative form” (Veracini, 2010, p. 12). Defining settler colonialism thusly, Veracini draws attention to the fact that “the possibility of

ultimately discontinuing/decolonising [sic] settler colonial forms remains problematic”
(Veracini, 2010, p. 12).

Challenging Hegemonic (Settler) Narratives

In this final section of Part I, I put aside arguments about whether or not settler colonial formations can be decolonized, and focus on challenging hegemonic settler narratives on their merits and against historical and present realities. A number of scholars have utilized the settler colonial paradigm to reexamine relations of power and national origin across a range of settler colonial contexts, including Israel, the continental US, Hawaii, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia. Rather than asserting that settler colonial formations can or have ended (Macoun & Strakosch, 2013; Zreik, 2016), I think it is important to challenge the hegemonic narratives and internalized consciousness of settler formations which disavow foundational violence, disavow the presence of the native, assert settler fixity, and narrate themselves out of settler colonialism and into indigeneity. Further, examining relations of power through the lens of settler colonialism makes ongoing structuring inequalities visible in cases in which nationalist narratives obscure them. It is important to identify state formations as settler colonial because “defining a movement as settler-colonial may well help to clarify the relations between the settling nation and the native one” (Shapira & Wiskind-Elper, 1995, p. 30). One of the realities that continues to reveal settler colonial structures is the persistence of the native—in the face of settler narratives that described them as vanishing into history, existence is resistance for indigenous peoples.

1. Identity formation. I described above in the section on settler consciousness how in the settler imagination the natives are inconsequential to the form each settler society takes—the role

of this encounter in shaping the identity of the settler nation is written off and therefore marked as a settler colonial “non-encounter.” The story in which natives are inconsequential to settler identity formation is one that aims to separate “what we have done” from “who we are” (Piterberg, 2011, p. 25). Examining the history of these polities through the lens of settler colonization undermines these hegemonic narratives and focuses the gaze on continuing power imbalances and persistent inequality.

In one scholarly effort to do just this, Gabriel Piterberg brings the emerging field of comparative settler colonialism and the field of comparative literature into conversation in his article “Literature of Settler Societies” through a close, contextual reading of two pairs of literary texts: autobiographical novels by Albert Camus and S. Yizhar, and short stories by Camus and Amos Oz (Piterberg, 2011). Pointing out that several settler colonies have given birth to powerful nation-states able to assert their own hegemonic narratives, both nationally and internationally, he argues that the relatively new field of comparative settler colonialism is important as it “not only questions these narratives through countervailing evidence and interpretation, but also offers an alternative account of the social formations themselves,” and

“[i]n the process, three fundamental features common to these hegemonic settler myths are undermined. The first of these is the putative uniqueness of each settler nation. The second is their privileging of the settlers’ intentions as sovereign subjects, at the expense of the consequences (be what may the intentions), and at the expense of the natives’ consciousness. Third is the supposed inconsequence of the natives to the form each settler society takes; in other words, the conflict with the natives is not denied, but the fundamental role that this conflict has played in shaping the identity of the settler nation is written off” (Piterberg, 2011, p. 3).

By bringing comparative settler colonialism and comparative literature together in analyzing four texts, Piterberg shows that the literature is related to the material context within which it was produced, and therefore highlights the “morphological continuity” of settler colonial imaginaries and forms posited by Veracini (2010). In this case, the relevant forms are the *settler plantation*

(in the case of Camus and Yizhar) and the *pure settlement colony* (in the case of Oz). Piterberg argues that the different socio-economic realities of these two types of settler colonies “have played an acute role in shaping the experiences of the authors and their literary imagination, and that the nuanced differences between the experience of a settler plantation on the one hand and that of a pure settlement colony on the other may express themselves in novels, novellas and short stories” (Piterberg, 2011, p. 6).

In his chapter on settler colonialism in the United States in the late 19th century, Matthew Crow argues that the US is at once a settler society and a postcolonial one. Though the US is clearly a settler colonial nation, its identity is taken to be anti-imperial. The fight for independence from Britain in the founding of the republic “bestowed on the historical self-understanding of the nation several governing ideas and tropes, not least of which has been a tendency to narrate national history as that of not only a colonial but a colonized people, resisting the reach of an imperial central state” (Crow, 2016, p. 95). In reality, the populist economic and political promise of revolutionary republicanism “was predicated on removal of Native title and the forced removal of Natives themselves” (Crow, 2016, p. 95). Regarding the disavowal of settler origins he states: “Settler colonialism matters to any understanding of the history of the United States simply because, in the American context, settler colonialism has worked by allowing the predominant settler population to not recognize itself as one” (Crow, 2016, p. 95). Crow describes the character of settler colonialism in the United states as “a confident narrative of historical development that marginalizes and subdues while not altogether erasing other histories” (Crow, 2016, p. 106). Though American history should be conceptualized within the context of settler colonization, “a thick cloud of nationalist mythology has long obscured identification of the United States as fundamentally a settler society.... Denial and elision of the

colonial past are thus fundamental to the United States, as with other settler societies” (Hixon, 2016, p. 169).

Crow stresses that settler colonialism is a fundamental building block of thought, law and politics in the US, and that

“the expansion of settler society in the United States was forged in response to various challenges in the form of the presence of peoples who either stood in the way of or could potentially threaten the security of the idealized settler subject configured by American political thought and in the form of the inseparability of expansion policy from the partisan politics of the antebellum period and the political economy of slavery” (Crow, 2016, p. 97).

In other words, despite the hegemonic narrative whereby the natives are inconsequential to the form each settler society takes, the presence of the native was *central* to the identity of the resulting settler society. Crow argues that frontier violence, and the experience of the *idea* of frontier violence (spread in the pages of newspapers in the mid-1700s), were important because “it was in the power of circulating images and stories of racial violence that a polyglot and fractious settler population would start to think of itself as a distinct people” (Crow, 2016, p. 101). Settlers were only a cohesive polity in their relationship to, and disavowal of, the metropole and the indigenous other. In fact, because Americans have been “playing Indian” since they first mocked the British by showing up in drag for the Boston Tea Party in 1773, they as a settler society have continued affirm “the trope of conquest” and have persistently reaffirmed their own identity through “racial victimization of the Indian other” (Hixon, 2016, p. 178). This persistence reflects a paradox that “even though Americans sought to remove indigenous people and destroy their cultures, there was nonetheless ‘no way to make a complete [American] identity without Indians’” (Hixon, 2016, p. 178).

The collection of papers in *Rethinking settler colonialism: History and memory in Australia, Canada, Aotearoa New Zealand and South Africa*, focuses on the different ways in

which the long history of contact between indigenous peoples and the heterogeneous white colonial communities which settled these places has been “obscured, narrated and embodied in public culture in the twentieth century, and the various contests over historical memory which have more recently emerged” (Coombes, 2006, p. 1). The authors in this collection compare these cases on the basis of common features in their colonial histories: they were ostensibly self-governing, had an ambivalent relationship to the metropole, and the settler populations came to stay permanently (Coombes, 2006, p. 1). The strength of this collection, while it may not explicitly draw on or contribute to settler colonial *theory*, is in revealing the fallacy in the settler imagination in which the natives are seen as inconsequential to the specific form each settler society takes (Piterberg, 2011). One of the contentions of the collection is that, despite commonalities in each context in terms of cultural and political institutions, practices and policies, and attitudes toward class and gender, “the distinctiveness which could be said to mark out the various white constituencies as ‘Australian’, ‘South African’, ‘Canadian’ or ‘New Zealander’ is fundamentally contingent on their relationship to and with the various indigenous communities they necessarily encountered” (Coombes, 2006, p. 1). In other words,

“the colonisers’ [sic] dealings with indigenous peoples – through resistance, containment, appropriation, assimilation, miscegenation or attempted destruction – is the historical factor which has ultimately shaped the cultural and political character of the new nations, mediating in highly significant ways their shared colonial roots/routes” (Coombes, 2006, p. 1).

The authors also note the deceptively benign ring to the term “settler,” which masks the violence of these colonial encounters (which are necessarily violent and eliminatory), the role of the “frontier” in the settler imaginary, and the significance of control and settlement of the land to these formations (Coombes, 2006, p. 2). The works included in the collection expand on the project of comparing white settler colonial formations, and a number of the contributions attempt cross-cultural and intra-national comparison, in addition to considering the historical significance

of cultural practices and institutions as integral to the analysis of settler-indigenous relations (Coombes, 2006, p. 3).

Piterberg (2011) and Coombes (2006) assert that indigenous people, and the colonizers' relations with them, play a pivotal role in shaping the identity of the settler nation, and Wolfe (2006, p. 390) stresses that the process of replacing native society with settler society does not happen *tout court*, but rather the native repressed continues to structure the settler-colonial society. Framed in another way, Svirsky argues that an analysis of settler colonialism must also include an analysis of the resistance these projects continue to face. Settler colonialism is a structure, but the nuances from one settler colonial context to another should be accounted for by studying “the forces that bring about the variation of the parts of the structure and their relations, redefining it anew” (Svirsky, 2017, p. 29).

In her article “Anthropologies of the United States,” Jessica Cattelino (2010), recognizing the pivotal role of settler-native conflict to the particular form the settler formation takes, argues for more ethnographic research that locates Native North America (the indigenous peoples of North America) not as distinct from the anthropology of the United States, but as critical to it (Cattelino, 2010, p. 276). She contends:

“Emergent inquiry into settler colonialism and the politics of indigeneity has the potential to strengthen the anthropology of the United States by accounting for the ways that being a settler society structures all American lives. Such an approach can enhance the anthropology of Native North America by identifying the ongoing conditions and limits of settler colonialism while also attending to forms of indigenous political and cultural distinctiveness” (Cattelino, 2010, p. 282).

By not taking into account the ways settler colonial polities are shaped by, and constantly respond to, indigenous presence and claims, and by treating indigenous peoples as marginal to American society, Cattelino argues that the discipline of anthropology has “reflected and reinforced the positioning of indigenous peoples as outside the time and space of modern

American life” (Cattelino, 2010, p. 283). As S. Gregory (1998) asserts, “community describes not a static, place-based social collective but the power-laden field of social relations whose meanings, structures, and frontiers are continually produced, contested, and reworked in relation to a complex range of sociopolitical attachments and antagonisms” (S. Gregory, 1998, p. 11). Settler colonial societies both disavow the presence and claims of indigenous peoples *and* shape themselves in response to the actual existence of these peoples. Cattelino notes that settler colonialism, as an analytic tool, creates a set of structures, practices, ideological formations, and dilemmas that are open to social scientific analysis, including, but not limited to, “the dilemmas that indigenous peoples’ everyday practices of citizenship pose to settler states, distinctive epistemologies and disciplinary formations, settler quandaries of how to claim national histories and territories when these are laced with traces of invasion, and pressure on the crafting of shared futures” (Cattelino, 2010, pp. 285-286).

2. *Settler colonialism and structuring inequalities.* Since becoming more established as an independent scholarly field with more developed theoretical grounding, settler colonialism has been used to reexamine past and existing relationships and conditions in a number of colonial contexts. For example, the edited collection *Asian Settler Colonialism: From Local Governance to the Habits of Everyday Life in Hawai’i* opens with a poem by Haunani-Kay Trask entitled “Settlers, not immigrants,” which describes the Asian settlers who came to take land and sovereignty from the native people of Hawai’i. Trask, a Hawaiian nationalist leader and professor of Hawaiian studies, asserts that Hawai’i is a settler society in which the indigenous people have been killed, suppressed, and marginalized for the benefit of Asian settlers. Hawaiian scholarship on ethnic histories, argue the editors, tells the story of Asians’ civil rights struggles as one of nation building, therefore legitimizing Asian claims to a place for themselves in

Hawai'i, and erasing the claims of native peoples (Fujikane & Okamura, 2008, p. 2). Defining settler projects as ones of nation building renders anti-colonial struggles of native peoples invisible in settler colonial contexts, and as previously noted "there is no intuitive narrative of settler colonial decolonization" (Veracini, 2010, p. 105). This collection calls for a shift away from accounts of Hawai'i as "multicultural," toward an awareness of it as a white- and Asian-dominated US settler colony, because it is important to note that indigenous struggles to reclaim ancestral lands "extended beyond a civil rights framework to challenge the very foundation of the US settler state" (Fujikane & Okamura, 2008, p. 4).

While in ethnic studies Asians in Hawai'i have been referred to as "local Asians" or "Asian Americans," the authors collected in this work emphasize the structural difference between settlers and natives in order to reexamine Asian settler occupation of Hawaiian lands. Drawing on Johnston and Lawson (2000), the edited collection reexamines the history of colonialism in Hawai'i through the analytical lens of settler colonialism. This approach has the potential to strengthen scholarly work by accounting for the ways being a settler society structures all Hawaiian lives, and "by identifying the ongoing conditions and limits of settler colonialism while also attending to forms of indigenous political and cultural distinctiveness" (Cattelino, 2010, p. 282). In the essays here, Hawaiians demand recognition of the distinction between natives and settlers of color, and point out that the status of Asians as settlers is not defined by their political power (which they may feel is very limited in relation to the United States), but rather by their relationship to indigenous peoples in a settler state (Fujikane & Okamura, 2008, p. 12).

In her article "Florida Seminole Housing and the Social Meanings of Sovereignty," Cattelino examines Seminole housing in the US in order to offer insight "into the ongoing

processes of settler coloniality in the United States, much as scholars have examined housing as a domain of colonialism in other periods and locales” (Cattelino, 2006, p. 700). Her ethnography shows how “U.S. governmental control over indigenous residence took on historically particular connotations of subjugation and genocide” as indigenous people were being organized into modern, Western homes by the colonizing state (Cattelino, 2006, p. 704). This piece very clearly illustrates Wolfe’s argument about the ongoing nature of invasion, the history of which does not stop when it moves on from the era of frontier homicide, but which rather charts “the continuities, discontinuities, adjustments, and departures whereby a logic that initially informed frontier killing transmutes into different modalities, discourses and institutional formations as it undergirds the historical development and complexification [sic] of settler society” (Wolfe, 2006, p. 402). The logic of elimination underpins settler colonial formations, so while modes of elimination might shift over time (from frontier violence to forced assimilation), the end goal is the same: asserting settler sovereignty by erasing any conflicting native claim. Because settlers come to stay, form societies distinct from the native population, and seek to control land and resources and establish their own economy and modes of governance, settler formations are marked by “a particular structure of privilege” (Elkins & Pedersen, 2005, p. 4; Masri, 2017). This privilege is expressed in deep and pervasive inequalities between the settler and indigenous populations, and in divisions that are usually “built into the economy, the political system, and the law” (Elkins & Pedersen, 2005, p. 4; Masri, 2017).

3. *Persistence of the native.* As described above, one narrative settlers have frequently relied on positions the native as naturally vanishing into the mists of history. This is a narrative that has continued into the present day. As Hixon describes:

“At the beginning of the twentieth century, discourse and representation picked up where demographic swamping and indigenous removal left off. In the United States, as in other settler societies, historical and cultural frameworks represented the colonizer as the

redeemer of a pre-modern land in a triumph of civilization and progress over primitivism and savagery. In the most extreme form of representations, the colonizer attempts to displace the indigene altogether and usurp the role of native in historical narratives. More typically, the indigene becomes a ‘noble savage’ inevitably ‘passing’ from the scene to make way for a more advanced people” (Hixon, 2016, p. 170).

But, as Hixon notes, the vanishing native refused to vanish: “according to the 2010 [US] census, 5.2 million people identified as Indian or as indigenous Alaskan, comprising hundreds of indigenous bands. Another 1.4 million identified as indigenous Hawaiians or Pacific Islanders” (Hixon, 2016, p. 170). Thus Native peoples have defied their prescribed historical role as a ‘dying race’ through the modern tribal sovereignty movement.

In an effort to assert a sense of authority, often the colonizer “effects an inversion in which tribes are framed as the colonizers” demanding special privileges, and therefore “the ethnic minority becomes the aggressor and the majority population the victims deprived of the rightful prerogatives of ‘conquest’” (Hixon, 2016, p. 174). In the 1990s and 2000s in Australia conservatives argued that “Indigenous leaders did not represent their constituencies and bullied decent white folk with their ceaseless demands” (Moses, 2004). They therefore feign ignorance of the colonial past. Indigenous Alaskans, for example, have been framed as minorities who have been ‘given’ enough, not as sovereign peoples who were conquered and dispossessed (Hixon, 2016, p. 175). Therefore, to challenge hegemonic narratives some scholars are focusing on Indigenous resurgence—“ways to restore and regenerate Indigenous nationhood and the ‘repatriation of Indigenous land and life’”—to “resist the disavowal of a colonial present still defined by Indigenous dispossession” (Snelgrove et al., 2014, p. 2). Because settler colonialism is structurally different from colonialism, resistance must take different forms as well. Settler colonialism is aimed at the land without the native people, so indigenous persistence and survival become crucial (Veracini, 2011, p. 3). There is no decolonization in settler colonialism, because “the independent polity is the *settler* polity” (Veracini, 2011, p. 6). Settler colonialism is aimed

at extinguishing the settler colonial relation, so indigenous resistance must entail keeping the settler-indigenous relationship ongoing (Veracini, 2011, p. 6).

3.3 Part II: Settler Colonialism in Israel/Palestine

Since the 1990s there has been a marked increase in academic research that uses settler-colonialism to inform analyses about the Israeli state and society. Placing settler colonial formations in comparison shows that they are not singular—it undermines the putative uniqueness of settler nations, which, as stated above, don't like to be compared. A number of scholars have used settler-colonialism as an analytical framework to understand the Israeli state and society from across a wide range of social sciences and humanities, including history, sociology, anthropology, gender and women studies, religion, sexuality studies, literature, geography, law, and citizenship studies (Amara, Abu-Saad, & Yiftachel, 2012; Masalha, 1992; Masri, 2017; Morgensen, 2012; Piterberg, 2008; Robinson, 2013; Rouhana & Sultany, 2003; Shafir & Peled, 2002; Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2015). Other academics have rejected this perspective, highlighting the historical, cultural, and religious ties between the Jewish people and the region. They have argued that Jewish settlement in Palestine cannot be colonialism since it is the Jews' ancestral homeland, and thus Zionist colonization is different than other forms of settler colonization (Aaronsohn, 1996; Dershowitz, 2003; Yakobson & Rubinstein, 2009).

Veracini (2010) suggests that settler colonial phenomena possess a mimetic character, and that the recurrent need to disavow foundational violence and to disavow the presence of the indigenous other produces a circumstance where the actual operation of settler colonial practices is concealed behind other occurrences:

“The settler hides (and thus avoids acknowledging himself as settler)—he hides behind the metropolitan colonizer (because he ‘is not sovereign’ and therefore ‘is not responsible’ for colonialism and its excesses), behind the activity of settlers elsewhere,

behind the persecuted, behind the migrant, behind the refugee (the settler is seeking refuge from suffering elsewhere), behind his labor and hardship ('the settler does not dispossess anyone' but rather struggles with the land to sustain himself and his family), and, most importantly, behind the ethnic cleanser (the settler is peaceful, non-violent, entering an empty land; the indigenous people leave naturally, they are not displaced by the settler)" (Veracini, 2010, p. 14).

And through all this hiding settler colonialism "obscures the conditions of its own production" (Veracini, 2010, p. 14). It is for this reason that comparative settler colonialism is so important. The recognition of a "morphological continuity" in various settler colonial imaginaries enables scholars to question these hegemonic narratives and to challenge the putative uniqueness and exceptionalism of each settler colonial polity. As Piterberg says, the intentions of settler colonial societies (a home for the ravaged Jews of Europe) cannot be allowed to overshadow the effects of their formation (the destruction of native societies) (Piterberg, 2008). He argues that the context in which the history of Zionism should be understood is the comparative study of white settler societies since the sixteenth century, and that this historical and analytic framing is true for issues such as land, labor, institutions, consciousness, knowledge and literary imagination (Piterberg, 2008). It is important to note that though Israel is particular, it is not unique, singular, or exceptional—a claim that most settler polities make.

Gershon Shafir's *Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882-1914* is a foundational text in bringing Israel/Palestine into the fold of settler colonial studies, drawn on by settler colonial scholars such as Veracini, Wolfe, and Piterberg, in addition to being a major contribution to settler colonial studies in general. His book is a radical text for four reasons. First, because it challenges hegemonic narratives about Zionism, arguing that the two things underlying the Zionist project and its motivations are material constraints and encounter with Palestinians (land and labor). Second, he therefore denies that this was an ethnic/religious conflict, as it has been framed for so long, while recognizing that this is how difference (between

settlers and natives) is defined. Third, Shafir brings Palestine/Israel into the field of comparative settler colonialism, which challenges settler formations that like to frame themselves as exceptional. And fourth, he points out how Israel's identity, institutions, etc. are shaped by their encounter and conflict with the native, despite the fact that settler formations like to think they are internally developed.

Challenging Notions of Israeli Exceptionalism

Asserting that Israel is not unique as a settler colonial nation is not to say that it doesn't have its particularities. Israel is a settler polity that "is not [morphologically] different from Canada, Argentina, Brazil, the United States or South Africa":

"What makes Israel unique is that it is a belated settler colony which was launched in the last two decades of the nineteenth century and, even more so, that it continues the colonization through which it was formed into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. It is Zionism's belated nature, past the heyday of other effective settler colonial movements, that requires us to understand its distinct character and corresponding theories on how to accomplish its goal" (Shafir, 2016, p. 339).

But despite obvious differences in place and time, the parallels between the US and Israeli settler colonial projects are striking, as "[b]oth reveal a propensity to establish 'facts on the ground' and a willingness to employ repeated and often extreme violence and to invoke tropes of divine authorization on the one hand and terror and savagery on the other to justify and reinforce the settler project" (Hixon, 2016, p. 177).

In tracing how the Zionist project fits the morphological continuity of settler colonialism—therefore also framing this conflict as marked by a colonial relationship rather than as a struggle between two competing nationalisms—I will discuss the centrality of land, management of the population economy, assertions of sovereign entitlement, consciousness, and narrative form. In laying out this analysis I will also draw on ethnographic data from field work

conducted over seven months, mainly in the eastern Gush Etzion settlement bloc. Finally, in closing out the chapter I will discuss possible outcomes in the Israel/Palestine context and the importance of challenging Israel's hegemonic nationalist narratives.

1. Land in Israel/Palestine. Settler colonialism is distinct from colonialism in that the primary object is possession of the land emptied by various means of its native inhabitants. In the case of Israel, "[t]he early Zionist maxim of '*kiboush haAdamah*' [occupation of land], and the early formation of a special organization (the Jewish National Fund) with the mandate of acquiring land in Palestine under the Ottomans and later under the British Mandate are only examples of the centrality of the control of land for the Zionist movement" (Masri, 2017, p. 16). But though all settler colonial formations share this imperative, their particular contexts (including both demography and geography) shape the form land appropriation and native displacement will take.

Shafir argues that Jewish-Arab relations from the period of the founders assumed a distinctively colonial cast, but that alternative versions of colonialism characterize the confrontation of the First and Second *Aliyot* (waves of immigration) with the Arab population of Palestine (Shafir, 1989, p. ix):

"The colonialism of the First *Aliya* was based on sparse settlement and exploitation and the employment of low-paid Palestinian workers on Jewish-owned farms. The Second *Aliya* replaced it with the colonialism of dense settlement in exclusive Jewish colonies and displacement of Arab residents" (Shafir, 1996, p. xii).

Shafir frames the dilemma accompanying Israel's formation as "a growing tension between two competing visions of building an exclusively Jewish nation in Palestine: maximalist territorial exclusivism, the logical conclusion of which is the removal of the Palestinian Arabs; and the territorial partition of Eretz Israel/Palestine leading to separate Israeli and Palestinian national development" (Shafir, 1996, p. xxii). Through his amalgamation of the taxonomies crafted by

Fieldhouse (1966) and later by Fredrickson (1982, 1988), Shafir distinguishes between pure settlement and settlement societies based on two factors: (1) the centrality of land acquisition/territorial supremacy, which is tied up with effective demographic presence, or the ratio between land and population density (Shafir, 1996, pp. 12-13); and (2) potential labor forces, where in mixed colonies settlers relied on native peoples, in plantation colonies they relied on imported slaves, and in pure settlement colonies they relied on poor white settlers (Shafir, 1996, p. 14). He argues that Palestine was not well-equipped for a pure settlement colony because unlike in other settler colonial contexts there was no sparse indigenous population (Shafir, 1996, pp. 18-19).

Israel is a latecomer among settler colonial polities. Jewish settlement in Palestine began in the 19th century, and Israel wasn't established as an independent nation until 1948. In contrast, the US became a state in 1776 and Australia became a state in 1901, both after having been settled since the 17th century. Therefore, while "European settlers were attracted to the American continent, Southern Africa, Australia and elsewhere by the social mobility afforded by their ability to take possession of abundant land, and thus the opening of the land for settlement was their foremost priority," Palestine was an exception, because the land had to be purchased, and early Jewish settlers had limited resources (Shafir, 2016, p. 345). Unlike in North America and Australia, the level of sedentary agriculture was high in Palestine, the territory was more densely populated, there were cities, the natives were socio-politically developed (in trade, agriculture, and rights of use to till land) and were part of a large empire—in other words, there was a much more urban and sedentary population than settlers encountered in other contexts. The first wave of Jewish settlement was therefore focused on dominating the wage labor market, rather than on

acquiring land. Therefore, settler colonialism in Palestine developed along very different socio-economic logics to that of Australia and the US.

In the US, settlement was spurred by enclosure in England and based on private ownership of land—settlers were homesteading precisely to *avoid* participating in a wage-labor economy. In Palestine, settlement was organized into cooperatives (kibbutzim) because the nationalization of land was necessary to ensure exclusive Jewish ownership:

“The agricultural workers recognized that the guarantees of public ownership of land, hereditary lease to tenants, and proscription of subleasing by the JNF [Jewish National Fund] were the best guarantors of workers’ colonization” (Shafir, 2016, p. 347).

The JNF’s hereditary lease would facilitate national colonization by expediting “the immigration of masses who would not need to sink their meager resources into land purchase” and which would also be the tool for ensuring the employment of Jewish workers (Shafir, 2016, p. 347). So, like Fredrickson argued in 1981, the form the settler formation took depended on demography, geography, and their ability to self-govern (Fredrickson, 1982).

2. Population economy. Settler colonialism refers to a relationship between dominant and subordinate groups characterized by practices of construction, exclusion, elimination, and erasure. The Israeli/Palestinian context has entailed a century of Zionist ideology that has been marshaled to dispossess non-Jewish residents and erase remnants of their presence through geographical, architectural, and historiographical means (Efrat, 2006; D. Gregory, 2004; Rose, 2005; Sand, 2012; Weizman, 2012). Establishment of the State of Israel, as in other settler colonial contexts, “required that a considerable portion of British Palestine be ethnically cleansed of its Arab inhabitants” a clearance which made possible the establishment of “a state more nationally homogeneous, with more territory, and, from the Jewish nationalist point of view, with more ‘rational’ borders than originally allocated by the United Nations Resolution 181 and the territorial partition plan” (Kimmerling, 2001, p. 5).

As stated in Part I in describing the various forms of transfer through which settler polities might manage their respective population economy, the particular mode of removal/elimination depends on the geographical and demographic context and moment in history. From the early years of the 20th century, the leaders of the Zionist movement had to deal with “the Arab Problem”—the presence of Palestinian Arabs in large numbers which impeded the task of establishing a Jewish state with a Jewish majority (Masri, 2017, p. 17). And despite the prevalence of alternative visions prior to the 1948 war (Azoulay, 2014), “the establishment of the State of Israel has construed these conditions of enmity as a zero-sum game, hinged on the logic of non-recognition” (Amir, 2016, p. 2). Gregory notes that “[t]he concept of transfer was central to the Zionist vision of the Land of Israel with both territorial and cultural integrity,” the vision of an ethnically pure *Jewish* state (D. Gregory, 2004, p. 82). The elimination of the native through various forms of transfer was integral to the Zionist vision—for the Israelis to stay, the Palestinians had to go.

The idea of physically transferring the Arab population can be traced back to the late 19th century, though it was discussed and took a more concrete shape in the 1930s and 1940s (Masri, 2017, p. 17). This was the prevailing mindset on the eve of the 1948 war, and between December 1947 and the end of the war in 1949, “the overwhelming majority of the Palestinians living in the areas that became Israel fled or were expelled” (Masri, 2017, p. 17). This demographic shift was a major war gain, and the state took measures to block the return of Palestinians, like destroying the villages from which they had fled (Masri, 2017, p. 18). Citizenship and the census also became tools of expulsion, since the legibility and enumeration of the Arabs who had remained during the war (who were deemed “lawful”) made it possible to distinguish between them and

those who had fled and were trying to return (who were designated as “illegal”) (Masri, 2017, p. 18).

The Australian solution to the problem of persistent indigenous societies was to absorb them, but in that case the demographic ratio, where indigenous peoples were numerically overwhelmed by the settler population, was amenable to assimilation (Wolfe, 2001, p. 874), while Israel is still coping with what Gershon Shafir calls “the inescapable facts of Palestinian demography” (Shafir, 1989, p. xxiii). Additionally, Wolfe explains that Aborigines in Australia were absorbed rather than ejected because no external homeland could plausibly be assigned to them, while Arab Palestinians are perceived as having plenty of places to go—to any one of the surrounding Arab states (Wolfe, 2001).

It is not only the demography but also the geography of Israel that is different than that of the US and Australia, where settler colonization essentially encompassed a continent, while Israel is a much smaller polity surrounded by Arab states. In the U.S. context, Wolfe (2006) describes how eventually expansion westward met expansion from the Pacific, therefore closing off the reservations for native peoples. Therefore, in North America and Australia, settler expansion into the frontier reached a limit at which the strategy of removal turned to one of assimilation (Wolfe, 2006). Wolfe states:

“For comparative purposes, it is significant that the full radicalization of assimilation policies in both the U.S. and Australia coincided with the closure of the frontier, which forestalled spatial stop-gaps such as removal. In infra-continental societies like those of mainland Europe, the frontier designates a national boundary as opposed to a mobile index of expansion. Israel’s borders partake of both qualities. Despite Zionism’s chronic addiction to territorial expansion, Israel’s borders do not preclude the option of removal (in this connection, it is hardly surprising that a nation that has driven so many of its original inhabitants into the sand should express fear of itself being driven into the sea). As the logic of elimination has taken on a variety of forms in other settler-colonial situations, so, in Israel, the continuing tendency to Palestinian expulsion has not been limited to the unelaborated exercise of force” (Wolfe, 2006, pp. 400-401).

One way the removal of Palestinians to surrounding Arab states was attempted (and partially successful) was by continually removing them east, eventually across the Jordan River. But in an effort to secure maximalist state borders, Israeli settlers have fortified the border with Jordan (through the construction of settlements there), and therefore Palestinians are locked into “reservations” in a manner similar to the Native Americans, but in numbers too great to shift tactics to assimilation (the “demographic threat” is that one day the Palestinian Arabs within Israel’s sovereign borders will outnumber Israeli Jews) (Wolfe, 2006).

The settler colonial identity of the state is still apparent today in the state’s population policies, which follow the main logic of elimination. Restrictions are placed on Palestinian citizens, mainly by banning family reunification with other Palestinians, while the Jewish State promotes increasing Jewish immigration to the territory (Masri, 2017, p. 20). While downward pressure is consistently applied to the Palestinian population in Israel proper, the Israeli *Citizenship Law* provides that “[E]very Jew has the right to ascend [immigrate] to the Country” (Masri, 2017, p. 19). The inclusive nature and broad conception of the *Law of Return* constitutes the cornerstone of the positive dimension of settler colonialism—while the native population is forcibly diminished, the settlers draw on a readily available pool of potential Jewish citizens in the diaspora, hoping to increase their population through the movement of large numbers of Jews across space (Masri, 2017, p. 20).

3. Sovereign entitlement. The settler ethos can be seen clearly in the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel, the first constitutional document of the state and the moment of “independence” from European powers (Masri, 2017). The Declaration describes the settlers and their deeds in the following terms:

“Impelled by this historic and traditional attachment, Jews strove in every successive generation to re-establish themselves in their ancient homeland. In recent decades they returned in their masses. Pioneers, *ma’pilim* [(Hebrew) – immigrants coming to Eretz-

Israel in defiance of restrictive legislation] and defenders, they made deserts bloom, revived the Hebrew language, built villages and towns, and created a thriving community controlling its own economy and culture, loving peace but knowing how to defend itself, bringing the blessings of progress to all the country's inhabitants, and aspiring towards independent nationhood" (Masri, 2017, pp. 10-11).

This paragraph establishes Israeli sovereign entitlement along a number of lines redolent of settler colonial formations across space and time. These claims were based on "return," on the proper use and regeneration of the land ("they made the deserts bloom"), on overcoming colonial restrictions to settlement, on self-identification as peace-loving (disavowing foundational violence as "knowing how to defend itself"), and on bringing progress to the native peoples.

The Declaration refers to the land, but not its indigenous inhabitants, painting it as a *terra nullius* which the Jews came to redeem. In *The Colonial Present*, Derek D. Gregory (2004) describes Zionism as a colonial project by its very nature, which, like other colonial projects, constructed Palestine as an empty space (*terra nullius*) and sought to establish irreversible "facts on the ground" through political, military, economic and cultural means (D. Gregory, 2004, p. 78). The land of Palestine was portrayed as an empty wilderness, a desert for the Jews to reclaim and make bloom so that the land could come alive again, as though "the land, too, was condemned to an exile so long as there was no Jewish sovereignty over it: it lacked any meaningful or authentic history, awaiting redemption with the return of the Jews" (Piterberg, 2001, p. 32). Though Zionists knew that Arabs lived on the land and would not give it up willingly, in another quintessentially colonial gesture they reduced the indigenous population to a mute object of history, rather than active subjects (D. Gregory, 2004, p. 79).

When during interviews with residents of the settlement in eastern Gush Etzion I brought up the fact that the settlements were illegal according to international law, I was asked rhetorically: "What could be more legal than Jews living in the land of Judea?" This statement

highlights another aspect of settler colonial phenomena and mindsets. Describing settler sovereignty, Veracini says that

“[t]he sovereignty claimed by settler collectives does not focus on the state and insists on the law-making corporate capacity of the local community, on its self-constituting ability, on its competence to control the local population economy, and on a subordination to the colonizing metropole that is premised on a conditional type of loyalty” (Veracini, 2010, p. 72).

Therefore, as described in Part I, settlers frequently pushed past the limits of authorized settlement delimited by the metropole/central government, which was attempting to manage the natives and settlers and avoid violence. During the mandate period, the British repeatedly tried to rein in Jewish settlement and manage tensions between settlers and Palestinians—and settlers in the West Bank today often push against the limits of authorized settlement (apparently never very effective in controlling settlement expansion).

Residents of settlement outposts in the eastern Gush (considered illegal under Israeli law) expressed many times that the laws of the State of Israel sometimes ran counter to their best interests. In those cases, they taught their children that you have to fight against these unjust laws and refuse to follow them—the idea being that they had a specific settler sovereign entitlement that was not subject to Israeli law. And while they know full well that by building homes in this area they are breaking Israeli civil and military laws, residents still strongly feel that they do what they do “for Israel.” They are the vanguard of the settlement movement, reclaiming Judea and Samaria for Eretz Israel. Why should they follow laws designating their settlements as illegal, when they know that eventually their communities will be legalized:

“The tide of history canonizes the *fait accompli*, harnessing the diplomatic niceties of the law of nations to the maverick rapine of the squatters’ posse within a cohesive project that implicates individual and nation-state, official and unofficial alike. Over the Green Line today, *Ammana*, the settler advance-guard of the fundamentalist *Gush Emunim* movement, hastens apace with the construction of its facts on the ground. In this regard, the settlers are maintaining a tired and tested Zionist strategy—Israel’s 1949 campaign to

seize the Negev before the impending armistice was codenamed *Uvda*, Hebrew for ‘fact’” (Wolfe, 2006, p. 393).

The fact that the law will eventually follow the lead of the settlers emphasizes “the role of individual initiative in the ‘opening’ of frontiers and in compelling settlement processes” (Veracini 60). As in the American context, freedom for Israeli settlers includes the right to settle anywhere they think fit:

“National [and imperial] boundaries made little difference to [settler] expansion; in Florida, Louisiana, Texas and other areas, American settlers rushed in to claim land under the jurisdiction of Spain, France, Mexico, and Indian tribes, confident that American sovereignty would soon follow in their wake” (Foner, 1999, p. 50).

Settlers carry a specific kind of sovereign title with them—wherever they are physically located, that sovereign title exists.

3. *Consciousness.* As described above, Veracini highlights two prominent features of the settler consciousness which result from the fact that settlers have to manage the dissonance between “who they are” (liberty, the constitution, free speech, all men created equal, etc.), and “what they did” (dispossession, removal, elimination, etc.). The first feature is an imperative to disavow foundational violence, and the second is the ideal of settler fixity.

In the preface of *The Question of Zion*, Jacqueline Rose (2005) notes the widespread view in Israeli society that Israel is innocent of the violence with which it is beset—the belief that “[t]here is nothing in the actions of the state, the history of the country or of Zionism, that can explain it” (Rose, 2005, p. xi). In other words, the widespread Israeli view designates this violence as terrorism, rather than as anti-colonial (violent) resistance. In fact, settler projects “are inevitably premised on the traumatic, that is, *violent*, replacement and/or displacement of indigenous Others”—despite the fact that this foundational violence is obsessively disavowed—and foundational violence is often met with energetic resistance (Veracini, 2010, pp. 76-78).

As described above under “Consciousness,” one of the ways settlers disavow foundational violence is by framing anti-indigenous violence as purely defensive. When I brought up settlement security measures or violence perpetrated by settlers with my subjects in eastern Gush Etzion, I was often reminded: “we live in a tough neighborhood.” I was told by security guards, mostly young men, that they *hated* the fact that they had to carry a gun, search Palestinian workers entering the settlement, and then guard the settlement against them the entire time they worked—but they had no choice. All these measures were defensive, meant to prevent *inevitable* attacks by Palestinians against the settlements. I was reminded: “A terrorist attack will happen, it’s just a matter of when.” Then I was told that these attacks were inevitable because Arabs (or Muslims, as these terms are used interchangeably), inherently hate Jews—a hatred that has nothing to do with any conflict over land.

Further, Israelis believe that their nationalist project can’t be settler colonial (or inherently violent) because they are the eternal victims, rather than the perpetrators, of violence. The term “genocide,” and any reference to violent elimination, cannot be used to describe settler colonization (especially in Israel/Palestine) because it can only be properly applied to the Holocaust (Moses, 2004). Particularly because the settlers in this context are Jews, and because the Holocaust and genocide are the exclusive history of the Jewish people, it is nonsensical to accuse Jewish settlers of committing anything resembling genocide.

Settler fixity, the second feature of settler consciousness identified by Veracini, is asserted through the performance and expression of settler nativism—often resulting in the nomadification of the indigenous other (Veracini, 2010, p. 79). This move reflects two forms of transfer identified by Veracini (2010, pp. 36-37): conceptual displacement (when indigenous people are not considered to be native to the land) and civilizational transfer (whereby

indigenous peoples are represented as putative settlers). Zionism as a settler colonial project claims a historical right to the land, and settlers think of themselves as “indigenous *ex abrupto*” (Veracini, 2010, p. 18). Therefore, the very existence of a “native” Palestinian people is denied, and Arabs in Palestine are represented as settlers from the surrounding Arab states, settlers who should and could “return” to where they came from and “give back” Israel to the Jews.

I was often told by my subjects in Gush Etzion that the Jewish people are historically and ancestrally connected to the Judean desert, while the Arabs there are actually migrants, or settlers, from Syria, Iraq, etc., and therefore do not have a historic right to the land at all. This reasoning effectively unmade any conflict between Jewish and Palestinian claims to historic and ancestral rights to the land. Residents of the settlement bloc where I conducted my research certainly don’t see themselves as “settlers.” When mentioning that they were settlers or that they lived in settlements (according to the international community), they tended to use air quotes around the words, and frequently referred to the nearby Palestinian villages as “Arab settlements,” many of which they claimed had been established *after* their communities had been. As Veracini points out, at times in settler colonial formations “the indigenous community’s very indigeneity is questioned,” and Palestinians have often been represented in Zionist discourse as non-indigenous to Palestine (Veracini, 2010, p. 25).

Another of the many forms of transfer described by Veracini (2010, pp. 36-37) is perception transfer, where indigenous peoples are disavowed in a variety of ways and their actual *presence* is not registered. In the Israeli/Palestinian case, the terms ‘deArabization’ and ‘Judaization’ tend to refer to “Israeli strategies of transforming Palestinian territories into areas under Jewish occupancy,” covering over and obliterating the Arab cultural landscape of Palestine (Falah, 1989, p. 536). Ghazi Falah notes in his 1989 article “Israelization of Palestine Human

Geography” that another type of Judaization is also taking place, namely, “the attempt to obliterate the Arab identity of Palestine within the realm of scholarship: not on the level of actual landscape, but through work by Israeli geographers on Palestine/Israel” (Falah, 1989, p. 536). The Arab population has been rendered invisible, for example, in a collection of essays submitted by Israeli geographers to the 23rd International Geographical Congress (held in the USSR in 1976). Falah argues that the Zionist myth of empty lands was clearly reflected in the pictures chosen to represent the landscape. Falah concludes by arguing that “[t]he strong proclivity of Israeli human geography to be directed toward subjectivity of this sort derives from the dominant Zionist [sic] dream and the political motivation of the individual researcher,” a kind of promotional imaging that obliterates the Arab geography of the country (Falah, 1989, pp. 547-548). He hopes in exposing this hegemonic framing to provide a basis for more comprehensive, balanced, and objective geography of human landscapes in Israel/Palestine.

4. Narrative. In his theoretical explication of settler colonialism, Veracini (2010, p. 3) distinguishes settlers from migrants by explaining that while migrants move to another country, lead diasporic lives, and are appellants to a political order that is already constituted, settlers move (or “return”) to their own country and are founders of political orders who carry their sovereignty with them. This is particularly the case when settlers espouse a narrative in which they self-identify as Chosen People. This is clearly illustrated in the Zionist case by Shlomo Sand in his book *The Invention of the Jewish People* (Sand, 2009). Sand draws attention to the fact that Zionist colonization is justified by “invoking claims of ancestral lands, historical rights, and millennia-old national yearning,” despite the fact that it is evident that Jews are not a pure race (in his estimation), and it therefore makes little sense to espouse the view that most Jews belong to an ancient race-based people with roots in ancient Israel (Sand, 2012, p. 10). Rather than being

a factual claim, this settler colonial narrative is an effective technology for the preservation and dissemination of the formative historical mythos. Sand concludes that “the Zionist ‘return’ was, above all, an invention meant to arouse the sympathy of the West—particularly the Protestant Christian community, which preceded the Zionists in proposing the idea—in order to justify a new settlement enterprise, and that it had proven its effectiveness” (Sand, 2012, p. 16).

The goal of Sand’s book, while not explicitly referring to settler colonialism as a theoretical framework, closely mirrors Piterberg’s (Piterberg, 2011) aim of challenging the hegemonic narratives of successful settler colonial nation-states. The intention of the book is:

“to deconstruct the concept of the Jewish ‘historical right’ to the Land of Israel and its associated nationalist narratives, whose only purpose was to establish moral legitimacy for the appropriation of territory” (Sand, 2012, p. 29).

As a point of comparison to the Israeli case, Sand brings up two other settler colonial formations—the United States and South Africa—thereby illustrating the “morphological continuity” of settler colonial formations in adopting a narrative of Chosen People. He says that when he was a university student the Israeli case seemed “not fundamentally different from the mythoi of Puritan Christian settlement in North Africa or Afrikaner settlement in South Africa, which imagined the conquered land as the Land of Canaan, bestowed by God upon the true children of Israel” (Sand, 2009, pp. 15; see also Smith, 2003 and Akenson, 1992 for a discussion of the promised lands of “chosen peoples”).

It is perhaps no surprise that as the archetypical “Chosen People” the Zionist project would draw on this narrative. According to Kimmerling, Palestine was chosen as the target land because of a national ideology, Zionism, which was based on symbols and codes borrowed from the 19th century European version of Jewish religion and ethnicity: “The secular (liberal- or socialist-oriented) founding fathers and the inventors of modern Jewish nationalism borrowed the religiously preserved collective memory of the ancient Holy Land, *Zion*, as the territorial

base for their nation- and state-building efforts” (Kimmerling, 2001, p. 4). These religious symbols and especially biblical texts were “constructed and reinterpreted as ‘history,’” and were considered a very useful tool for generating internal and external legitimacy for the Zionist colonial venture (Kimmerling, 2001, p. 4). The representation of Jews as victims of history returning to their historic and biblical homeland from which they were forcibly driven out thousands of years ago appeals to the sympathies of the West, particularly Protestant Christians who relied on the Hebrew scriptures to justify their own settler colonial formations.

Another common narrative in settler colonial contexts emphasizes superiority and progress. As previously described, to overcome the anxiety of dispossessing native peoples of their land for commercial gain, and to reassure themselves of the virtue of their project, settlers frequently relied on myths of their superiority. Evidence of this narrative can be found in the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel. The Declaration makes reference to “the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel” who might “preserve peace and participate in the upbuilding of the State on the basis of full and equal citizenship” (Masri, 2017, p. 12). This line is often cited as proof of the open and democratic nature of the State of Israel towards its non-Jewish citizens. Significantly, however, this statement reinforces

“the conception of the emerging (Jewish) settler nation that has exclusive control over the state as a matter of law. It creates the dichotomy of we/you, where ‘we’ are the (Jewish) sovereign people who, by virtue of this sovereignty, can offer ‘you’ – the ‘Other’ – citizenship and equality. This is not citizenship as of right based on habitual residence, nor is it citizenship based on a ‘natural and historic right’, similar to the rights mentioned in the Declaration as belonging to the Jewish people. It is citizenship that ‘we’, the civilized and cultured settler nation, will ‘give’ to ‘you’, the violent assailants who happen to be here, if you attain a level of civility and ‘preserve the peace’” (Masri, 2017, p. 12)

In the centrality of land to the Zionist project, the methods utilized for managing the population economy, the justifications for sovereign entitlement, the aspects of settler consciousness, and narrative form, it should be clear that Israel fits the morphological continuity

of settler colonization. I now turn to possible outcomes and the ways Zionist hegemonic discourses are being continually challenged.

Possible Outcomes and Challenging Hegemonic Narratives

This final section of the chapter explores the designation of Israel as the last ongoing case of settler colonialism, the ways encountering Palestinians has shaped Israeli national identity, the ongoing structural inequalities of settler colonization in Israel/Palestine, the persistence of native Palestinians on the land, and possibilities of decolonization.

1. The last “ongoing” case of settler colonialism? Baruch Kimmerling says that the Israeli state and society “still constitute an active immigrant settler sociopolitical entity (perhaps the last of its kind in the world), lacking a finalized and consensual geopolitical and social identity, boundaries, and location in the political and cultural environment of the Middle East” (Kimmerling, 2001, p. 3). Similarly, though Ilan Pappé sees the settler-colonial paradigm as useful in challenging the official Israel and mainstream scholarly approach to Israeli history, he finds it unsatisfactory and insufficient to account for Israel-Palestine in a comprehensive fashion because it “applies historical case studies with a *known closure* to an ongoing reality” (Pappé, 2014, pp. 312, emphasis added; Svirsky, 2017, p. 23).

These are problematic assertions, though, because they suggest that other settler formations *have* superseded their colonial origins and are effectively concluded—and as described above, settler colonial contexts are always ongoing because settler colonization is a structure rather than an event and the structures of difference the resulting polity is built on continue to shape the settler society into the future. The description of Israel as the “last of its

kind in the world” erases ongoing native struggles and reinforces the hegemonic narrative(s) whereby settler societies re-write and narrate their history.

This description of Israel as the last on-going case of settler colonization is also problematic because it suggests that there is some significant disjuncture between the state of Israel in its 1948 borders and the occupation following the 1967 Six Day War—the suggestion being that Israel is an active settler sociopolitical entity *only because* the occupation is ongoing. Rather, it is important to recognize that the settler colonial encounter continues to structure political, social, legal, and economic relations within Israel proper as well as within the occupied territories. But, the unresolved nature of the occupation (in contrast to the fact that Israel is widely recognized as a legitimate nation-state) makes it difficult for Israelis to disavow the foundational violence on which their polity is built. It is a daily reminder of the settler character of the Zionist enterprise. Therefore, in the minds of liberal Israelis, the occupation must be separated from Israel proper because it consistently undermines hegemonic narratives and revisionist histories.

2. Identity formation. One vital reason for locating Israeli history within the settler colonial framework is that it allows us to challenge both hegemonic narratives that assert Israeli exceptionalism and to challenge the framing of the conflict as one of two competing national claims (as opposed to the result of a colonial encounter). One of the ways scholars studying various settler colonial contexts have challenged hegemonic settler narratives is by marking the impact of the encounter with the native on identity formation in the settler polity. In the preface to his book, Shafir says that he was following in the footsteps of Baruch Kimmerling, “a trailblazer among critical sociologists who studied the effects of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict on Israeli society” when previously Israeli social sciences and Israeli history had ignored the

formative impact of the conflict on the character of the Israeli state and society (Shafir, 1989, p. ix). Kimmerling, for his part, credits Sammy Smooha as the first Israeli sociologist to observe tension between Israel as a Jewish nation-state and its pretension to be an open democratic state. In his book *Israel: Pluralism and Conflict*, he regroups Israeli society into the dominant Ashkenazi group, the dominated Mizrahi and religious groups, and the exploited and collectively excluded Arab and Palestinian groups, and emphasizes the contrast between formal civic equality and the cultural and stratificational dominance of a secular Ashkenazi minority over all other social components of the state (Smooha, 1978).

Other authors have picked up on the analysis of this tension between settler colonization and liberal democracy and the way settler polities re-write their history so as to assert their postcoloniality. In other words, as described above, settlers “narrate their own end” in a way that erases their settler colonial origins. In *Citizen Strangers: Palestinians and the Birth of Israel’s Liberal Settler State*, Shira Robinson begins by relating a conversation between a Palestinian activist and former prime minister David Ben-Gurion, during which the first charged Israelis with the colonial dispossession of native Palestinians and the second disavowed this dispossession, stating that under the British both peoples had been natives (Robinson, 2013, pp. 1-2). This assertion relies on the same logic as that utilized by Asian settlers in Hawai’i, who present their struggle against the British as one of nation building, and thus legitimize settler claims to a place on the land (Fujikane & Okamura, 2008, p. 2). In the Hawai’ian case, authors and activists have stressed the structural difference between settlers and natives which belies settler claims to indigeneity; settlers are not defined by their political power (in the Israeli case relative to the British Empire), but rather by their relationship to indigenous peoples in a settler state (Fujikane & Okamura, 2008, p. 12).

Robinson claims that the charge of colonial dispossession and its disavowal recounted in *Citizen Strangers* is at the heart of the puzzle driving her book: that in 1948 the Jewish settler community threw off the yoke of the British Empire, while for Palestinians the settler-colonial yoke has not only stayed in place but grown “immeasurably heavier” (Robinson, 2013, pp. 2-3). Her book explores the contradictions that emerged from Israel’s foundation as a “*liberal settler state*”—a liberal state committed to international norms and the rule of law and at the same time a settler-colonial state dedicated to preserving the racial privilege of the Jews. According to Robinson, Israel’s dilemma, beginning in 1948, was “how it could secure its wartime gains while sharing political power with the very people who—by virtue of their desire to hold onto their lands and bring home their relatives, friends, and compatriots—would want to reverse them” (Robinson, 2013, p. 10).

3. Structuring inequalities. Recognizing the settler colonial character of the Israeli polity is also necessary in order to trace the enduring settler colonial structures that shape the Israeli state and society. For example, Mazen Masri has argued that Israel’s constitutional regime and law can only be understood through the lens of settler colonialism to show the foundational aspects of Israeli constitutional law and how they were shaped, and continue to be shaped, by settler colonialism (Masri, 2017). The fact that Israel is a settler-nation in a settler-colonial context has implications for the evolution and shaping of constitutional law and its relationship to Palestinian citizens of Israel. The way the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel define citizenship and belonging in the state are described above under “Challenging notions of Israeli exceptionalism” in reference to sovereign entitlement and settler consciousness. The laws and constitution of the state are thus founded upon a settler colonial relationship between settler and native.

4. *Persistence of the native.* The fact that Palestinians are still present in the numbers they are complicates the process of forgetting them and moving on from foundational violence—the process of overcoming the settler foundations of the polity, which all settler formations strive for. Unlike in the case of Australia and North America, where extinction narratives asserted that the natives would naturally fade from history, this has not been the case in Israel/Palestine. Israel has been largely successful in asserting hegemonic narratives—the Jews are victims of Arab aggression, they are returning to their historical and biblical homeland, they are a sole democratic beacon in the Middle East—but is it much harder to re-write history today than it was in the past. In many ways Israel has been unable to escape its identity as a settler polity—in no small part due to the fact that the occupation is so visible—and there continue to be strong and ongoing challenges to Israel’s hegemonic narratives, unlike in other examples (such as the US, which represents “liberty and freedom for all” despite its settler origins).

Settler colonialism introduces a zero-sum contest over land, and therefore its primary logic is one of elimination (Wolfe, 2001, p. 868). Thus far, though, Palestinians continue to be an obstacle to full settler sovereignty (Shafir, 1989). Indigenous people challenge with their very presence the basic legitimacy of the settler entity; therefore, for Palestinians and other indigenous peoples, to exist really is to resist (Veracini, 2010, p. 33).

5. *Decolonization?* Addressing the question of decolonization, Shafir says that just as colonization had many strands, processes of decolonization also vary: “Whereas settler-immigrants and their descendants on Europe’s other ‘frontiers of settlement’ mixed (in different measures) with the native populations, marginalized and destroyed them, or expelled them, Palestinians still continue to pose a basic challenge to the resolve and identity of Jewish Israelis” and at the same time “the settler-immigrants in Israel had no colonial metropolis to return to and

over time evolved into their own native population” (Shafir, 1996, p. xv). Sand (2012) argues that trying to undo the damage Israel’s settler colonial project has done by unmaking the state of Israel would cause more harm than good. Similarly, Shafir says that settler-immigrants have partially realized their goals in Israel, sinking deep roots and establishing societies with distinct cultural, ethnic, and religious markets, which means “that the decolonization required for peacemaking in Israel will also be partial and will be played out in Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem” (Shafir, 1996, p. xv). In other words, he recognizes that Israel’s settler colonial project has thus far been successful—though in his mind a partial success because of the enduring presence of the Palestinian people—but he may not agree with Piterberg’s (Piterberg, 2011) assertion that there are only three outcomes in settler colonial contexts (described below), and that successful settler polities never give up or share sovereignty with the native inhabitants.

Historian Gabriel Piterberg argues that there are only three possible outcomes in settler colonial contexts: the first is that the settlers successfully establish an independent nation-state (with dire consequences for the natives), the second is that the settlers do not prevail and eventually have to leave, and the third is that the settlers initially win independence but later are unable to prevent indigenous reassertion (Piterberg, 2011, p. 3). In order, examples of each of these cases are: the US, French Algeria, and South Africa. Israel within its 1948 borders fits the first case—but the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip beginning in 1967 complicates matters. The occupation and ongoing settlement of the Palestinian Territories threaten/challenge the hegemonic narrative that tries to deny and overcome foundational and ongoing violence.

The possibility of decolonization, partial as it may be, seems doubtful given ongoing, gradual, and unceasing settlement expansion in the West Bank. Still, Shafir notes that “[t]he present debate in Israeli society, ushered in with the Six Day War, is whether the alternative of

territorially separate Israeli and Palestinian development be pursued further and given for the first time a real prospect or be replaced by the more extreme exclusivist alternative – Israeli territorial maximalism” (Shafir, 1996, p. 21). Zreik argues that because of Zionism’s “crucial mistake” in “failing to set itself a clear stopping point” it is both militarily and politically incapable of annihilating Palestinians” and that the best way forward is to incorporate them as full citizens of Israel, because “[c]itizenship, at the very least, has the potential of ending the monopoly of the settler project over law” (Zreik, 2016, pp. 355-358). Similarly, Sand closes his book with the story of the frog and the scorpion, suggesting that if Israel does not recognize Palestinian self-determination and statehood they will go down with it (Sand, 2012). But given that settler colonial formations are marked by “the *continuing* operation of an unchanged set of unequal relations” which resists formal decolonization, these may be easier claims to make than to achieve in reality (Cavanagh & Veracini, 2016, p. 3).

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4. Domesticity and Diasporic Homeland: Constructing “Home” in Israeli Settlements in the Occupied West Bank

4.1 Abstract

Building on work in cultural geography and related fields on the concept of home, particularly in relation to diaspora and nationalism (the homeland), this article explores the discursive construction of home by Israeli settlers in the occupied Palestinian West Bank. While other scholars have tracked the way domestic space has been militarized (particularly since 9/11), and how diasporic communities construct a sense of home away from their historic homeland, I am concerned with how military-occupied space is domesticated by a diasporic community that has “returned.” Drawing on expansive qualitative fieldwork, I found that the tension between constructing home as domesticity (a safe, peaceful sanctuary from the world) and home as diasporic homeland (a contested territory fight and sacrifice for) in the occupied territories leads Israeli settlers to make compromises between the ideal of security and the drive for national territory. This produces incongruous impulses and outcomes where the imperative of security and the need to place oneself in danger for the good of the nation are held in constant tension. These dissonances are reconciled through the use of four discourses, or conceptual frameworks, that settlers use to make sense of themselves and their lifestyle in this dangerous place: Torah/Return, Pioneering/frontier spirit, Quality-of-life, and Jewish community and identity. Through these discourses settlers are constructing a sense of “home,” both as domesticity and diasporic homeland.

4.2 Introduction

As cultural geographers Blunt and Varley (2004, p. 3) describe: “As a space of belonging and alienation, intimacy and violence, desire and fear, the home is invested with meanings, emotions, experiences and relationships that lie at the heart of human life. Geographies of home are both material and symbolic and are located on the thresholds between memory and nostalgia for the past, everyday life in the present, and future dreams and fears.” Perhaps nowhere is this description more apt than in the contested territory of the occupied West Bank. With its checkpoints, segregated road systems, settlements, and roadblocks, the landscape screams inclusion and exclusion, desire and fear, us and them. The territory absolutely stands on the threshold of memory and longing (for the biblical homeland on the part of Jewish Israelis, and for the homes they lost in the *Nakba* on the part of Palestinians), the reality of everyday life in a military-occupied, contested territory, and future dreams and fears on the part of both Israelis and Palestinians that the land will one day be either be exclusively theirs or lost to them forever. In this space, between past, present, and future, and between competing claims to the same national territory, Israeli settlers are constructing a sense of home both as domesticity and as diasporic homeland. It is a process of what Yen Le Espiritu (2003) has called “home making”—the ways by which diverse subjects imagine and make themselves at home—that is premised on the displacement and dispossession of West Bank Palestinians.

The concept of home has a rich intellectual history across the humanities and social sciences, particularly from the late 1990s onwards.¹ note that home is both concrete (a place where one lives) and abstract (a feeling of comfort/home), and ranges in scale from a mental state, to a house, to a continent. In fact, recognizing that the concept of home transgresses

¹ For a review of literature in cultural geography on the concept of home, see: Blunt (2005), Blunt and Varley (2004), Duncan and Lambert (2004).

borders, recent studies of transnational homes and communities have emphasized the tension between home as place where one resides and place where one comes from, particularly for immigrants, exiles, and expatriates² (Duncan & Lambert, 2004, p. 388). Within this literature, scholars have also examined how diasporic communities construct a sense of home away from their historic, mythical homeland. For example, Alison Blunt (2011) explores how Anglo-Indian women, country-born and domiciled in India, imagine Britain as home and identify with British life even as they are excluded from it (Blunt, 2011). And Yen Le Espiritu (2003, p. 2) examines how, for Filipino Americans and other diasporic groups, home is both an imagined and an actual geography, and is therefore “both connected to and disconnected from the space in which one lives.” These studies show how migrants and diasporic groups use memory of homeland to construct new lives in the country in which they live, and have emphasized the fact that home is a site of inclusion, exclusion, and contestation shaped by different axes of power and over a range of scales.

Though home traditionally connotes a space of security, comfort, and belonging, the meanings and lived experiences of home are diverse. Feminist geographers in particular have pointed out that home is not just a place of safety and security, but can also be a place of fear and danger. This has been shown especially through research on domestic violence.³ Research on the militarization of the domestic sphere, particularly since 9/11, has also revealed the racialized and gendered exclusionary violence of the home(land), in addition to the blurring of battle zone and home front.⁴ The increasing sense of diffuse threat that leads to the militarization of domestic

² Studies of home at the scale of the global or transnational have focused in two broad areas: postcolonial geographies of home, nation, and empire [see, for example: Blunt (2002), Gowans (2001), Legg (2003)]; and transnational geographies of migration, home, and work [see, for example: Asis et al. (2004), Naficy (2013), Pratt (2003), Silvey (2004)].

³ See, for example: Goldsack (1999), Meth (2003), Warrington (2001), Klodawsky and Mackenzie (1987).

space has also led to the spread of gated communities and enclaves in Fortress America (and Fortress Israel, Brazil, etc...) (Low, 2003; Rosen & Razin, 2008; Szasz, 2007).

As these studies show, household geographies are intimately bound up with national and transnational geographies (Blunt & Varley, 2004). As further example, Natalie Oswin (2010) explores how the two meanings of domestic, as residential shelter and national territory, converge in Singapore to demarcate belonging within a national ‘family’ according to axes of race, class, nationality, and heteronormativity. Drawing on her approach and the plethora of research on “home” in cultural geography and related fields, in this paper I examine how the two meanings of domestic converge to demarcate belonging in a contested territory—how settlers discursively draw these two meanings together to show that Israeli Jews have a national, historic, and moral right to the land that trumps the claims of Palestinian Arabs. Like other scholars studying geographies of home, I am interested in examining the material, symbolic, and political aspects of home, focusing specifically on how Israeli settlers are domesticating the violent project of occupation and dispossession in the Palestinian territories. Unlike studies that explore how diasporic communities are physically domiciled away from the place where they’re from—a place that they return to through imaginary geographies—this paper explores how home is constructed by a diasporic group that has “returned” to their mythic, historic homeland in a violently contested territory. And while other scholars have tracked the way domestic space has been increasingly militarized (particularly since 9/11), I am concerned with how military-occupied space is being domesticated.

⁴ See, for example: Loyd (2011), Walters (2004), Katz (2007), Gregory (2011).

4.3 Discursive Construction of “Home”

There are currently an estimated half million Israeli Jews living in the occupied West Bank, in around 100 authorized settlements and another 100 unrecognized settlement outposts.⁵ While these communities are located in an area under military occupation and are surrounded by indigenous Palestinians fighting for their self-determination, residents give a surprising answer for why they have chosen to live here: it is a good, *safe* place to raise a family. This is despite the fact that they also experience frequent violence at the hands of local Palestinians, and seem to accept that attacks on settler families are inevitable. For example, during the Second Intifada over 95 percent of terrorist attacks took place in the occupied territories, targeting settlers and the soldiers guarding them (Feige, 2009, p. 25). According to a UNOCHA report, 77 out of 87 Israeli fatalities by Palestinians occurred in the occupied West Bank in 2014, and 18 out of 22 Israeli fatalities by Palestinians occurred in the occupied West Bank in 2015 (as of 14 December 2015) (UNOCHA, 2015). Some particularly notorious examples of violence come to mind, because they are either directly connected to the communities I studied or actually occurred while I was conducting fieldwork in the settlements. One well-known case involved two teenage boys (Koby Mandell and Yosef Ishran) from the settlement Tekoa in eastern Gush Etzion, who skipped school to go hiking in the Tekoa *wadi* (canyon) in 2001 and were found beaten and stabbed to death. And in an incident that sparked the June 2014 Gaza War, three teenagers were kidnapped and killed while hitch hiking in Gush Etzion (Hughes, 2016). More recently, in

⁵ Israeli law distinguishes between outposts, which are unauthorized settlements in the West Bank constructed without the required authorization from the Israeli government, and settlements, which have authorization and are legal in the eyes of the Israeli government. This distinction, however, is not endorsed by international law, which considers both a violation of the norms governing belligerent occupation. A further note about terminology: I use the generally accepted word “settlements” when referring to the Jewish Israeli communities located in the occupied West Bank, though residents dislike the term because it connotes a judgement of illegitimacy. Residents refer to these communities using the Hebrew *yishuvim* (singular: *yishuv*), which is a generic Hebrew term for any Jewish settlements or neighborhoods within Israel proper, rather than using the Hebrew *hitnachlut*. This is because *yishuvim* is an apolitical and generic term, while *hitnachlut* is a term with biblical roots that is used by the Israeli public to refer to “fundamentalist” religious/ideological settlements.

October 2015, an Israeli couple from Nerya⁶ were shot to death while driving their car with their four young children, now orphaned, in the backseat. And in January 2016 a pregnant woman from Tekoa, the daughter-in-law of the late “peace Rabbi” Menachem Froman, was stabbed several times inside the settlement by a Palestinian teenager who got in under a security fence put up by the Israeli Defense Forces.

In studying “home” as both a physical location of dwelling as well as a space of belonging and identity construction, cultural geographers and scholars in related fields have “unsettled ideas about home and domesticity by questioning what might at first glance appear to be familiar and mundane” (Blunt, 2005, p. 505). In some sense this paper looks at the opposite: how home (familiar, mundane, safe) is constructed by Israeli settlers in the military-occupied, violently contested territory of the Palestinian West Bank. In order to address this apparent contradiction, in this paper I distinguish between four discourses, or conceptual frameworks, that settlers use to make sense of themselves and their lifestyle in this dangerous place: Torah/Return, Pioneering/frontier spirit, Quality-of-life, and Jewish community and identity.⁷ The advantage of an approach analyzing multiple discourses is that it captures the conflict that exists as a fundamental aspect of social life. These discourses encompass the complex, evolving, sometimes overlapping and sometimes divergent, motivations behind settlement living.

⁶ Sometimes transliterated as “Neria.”

⁷ Data for this paper was generated from over 100 in-depth interviews with settlement residents, local settlement council members, and regional council elected officials; from documents including settlement periodicals, websites, reports, news sources, and marketing materials; and from participant-observation among residents over a combined seven months during the summers of 2014 and 2015. My field sites include several settlements and outposts in the Gush Etzion Regional Council settlement bloc (Efrat and Alon Shvut in the central Gush, Tekoa, Nokdim, Kfar Eldad, Sde Bar, and Ma’ale Rechavam in the eastern Gush) and several settlements in the Mateh Binyamin Regional Council settlement bloc (Nerya and Talmon). I also draw on secondary sources in which authors, academic and otherwise, interviewed settlement residents about their lives and experiences, and on both literature by settlers and literature about settlers [see Simons (2014), Rosenthal (2003), Mecklenburg (2013), Feige (2009), Arfa (2013), Gavron (2013), Mandell (2003)].

Like Duncan and Lambert (2004, p. 395) argue, home is perhaps one of the most emotive geographical concepts, and is “inextricable from that of self, family, nation, sense of place, and sense of responsibility towards those who share one’s place in the world.” Therefore, Israeli settlers’ sense of home—home as residential shelter, security, belonging, refuge—cannot be separated out from their sense of the *homeland*—national territory, Land of their Fathers, duty, sacrifice. The dual impulses to construct home as domesticity and home as diasporic homeland are often in tension, as the first emphasizes security while the latter demands that individuals sacrifice for the nation. This tension is managed through the use of four discourses, through which settlement residents understand themselves and their lifestyles in the occupied West Bank, and through which they cope with the everyday reality of violence and danger. The goal of the following discourse analysis is to find a way to represent the world that captures settler understandings, feelings, and choices, and to understand the discursive *work* that goes into constructing their lifestyle as “normal” and the settlements as desirable places to live.

1. Torah/Return

The first discourse I analyze revolves around two separate but closely related claims or beliefs. The first stems from the Torah, and entails a divine decree that the land belongs to the People of Israel. The second, which is a related but a more secular historical claim, stems from biblical history: the Jews were here 3,000 years ago and therefore have the “Right of Return.” Both of these claims center on a commitment to “Greater Israel”—a need to live in “all of Israel” (interview 8, Kfar Eldad 7/11/14)—but one requires religious belief while the other proclaims to be secular. In dealing with the threat or fact of violence, the Torah/Return discourse emphasizes the importance of belief and faith in coping with danger and risk. The biblical imperative to

establish a Jewish presence on the land requires belief and sacrifice. When I asked a new father if he was worried about living in the occupied territories, he replied: “[I don’t] worry, because when you are religion [sic], if you believe in something, it’s more easy [sic]... when you believe in something, you make your choices... you can stand it if you believe” (interview 8, Kfar Eldad 7/11/14).

East Jerusalem and the West Bank (Judea and Samaria in settler parlance) form the geographical core of biblical Eretz Yisrae’el (the Land of Israel) (Beinin, 2013). Many settlers, especially the Orthodox, saw the 1967 Six-Day War, when Israel captured the West Bank from Jordan and Gaza from Egypt, as a divine miracle returning the cradle of Judaism to the Jews (Rosenthal, 2003, p. 210). As one resident asserted, “Judea is the land of the Jews, historically, biblically, lexiconically. The missing ingredient [here] is the Jews. There aren’t enough Jews in Judea” (field notes 7/18/14). According to theological thought, “the land is divinely promised and settlement is a halakhic rule (rules of religious/divine law),” and according to national-religious thought “rights to the land belong to the Jewish people because of its unique history” (Feige, 2009, p. 17). Scriptures “help substantiate the identity of the rightful owner(s) of this Land” (Mecklenburg, 2013, p. 14). For example, residents assert things like: “We believe this is our place. Everybody knows that this is our place, [it’s in the] bible. [There is] archeology. We were here 4000 years ago” (interview 5, Kfar Eldad 7/8/14); “I am here because it is written in the Torah, in the Bible” (interview 6, Kfar Eldad 7/9/14); or “What could be more right than Jews living in the land of Judea?” (field notes 2015). An online advertisement enticing Israelis to move to Tekoa states: “The ancient Jewish City is renowned for being the birthplace of the Old Testament prophet Amos (Book of Amos 1:1). According to the Book of Samuel, Joab procured a ‘wise woman’ from there to persuade David to bring Absalom back to Jerusalem (2

Sam. 14:2, 4, 9)” (Ben-Zvi, 2014). A statue of the “Wise Woman of Tekoa”⁸ was built in the settlement in 2015, and there is a mosaic at the entrance of the Tekoa settlement showing the Prophet Amos and reading: “*“And I will plant them on their land [Israel], And they will not again be rooted from their land Which I have given them, ’ says the LORD your G’d”* (pictured in Figure 4.1).

In addition to asserting a biblical imperative and right for the Jews to live in the West Bank, this discourse also frames Jews as the historical, indigenous inhabitants of the region, who are simply “returning” from exile. This is based on the assumption that “discrete peoples belong to specific, bounded territories, which frame their distinct cultures and local identities” (Le Espiritu, 2003, pp. 12-13). This understanding is of “the home as *our* place, where we belong naturally, and where, by definition, others do not...” (Walters, 2004, p. 241). As one settlement resident noted, the “correct” name for the area of the West Bank where he lives is Judea, meaning land of the Jews, from which the Jews were purged by illegal occupiers thousands of years ago (field notes 7/11/14). Settlers don’t see themselves as settlers; rather, the Palestinian Arabs are the settlers. This is true whether settlers are ethnically Jews or recent converts. For example, one kippa-wearing Peruvian convert to Judaism living in the settlement Alon Shvut said to Rosenthal, “I have no problem because I don’t consider the territories to be occupied. You cannot conquer what has belonged to you since the time of the patriarch Abraham” (Rosenthal, 2003, p. 207). Therefore, Arab Palestinians are settlers/foreigners who need to “go back” to the Arab states they came from. Historian Joel Beinin notes that “[s]ettler violence in Hebron is ultimately motivated by the claim that Jewish ownership was established by a purchase recorded in the Bible; therefor Arabs are aliens” (Beinin, 2013, p. 35). Settlement

⁸ The wise woman of Tekoa is an unnamed figure in the Hebrew bible who convinces David to spare Absalom. The statue is another connection (besides references in the Hebrew bible to the Prophet Amos of Tekoa) linking the settlement to biblical history.

residents often explain that Palestinians are not natives: *“To be honest, more than 75% of Palestinians that live here their origin is not here it is Syria, North Africa, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen”* (interview 6, Kfar Eldad 7/9/14). Another resident, a lawyer and legal expert, said,

“Nothing is illegal, we are the legal occupiers. Very few Palestinians can trace their presence here before the 1920s, they came after the Jews to get jobs—then to oppose and to thwart the presence of the Jews. They are immigrants from the same period as the Jews. There were no Palestinian people before 1967—no one ever heard of them” (field notes 7/17/15).

In contrast, the Jews were here thousands of years ago, and as such are the true indigenous people. This discourse contains a challenge for Arabs living in the region: who has a longer history in the West Bank—Jews or Arabs/Muslims?

2. Pioneering/Frontier Spirit

The second discourse I analyze revolves around a pioneering, frontier spirit, whereby religious settlers see themselves as the true descendants of the original (secular) Zionist pioneers. Settlers, religious and secular, see themselves as having the same self-sacrificial spirit as the mostly-secular Zionist pioneers (Feige, 2009; Rosenthal, 2003, p. 206). Additionally, they stand as a “buffer” between militant Islam and the West (broadly construed). This discourse also plays on language from the expansion of the American West, referencing the frontier, pioneers, Manifest Destiny, and cowboys and Indians.

The notion of sacrifice is central to this discourse: several settlement residents expressed to me that, yes, there would be violence and death, but this is a sacrifice they are willing to accept (interview 51, Tekoa 7/6/15). Though life in the West Bank is dangerous, there is a necessity for personal sacrifice (which extends to the family) in order to reinforce a Jewish

presence on the land. When I asked one woman whether Jewish mothers are endangering their children by moving to the West Bank, she replied:

“NO! Not Jewish mothers. Arab mothers endanger their children, teach them to be suicide bombers so they can go to heaven, they endanger their children. But not Jewish mothers. [We come to live here] in order to make sure that a Jewish presence continues here. [It’s more complicated than safe or not safe.] You put your personal life in danger to make the life of your people longer, it’s about more than just yourself, one has to believe [in order to not be afraid.] ...sometimes you do something for a cause. You put your personal life in danger. [It’s] a little bit more comfortable [to think] about yourself [and] just stay at home. You can’t be so, one has to act and do and not be fearful that something will happen to us” (interview 58, Efrat 7/24/15).

Like the discourse around Torah/Return, there is an emphasis on the imperative to hold onto the land despite the human cost. But in addition to that thread, part of this sacrifice entails strengthening the security of Israel, and also of the West, with their presence as a “buffer” between the West and radical Islam (embodied in the West Bank by the Palestinian Muslim).

They “like to see themselves as standing on the frontier of Western, Judeo-Christian civilization, protecting it against the Arab and Muslim world” (Feige, 2009, p. 5). Many residents asserted that they were making *me* and the rest of America safer by living in the territories, in addition to making Israel safer: *“We’re out here doing it—the safety belt of Israel. If we weren’t here on the Green Line⁹ then Jerusalem would border the Arabs and we would be really gone [meaning the state of Israel]. We’re keeping Israelis alive—where we’re placed and our personality”*

(interview 59, Alon Shvut 7/24/15). This discourse has a certain valorization of danger and threat. Amos Oz was told by one of the founding members of Tekoa that when the army liberated Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) in 1967, “right away I felt that we had to—what’s the word?—yes, to fulfill, to realize, immediately, so the opportunity would not be lost. I decided to go someplace where there was danger. Pioneering!” (Oz, 1993, pp. 67-68).

⁹ The “Green Line” refers to the demarcation lines set out in the 1949 Armistice Agreements between the armies of Israel and those of its neighbors after the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. The consensus in the international community is that this is the internationally recognized and legitimate border between the State of Israel and the West Bank.

The notion of sacrifice in part explains the growth of settlements even during periods of intense violence, such as during the second intifada: “during this terrible time of suffering the settlers remained strong and the settlements continued to grow.... started by pioneers who really knew in their hearts that this is the biblical heartland of Israel, and that this land belonged to their ancestors because God had given it to them” (Mecklenburg, 2013, p. 66). I was told several times that “*the people who came here [to Tekoa] during the intifada, they’re the real pioneers, they’re the real courageous people*” (field notes 7/20/14). Or even, “*the people who came during the intifada are the real heroes*” (field notes 8/11/14). The imperative to hold on to the land, “regardless of human cost,” is central to the settlers’ ethos (Feige, 2009, p. 2).

This discourse also draws on the Manifest Destiny-type language of American westward expansion. One resident of a settlement outpost said of living there: “*it’s like Little House on the Prairie, you make your own fortune, or you don’t, no one else will do it for you*” (interview 8B, Ma’ale Rechavam 7/11/14). I often hear American settlers in particular referring to the territories as “the Wild West Bank,” while insisting that in this scenario they are the “Indians” and the Palestinians are the settlers: “*3,000 years ago Jews lived in Judea, the land of the Jews, God-given land. In America you see settlers as building Fort Apaches everywhere, and pushing out the indigenous people. But it’s the opposite. We’re the Indians that were expelled from our reservations, and Arab leaders want to kick us out...*” (field notes 2013 & field notes 7/18/14).

Part of this sacrifice is also about “roughing it.” The settlement movement, according to one supporter, “depended on rugged pioneers who were willing to make the sacrifices to live on barren hills and ridges among a rather hostile local population” (Mecklenburg, 2013, p. 59). But there are degrees of “roughing it” for the good of the nation/people. Some settlers move to more established, and more comfortable, settlements, while others take to the hills and claim new

outposts. But this is more complicated than saying that some settlers are more “extreme” or “fanatical” than others. Often those settlers who are “roughing it” are also those who are looking for free land (outpost land is not bought and paid for). And even illegal outposts have access to water, electricity, housing, and school buses.

Settlement residents themselves often “rank” settlers and settlements according to who is “more extreme.” For instance, while waiting at a bus stop once I met an older man who had just moved to Tekoa. He asked where I was living and I said Kfar Eldad (which was founded by residents of Tekoa). He replied: “*Oh, you’re with the lunatic fringe*” (interview 51B, Tekoa 7/7/15). In this man’s mind, what makes Kfar Eldad the “lunatic fringe” while Tekoa is normalized is the fact that Tekoa has more housing approved by the Israeli government, better amenities, and has grown into a large suburb with thousands of residents, while Kfar Eldad has only a few approved housing units, relatively few amenities, and is a much newer, and smaller, community. When I told this story to a woman living in Kfar Eldad, she laughed at the idea that Kfar Eldad is the “lunatic fringe,” but then asserted that the settlers in the hills of the northern West Bank were “*really crazy*” (interview 55, Tekoa 7/19/15).

3. Quality-of-Life

In contrast to the ideal of “roughing it” entailed in the Pioneering/frontier spirit discourse, but not, I should note, always in opposition to it, settlers move to the occupied territories to achieve a higher quality-of-life than is often available in Israel-proper. Bigger houses, private yards, and community amenities like parks, swimming pools, highly-ranked elementary schools, and office parks, all at cheaper prices, are available in the suburb-like gated communities in the occupied West Bank. As described by Rosenthal, “With its spacious stone houses, tennis and

basketball courts, and children on scooters and skates, Alon Shevut resembles a bucolic Arizona suburb rather than an Orthodox West Bank settlement in the world's most famous war zone" (Rosenthal, 2003, p. 205). This image of an idyllic suburban neighborhood could be written about any of the established Israeli settlements (for example see Tekoa in Figure 4.2 and Efrat in Figure 4.3). They resemble American suburbs and gated communities, or sometimes look a bit like Tuscan villas, with their red roofs, stone walls, and trellises of bougainvillea. This quality-of-life discourse stresses suburban living, convenience, affordability, freedom, and an escape from the city to nature. The West Bank, therefore, isn't marketed as occupied or even as the "Homeland of the Fathers," but as a nice lifestyle.

The settlements of Gush Etzion are considered the most ideological—initiated by the fundamentalist settlement movement Gush Emunim before its disbandment. Additionally, the number of Jewish Americans is higher in Gush Etzion than in other settlements, and American Jews tend to be the most fanatical fringe of the settlement movement, with deep feelings about Messianic redemption and pioneering (Hirschhorn, 2014). Therefore, Israel Studies scholar Sara Hirschhorn argues that Jewish Americans are not coming to the settlements because they don't have a good life in America, they do, therefore they are coming here for ideological, rather than quality-of-life, reasons (Hirschhorn, 2014). But I think this is too reductionist. American Jewish settlers especially also have deeply ingrained ideas about the suburban ideal, and are looking for a "suburban paradise" (Newman, 2014). They might be ideological, but they are negotiating a dialectic between fundamentalism and pragmatism (Newman, 2014). As Hirschhorn notes, American immigrants are primarily urbanites becoming suburbanites in Israel—but while they may be immigrating for ideological reasons, the attractiveness of settlement living has a large amount to do with its suburban appeal. Many Jewish American residents expressed to me that

living in the settlements is safer and more family-friendly than living in the American cities they came from. Therefore, while these residents may have been living well in the U.S., their reasons for living in settlements cannot be reduced to fundamentalism—they are middle-class Israelis who require a certain standard of living which is much more attainable and affordable over the Green Line.

The settlements, even those that are considered more “periphery,” like those I lived in in eastern Gush Etzion (including Tekoa), are marketed as suburban commuter towns. A real estate agent I interviewed in Tekoa stressed that the community is “*only fifteen minutes from Jerusalem!*” (interview 1, Tekoa 9/6/13). And for people who are not opposed ideologically to moving beyond the Green Line, though they may not be ideologically attracted to it, this is a successful marketing technique and a very attractive proposal (Newman, 2014). Housing is predominately single-family with private yards. Community settlements, like those in eastern Gush Etzion, are essentially suburban neighborhoods offering real-estate opportunities for middle-class Israelis who want to improve their quality of life; they tend to lack any significant local economic base, instead relying on residents commuting to nearby regional and metropolitan areas (Rosen & Razin, 2008, p. 2904). Being located over the Green Line doesn’t impede settlers’ ability to move back and forth between these “suburban settlements” and Israeli cities. As an illustration of the growing popularity of even the more “remote” settlements, I was told many times by real estate agents and settlement council leadership that in the past five years the population of Tekoa has grown three times. This is because a road was opened connecting them to Jerusalem and it now takes only 12 minutes to reach the city limit: “*Before the road there was a small community there, but now it draws people, not for ideological reasons, but for ‘nice*

living' It's like a suburb, less expensive [than Israel proper], and we have a swimming pool—it's like a country club!" (interview 1, Tekoa 9/6/13).

Other residents stressed that affordability was a major factor in their decision to reside in the West Bank: *"Maybe I would live in Jerusalem if it was cheaper. In Jerusalem we lived in a fourth floor apartment, here we have a house"* (interview 6, Kfar Eldad 7/9/14). About Nokdim in Gush Etzion one resident said, *"to buy [a house] and build here is a fraction of the cost of Jerusalem. [It is] triple there, and we're just seven minutes from Jerusalem, [so this is] one of the main encouragements [for living here]"* (field notes 7/11/14). The "affordability" of settlement living varies—more established settlements, like Efrat and Tekoa, are more expensive than moving to smaller settlements, like Kfar Eldad, and still more expensive than moving to outposts, where the land is free (but the risk of being evacuated is greater). One resident of Kfar Eldad said that people who come to live in the outposts come to hide from the world, to live for free, while *"people who have a little more money go to Nokdim or Tekoa"* (interview 8, Kfar Eldad 7/11/14). When asked why she chose to live in a settlement, one young mother said, *"We lived in Rehavia in Jerusalem, in a very small 30 meter square house, tiny. We had a baby on the way and needed to expand, [we] needed another room. Jerusalem is crazy, the rent. I am 32, and I haven't had a car. It's too expensive in Jerusalem"* (field notes 7/18/14). To put it simply, when asked why they chose to live in the settlements, most interviewees, even those living in these more "ideological" settlements, will at some point note: *"[Because of] money—it's a lot cheaper than Jerusalem. It's ten minutes away and twice cheaper [sic]!"* (interview 8, Kfar Eldad 7/11/14). And like other suburbs the settlements are not developing as purely residential—they include small organic farms, office parks with dentist offices and clinicians, shopping malls and grocery stores, boutiques, restaurants, bars and clubs, horse-riding schools... the list goes on and on.

The settlements also tend to be relatively close-knit communities with lots of kids. Many parents stressed that there are a lot of activities for kids, including after-school programs, the swimming pool, horseback riding, biking, hiking, and youth groups. The “freedom” for kids to run around and play was frequently noted: *“the kids can do whatever they want here, [they have] freedom [while] the city is a prison”* (interview 8B, Ma’ale Rechavam 7/11/14). When one young mother in Kfar Eldad was asked if Zionism was an important factor for her when she moved here, she said, *“It’s not that important for me. I’m more right-wing than left, but this was not the main reason for moving here. Mostly we wanted to leave the city, live somewhere my kids could run around”* (field notes 7/18/14). One teenage girl in Alon Shvut, when asked if she likes living there and if she feels safe, replied, *“I love it. I can go out all night and they don’t have to worry. People are amazing. I think we have better morals here than other places,”* to which her sister added, *“You can knock on a stranger’s door and ask to use the bathroom”* (interview 59, Alon Shvut 7/24/15). This emphasis on a tight-knit community and the freedom children have to run around is also reflected in the Jewish community and identity discourse, discussed below.

Residents also frequently bring up unfavorable conditions in Israeli cities—living in a fourth-floor apartment, grime, crime, and other dangers—as a motivation for moving to the (relatively affordable) suburban settlements. So there is also an element of escaping the city and getting back to nature. When asked why he’d want to live in the occupied West Bank, one young husband and father emphasized: *“First of all because of the silence of the desert... [I have to commute to Jerusalem,] but when I come back [and I] see the mountains and the [Dead] sea, it means everything. I’m also a rider, I have my motorcycle here, ATVs”* (interview 8, Kfar Eldad 7/11/14). Residents talked about being closer to nature, enjoying the beautiful environment and fresh air. About a young man living in Tekoa, Amos Oz asks “What brought him to Tekoa?

Ideology? Political opinions? A vocational challenge?” (Oz, 1993, p. 63). The answer he got was that the young man had moved there because of a hike to Chariton Cave in the Tekoa *wadi*, that he was enchanted by the place, the setting, and the landscape. There is something special about it, he says, that can’t be put into words (Oz, 1993, p. 64). Many residents I talked to tried to explain that the desert has certain vibrations that their bodies are in tune with, that it resonates, that they belong there because they are on the same wavelength. “*Don’t you love these views?*” I was asked while visiting the hilltop settlement Nerya in Mateh Binyamin. At Mount Haresha near Nerya and Talmon in Mateh Binyamin there is a lookout point, “*From here you can see the whole land, Hadera to Gaza... Moses saw the whole country from Mount Nebo, that is what we do here*” (field notes 7/31/15). This connection with nature and the land was hard for residents to put into words, but many talked about vibrations and resonance, and feeling at home and in tune with the natural environment in a way they couldn’t be in Israeli cities in Israel proper. Aligned with this feeling is that residents feel “more Jewish” living in the West Bank, as I discuss below with the discourse around Jewish community and identity.

The quality-of-life discourse deals with the sense of insecurity in several ways. First, through an assertion that though the roads may be dangerous, inside the settlements it is safe and bucolic (despite events like the recent stabbing of Rabbi Froman’s pregnant daughter-in-law inside Tekoa, described in the introduction). Settlers also downplay the danger of living in the West Bank by asserting that all of Israel, and even the world, is also dangerous—especially for Jews. When settlers tell me, for instance, that they “live in a rough neighborhood,” they aren’t referring to settlements in the West Bank, they are referring to Israel being located in the Middle East (field notes 8/18/14). One settler, talking about terrorism and his wife’s fear of driving to work in Jerusalem because of the danger on the roads, concluded: “*but this is Israel, you know?*”

(interview 5, Kfar Eldad 7/8/14). Another asserted: *“Everywhere is dangerous, but it’s normal for the people who live there. In Syria it’s dangerous, but people live there, people live anywhere. At least here we are free, we can go anywhere, it is wide open...”* (interview 8, Kfar Eldad 7/11/14). The risk of violence and terror in West Bank settlements becomes normalized for the people who live there. Despite the statistics on attacks in the settlements, it becomes “within the realm of normalcy,” in the words of one resident of Efrat: *“This is in the realm of normalcy—you drive cars despite the statistics because it is still within the realm of normalcy. It’s the same here. As long as it is in the realm of normal [we will live here]”* (interview 58, Efrat 7/24/15). One resident says his family who lives in Israel proper worries about his safety living in a settlement, *“Most people see out of Israel different than we do [sic]. But this is our life so we stay. [It’s] not more dangerous here than in Haifa or Tel Aviv. All the world is dangerous”* (field notes 7/11/14). Other ethnographies of settlements have found the same claims: that there is a risk of terrorism and insecurity across Israel, not just in the settlements (Mayne, 2014). That said, residents go to great lengths to try and protect themselves: the buses that service the West Bank are bulletproof, polycarbonate windows to replace the glass in your car in case of stone throwing or shootings is subsidized, some mothers put bulletproof vests on their kids when they drive places.

4. Jewish Community & Identity

The fourth discourse revolves around Jewish community and identity. In some sense, the emphasis on Jewish community may be somewhat unique to the mixed, community settlements in which I conducted my research. But the idea of excluding other groups—like Israeli Arabs—is not unique to these settlements, and the emphasis on connecting the territories with Jewish

identity isn't either. Additionally, all the settlements develop their own distinct "flavor" and community spirit: *"they're not contiguous like neighborhoods in the U.S. They're more like gated communities, so they each develop their own style and personality. It's like what Darwin found of the Galapagos Islands"* (interview 58B, Alon Shvut 7/24/15). Within each of these distinct "neighborhoods" develops a sense of community, identity, and reciprocal help and support. This discourse stresses exclusivity, the diversity of Jewish life, social cohesion, and a deeper Jewish identity.

According to Le Espiritu (2003, p. 2), "Because home making is most often a way of establishing difference and a means of jostling for power, homes are as much about inclusions and open doors as they are about exclusions and closed borders." One of the narratives this discourse entails emphasizes exclusivity. In contrast to cities and neighborhoods in Israel proper, "Jews exclusively inhabit all settlements—urban, suburban, or rural, ideologically or economically inspired—though Palestinians are often employed in them, even to construct them" (Beinin, 2013, pp. 29-30). Further, most of the settlements included in my study are community/communal settlements. In community settlements a further selection process is set up so that residents can veto the sale of a house or business to an undesirable buyer. This selection process maintains a shared ideology, religious perspective, and/or desired lifestyle which residents wish to perpetuate by accepting like-minded individuals. Many of the settlements retain strong social and cultural cohesion by applying social screening mechanisms such as psychometric tests and interviews to sort candidates (Rosen & Razin, 2008).

The settlements of eastern Gush Etzion are also "mixed" communities, where religious and non-religious Jews live together because they want their children to experience the diversity of Jewish life (diversity within constraints, anyway). In an account of Tekoa, Israeli novelist

Amos Oz says, “The people of Tekoa refer to their community as a melting pot because of the wide diversity of backgrounds and because of the unusual attempt to build a community of religious and secular settlers together” (Oz, 1993, p. 52). Residents in these settlements often stressed that they had moved to a mixed settlement because they like the idea of a diverse community where religious and non-religious Jews live together harmoniously. According to a spokeswoman for Tekoa: established by “visionary Israeli and new immigrants seeking to build a community of co-existence, Tekoa is blessed with people who have chosen to live in a community based on social diversity and mutual respect” (Simkovitz). For example, community amenities, like the public pool, cater to both religious and secular Jews (pool pictured in Figure 4.4). While many settlements cater to specific segments of Israeli society, in an advertisement for Tekoa labelled “Diverse, Dynamic, Determined,” the author noted:

“In Tekoa, however, people believe strongly that all Jews belong to one extended family, and that being able to live as good neighbors isn’t based on one’s political ideology or religious inclination.//The community is populated by a mix of religious Zionists and secular Israelis. Many new immigrants from the former Soviet Union also live in Tekoa. While English speakers have settled there for year, its popularity has picked up recently with the opening of a new road that bypasses Arab communities and enables one to arrive in Jerusalem within 10 minutes” (Ben-Zvi, 2014).

Personally, I found this emphasis on diversity sometimes a bit ironic, given the selection process for new residents and the fact that all residents are Jewish. Home is the comfort of living around people who look a lot like you—unlike in Israel-proper, only Israeli Jews can live in the settlements. The only Arabs who enter the settlements are the day laborers, who are with a Jewish armed guard at all times. Not unlike white, affluent suburbs in the United States, “The ‘community’ that they find so comforting is, more exactly, demographic homogeneity, the reassurance and sense of security one gets from being surrounded by—not necessarily interacting with but simply living among—neighbors who are ‘similar to my background’” (Szasz, 2007, p. 76).

Community settlements in particular emphasize community living and social cohesion. In one book of fiction about living in a settlement and the danger it entails, the author says that living in a *yishuv* is like living in “one house divided into many rooms, and all the people one large, extended family. If you saw someone’s child in need of a Band-Aid, or a sandwich, or just a hug, you provided it, no questions asked” (Ragen, 2007, p. 13). Similarly, in a book she wrote after her son Koby was killed, Tekoa resident Sherri Mandell says, “Tekoa is a village like the one Hillary Clinton describes when she says—‘it takes a village to raise a child.’ If a small child on his way to school here cries because he forgot his sandwich, another mother will hear him and make him one. My son Daniel once said it felt like each house in Tekoa was the room of one big house and he could go into any room he wanted” (Mandell, 2003, pp. 57-59). After the murder of her son, her family stayed in the settlement, and received an outpouring of community support. An older couple in the settlement said that “*the kids treat us like their grandparents,*” and that younger couples in the community would come by on the pretense of borrowing something, “*but what they really wanted was just to check on us. I’ve never lived in a community in the U.S. like that. I feel safe here, safer than in the States*” (interview 53, Tekoa 7/13/15). The couple noted that often kids would wander in their house off the street, looking for a bathroom or snack. This emphasis on reciprocal help and support says a lot about social cohesion and insularity in the settlements.

In addition to a desire to live among other, like-minded, Jews, settlement residents often express that living in the territories makes them feel “more Jewish” or “more Israeli” in some intangible way. In response to the question “What is it like to live here?” one resident replied: “*In some way [sic] I feel more Israeli, and I feel more, eh, eh, more give for my country [sic] in some way*” (interview 7, Kfar Eldad 7/9/14). Another girl said, “*We’re like more Israeli here, the*

community is the most Israeli. Spiritually I feel it, when I come back to the Gush. It's emotional. We stand up for each other. We're out there doing it—the safety belt of Israel” (interview 59, Alon Shvut 7/24/15). The discourse of Jewish community and identity is also closely tied to the reality of danger in the settlements. During my fieldwork I often wondered whether there might be a certain emotional economy to life in the territories: why does feeling scared make you more Jewish? For example, I interviewed a couple once who were recent immigrants from the U.S. living in Tekoa, both of them university professors. They expressed that living in the West Bank was definitely dangerous, and that their kids might be scared, but that this would make them *more Jewish* than they would have been growing up back in the U.S., and this is desirable (interview 30, Tekoa 8/6/14). The emphasis on exclusivity in the Jewish community and identity discourse also relates to safety/security: *“Here you know exactly who the enemy is. It's more chill and independent. You never see someone from the city like that. In the city anyone can be the bad guy”* (interview 59, Alon Shvut 7/24/15). The enemy, no mistake, is the Palestinian Arab. Anyone (any Jew) who had been approved to live in the settlement had already been screened and deemed worthy of joining the community. The social cohesion and reciprocal help and support play a role in minimizing and coping with fear and danger—when there is a violent attack, the community comes together in mourning and an outpouring of love. Many residents of the settlements have lost family and friends to terror attacks, but they still remain there with their families.

4.4 Concluding Remarks

Together these discourses display what David Newman described as the dialectic between fundamentalism and pragmatism, the ideological/religious and the practical, Messianic

redemption and suburban paradise (Newman, 2014). By separating out these discourses (as much as possible), I hope to capture the variegated, complicated, and conflictual reality of life in the settlements, and to understand how settlers construct such a dangerous setting as “home.”

In the face of near constant violence the settlement communities are growing—people are moving into, not out of, the settlements (Rosenthal, 2003; Simons, 2014). Many of the settlements have waiting lists of prospective residents, and population increase in the settlements is higher than in Israel proper (Shihade, 2014). As one real estate agent in Tekoa described:

“This is a healthy, vibrant community. Lots of couples with kids. I can’t imagine living anywhere else. [One] indication that this is a successful community is that the kids who grow up here want to live here... [this is a] great place to raise kids” (interview 1, Tekoa 9/6/13). One woman who had grown up in Tekoa and was now raising a family there and serving on the local community council said *“the fact that there are so many [people] of the second generation living in Tekoa tells you what a great community it is... people love the place”* (field notes 8/13/14). Already there are 2nd and 3rd generations of settlers in Tekoa, established in the late 1970s (field notes 7/2/15). These new generations of settlers are socialized to the violence: *“In [the settlements] it’s tense, but when you’re living in a place first of all you’re not feeling it... when you live in a place you don’t feel the tense [sic] cause you grow up there, so for me it’s the life”* (interview 8, Kfar Eldad 7/11/14).

Sociologist Michael Feige (2009, p. 2) asserts that the multiple deaths at the hands of Palestinian terrorists in the West Bank exemplifies that while the term *home* “conjures up images of tranquility and security,” the settlers have little of those. But I disagree with this assertion—within the settlements themselves residents claim they are living a peaceful, bucolic lifestyle. In examining this contradiction, I found that the tension between constructing home as domesticity

(a safe, peaceful sanctuary from the world) and home as diasporic homeland (a contested territory to fight and sacrifice for) in the occupied territories leads Israeli settlers to make compromises between the ideal of a secure, suburban lifestyle and the drive for national territory. This produces incongruous impulses and outcomes where the imperative of security and the need to place oneself in danger for the good of the nation are held in constant tension. Therefore, settlers are drawing on these four discourses to reconcile the impulse to construction a safe, suburban lifestyle, and the impulse to fight for the contested diasporic homeland. Sometimes these impulses are complementary, often they are divergent, but the resulting dissonances are managed by framing settlement life in these terms.

4.5 Figures



Figure 4.1: Mosaic at the entrance of the Tekoa settlement showing the Prophet Amos and reading: “And I will plant them on their land [Israel], And they will not again be rooted from their land Which I have given them,’ says the LORD your G’d.” Source: Author’s collection.



Figure 4.2: Park in Tekoa with single-family houses in the background, eastern Gush Etzion settlement bloc, July 2015. Source: Author's collection.



Figure 4.3: The settlement Efrat in Gush Etzion, July 2015. Source: Author's collection.



Figure 4.4: Community pool in Tekoa, eastern Gush Etzion, offering hours specifically for men and women, as well as “family” hours, July 2014. Source: Author's collection.

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5. With a Wink and a Nod: Settlement Growth Through Construction as Commemoration in the Occupied West Bank

A version of: Hughes, Sara. "With a Wink and a Nod: Settlement Growth Through Construction as Commemoration in the Occupied West Bank." Geopolitics (2016): 1-23.

5.1 Abstract

Construction as commemoration refers to the construction of new settlement outposts and the expansion of existing settlements to commemorate the loss of Israeli life in the occupied West Bank. Popular discourse surrounding this commemorative construction maintains that these acts are aimed at "sending a message" to Palestinian terrorists, asserting that Israeli settlers will stand fast in the face of violence. Settlements, however, grow regardless of what Palestinians do or do not do. In this paper, I argue that when viewed through the lens of settler colonial theory, construction as commemoration is revealed to not be aimed at sending a message to Palestinians, but rather at appealing to the hearts and minds of the Israeli public, and at providing cover for the Israeli government to openly support settlement growth regardless of international pressure. In contrast to commemorative acts like monuments and memorials which are aimed at symbolically controlling space, construction as commemoration results in the material, physical control of contested territory. The discursive framing of construction as commemoration maintains the fiction of a conflictual relationship between settlers and the Israeli government, which allows for settlement growth to continue, in the words of one informant, "with a wink and a nod" – with the tacit support of the Israeli government at the same time that it claims to try to rein the settlers in.

5.2 Introduction: Construction as Commemoration

In the summer of 2014, several Israeli settlement outposts were established in the West Bank to honour the memory of three Jewish Israeli teenagers—Naftali, Gilad, and Eyal—who were kidnapped and murdered by Palestinians while hitchhiking home in the occupied territory. On Monday 30 June, the boys’ bodies were found in Halhul, near Hebron and the location where they were kidnapped. Just three days later, the Gush Etzion Regional Council¹ established three new outposts in the dark of night, complete with several mobile homes and generators (Times of Israel staff, 2014). The sun rose on rubber hoses extending from existing settlements to provide water to the new outposts, snaking through the desert faster than the boys could formally be laid to rest. Anti-occupation activist groups and many critics in the media immediately condemned what they saw as a punitive act: the illegal confiscation of “land for lives” (Fisk, 2014). In an article following the murder titled “Taking Advantage: Three New Outposts,” the activist organization Americans for Peace Now² said that the developments would be judged by the Israeli government’s reaction (Americans for Peace Now, 2014). Would the settlers be allowed to stay, creating more facts on the ground, or would they be removed? Of the 3-4 outposts established, one, Tekoa He, was removed within a week or two. Driving and biking around the settlement where I lived that summer, I could see the blue tarp on a distant hill that marked the location of the Tekoa He outpost, and its subsequent disappearance (Figure 5.1: Blue tarp and newly planted trees in front of *caravan* [mobile home] number 4 in Tekoa He). But around the same time the handful of families residing at Tekoa He were evicted, nearly 1,000 acres were

¹ The Gush Etzion Regional Council is an administrative unit for Israeli settlements in the Gush Etzion region of the occupied West Bank. Regional councils are one of three types of local government bodies found in Israel and the occupied territories. In addition to being under the administration of the Regional Council, each settlement also has its own local council. In 2014 Naftali, Gilad, and Eyal were kidnapped from the Gush Etzion region, where most of the ensuing settlement activity took place.

² Peace Now is an Israeli NGO and activist group that promotes a two-state solution to the Israel/Palestine conflict. They regularly publish reports detailing Israeli settlement and military activity in the occupied West Bank.

confiscated for the Israeli settlement Gvaot—the largest land appropriation in thirty years (Beaumont, 2014; Fisk, 2014).

As the following data and analysis will show, the eviction of Tekoa He should not be interpreted as the Israeli government intervening to halt settlement growth. Late that July, I asked an informant who had been active in the establishment of the commemorative outposts if he and the other founders were upset that the government had forced them to leave Tekoa He. I expected expressions of anger, sadness, and frustration, as I had often been told by settlers that the Israeli government is constantly getting in their way when it should be supporting them as Jewish citizens of Israel. His knowing smile suggested that I had said something humorously naïve. What he told me was this: someone “high up in the Knesset³” had approached the settlers and explained that all of the government’s political clout following the terror attack against the three boys needed to be thrown behind the appropriation of nearly 1,000 acres for Gvaot. The choice was between a few *caravanim* [mobile homes] in the Tekoa He outpost (Figure 5.2: *Caravanim* [mobile homes] at Tekoa He), or 990 acres and potentially thousands of new housing units in Gvaot. So, said my informant, “with a wink and a nod” from the Israeli government, the settlers were told they could return to the location of Tekoa He later and settle there more successfully and in greater numbers, but for now they would have to wait (field notes 7/31/14). Though the settlers were not allowed to stay at Tekoa He, the eviction is clearly not evidence of the government reining in settlement activity, but rather is demonstrative of the cooperation and tacit support of the government for the settlement movement.

A critical analysis of the discourse surrounding what I term *construction as commemoration*—the construction of new outposts and expansion of existing settlements in response to violence against Israeli settlers—further reveals the nature of the relationship between the Israeli government and the settlement movement. Land appropriation through

³ The Knesset is the Israeli Parliament.

settlement is consistently justified by Israeli settlers and government officials as an “appropriate and just” Zionist response to the taking of Jewish Israeli lives. In this paper, I analyse construction as commemoration by drawing on settler colonial theory. Seen through this theoretical framework, it becomes clear that construction as commemoration is not aimed at “sending a message” to Palestinian terrorists, despite popular rhetoric. Rather, as sociologist Michael Feige (2009) notes, it is aimed at “settling in the hearts”⁴ of the Israeli public: integrating the settlement project into the national narrative and national consciousness. In his book about the religious fundamentalist group Gush Emunim, Feige (2009) focuses on deciphering the inner logic of the settlement movement and explores how a private and national home is socially produced, mentally constructed, and politically presented. He is also interested in deciphering the nature of the dialogue between the settlement movement and Israeli society, as the movement’s leadership employs discursive strategies in an effort to appeal to the compassion of the Israeli public. Additionally, construction as commemoration and the discourse around it obscures and obfuscates the true nature of the relationship between the settlers and the Israeli government. I argue that viewing this commemorative act through settler colonial theory exposes the fact that the settlers and the Israeli government are two consenting participants in what only seems like a conflictual relationship. Colonial expansion in the West Bank thus continues in the shadow of a well-orchestrated dynamic whereby settlers presumably strong-arm the government (through appeals to national commemoration and loss of Jewish life) and the government does everything it can to restrain the settlers (but allowances must be made for tragedy). Therefore, the discursive framing of construction as commemoration enables the settlement movement to expand “with a wink and a nod” from the Israeli government, while maintaining the impression of a conflictual relationship.

⁴ The expression ‘settling in the hearts’ (*hitnachalut ba-levavot*) was coined by the religious fundamentalist group Gush Emunim to describe their strategy vis-à-vis Israeli society (see Feige 2009).

5.3 Methodology

Through an analysis of the events and discourse surrounding the establishment of settlements in response to terror attacks against settlers, I investigate what these commemorations are meant to communicate, and to whom, by drawing on settler colonial literature and theory. The data for this discursive analysis was generated through an examination of various publications from Israeli and international news sources following the establishment of settlements in response to terror attacks, as well as through an examination of the monthly publications of the Gush Etzion Regional Council in the months following the murder of the three Israeli teens in the summer of 2014. I also draw on secondary sources in which journalists and scholars interviewed settlers about various instances of construction as commemoration (for example, journalist James R. Gaines wrote about Nokdim and Kfar Eldad, founded in 1982; sociologist Michael Feige wrote about Rechalim, founded in 1991; and settlement supporter Frank Mecklenburg wrote about Ramat Gilad and Havat Gilad, founded in the early 2000s during the Second Intifada). Further, I analyse new qualitative field data generated during three months of fieldwork in eastern Gush Etzion in the period immediately following the murder of the three boys and subsequent settlement expansion (June-September 2014), and follow-up interviews and site visits during three months of fieldwork a year later (June-September 2015). During both of these periods I resided in the eastern Gush Etzion settlement bloc and conducted over 100 in-depth interviews with residents of the Gush Etzion, eastern Gush Etzion, and Mateh Binyamin settlement blocs, in addition to interviews with settlement and regional council elected officials. Interviews were conducted primarily in English, though occasionally in Hebrew with the aid of a translator from the community. The boys were kidnapped from the Gush Etzion region, and a majority of the outposts established in the aftermath of their deaths were also within this administrative region. As such, residents of the Gush Etzion and eastern Gush Etzion settlement blocs were active and instrumental in the establishment of several of the outposts set

up in honour of the boys, and provided first-hand accounts of their actions and motivations. Unless otherwise noted, translations are by the author.

5.4 Theoretical framework: Settler Colonialism in Palestine/Israel

The emerging field of settler colonial studies investigates the replacement of an indigenous population with an exogenous one on the land as a category analytically distinct from colonialism, which is primarily the control of an exogenous polity over an indigenous population (Veracini, 2010; Wolfe, 1998, 2006). The study and theorization of a form of colonization based on settlement is not necessarily novel. Though they placed colonialism and settler colonialism within the same analytical frame, traditionally studies on colonial orders and their historiographies have acknowledged the distinction between *colonies of settlement* and *colonies of exploitation*, and between internal and external colonialisms (Veracini, 2010, pp. 6; see: Horvath, 1972; Finley, 1976; Fredrickson, 1988; Osterhammel, 1997). In fact, classificatory attempts have repeatedly stressed this separation. For a foundational text and comprehensive typology of different colonial formations, see D.K. Fieldhouse, *The colonial empires: a comparative survey from the eighteenth century*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1966. Significant re-workings of Fieldhouse's taxonomy are offered by George Fredrickson, *White supremacy: a comparative study in American and South African history*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983; and by Gershon Shafir, *Land, labour, and the origins of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, 1882-1914*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989. However, one result of the acknowledgement of these taxonomies has been that settler colonial phenomena have generally been seen as a subset, albeit a distinct one, of colonial phenomena, rather than as a distinct configuration of citizenship, territory, economy, and cultural politics (Cattellino, 2010; Piterberg, 2008; Veracini, 2010). It is this subordination of settler colonialism to colonialism as an analytical frame that scholars in the emerging field seek to address. Certain morphological

differences exist between colonialism and settler colonialism that are of particular importance to this analysis. They are the fact that the primary object of the colonization is the land itself, how this shapes the form the system of relationships takes, and the resulting colonial consciousness.

As a phenomenon distinct from colonialism, in the settler colonial situation the primary object is the acquisition of the land itself, which therefore necessitates the elimination of the indigenous population (Veracini, 2010, p. 9). In colonial situations, by contrast, the primary object is the surplus value to be derived from mixing native labour with the land. Therefore, in settler colonial contexts the colonizers interact directly with the land, not with the colonized whom they seek to *replace* on, not just *displace* from, the land (Wolfe, 1998).

Because the object of settler colonization is land and not labour the system of relationships in settler colonialism is also different than that in colonialism. Influential and oft-cited definitions of colonialism insist on foreign domination and rule over a colonized demographic majority (Balandier, 1966; Osterhammel & Frisch, 1997), an interpretive framework that pits colonizing metropole against colonized periphery. Conversely, Veracini and other scholars (such as Wolfe 1998, 2006, Johnston & Lawson 2000, and Shafir 1989) argue that settler colonial phenomena complicate this dyad “by establishing a fundamentally triangular system of relationships,” a system comprising the settler colonizer, the indigenous colonized, and a variety of variously categorized exogenous others (Figure 5.3: The triangular system of relationships in settler colonization) (Veracini, 2010, pp. 6; see also: Piterberg, 2011). The settler collective, having come from elsewhere and seeing itself as permanently situated in the place it has come to, is both exogenous and indigenous at the same time, and due to this imaginary there are conflicting tendencies operating on the settler collective at once: “one striving for indigenization and national autonomy, the other aiming at neo-European replication and the establishment of a ‘civilized’ pattern of life” (Veracini, 2010, pp. 20-21). These are two conflicting sources of identification, authenticity, and authority for the settler colonizer. The

settler subject is therefore always committed (or condemned) to desire and disavow two kinds of authority and authenticity—the authentic imperial culture from which he is separated and an indigenous authenticity that he desires as a marker of his legitimacy (Johnston & Lawson, 2000, p. 369). Theoretically, the settler is “uneasily occupying a place caught between two First Worlds, two origins of authority and authenticity”—the Imperium (the source of cultural authority, protection, and material support) and the First Nations (whose authority they both replaced and effaced but also desired) (Johnston & Lawson, 2000, p. 369). Therefore, settler colonial representational regimes (in which the settler self is both indigenous and exogenous) need a triangular system of relationships (Figure 5.3: The triangular system of relationships in settler colonization) because the dual self needs two dialectical counterpoints—an indigenous and an exogenous one—where the colonial self needs only one (Veracini, 2010, p. 30).

The difference between the dual relationship in colonialism and the triangular one in settler colonialism results in very different kinds of colonial consciousness. Within the metropolitan colonial relationship “the colonizers are convinced of their own superiority and of their ordained mandate to rule” (Osterhammel & Frisch, 1997, pp. 16-17). There is no need to disavow the indigeneity of the colonized or to claim indigeneity as a marker of legitimacy. In contrast, the two dominant features of the settler colonial consciousness are: (1) a disavowal of violence, and (2) an ideal of settler fixity. In the settler fantasy the society is constantly striving to live a peaceful, stable life. This is because, on the one hand, settlers perceive themselves as members of hard-working, peacefully-living communities in a regenerative world—despite the fact that settler projects “are inevitably premised on the traumatic, that is, *violent*, replacement and/or displacement of indigenous Others”—and on the other because, in addition to an inevitable founding violence, settler collectives are also escaping *from* violence and are determined to produce a settled political body with a secure future (Veracini, 2010, pp. 75, 76-77):

A 'settler society' can thus be seen as a fantasy where a perception of a constant struggle is juxtaposed against an ideal of 'peace' that can never be reached, settler projects embrace and reject violence *at the same time*. The settler colonial situation is thus a circumstance where the tension between contradictory impulses produces long-lasting psychic conflicts and a number of associated psychopathologies (Veracini, 2010, p. 77).

Settler colonial societies, therefore, need to disavow their foundational violence for a variety of reasons, one of which is "a recurring narcissistic drive" which demands that a settler society be represented as an ideal political body so that "even when settler colonial narratives celebrate anti-indigenous violence, they do so by representing a defensive battle ensuring the continued survival of the settler community and never as founding violence per se" (Veracini, 2010, pp. 77, 78).

Here I would like to note how I engage the settlement movement in the occupied Palestinian Territories as a "settler polity" in the terms used by Veracini and other scholars of settler colonialism, because this framing is "complicated by the fact that the Israeli state *is itself* a settler polity whose indigenous other is the Palestinian Arab and whose exogenous other is usually located in Europe/the West. In this sense, the settlement of the occupied Palestinian Territories is merely a continuation of the Zionist settler colonial project that resulted in the establishment of Israel in 1948. However, because the Jewish State of Israel is a sovereign state within internationally-recognized borders (the "Green Line"⁵), in many ways the state has elided its history as settler colonial. As a sovereign nation-state, Israel's seizure of the Palestinian territories in the 1967 Six-Day War⁶ and the subsequent occupation and settlement of that territory by Israeli Jews is seen as a breach of international norms governing belligerent

⁵ The 'Green Line' refers to the 1949 Armistice Line, which the international community regards as the border between Israel 'proper' and the occupied Palestinian Territories. The settlements located close to the Green Line are generally considered the ones that will eventually be annexed by the state of Israel.

⁶ The Six-Day War was fought between 5 and 10 June 1967 by Israel and the neighbouring states of Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. During the war Israel seized control of the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan, and the Golan Heights from Syria.

occupation,⁷ rather than as the continuation of a larger settler project. The settlement movement is held at arm's length by the Israeli public and government in order to avoid any association between the widely-criticized settlement of civilian population in the occupied Palestinian Territories and the creation of the state of Israel, which also dispossessed Palestinians of their traditional homeland. By framing the occupation of the Palestinian territories as Israel's breach of international norms, the creation of the State of Israel itself and the resulting Palestinian *Nakba* [Catastrophe] are naturalized and rendered indisputable. And because West Bank settlers are held distinct from Israel, then, their indigenous other is the Palestinian Arab, and their exogenous other consists of a variety of actors which include the Israeli public and the Israeli government (Figure 5.4: The triangular system of relationships for West Bank settlers).

Viewed through the lens of the settler colonial theory outlined here, construction as commemoration is revealed as an act aimed not at sending a message to Palestinians (the indigenous other), but rather at capturing the hearts and minds of the Israeli public and at providing a smokescreen for practical collaboration between the settlers and the Israeli government (the exogenous other). As I will show below, the discursive framing of construction as commemoration flows logically from the sources of legitimacy settlers rely on in the three-way system of relationships and from the settler consciousness. For instance: there is an appeal to the "authentic imperial culture" from which the settlers are separated—in this case, an appeal to mainstream Israeli nationalism and an attempt to write themselves into the national narrative; settlement construction is framed as a defensive battle against Palestinian violence, rather than as a violent act in itself; and the ideal of settler fixity is achieved through the creation of new facts on the ground which secure the future of Jewish settlement in the occupied West Bank. I will

⁷ Moving civilian population into military occupied territory is illegal according to the Geneva Conventions and therefore Israeli settlements are condemned by the UN and most sovereign nations of the world.

explore the connections between settler colonial theory and construction as commemoration in greater detail following a discussion of the discourse surrounding these commemorative acts.

5.5 “Land for lives”: the Discursive Framing of Construction as Commemoration

The commemoration of Naftali, Gilad, and Eyal in the summer of 2014 through construction of new settlement outposts and expansion of existing settlements is only the most recent example in a long history of construction as commemoration in the occupied West Bank. The act of establishing new outposts or expanding existing settlements to commemorate settlers killed by Palestinians has been part of the settlement movement since the onset of the occupation of the Palestinian Territories following the 1967 Six-Day War. The discourse surrounding these commemorative acts asserts that they are aimed at “sending a message” to Palestinian terrorists and their supporters—communicating that the “price” of taking Israeli lives is the expropriation of Palestinian land. This point is reasserted through the naming and placement of the new outposts (often named for the Israeli settlers they commemorate and located either near where the settlers in question were killed, or near the settlement(s) where they lived), in statements made by residents of the West Bank settlements and representatives of the local settlement regional councils, as well as in statements made by ministers in the national government. I trace the main tenets of this discourse through the events following the kidnapping and murder of these three boys in 2014.

Several interlocking themes make up the discourse of construction as commemoration: these acts are a fitting response, or answer, to the taking of Jewish lives; these are acts of retribution or revenge, punitive measures aimed at deterring future terrorist acts; and settlers will show they cannot be intimidated and are steadfast in the face of violence. Implied in all of these themes is that there is a universal difference between Israeli settlers and Palestinians: Israelis love life, and respond to destruction and violence with construction and growth, while

Palestinians love death and are full of blind hatred that results in terrorist acts. Israeli actions are justified, Palestinian actions are not. This discourse therefore disavows the foundational violence of the settler project, framing settlement growth as a defensive battle ensuring the continued survival of the settler community, rather than as an act of violence in itself (Veracini, 2010, pp. 77, 78).

Woven throughout the events and discourse presented here are first-hand encounters from 2014, and other examples from the long history of construction as commemoration (referencing outposts established in the same spirit in 1982, 1991, and during the Second Intifada in the early 2000s). In all of these cases, the same discourse surrounding the establishment of outposts following the boys' murder in 2014 is prevalent.

Sequence of Events: Summer 2014

Naftali, Gilad, and Eyal were hitchhiking home from school on the evening of 12 June 2014, when they were picked up by three Palestinians from a *trempiyada* [hitch hiking post] in the Gush Etzion region of the occupied West Bank (Ellis & Schwartz). In the immediate aftermath of the kidnapping, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) launched Operation Brother's Keeper to find and rescue the three teenagers. Over the course of eleven days the IDF very visibly scoured the occupied West Bank, with daily updates and pictures posted online, searching more than 1,000 Palestinian homes, arresting over 350 Palestinians (mostly associated in some way with Hamas), and resulting in the death of 5 Palestinians (Norman, 2014). In response to the crackdown in the West Bank, Hamas intensified rocket fire from Gaza into Israel. On 8 July 2014, Israel launched Operation Protective Edge, the latest Gaza war, which lasted 50 days and resulted in over 2,200 casualties, the overwhelming majority of whom were Gazans (Booth, 2014).

As described in the introduction, just three days after the boys' bodies were found, the Gush Etzion Regional council had established three new outposts. These outposts included

Ramat HaShaloshah, located between Bat Ayn and the Arab village Zoref⁸, Tekoa He (Figure 5.2: *Caravanim* [mobile homes] at Tekoa He), located east of Tekoa, and Talmei Hayim, near Kiryat Arba (Figure 5.5: Outposts established in summer 2014). They also included one recreational site called Giva'at Oz veGaon⁹, located near kibbutz Migdal Oz (Degan, 2014; Times of Israel staff, 2014). All of the sites are located in the Gush Etzion settlement bloc, except Talmei Hayim which is in the independent settlement town Kiryat Arba. On 31 August 2014, five days after the close of the 2014 Gaza war, 990 acres of land were confiscated for the Israeli settlement Gvaot in the Gush Etzion settlement bloc (Figure 5.5: Outposts established in summer 2014).

Discursive Framing

One of the themes repeated again and again in the discourse surrounding construction as commemoration frames these commemorative acts as fitting responses, or the “correct answer,” to the taking of Jewish lives. In response to the killing of the boys, Malachi Levinger, head of Kiryat Arba's local council, said that “The new neighbourhood [Talmei Hayim] will expand the town [Kiryat Arba] towards the area where the abduction took place,” adding, “[o]ur answer to the taking of life is to plant new life at any time and any place in the country, as part of our birthright,” (Times of Israel staff, 2014). The establishment of the outpost Rechalim in the northern West Bank in 1991 was framed with similar language—it was a “fitting Zionist response” to killing, established on the spot where the act of violence took place (Feige, 2009, p. 213). Rechalim was established in response to the killing of Rachel Druk after Palestinians fired on a bus leaving the settlement of Shiloh on its way to a large political rally in Tel Aviv (Feige, 2009, p. 212). Like the outposts built to commemorate Naftali, Gilad, and Eyal, the settlement was established at the site of the murder to commemorate Rachel's death as a form of retaliation,

⁸ The name of this Palestinian village is sometimes transliterated as ‘Zoref,’ as in this text, and sometimes as ‘Surif.’

⁹ In honour of the boys, Ramat HaShaloshah means ‘hills/heights of the three,’ and Giva'at Oz veGaon combines the initials of the three boys' first names.

deterrence, and confidence boosting among settlement residents (Feige, 2009, p. 213). Drawing on their political influence and “capitalizing on popular outrage at the attack,” the settlers were allowed to remain at the site (Feige, 2009, p. 213).

A second theme of this discourse frames construction as commemoration as an act of retribution or revenge, a punitive measure aimed at deterring future terrorist acts. In a *Guardian* article, Peter Beaumont (2014) noted that Israel’s announcement to expropriate nearly 1,000 acres for Gvaot “comes after an apparently concerted effort by some of its officials and politicians to use the kidnap and murder of three religious students earlier this summer to justify the expropriation.” He said that the direct link between the murder, which shocked Israeli society, and the announcement suggests the move “was designed in part as a punitive measure” (Beaumont, 2014). This interpretation tracks with local discourse in Gush Etzion, which explicitly linked the establishment of several settlement outposts in the region with violence against Israeli bodies there. *Gushpanka*, the monthly periodical of the Gush Etzion Regional Council, circulated an article in its July 2014 issue titled “Price Tag,”¹⁰ conveying that the “price” of terrorism is settlement expansion. In the article, Davidi Pearl, head of the Gush Etzion Regional Council, demanded that the Israeli government strengthen Jewish settlement in response to the murder of the three boys. He is quoted as saying:

We know that since the beginning of [the] settlement [movement] we have encountered difficulties and terror [from Palestinians] trying to weaken our spirit. But we are strong, and we shall continue to be strong. I spoke to the ministers and members of the Knesset and I called on the prime minister *to respond to destruction with construction*. To annex Gush Etzion and to make the whole area into thousands of housing units. *The correct answer to terror is more development, construction, and action*. We shall continue building and we encourage our youth to help volunteer and partner with settlement efforts during the summer vacation (“Price Tag,” 2014, p. emphasis added).

¹⁰ The policy or tactic known as ‘price tag’ generally refers to acts of vandalism by Jewish fundamentalist settlers, usually young and from ideological outposts, in response to any actions taken against the settler enterprise. In this case, though, it is the title of an article published in a Gush Etzion periodical about establishing new outposts in response to the kidnapping and murder of the three Israeli teens in 2014.

Another article in *Gushpanka*'s August 2014 issue was titled "Three boys – three settlements." The three outposts described in the article included Giva'at Oz veGaon, Ramat HaShaloshah, and Tekoa He. The article reports that these settlements were quickly inhabited by several families in mobile homes, supported by the regional council, which provided water tanks for drinking and washing and gathered volunteers to develop roads and improve local infrastructure. The article also included pictures of Eyal Yifrah's grandparents and Gilad Shaer's parents visiting the new outposts, to show their support and to plant trees in honour of the boys (Degan, 2014). In this way the boys, and the trees planted in their honor, were the seeds out of which new settlement outposts grew.

Robert Fisk (2014), writing for *The Independent*, described the significant political move of appropriating 990 acres of land for Gvaot in his title: "Israel's 'land for lives' is theft. Pure and simple." He claimed that the land confiscated for Gvaot had not been seized on God's warrant, on security grounds, or because of deed of title, but for "revenge," a measure which sets a dangerous precedent (Fisk, 2014, p. 246). He described the growth of Gvaot as "the biggest land heist in 30 years," (Fisk, 2014). Similarly, when El-David, an outpost in eastern Gush Etzion, was established as a "response" to the murder of David Rosenfeld in 1982, it was seen as part of "a new cycle of revenge" (Gaines, 1982). Rosenfeld was a resident of the eastern Gush Etzion settlement Tekoa and director of the tourist site and national park on Mount Herodion.¹¹ In 1982, he was stabbed to death outside the office where he worked by two young Palestinian men from a nearby village. In response, his fellow settlers and neighbours from Tekoa decided to establish a new settlement, originally located in Ferdis, the Palestinian village where his killers were from. At the time, there were 25 people and an army escort living in El-David in a "tight-packed enclave of tents, outbuildings and windowless mobile homes" (Gaines, 1982). An article

¹¹ Sometimes spelled 'Herodium,' the mountain is actually a man-made truncated cone-shaped hill where Herod the Great built his summer fortress, palace, and small town between 23 and 15 BCE. Today the site is managed by the Israel National Parks Authority. At least the last three directors of the site have been residents of settlements in eastern Gush Etzion.

titled “The Birth of a Settlement: The Murder of an American Starts a New Cycle of Revenge on the Israeli-Occupied West Bank” describes the establishment:

After David’s funeral on Sunday, July 4, and with the express personal blessings of Prime Minister Menachem Begin, a detachment of Israeli soldiers escorted five families from Tekoa into Ferdis, where they put up tents and made it known they were staying. ‘For our self-respect we had to make some response,’ explains Bobby Brown, a New York native who is manager of Tekoa. ‘We decided to give that village [where the killers lived] what they apparently wanted least—more Jews’ (Gaines, 1982).

Later the outpost named El-David would be moved further away from the village, after the army informed the settlers there that they had to move because their safety could not be guaranteed so close to an Arab village. They were told to “go out into the desert,” establishing what were then called “El-David Permanent” and “El-David Temporary” which were later renamed Nokdim and Kfar Eldad (field notes 7/5/15). Today both are permanent settlements housing hundreds of Israeli families.

A third theme in the discourse surrounding construction as commemoration is that these acts are proof that settlers cannot be intimidated and are steadfast in the face of violence and terror. The settlers who founded the outposts commemorating Naftali, Gilad, and Eyal called their establishment a Zionist response “to the incomprehensible act of killing our boys,” said: “Our enemies think they will scare us away with their acts of terrorism, but they are wrong. We cling to the land ever more strongly in response to their efforts” (Marcus, 2014). Pearl, head of the Gush Etzion Regional Council, said: “The murderers of the three teens wanted to plant fear in our hearts and disrupt our daily lives, and our answer is strengthening the settlements and constructing both inside the main blocs and outside of them” (Levy, 2014).

Drawing on the same theme of standing fast in the face of violence, a female founder of El-David in 1982 told a reporter: “We came to show that we will not be intimidated by violence. If they want to get rid of us, they’ll have to kill all of us” (Gaines, 1982). The neighbourhood of mobile homes near Karmei Tzur was named Tzur Shalem in honour of Shmuel Gillis, a doctor at Hadassa hospital and resident of the settlement Karmei Tzur who was shot and killed on the road

during the Second Intifada (Shragai, 2002). Tzur Shalem was thus named by Gillis's widow, Ruth, because *tzur* means "rock" and symbolizes steadfastness in the face of violence (Shragai, 2002). Ramat Gilad and Havat Gilad, located near Kedumim in the northern West Bank, were both established by a man named Moshe Zar, to honour his son who was murdered by Palestinians on 29 May 2001 while driving from the settlement of Kedumim to the settlement of Yitzhar. According to the author who interviewed Moshe,

[his] reaction to the tragic killing of his son, Gilad Zar, is to build six new communities, one for each of the six Hebrew letters that make up the Hebrew name 'Gilad Zar.' This will serve as a memorial to the body and soul of his son, who worked hard to develop and expand the settlements. Starting these new settlements brings comfort to Moshe who was so hurt by the loss of his son. So far four of the six have been started on property that Moshe himself has purchased [in Samaria] (Mecklenburg, 2013, p. 95).

Based on numerous interviews with settlement founders and residents, Mecklenburg relates that residents look for the good that can come out of tragedy. One young mother in Itamar, when asked about the murder of a family of 5 in their beds in March 2011, "responded with a cheerful look on her face," saying: "I believe that God can even take this tragedy and work good out of it. Since then the love that people have for each other has grown and the community feels closer to each other and are even more determined to see their community grow" (Mecklenburg, 2013, p. 122). She noted that the government had given permission for more houses to be built after the murder. Mecklenburg states: "Much development results from the tragic deaths caused by terrorist attacks because, as stated before, the Jewish settlers do not react to terrorism with defeat, but instead with more determination, expansion, and building" (Mecklenburg, 2013, pp. 126-127). People are sad and cry when residents are killed, "but at the same time they smile and are happy because of the growth and the new communities" (Mecklenburg, 2013, pp. 128-129).

Each of these discursive frames fit into the settler colonial framework. Settlers see themselves as "members of hard-working, peacefully-living communities in a regenerative world" who disavow the violence of settlement growth and frame it as a defensive act, a response, to Palestinian violence (Veracini, 2010). In the settler consciousness, settlers are

constructive, responding to violence by planting seeds, planting new life, and growing, while Palestinians are destructive killers. Further, they ensure the ideal of settler fixity by establishing new facts on the ground and showing that they will stand fast against terrorism. Therefore, each of these discursive frames also purports to “send a message” to Palestinians. But to what extent is construction as commemoration really aimed at Palestinians? Drawing on the settler colonial framework, the following analysis will show that construction as commemoration is actually aimed at gaining the support and affinity of the Israeli public, in addition to obfuscating the true nature of the relationship between the settlers and the Israeli government.

5.6 Return to Sender, Address Unknown: Sending a “Message” to Palestinians

The logic behind the discursive framing of construction as commemoration, and the realities it obscures, are clear when read through settler colonial theory. As noted in the theoretical framing of the paper, the object of settler colonization is the land itself, emptied of its indigenous population. So it is no surprise that intended audience for these acts of commemoration is not the indigenous people. But as seen in the triangular system of relationships in settler colonialism, the settler does seek to efface and replace, at the same time as they desire, indigenous authority and legitimacy (Figure 5.4: The triangular system of relationships for West Bank settlers). The role of the indigenous other in the rhetorical structure of this discursive construction is therefore to perpetuate narratives that insist that settlement is not violent in itself, but is a defensive response to Palestinian terrorism, and that there are universal differences between Israeli settlers, who are constructive and regenerative, and Palestinians, who are destructive.

Ostensibly, settlers are “sending a message” to Palestinians when they respond to terrorism with colonial expansion. For both its critics and its proponents the establishment of new settlements is, variously: a “fitting Zionist response” or “answer” to murder; an act of

retaliation or revenge; a symbol of the steadfastness of the settlers, who cannot be intimidated by Palestinian violence and terror; a reprisal, punishment, punitive act, deterrence, or “price” exacted from Palestinian terrorists and “collaborators”; a sign of settler determination in the face of threat; and/or a positive reaction, responding to destruction with construction, finding the good and communal growth that can come from tragedy. I was frequently asked by residents of the Gush Etzion settlement bloc variations of this question: “When are the Arabs going to learn that every time they kill a Jew, a new settlement will be built?” (field notes 7/4/14). But if settlement growth is a response, reprisal, and deterrent for terrorism, it is less effective given that settlements expand regardless of what Palestinians do or not do.

The problem, put simply, with representations and interpretations of construction as commemoration as a “punitive measure” is that it misses a simple truth: the settlers do not need a special reason to build. Settlement expansion has continued apace since the beginning of the occupation of the West Bank following the 1967 Six-Day War. Settlement growth happens for the simple reason that it is the central aim of settler colonialism: maximal territorial control and displacement (or elimination) of the indigenous population. The act that I have termed construction as commemoration is referred to rhetorically as “land for lives,” but settler colonialism is about land, period. The establishment of new outposts and expansion of existing settlements can hardly be a response to terror attacks meant to deter future violence when settlements grow regardless of whether terrorist attacks occur or not. The suggestion that construction as commemoration is meant as a reprisal, or equalizer, implies that there is a symmetrical struggle and cycle of violence taking place in the occupied territories. The expansion of settlements is seen as a justifiable reaction to terrorist violence, rather than as a violent act in itself. In this way, the abrupt, explicit violence of terror attacks is used to obfuscate and warrant the slow, banal violence of settlement growth, and most Israeli settlers I have

interviewed remain convinced that Palestinians hate Israel and Jews because there is something destructive in their nature, while Jews respond constructively with expansion and building.

5.7 “Settling in the Hearts” of the Israeli Public

Rather than sending a message to Palestinians, construction as commemoration should be understood as a discursive strategy to win over the hearts and minds of the Israeli public and to obscure the nature of the relationship between the settlers and the Israeli government. This is the second leg of the triangular system of relationships in settler colonization: between the settler-colonizers and their exogenous others. In part, these commemorative events are aimed at =“settling in the hearts” of the wider Israeli public (Feige, 2009). Through the commemoration of those Israeli settlers killed at the hands of Palestinian terrorists in the West Bank, the settlers play into the sentiments of the Israeli public, stressing themes like national sacrifice, the body politics, and the unity of the Jewish people in the face of threat. This is more or less successful: in these moments of national grief and coming together, counter-narratives are silenced and delegitimized. But despite attempts to appeal to the sympathies of the Israeli public, the settlement movement remains largely unpopular in Israel proper.¹²

As Feige (2009) suggests in his book about Gush Emunim, the settlement movement employs discursive strategies to appeal to the sympathies of the wider Israeli public. Settlers are using construction as commemoration and the discourse it entails to locate themselves within the Israeli national narrative in order “to gain the support of the—at times hostile, at times sympathetic, usually apathetic—Israeli public” in these moments of tragedy (Feige, 2009, p. 2). Using the language of settler colonial theory, settlers are appealing to the “authentic imperial culture” from which they are separated—appealing to mainstream Israeli nationalism in an

¹² Israel proper refers to the territory controlled by Israel after the 1949 Armistice Agreement was signed (those territories on the western side of the Green Line, except the Gaza Strip). Territories outside of this (such as Gaza and the West Bank) are considered ‘occupied.’

attempt to write themselves into the national narrative.(Johnston & Lawson, 2000) For example, think again about the Gush Etzion article “Three boys – three settlements,” which included pictures of Eyal Yifrah’s grandparents and Gilad Shaer’s parents visiting the new outposts established to honour their boys (Degan, 2014). In these pictures the families were showing their support for the outposts and planting trees—images not aimed at sending a message to Palestinians, but at garnering the sympathy of the Israeli public and wider international community, in addition to what Feige calls “confidence boosting among settlement residents” (Feige, 2009, p. 213).

In these moments of tragedy when Jewish blood has been spilled, settlers are more or less successful in their first goal: winning over the Israeli public’s hearts and minds—at least temporarily. The loss of Jewish Israeli life, even of West Bank settlers, creates a moment of national mourning and solidarity in the face of terrorism. Presenting settlement expansion as a reaction to Palestinian violence is also used to silence the external criticism of the international community. For example, summer 2014 kidnapping was greeted with several mass displays of solidarity and commemoration, including a worldwide social media campaign (*#BringBackOurBoys*) modelled after a similar effort in support of kidnapped Nigerian schoolgirls, and a gathering of over 25,000 people at the Western Wall to pray for their rescue. Operation Brother’s Keeper was launched following the kidnapping of the boys, and throughout the course of this military operation, the public was led to believe there was hope of rescuing the boys. Some commentators have argued that “[d]etails under gag order could have suggested early on that the abducted teens were murdered,” and that this information was withheld from the Israeli public in order to help “the legitimacy of Israel’s military operation in the West Bank” (Sheizaf, 2014). Schools across the country hung signs with the boys’ names and pictures, with slogans like “looking forward to your return” (Sheizaf, 2014). Media broadcasts of the search for the boys contributed to, and prolonged, the growing fear, hope, and anxiety that fuelled the

international media campaign and the demonstrations of national solidarity. And once the boys' bodies were found, this solidarity continued with a funeral attended by tens of thousands of Israelis (Associated Press, 2014; Mackey, 2014). When Rechalim was established in 1991, settlers similarly appealed to national identity and sympathy for the loss of Jewish life. As Feige describes, in setting up the outpost and being allowed to remain there, settlers drew on their political influence and capitalized on "popular outrage at the attack," in which the bus driver and Rachel were killed, and several children were wounded (Feige, 2009, p. 213).

But these moments of national mourning are brief. As Feige (2009, p. 2) describes, settlers are constantly struggling to locate their movement within the Israeli national narrative to gain the support of the Israeli public. Despite their efforts, and in spite of these instances of Israeli collective mourning, support for the settlements within Israel continues to drastically decline. Just a few days after the boys' kidnapping, *Haaretz* published a report which, based on an annual public opinion poll conducted over the past six years, revealed a trend of decreasing support among the Israeli public for the settlers (Skop, 2014). Construction as commemoration fails to "settle in the hearts" of the Israeli public. However, that is not the only aim of this discursive construction; the discourse around construction as commemoration is also about obscuring the nature of the relationship between the settlers and the Israeli government.

5.8 The "Green Light": Settler-Government Relations

The relationship between the settlers and the Israeli government, the second exogenous other, is occluded by the discourse surrounding construction as commemoration. It is a well-documented fact that no matter who controls the government, Likud (the Israeli Right) or Labour (the Israeli Left), settlements grow. In interviews and public statements settlers frame the Israeli government as their enemy—a body that *should* represent them but that will not openly support them, that sometimes allows them to expand but sometimes bulldozes their homes. Successive Israeli governments have maintained the "temporary" military occupation of the West Bank and

Gaza Strip for nearly 50 years, neither annexing nor relinquishing the territory. These moments of national tragedy, when Israeli settlers are killed at the hands of Palestinian terrorists, provide cover for the Israeli government to openly support the settlement movement and colonial expansion. It is in this dance between the Israeli government and Israeli settlers, each claiming the other as their enemy despite tacit agreement and support, that construction as commemoration should be understood as an act taking advantage of a politically strategic moment in which to further the settlement project.

In the days following the establishment of new settlements in June 2014, activist organizations like Americans for Peace Now said:

The settlers are taking advantage of the killing of the three teens in order to set facts on the ground that they wouldn't dare to do before. *We don't know if they got a green light from the government (although such a green light could not have made the acts legal, short of planning procedures), however, those developments will be judged by the government's reaction.* // If the government doesn't evict them in the coming days, it will be much harder to remove them and they will stay and develop as settlements. These are critical days when the settlers might continue to seize the opportunity of the current political and security situation in order create more facts on the ground (Americans for Peace Now, 2014, p. emphasis added).

This article specifically refers to the outposts Ramat HaShaloshah, Tekoa He, and Talmei Hayim (Figure 5.5: Outposts established in summer 2014). As the organization notes, it is difficult to say if the settlers got the “green light” from the national government before setting up the outposts, but they certainly had the material and logistical support of the local regional council leadership which mobilized just days after the boys’ bodies were found. In addition to providing evidence of government support, this rapid mobilization shows that the expansion of settlement outposts is not a spontaneous and improvised action. Rather, the Israeli government and settlement regional councils have a few such plans shelved, waiting for an excuse to be carried out. Thus, incidents such as the murder of the three teenagers are used as an excuse to carry out pre-meditated and thoroughly designed plans. This fact explains how settlement construction can be carried out so quickly in the wake of an attack, and further drives home the fact that settlement construction is not aimed at sending a message to Palestinians, but is merely cloaked

as such. And more important than whether they got permission to set up in the first place is whether the government would send in the army to clear them out now that they were there. As Americans for Peace Now said, if the outposts were not removed chances were they would develop into larger settlements—like happened with El-David.

Despite statements made by the settlement movement's leadership that frame the relationship between the settlers and the government as confrontational—such as when the head of the Gush Etzion Regional Council “demanded” that the Israeli government strengthen Jewish settlement in response to the 2014 murders—these moments of national tragedy create opportunities for the government to openly support settlement expansion (“Price Tag,” 2014). As one informant noted repeatedly, the settlements are “built on Jewish blood” (field notes 7/20/14). When El-David was established in 1982 to honour David Rosenfeld, it was done so “with the express personal blessings of Prime Minister Menachem Begin” and with the support and protection of a detachment of Israeli soldiers (Gaines, 1982). El-David began with five families from Tekoa, and now has grown into Nokdim and Kfar Eldad, permanent settlements housing hundreds of Jewish Israeli families.

Of the three outposts established by the Gush Etzion Regional Council in 2014, Tekoa He was subsequently removed. The circumstances around its removal, discussed in the opening vignette of this paper, suggest that not even its eviction is a sign of conflict between the settlers and the government, but rather is a sign of cooperation under the guise of a conflictual relationship. As my informant pointed out to me, with a smile, the outpost was not removed indefinitely. Rather, the settlers were told “with a wink and a nod” by someone in the Knesset that they could return to the site sometime in the future (field notes 7/31/14). The eviction was carried out so that the government could throw its support behind the confiscation of over 990 acres for Gvaot, which had been ordered by the national government in response to the murder of the teens (Ravid, 2014). At a meeting of the security council just days after the boys' murders,

Moshe Ya'alon, Israel's Defense Minister, suggested that "as part of the response to the killing, Israel should turn the Gvaot outpost in the Gush Etzion area into a new settlement," which could include thousands of new housing units (Ravid, 2014). The decision to appropriate this land for Gvaot was applauded by Israel's economics minister, Naftali Bennett, who visited Gush Etzion the day after it was confiscated. He called it an "appropriate Zionist response to murder" and said: "What we did yesterday was a display of Zionism. Building is our answer to murder" (Beaumont, 2014). As another woman active in the settlement movement explained to me, with a knowing smirk, the government evicted the five families from Tekoa He because "they want to be able to say we didn't let them do XYZ, but not say what they *did* let us do" when explaining themselves to the United States and the international community (field notes 7/31/15).

5.9 Conclusion

The commemoration of Naftali, Gilad, and Eyal through the construction of new settlement outposts and the expansion of existing settlements in the summer of 2014 is only the most recent example in a long history of construction as commemoration in the occupied West Bank. The act of establishing new outposts or expanding existing settlements to commemorate settlers killed by Palestinians has been part of the settlement movement since the onset of the occupation of the Palestinian Territories following the 1967 Six-Day War. I have traced several illustrative examples of this strategic manoeuvre from 1982 through 2014. The discourse of construction as commemoration frames it as an act aimed at "sending a message" to Palestinians. These commemorative acts are described as: (1) a fitting response to the taking of Jewish lives; (2) retribution or revenge, punitive measures aimed at deterring future terrorist acts; and (3) proof that settlers cannot be intimidated and will stand fast in the face of violence.

But a critical analysis of this discourse, viewed through settler colonial theory, reveals that construction as commemoration is not about sending a message to Palestinians, but rather is aimed at the Israeli public and the Israeli government. Given that settlements grow steadily

regardless of what Palestinians do or do not do, in times of war as well as in times of relative peace, what are these commemorative acts *really* meant to accomplish? I have shown that construction as commemoration enables settlers, with the support of the Israeli government, to expand territorially by claiming that this expansion is contingent on Palestinian acts of violence. Meanwhile, this discourse maintains the fiction that the Israeli government is in a conflictual relationship with West Bank settlers. Interrogating the discourse around construction as commemoration is especially pressing because unlike other politicized and value-laden commemorative memorials and monuments aimed at the symbolic control of space, this form of commemoration advances the settlement movement and further entrenches the occupation of the Palestinian territories, resulting in direct territorial control and dispossession.

5.10 Figures



Figure 5.1: Blue tarp and newly planted trees in front of *caravan* [mobile home] number 4 in Tekoa He. Source: Author's collection.



Figure 5.2: *Caravanim* [mobile homes] at Tekoa He. Source: Author's collection.

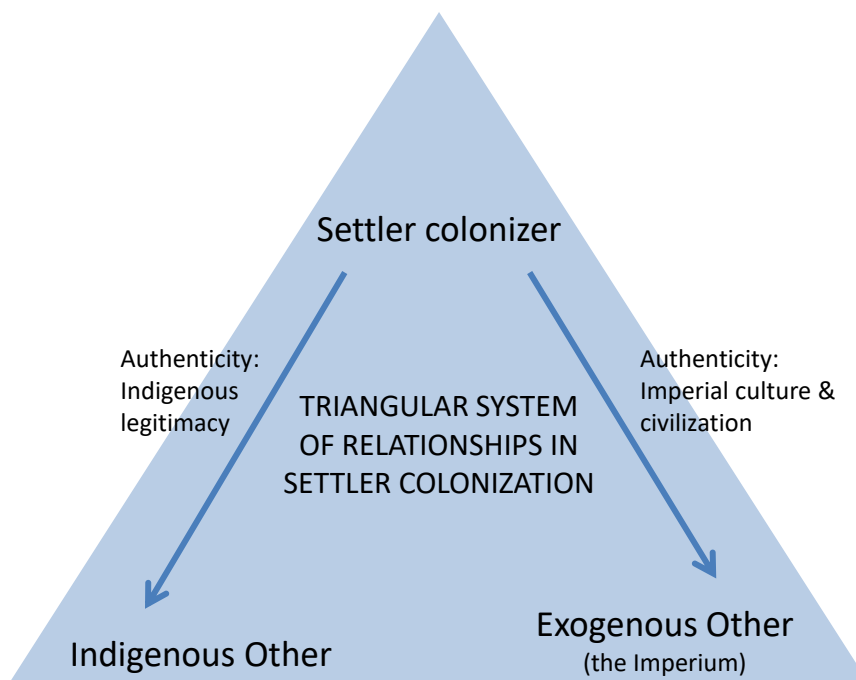


Figure 5.3: The triangular system of relationships in settler colonization.

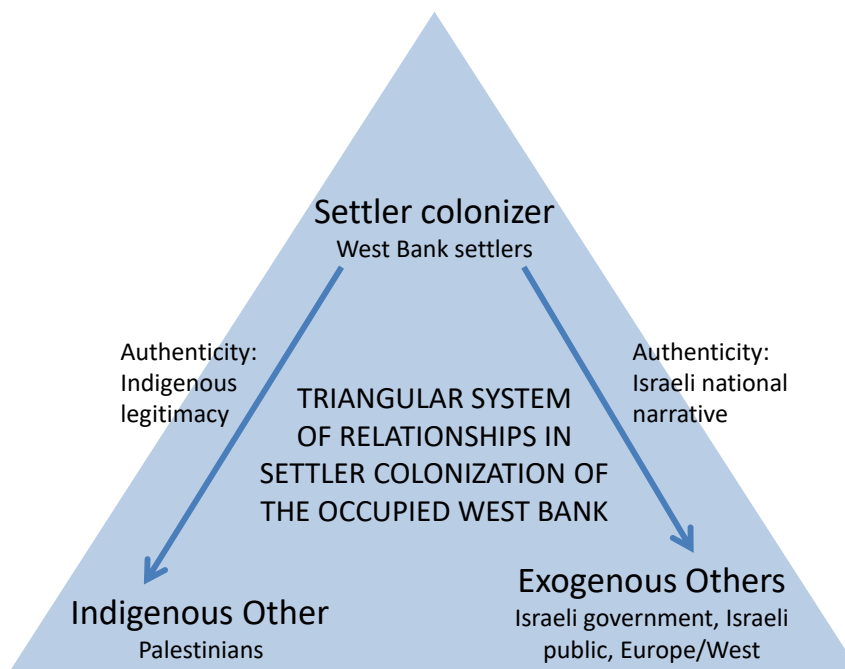


Figure 5.4: The triangular system of relationships for West Bank settlers.

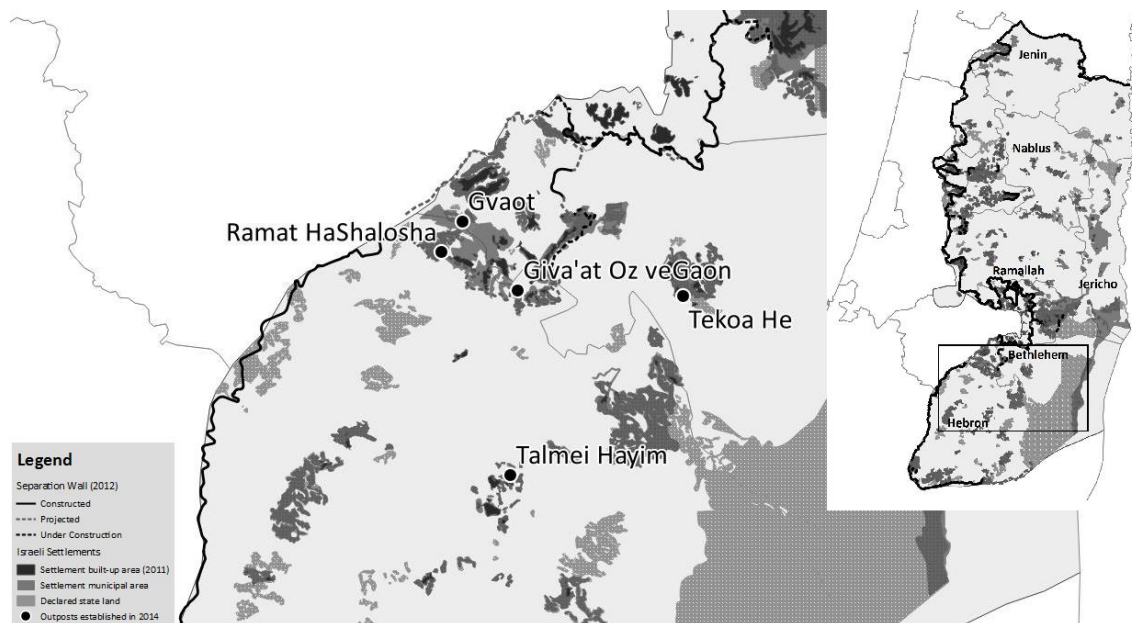


Figure 5.5: Outposts established in summer 2014.

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6. Unbounded territoriality: Territorial control in the Occupied Palestinian Territories

6.1 Abstract

The “temporary” Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem began in 1967. Excepting East Jerusalem, Israel has made no move to formally annex the territories. Neither are they withdrawing, which is made clear by continuous settlement growth. By what territorial logic does the Israeli military occupation of the Palestinian territories function such that it can continue indefinitely yet still be regarded an “occupation,” which, by definition, is temporary? Robert David Sack defines territoriality as “*the attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationships, by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area*” (Sack, 1986, p. 19). One of the three requirements of territoriality is delimiting the area under control. In stark contrast to this, I suggest the territorial logic of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip represents what I term *unbounded territoriality*, a form of territorial control best exercised by *not* delimiting boundaries. This form of territoriality complicates the connection between sovereignty and territory in the nation-state system. I argue that what Israeli philosophers Ophir and Azoulay (2012) have termed the “temporary permanence” of the occupation is predicated upon a spatial strategy I identify as unbounded territoriality. This chapter traces the *how* (tools and apparatus), *what* (logics and maneuvers), and *why* (what it accomplishes and avoids) of unbounded territoriality in the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

6.2 Introduction

The hundred-year conflict in Israel-Palestine is, at its core, a struggle over land and its control. Agnew and Muscarà (2012, p. 35) describe it as “*the most geographical of contests*,” which now centers on the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip (emphasis in original). This is perhaps obvious in that Israel is a settler colonial polity, and, as stated by Patrick Wolfe, “[t]erritoriality is settler colonialism’s specific, irreducible element” (Wolfe 2006, 388). He goes on to say that, like in other dynamic settler colonial contexts, Israel is always in need of more land (Wolfe 2006, 395).

The principle of international law known as *occupatio bellica*, military occupation, turns on the distinction between a change of sovereignty—a territorial change effected by the redrawing of sovereign borders—and the provisional, or temporary, change of a military occupation (Schmitt, 2006, p. 206). In the five decades since the “temporary” occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem began in 1967, the settler population in the occupied territories has reached well over a half million Israeli Jews. Excepting East Jerusalem, Israel has made no move to formally annex the territories, no move to redraw the map of sovereignty. Neither are they withdrawing, made clear by the fact that the settler population is continuously growing. Rather, the occupation represents what Israeli philosopher Adi Ophir has described as a state of temporary permanence. By refraining from formally annexing the Palestinian territories while continuing to expand Israeli civilian settlements and Israeli military control over the everyday lives of Palestinians, Israel has created a legal grey area, a limbo—or, for Palestinians, a purgatory—without making legible and explicit the extent and limit of Israeli territorial control. The occupation regime is reproduced through uncertainty, as Israel continues to decline fixing its boundaries. The question that this paper grapples with is: *by what territorial logic, by what strategy of territorial control, does the Israeli military occupation of the Palestinian territories*

function such that it can continue indefinitely and yet still be regarded as an “occupation,” which, legally defined, is temporary?

The answer to this question hinges on Israel’s refusal to delimit territorial boundaries. I spent seven months living and conducting ethnographic fieldwork in Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank. These communities are not unlike suburban gated communities in the U.S. or other countries, but what struck me about them from my first visit, particularly given the constant state of threat residents related to me, was that *many of these communities are unfenced*. Given that these Israeli civilians are building a suburban lifestyle in a violently contested territory, and they truly believe that their Palestinian neighbors might kill them at any moment, I had to wonder why they were not building fences and walls around their communities (elsewhere in the world, and even elsewhere in Israel, a growing trend). The answer goes to the very heart of settler colonial logics, and also to the heart of the question of how territoriality operates in the occupied territories: settlers intuitively recognize that drawing borders is limiting. Geographer David Delaney argues that boundaries are meaningful, they signify, and “[t]erritories are not only spatial entities but also communicative devices” (Delaney, 2005, p. 15). I was told by Israeli settlers that fences around the settlements would communicate: “we are here, and not there; this is ours, but that is not” (field notes 8/7/14). Many settlements therefore vote against building fences around their communities, even for security, because *they don’t want to fence themselves in*, implying that there is a limit to their territorial claims or future growth. For many settlements, especially the more “ideological” communities in the Judean Hills, no fences mean no dividing lines, no clear indication of a sovereign limit. The West Bank is therefore constructed as a space where it is intentionally vague where the dividing lines run.

Because borders are communicative devices and Israel wants the true extent of its territorial control to remain illegible, its borders remain undefined. The form of territoriality operating in the occupied Palestinian territories therefore runs counter to traditional conceptions of territoriality, which assert that its exercise requires that the territorial extent of control is clearly bounded and communicated (Sack, 1986). I argue that territorial control in the occupied territories operates through *unbounded territoriality*, which is best exercised by *not* delimiting boundaries, by not (re)drawing the map of sovereignty. As I will describe in more detail below, the fact that Israel exercises territorial control in the West Bank is undeniable, but the spatial logic of territoriality in this context is devoid of content or contours, illegible, ambiguous, and fuzzy. This form of territorial control operates, like the occupation it maintains, though nondecision-making. By exercising unbounded territoriality, Israel is able to affect, influence, and control people, phenomena, and relationships in the West Bank without delimiting a geographic area—without making legible the extent and limit of Israeli territorial control. Through the operation of unbounded territoriality, “[t]he occupied territories have been turned into twilight zones, caught in a frenzied cartography of mobile frontiers rather than fixed boundaries” (Gregory, 2004, p. 126). The occupation regime follows a distinct spatial pattern—not a march forward to close the frontier, but a spottiness that belies annexation.

In this paper, I will first discuss how the terms we use have led to conceptual blindness concerning the reality of the Israeli Occupation. After a brief background on the conflict, and an explanation of the international laws regarding belligerent occupation, I will show how the examination of unbounded territoriality contributes to a project, started primarily by Israeli philosopher Adi Ophir, to create a new conceptual framework for narrating the history of the occupation. To explain how unbounded territoriality contributes to this project, I will first

describe traditional conceptions of sovereignty, territoriality, and the nation-state system, before describing unbounded territoriality in greater detail. I will then outline the “what” of unbounded territoriality, its tools and apparatuses, and the “how,” the logics and maneuverings that make this strategy viable. Finally, informed by the work of Ophir and a number of other scholars, in the conclusion I explain the “why” of unbounded territoriality—what it accomplishes and avoids, and why it is necessary for the maintenance of Israel’s identity as a Jewish-Democratic State.

6.3 Terminology and Conceptual Blindness

The conflict in Israel-Palestine is understood, both by scholars and in the popular imagination, as one over the sovereign control of territory, taking place within a global framework of clearly defined nation-states. Though the conflict takes place on a relatively small piece of land (about the size of the state of New Jersey), it has been significantly long-lived, lasting for over a century (Gelvin, 2005). The State of Israel came into existence in 1947 just before the onset of the 1948 War, described by Israelis as the “War of Independence,” and by Palestinians as “*al-Nakba*” (“the catastrophe”). The armistice agreement reached by Israel and its Arab-state neighbors following the war created the 1949 Armistice Line, or Green Line, which is the internationally recognized limit of the State of Israel. In 1967, Israel and its neighbors went to war again (the Six Day War/Arab-Israeli War), and Israel gained military control over the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula and the West Bank. Israel annexed East Jerusalem and the Golan, eventually returned Sinai to Egypt, and has occupied Gaza and the West Bank ever since. As Gershon Shafir (2017, p. 2) notes, “[l]inguistically, the transition was seamless, as Hebrew does not dedicate separate words to conquest and occupation, using the word *kibosh* for both.” Settlement expansion in the occupied Palestinian territories began in 1967

directly following the Arab-Israeli War, despite the fact that the occupation and transfer of Israeli population into the Palestinian territories is illegal and often criticized under international conventions regarding belligerent occupation (Zertal & Eldar, 2009, p. x). Since the Israeli military occupation began in 1967, the settler population in the West Bank and East Jerusalem has risen to well over 500,000 Israeli Jews. In 1993 the first protocol of the Oslo Accords called for letters of mutual recognition to be exchanged between Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin. In his letter, Arafat recognized the state of Israel, therefore conceding that the pre-1967 borders (the 1948 borders) of Israel are non-negotiable—that the land claimed by Israel in 1948 is forever lost to the Palestinians. Therefore, all future negotiations over the border between Israel and a future Palestinian state would concern the West Bank and Gaza Strip territories (Gelvin, 2005, p. 234). Today, because the State of Israel has international recognition within its 1948 borders, the conflict centers on the Israeli colonization of the occupied Palestinian territories, primarily settlement of the West Bank and the siege of the Gaza Strip.

Many of the terms we use to talk about Israel/Palestine are misleading. The word “occupation” alone denotes a temporariness belied by its 50-year duration. In fact, this “temporary” occupation of the West Bank, which is becoming characterized more and more by permanent “facts on the ground,” is the longest official military occupation of modern history—seemingly without end (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007, p. 100). The principle of international law known as *occupatio bellica* (military/belligerent occupation) is founded on “the sharp distinction between a change of sovereignty, i.e., a territorial change, and the provisional change of a military occupation” (Schmitt, 2006, p. 206). In other words, belligerent occupation is understood to be a transient state, “one to be quickly resolved by agreements on annexation or return after wars are won or lost” (Weizman, 2012, p. 97). Under the doctrine of *occupatio*

bellica, “the occupying state exercised state power in the occupied enemy territory; however, it did not exercise its own power, but rather that of the state of the occupied territory, and this exercise of foreign state power was based not on empowerment of the enemy state’s authority, but rather on its own original legal title in international law” (Schmitt, 2006, p. 206). Further, the construction of Israeli civilian settlements violates the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, which states: “The occupying power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies” (Gelvin, 2005, p. 192). This fact has been supported and reiterated by the UN following the 1967 war:

“The transfer of any part of a civilian population into territory occupied by a foreign power is expressly forbidden under Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (1949), and in November 1967 the UN Security Council passed Resolution 242 that emphatically reminded Israel of ‘the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force,’ required it to withdraw ‘from territories occupied in the recent conflict,’ and affirmed the right of every state ‘to live in peace with secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force’” (Gregory, 2004, p. 89).

Israel has ignored UN Resolution 242, refusing to withdraw its troops from the occupied territories and declining to fix its boundaries (Gregory, 2004, p. 90). Despite the fact that occupation is, by definition and according to international law, provisional—or, perhaps, *because* of what this designation obfuscates—even now, “after almost half a century of Israeli rule in the occupied territories, nearly everyone continues to speak—in everyday political discourse, as well as in legal and academic discourse—of this rule as one of a temporary control, a state of affairs incidental to the Israeli regime and not a structural element of it” (Azoulay & Ophir, 2012, p. 12).

As Israeli architect and intellectual Eyal Weizman states, the term “occupation” (which implies temporariness) is complicit in the entire legal charade on which the system rests, and therefore represents an example of the use of language to limit the scope of decision-making and

to maintain the status quo (2012, pp. 104-105). As Weizman points out, in international law the definition of “temporariness” is predicated on the states of “war” and “peace” being clearly distinguishable, while the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, like other settler colonial conflicts, “is an ever-present asymmetrical, low-intensity conflict between a state and quasi-state actors,” and in which war and peace merge into a single extended continuum (2012, p. 105). As such, time is rendered indeterminate by the occupation, the everyday life of Palestinians disrupted at every turn:

“Temporariness is now the law of the occupation... temporary takeover of Area A, temporary withdrawal from Area A, temporary encirclement and temporary closures, temporary transit permits, temporary revocation of transit permits, temporary enforcement of an elimination policy, temporary change in the open-fire orders... When the occupier plays with time like this, everything – everything that moves, everything that lives – becomes dependent on the arbitrariness of the occupier’s decisions. The occupier is fully aware that he is always playing on borrowed time, in fact on stolen time, other people’s time. The occupier is an unrestrained, almost boundless sovereign, because when everything is temporary almost anything – any crime, any form of violence – is acceptable, because the temporariness seemingly grants it a license, the license of the state of emergency” (Ophir, 2002, p. 60).

Within a conceptual framework that implicitly accepts the assumption of temporariness, the assumption that the occupation is provisional and must eventually come to an end, Israel has incredible flexibility to operate in the Palestinian territories. The occupation is difficult to describe not only because of its growing complexity, but also because of efforts to deny its very existence (Shafir, 2017, p. 3).

In response to this conceptual blindness, Ophir and his colleagues have started a project reconceptualizing familiar facts about the conflict “in order to propose a new conceptual framework for narrating the history of the Occupation and reconstructing its structure” (Azoulay & Ophir, 2012, p. 11). This requires, the authors argue, a revised set of concepts, a new language which problematizes the most prevalent terms of the existing discourse, including: occupation, occupier, occupied, violence, and terrorism (Azoulay & Ophir, 2012, p. 11). Ophir argues, for

example, that the occupation is marked by a state of “temporary permanence” (Azoulay & Ophir, 2012). In this chapter I argue that while the temporal strategy of the occupation is one of temporary permanence, its spatial strategy is unbounded territoriality. In fact, these two dimensions require each other—unbounded territoriality is predicated upon temporary permanence and vice versa. This project problematizes the way geographers conceptualize *territory* and *territoriality* through the case of Israel/Palestine and the occupation regime and structure Ophir and his colleagues are working to make visible. This project is about seeing the Israeli occupation for what it *is*, though as comparative literature and gender studies scholar Gil Hochberg notes “it is a long and bumpy process to reshape a visual field that dominates and sustains conflict of the magnitude [of Israel and Palestine]” (Hochberg, 2015, pp. 2-3). Hochberg does this by exploring various artistic attempts to expose and reframe the conditions of vision that underlie the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Hochberg, 2015, p. 3) and by “tracing the visual politics sustaining the Israeli-Palestinian conflict’s various contingent and contextual appearances from its initial evocation to the present” (Hochberg, 2015, p. 4). Ophir does this by drawing attention to the way the words we use, like “occupation,” obscure the permanence of the situation.

I add to this project by rendering visible the operation of territorial control I term unbounded territoriality. This chapter address the relationship between illegibility, power, domination, and control—the relationship between the power of nondecision-making and territorial control. But before explicating unbounded territorially in greater detail, for the remainder of this part I describe how the relationship between sovereignty, territoriality, and the nation-state system has been traditionally conceptualized. In so doing, I want to stress the taken-

for-granted nature of this relationship, before describing political geographer John Agnew's *territorial trap* and how these assumptions conceal the workings of unbounded territoriality.

The Territorial Trap: Sovereignty, Territoriality, and the Nation-State System Traditionally Conceived

In *Territory: a short introduction*, geographer David Delaney describes territoriality as a verb, an activity. Specifically, territoriality is “a social (and political, economic, cultural) *process* that unfolds not only in place but through time” and territories are its resulting “social *products*” (Delaney 2005, 2). Territoriality is traditionally conceived of as a strategy to control people, things, and phenomena by delimiting and controlling a geographic area—an assertion of sovereign power (Delaney, 2005; Sack, 1986). According to Sack, territoriality has four basic components (territory, recognition, autonomy, and control) and has three requirements; namely: (1) “territoriality must involve a form of classification by area,” (2) “territoriality must contain a form of communication... a marker,” and (3) “each instance of territoriality must involve an attempt at enforcing control over access” (Sack, 1986, pp. 21-22). Essentially, territoriality requires: (1) the identification of a territory, (2) the drawing of its borders, and (3) the exercise of sovereign power over it. Sack asserts that “territoriality in humans supposes a control over an area or space that must be conceived of and communicated.... a spatial strategy to affect, influence, or control resources and people, by controlling area” (Sack, 1986, pp. 1-2). A territory, therefore, is “a bounded social space that inscribes a certain sort of meaning into defined segments of the material world”—these “segments” have been understood, often implicitly, to characterize states in the international system (Delaney, 2005, p. 14; Krasner, 1999, p. 220; Philpott, 2010). According to Thongchai Winichakul, once the boundary is reified, either as a

line on the map or as a fence on the ground, the category it is meant to represent appears to come more fully into being (Winichakul, 1994).

Many scholars note the close, often implied, connection between sovereignty and territoriality (Delaney, 2005; Krasner, 1999; Mendlovitz & Walker, 1990) which finds its expression in the overwhelming dominance of the nation-state system, assumed in much of the literature on nations and nationalism to be an almost natural and implicit phenomenon (Anderson, 2006; Delaney, 2005, pp. 35, 58; Foucault, 2009; Gellner & Breuilly, 2008, pp. 116, 119; Giddens, 1987; Hobsbawm, 1992, pp. 9-10; Van Der Pijl, 2011; Walker, 1993, pp. 165-166). As David Delaney states, “modern sovereignty is inextricable from modern territory,” and “[f]ormally, to be ‘sovereign’ is to have absolute authority within a territorial space and to suffer no interference by parties outside of that space” (Delaney, 2005, p. 36). For Max Weber sovereignty is the monopoly on the legitimate use of violence within a territory (Weber, 2002). Even Michel Foucault, in *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the College de France 1977-1978*, describes sovereignty as being first of all exercised within the borders of a territory—this is, in fact, its primary characteristic (Foucault, 2009, p. 11). Westphalian sovereignty, with its basic rule of territorial autonomy, takes as its fundamental norm that “states exist in specific territories,” and modern territoriality refers to “the capacity to conceive of the entire planet as a single place carved up into mutually exclusive, putatively sovereign states” (Delaney, 2005, p. 23; Krasner, 1999, p. 20). In the international legal system sovereignty bounded by a nation-state, which is territorial by definition, is the respected and accepted norm.

John Agnew’s notion of the territorial trap a helpful starting point for thinking about how territoriality might function differently through the occupation than it has traditionally been conceptualized. He identifies three key, and erroneous, assumptions about territory and the

sovereign nation-state system: (1) that the modern nation state is a clearly bounded territorial space; (2) that ‘domestic’ and ‘sovereign’ affairs are in completely different realms; and (3) that the boundaries of the state map onto the boundaries of society (Agnew, 1994). These assumptions are problematic because “the proliferation and dispersal of the territorial nation-state as the sole legitimate expression of political identity and authority” leaves no room for entities that are not formal states (Delaney, 2005, p. 21). As anthropologist Liisa Malkki has asserted about the hegemonic nature of the nation-state system: “That the world should be composed of sovereign, spatially discontinuous units is a sometimes implicit, sometimes stated premise in much of the literature on nations and nationalism”:

The national order of things... usually passes as the normal or natural order of things. For it is self-evident that ‘real’ nations are fixed in space and ‘recognizable’ on a map. One country cannot at the same time be another country. The world of nations is thus conceived as a discrete spatial partitioning of territory; it is territorialized in the segmentary fashion of the multicolored school atlas (Malkki, 1992, p. 26).

Malkki notes that a global map made up of clear-cut dividing lines does not allow for “fuzzy spaces” or the bleeding of boundaries (Malkki, 1992, p. 26). Borders cannot be vague in the world of nations conceived as discrete spatial partitionings of territory. Within such a framework, the Palestinian territories cannot be located within the borders of a sovereign state—they are, in a sense, nowhere. As Krasner argues, “[a]n independent political community which merely claims a right to sovereignty (or is judged by others to have such a right) but cannot assert this right in practice, is not a state properly so-called” (Krasner 1999, 47). The ambiguity around state sovereignty in the Palestinian territories allows Israel to exercise territorial control without rendering legible the extent of that control. Sovereignty exists at both the normative and factual level. There is the normative *right* of states to assert sovereign power, but “they also actually exercise, in varying degrees, such supremacy and independence in practice” (Krasner 1999, 47). In the case of the Israeli occupation, the state is *not* asserting any sovereign right in

order to avoid the repercussions of such a move (described in the conclusion), but it is exercising sovereign power in practice.

The fact that we don't conceive of nation-states or the operation of territorial control as borderless is in part what allows Israel to exercise unbounded territoriality in the West Bank, and what allows for the temporary permanence of the Israeli occupation—though it should be noted that in practice, as well as in nationalist discourse, territory and sovereignty have never mapped onto each other nearly (Agnew, 2009). The centrality of sovereignty and territoriality to the nation-state system is what blinds us to the territorial strategies of the occupation, which are much messier and more convoluted than generally assumed. Territoriality in the occupation is haphazard, contingent, and fluid, nothing that could be called “annexation” and be resisted as such. Though scholars know that interstate divisions have never been as clear-cut as the nation-state framework asserts this is the very image of the world that leads to the assumption that a dividing line will eventually be drawn between Israel and Palestine and the occupation will end. This is the very assumption that allows for the temporary permanence of the occupation, and the operation of unbounded territoriality. Though Gideon Biger, geographer at Tel Aviv University, argues that “[t]he whole issue can be summarized by one question—where should the separation line run?” the reality is that there is no reason to draw a dividing line when Israel can exercise territoriality without one (Biger, 2008, p. 91). After all, the occupied Palestinian territories are the ultimate fuzzy space—the territory doesn't belong to any state on the map, borders are constantly in flux, and it is inhabited by two national groups. This undefined, shapeless space where nothing is fixed, nothing is sure, and insecurity is the norm flies in the face of the national, and assumed natural, order of the world. In the next part I will describe unbounded territoriality, what its tools and apparatuses are, and how—by what logics and maneuverings—it operates

while defying all the known rules and assumptions of sovereignty, territoriality, and the nation-state system.

6.4 Unbounded Territoriality: Nondecision-making, Legibility, and Territorial Control in the West Bank

In his book *Human Territoriality: Its Theory and History*, geographer Robert David Sack defines territoriality as “*the attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationships, by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area*” (Sack 1986, 19). One of the three requirements of territoriality, according to Sack and other theorists, is to delimit the area under control. The boundary of a territory “may be expressed by physical structures – fences, walls, gates or doors,” but the point is that a territory and its boundary are *meaningful*, they “are significant in so far as they signify” (Delaney, 2005, p. 14). In stark contrast to the traditional idea that territorial control requires bordering, the territorial logic of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip follows what I term unbounded territoriality. This is a form of territorial control that is best exercised by *not* delimiting boundaries. This strategy is termed unbounded territoriality (territorial control that actively avoids limits and boundaries) rather than boundless territoriality (territorial control without limit) to signify intentionality and work. As Delaney notes, territoriality is a verb which entails “deliberation, intentionality, or strategy” in its use (Delaney, 2005, p. 16). Unbounded territoriality is not different in this, but the intention or strategy diverges from that of territoriality traditionally conceived. Israel is intentionally and actively not identifying the limits, or borders, of its territorial control in the occupied Palestinian territories. This control is not “boundless,” because a great deal of effort goes into justifying and exercising this control. The reason for not (re)drawing sovereign boundaries in the occupied territories is to not communicate a *limit* to

Israeli territorial control; to not make *legible* the extent or durability of Israeli dominance over the Palestinian territories; and to exercise *nondecision-making* in order to avoid finally defining the identity of the State of Israel.

Neither territory nor the means to control it are static—they are mobile and mutable. Delaney says that territoriality is not neutral. It is a tool, a “device,” and one of its most important functions is “as a device for simplifying and clarifying something else, such as political authority, cultural identity, individual autonomy, or rights (Delaney, 2005, p. 9). In other words, it is a tool for simplifying and communicating sovereign power. In direct opposition to this, unbounded territoriality—the control of people, phenomena, and relationships *without* delimiting boundaries—is about rendering the extent and exercise of territorial control illegible. It is a device aimed at obscuring realities on the ground. Unbounded territoriality is intentionally spotty, always incomplete, and yet ever-present/pending. Sovereign power is not contained within the borders of the state, but is a network that moves well beyond the sovereign territory into grey zones where international and domestic policy, law and jurisdictions are blurred (Johnson et al., 2011). As Gregory notes, “[t]his program of state coercion emerged in an ad hoc, hit-and-miss fashion”—but I argue it did so by design (Gregory, 2004, p. 91). Territoriality is a strategy of control, and as Michel de Certeau states, “[s]trategies do not ‘apply’ principles or rules; they choose among them to make up the repertoire of their operations” (De Certeau, 1984, p. 54). The occupation’s repertoire of tools and apparatuses (the “what” of unbounded territoriality) include the separation barrier, settlements, roadblocks, surveillance, closures, and numerous other mechanisms of territorial control.

That Israel exercises territorial control in the Palestinian territories is undeniable—despite the fact that the map of sovereignty remains undefined. This control has gone by many names.

Israeli settlement expansion (Figure 6.1: Israeli settlement Tekoa, eastern Gush Etzion [center], with Palestinian villages in the foreground and background, August 2015), the path of the separation barrier (Figure 6.2: The Separation Barrier/Apartheid Wall, June 2011), segregated road networks (Figure 6.3: Bridge and bypass road for Palestinian villages on either side of Route 398, the main road from Jerusalem to Israeli settlement in Gush Etzion, August 2015), roadblocks and observation towers (Figure 6.4: Currently abandoned roadblock and observation tower near the Palestinian village Nabi Saleh, June 2011), checkpoints (Figure 6.5: Checkpoint on the road into Jerusalem, June 2011), and surveillance cameras make up what Wendy Pullan refers to as the “conflict infrastructure” of the Israeli occupation, and what Gil Hochberg describes as “Israel’s militarized architectural organization of the landscape” (Hochberg, 2015, p. 27; Till et al., 2013). Derek Gregory describes Palestinians as “caught in a network of identity papers and travel permits, road blocks and body searches”:

“Palestinian nationalism was criminalized; freedom of expression and association were denied; and collective punishment like curfews, border closures, and house demolitions were regularly imposed on the population at large” (Gregory, 2004, p. 90).

What Camille Mansour has called Israel’s “besieging cartography” in the West Bank is “sustained by an intricate system of monitoring” including “passive sensors, observation towers equipped with day/night and radar surveillance capabilities, satellite images and photographs from reconnaissance planes, and during and after Operation Defensive Shield Unattended Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and camera-carrying balloons” (Gregory, 2004, p. 117; Mansour, 2001). Israeli territorial control of the Palestinian territories might be haphazard and fluid, but for Palestinians it is also always there, always pending, always possible.

It is Jeff Halper’s description of Israel’s “matrix of control” over the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip that comes closest to describing what I mean by unbounded territoriality. According to Halper, this matrix operates by control not conquest—i.e., not by

redrawing the map of sovereignty (Halper, 2006). Similarly, Shafir (2017, p. 4) describes the occupation as “a geographical *mosaic* of distinct forms of domination: “The complexity and repeated adjustments of the tools of occupation have helped the occupation authorities overcome crises and have played a role in its persistence.” Since 1967 Israel has used the matrix to paralyze the Palestinian population without “defeating” it or even conquering/annexing much territory:

“It is an interlocking series of mechanisms, only a few of which require physical occupation of territory, that allow Israel to control every aspect of Palestinian life in the Occupied Territories. The matrix works like the Japanese game of Go. Instead of defeating your opponent as in chess, in Go you win by immobilizing your opponent, by gaining control of key points of a matrix so that every time s/he moves s/he encounters an obstacle of some kind” (Halper, 2006, p. 63).

Halper is not the only observer I have heard compare settlements, segregated road networks, roadblocks, and the other elements of the “matrix of control” to Go. While I was visiting Israel in 2011, a Gush Etzion settler opened an informal lecture by describing a Japanese game called “Go” in which the players use black and white counters in order to surround and incapacitate their opponent, winning the game. He compared this to the construction of Israeli settlements near and around Palestinian population centers in the West Bank (field notes 6/27/11). Rather than conquering or annexing territory, the matrix relies on mostly bureaucratic and legal interventions under the guise of proper administration, keeping public order, and security, though it is sustained only by the omnipresent threat of raw military power. These mechanisms of control (the gun, the watchtower, the surveillance camera, the tank) are made highly visible to Palestinians in order to ensure obedience (Hochberg, 2015).

The Operation of Unbounded Territoriality

In this section, I will explain *how* unbounded territoriality can operate effectively in the occupied Palestinian territories—it’s logics and maneuvers. I argue that the prolonged state of

indecision concerning Israel's borders and the Palestinian territories is not because Israel is *incapable* of re-drawing the map of sovereignty, but that this is a strategic move that reveals Israel's incredible ability to exercise territoriality without defining its limits. Unbounded territoriality provides Israel with the territorialized flexibility to continue the occupation regime indefinitely. By exercising nondecision-making, unmapping the territories, and creating a space of exception and legal grey area, Israel renders the true extent of its territorial control in the occupied Palestinian territories illegible. Informed by the theoretical work of political theorists Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz, urban planning and social welfare scholar Ananya Roy, geographer Derek Gregory, and Israeli intellectual and architect Eyal Weizman, in this section I trace the spatial logics and maneuverings of unbounded territoriality in the Israel-Palestine conflict. Recognizing, though, that Israel is not all-powerful, I will close this part of the chapter with a final section describing the limitations of unbounded territoriality.

French sociologist, anthropologist, and philosopher Pierre Bourdieu argues that power is the ability to “impose the legitimate definition of the divisions of the social world and, thereby, *to make and unmake groups*” (Bourdieu, 1991, pp. 221, emphasis in original). In other words, power is the ability to draw borders, to decide who and what are included and excluded, to define limits and identities. This definition of power tracks with the dominance of the nation-state system, of neatly bounded entities exercising sovereign power within their territorial borders. This statist approach defines the state as a system of decision-making (Mitchell, 1991, p. 82), and for pluralists, power is located in decision-making (Bachrach & Baratz, 1962). However, according to political theorists Bachrach and Baratz, this is only the first face of power. The dynamics of *nondecision-making*, or the ability to limit the scope of discussion to ‘safe’ issues, is the second (Bachrach & Baratz, 1962, p. 952). Nondecision-making is “the practice of limiting

the scope of actual decision-making to ‘safe’ issues by manipulating the dominant community values, myths, and political institutions and procedures” (Bachrach & Baratz, 1963, p. 632).

Therefore, power is not only located in the ability to make and implement decisions, but can be revealed when a decision has been avoided indefinitely on a highly contentious issue within the polity.

Nondecision-making has been a hallmark of Israeli governance. Among abundant examples, Israel has yet to ratify a constitution. A committee has been set up, but ratification is perpetually put off. This is part of the flexibility enabled by nondecision-making—that the state has not, in 69 years of existence, had to decide *what it is*. Golda Meir was elected prime minister in 1969, closely following the 1967 war and territorial expansion, but her approach to the settlements and the occupation—namely, avoiding a clear policy decision—has been the approach taken by every Israeli leader up to the present day. According to historians Bickerton and Klausner,

“With so much difference of opinion internally, [Prime Minister] Meir’s inclination in terms of any policy decision was to procrastinate. Therefore, in the absence of peace negotiations, the Israeli occupation continued as new realities in the territories emerged” (2007).

Similarly, Guy Ben-Porat argues, “The variety of viewpoints between and within the parties and the creation of extraparliamentary pressure groups resulted in government coalitions based on vaguely defined programs that had difficulties reaching decisions on the future of the territories” (Ben-Porat, 2006, p. 145). As Weizman claims, “The indecision of these governments was often in fact structural; successive Israeli governments decided not to risk splitting public opinion by outlining a clearly defined policy on this deeply divisive issue; instead, they let events take their course” (2012, p. 93). Other scholars also note that after the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip “the state adopted a policy of ambiguity and vagueness” (Zertal & Eldar, 2009, p.

335). Settlement growth also falls into this pattern of nondecision-making, as no Israeli political leader or government coalition can be said to be the master-planner of the West Bank settlement project; the “‘authorship’ of this project was diffused rather amongst a multiplicity of agents and organizations and embodied more contradictions than a set of coherent strategies” (Weizman, 2012, p. 87). This is a clear example of what Bachrach and Baratz term the “second face” of power, or “nondecision-making”—the power to limit the scope of discussion to “safe” issues (1963). According to Weizman,

“Governments gradually learned to benefit from the settlement chaos; indeed, they sometimes promoted or even agitated it, creating the atmosphere that allows certain crimes to take place.... this chaos was often promoted from the centre. Actual or claimed loss of control in the Occupied Territories thus itself became an effective government strategy. The appearance of being out of control allowed the state to achieve its ideological objectives without accepting responsibility for them. When criticized internationally, the state was always able to absolve itself of responsibility...” (2012, pp. 94-95).

Through nondecision-making and unbounded territoriality, Israel has been able to continue the occupation “with great flexibility and little accountability toward ends that it itself has outlawed but that it wishes to achieve” (Roy, 2004, p. 153). This flexibility is also achieved through what Ananya Roy has called “unmapping,” or rendering certain territories illegible in order to extend state power.

In his well-known and oft-cited work *Seeing Like a State*, political scientist and anthropologist James C. Scott describes how states’ central governments attempt to force *legibility* on their subjects, “to arrange the population in ways that simplif[y] the classic state functions of taxation, conscription, and prevention of rebellion” (Scott, 1999, p. 2). Cartography and land designation are tools “by which modern states supervise and articulate their territories” (Roy, 2004, p. 151). Hochberg argues that “Israel’s spatial control within the Occupied Territories produces grey zones and sites of ambiguity (whether in the form of leftover ruins,

demolished houses, or extraterritorial spaces left out of clear legal jurisdictions) that carry within them the potential to reveal and expose those workings of power” (Hochberg, 2015, p. 1). I agree, but assert that the very fact and existence of these grey zones and sites of ambiguity *are* the signs of the workings of power—the power of nondecision-making (the power to limit the scope of discussion and challenges to the status quo), and the power to render some spaces illegible. According to Ananya Roy, a regulatory context in which maps don’t exist is one which allows for unchecked state power. In her study of urban development in Calcutta she describes how the state intentionally made portions of its population *illegible* in order to achieve its goals (Roy, 2004). While vision is often equated with power (“The gaze that sees is a gaze that dominates,” Foucault has famously stated), power can also be located in the ability to render illegible, the ability to go unseen. Roy describes how the state is able to bypass its own regulations and restrictions on the urbanization of agricultural land, furthering its goals of urban development through the logic of “unmapping” (Roy, 2004, p. 151). “Unmapping,” the absence of core bureaucratic and public knowledge about land, leads to territorialized flexibility (Roy, 2004, p. 151). Areas marked by regulatory ambiguity, uncertainty, and informality—legal and territorial grey areas—are spaces where the state can operate in contravention of its own (and in the case of Israel, international) laws.

This represents a new spatial vocabulary of control, in contrast to colonial techniques of mapping and making legible. According to Roy, “the structure of unmapping makes possible an informalization of the state” (Roy, 2004, p. 152). Informality in this case is a sphere of regulation that depends on extralegal systems—extralegality

“inhering in the state, a structural formalization that comes to be systematized and institutionalized. The informalized state is thus an entity of great power...” (Roy, 2004, p. 153).

Similarly, in the occupied territories Israeli control depends on extralegal systems, on working around international law. This is accomplished through the continued framing of the conflict as a temporary occupation, by the avoidance of officially annexing the territory. Israeli territorial control, then, is informalized, unmapped, unbounded. State power is exercised through “the territorialized uncertainty of informality” (Roy, 2004, p. 144). Territorialized uncertainty deepens state control in the occupied territories. Because the Palestinian is never a citizen, always an enemy, extraordinary measures can be taken. Nondecision-making, unmapping, and unbounded territoriality have produced a legal grey area in the occupied territories, a sovereignty vacuum.

The occupation remains a legal category despite the fact that occupations are rare, and ongoing, decades-long occupations are even rarer, and despite the fact that various US political actors and Israeli officials denounce the use of the term (Shafir, 2017, pp. 10-11). In this sense unbounded territoriality operates through the production of a legal grey area. After conquering the territories in 1967, Israel was stuck in “the classic colonial dilemma” between wanting to retain the territory while avoiding the extension of its sovereignty over the Palestinian population (Shafir, 2017, p. 12). The solution to this problem, explains Shafir, was to manipulate the international legal framework and to mire the country “in ever-deeper denial of the causes for the untenable situation wrought by continued occupation and the resistance it generates” (Shafir, 2017, p. 12). Derek Gregory describes the lands in the West Bank as “zones of indistinction” where the legal and lawful can no longer be distinguished from the illegal and unlawful (Gregory, 2004, p. 125). This is accomplished through

“the unique manipulation and combination of the three types of legal protection that are available to occupied Palestinians in today’s world. These are citizenship, human rights, and humanitarianism, none of which is fully available in the OPT” (Shafir, 2017, p. 13).

In the nation-state system, described above under “Terminology and Conceptual Blindness,” people access rights through citizenship. However, by not annexing the territories and re-drawing the map of sovereignty, Israel acts as the de facto sovereign power in the occupied territories while destroying the fabric of Palestinian civil society, and without extending the rights of citizenship to its population (Gregory, 2004, p. 129). Palestinians are required to obey the laws and military orders of the State of Israel, but that state has no responsibility (beyond that of occupier, discussed below) for the welfare of the Palestinians living in these territories, and any act of Palestinian resistance to Israel’s illegal settlement activity is criminalized as terrorism, because Israel asserts its monopoly over the legitimate use of violence.

Since the end of WWII, people are also protected by human rights, which sometimes overlap with citizenship rights. Unlike citizenship rights, which are enforced by the state, human rights are more ambiguous and disputed in scope (Shafir, 2017, pp. 13-14). While occasionally the Israeli High Court of Justice (HCJ) upholds the human rights of Palestinians in the occupied territories, “[a]n analysis of the HCJ’s rulings on petitions by Palestinian residents of the OPT by legal scholar David Kretzmer makes abundantly clear that the duty to uphold human rights ‘has more often been part of the Court’s rhetoric than of its actual decision-making’” (Shafir, 2017, p. 19). Overall, the military occupation is a “carceral enterprise” in which almost every third Palestinian has at some time been imprisoned or detained (Shafir, 2017, p. 19). In practice, the territories are constructed as a legal grey area in which it is unclear in any given circumstance which legal protections might apply. Shafir, for example, describes how in the Ajuri case before the HCJ an appeal against a violation of human rights (the forced relocation of West Bank residents to Gaza for two years) was rejected “based on Article 78 of the Fourth Geneva

Convention, which allows the occupying power to move someone from his or her residence if it deems this necessary for security reasons” (Shafir, 2017, pp. 19-20).

The third layer of legal protections described by Shafir are not rights, but humanitarian protections: “[t]his layer’s most detailed component is international humanitarian law (IHL), also referred to as the law of armed conflict, particularly its subcategory of the law of belligerent occupation” (described in detail above) (Shafir, 2017, p. 14). This seems to be the best protection for Palestinians given that they possess no citizenship rights and only the vestiges of human rights (Shafir, 2017, p. 22). However Israel adopted early on “a mixed—in fact contradictory—attitude to its obligations to the occupied Palestinian residents as mandated by the IHL” (Shafir, 2017, p. 22). Rather than acquiescing to the designation of “occupied territories,” for example, they are referred to as “administered territories” (Shafir, 2017, p. 22).

Shafir terms Israel’s three-article legal doctrine with regard to the occupied territories the “Shamgar Doctrine,” after the government’s legal counsel Meir Shamgar (Shafir, 2017, p. 23). Essentially it is an elaborate form of legal denialism (Shafir, 2017, p. 23). The first plank asserts that because the territories never constituted a sovereign state (as they moved from mandate rule to Egyptian and Jordanian rule to Israeli rule), they are not occupied but rather “disputed” territories (Shafir, 2017, p. 23). The second article holds that only sovereign states, and not stateless people, have ownership of their land (Shafir, 2017, p. 24). And the third and final article is that even though Israel asserts the state is not subject to the law of belligerent occupation, it voluntarily abides by its “humanitarian provisions” (Shafir, 2017, p. 25). Further, though under international law the occupying power is responsible for the welfare of the local population, Oslo transferred this responsibility to the Palestinian Authority, which has little capacity to act. As Shafir asserts, “[t]he occupation from the legal perspective, then, is created by twisting together

different strands of legal rights and protections: (1) citizenship *manqué* for Palestinians of East Jerusalem and the Druze of the Golan Heights, (2) human rights that are available (in a limited edition) to all Palestinians in procedural and concrete matters but are never codified as principle, and the rest of the time, (3) humanitarian protections and the vestiges of humanitarianism” (Shafir, 2017, p. 30). He states my point exactly in saying: “[t]his legal ambiguity is not only an essential aspect of Israel’s continued occupation but a *necessary precondition* for the occupation” (Shafir, 2017, p. 30). Through the workings of unbounded territoriality, nondecision-making, and unmapping, Israel continues “to hold these territories in an ambiguous position: *not* part of Israel per se, yet also not quite *not* part of Israel per se” (Hochberg, 2015, p. 17).

The Limits of Unbounded Territoriality

The strategy of unbounded territoriality, however, is not unlimited. There is still the Separation Wall, Areas A, B, and C, and these indicate that Israeli control is not unlimited but at given moments has had to take into consideration the existence and resistance of Palestinians. It was resistance, in fact, “that initially led to the diplomatic process, the Oslo negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian leadership in 1993” (Shafir, 2017, p. 11). There is no occupation, no need for either temporary permanence or unbounded territoriality, without resistance. If there were no Palestinians, Israel would have no need to maintain what Adriana Kemp (1999, p. 78) has called “the liminal geopolitical situation of non-annexation/non-withdrawal.”

The fact that Israel has to go to these lengths to maintain the status quo of the occupation is in response to the existence of the “indigenous other.” Piterberg (2011, p. 25) argues that settler colonial formations deny the fundamental role that the conflict between settlers and

natives plays in shaping the identity of the settler nation: “the conflict with the natives is not denied, but the pivotal role that this conflict has played in shaping the identity of the settler nation is written off” and more liberal expressions of hegemonic white settler consciousness keep separate “what we have done” and “who we are.” As noted in detail in **Chapter 3 – Settler Colonialism**, particularly in the section titled “Challenging Hegemonic (Settler) Narratives,” despite the stories settlers tell themselves, the natives are not inconsequential to the form each settler polity takes. In fact, their presence is *central* to the identity formation of the resulting settler polity. Subsequently, the need to distance the indigene from the discussion of “who we are” as settlers leads to “the colonial anxiety... of the colonized becoming an intrinsic part of the colonizing society’s identity” (Piterberg 2011, 28). As described shortly in the conclusion to this chapter, Israel therefore uses both temporary permanence and unbounded territoriality to distance itself from its own frontier—maintaining plausible deniability to accusations of annexation and subsequent responsibility over the day to day lives of Palestinians. This strategy, however, is not foolproof. Even Israeli unbounded territoriality has its limits, is bound sometimes.

6.5 Conclusion: the Logic of Unbounded Territoriality

In Frank Herbert’s 1965 epic science fiction novel *Dune*, the book’s hero states:

“The convoluted wording of legalisms grew up around the necessity to hide from ourselves the violence we intend toward each other. Between depriving a man of one hour of his life and depriving him of his life there exists only a difference of degree. You have done violence to him, consumed his energy. Elaborate euphemisms may conceal your intent to kill, but behind any use of power over another the ultimate assumption remains: ‘I feed on your energy’” (Herbert, 1965).

Legalisms often obscure violent intentions and violent realities. The definition of the occupation as “temporary” while maintaining its conditions indefinitely is nothing more than a complex legalism meant to obscure the reality that Palestinians are being deprived of their lives and their

self-determination, “temporarily” or not. Occupations are the story of people denied: “Keeping a people under occupation means subjecting them to rule by foreigners and denying them political freedom and free expression of national identity” (Shafir, 2017, p. 13). Sustaining the illusion of temporariness allows Israel to manage two contradictory components of the Occupation: colonization and separation. Thus, it is as if the occupation is a transitory, external nuisance, and not a structural component of the State of Israel (Ophir, 2008, p. 209).

Through the operation of unbounded territoriality, Israel as a settler colonial polity has distanced itself from its own frontier: the occupied Palestinian territories. It does this by maintaining the framework of belligerent occupation, the illusion of temporariness; by not redrawing the map of sovereignty while still being able to exercise effective territorial control and sovereign power. The Jewish State therefore maintains plausible deniability to accusations of annexation and subsequent responsibility over the day to day lives of Palestinians. This is different than the exercise of extra-territoriality—exercising sovereign power beyond state borders—because the final borders of Israel remain unfixed. The occupied territories remain in a legal grey area, a fuzzy space of unclear sovereignty. The questions I would like to address in these concluding remarks are: *why* does Israel continue to exercise unbounded territoriality rather than formally and finally annexing the territories to Israel? What kind of state does unbounded territoriality make Israel? What does it mean to be a fluid, unstable, and borderless state with an uncertain future because of this temporary permanence? Finally, I close the paper by considering what a new conceptual framework could enable us to see.

Before explaining why Israel continues to exercise unbounded territoriality in the Palestinian territories it is necessary to understand the public consensus regarding the essence, *raison d'être*, and *telos* of the State of Israel. There is a three-word phrase that is very popular

in Israel. The phrase is “Jewish-Democratic State,” and the referent is Israel. It is described by Ophir (2008) as a “miraculous phrase,” a speech act that can encompass a fact (Israel is a Jewish-Democratic State), a value (that if Israel is not a Jewish-Democratic State it will lose its *raison d’être* as a state), a telos and a vocation (Israel must remain, or become, a Jewish-Democratic state), and a limit (when a Jewish Israeli deviates and questions the fact of Israel being a Jewish-Democratic State she excludes herself from the community) (Ophir, 2008, p. 207). The phrase appeals to a certain presumed shared understanding, it “always designates or implies a certain public consensus, a Jewish consensus, obviously, a kind of common ground that persists despite all political disputes and ideological cleavages” (Ophir, 2008, p. 207). Ophir notes that no matter the context—law, politics, education, or security—“it is always pronounced as if something very essential, even urgent is at stake,” the very character of the State of Israel (Ophir, 2008, p. 207). This phrase is an “incantation” meant to erase “the disgrace of forty years of Occupation and with it there would disappear three and a half million Palestinians who fight for a state of their own” (Ophir, 2008, p. 208). Ophir describes how a wall has been constructed in the minds and political imaginations of ordinary Israelis—“not an apartheid wall but a wall against apartheid”—a wall which separates the state “from the Occupation and its evils, from racist discourse and its discriminatory and humiliating effects” (Ophir, 2008, p. 208).

Consequences of Re-Drawing the Map of Sovereignty

The answer to why Israel exercises unbounded territoriality relates directly to the consequences it would face in redrawing the map of sovereignty. In order for Israel to maintain its “*façade of normalcy*”—that the state is a functioning democracy despite the treatment of Arab citizens of Israel and despite the ongoing occupation of the Palestinian territories—it has had to

artificially present “an image of separation between its civil order and its militarized one, thus obscuring the impact militarism has on every single aspect of everyday Israeli life” (Hochberg, 2015, p. 10). In July 2015 I interviewed a settler, activist, and self-appointed “spokesman” for the Israeli settlement movement. He insisted that settling the West Bank—Judea and Samaria in settler parlance—could not be wrong, because this was the biblical heartland of the Jews, theirs by historic right. When asked why then the Israeli government itself designates new outposts as illegal settlements, he replied: “because it is easier for Israel to say that a territory [the West Bank, or Judea and Samaria] is under dispute than that a state is under dispute” (field notes 7/17/15). What he was referring to was the necessity to maintain cognitive separation between the occupied territories and the internationally-recognized State of Israel, so that the occupation does not threaten the legitimacy of the state. Continuities abound between Zionist settler colonization prior to 1948 and after 1967, but the West Bank is “the most densely inhabited area of Palestine,” and as such old practices and patterns of settlement have been ineffective there (Shafir, 2017, p. 5). By holding the occupied territories apart from the state, the Israeli government doesn’t have to admit that Palestinians dispute the establishment of the state of Israel within its 1948 borders as well—that they were dispossessed of that land as well. The occupation is therefore spatially, as well as temporally, denied:

“The Occupation is a hindrance, indeed, a burden, sometimes even a shame, but it is not really part of ‘us’ and ‘we’ are not really part of it. When it comes to the political imaginary the Occupation is always on the outside, beyond our imaginary border, external to what constitutes us as a nation, a project in which we are doomed to take part (because Palestinians are such uncompromising enemies), never the other half of our democratic regime” (Ophir, 2008, p. 209).

Zreik (2016, p. 356) argues that “one of Israel’s most crucial mistakes” was in “failing to set itself a clear stopping point”: “Zionism is an ongoing revolution that refuses to become a *Rechtsstaat*, and an ethnically exclusive settlement project that refuses to settle down.” Similarly,

Sand (2012) closes his book *The Invention of the Land of Israel* with the story of the frog and the scorpion—suggesting that if Israel does not recognize Palestinian self-determination and statehood they will go down with it (pointing to the contradiction inherent in a Jewish and democratic state). But both authors have missed how, through the perpetual putting off of any final status decision regarding the Palestinian territories or the borders of the State of Israel, made possible through the exercise of unbounded territoriality, Israel has managed to maintain flexibility and contain the contradiction inherent in a Jewish and democratic state.

If Israel were to annex the territories, it would have to decide once and for all *what kind of state it is*, and it would inevitably fall apart, since it cannot be both democratic and Jewish with a large population of Palestinians living within its borders. Currently, despite the fact that Palestinians make up something like 20% of the population of Israel, the image of a Jewish-Democratic state is maintained. Palestinians residing within the 1948 borders are referred to as Israeli Arabs, a name that ignores their national affiliation as Palestinians and their native status as pre-1948 inhabitants of the land. Their invisibility is accomplished by erasing their Palestinian-ness in favor of a vague Arab-ness that as such can be incorporated into Israel as a docile minority (Hochberg, 2015, p. 17). In a biting statement that aptly captures Palestinians' paradoxical presence as non-Jewish citizens of Israel, Palestinian-Israeli Knesset member Ahmad Tibi has stated: "The truth is, Israel is a Jewish democracy: democratic towards Jews and Jewish towards Arabs" (Hochberg, 2015, p. 61). To try and unpack the connection between the adjectives "Jewish" and "Democratic" in relation to Israel and to try to change the nature of the relationship between the state and its non-Jewish citizens is to betray the very essence of the state.

Palestinian residents of the occupied territories are rendered invisible in a different way. They are not granted Israeli citizenship and unlike their “Israeli Arab” cousins are not considered Israeli. Because their Palestinian-ness is overtly accepted, they must remain clearly and securely outside of Israel and outside of Israeli sight (Hochberg, 2015, pp. 17-18). “Clearly,” Said notes, “as Zionist discourse has always stipulated, the very existence of Palestinians, no matter how confined or disempowered, constitutes a racial and religious threat to Israel’s security,” to its very *raison d’être* (Agnew & Muscarà, 2012, p. 39). Unbounded territoriality allows Israel to maintain a certain status quo—to claim to be one thing while doing another. Were Israel to annex the Palestinian territories it would also render its control over this space and the people within it legible—it would render the wider Israeli project of appropriation and dispossession legible, in a time when this type of territorial maneuver is considered illegitimate. Israel as a settler colonial state is an anachronism in a post-colonial time. Through unbounded territoriality the state can maintain flexibility and manage/contain contradictions and conflicts. Annexing the territories, on the other hand, would require the state to decide once and for all what it is. If it is a democracy, then it is “a State of and for all its citizens,” including Palestinian citizens of Israel, who, upon annexation, would outnumber Jewish Israelis, shift the demographic balance of the state, and therefore erase its Jewish identity (Ophir, 2008, p. 207). If it retained its identity as a Jewish State, it could no longer credibly claim to be a democracy, because the large number of non-Jewish Israelis would be at best second-class citizens, or perhaps “permanent residents” like the majority of Palestinians living in annexed East Jerusalem. Unbounded territoriality allows Israel to avoid officially redrawing the map of sovereignty—to avoid annexing millions of Palestinians along with the territories.

Unbounded Territoriality and World-Making

Delaney has argued that territoriality is not just a tool or strategy for controlling space:

“It is better understood as implicating and being implicated in ways of thinking, acting, and being in the world – ways of world-making informed by beliefs, desires, and culturally and historically informed ways of knowing. It is as much a metaphysical phenomenon as a material one” (Delaney, 2005, p. 13).

Unbounded territoriality is tied to the occupation and wider Israeli settler colonial project—a way of world-making that obscures “facts on the ground” and creates its own material and metaphysical reality. As Hochberg notes, “the greatest power of the Israeli state (perhaps of all states) lies in its ability to conceal its violence and manipulate its citizens’ frame of vision *even* and *despite* what may be their well-informed understanding and capacity to analyze their political reality” (Hochberg, 2015, p. 33). This is a reality in which the occupation is kept conceptually apart from the State of Israel, in which Israel is an “administrator” of disputed territories, not an occupier. Unbounded territoriality and nondecision-making allow Israelis to believe in the geopolitical imagination of the Jewish Democratic State. As Ophir explains,

“[The phrase ‘Jewish-Democratic State’] is not a smokescreen. Its role is not to conceal reality but to create it.... One summons reality to be other than it is, till finally it is transformed. Everything remains the same, of course, but all those things that prevented our miraculous phrase from accurately describing the political reality are not to be thought, counted, and accounted for any longer. [They are not to be counted because] one speaks from the point of view of the future – that future which will start after the end of the Occupation, a moment which is sure to come. Everyone knows, with a kind of strange certainty, that the Occupation is temporary and that it is about to come to an end.... all we need is a reliable partner...” (Ophir, 2008, p. 209).

Therefore, the occupation as an instance of nondecision-making and the functioning of unbounded territoriality are essential for supporting the “Jewish-Democratic” speech act, necessary for managing the contradiction of designating Israel a Jewish *and* Democratic State. As long as the occupation and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are ongoing, Palestinians—both citizens of Israel and not—remain the other, the enemy, who have their own almost-state out there, who belong elsewhere. In maintaining the Palestinian Arab as the enemy other, the

occupation *reinforces* the designation Jewish-Democratic State—for isn't it a matter of security to distinguish between Jew and Arab? And aren't the severe security measures that make-up the occupation justified because a democracy has a right and a duty to protect itself (Ophir, 2008, p. 208)?

Hochberg analyzes violence and visibility in the occupied territories, asking: “what or who can be seen, what or who remains invisible, who can see and whose vision is compromised?” (Hochberg, 2015, p. 5). This work is significant here because the operation of unbounded territoriality, and the maintenance of the “temporary” military occupation, can't be seen from our framework of sovereign, territorially bounded nation-states. The reality of Israeli sovereign power in the occupied territories is concealed within the framework of a military occupation. In contributing to Adi Ophir's project to reconceptualize, and therefore render visible, the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories, I would like to close with Hochberg's assertion that any effort at reframing the conflict also involves the ability to see one's own blindness and render visible one's failure to see” (Hochberg, 2015, p. 1). The territorial strategy of unbounded territoriality is not deployed because Israel is incapable of redrawing the map of sovereignty, but rather serves as proof of Israel's overwhelming ability to control this territory in a borderless, fuzzy, flexible, and piecemeal fashion. It is an example of nondecision-making, the power to suppress challenges to the status quo and to limit the scope of discussion to “safe,” rather than divisive, issues (Bachrach & Baratz, 1962, 1963). Through unbounded territoriality and nondecision-making, the extent of Israel's territorial control remains illegible. In contributing to a growing body of work challenging our assumptions about the “Occupation” I hope to create another crack in the façade of the Jewish-Democratic wall that protects Israel “from those who wish to undermine its Jewishness and from those who threaten to expose its

undemocratic nature” (Ophir, 2008, p. 208). As Ophir notes: “The speech act that chants [Jewish-Democratic State] is nothing but a work of construction and maintenance, for recently it seems that the wall is constantly falling apart” (Ophir, 2008, p. 208).

6.6 Figures



Figure 6.1: Israeli settlement Tekoa, eastern Gush Etzion [center], with Palestinian villages in the foreground and background, August 2015. Source: Author's collection.



Figure 6.2: The Separation Barrier/Apartheid Wall, June 2011. Source: Author's collection.



Figure 6.3: Bridge and bypass road for Palestinian villages on either side of Route 398, the main road from Jerusalem to Israeli settlement in Gush Etzion, August 2015. Source: Author's collection.



Figure 6.4: Currently abandoned roadblock and observation tower near the Palestinian village Nabi Saleh, June 2011. Source: Author's collection.



Figure 6.5: Checkpoint on the road into Jerusalem, June 2011. Source: Author's collection.

6.7 References

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7. Concluding Remarks

7.1 Conclusion: Suburban Occupation

My research broadly investigates ethno-territorial conflict in contested territory—analyzing the construction of home(land), settler colonization, everyday life in conflict zones, the material and discursive mechanisms of territorial control, and how the construction of belonging for one group depends on the displacement and dispossession of another. This dissertation in particular examines how Jewish Israeli settlers are constructing a sense of “home” deep in the military-occupied West Bank—in effect domesticating the violent project of occupation and dispossession of Palestinian land. My use of qualitative methods in examining these issues is aimed at representing the world in a way that captures subjects’ understandings, feelings, and choices, while applying a critical eye to the reality they perceive and seek to (re)produce. In my research I am interested in the conceptual frameworks and day-to-day practices that settlement residents use to make sense of their bucolic suburban lifestyle in a military-occupied, violently contested area, and also in critiquing their interpretation of the world and in understanding how it is linked to geopolitics, settler colonialism, and unequal relations of power.

My findings are reflected in the title of this work: *Suburban Occupation: Contradictory impulses and outcomes of life in the occupied West Bank*. They reveal that Israeli settlement residents are managing several dissonances of their lifestyle in the occupied West Bank: in the juxtaposition between bucolic suburban life and constant threat and securitization, in their relationship with the Palestinians who build their communities but who threaten their lives and national territory, and in their desire to build both home as domesticity and home as diasporic homeland. In three substantive chapters drawing on seven months of ethnographic fieldwork, this dissertation analyzes the considerable discursive and material *work* required to construct and

maintain settlements as desirable places to live; the ways in which territorial control is utilized to make the occupation possible and sustainable; and how settlers are responding to and shaping their physical and social environment in relation to the Palestinian “other.”

Chapter 4 – Domesticity and Diasporic Homeland builds on work in cultural geography and related fields on the concept of home, particularly in relation to diaspora and nationalism (the “homeland”), to explore the discursive construction of home by Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank. While other scholars have tracked the way domestic space has been militarized (particularly since 9/11), and how diasporic communities construct a sense of home away from their historic homeland, I am concerned with how military-occupied space is domesticated by a diasporic community that has “returned.” Drawing on expansive qualitative fieldwork, I found that the tension between constructing home as domesticity (a safe, peaceful sanctuary from the world) and home as diasporic homeland (a contested territory fight and sacrifice for) in the occupied territories leads Israeli settlers to make compromises between the ideal of security and the drive for national territory. This produces incongruous impulses and outcomes where the imperative of security and the need to place oneself in danger for the good of the nation are held in constant tension. These dissonances are reconciled through the use of four discourses, or conceptual frameworks, that settlers use to make sense of themselves and their lifestyle in this dangerous place: Torah/Return, Pioneering/frontier spirit, Quality-of-life, and Jewish community and identity. Through these discourses settlers are constructing a sense of “home,” both as domesticity and diasporic homeland.

Chapter 5 – With a Wink and a Nod addresses how settlement growth is made possible by the discrepancy between what settlers say, and what they mean and do, when responding to terror attacks with increased settlement construction—what I term “construction as

commemoration.” The paper centers on the kidnapping and murder of three Israeli teens in June 2014 (while I was conducting fieldwork in eastern Gush Etzion), and how this act was used to justify the establishment of new settlement outposts and the largest land appropriation in 30 years. Construction as commemoration refers to the construction of new settlement outposts and the expansion of existing settlements to commemorate the loss of Israeli life in the occupied West Bank. Popular discourse surrounding this commemorative construction maintains that these acts are aimed at “sending a message” to Palestinian terrorists, asserting that Israeli settlers will stand fast in the face of violence. Settlements, however, grow regardless of what Palestinians do or do not do. In this paper, I argue that when viewed through the lens of settler colonial theory, construction as commemoration is revealed to not be aimed at sending a message to Palestinians, but rather at appealing to the hearts and minds of the Israeli public, and at providing cover for the Israeli government to openly support settlement growth regardless of international pressure. In contrast to commemorative acts like monuments and memorials which are aimed at symbolically controlling space, construction as commemoration results in the material, physical control of contested territory. The discursive framing of construction as commemoration maintains the fiction of a conflictual relationship between settlers and the Israeli government, which allows for settlement growth to continue, in the words of one informant, “with a wink and a nod”—with the tacit support of the Israeli government at the same time that it claims to try to rein the settlers in.

Chapter 6 – Unbounded Territoriality is a re-examination of territorial control in the occupied West Bank. This chapter takes a theoretical approach to examining the occupation, building on work by scholars who are rethinking the terms we use to analyze this conflict, and how they color our perception of the phenomena we study. The “temporary” Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem began in 1967. In the nearly five decades

since, the settler population in the occupied territories has reached well over an estimated half million Israeli Jews. Excepting East Jerusalem, Israel has made no move to formally annex the territories. Neither are they withdrawing, which is made clear by continuous settlement growth. Therefore, the question this chapter grapples with is: by what territorial logic does the occupation function, such that it can continue indefinitely but call itself a “temporary” military occupation? In *Human Territoriality: Its Theory and History*, Robert David Sack defines territoriality as “*the attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationships, by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area*” (Sack, 1986, p. 19). One of the three requirements of territoriality is delimiting the area under control. In stark contrast to this, I suggest the territorial logic of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip represents what I term *unbounded territoriality*, a form of territorial control best exercised by *not* delimiting boundaries. Unbounded territoriality is the spatial dimension of what Adi Ophir has described as the “temporary permanence” of the occupation (Azoulay & Ophir, 2012). This form of territoriality complicates the connection between sovereignty and territory in the nation-state system. Unbounded territoriality is not exercised because Israel is incapable of exercising territorial control as traditionally conceived, but is rather proof of Israel’s power to control territory in a fuzzy, piecemeal fashion.

7.2 Closing Thoughts

As a general rule, fundamentalists cannot be reasoned with. Lorenzo Veracini says that because settlers have not reasoned their way into denial (of their foundational violence, of the existence of an indigenous group with claims to the land, etc.), they cannot be reasoned out of it (see **Chapter 3 – Settler Colonialism**, particularly the section on “Consciousness”) (Veracini,

2010). Endless studies in psychology show that information does not make people change their behavior. Denial, after all, “is... not a lack of knowledge, but a complex form of knowledge” (Illouz, 2015). Shafir says that “[w]e commonly think of denial as a defense mechanism used to shield our inner selves from painful knowledge” but that “[a] measure of deliberateness lurks at the bottom of every denial, whether one denies the health consequences of smoking or the psychological consequences of sexual abuse” (Shafir, 2017, pp. 12-13). He goes on to argue that living with open secrets—things we *choose* not to recognize—“promotes numbness and indifference among the bystanders and, simultaneously, avoidance of witness and human rights organizations—‘the eyes that see’” (Shafir, 2017, pp. 12-13). And deeper even than denial is *denialism*, the subversion of truth (Shafir, 2017, p. 13). Denialism is a system of employing “rhetorical tactics to give the appearance of argument or legitimate debate, when in actuality there is none” (Hoofnagle, 2007). According to Shafir,

“Denialism is both more deliberate and collective than mere denial and, consequently, fosters a politics of denial. It expresses not just an inability but a refusal to recognize the responsibility for causal chains of actions. The practice of denialism frequently displaces guilt from the perpetrators of wrongdoing onto the victims” (Shafir, 2017, p. 13).

Therefore, though in my Acknowledgements I expressed the hope that, given the challenge and responsibility of representing settlement residents truly, fairly, and always contextually, the residents of eastern Gush Etzion might have to face up to the implications of the things they told me, and the way they choose to live, I remain pessimistic about the chances for peace that demand changing the hearts and minds of settlers. As a community, they are well versed in the politics of denial.

Two brief anecdotes will help explain my doubt. First: in July 2014, relatively early in my fieldwork (I had spent about two months in the settlements up to that point), I did an interview with an Israeli American mother whose family had been living in Tekoa for just

coming up on two years. Toward the end of a 90-minute interview she expressed that maybe the Palestinians have as close a connection to the land as Jewish Israelis do—that maybe the Israeli constitution should be re-written so that it is not a Jewish nation, but a home for many religions and many people, a “free country” where both people could live together in peace (interview 34, Tekoa 8/13/14). While making this statement she described herself as “this humanitarian lefty, always weighing both sides” (interview 34, Tekoa 8/13/14). Two days later she sought me out, saying there was something she wanted to add to her interview. She said that first she wanted to change what she had said about thinking that Israel being described as a “Jewish country” in the constitution should be changed. After our interview she had spoken with her husband and her neighbors, and she wanted to amend this statement. Where she had once expressed doubt about the moral correctness of Greater Israel being defined exclusively, or at least primarily, as a home for the Jewish people (my interpretation was that in this moment her American liberalism was showing though), her doubts had been removed through conversation with her community (they had assured her again of the justice of their cause). There are over fifty Muslim states, she said, but Israel is the only Jewish country in the world. Therefore, while she still believed in freedom of religion, the dominant religion should always be Judaism (field notes 8/15/14). Second, she told me (“no offense”) that because I’m not Jewish I can’t understand the connection they have with the land, that their indigeneity trumps the indigeneity of the Palestinians, and that it is important for all the Jews to live in the land of Israel and for it to remain a Jewish state. She closed the statement by saying that at least Israel is a Jewish *and* democratic state, while “there is no Arab democratic country,” and therefore Palestinian Arabs were better off as second-class citizens, legal residents, or even the occupied population of the Israeli democratic regime than they would be under any Arab/Muslim government (see the conclusion of **Chapter 6** –

Unbounded Territoriality for a description of the contradiction inherent in a Jewish democratic state) (field notes 8/15/14).

I had many of these frustrating moments with my interlocutors in the settlements—when it seemed they were on the verge of recognizing that Palestinians are people too, only to pull themselves back (or be pulled back by their community) from the abyss. Back to the safety of denialism. The alternate reality that they lived in—the refusal to recognize responsibility for causal chains of actions and the desire to displace guilt onto the Palestinian population—is maintained by denying any facts to the contrary. The second anecdote I want to share happened towards the end of my fieldwork, in late July 2015. In many ways I think this event was also the moment I knew my fieldwork was over, and after leaving the settlements in September 2015 I have yet to go back. On the weekend of July 31, 2015, I was spending Shabbat in Neria, a community settlement in the Mateh Binyamin region of the West Bank (see **Chapter 2 – The Setting and the Research**). That day, there was an arson attack in the nearby Palestinian village of Duma, which resulted in the death of three of the four family members. 18-month old Ali Dawabsheh was burned alive in the fire, and within weeks both his parents would also be dead from their injuries. The only survivor was 4-year-old son, who also suffered serious burns. I didn't hear anything about the attack that day—Neria is a religious settlement where cell phones are not permitted during Shabbat. It wasn't until Sunday morning that I heard of the attack, and that a baby had been burned alive. The attack and murder, having happened so close to the settlement where I had been enjoying a Shabbat meal, hit me hard.

It was obvious early on to both Israeli investigators and international observers that the attack was most likely committed by extremist Jewish Israeli settlers, and later a 21-year-old Jewish settler was indicted for the murder. Hebrew graffiti was found at the site reading things

like “Revenge.” When I asked some of the settlement residents I was staying with about the event, they said it was tragic, but it couldn’t have been committed by Jews. “Jews don’t commit terrorism,” I was told, “Jewish violence is always defensive, only when we have to” (field notes 8/2/15). Jews couldn’t have done anything so horrific, “only Arabs commit terrorism” (field notes 8/2/15). I was told that the attack had probably been carried out by other Arabs due to some kind of “feud,” which they have all the time. The Hebrew was put there to frame the Jews. When I said that even the Israeli authorities said they were looking for Jewish Israeli extremists, I was told they are only saying that to appease the international community, their American “keepers.” The extent to which they could find an explanation for every detail, an explanation that always pointed away from Jewish guilt, astounded me, though maybe it shouldn’t have. I think it caught me off guard, even after months of living in these communities, because in so many other ways the settlers were rational people—teachers and doctors and shopkeepers—who were kind to me and talked openly, who cared about their neighbors and their communities. It was the first time I really pushed back hard, didn’t back down or try to find a polite way around the conversation. I got angry, said Jews were people too who could commit evil acts just like anyone else. They got angry, and for a while the conversation was over.

Later, in early September, when the IDF announced that the attack was definitely an act of Jewish terror, the subject came up again between me and my host, who I had shared a *caravan* [mobile home] with for months (except for a short period when he was out of the country and I had the place to myself). Seeing that I still believed that Jews had committed the arson, he finally sat me down and asked unequivocally if, after all this time living in the community, I believed that the Jews were the rightful inhabitants of the territories, and that the Palestinians had to accept this or leave. I said that I still believed that Palestinians had a rightful claim to the

territory. After a long and heated conversation, he said that he was disappointed in me, that he couldn't believe I could live in the settlements so long and not see "the truth." But he also said he was glad we had talked, because he now saw that the *goyim* [gentiles] would never understand, and after talking to me he was "mores sure than ever" that the Palestinians had no right to the land.

In retrospect, of course this was not true. I did not convince him that Palestinians have no rights, that was always his position. But at the time, this destroyed me. There was no getting through to him. I felt defeated. I left the settlements later in September feeling utterly demoralized. So, no, despite my commitment to writing truthfully about what I saw and heard while living in the settlements, despite my efforts to analyze events and conversations always in the context in which they took place, I do not hold out much hope that this work will "get through" to my interlocutors in the settlements. I am not sure it is possible to change their minds, so deep do the politics of denial run. So I come back to Susan Harding's belief that a close, situated, and self-reflexive examination of fundamentalists, resulting in more nuanced readings of who they are and what they're doing, will allow scholars and activists to "design more effective political strategies to oppose directly the specific positions they advocate," (Harding, 1991, pp. 374, 393). From here, I will continue in this work.

7.3 References

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8. Appendix: Interview Protocols

8.1 Interview Protocol for Residents

Oral consent script:

You are invited to participate in a research study about life in Jewish settlements in the West Bank. You will be asked to participate in interviews. Initial themes will include: (1) how residents came to live in the settlements, and (2) what life and security is like in their community.

There are no risks associated with this interview.

Please understand that your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study. With your consent, I would like to audio tape our conversation today so that I can listen properly and take notes. Only I will listen to the tapes which will be eventually destroyed after they are transcribed. Additionally, if there is anything you would not like to discuss, or you would like a topic removed from the tapes, you can tell me at any time during this interview. I have planned this interview to last about an hour, if time runs short, maybe we can arrange a follow-up interview, at your convenience. I will provide you with my contact information if you have any questions for me about this study, or about anything else. You can also contact the Office of Human Research Protection Program at UCLA if you have any questions about your rights as a participant.

[Hand out a separate business card or contact sheet to subjects which includes the following contact information]

FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY

- Interview appointment contact: If you need to change your appointment, please contact Sara Hughes at saranhughes@ucla.edu or [Israeli cell number not obtained yet].
- Questions, Concerns or Complaints: *If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this research study, its procedures, or risks or benefits you should contact the principle investigator, Sara Hughes.
- Independent of the Research Team Contact: If you are not satisfied with the manner in which this study is being conducted, or you have any concerns, complaints, or general questions about the research or your rights as a research study subject, please contact the UCLA Institutional Review Board (IRB).

I. Introduction

A. Interviewee Background

Interviewee (coded name, resident Y/N): _____

1. How long have you...

_____ lived in Israel?

_____ been a resident of Tekoa/Nokdim/Kfar el Dad (or other settlement)?

2. How did you come to live in Israel?

3. How did you come to live in Tekoa/Nokdim/Kfar el Dad (or other settlement)?

a. Where were you living before?

b. How did you decide to leave?

c. How is Tekoa/Nokdim/Kfar el Dad (or other settlement) different than where you lived before?

d. Selection criteria—what was this process like for you?

e. Why not live in Israel proper?

4. Do you live here with your family?

5. Do you work inside or outside of the community?

a. What do you do?

b. Do you commute?

6. What have your experiences been living here?

a. Feelings of security/insecurity, sense of community.

b. How does your family outside of the settlement, and outside Israel, react to your decision to live in the West Bank?

c. How does the military occupation affect your daily life? If the settlement is “safe,” safe relative to what?

7. What have your experiences been with your Arab neighbors?

a. Do you feel safe living in the West Bank?

8. Would you like peace? What does that peace entail?

a. Would you leave the West Bank if there was a peace agreement?

B. Post Interview Comments and/or Observations:

1. Is there anything we haven't covered today that you think I should know?

2. Can you suggest anyone else you think I should talk with to get a better handle on the project?

3. Could we talk again?

II. Resident Interview Protocol [for my records]

Interviewee (coded name, resident Y/N): _____

Topics covered:

_____ A: How did you come to live in Tekoa?

_____ B: Feelings of security/insecurity

_____ C: Everyday life in the settlement

_____ D: Relations with Arab neighbors

_____ E: Life history

_____ F: Settlement selection criteria/marketing

Other Topics Discussed: _____

Documents Obtained: _____

Post Interview Comments or Leads:

8.2 Interview Protocol for Key Informants

Oral consent script:

You are invited to participate in a research study about life in Jewish settlements in the West Bank. You will be asked to participate in interviews. Initial themes will include: (1) everyday life in the settlements, (2) history of the settlements, and (3) incentives for living in the West Bank.

There are no risks associated with this interview.

Please understand that your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study. With your consent, I would like to audio tape our conversation today so that I can listen properly and take notes. Only I will listen to the tapes which will be eventually destroyed after they are transcribed. Additionally, if there is anything you would not like to discuss, or you would like a topic removed from the tapes, you can tell me at any time during this interview. I have planned this interview to last about an hour, if time runs short, maybe we can arrange a follow-up interview, at your convenience. I will provide you with my contact information if you have any questions for me about this study, or about anything else. You can also contact the Office of Human Research Protection Program at UCLA if you have any questions about your rights as a participant.

[Hand out a separate business card or contact sheet to subjects which includes the following contact information]

FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY

- Interview appointment contact: If you need to change your appointment, please contact Sara Hughes at saranhughes@ucla.edu or [Israeli cell number not obtained yet].
- Questions, Concerns or Complaints: *If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this research study, its procedures, or risks or benefits you should contact the principle investigator, Sara Hughes.
- Independent of the Research Team Contact: If you are not satisfied with the manner in which this study is being conducted, or you have any concerns, complaints, or general questions about the research or your rights as a research study subject, please contact the UCLA Institutional Review Board (IRB).

I. Introduction

You have been selected to speak with me today because of your work in and on West Bank settlements. My research project as a whole focuses on how residents came to live in settlements in the military-occupied West Bank, with particular interest on why this is a good place to raise a family and whether residents feel safe and secure here.

A. Interviewee Background

Institution: _____

Interviewee (coded name, resident Y/N, title): _____

1. How long have you...

_____ worked for this organization?

_____ worked on West Bank settlements?

2. Describe your work in and around the settlements, the intended results of this work, and your perception of the settlements and settlement expansion overall.

Probes: What are the possible incentives for living in the West Bank? How does the military occupation impact life in the settlements, or not? What are the relations with local Arab populations?

3. What have your experiences been working on West Bank settlements?

Probes: Sense of security/insecurity and community in the settlements. How are residents perceived by Israelis in Israel propose? How does the military occupation affect daily life?

4. What have your experiences been with local Palestinian populations?

B. Post Interview Comments and/or Observations:

1. Is there anything we haven't covered today that you think is relevant to the project?

2. Can you suggest anyone else you think I should talk with to get a better handle on the project?

3. Could we talk again?

II. Key Informant Interview Protocol [for my records]

Institution: _____

Interviewee (coded name, resident Y/N, title): _____

Topics covered:

_____ A: Life in West Bank settlements

_____ B: History of the settlements

_____ C: Military occupation of the West Bank

_____ D: Settlement expansion

_____ E: Incentives for living in the settlements

_____ F: Settlement selection criteria/marketing

Other Topics Discussed: _____

Documents Obtained: _____

Post Interview Comments or Leads:
