Challenging Collaborative Consumption at a Critical Juncture:

Airbnb in the Matrix of Gentrification and Colonization

by

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

ABSTRACT

Ten years since the nationwide J14 housing protests against Israel's increasing cost of living, affordable housing remains just as scarce, even prompting some city-dwellers to seek cheaper living in West Bank settlements – a military-occupied Palestinian Territory. Given that Israel is often called the Start-Up Nation, Airbnb's rise in Tel Aviv-Yaffo and West Bank settlements was exceptional. Thus, my thesis aims to determine Airbnb's role in the Tel Aviv-Yaffo housing crisis and the West Bank settlement economy. My research demonstrates the ways in which Airbnb accelerates the existing historic trends in Tel Aviv-Yaffo and the West Bank by introducing new capital flows via the sharing platforms.

While existing Israeli literature on Airbnb's activity in Tel Aviv-Yaffo has done an adequate job of addressing the phenomenon as a policy and legal issue, none have understood it within Israel-Palestine's gentrification-colonization matrix. My contribution is applying Anglo gentrification literature to consider how these activities unfold in particular ways within Israel-Palestine's unique colonial context. Through a post-colonial lens, my thesis reveals how Airbnb has exacerbated the housing crisis by converting residential units into illegal hotels, displaced marginalized Jews in south Tel Aviv-Yaffo, turned human rights violations into tourist attractions, and further displaced Palestinian Arabs living both within and outside the Green Line.

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

In the past few years, the sharing economy has gained major traction for its potential to broaden the scope of self-employment opportunities, build a sense of community, create environmental sustainability, lower the costs of services, and foster sustainable consumption. These qualities are precisely what have made the sharing economy appeal to the Israeli-Palestinian market, as the availability of land and ethnic-divisions has long been a socio-economic obstacle, especially now when the nation is facing a housing shortage.[1] In light of this, my master's research asks the following question: *What role does Airbnb play in Tel Aviv-Yaffo's housing crisis and the West Bank settlement economy?*

Israel has a lot of potential as an important case study for the sharing economy. While many countries face these issues today, Israel is at a critical juncture with its housing market. Not much has changed since the 2011 cost of living protests, especially in Tel Aviv-Yaffo. Almost a decade after the nation-wide demonstrations occurred, a 2021 issue of *The Economist* listed Tel Aviv-Yaffo as the fifth most expensive city in the world in cost of living – "ahead of New York City and Geneva."[2]

As importantly, the housing crisis and gentrification in Israel unfolded within the context of colonization and settlement-building. Not only does the gentrification and the high-cost of living within the Green Line lead Jewish Israeli citizens to opt for living in the settlements, but then some of these settlements become Airbnbs.[3] The sharing economy presents itself as a new

[1] David Horovitz, "A Deeper Political Agenda behind Israel's Soaring Housing Market?," *The Times of Israel*, August 23, 2016, https://www.timesofisrael.com/a-deeper-political-agenda-behind-israels-soaring-housing-market/; Sue Surkes, "Investors Bailing out of New Properties Market," *The Times of Israel*, March 13, 2017, http://www.timesofisrael.com/investors-bailing-out-of-new-properties-market-report/.
[2] Alexandra Vardi, "A Decade After Social Protests, Affordable Housing Remains A Dream For Many," *The Times of Israel*, February 18, 2021, https://www.timesofisrael.com/a-decade-after-social-protests-affordable-housing-remains-a-dream-for-many/.
[3] "The Green Line or the pre-1967 border or 1949 Armistice border, is the demarcation line set out in the 1949 Armistice Agreements between the armies of Israel and those of its neighbors (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria)

way of understanding colonialism, as West Bank settlers list their homes on Airbnb, displace

indigenous Palestinians, and financially profit from their displacement via the sharing platforms.

In turn, settler-run Airbnbs in Palestine have led to the normalization of the Occupation.

According to anthropologist, Rebecca Stein:

> In the last few years, by extension, the Israeli demand for leisure opportunities in Jewish settlements in the Palestinian West Bank has grown markedly. Settler entrepreneurs and families seeking extra income increasingly court both Israeli and international tourists with the promise of serene landscapes, wine tasting, and spacious accommodations at reduced prices. [4]

This phenomenon provides new understandings of land conflicts and displacement found at the

intersections of tourism, colonialism, and gentrification.

The sharing economy has had a real rise in many nations with high tech-sectors, such as

Canada, the United States, and Germany.[5] It is best defined as an economy that uses a range of

"platforms" which link peer-providers to peer-consumers (e.g. Airbnb and WeWork) and allow

people to consume under-utilized resources collaboratively.[6] Technology plays a major role in

this economic model, as the very existence of the shared economy is completely reliant on

sharing-based technology, platforms, communities, creation, sales, purchases, and ownership.

Israel, known in the business and tech world as "the Start-Up Nation", is a potential major player

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after the 1948 Arab–Israeli War. It served as the de facto borders of the State of Israel from 1949 until the Six-Day War in 1967"; Amnon Sella, "Custodians and Redeemers: Israeli Leaders' Perceptions of Peace, 1967-79," *Middle Eastern Studies* 22, no. 2 (1986): 236–51.

[4] Rebecca L. Stein, "#StolenHomes: Israeli Tourism and/as Military Occupation in Historical Perspective," *American Quarterly* 68, no. 3 (2016): 545.

[5] Sarah Cannon and Lawrence H. Summers, "How Uber and the Sharing Economy Can Win Over Regulators," *Harvard Business Review*, October 13, 2014, sec. Technology; Juho Hamari, Mimmi Sjöklint, and Antti Ukkonen, "The Sharing Economy: Why People Participate in Collaborative Consumption," *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology* 67, no. 9 (2016): 2047–59; Mohammad Reza Habibi, Alexander Davidson, and Michel Laroche, "What Managers Should Know about the Sharing Economy," *Business Horizons* 60, no. 1 (January 2017): 113–21; Chris Richter et al., "Digital Entrepreneurship: Innovative Business Models for the Sharing Economy," *Creativity and Innovation Management* 26, no. 3 (2017): 300–310.

[6] Meisam Ranjbari, Gustavo Morales-Alonso, and Ruth Carrasco-Gallego, "Conceptualizing the Sharing Economy through Presenting a Comprehensive Framework," *Sustainability* 10, no. 7 (July 2018): 2336; Sunyoung Cho, ChongWoo Park, and Junghwan Kim, "Leveraging Consumption Intention with Identity Information on Sharing Economy Platforms," *Journal of Computer Information Systems* 59, no. 2 (March 4, 2019): 178–87.

in the sharing economy.[7] My interest in the Israel-Palestine case is in demonstrating the extent to which the sharing economy not only deregulates markets (about which there is a good deal of literature already) but that it may also play a role – even if indirect – in in the complex matrix of land-based or territorial conflicts.

My research explores the impact of the sharing economy's role as an obstacle to affordable housing access for residents in Tel Aviv-Yaffo which while indirect may be used to trace the expansion of settlements in Palestine. More specifically, my thesis demonstrates that Airbnb has led to a rent price increase in Tel Aviv-Yaffo, leading to Netanyahu's government politicizing settlements as affordable housing options, which resulted in an increase in West Bank funding – against the wishes of Israeli citizens living within the Green Line. The aim of my research is to fit Airbnb's deregulation of the housing market and displacement of marginalized neighbourhoods into the wider dynamics and historic trends of Israel-Palestine (i.e. colonization and settlement-building). Existing Israeli literature on Airbnb has adequately explained the ways in which Airbnb's activities have impacted or been a result of deregulation and municipal public policy, but I will be applying the American/Anglo Airbnb literature to consider how these activities unfolds in particular ways within the colonial context. My thesis draws on existing policy-based, scholarly and activist literature to develop my analytical framework.

Thesis Structure

Chapter I is divided into three parts, each devoted to explaining Israel's nation building project via housing and the ways in which it has led to the 2011 housing protests. The first part

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[7] Einat Paz-Frankel, "Israeli Startups Lead Sharing Economy," *NoCamels*, June 1, 2016, http://nocamels.com/2016/06/israeli-startups-lead-sharing-economy/; Moshe Gilad, "In Tel Aviv, Airbnb May Have Revealed Its Darkest Side Yet," *Haaretz*, November 21, 2017, https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium.MAGAZINE-in-tel-aviv-airbnb-may-have-revealed-its-darkest-side-yet-1.5466748; Moath al-Amoudi, "Will New E-Payment Regulations Boost Gaza's Gig Economy?," *Al-Monitor*, August 15, 2018, sec. Editorial, https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/08/gaza-palestine-payment-service-providers-online-freelance.html.

examines how the Israel Land Administration (ILA), an Israeli government authority responsible for managing land in Israel that is in the public domain, created segregated Ashkenazi, Mizrahi and Palestinian communities through the provision of public housing. The second part explains the history of state-funded occupation in the West Bank and the financial incentives for displaced Jewish Israeli citizens to move into these settlements. The third part examines how the housing prices and the cost of living have been increasing at such an alarming rate that Israel, in particular in Tel Aviv-Yaffo, is faced with a housing crisis. The 2011 J14 nation-wide protests focused on these issues, however, marginalized groups within the protests also voiced their concerns around the state-engineered ghettos they have been forced to live in, the gentrification of their neighbourhoods, and the obstacles the state has placed on these groups for buying a new home. Netanyahu's Knesset responded to these cost-of-living demonstrations by creating the demanded welfare state – only outside the Green Line.

Chapter II examines the existing literature on the sharing economy, Airbnb, homeownership, gentrification, transnational gentrification and introduces the analytical framework for the thesis. Building on stage theory, the rent gap model, and existing Israeli studies of sharing platforms, this research is interested in understanding the connection between colonization and gentrification through Airbnb's impact on city-to-settlement migration in Israel-Palestine. Following urban scholars Sigler and Waschmuth, my thesis looks at Airbnb's activities as a part of a transnational gentrification process "that connects leisure-driven migration to spatially distant neighbourhood reinvestment schemes that existing local demand may not have allowed for."[8] While Israeli scholars have fittingly examined the lack of regulations and the housing shortage in Tel Aviv-Yaffo that have allowed for Airbnb to flourish in the city, none

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[8] Thomas Sigler and David Wachsmuth, "Transnational Gentrification: Globalisation and Neighbourhood Change in Panama's Casco Antiguo," *Urban Studies* 53, no. 4 (March 2016): 707.

have identified the relationship between the gentrification in Tel Aviv-Yaffo to the colonization of the West Bank. Thus, I will be applying the American/Anglo Airbnb literature on gentrification and colonization to consider how Airbnb activities unfold in particular ways within the colonial context.

Chapter III provides detail on my data collection strategy, the tables listed in the Appendices, and my data sources. This section is broken up into two parts: the measurements used to calculate the gentrification occurring in Tel Aviv-Yaffo via Airbnb and the measurements used to calculate the colonization of the West Bank via Airbnb.

Chapter IV opens up with a demonstration of the exceptional scope of Airbnb activities in Tel Aviv-Yaffo compared to other major cities. Then, this section goes through existing Israeli literature on Airbnb to examine why Tel Aviv-Yaffo has been impacted by Airbnb more than any other major city in the world and what is driving the Airbnb'ization. The main focus on this section is how Airbnb has impacted the housing market in Tel Aviv-Yaffo. First, the lack or regulations and the profit potentials have created a new class of landlords – the Airbnb entrepreneurs. In Tel Aviv-Yaffo, in particular, the majority of Airbnb hosts have multiple listings on the platform, and some have even turned entire building complexes into illegal hotels. The conversion of residential rental properties into hotels has decreased the housing supply in the city and increased rent prices. The flood of global tourists has shifted the focus of local businesses to the tourists as their new customer base and most of the prices in the area have increased. In particular, Airbnb presents itself as the affordable option for short-term accommodations, so many of the Airbnb listings are in neighbourhoods with cheaper rent; thus, Airbnb disproportionally affects marginalized neighbourhoods populated with mostly Mizrahi Jews, Yemenite Jews, and Palestinian Arabs.

However, the Israel-Palestine is a unique historical context in which the line between gentrification and colonization is often blurred. Many of the neighbourhoods being gentrified in Israeli urban centres are Palestinian neighbourhoods, which is an obstacle for Israeli and Palestinian scholars when seeking to make a distinction between the two processes. However, this thesis will allow the distinction between gentrification and colonization to remain in a grey area to demonstrate that the processes are highly interlinked in the case of Israel-Palestine.[9]

Chapter V demonstrates that some Tel Aviv-Yaffo residents displaced by neoliberal municipal policies and Airbnb's exploitation of their neighbourhoods have increasingly begun moving to the West Bank. Then, this section examines the ways in which Airbnb listings in the West Bank normalize the occupation through tourism and Netanyahu's politicization of West Bank settlements as the surburbs of Israel, rather than a militarized occupation of Palestine.

In light of current social struggles over access to housing and social justice in Israel, the conclusion summarizes the overarching argument and reflects on the impact the pandemic may have on Airbnb's activities in the region.

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[9] However, the gentrification of Palestinian neighbourhoods in Israel is no less a case of colonization than the building of settlements in occupied Palestinian territories.

CHAPTER I: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Part I: Nation-Building via Housing

Government housing programs and policies were important to Israel's goal of defining

itself as a Jewish (yet segregated) homeland. In "Myth of the Benevolent State", Marcuse

examines U.S. national housing policies to demonstrate the mechanisms of the state-citizen

contract as exploitative rather than benevolent.[10] He explains that while nation-states claim to be

benevolent institutions serving their citizens, they use the very basic terms of the social contract

– like housing – to dominate, rather than care for, their citizens.[11] In the case of Israel especially,

housing policies have always been created to support if also manage the various waves of Jewish

immigrants and the existing Palestinian population.

Housing is not only a representation or symbol of the nation. It is equipment, a tool with

which subjects (i.e. citizens) are formed, values are inscribed, and class struggle, in the broadest

sense, is waged.[12] For a newly formed state such as Israel, housing was not simply built to shelter

Jewish immigrants, but a means to claim territory. Housing embodies the nation-state's idea of

what it means to "be at home" as a member of the imagined community of the nation.[13] More

than any other built form, then, housing and the ways in which it is distributed can serve as a tool

for questioning the modern nation-state as a cultural-political institution.

Israel's political and ideological-cultural foundation is Zionism, the Jewish nationalist

movement that supports the re-establishment of a Jewish homeland in the territory deemed as the

historic Land of Israel. Prior to 1948, Zionism was only a reactionary utopia, but after the

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[10] Peter Marcuse, "The Myth of the Benevolent State: Towards a Theory of Housing," *Social Policy* 8, no. 4 (1978): 21–26.
[11] Marcuse.
[12] Paul Rabinow, *Anthropos Today: Reflections on Modern Equipment* (Princeton University Press, 2003); Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Duke University Press, 1999).
[13] Étienne Balibar and Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (Verso Books, 1991).

Holocaust, it gained immense traction as there began mass immigration of Jews to this "safe" state. The interrelation of the national home and the individual house is central to Zionism as ideology and as a regime. In her book "Building a Homeland", architect Yael Allweil explains that, "Israel's housing regime was intended to provide housing for each citizen as a fulfillment of the right of each Jew to the ancestral homeland in which he or she was being 're-rooted'."[14] In this view of things, which has been operative since the 1860s, producing a national home requires the housing of Jewish nationals.[15] This is a condition for their transformation into self-governing members to a legitimate state; however, this has always been at the cost of the Mizrahim and Palestinian Arabic population.[16]

State Engineered Segregation

With the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, the segregation of communities based on ethnic and religious identities was formally regulated, after a war that displaced approximately 700,000 Palestinians who either escaped or were forced to leave from at least 350 villages.[17] Nearly 200,000 Palestinians remained in Israel, however, most lived in the northern peripheries of the state, in the Negev, and Galilee.[18] After 1948, hundreds of thousands of Mizrahi immigrants, primarily from Africa and the Arab world, arrived in Israel, tripling the population of Jewish citizens within a decade.[19]

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[14] Yael Allweil, "Building a Home-Land: Zionism as a Regime of Housing 1860-2005" (UC Berkeley, 2011), 12, https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7c608798.
[15] Allweil, "Building a Home-Land."
[16] Mizrahim are descendants of local Jewish communities in the Muslim countries in Asia and North Africa.
[17] Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 382.
[18] Erez Tzfadia, "Public Housing as Control: Spatial Policy of Settling Immigrants in Israeli Development Towns," *Housing Studies* 21, no. 4 (July 2006): 524.
[19] Aziza Khazzoom, "Did the Israeli State Engineer Segregation? On the Placement of Jewish Immigrants in Development Towns in the 1950s," *Social Forces* 84, no. 1 (September 1, 2005): 116.

By the early 1960s, the state had both ownership and control of 93 percent of all the land that had been occupied in 1948, all of which was supposed to be maintained as public domain.[20] However, as Alexander Kedar noted in his research on the "transformation" of land ownership in the period after the war, the Israel Land Administration (ILA), which is the government agency responsible for managing national landholdings, does not have a single Palestinian representative among its 22 Board members: 12 are from government ministries and 10 are representatives of the Jewish National Fund.[21] This lack of representation in a key government planning organizations is also reflected in how the state provisioned public housing.

Development Towns

The ILA initially constructed Israel so it would not have inner cities, as much as it would outer cities which Israeli scholars today call "development towns."[22] Development towns were created by the ILA to provide permanent housing for the massive wave of holocaust survivors as well as Jewish immigrants primarily from African countries including Yemen, Egypt, and Morocco. According to geographer Oren Yiftachel and many others, the state placed migrant Jews on the peripheries of the country as a way to both occupy these regions and to control Jewish and Palestinian demographics particularly in areas around the 1949 Green Line.[23] Moreover, in the 1950s, the state intended for these development towns to play an economic function by subsidizing and supporting the creation of low-skilled manufacturing industries. The

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[20] Alexandre (Sandy) Kedar, "The Legal Transformation of Ethnic Geography: Israeli Law and the Palestinian Landholder 1948-1967," *New York University Journal of International Law and Politics* 33, no. 4 (2001): 946.
[21] Yoav Mehozay, "The Rule of Difference: How Emergency Powers Prevent Palestinian Assimilation in Israel," *Israel Studies Review* 27, no. 2 (2012): 21.
[22] Khazzoom, "Did the Israeli State Engineer Segregation?"; Tzfadia, "Public Housing as Control"; Oren Yiftachel, "Social Control, Urban Planning and Ethno-Class Relations: Mizrahi Jews in Israel's 'Development Towns,'" *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 24, no. 2 (2000): 418–38; Yossi Yonah and Ishak Saporta, "The Politics of Lands and Housing in Israel: A Wayward Republican Discourse," *Social Identities* 8, no. 1 (March 2002): 91–117.
[23] Khazzoom, "Did the Israeli State Engineer Segregation?"; Yiftachel, "Social Control, Urban Planning and Ethno-Class Relations"; Yonah and Saporta, "The Politics of Lands and Housing in Israel."

kibbutzim model, which was primarily founded by and for Ashkenazi Jews, played a similar function to the development towns.[24]

By the 1970s, Israel faced a major economic recession and much of the country, except for the development towns and kibbutzim, began transitioning into a post-industrial economy.[25] This created mass unemployment for residents in the development towns, which in turn, led to "high levels of poverty and welfare dependency, single motherhood, depression, alcoholism, and school dropout, as well as lower educational and occupational attainment."[26] The kibbutzim and most Ashkenazim, however, did not share the same fate as their Mizrahim counterparts living in the development towns.[27]

Since 85 to 90 percent of development town residents were Mizrahi Jews, an association formed between Mizrahi identity, peripheral locality, and economic deprivation.[28] In some ways, as Oren Yiftachel and Erez Tzfadia described it, these development towns came to resemble many inner cities in the United States: "physically isolated, heavily minority areas characterized by low quality schooling and dominated by secondary labour markets."[29] Consequently, when the mass of Mizrahim in development towns lost their jobs after the 1970 economic recession, they emerged as an economic and social underclass. There also emerged a suburbanization of

[24] Uriel Leviatan, "Ethnic Differences in Attitudes Toward the Kibbutz," *Israel Social Science Research* 6, no. 2 (1988): 23–52; Oren Yiftachel, "Nation-building and the Division of Space: Ashkenazi Domination in the Israeli 'Ethnocracy,'" *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 4, no. 3 (September 1998): 33–58; Yuval Achouch and Yoann Morvan, "The Kibbutz and 'Development Towns' in Israel: Zionist Utopias: Ideals Ensnared in a Tormented History," *Justice Spatiale-Spatial Justice* 5 (December 2012): 25; Moti Gigi, "Relations between Development Towns and Kibbutzim," *Israel Studies Review* 33, no. 3 (December 1, 2018): 121–39; Seymour Spilerman and Jack Habib, "Development Towns in Israel: The Role of Community in Creating Ethnic Disparities in Labour Force Characteristics," *American Journal of Sociology* 81, no. 4 (1976): 781–812.
[25] Khazzoom, "Did the Israeli State Engineer Segregation?" 116.
[26] Aziza Khazzoom, "Did the Israeli State Engineer Segregation," 116.
[27] Achouch and Morvan, "The Kibbutz and "Development Towns" in Israel: Zionist Utopias: Ideals Ensnared in a Tormented History."
[28] Oren Yiftachel and Erez Tzfadia, "Between Periphery and 'Third Space': Identity of Mizrahim in Israel's Development Towns," in *Israelis in Conflict: Hegemonies, Identities and Challenges* (Sussex Academic Press, 2004), 208.
[29] Yiftachel, "Social Control, Urban Planning and Ethno-Class Relations."

low-skilled jobs and lack of services, all of which occurred within this larger dynamic of Israel.[30]

The final result of such state building of these towns and placing immigrants in them was an

overrepresentation of Mizrahi Jews in state-created ghettos.

The Israeli land and housing regime contributed to the low stratification of Mizrahim in

development towns and bound them to the towns. Even when Mizrahi landlords sought to sell

their apartments in order to leave the towns, they found that property values were insufficient for

them to move elsewhere in Israel.[31] Moreover, the interaction between ethnicity and human

capital was such that even so-called 'high-status' Mizrahim immigrants were as likely to be sent

to the towns as low-status Ashkenazim.[32]

As previously mentioned, these development towns played a major role in the removal of

indigenous Palestinians off the land altogether and into peripheral regions where the state can

gain easy control of them.[33] As almost all Palestinian properties were subsequently nationalized

by the state of Israel as mandated by the 1950 Absentees Property Law, most of the remaining

Palestinian families lost the private property titles to their land and houses and became renters of

public housing.[34] Housing conditions among the poorest Palestinian population in Jaffa

deteriorated further over the following decades, as they were dependent on public housing

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[30] Khazzoom, "Did the Israeli State Engineer Segregation?" 116.

[31] Yonah and Saporta, "The Politics of Lands and Housing in Israel," 97.

[32] Ashkenazim are descendants of local Jewish communities in the dominantly Christian countries in Europe; Tzfadia, "Public Housing as Control," 527.

[33] Gershon Shafir, *Land, Labour and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882-1914* (Berkeley, California, United States: University of California Press, 1996).

[34] Defines persons who were expelled, fled or who left the country after 29 November 1947, mainly due to the war, as well as their movable and immovable property (mainly land, houses and bank accounts etc.), as "absentee". Lyle Plocher, "Foreigner's Guide to Property Market: Who Owns the Land?," *The Jerusalem Post*, July 31, 2011, https://www.jpost.com/business/real-estate/foreigners-guide-to-property-market-who-owns-the-land; Chaim Weizmann, "Absentees' Property Law," 5710 § (1950), https://www.knesset.gov.il/review/data/eng/law/kns1_property_eng.pdf; Sebastian Schipper, "Social Movements in an Era of Post-Democracy: How the Israeli J14 Tent Protests of 2011 Challenged Neoliberal Hegemony through the Production of Place," *Social & Cultural Geography* 18, no. 6 (August 18, 2017): 808–30.

programmes managed by often hostile Israeli state agencies.[35] Consequently, many development towns were built on abandoned Palestinian towns and villages or expropriated Palestinian lands.[36] Construction, allocation and management of housing were rolled out by the State of Israel to serve national goals of spatial and social control, for the benefit of its dominant group.[37]

Since the 1960s, the Israeli state has had control over 93 percent of the land which can be divided into three categories: all the land that was subject to the British Mandate (69%), all the land that was confiscated in accordance with the Absentee Land Law and the Land Purchase Law (12%), and all the land owned by the National Jewish Fund (12%).[38] The majority of this land is only made available to Israeli citizens or Jewish non-residents through long-term leases of 49 to 98 years. The remaining 7 percent of Israeli land that was not under government control was supposed to be equally divided between Jews and Palestinians; therefore, this meant that approximately 20 percent of Israel's Palestinian population has access to only 3.5 percent of the land.[39]

There have been no new Palestinian towns developed since 1948 and although in principle, Palestinians can buy homes anywhere in Israel, in practice, they face major social and institutional obstacles that prevent them from acquiring land.[40] Palestinians have fought against housing discrimination practices in the Israeli High Court of Justice, winning both Ahadal Qaadan v. ILA and Zbidaht v. ILA, that ruled sellers could no longer discriminate against disqualifying prospective Palestinian buyers for lack of suitable characteristics. However, these

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[35] Schipper, "Social Movements in an Era of Post-Democracy: How the Israeli J14 Tent Protests of 2011 Challenged Neoliberal Hegemony through the Production of Place," 820.
[36] Geremy Forman and Alexandre (Sandy) Kedar, "From Arab Land to 'Israel Lands': The Legal Dispossession of the Palestinians Displaced by Israel in the Wake of 1948," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 22, no. 6 (December 1, 2004): 809–30.
[37] Tzfadia, "Public Housing as Control," 528.
[38] Plocher, "Foreigner's Guide to Property Market."
[39] Kedar, "The Legal Transformation of Ethnic Geography," 946.
[40] Mehozay, "The Rule of Difference," 21.

verdicts have had little impact on land allocation and the Knesset enacted a bill in 2011 that allows settler communities to exclude prospective buyers if they do not fit the "community profile."[41]

Part II: Subsidizing the Occupation

With the 1967 Six-Day War, Israel occupied the remainder of the Mandate Palestine with territories in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip from Egypt (see fig. 1).[42]
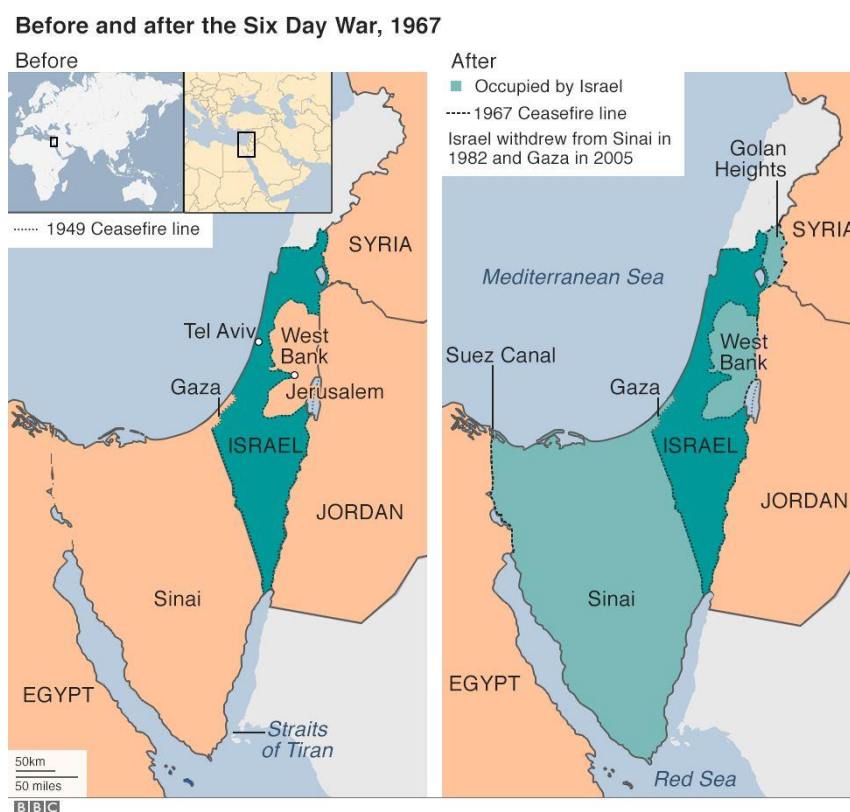
Figure 1. Map of Israel-Palestine-Egypt Before and After the Six-Day War (1967). Created by Jeremy Bowen. From BBC News Services. https://ichef.bbci.co.uk/news/976/cpsprodpb/655E/production/_96305952_israel-before-after-v18.png.

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[41] Read more about it at *Ahadal Qaadan v. Israel Land Administration, HC 6698/95, 54(1) PD 258 (8 March 2000)*; Read more about it at *Zbidaht v. Israel Land Administration, HC 8036/07 (13 September 2011)*; Ilan Saban, "הזכויות הקיבוציות של המיעוט הערבי-פלסטיני :היש, האין ותחום הטאבו [The Minority Rights of The Palestinian-Arabs In Israel: What Is, What Isn't and What Is Taboo]," *Tel Aviv University Law Review* 26 (2002): 292.

[42] Bowen Bowen, *Map of Israel-Palestine-Egypt Before and After the Six Day War (1967)*, 50 km (Israel-Palestine-Egypt: BBC News, 1967), https://ichef.bbci.co.uk/news/976/cpsprodpb/655E/production/_96305952_israel-before-after-v18.png.

Levi Eshkol's Labour government pushed for settlement-building in these territories under the guise of national security and the historical claims arising from the location of Jewish settlements and communities that existed before 1948.[43] The Allon Plan, led by Ministerial Committee on the Settlements' Yigal Allon, became the foundation for Israeli settlement-building.[44] As the justification for these settlements was mainly on the grounds of national security, many of them started as military bases outside areas still inhabited by Palestinians.[45] The remaining settlements were established under the pretenses of being work camps and archaeological excavations.[46] In 1977, Menachem Begin, the founder of Likud, came into power with settlement expansion as a priority. The Likud government planned to settle two million Jews in the West Bank alone by 2000.[47]

The state of Israel introduced neoliberal measures in the 1980s in response to the prolonged Israeli economic crisis of the 1970s which were characterized by stagflation that came to a peak in the wake of the 1983 bank crisis.[48] The newly-formed national unity government, headed by Shimon Peres, set out to solve the crisis by a forceful intervention to restructure political-economic relations in the country.[49] The result of these efforts was the so-called Economic Stabilization Plan in 1985, which introduced "the greatly reduced government

[43] Shlomo Gazit, *Trapped Fools: Thirty Years of Israeli Policy in the Territories* (Psychology Press, 2003), 241.

[44] Karen Tenenbaum and Ehud Eiran, "Israeli Settlement Activity in the West Bank and Gaza: A Brief History," *Negotiation Journal* 21, no. 2 (April 2005): 172.

[45] Tenenbaum and Eiran, "Israeli Settlement Activity in the West Bank and Gaza," 172.

[46] Gazit, *Trapped Fools,* 249.

[47] Menahem Begin, "Government Statement on Recognition of Three Settlements," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 26, 1977, https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/mfadocuments/yearbook3/pages/23%20government%20statement%20on%20re cognition%20of%20three%20se.aspx; Robin Leonard Bidwell, *Dictionary of Modern Arab History: An A to Z of Over 2,000 Entries from 1798 to the Present Day* (New York City, NY: Routledge, 1998), 442.

[48] Jonathan Nitzan and Shimshon Bichler, *The Global Political Economy of Israel: From War Profits to Peace Dividends* (London, UK: Pluto Press, 2002).

[49] Yonca Özdemir, "Is 'Consensus' Necessary for Inflation Stabilization? A Comparison of Israel and Turkey," *Middle Eastern Studies* 49, no. 1 (January 1, 2013): 47–62.

subsidies, devaluation of the currency, restrictions on wage growth, opening the economy to foreign capital, and privatization."[50] Similar to developments in other states, the neoliberal turn entailed cuts in welfare programs, a wave of privatization, and an emphasis on the individual taking responsibility for their socio-economic situations.[51] Unlike elsewhere, however, the Israeli government retained pockets of the welfare state for Israeli citizens – living in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Historian Gadi Algazi notes that "accelerated privatization went hand in hand with a colonial project heavily subsidized by the same state that shrank from public investment in social services within its pre-1967 borders."[52] In this regard, sociologist Daniel Gutwein talks about settlements as the "compensatory mechanism" for the struggling Israeli Jewish middle class.[53] While the Israeli state was involved in supporting the settlements from the very beginning through providing security and other basic means, the neoliberal era had brought the Israeli governments to dedicate substantial financial support for the Israeli settlements in the West Bank.

These incentives were and continue to be as considerable as they are diverse. The Israeli state covered a significant part of building costs, charged building companies a much lesser

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[50] Adam Hanieh, "From State-Led Growth to Globalization: The Evolution of Israeli Capitalism," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 32, no. 4 (July 1, 2003): 12.

[51] David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford University Press, 2007); Itzhak Galnoor, *Public Management in Israel: Development, Structure, Functions and Reforms* (Routledge, 2010).

[52] Gadi Algazi, "Matrix in Bil'in: Colonial Capitalism in the Occupied Territories," in *The Power of Inclusive Exclusion : Anatomy of Israeli Rule in the Occupied Palestinian Territories*, ed. Michal Givoni, Adi Ophir, and Sari Hanafi (New York City, NY: Zone Books, 2009), 520.

[53] Danny Gutwein, "The Settlements and the Relationship between Privatization and the Occupation," in *Normalizing Occupation*, ed. Marco Allegra, Ariel Handel, and Erez Maggor, The Politics of Everyday Life in the West Bank Settlements (Indiana University Press, 2017), 21–33.

percentage of the value of the land, and provided settlers with access to government-subsidized

mortgages.[54] Overall, sociologist Swirski has reported that between 1967 and 2003:

> … government surplus funding of the settlements – that is, the funds allocated above and
> beyond what the government would have invested were the settlements erected on the
> Israeli side of the Green Line – came to NIS 45 billion.[55]

All these benefits result in significantly cheaper housing in the West Bank vis-a-vis Israeli state

funding, with the average cost of an apartment in a settlement as low as half compared with

prices in Tel Aviv-Yaffo.[56]

It was this process of "urban sprawl" that was politically utilized by the Likud

government in the 1980s by pushing the population into the Occupied Territories through the

incentives as previously mentioned.[57] By subsidizing the prices of land, providing cheap loans

and allocating significant budget to local municipalities in the settlements, the state succeeded in

motivating a large number of Israelis to move to the West Bank, a significant portion of whom

would otherwise not consider it.[58] This strategy has remained essentially a constant repertoire of

Israeli governments since then.

What is particular about the suburbanization in Israel-Palestine is what geographer

Shalom Reichman called "the line of price discontinuity."[59] Usually, the prices of land and

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[54] Shlomo Swirski, "The Burden of Occupation The Cost of the Occupation to Israeli Society, Polity and Economy" (Tel Aviv: The Avda Center, 2008), http://adva.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Costof-Occupation-Nov2008-1.pdf; Eyal Hareuveni, "By Hook and by Crook: Israeli Settlement Policy in the West Bank" (Jerusalem, Israel: B'Tselem, July 2010), . https://www.btselem.org/download/201007_by_hook_and_by_crook_eng.pdf.

[55] Swirski, "The Burden of Occupation the Cost of the Occupation to Israeli Society, Polity and Economy," 53.

[56] Annie Slemrod, "The Economics at the Heart of Israeli Settlements," *The New Humanitarian*, January 5, 2015, https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/analysis/2015/01/05/economics-heart-israeli-settlements.

[57] Shafir, *Land, Labour and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882-1914,* 173.

[58] Marco Allegra, "The Politics of Suburbia: Israel's Settlement Policy and the Production of Space in the Metropolitan Area of Jerusalem," *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 45, no. 3 (2013): 497–516; David Newman, "The Territorial Politics of Exurbanization: Reflections on 25 Years of Jewish Settlement in the West Bank," *Israel Affairs* 3, no. 1 (September 1996): 61–85.

[59] Shalom Reichman, "Barriers and Strategic Planning - A Tentative Research Formulation," *NETCOM: Networks and Communication Studies* 4, no. 1 (1990): 51–60; David Newman, "Settlement as Suburbanization: The Banality of Colonization," in *Normalizing Occupation*, ed. Marco Allegra, Ariel Handel, and Erez Maggor, The Politics of Everyday Life in the West Bank Settlements (Indiana University Press, 2017), 40-41.

houses decline linearly with distance from the metropolitan area, but in the case of Israel-Palestine, "the crossing of the old Green Line boundary causes a sudden discontinuity in the land market, characterized by an extremely sharp (rather than gradual) fall in land prices" because of the contested status of Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories.[60] Thus, when combined with governmental subsidies, moving to settlements makes even more sense.

Moreover, the relocation to the West Bank was significantly facilitated by the settlements' proximity to the Green Line. As noted by geographer David Newman, unlike in other colonial contexts in which colonists would have to move overseas, in case of Israel/Palestine "the territory in question was physically adjacent to the mother country, requiring families to move no more than a few kilometers from their previous homes."[61] This means that settlers can move to new, more affordable communities without undergoing inconveniences like looking for new jobs or disruptions of existing social relations.[62] Because of that, the state also did not have to spend resources for creating job opportunities in the area in order to attract new settlers.[63] In this regard, Newman talks about settlements' "double centrality" which stands for "central location with the economic benefits of the periphery."[64]

Part III: Tel Aviv-Yaffo and the Nation-wide Housing Crisis

Tel Aviv-Yaffo

Tel Aviv-Yaffo is Israel's second-largest city, and a cosmopolitan, cultural and financial global city. It is also one of a few wealthy cities that is not financially supported by the Ministry

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[60] Newman, "The Territorial Politics of Exurbanization," 65.
[61] David Newman, "Colonization as Suburbanization," in *City of Collision: Jerusalem and the Principles of Conflict Urbanism*, ed. Philipp Misselwitz et al. (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2006), 113–14.
[62] Newman, "The Territorial Politics of Exurbanization," 64.
[63] Newman, 64; Newman, "Colonization as Suburbanization," 115.
[64] Newman, "Colonization as Suburbanization," 116.

of the Interior.[65] Based on these material conditions, municipal political elites "maintained an inclusive self-governing attitude, attempting to run the city's municipal and financial affairs independent of the central government," and have constructed an image of Tel Aviv-Yaffo as separate from the national state apparatus.[66] As a result, Tel Aviv-Yaffo "remains the most independent municipality in Israel" with a robust political body that has established progressive municipal policies: for instance, in the fields of labour migration, LGBT rights, education, and health.[67]

According to urban historian Talia Margalit, Tel Aviv-Yaffo's long history of entrepreneurial urban development strategies is reflected in flexible planning regulations like spot-zoning, public-private development ventures, luxurious building projects, and large-scale privatizations of fixed public assets and landed properties.[68] Urban geographer Sebastian Schipper explains:

> As municipal finances are heavily dependent on the appropriation of ground rent, local planning practices are predominantly shaped by profit-maximizing considerations that direct most planning activities towards the luxury market.[69]

As a consequence, lucrative real estate developments such as high-rise residential towers have dominated the flow of capital into the built environment since the 1990s, not only because they produce the most private profits, but also because they contribute "to the city coffers along with the national budget, whether directly through the privatization process or through high taxation

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[65] Nurit Alfasi and Tovi Fenster, "Between the 'Global' and the 'Local': On Global Locality and Local Globality," *Urban Geography* 30, no. 5 (July 2009): 543–66.
[66] Nurit Alfasi and Tovi Fenster, "A Tale of Two Cities: Jerusalem and Tel Aviv in an Age of Globalization," *Cities* 22, no. 5 (October 2005): 352.
[67] Alfasi and Fenster, 358.
[68] Talia Margalit, "Public Assets vs. Public Interest: Fifty Years of High-Rise Building in Tel Aviv-Jaffa," *Geography Research Forum* 29 (2009): 48–82; Talia Margalit, "Land, Politics and High-Rise Planning: Ongoing Development Practices in Tel Aviv–Yafo," *Planning Perspectives* 28, no. 3 (July 2013): 373–97.
[69] Sebastian Schipper, "Urban Social Movements and the Struggle for Affordable Housing in the Globalizing City of Tel Aviv-Jaffa," *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 47, no. 3 (March 1, 2015): 526, https://doi.org/10.1068/a140249p.

for the extra building permits."[70] As such, Margalit concludes that the general acceptance of

neoliberal planning strategies among local political elites is based on a hegemonic order

established over decades that "equates public interests with increased public financial resources,

while ignoring questions of social justice and sacrificing public and environmental assets."[71] The

fact that almost no public housing construction has occurred in Tel Aviv-Yaffo since 1993

perhaps best illustrates the entrenched neglect of the housing needs of the urban poor.[72]

All these policies and trend led to a boom in the real estate market and a significant rise

in housing prices in the city that went up to an 11% price increase per year.[73] While the housing

market in Israel is generally dominated by homeownership, the situation in Tel Aviv-Yaffo is

different: where a slight majority of 46.4% (in relation to 45.6% homeowners) rent their

apartment—often because homeownership has become out of reach even for young middle-class

households.[74] Households are exposed to sharp price hikes and high insecurity of tenure, as the

rental market in Israel is one of the most liberalized markets in the developed world.[75] Indeed,

"the state does not intervene at all in the terms of the rental contract, the level of rent, or the

frequency that it is raised."[76] Between 2008 and 2013, average rents in Tel Aviv-Yaffo

increased, according to the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), by 61% to NIS 5117—which

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[70] Margalit, "Public Assets vs. Public Interest," 72.
[71] Margalit, "Public Assets vs. Public Interest."
[72] Alfasi and Fenster, "A Tale of Two Cities," 359.
[73] Arik Mirovsky, "Price of Four-Room Flats in Tel Aviv Jumped 11% Last Year, Gov't Appraiser Finds," *Haaretz*, May 13, 2013, sec. Business, https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/business/.premium-price-of-four-room-flats-in-tel-aviv-jumped-11-last-year-gov-t-appraiser-finds-1.5242671.
[74] "Household Expenditure Survey 2012," Housing (Givat Shaul, Jerusalem: Central Bureau of Statistics, January 28, 2015), https://www.cbs.gov.il/en/publications/Pages/2015/Housing-In-Israel-Data-from-the-Household-Expenditure-Survey-1997-2012.aspx.
[75] Schipper, "Urban Social Movements and the Struggle for Affordable Housing in the Globalizing City of Tel Aviv-Jaffa."
[76] Gil Gan-Mor, "Real Estate or Rights: Housing Rights and Government Policy in Israel," Report on the Right to Housing (Tel Aviv, Israel: The Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ARCI), July 2008), 3, https://law.acri.org.il/pdf/DiurEng.pdf.

represents 56% of the average gross monthly wage in Israel.[77] As a result, not only low-income households but even "middle-class families, young professionals and students are increasingly finding housing in the city unaffordable" or are threatened by displacement.[78] Due to a severe housing crisis and the fact that the national government remains very reluctant to seriously intervene in housing markets in a non-neoliberal manner that restricts the commodity character of housing. Airbnb has been able to come in and exploit the housing shortage, lack of housing regulations, and precarious residents.

The 2011 Housing Protests

Issues of segregation are more exaggerated and complex given Israel's ongoing struggle with its shortage of land, and more recently, a major housing crisis. For those living on the margins, a housing crisis can mean further exacerbation of poor living conditions as more families begin to cram into smaller apartments, or even become homeless.

In 2011, Israel experienced its largest nation-wide protest to date. These demonstrations were given many different names by the Israeli media; however, the most common ones were "The Social Protest", "Housing Protest", and the "J14 Movement." Given this is in a country accustomed to the unrivalled ascendancy of security and geopolitics, mass protests under the banner of "the people demand social justice", although for just a moment, was significant.[79] These mass demonstrations were a part of the popular protest movements that had swept the world protesting the high cost of living and neoliberal hegemony (i.e. the Occupy movements).[80]

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[77] NIS 5,117 is worth CAD 1,918.48 (converted on March 15, 2021); Nimrod Bousso, "Housing Prices in Israel Are Climbing Faster than Wages," *Haaretz*, September 22, 2013, sec. Business, https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/business/.premium-israel-housing-prices-rising-faster-than-wages-1.5338412.
[78] Nathan Marom, "'Affordable Housing' and the Globalizing City: The Case of Tel Aviv," in *The Struggle to Belong: Dealing with Diversity in 21st Century Urban Settings*, Housing Markets, Urban Transformations (International RC21 Conference, Amsterdam, 2011), 11.
[79] Igal Charney, "A 'Supertanker' Against Bureaucracy in the Wake of a Housing Crisis: Neoliberalizing Planning in Netanyahu's Israel," *Antipode* 49, no. 5 (2017): 1223.
[80] Charney, "A 'Supertanker' Against Bureaucracy in the Wake of a Housing Crisis," 1223.

While Israel was one of the most equitable Western societies in terms of income and wealth amongst its Jewish population, with the coming of neoliberalism, it has become one of the most socioeconomically polarised societies in the world.[81] The rising cost of housing turned income erosion and socio-economic polarisation into aggravated problems, as both inflation-adjusted housing prices and rents rose by about 50% during the years before the protest.[82] The movement began with young Ashkenazim but quickly expanded to include more deprived social groups, such as Arab-Palestinian citizens, migrant workers, and the Mizrahi Jewish lower classes.[83]

Mizrahi citizens are more dependent on public housing than their Ashkenazi counterparts, due to the historically rooted ethno-class division of Israeli society and the way in which the state had allocated housing to Mizrahim. When some of these neighbourhoods became obstacles to urban gentrification, Mizrahim were forced, against their will and despite violent demonstrations, to move to other "modern" poor neighbourhoods.[84] The pattern is clear and systematic. Mizrahi areas were forcibly vacated and immediately became the object of major investments leading to Ashkenazi gentrification, all while the newly adopted Mizrahi neighbourhoods became defunded slums.[85] For this reason, Levinsky Park in Tel Aviv became one of the main bases for the J14 movement as it was located close to the two most neglected Mizrahi ghettos in the area that best represented multiple forms of oppression and exclusion.[86] The park was once a Mizrahi working-class housing area and in less than 5 years had become a temporary living space for the

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[81] Jonathan Nitzan and Shimshon Bichler, *The Global Political Economy of Israel: From War Profits to Peace Dividends* (London, UK: Pluto Press, 2002), 351.
[82] Schipper, "Social Movements in an Era of Post-Democracy," 814.
[83] Schipper.
[84] Ella Shohat, "The Narrative of the Nation and the Discourse of Modernization: The Case of the Mizrahim," *Critique: Journal for Critical Middle Eastern Studies of the Middle East* 6, no. 10 (March 1997): 13.
[85] Shohat, "The Narrative of the Nation and the Discourse of Modernization," 13; Nathan Marom, "Activising Space: The Spatial Politics of the 2011 Protest Movement in Israel," *Urban Studies* 50, no. 13 (October 1, 2013): 2831.
[86] Schipper, "Social Movements in an Era of Post-Democracy," 821.

homeless, substance abusers, migrant workers, and Eritrean and Sudanese refugees.[87] This area

was the perfect visual representation of both the housing crisis's impact and the state's neglect of

the Mizrahi communities. Mizrahi neighbourhoods are currently led down two paths: either

gentrification or such severe neglect by the state that they become uninhabitable.

Palestinian citizens in Israel, on the other hand, had a very different relationship with

public housing and the housing crisis in comparison to both Ashkenazi and Mizrahi Jewish

citizens. In the 1970s, when the availability of public housing decreased dramatically, the state

began using modernist urban planning practices of slum clearing, failed urban renewal strategies,

systematic disinvestment, often resulting in the demolition of many Palestinian

neighbourhoods.[88] Since the mid-1980s, a radical shift towards neoliberal planning and urban

redevelopment policies occurred, which resulted in the rehabilitation of neglected public

infrastructures and the privatization of public housing and luxurious waterfront developments

along the Mediterranean shoreline.[89] Many Palestinian residents interpreted the steady rent

increases and gentrification processes that ensued as a further 'Judaization' of Jaffa, as their

families were forced to squat in "empty public houses designated to be sold to private

developers."[90] In 2007, the ILA issued almost 500 eviction orders to families charged with the

illegal construction of extensions to their overcrowded public housing apartments.[91] As of 2013,

800 Jaffa families of an Arab-Palestinian community of about 18,000 people faced eviction

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[87] Erez Tzfadia and Haim Yacobi, *Rethinking Israeli Space: Periphery and Identity* (London, UK: Routledge, 2011), 54.

[88] Arnon Golan, "War and Postwar Transformation of Urban Areas: The 1948 War and the Incorporation of Jaffa into Tel Aviv," *Journal of Urban History* 35, no. 7 (November 1, 2009).

[89] Schipper, "Social Movements in an Era of Post-Democracy," 820.

[90] Daniel Monterescu, "Inner Space and High Ceilings: Agents and Ideologies of Ethnogentrification," in *Jaffa Shared and Shattered: Contrived Coexistence in Israel/Palestine* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2015), 135; Marom, "Activising Space," 2831.

[91] Monterescu, "Inner Space and High Ceilings," 173.

orders from public housing agencies.[92] Thus, throughout the three months of a nationwide

protest, Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel were usually reluctant to join, as they were faced with

housing hardships for substantially different reasons that were deeply rooted in institutional and

political discrimination on national grounds different than in the case of the Jewish majority.[93]

However, many Palestinians concluded that:

> … the J14 protests offered a unique opportunity to integrate the decades-long local struggle for the right to housing and against displacement from Jaffa into a broader mass movement also focused on housing issues.[94]

Thus, this movement initiated a nationwide, multi-ethnic public housing movement struggling

against evictions, privatizations, and the demolition of public housing apartments.

Anthropologist Callie Maidhof points out that the majority of J14 participants protested

the state's budgetary considerations and what was considered by many to be the provision of a

welfare state for settlers and religious Jews at the expense of secular Israelis.[95] To be clear, these

protests were not against the immorality of settlement-building or of living in a settlement, but

about the disproportionate level of funding and secular citizens' tax dollars required to keep

these settlements in place at the cost of offering rent support to those living within the Green

Line.[96] Interviewing many of the settlers, Maidhof explains that many of these settlers had

moved into these settlements when they could no longer afford to live within the Green Line and

felt themselves a part of the rent price hike protests.[97]

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[92] Yael Allweil, "Surprising Alliances for Dwelling and Citizenship: Palestinian-Israeli Participation in the Mass Housing Protests of Summer 2011," *International Journal of Islamic Architecture* 2, no. 1 (March 1, 2013): 52.
[93] Allweil.
[94] Sebastian Schipper, "Social Movements in an Era of Post-Democracy: How the Israeli J14 Tent Protests of 2011 Challenged Neoliberal Hegemony through the Production of Place," *Social & Cultural Geography* 18, no. 6 (August 18, 2017): 823.
[95] Callie Maidhof, "Society against Politics: Exclusions from Israel's #J14 Movement," *Contention* 4, no. 1–2 (June 2016): 21.
[96] Maidhof.
[97] Maidhof.

Netanyahu's Affordable Housing Solution

After the J14 mass protests, Netanyahu's government came out with their "Supertanker" policy.[98] Named after the aerial firefighting airplane that was deployed to extinguish the biggest forest fire in Israel's history, the policy was aimed at subordinating the housing planning authority to market calculus and inflating the housing supply through outpost authorization.[99] The Israeli government approved the legalization of three settlements (Sansana, Bruchin, Rechelim) which meant the establishment of new Israeli settlements for the first time since 1990.[100]

In November 2012, the United Nations upgraded Palestine to non-member Observer State status in the United Nations Assembly.[101] Following the UN decision to accept a Palestinian state alongside Israel, Netanyahu approved eleven thousand housing units in Jerusalem and West Bank.[102] According to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), from 2010 to 2012, investment in settlements grew by at least 17%.[103] Sociologist Shlomo Swirski found that on top of that, in 2012 alone, the government invested more per capita in settlements than within Israel, mainly for education and welfare services.[104] Thus, while Israeli citizens living inside the Green

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[98] Nir Mualam, "Playing with Supertankers: Centralization in Land Use Planning in Israel — A National Experiment Underway," *Land Use Policy* 75 (June 1, 2018): 269–83; Charney, "A 'Supertanker' Against Bureaucracy in the Wake of a Housing Crisis"; Sharon Eshel and Ravit Hananel, "Centralization, Neoliberalism, and Housing Policy Central–Local Government Relations and Residential Development in Israel," *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space* 37, no. 2 (March 2019): 237–55.

[99] Charney, "A 'Supertanker' Against Bureaucracy in the Wake of a Housing Crisis."

[100] "For the First Time Since 1990 – the Government Is to Approve the Establishment of New Settlements" (Tel Aviv, Israel: Peace Now, Settlement Watch, April 19, 2012), https://web.archive.org/web/20131011050653/http://peacenow.org.il/eng/rechelim-bruchin-sansana.

[101] "United Nations General Assembly Resolution 67/19" (New York City, NY: United Nations, November 29, 2012), https://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/19862D03C564FA2C85257ACB004EE69B.

[102] "11 Thousand Units in One Week - The Government's Settlement Offensive" (Tel Aviv, Israel: Peace Now, Settlement Watch, October 11, 2013), https://web.archive.org/web/20131011050538/http://peacenow.org.il/eng/E1_3000_units.

[103] "Settlements & the Netanyahu Government: A Deliberate Policy of Undermining the Two-State Solution" (Tel Aviv, Israel: Peace Now, Settlement Watch, 2012), https://peacenow.org/images/Summary%20of%20the%204%20years%20of%20Netanyahu%20Government.pdf.

[104] Shlomo Swirski and Etty Konor-Attias, "Inequality in Central Government Transfers to Municipalities, 1991-2012" (Tel Aviv, Israel: Adva Center, September 8, 2014), https://adva.org/post-slug-1816/.

Line were demanding the return of the welfare state, Netanyahu diverted all that funding to settlers living in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

The Israeli state's housing project was more of an ideological project that sought to materialize the once reactionary utopian Zionist discourse than it was a welfare-state housing program. The establishment of the state of Israel created racial segregation through public housing provisions, but which have resulted in stark socio-economic divisions between Ashkenazi, Mizrahi and Palestinian communities seen even in Tel Aviv-Yaffo today. The state-engineered segregation, economic recession of the 1970s, defunding of public housing, and funding diverted to occupying the West Bank led to the 2011 J14 housing protests. Instead of subsidizing rent or the cost-of-living in Tel Aviv-Yaffo, Netanyahu increased settlement-building in the West Bank through a "Supertanker policy" that subordinated the housing authority to a neoliberal market logic and set out a political campaign to frame West Bank settlements as an affordable housing option. While the gentrification of Tel Aviv-Yaffo and the colonization of the West Bank have been existing trends, Airbnb has accelerated some processes, largely indirectly, by introducing new capital flow via peer-to-peer networks. As part of a matrix of housing policy, transnational capital movements, Israel's neoliberal economic policy, and political ideologies, Airbnb can be seen to be playing some part in practices that displace marginalized groups in Tel Aviv-Yaffo, exacerbate affordable housing shortages, and may even have led to some secular Tel Aviv citizens to move into the West Bank settlements.[105]

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[105] "יוצאים מת"א-יפו ליישובים אחרים, לפי יישוב יעד ואזור מוצא [Leaving T.A.-Yafo to Other Locality and Zone of Origin 2018 to 2014 - Table 3.47]," Population Report (Tel Aviv, Israel: Tel Aviv-Yaffo Municipality, 2020).

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Sharing Economy

The sharing economy has captured the Israeli-Palestinian market and has played some role in accelerating existing historical trends (i.e., gentrification, colonization, and precarious employment) to unprecedented levels. Israel-Palestine has the perfect conditions for such an economy to flourish: a leading global tech sector, housing shortage, a growing precarious job market, and all in a very small country. Sharing platforms have framed collaborative consumption to be the solution to market shortages and precarity. This thesis, however, demonstrates otherwise.

Driven by technological, economic, and environmental considerations, people increasingly organize the collaborative consumption of goods and services over the internet.[106] Cohen and Kietzmann describe the sharing economy as a system in which people share 'underutilized' resources through peer-to-peer networks.[107] This includes "peer-to-peer-based activities of obtaining, giving, or sharing the access to goods and services, coordinated through community-based online services."[108] The sharing economy has changed our perceived value of ownership. Consumers can now enjoy goods and services only when they are required or desired without obtaining ownership and the involved obligations.[109]

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[106] Russell Belk, "You Are What You Can Access: Sharing and Collaborative Consumption Online," *Journal of Business Research* 67, no. 8 (August 2014): 1595–1600; Jeroen Oskam and Albert Boswijk, "Airbnb: The Future of Networked Hospitality Businesses," *Journal of Tourism Futures* 2, no. 1 (January 1, 2016): 22–42; Barbara Hartl, Eva Hofmann, and Erich Kirchler, "Do We Need Rules for 'What's Mine Is Yours'? Governance in Collaborative Consumption Communities," *Journal of Business Research* 69, no. 8 (2016): 2756–63; Mareike Möhlmann, "Collaborative Consumption: Determinants of Satisfaction and the Likelihood of Using a Sharing Economy Option Again," *Journal of Consumer Behaviour* 14, no. 3 (2015): 193–207; Boyd Cohen and Jan Kietzmann, "Ride On! Mobility Business Models for the Sharing Economy," *Organization & Environment* 27, no. 3 (2014): 279–96; Hamari, Sjöklint, and Ukkonen, "The Sharing Economy."

[107] Cohen and Kietzmann, "Ride On! Mobility Business Models for the Sharing Economy."

[108] Hamari, Sjöklint, and Ukkonen, "The Sharing Economy," 2047.

[109] Belk, "You Are What You Can Access."

The sharing economy features a paradoxical neoliberal dichotomy: community optimism and commercial extractivism.[110] The platform advertises itself as bringing the community together through positive values of "sharing" and "sustainability", while exploiting reproductive forms of labour for the creation of value, neglecting non-market transactions, and ignoring community activities beyond "the market" as viable and sustainable forms of economy.[111] More accurately, the sharing economy is a product of neoliberalism in that it is a platform that pushes for many laisse-faire policies and existing economic liberal trends: unregulated marketplaces, unprotected labour markets, tax avoidance, and a transfer of risks to individual users. For instance, Airbnb is constantly negotiating with governments to secure regulations that allow it to maintain and profit from its activities in different cities around the world – leading to further deregulation of tourist and housing markets.[112] These interventions have provided important evidence of the growing impact of the sharing platform on a local, national, and global scale.

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[110] Mingming Cheng, "Sharing Economy: A Review and Agenda for Future Research," *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 57 (August 2016): 60–70; Koen Frenken and Juliet Schor, "Putting the Sharing Economy into Perspective," *Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions* 23 (2017); Mikko Laamanen, Marcos Barros, and Gazi Islam, "Collective Representation on Collabourative Economy Platforms," in *Contemporary Collabourative Consumption*, ed. Isabel Cruz, Rafaela Ganga, and Stefan Wahlen (Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden, 2018), 35–56, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-21346-6_3; Lizzie Richardson, "Performing The Sharing Economy," *Geoforum* 67 (December 2015): 121–29; Tom Slee, *What's Yours Is Mine: Against the Sharing Economy* (New York, United States: OR Books, 2011),; Alex Stephany, *The Business of Sharing: Making It in the New Sharing Economy* (Springer, 2015).

[111] Chris Fairweather, "The Sharing Economy as Primitive Accumulation: Locating the Political-Economic Position of the Capital-Extractive Sharing Economy," *HPS: The Journal of History & Political Science* 5 (n.d.): 51–63; Nancy Fraser, "Contradictions of Capital and Care," *New Left Review*, no. 100 (August 2016): 99–117; Meg Luxton, "Friends, Neighbours, and Community: A Case Study of the Role of Informal Caregiving in Social Reproduction," in *Social Reproduction: Feminist Political Economy Challenges Neo-Liberalism* (Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen's Press, 2006); Michael O' Regan and Jaeyeon Choe, "Airbnb and Cultural Capitalism: Enclosure and Control within the Sharing Economy," *Anatolia* 28, no. 2 (April 3, 2017): 163–72.

[112] Diana Cao, "Regulation through Deregulation: Sharing Economy Companies Gaining Legitimacy by Circumventing Traditional Frameworks Notes," *Hastings Law Journal* 68, no. 5 (2017 2016): 1085–1110; Mara Ferreri and Romola Sanyal, "Platform Economies and Urban Planning: Airbnb and Regulated Deregulation in London," *Urban Studies* 55, no. 15 (November 2018): 3353–68; L. Grimmer, O. Vorobjovas-Pinta, and M. Massey, "Regulating, Then Deregulating Airbnb: The Unique Case of Tasmania (Australia)," *Annals of Tourism Research* 75 (2019): 304–7.

For many, ideas of home are closely tied to homeownership. In Marxist accounts, home-ownership is seen as instrumental to capitalism and used to forward an ideological agenda aimed at economic efficiency and growth.[113] In Israel and many Western countries, home-ownership is supported by governments through state policies and heavily promoted by the real estate industry.[114] According to critical geographer David Harvey, homeownership incentivizes workers to remain committed to their jobs to pay off their mortgages, and signals identification with and the incorporation of capitalist values.[115] In the last few decades, the global struggles over housing and associated practices of displacement and dispossession are testimonies to our changing conceptions of "home".[116] Ongoing external pressures such as the affordability of housing, housing instability, and lack of autonomy may affect whether or not one feels at home.[117]

Gentrification

Sharing platforms like Airbnb have contributed to a profound social transformation of many places around the world.[118] In recent years, Airbnb's role in accelerating gentrification and its disruption of the housing market has caused an uproar amongst housing advocates and anti-gentrification activists. Scholars have started to take note of the "Airbnb effect" on cities while

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[113] Shelley Mallett, "Understanding Home: A Critical Review of the Literature," *The Sociological Review* 52, no. 1 (February 2004): 66.

[114] Paul Knox and Steven Pinch, *Urban Social Geography: An Introduction*, 6th ed. (Routledge, 2014); Hadas Weiss, "Homeownership in Israel: The Social Costs of Middle-Class Debt," *Cultural Anthropology* 29, no. 1 (February 3, 2014): 128–49.

[115] David Harvey, "The Right to the City," *New Left Review* 53 (October 2008): 23–40.

[116] Katherine Brickell, Melissa Fernández Arrigoitia, and Alexander Vasudevan, *Geographies of Forced Eviction: Dispossession, Violence, Resistance* (Springer, 2017).

[117] Bronwyn Bate, "Understanding the Influence Tenure Has on Meanings of Home and Homemaking Practices," *Geography Compass* 12, no. 1 (2018): e12354; Justine Lloyd and Ellie Vasta, *Reimagining Home in the 21st Century* (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2017).

[118] Antonio Paolo Russo and Dr Greg Richards, *Reinventing the Local in Tourism: Producing, Consuming and Negotiating Place* (Bristol: Channel View Publications, 2016); Dianne Dredge and Szilvia Gyimóthy, *Collabourative Economy and Tourism: Perspectives, Politics, Policies and Prospects* (Springer, 2017).

other studies aim at informing future urban policy and planning in response to these recent trends.[119]

There are various theories employed throughout the years to understand gentrification. The most commonly used theory of gentrification is the 'Stage Theory'.[120] The theory suggests that gentrification passes through different phases over time, and that "the characteristics and attitudes of people moving into the neighbourhood vary depending on when they moved in."[121] While the first wave of gentrifiers cherishes a neighbourhood's diversity, authenticity and unique architecture, the later wave of arrivals are generally middle-class gentrifiers who seek a high quality of life and socioeconomically similar neighbours. Stage theory suggests that the first wave of 'urban pioneers' should retrospectively be referred to as gentrifiers as well, even if few enough moved into the neighbourhood at the time to not affect the local urban environment.[122]

Using this framework, scholars have categorized gentrifiers according to demographic characteristics, such as "visibility and tenure, occupation and income, political outlook, cultural affiliation, and household composition and lifestyle."[123] Alongside typical professional and managerial middle classes, scholars also emphasize other marginal groups as gentrifiers: artists,

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[119] Albert Arias Sans and Alan Quaglieri Domínguez, "Unravelling Airbnb: Urban Perspectives from Barcelona," in *Reinventing the Local in Tourism* (Bristol: Channel View Publications, 2016), 209–28, https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.21832/9781845415709-015/html; Agustín Cócola Gant, "Holiday Rentals: The New Gentrification Battlefront," *Sociological Research Online* 21, no. 3 (August 2016): 112–20; David Wachsmuth and Alexander Weisler, "Airbnb and The Rent Gap: Gentrification Through The Sharing Economy," *EPA: Economy and Space* 50, no. 6 (2018): 1147–70; Dayne Lee, "How Airbnb Short-Term Rentals Exacerbate Los Angeles's Affordable Housing Crisis: Analysis and Policy Recommendations Student Notes," *Harvard Law & Policy Review* 10, no. 1 (2016): 229–54; Nicole Gurran and Peter Phibbs, "When Tourists Move In: How Should Urban Planners Respond to Airbnb?," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 83, no. 1 (January 2, 2017): 80–92.
[120] Merav Kaddar, "Gentrifiers and Attitudes towards Agency: A New Typology. Evidence from Tel Aviv-Jaffa, Israel," *Urban Studies* 57, no. 6 (May 1, 2020): 1244.
[121] Robert Kerstein, "Stage Models of Gentrification: An Examination," *Urban Affairs Quarterly* 25, no. 4 (June 1, 1990): 621.
[122] Kaddar, "Gentrifiers and Attitudes towards Agency"; Kerstein, "Stage Models of Gentrification."
[123] Jon Caulfield, "'Gentrification' and Desire," *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue Canadienne de Sociologie* 26, no. 4 (1989): 618.

the gay community, students and Bohemians, and all those searching for cheap rents, large

working spaces, community life and authenticity.[124] While these groups are commonly

understood as symbolically and culturally middle-class from a Bourdieu perspective, they are

economically low-income and marginal relative to the managerial class.[125] Their move may

subject long-term residents to cultural, political or social marginalization, which in turn may

result in 'displacement pressure', leading to actual displacement.[126] While these accounts are

invaluable in understanding the "chaotic concept of gentrification", they depict gentrification as

a pre-determined process that leaves little room for deviations.

Other explanations of gentrification interpret the process as an essentially structural one,

viewing gentrification as the outcome of economic and/or political power structures. [127] These

theories, most notably 'the rent gap' theory', help understand the role of banks, developers,

investors and authorities in channelling capital into formerly neglected places such as Airbnb.[128]

Wachsmuth and Weisler introduced the rent gap mechanism that allows Airbnb to be a major

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[124] David Ley, "Artists, Aestheticisation and the Field of Gentrification," *Urban Studies* 40, no. 12 (November 1, 2003): 2527–44; Mickey Lauria and Lawrence Knopp, "Toward an Analysis of the Role of Gay Communities in the Urban Renaissance," *Urban Geography* 6, no. 2 (1985): 152–69; Darren P. Smith, Joanna Sage, and Stacey Balsdon, "The Geographies of Studentification: 'Here, There and Everywhere'?," *Geography* 99 (Autumn 2014): 116–27; Chris Hamnett, "Gentrification and the Middle-Class Remaking of Inner London, 1961-2001," *Urban Studies* 40, no. 12 (November 1, 2003): 2401–26; Jon Caulfield, *City Form and Everyday Life: Toronto's Gentrification and Critical Social Practice* (University of Toronto Press, 1994); David Ley, *New Middle Class and the Remaking of the Central City* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), https://books-scholarsportal-info.proxy.lib.uwaterloo.ca/en/read?id=/ebooks/ebooks0/oxford/2009-11-30/4/0198232926; Damaris Rose, "Economic Restructuring and the Diversification of Gentrification in the 1980s: A View From a Marginal Metropolis," in *City Lives and City Forms: Critical Research and Canadian Urbanism*, ed. Jon Caulfield and Linda Peake (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 131–72.
[125] Pierre Bourdieu, "What Makes a Social Class? On The Theoretical and Practical Existence Of Groups," *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* 32 (1987): 1–17.
[126] Peter Marcuse, "Gentrification, Abandonment, and Displacement: Connections, Causes, and Policy Responses in New York City," *Washington University Journal of Urban and Contemporary Law* 28 (1985): 207.
[127] Neil Smith, "Gentrification and Uneven Development," *Economic Geography* 58, no. 2 (April 1982): 139–55; Damaris Rose, "Rethinking Gentrification: Beyond the Uneven Development of Marxist Urban Theory," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 2, no. 1 (March 1, 1984): 47–74.
[128] Neil Smith, "Gentrification and the Rent Gap," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 77, no. 3 (September 1987): 462–65 ; David Wachsmuth and Alexander Weisler, "Airbnb and The Rent Gap: Gentrification Through The Sharing Economy," *EPA: Economy and Space* 50, no. 6 (2018): 1147–70.

driver of gentrification in New York City neighbourhoods.[129] Nonetheless, such explanations fail

to explain what makes people, especially early-wave gentrifiers, move to such areas. In addition,

neither the stage theory nor the rent gap model capture gentrification in our increasingly

globalized cities.

Transnational Gentrification

A growing scholarly literature places gentrification in a global context by extending the

range of case studies and incorporating transnational perspectives in comparative studies.[130]

Building on what until recently comprised just a few scattered case studies, scholars have

investigated gentrification in East Asia, Latin America, Africa and elsewhere, providing insights

that expand the boundaries (both theoretically and spatially) of gentrification research.[131] In

addition to broadening the empirical scope of research, gentrification scholars have also begun to

explicitly consider the theoretical relationship between gentrification and globalization, generally

via one of two pathways.

First is the argument proposed by geographer Neil Smith and later substantiated by a

range of case studies, that gentrification has become a global strategy by which "urban

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[129] Wachsmuth and Weisler, "Airbnb and the Rent Gap."

[130] Loretta Lees, "The Geography of Gentrification: Thinking Through Comparative Urbanism," *Progress in Human Geography* 36, no. 2 (April 1, 2012): 155–71.

[131] Gerald A. Thomas, "The Gentrification of Paradise: St. John's, Antigua," *Urban Geography* 12, no. 5 (September 1991): 469–87; Shenjing He, "State-Sponsored Gentrification Under Market Transition The Case of Shanghai," *Urban Affairs Review* 43, no. 2 (November 2007): 171–98; Jorge Inzulza-Contardo, "'Latino Gentrification'?: Focusing on Physical and Socioeconomic Patterns of Change in Latin American Inner Cities," *Urban Studies* 49, no. 10 (August 2012): 2085–2107; Michael Janoschka, Jorge Sequera, and Luis Salinas, "Gentrification in Spain and Latin America — a Critical Dialogue," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 38, no. 4 (2014): 1234–65; Ernesto Lopez-Morales, "Gentrification by Ground Rent Dispossession: The Shadows Cast by Large-Scale Urban Renewal in Santiago de Chile," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 35, no. 2 (2011): 330–57; G A Jones and A Varley, "The Reconquest of the Historic Centre: Urban Conservation and Gentrification in Puebla, Mexico," *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 31, no. 9 (September 1999): 1547–66; Jayne Garside, "Inner City Gentrification in South Africa: The Case of Woodstock, Cape Town," *GeoJournal* 30, no. 1 (May 1993): 29–35; Gustav Visser and Nico Kotze, "The State and New-Build Gentrification in Central Cape Town, South Africa," *Urban Studies* 45, no. 12 (November 2008): 2565–93.

entrepreneurial governance seeks to secure investment in cities across the world."[132] Here

globalization refers to an economic restructuring that has destabilized nation-states as the

preeminent form of a territorial organization while strengthening functional connections between

the urban and global scales.[133] The result of this urban rescaling, Smith claimed, was that

gentrification has "rapidly descended the urban hierarchy", and become an increasingly

ubiquitous phenomenon in ordinary cities as well as in so-called global ones.[134] Particularly as

gentrification has become a state-led strategy, actively facilitated by municipal, regional and

national governments in cooperation with large capital, a gentrification 'template' has been

replicated in cities around the world.[135]

 The second proposed relationship between gentrification and globalization has been via

the subjective identity of the gentrifying class. Geographer Matthew W. Rofe argues that

globalization has rendered local experiences of neighbourhood change less uniquely distinctive

and more readily comparable with neighbourhood change elsewhere in the world, at least for

local gentrifiers.[136] These actors thus come to understand themselves as part of a global,

cosmopolitan class and consuming a globally homogenous 'gentrification commodity'. The same

global economic restructuring processes that make gentrification practically available as a

strategy of entrepreneurial urban governance also make it imaginatively available as the basis for

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[132] Thomas Sigler and David Wachsmuth, "Transnational Gentrification: Globalization and Neighbourhood Change in Panama's Casco Antiguo," *Urban Studies* 53, no. 4 (March 2016): 707; Neil Smith, "New Globalism, New Urbanism: Gentrification as Global Urban Strategy," *Antipode* 34, no. 3 (2002): 427–50; Gary Bridge, Tim Butler, and Loretta Lees, *Mixed Communities: Gentrification by Stealth?* (Policy Press, 2012).

[133] Neil Brenner, "Globalization as Reterritorialisation: The Re-Scaling of Urban Governance in the European Union," *Urban Studies* 36, no. 3 (March 1999): 431–51.

[134] Smith, "New Globalism, New Urbanism," 439; Jennifer Robinson, *Ordinary Cities: Between Modernity and Development* (Psychology Press, 2006).

[135] Jason Hackworth and Neil Smith, "The Changing State of Gentrification," *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie* 92, no. 4 (2001): 464–77; Mark Davidson and Loretta Lees, "New-Build 'Gentrification' and London's Riverside Renaissance," *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 37, no. 7 (July 2005): 1165–90.

[136] Matthew W. Rofe, "'I Want to Be Global': Theorising the Gentrifying Class as an Emergent Elite Global Community," *Urban Studies* 40, no. 12 (November 1, 2003): 2511–26.

a cosmopolitan identity among local gentrifiers.[137] Despite the different theoretical and

sometimes normative aspects of these perspectives, what they share is an orientation towards

gentrification as a local outcome of globalized socio-spatial processes. From this understanding,

global capital is investing in uneven local property markets, which are moulded to satisfy the

preferences of a local urban middle class, along with a new subjectivity wherein this gentrifying

class imagines itself to be part of an international cosmopolitan class.

Here, following Sigler and Waschmuth, I wish to focus on a third understanding of

globalization's relationship with gentrification, one much less explored in the existing literature.

Gentrification is not a result of globalization processes that are distinct from gentrification, as in

both the 'global strategy' and 'cosmopolitan class' arguments, but as an active pathway along

which globalization processes unfold. Sigler and Waschmuth identify 'transnational

gentrification' as "… a process that connects leisure-driven migration to spatially distant

neighbourhood reinvestment schemes that existing local demand may not have allowed for."[138]

The concept of transnational gentrification draws theoretical attention to the relationship between

gentrification and migration. Researchers have explored such linkages, but overwhelmingly in

the South-North direction, insofar as particular migrant groups have been wrapped up in the

gentrification process.[139] However, little research has been done on the relationship between

gentrification and colonization in Israel-Palestine.

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[137] Craig J. Calhoun, "The Class Consciousness of Frequent Travelers: Toward a Critique of Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101, no. 4 (2002): 869–97; Caroline Mills, "Myths and Meanings of Gentrification," in *Place/Culture/Representation*, ed. S. James and David Ley (New York and London: Routledge, 1993), 149–70.

[138] Thomas Sigler and David Wachsmuth, "Transnational Gentrification: Globalization and Neighbourhood Change in Panama's Casco Antiguo," *Urban Studies* 53, no. 4 (March 2016): 707.

[139] Jason Hackworth and Josephine Rekers, "Ethnic Packaging and Gentrification: The Case of Four Neighbourhoods in Toronto," *Urban Affairs Review* 41, no. 2 (November 2005): 211–36; Loretta Lees, "A Reappraisal of Gentrification: Towards a 'Geography of Gentrification,'" *Progress in Human Geography* 24, no. 3 (September 2000): 389–408; Robert Murdie and Carlos Teixeira, "The Impact of Gentrification on Ethnic

Israeli Literature on Airbnb

Existing Israeli scholarly and grey literature on Airbnb has almost exclusively examined

Airbnb's activities through a legal and regulatory lens. Elster and Nesher and Yaniv have

examined public policy approaches for regulating Airbnb's activities in Tel Aviv-Yaffo and

Jerusalem.[140] Legal scholars Beirach and Yifat have examined the legal status of these

apartments-turned-hotels and the impact they had on marginalized neighbourhoods in Tel Aviv-

Yaffo and Jerusalem.[141] Israeli-Palestinian peace organizations, such as Peace Now and Jewish

Voices for Peace, have recognized and reported on the growing number of settler-run Airbnbs in

the West Bank.[142] Törnberg and Chiappini were the first scholars to make the connection

between New York Airbnbs and their use of colonial discourse and an appeal to "adventure" to

advertise to potential white hosts.[143] However, none of the literature examines the relationship

between gentrification in Tel Aviv-Yaffo, the ways in which it impacts the West Bank, and how

Airbnb fits into this relationship. I will be applying the American/Anglo Airbnb literature on

gentrification and colonization to consider how Airbnb activities unfold in particular ways within

the colonial context.

Neighbourhoods in Toronto: A Case Study of Little Portugal," *Urban Studies* 48, no. 1 (January 2011): 61–83;
Janoschka, Sequera, and Salinas, "Gentrification in Spain and Latin America — a Critical Dialogue."

[140] Tal Elster and Maayan Nesher, "הצעה לרגולציה מיטבית של Airbnb בתל אביב-יפו [Policy Solution for Airbnb Regulations in Tel Aviv-Yaffo]" כן בתל אביב [Yes in Tel Aviv], May 2019); Omar Yaniv, "נכסים להשכרה לתיירים לטווח קצר בישראל ובעולם תמונת מצב ואפשרויות הסדרה [Properties for Short-Term Rent to Tourists in Israel and Around the World]" (Jerusalem, Israel: Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research, 2019).

[141] Avner Beirach Barak and Holzman-Gazit Yifat, "אורח נטה ללו: השלכות על שוק הדיור ואסדרה של Airbnb בישראל [A Guest Overnight: Airbnb's Impact on Housing Markets in Israel and a Recommended Regulatory Framework]," *מחקרי רגולציה [Regulatory Studies]*, The Heth Academic Center For Research Of Competition And Regulation, 1 (November 2019): 71–131.

[142] "Settling in Your Pocket: Housing," Peace Now, July 20, 2011, https://peacenow.org.il/en/settling-in-your-pocket-housing; Sonya Meyerson-Knox, "Airbnb Commits to Removing Rentals in Illegal Israeli Settlements in the West Bank," *Jewish Voice for Peace* (blog), November 19, 2018, https://jewishvoiceforpeace.org/airbnb-victory/.

[143] Petter Törnberg and Letizia Chiappini, "Selling Black Places on Airbnb: Colonial Discourse and the Marketing of Black Communities in New York City," *EPA: Economy and Space* 52, no. 3 (2020).

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Homesharing platforms, including Airbnb, do not provide public data on numbers and performance of their rentals. Airbnb has historically been secretive about its data, even when faced with legal requirements, and when they have released data, observers have concluded that they have done so in a misleading fashion.[144]At the end of 2015, Airbnb stopped disclosing when a non-available property was reserved or was simply blocked from new reservations, which made it impossible to precisely measure occupancy.[145] Therefore, my main sources of information are official databases (i.e. from Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics and Tel Aviv Municipality Statistics) on housing in Tel Aviv-Yaffo and data on Airbnb from existing Israeli scholarly literature, grey literature, and Israeli newspapers. In light of the recent COVID-19 Pandemic, the ongoing travel restrictions and bans have made fieldwork unfeasible, so my analysis will only employ secondary data.

My approach in analyzing gentrification in Tel Aviv-Yaffo uses two types of sources: statistical use of official data and existing Israeli literature on Airbnb's activities in Tel Aviv-Yaffo. For the sake of simplicity and the limited data released by Israeli official sources, the official data collected is from 2017 to 2019. See Table 1 for more detail.

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[144] Murray Cox and Tom Slee, "How Airbnb's Data Hid the Facts in New York City," *InsideAirbnb* (blog), February 10, 2016.
[145] Thorben Wieditz, "Squeezed Out: Airbnb's Commercialization of Home-Sharing in Toronto" (Toronto, Canada: Fairbnb, February 28, 2017), https://fairbnb.ca/Fairbnb_Report_Feb_29.pdf.

Table 1. Gentrification Measurements for Tel Aviv-Yaffo

	2017	*2018*	*2019*
Monthly Rent *The sum of all contract rent generated in the long-term rental market*	₪ 1,081,508,400.00	₪ 1,107,772,410.00	₪ 1,190,399,850.00
Average rent *Average Monthly Rent*	₪ 5,517.90	₪ 5,603.30	₪ 5,792.70
Units (Jewish) *Total Jewish households*	187,000	190,800	196,800
Units (Occupied) *Total Number of Occupied Residential Units*	196,000	197,700	205,500
Units (Total) *Total number of housing units, occupied or not*	205,533	208,821	210,795
Units (Vacant for Rent) *Total number of units "vacant"*	9,533	11,121	5,295

Source: Tel Aviv-Yaffo Statistical Database and the Central Bureau of Statistics

From the Tel Aviv Municipality Statistics, I have gathered the following measurements calculated at the census-tract scale: average monthly rent (מחירים ממוצעים של שכר דירה חופשילפי קבוצת גודל הדירה מספר חדרים Table 4.30) and total number of housing units, occupied or not, in Tel Aviv-Yaffo (2019-1979 לפי אזור, יחידות למגורים table 12.12).[146] The average monthly rent was gathered to demonstrate the increase over the years. From Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, I have gathered the following measurements calculated at the census-tract scale: the number of occupied residential units in Tel Aviv-Yaffo (תכונות דמוגרפיות: משקי בית ומשפחות table 2), total

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[146] מחירים ממוצעים של שכר דירה חופשילפי קבוצת גודל הדירה (מספר חדרים) (ח"ש), (הגדולות הערים ובשלוש ב '' [Average Prices of Free Rent, by Apartment's Size (No. of Rooms) in Israel and in the Three Big Cities (NIS) Table 4.30 - (2020-2000)]," משקי בית ורמת חיים (Tel Aviv-Yaffa: Tel Aviv-Yaffa Municipality, 2020), 30; "2019- לפי אזור, יחידות למגורים 1979 [Dwelling Units, By Zone - Table 12.12 (2019-1979)]," דיור (Tel Aviv-Yaffa: Tel Aviv-Yaffa Municipality, 2020), 12.

number of Jewish household in Tel Aviv-Yaffo (משקי בית ומשפחות: תכונות דמוגרפיות table 2), and

total number of residential units vacant in Tel Aviv-Yaffo (אחוזי עיגון ביישובים המונים יותר מ 100-

אלף תושבים).[147] The remaining information is gathered from Israeli scholarly publications, grey

literature, and newspapers.

My approach in analyzing colonization of the West Bank also uses two types of sources:

statistical use of official data and existing Israeli literature and settlement watch reports on

Airbnb's activities in the West Bank. From the Tel Aviv Municipal Statistics database, I gathered

data on how many residents moved from Tel Aviv-Yaffo into a West Bank settlement annually

from 2014 to 2019. The data is further broken down by which area of Tel Aviv-Yaffo the

residents have left, which is then compared to the neighbourhoods that were displaced by Airbnb

the most. See Table 4 for more detail. Since prior to the establishment of the state of Israel,

West Bank tourism has been an essential part of the Zionist enterprise. While Israel increases

funding for tourism in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Israel's Ministry of Tourism does not

disclose the data.[148] Therefore, my thesis employs data from umbrella settler organizations and

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[147] "דירות ומבנים בישראל, 2017 [Dwellings and Buildings in Israel, 2017]" (Givat Shaul, Jerusalem: Central Bureau of Statistics, n.d.); "דירות ומבנים בישראל, 2018 [Dwellings and Buildings in Israel, 2018]" (Givat Shaul, Jerusalem: Central Bureau of Statistics, July 31, 2019); "דירות ומבנים בישראל, 2019 [Dwellings and Buildings in Israel, 2019]" (Givat Shaul, Jerusalem: Central Bureau of Statistics, December 19, 2019); "משקי בית ומשפחות: תכונות דמוגרפיות -2016 על פי סקרי כוח אדם - משקי בית, לפי גודל משק בית, צורת יישוב מגורים וקבוצת אוכלוסייה 2017 [Households and Families: Demographic Characteristics 2016-2017 - Table 2]," Labour Force Survey (Givat Shaul, Jerusalem: Central Bureau of Statistics, May 14, 2019); "משקי בית ומשפחות: תכונות דמוגרפיות 2018 על פי סקרי כוח אדם - משקי בית, לפי גודל משק בית, צורת יישוב מגורים וקבוצת אוכלוסייה [Households and Families: Demographic Characteristics 2018 - Table 2]," Labour Force Survey (Givat Shaul, Jerusalem: Central Bureau of Statistics, March 16, 2020); "משקי בית ומשפחות: תכונות דמוגרפיות 2019 על פי סקרי כוח אדם - משקי בית, לפי גודל משק בית, צורת יישוב מגורים וקבוצת אוכלוסייה [Households and Families: Demographic Characteristics 2019 - Table 2]," Labour Force Survey (Givat Shaul, Jerusalem: Central Bureau of Statistics, October 20, 2020).
[148] Benjamin Netanyahu, "סיוע מיוחד לשנת 2016 לאזור יהודה ושומרון [Special assistance for 2016 to the Judea and Samaria area]," Government Decision (Givat Ram, Jerusalem: Knesset, June 19, 2016). https://www.gov.il/he/departments/policies/2016_des1561.

various NGOs to examine the Israel's tourism industry has grown in the region and the ways in which it has displaced Palestinians.[149]

Limitations of the Research

There are two major limitations in this study that could be addressed in future research. First, the study focused on the ways in which Airbnb has impacted Tel Aviv-Yaffo's real estate market and Isreal's West Bank tourism industry. However, my thesis does not cover Palestinian-run Airbnb neither in Tel Aviv-Yaffo nor the West Bank. While the topic of Palestinian-run Airbnb is important to examine, a 2018 report shows that Palestinian Airbnb hosts have been backlisted by the platform.[150] This means the necessary data to examine this topic is very challenging to find without conducting fieldwork.

Second, due to the lack of Airbnb data available, I could not provide a measure of the gentrification occurring in Tel Aviv-Yaffo that would isolate Airbnb as the cause, which would involve applying Wachsmuth and Weisler's rent gap model.[151] Following Israeli Airbnb researchers, my thesis uses the residential to commercial unit conversion rate, rising prices, and migration as an indicator of increasing gentrification in Tel Aviv-Yaffo. The residential to

[149] "חגיגת אביב בהתיישבות [Spring Celebration in the Settlement]," *Yesha - Judea Samaria and the Gaza Strip* (blog), November 4, 2018, http://www.myesha.org.il/?CategoryID=187&ArticleID=7924; "Settling in Your Pocket"; Stein, "#StolenHomes"; Hareuveni, "By Hook and by Crook"; Yonatan Kanonich, "The Illegal Outpost of Amona: Theft of Private Palestinian Land - A Chronology (1995 - ?)," Position Paper, trans. Leora Gal (Tel Aviv: Yesh Din, December 2020), https://din-online.info/pdf/yd45e.pdf; Chemi Shiff, "On Which Side Is the Grass Greener: National Parks in Israel and the West Bank" (Jerusalem, Israel: Emek Shaveh, December 2017), https://emekshaveh.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/On-which-side-is-the-Grass-Greener.pdf; Ziv Stahl, "Appropriating the Past: Israel's Archaeological Practices in the West Bank" (Jerusalem, Israel: Yesh Din, Emek Shaveh, December 2017), https://www.yesh-din.org/en/appropriating-past-israels-archaeological-practices-west-bank/; "Occupation Remains: A Legal Analysis of the Israeli Archeology Policies in the West Bank: An International Law Perspective" (Jerusalem, Israel: Diakonia International Humanitarian Law Resource Centre, December 2015); "Destination: Occupation" (London, UK: Amnesty International, January 2019), https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2019/01/destination-occupation-digital-tourism-israel-illegal-settlements/; "Touring Israeli Settlements: Business and Pleasure for the Economy of Occupation," Flash Report (Tel Aviv, Israel: Who Profits, September 2017), https://whoprofits.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/old/touring_israeli_settlements_wp_flash_report_oct_2017-3.pdf.
[150] Yumna Patel, "Airbnb Is Preventing Palestinian Hosts from Listing Their Homes in the Occupied West Bank," *Mondoweiss*, December 11, 2018, https://mondoweiss.net/2018/12/preventing-palestinian-occupied/.
[151] Wachsmuth and Weisler, "Airbnb and the Rent Gap."

commercial unit conversion rate is calculated by multiplying the number of Airbnb listings with the percentage of multi-listings and dividing that by the total number of residential units (occupied or not). Much like Wachsmuth and Weisler's rent gap, the conversion rate and rising rent prices demonstrates that a decreasing supply of residential units and an increasing demand for short term rentals places an upward pressure on rent prices. This method, however, does not calculate the "gap" between actual returns for traditional landlords and potential returns after converting the unit into an Airbnb. For this reason, my next chapter dedicates a substantial section to describing the financial incentives for professionalizing as a landlord via Airbnb.

CHAPTER IV: AIRBNB IN TEL AVIV-YAFFO

Tel Aviv-Yaffo is one of Israel's most sought-after residential areas and Airbnb has gained more popularity in Tel Aviv-Yaffo than most other major cities. In San Francisco, the city where Airbnb began operations, there are almost twice as many residents and residential housing units as there are in Tel Aviv-Yaffo. In 2016, San Francisco had only about 7,000 Airbnb listings compared to about 8,600 listings in Tel Aviv-Yaffo.[152] In Tel Aviv, there is an unprecedented number of apartments that have been converted into Airbnb hotels. To demonstrate the scope of Airbnb's activities in Tel Aviv-Yafo, Table 2 compares Airbnb activities in Tel Aviv-Yaffo to other major cities around the world.

Table 2: Airbnb Activity in Seven Major Cities

City	Number of Airbnb Listings	Percentage of Multi-Listings	Number of Apartments Converted into Airbnbs	Total Number of Residential Units	Percentage of Residential Units Turned to Airbnb
Tel Aviv-Yaffo	9,152	55%	5,033	205,500	2.4%
New York City	39,470	43%	16,972	3,464,00	0.5%
Berlin	15,022	30%	4,506	1,900,00	0.2%
Amsterdam	11,726	28%	3,283	428,000	0.8%
Copenhagen	11,598	17%	1,971	498,000	0.4%
Barcelona	17,541	66%	11,577	811,000	1.4%
Paris	36,807	29%	10,674	1,160,000	0.9%

Source: Airbnb בתל אביב קיימת חריגה בין-לאומית במספר הדירות שהוסבו למלונות [Record-Breaking Number of Apartments-turned-Airbnb-Hotels in Tel Aviv] Table adopted and translated from Tal Elster and Maayan Nesher, "הצעה לרגולציה מיטבית של Airbnb בתל אביב-יפו [Policy Solution for Airbnb Regulations in Tel Aviv-Yaffo]" (כן בתל אביב [Yes in Tel Aviv], May 2019)[153]

As demonstrated by Table 2, Tel Aviv-Yaffo has an unusually high percentage of property owners with a large number of properties in their name (Multi-Listings) and an astronomical percentage of Airbnb listings in the total number of residential units. According to the percentage

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[152] Beirach Barak and Yifat, "86," השלכות על שוק הדיור.
[153] Elster and Nesher, "הצעה לרגולציה מיטבית של Airbnb בתל אביב-יפו."

of residential units turned to Airbnbs, the impact of Airbnb on the Tel Aviv-Yaffo housing

market is exceptional as it is almost 2 times higher than in Barcelona, 3 times higher than in

Amsterdam and Paris, almost 5 times more than in New York City, 6 times more than in

Copenhagen and 12 times more than in Berlin. In terms of the impact Airbnb has had on

neighbourhoods, New York City neighbourhoods with the largest Airbnb presences have had

1.1% of apartments turned into Airbnb hotels in the Manhattan downtown area and 1.6% in

Williamsburg, Brooklyn.[154] However, according to Israeli scholars Beirach Barak and Yifat, the

impact in comparison to marginalized Tel-Aviv neighbourhoods has been inordinate: in Kerem

Hatemanim (כרם התימנים) more than 21% of apartments have been converted into Airbnb listings,

in Neve Tzedek (נווה צדק) more than 13%, in North Jaffa (צפון יפו) more than 11%, and more than

9% in Lev HaIr (לב העיר) and the HaTzafon HaYashan (הצפון הישן).[155] See table 2 for the data on

housing lost in Tel Aviv-Yaffo neighbourhoods and fig. 3 for a neighbourhood map of Tel Aviv-

Yaffo.

Why Tel Aviv-Yaffo?

Israeli scholars Elster and Neshel attribute Airbnb's forceful impact on Tel Aviv-Yaffo to

the fact that the tenant population being a significant portion of the city's population.[156] By 2015,

over 50% of the city's households live in rental units, the highest percentage of all the largest

cities in the country.[157] From the perspective of tenants in Tel Aviv-Yaffo, the thousands of

apartments being used as short-term accommodations means a scarcity of apartments available

for rent. As a result, Elster and Neshel argue that the decrease in the supply of apartments in Tel

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[154] David Wachsmuth et al., "The High Cost of Short-Term Rentals in New York City," Urban Politics and Governance (Montreal, QC: School of Urban Planning, McGill University, January 30, 2018).

[155] Beirach Barak and Yifat, "השלכות על שוק הדיור."

[156] Tal Elster and Maayan Nesher, "Airbnb הצעה לרגולציה מיטבית של בתל אביב-יפו [Policy Solution for Airbnb Regulations in Tel Aviv-Yaffo]" כן בתל אביב [Yes in Tel Aviv], May 2019), 4.

[157] "נתונים מסקר הוצאות משק הבית הדיור בישראל 2015–1997 [Housing in Israel: Data from the Household Expenditure Survey 1997–2015]," Expenditure Survey (Givat Shaul, Jerusalem: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2015), 69.

Aviv has led to an increase in rent prices in the city.[158] However, according to the United States

Census Bureau, tenants make up 64.6% of New York City's population and 60.1% of Los

Angeles' population.[159] As previously mentioned, although New York City has a larger tenant

population percentage, the percentage of apartments turned into Airbnb listings is five times

greater in Tel Aviv-Yaffo than in New York City. Therefore, although Airbnb does increase

rents by removing apartments from the residential market, the percentage of renters is not a

strong argument for Airbnb's impact on the city's housing market.

Israeli scholar Yaniv attributed Airbnb's boom in Tel Aviv-Yaffo to a lack of regulations

in the city's tourism industry and real estate market.[160] Operators of "traditional"

accommodation, such as hotels and hostels, argue that, in most cases, those who rent out their

properties for tourism purposes are not required to pay taxes to the authorities and meet the

restrictive conditions set for them.[161] Airbnb is considered a 'shared economy' platform, but in

practice it allows for organized entrepreneurs, some of them large and established, to produce

professional hotel units in the city centers without bearing the burden of investment, statutory

procedure, planning and licensing, organization, and sometimes the taxation imposed on

hoteliers.[162] This inviting and deregulated business creates a natural shift of housing units from

long-term accommodations to be used by hoteliers-entrepreneurs. As of June 2017, 4% of

landlords in Tel Aviv-Yaffo have 5 or more properties for rent, with an average of 3.14

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[158] Elster and Nesher, "הצעה לרגולציה מיטבית של Airbnb בתל אביב-יפו [Policy Solution for Airbnb Regulations in Tel Aviv-Yaffo]", 2.

[159] "2013-2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates" (Washington, DC: United States Census Bureau, November 28, 2018), https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/table-and-geography-changes/2017/5-year.html.

[160] Yaniv, "נכסים להשכרה לתיירים לטווח קצר בישראל ובעולם תמונת מצב ואפשרויות הסדרה [Properties for Short-Term Rent to Tourists in Israel and Around the World]."

[161] Yaniv, 17.

[162] Eric T. Schneiderman, "Airbnb in the City" (New York City, NY: New York State Office of the Attorney General, October 2014), https://ag.ny.gov/pdfs/AIRBNB%20REPORT.pdf.

properties per landlord.[163] Thus, these apartments operate as illegal apartment hotels and their

owners avoid paying taxes and meeting basic conditions for operating a place to stay. The

Tourism Ministry of Israel encourages this activity, although many other countries impose

restrictions on these sorts of platforms. Tourism Ministry director-general Amir Halevi explains

the ministry's position:

> Our goal is to increase the supply of rooms. This year a record is going to be broken with
> more than 3.5 million tourists coming here. We need as many accommodations as
> possible. We will work toward this on all fronts, including converting office buildings
> into hotels.[164]

In Israel, there is no regulation or restriction of Airbnb activity as both the Tel Aviv municipality

and the Tourism Ministry encourage the capital inflow brought in by tourists.[165]

   While this explanation falls in line with Tel Aviv-Yaffo's history of entrepreneurship and

policy independence from the rest of the state, as previously mentioned, there are larger

structural reasons for the lack of regulation in Tel Aviv-Yaffo. Tel Aviv-Yaffo's urban policies

are reflective of the fact that municipal finances are heavily dependent on the appropriation of

ground rent, local planning practices are predominantly shaped by profit-maximizing

considerations.[166] Therefore, it would be more pertinent to examine the larger economic factors

at play.

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[163] Yaniv, "נכסים להשכרה לתיירים לטווח קצר בישראל ובעולם תמונת מצב ואפשרויות הסדרה [Properties for Short-Term Rent to Tourists in Israel and Around the World]," 17.
[164] Moshe Gilad, "In Tel Aviv, Airbnb May Have Revealed Its Darkest Side Yet."
[165] Moshe Gilad, "In Tel Aviv, Airbnb May Have Revealed Its Darkest Side Yet."
[166] Schipper, "Urban Social Movements and the Struggle for Affordable Housing in the Globalizing City of Tel Aviv-Jaffa."

What Happens When Airbnb Enters the Market?

   The "Hotelization" of Rental Properties

   While Airbnb advertises itself as a way for tenants or homeowners to supplement their income, Table 2 demonstrates that most Airbnbs in Tel Aviv-Yaffo are run by hosts with multiple listings. Legal scholar Dayne Lee (2016) refers to this phenomenon as the "hotelization" of rental properties and it consists of two processes: first a private property (usually apartments) is converted into a rental tourist property, then entire buildings are converted into illegal hotels.[167] In May of 2019, about 9,150 properties are listed on Airbnb, of which about 7,500 (82%) apartments and 1,500 rooms are shared over 5,040 active hosts.[168] There is a distinction between 'casual' assets belonging to tenants for a limited period of time or an apartment as an income supplement, and "professional" properties belonging to tenants or apartments regularly, thus removing the same property from the residential market. By the end of 2017, 12 Airbnb hosts owned 970 properties, and 75 hosts own about 2,150 properties or a quarter of all Airbnb properties in the city.[169] It is the professional assets that are at the center of my attention because they cause the bulk of the damage to the rental market.

   Of all the properties offered for rent in Tel Aviv-Yaffo, about 4,150 are registered as having only one property for their hosts (Single-Listings Hosts). The other assets, about 5,000 in number (55% of all assets leased on Airbnb), are leased by 870 professional landlords (Multi-Listing Hosts). Thus, at least 5,000 apartments are no longer used for residence and do not constitute a means of supplementing the occasional income for the tenants of the apartments but are rented as a hotel entrepreneurial business for all intents and purposes. Beyond that, there is a

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[167] Lee, "How Airbnb Short-Term Rentals Exacerbate Los Angeles's Affordable Housing Crisis."

[168] Elster and Nesher, "הצעה לרגולציה מיטבית של Airbnb בתל אביב-יפו."

[169] Beirach Barak and Yifat, "השלכות על שוק הדיור."

high probability that even out of the 4,150 properties rented by a landlord whose only property is there, there are professional assets. According to the municipality itself, there are about 7,150 apartments used as a hotel business.[170]

Incentives for Airbnb to Professionalize Landlords

Airbnb relies on guest ratings and the Super Host status. A tourist seeking to rent a room or an apartment on the site will usually look through the guest reviews to decide whether to stay at that listing. An apartment with a high rating from many visitors will significantly increase the chance of renting the apartment. A 'casual' landlord will not get a high number of reviews on the site, so tourists will feel that they are taking a risk. Moreover, hosts who have "completed at least 10 stays in the past year or 100 nights over at least 3 completed stays", maintain a 4.8+ overall rating from their guests, cancel less than 1% of the time, and respond to 90% of new messages within 24 hours are awarded Superhost status.[171]

Airbnb has built its business model on commission that is passed on to Airbnb from each transaction and is calculated as a percentage of the price. For this reason, Airbnb encourages hosts to carry out multiple transactions at high listing prices. Therefore, casual renting would be contrary to the marketing logic of Airbnb.

Beyond that, professional landlords (who, as mentioned, are the majority of landlords in Tel Aviv-Yafo) make it easier to carry out the transaction on additional levels. For instance, professional landlords allow the consumer to book the apartment or room without correspondence with them using Instant Booking.[172] This is very convenient from the

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[170] "דברי הסבר לצו הארנונה הכללית 2019 [Explanatory Notes to the General Property Tax Order 2019]" (Tel Aviv-Yaffo: Tel Aviv-Yaffo Municipality, 2019), 23.
[171] "Airbnb Superhost Program Details," Airbnb, n.d., https://www.airbnb.ca/d/superhost.
[172] "What Is Instant Book? - Airbnb Help Centre," Airbnb, n.d., https://www.airbnb.ca/help/article/523/what-is-instant-book.

consumer's point of view, who then do not have to correspond with the landlord, introduce themselves to the landlord, wait for a booking confirmation, and so on - things that are required by the casual landlord. Professional landlords take the risk involved in hosting bad tenants or new Airbnb users, thus making the ordering process easier.

Naturally, the percentage of transactions made by professional landlords is much higher, since by definition, 'casual' landlords rent out their apartment from time to time, and 'professional' landlords strive to rent out the intended property to hotels as much as possible. However, Airbnb incentivizes professional landlords through their Superhost program in which these users receive more visibility, a significant increase in earnings, and a bonus for referring new hosts.[173] Elster and Nesher estimate that Airbnb entrepreneurs (multi-listing hosts) in Tel Aviv-Yaffo make higher earnings on average by 40% to 130% compared to single-listing hosts that are using Airbnb to supplement their income.[174] As a result, the vast majority of rental nights on Airbnb are in units that have been converted to hotels, and not in apartments where the Airbnb platform is a means of supplementing income.[175]

Creates Scarcity

As demonstrated by Table 2, Airbnb has converted more residential units in Tel Aviv-Yaffo than in any other major city in the world.[176] Airbnb has made it simpler and more profitable for landlords and property managers to offer units as year-round short-term rentals than as long-term residential rentals. Therefore, the demand for these short-term rentals is placing upward pressure on rents.[177]

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[173] "Airbnb Superhost Program Details."
[174] Elster and Nesher, "בתל אביב-יפו Airbnb הצעה לרגולציה מיטבית של," 6.
[175] Beirach Barak and Yifat, "השלכות על שוק הדיור"; Elster and Nesher, "בתל אביב-יפו Airbnb הצעה לרגולציה מיטבית של."
[176] Elster and Nesher, "בתל אביב-יפו Airbnb הצעה לרגולציה מיטבית של."
[177] Wachsmuth and Weisler, "Airbnb and the Rent Gap" 1150.

Wachsmuth and Weisler describe this phenomenon through the rent gap model, a situation where the actual economic returns to properties tend to decline or stagnate while potential economic returns tend to increase (see fig. 2).[178]
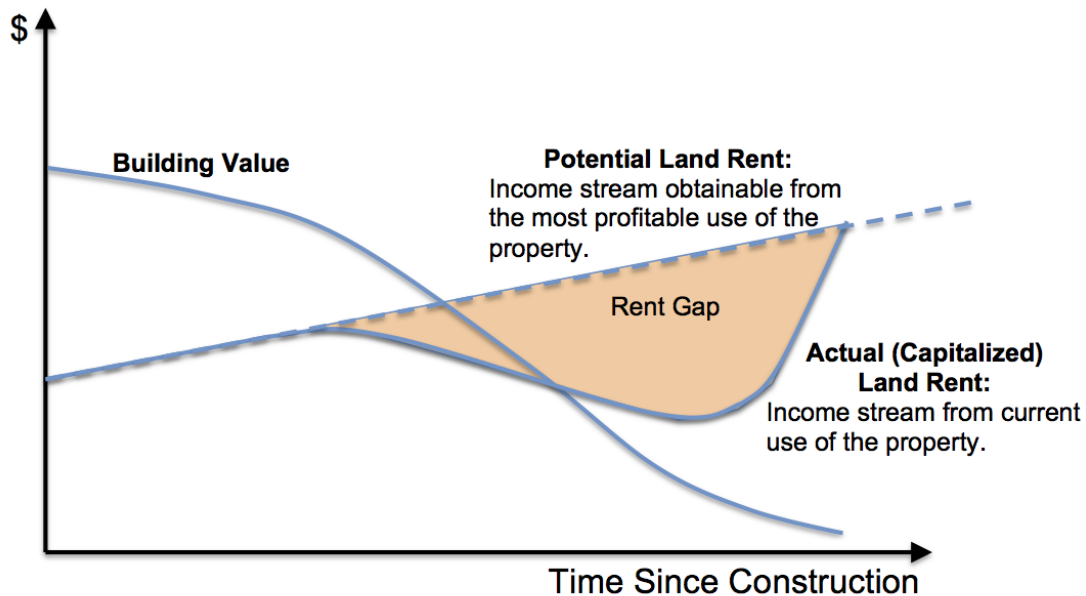

Figure 2. Graph of a Rent Gap. Created by Bill Lindeke. From Streets MN. https://3kpnuxym9k04c8ilz2quku1czd-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/rent-gap-theory.png.

In neighbourhoods where this "gap" between actual and potential returns systematically increases, the result will be a corresponding increasing incentive for real estate capital to direct new housing investment flows.[179] As these investment flows drive up housing prices, attract more affluent newcomers, and displace existing poorer residents, the result is gentrification. There are two other immediate implications of the short-term nature of Airbnb's rent gaps: either in the short-term with actual evictions to make room for more profitable tenants or over a slightly longer timescale as long-term rental housing is "organically" converted to short-term rentals, the

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[178] Wachsmuth and Weisler, "Airbnb and the Rent Gap," 1150.
[179] Wachsmuth and Weisler, "Airbnb and the Rent Gap," 1150.

result will be the displacement of an existing, lower-income population and the arrival of higher-income newcomers.[180]

Airbnb is presented as an inexpensive alternative, but figures show that the hotels and the short-term rental platforms coexist just fine in Tel Aviv-Yaffo, and both are flourishing; therefore, it is really the long-term renters paying the price. According to the Tel Aviv-Yaffo Municipality, between 2013 to 2016, rental prices in the city rose by nine percent (9%) and the prices of apartments sold rose by 27.5 percent.[181] Kerner's study further demonstrates that Airbnb is responsible for the steep rise in Tel Aviv-Yaffo rents for the past 10 years, primarily in the market for one to two-room apartments as they are the most popular type of properties on these websites.[182] Beyond that, from 2017 to 2019, average rent in Tel Aviv-Yaffo has increased from NIS 5,517.90 to NIS 5,792.70 (see Table 1).[183] In comparison, in 2019, rent in Tel Aviv-Yaffo had gone up by almost twice as much (3.3%) as it did in Toronto (1.8%).[184] To put it further in perspective, according to Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, the average monthly income in December 2019 was reported to be NIS 8,817, which means rent expenses 65% of a resident's monthly income.[185]

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[180] Wachsmuth and Weisler, "Airbnb and the Rent Gap," 1155.

[181] "פרופיל העיר 2.0, לעיר תל אביב-יפו [Updated the Strategic Plan for the City of Tel Aviv-Yaffa: City Profile 2.0]" (Tel Aviv-Yaffa: Tel Aviv-Yaffa Municipality, 2017).

[182] Yoav Kerner, "Airbnb to Blame for Steep Rise in Tel Aviv Rent Prices" (Beersheba, Israel: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, September 13, 2017), https://aabgu.org/airbnb-blame-steep-rise-tel-aviv-rent-prices/.

[183] If converted to CAD, the rent has increased from $2,085.67 to $2,188.08. "מחירים ממוצעים של שכר דירה חופשילפי קבוצת גודל הדירה (מספר חדרים) (ח"ש) הגדולות הערים ובשלוש ב [Average Prices of Free Rent, by Apartment's Size (No. of Rooms) in Israel and in the Three Big Cities (NIS) Table 4.30 - (2020-2000)]," 30.

[184] "Ontario's Residential Rent Increase Guidelines" (Ontario, Canada: Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, October 1, 2020), https://www.ontario.ca/page/residential-rent-increases.

[185] "ירחון שכר ותעסוקה דצמבר 2019 [Monthly Wages and Employment for Decemeber 2019 - Table 2]" (Givat Shaul, Jerusalem: Central Bureau of Statistics, March 4, 2020), https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/publications/Pages/2019/%D7%99%D7%A8%D7%97%D7%95%D7%9F-%D7%A9%D7%9B%D7%A8-%D7%95%D7%AA%D7%A2%D7%A1%D7%95%D7%A7%D7%94-%D7%93%D7%A6%D7%9E%D7%91%D7%A8-2019.aspx.

The gentrification process escalates when local businesses that would create ties with residents are instead replaced by businesses that only focus on tourists. Tourists often pay much more for coffee or groceries than local residents, so businesses with higher prices enter the market. If local residents can no longer afford to shop at the over-priced stores in their area, they are forced to move to a new area. Thus, Wachsmuth & Weisler have noted that Airbnb raises potential landlord income without any need for redevelopment, in a geographically uneven way, by concentrating on neighbourhoods with a "local" tourist appeal that does not necessarily overlap with areas that were gentrified due to more conventional market factors.[186] With 4.5 million tourists coming to Tel Aviv-Yaffo in 2019 alone, some of the gentrification that occurs in the city can justifiably qualify as "transnational gentrification".[187] Airbnb pushes up the cost of rent which greases the wheels of gentrification and accelerates the decline of marginalized neighbourhoods.

Displacing Marginalized Residents, Transforming Neighbourhoods

As with developments in most other global cities, the restructuring of Tel Aviv-Yaffo has led to a rise in social inequality tied to labour-market polarization, with greater demand both for highly qualified and for low-income workers.[188] This polarization is reflected in a strong socio-spatial division between the affluent northern parts of the city, inhabited mostly by the Ashkenazi upper and middle classes, and the 'hard-up', neglected, southern and southeastern neighbourhoods populated mostly by Jewish Mizrahi lower classes, Arab-Palestinians in Jaffa,

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[186] David Wachsmuth and Alexander Weisler, "Airbnb and The Rent Gap," 1151.
[187] Michal Raz-Chaimovich, "Record Year for Israeli Tourism Despite High Prices," *Globes*, January 1, 2020, sec. News, https://en.globes.co.il/en/article-record-year-for-israel-tourism-despite-high-prices-1001313237.
[188] Neil Brenner and Roger Keil, *The Global Cities Reader* (London, UK: Psychology Press, 2006); Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (Princeton University Press, 2013).

labour migrants, and African refugees concentrated in the areas around the Central Bus Station

where rental prices used to be relatively low (see fig. 3).[189]

Figure 3. Map of Tel Aviv-Yaffo. From Maps Tel Aviv. https://maps-tel-aviv.com/img/1200/tel-aviv-neighborhood-map.jpg.

[189] Barukh Kipnis, "Tel Aviv, Israel - A World City in Evolution: Urban Development at a Deadend of the Global Economy," *Dela*, no. 21 (December 1, 2004): 183–93; Margalit, "Land, Politics and High-Rise Planning"; Marom, "'Affordable Housing' and the Globalizing City"; Daniel Felsenstein and Arie Shachar, "Globalization Processes and Their Impact on the Structure of the Tel Aviv Metropolitian Area," in *Emerging Nodes in the Global Economy: Frankfurt and Tel Aviv Compared*, ed. Eike W. Schamp (Dordecht: Springer Science & Business Media, 2013), 36–56.

In terms of Airbnb's entry into the various neighbourhoods in Tel Aviv-Yaffo, it appears that not all neighbourhoods have a large presence of properties rented through the site. Neighbourhoods far from the historic center, such as Ne'ot Afeka (נאות אפקה), Ramat HaTayasim (רמת הטייסים), Neve Barbur (נווה בארבור), and Kfar Shalem (כפר שלם) have little to no Airbnb listings.[190] However, in a significant number of neighbourhoods, a high number of Airbnb activity was recorded relative to the total number of dwelling units. Most of the Airbnb activity in Tel Aviv-Yafo is concentrated in the city center and south of it, with most of the apartments and rooms located on Ibon Gabirol Street with a leakage of property concentrations in Florentin and Jaffa.[191] To demonstrate the impact of Airbnb on marginalized neighbourhoods in Tel Aviv-Yaffo, Table 3 ranks the top 10 neighbourhoods impacted by the percentage of residential units that have been converted to Airbnbs.

Table 3: Tel Aviv-Yaffo Neighbourhoods with Highest Number of Dwelling Units Lost to Airbnb (2017)

Rank	Neighbourhood	Number of Airbnb Listings	Number of Dwellings	Percentage
1	Kerem Hatemanim (כרם התימנים)	657	3,111	21.1%
2	Neve Tzedek (נווה צדק)	322	2,452	13.1%
3	North Jaffa (צפון יפו)	389	3,464	11.2%
4	Old Jaffa/Jaffa Port (צפון יפו, נמל יפו)	41	434	9.4%
5	Orot (אורות)	6	67	9.0%
6	Lev Ha'ir (לב העיר)	1,479	18,060	8.2%
7	South HaTzafon HaYashan (הצפון הישן)	1,339	17,171	7.8%
8	Sarona (גני שרונה)	72	1,064	6.8%
9	North HaTzafon HaYashan (הצפון הישן)	1,266	18,968	6.7%
10	Florentin (פלורנטין)	291	6,038	4.8%

Source: טבלה 4: עשר ר השכונות בעלות השיעור הגבוה ביותר של דירות מרובות מתו כלל יחידות הדיור, תל אביביפו [Table 4: The ten neighbourhoods with the highest rate of residential units lost to Airbnb, Tel Aviv] adopted and translated from Avner Beirach Barak and Holzman-Gazit Yifat, "השלכות על שוק: אורח נטה ללו Airbnb בישראל והדיור ואסדרה של [A Guest Overnight: Airbnb's Impact on Housing Markets in Israel and a Recommended Regulatory Framework]," מחקרי רגולציה [Regulatory Studies], The Heth Academic Center For Research Of Competition And Regulation, 1 (November 2019)[192]

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[190] Beirach Barak and Yifat, "94," השלכות על שוק הדיור.
[191] Beirach Barak and Yifat, 84.
[192] Beirach Barak and Yifat, 96.

As previously mentioned, these are marginalized neighbourhoods that have historically been populated by Palestinian Arabs, Yemenite Jews, and Mizrahi Jews. By the end of 2017, more than 21% of the apartments in Kerem HaTeimanim (a Yemeni neighbourhood), more than 13% of the apartments in Neve Tzedek (a Mizrahim and Yemeni neighbourhood), and more than 11% of the apartments in North Jaffa (an Arabic neighbourhood) have been converted into Airbnb hotels.[193] These neighbourhoods in particular have been neglected by the Tel Aviv-Yaffo Municipality to deteriorate, placing the onus of renovations on the residents, and forcing residents out when they can no longer afford the necessary improvements.[194] These deteriorating conditions create the conditions for Airbnb entrepreneurs to buy the properties at a low cost and rent them out to tourists. Thus, Airbnb has introduced a new potential revenue flow in the housing markets based around tourists, which is geographically uneven. As a result, these marginalized neighbourhoods become seen as culturally desirable and internationally recognizable, which has subjected them to extensive gentrification.

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[193] Beirach Barak and Yifat, "השלכות על שוק הדיור."

[194] I. Schnell and B. Barzilay, "Conservation Plans - A Model for Economic Exploitation," *The Open Urban Studies Journal* 1, no. 1 (December 1, 2008): 19–24.

CHAPTER V: AIRBNB IN THE WEST BANK SETTLEMENTS

Tel Aviv-Yaffo to West Bank Migration

The question now is: *where have those displaced residents gone?* According to the Tel

Aviv Municipality Statistics, a growing number of those displaced citizens have moved to the

West Bank.[195] See Table 4 for more detail. More importantly, the increased rent prices in Tel

Aviv-Yaffo and lack of affordable housing options, an increasing number of poor Jewish Tel

Aviv-Yaffo residents are moving into West Bank settlements.

Table 4: Departure from Tel Aviv-Yaffo to the West Bank

Zones in Tel Aviv-Yaffo	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**
South (דרום)	210	209	165	167	189
Center (מרכז)	60	68	39	39	32
North (צפון)	140	103	92	105	60
Trans-Yarkon (עבר הירקון)	60	59	37	51	39
Total	460	439	333	362	323
Percentage from South of Tel Aviv-Yaffo to the West Bank	46%	48%	50%	46%	59%

Source: "יוצאים מת"א-יפו ליישובים אחרים, לפי יישוב יעד ואזור מוצא [Leaving T.A.-Yafo to Other Locality and Zone of Origin 2014 to 2018 - Table 3.47]," Population Report (Tel Aviv, Israel: Tel Aviv-Yaffo Municipality, 2020).

While the total number of Tel Aviv-Yaffo citizens moving into the West Bank has decreased

between 2014 to 2018, the percentage of Tel Aviv-Yaffo residents *from the south* has increased

by 13%. The majority (59%) of Tel Aviv-Yaffo citizens moving to the West Bank are from the

south Yaffo – the part of the city with mostly marginalized neighbourhoods that have been

displaced by Airbnb as mentioned in the previous chapter. From 2016 to 2018, the number of

southern residents moving to the West Bank annually increased by 22 citizens. These could very

well be the displaced citizens from the many marginalized neighbourhoods impacted by Airbnb;

however, it must be stated that this is most likely an underestimate as the Tel Aviv Municipality

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[195] "יוצאים מת"א-יפו ליישובים אחרים, לפי יישוב יעד ואזור מוצא [Leaving T.A.-Yafo to Other Locality and Zone of Origin 2018 to 2014 - Table 3.47]."

gathers this information tracking permanent address changes and many young people prefer to

keep their permanent address as their parent's homes.[196] A 2020 report shows that the Jewish

population in the West Bank and East Jerusalem is growing at a faster rate than the population

within the Green Line.[197] This can partially be attributed to Netanyahu's campaign to bring more

Jewish Israeli citizens to live in the West Bank settlements by providing numerous subsidies and

benefit. Airbnb has aided in this push by providing short-term accommodations in the

settlements, allowing more people to visit them.

The Tourism Industry of the Settlements

In part with that the state funding that goes to the West Bank settlement economy, Israel

has recently increased funding to the tourism industry linked to settlements.[198] In 2010, the state

of Israel allocated approximately NIS 367 million for the development and military protection of

historic sites "that reflect the national heritage of the Jewish people" across Israel and the

Occupied Palestinian Territory.[199] This includes 13 historic sites in East Jerusalem and 30 sites in

the West Bank.[200]

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[196] Tony Champion, Thomas Cooke, and Ian Shuttleworth, "Introduction: A More Mobile World, or Not?," in *Internal Migration in the Developed World: Are We Becoming Less Mobile?*, International Population Studies (Routledge, 2017), 9; Igor Ivan et al., "Microanalysis of Migration Movements in the City - Case Study of Jihlava" (International Multidisciplinary Scientific GeoConference, Albena, Bulgaria, 2013).

[197] Mohammed Haddad, "Palestine and Israel: Mapping an Annexation," Infographic (Qatar: Al Jazeera, June 26, 2020), https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/6/26/palestine-and-israel-mapping-an-annexation.

[198] "Database of All Business Enterprises Involved in the Activities Detailed in Paragraph 96 of the Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission to Investigate the Implications of the Israeli Settlements on the Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of the Palestinian People throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Including East Jerusalem," Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Human Rights Situation in Palestine and Other Occupied Arab Territories (New York City, NY: United Nations, December 31, 2014), https://doi.org/10.18356/d9bf1c42-en.

[199] NIS 367 million is valued at approximately CAD 139 million. "Israel's Exploitation of Palestinian Tourism and International Complicity: Tourism as a Tool to Normalize Occupation" (Palestinian Liberation Organization (Negotiations Affairs Department), December 5, 2017), https://www.nad.ps/en/publication-resources/publications/israel%E2%80%99s-exploitation-palestinian-tourism-and-international; "Touring Israeli Settlements: Business and Pleasure for the Economy of Occupation."

[200] "Destination: Occupation."

In June 2016, the government announced an additional programme of "special financial aid", with provisions to support the development of the tourism industry in West Bank settlements.[201] This resulted in a grant of NIS 5 million for "public tourism infrastructure".[202] In this programme, Netanyahu announced subsidies will be given to the "establishment, conversion and expansion" of all short-term accommodations (i.e. Airbnbs, hotels, and B&Bs) in West Bank settlements.[203]

While there are no government figures for West Bank visitors or whether these subsidies have gone towards Airbnbs, the Yesha Council, an umbrella organization of Jewish settlement municipal councils in the West Bank, announced that in 2018 during Passover, approximately 300,000 tourists visited their various "tourist sites, routes, museums, festivals, wineries and archaeological sites."[204] There are many of these scattered across the West Bank. A recent guidebook listed more than 200 places to visit, stay or eat in settlements.[205] Tourists visiting these attractions and spending money in the restaurants and other sites directly contribute to the maintenance and growth of settlements, since businesses are owned or managed by settlers.

Israel's support for tourism infrastructure has also come at the cost of Palestine's own tourism industry, which has faced numerous physical, institutional, and financial restrictions imposed by Israel since 1967.[206] In spite of the essential part that Christian and Muslim pilgrimages have played in the tourism industry in Palestine, not only does the money earned in Palestine finds its way into the Israeli economy but Israel's tourism industry in Palestine has

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[201] Netanyahu, "סיוע מיוחד לשנת 2016 לאזור יהודה ושומרון [Special assistance for 2016 to the Judea and Samaria area]."
[202] NIS 5 million is equal to CAD 1.8 million. Netanyahu.
[203] Netanyahu.
[204] "חגיגת אביב בהתיישבות [Spring Celebration in the Settlement]."
[205] Ḳarni Eldad, *Yesha Is Fun: The Good Life Guide to Judea and Samaria* (Jerusalem, Israel: Carta, The Israel Map & Publishing Company, Ltd, 2013).
[206] Rami K. Isaac, C. Michael Hall, and Freya Higgins-Desbiolles, "Palestine as a Tourism Destination," in *The Politics and Power of Tourism in Palestine* (Routledge, 2015).

dominated the territory.[207] In addition to these financial gains, the Israeli government has a larger

Zionist goal for developing a booming tourism industry in the West Bank. Tourism serves two

functions: emphasizes the Jewish people's historic connection to the land and allows Israeli

settlers to provide an explanation centred on their experiences of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

When Trump took office, spokesperson of Hebron settlers released a statement explaining, "from

our perspective, living here is key to giving the modern state of Israel its rooting in Jewish

history."[208]

For this reason, Israel has constructed many of its settlements near archaeological and

other historic sites; it is in order to for them to be able to make the connection between Jewish

history and the land explicit.[209] Similar to the Allon Plan and the settlement-building logic of the

1970s, archaeological sites legitimize Israel's increasing military presence in the Occupied

Palestinian Territories.[210] Simultaneously, Israel's tourism is able to downplay or completely

neglect non-Jewish historic periods at these sites.[211] These acts of rewriting history minimize the

Palestinian's historic connection to the land.

Websites and tour maps issued by Israel's Ministry of Tourism and Israel Nature and

Park Authority do not show the Green Line. Rather, these maps deliberately conceal and mark

the West Bank as "Judea and Samaria", a term used by the Israeli government and settlers, but

not by Palestinians.[212] In addition, the designation of certain locations as tourists is used by the

Israeli state to remove Palestinians from their land and their homes. For instance, nature reserves

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[207] Isaac, Hall, and Higgins-Desbiolles; Jennifer Lynn Kelly, "Asymmetrical Itineraries: Militarism, Tourism, and Solidarity in Occupied Palestine," *American Quarterly* 68, no. 3 (2016): 723-745,857.

[208] Yishai Fleisher, "Goodbye, President Obama: Parting Words From an Israeli Settler," *The Jewish Community of Hebron* (blog), January 18, 2017, http://hebron.org.il/blog/51/627.

[209] "Occupation Remains: A Legal Analysis of the Israeli Archeology Policies in the West Bank: An International Law Perspective."

[210] Stahl, "Appropriating the Past: Israel's Archaeological Practices in the West Bank," 14.

[211] "Destination: Occupation."

[212] "Destination: Occupation."

in the West Bank are protected by Israeli military order, which penalizes Palestinians for attempting to graze their animals, using the land for agricultural purposes, and establishing or expanding their homes or agricultural structures.[213] Palestinians have been evicted from their homes and prevented from entering their land when a new archaeological site was declared as falling within the jurisdiction of settler regional councils.[214]

Settlements as Airbnb Listings

In 2019, more foreign visitors visited the Occupied Palestinian Territories (76.5%), than they had the Dead Sea region (74.2%).[215] Many of these tourists are increasingly using the internet to research destinations and book their vacations. As of 2018, the majority of tourists book their accommodations online.[216] The intersection of these trends has brought tourists to booking Airbnbs in West Bank settlements – knowingly or unknowingly.

Airbnb has received a lot of criticisms for giving platform and business opportunities to Jewish citizens living in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. In 2018, Airbnb succumbed to public pressures and removed listings of rentals in illegal settlements in the West Bank – only to reverse this decision a year later.[217] While Airbnb is a platform open to both Palestinians and Jewish settlers living in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, the ways in which Jewish settlers use it turns illegal settlements into tourist attractions.

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[213] Shiff, "On Which Side Is the Grass Greener: National Parks in Israel and the West Bank."

[214] "Destination: Occupation."

[215] "Inbound Tourism Survey 2019," Annual Report (Givat Ram, Jerusalem: Israel Ministry of Tourism, August 2020), https://motwebmediastg01.blob.core.windows.net/nop-attachment/9266_%D7%9E%D7%A9%D7%94%D7%AA-%D7%A1%D7%A7%D7%A8-%D7%AA%D7%99%D7%99%D7%A8%D7%95%D7%AA-%D7%A0%D7%9B%D7%A0%D7%A1%D7%AA-2019-ENGLISH.pdf.

[216] "Inbound Tourism Survey 2018," Annual Report (Givat Ram, Jerusalem: Israel Ministry of Tourism, June 2019), https://motwebmediastg01.blob.core.windows.net/nop-attachment/9164_incoming%20tourism%20survey%202018.pdf.

[217] "Update on Listings in Disputed Regions," *Airbnb Newsroom* (blog), April 9, 2019, https://news.airbnb.com/update-listings-disputed-regions/.

The Israeli settlements are part of a decades-old military occupation that has confiscated 42 percent of Palestinian land in the West Bank for settlement construction, resulting in the loss of freedom of movement and other human rights abuses against the Palestinian people.[218] For years, Airbnb has profited from rental suites built on top of the ruins of Palestinian lives and livelihoods with no mention on these postings that they are on militarily occupied land. In turn, it has directly helped Israeli settlers legitimize their occupation, contributing to the Israeli government's decades-long policies of occupation, discrimination, and dispossession. The normalization of an exclusive and militarized ethnic enclave as a tourist destination serves as an example of the way in which Airbnb fits into the matrix of colonialism in the region. Moreover, Airbnb is also still operating in other Occupied Palestinian Territories, such as East Jerusalem and Golan Heights.

Airbnb also does not require hosts to provide their guest with the property address of the listing until after they have made the booking.[219] Prior to the booking, Airbnb guests can only go by the information that hosts choose to display. As a result, most West Bank settler-run Airbnb choose to falsely state that the property is located in Israel, rather than the Occupied Palestinian Territories (see fig. 4 and fig. 5).

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[218] Meyerson-Knox, "Airbnb Commits to Removing Rentals in Illegal Israeli Settlements in the West Bank."
[219] "Are There Any Restrictions about What Can Be Listed as a Place to Stay?," Airbnb Help Centre, accessed March 30, 2021, https://www.airbnb.co.uk/help/article/455/are-there-any-restrictions-about-what-can-be-listed.

Home Sweet Home

★ 4.83 (72 reviews) · ⚡ Superhost · Har Adar, Israel   ⬆ Share ♡ Save

Entire apartment hosted by Nathalie
7 guests · 2 bedrooms · 4 beds · 1 bath

$59 /night   ★ 4.83 (72 reviews)

Figure 4. "Home Sweet Home" Airbnb Listing.
https://www.airbnb.ca/rooms/23489002?locale=en&_set_bev_on_new_domain=1617064384_M2M5ZWJhMWM1MDA4&source_impression_id=p3_1617064390_Y%2BlNkaeCzjPKEgSq

Cozy Room & warm hosting in Givat-Zeev, Jerusalem

★ 4.89 (18 reviews) · ⚡ Superhost · Giv'at Zeev, Center District, Israel   ⬆ Share ♡ Save

Private room in apartment hosted by Shoshi
2 guests · 1 bedroom · 1 bed · 1 shared bath

$49 /night   ★ 4.89 (18 reviews)

Figure 5. "Cozy Room & warm hosting in Givat-Zeev, Jerusalem" Airbnb Listing.
https://www.airbnb.ca/rooms/22858768?source_impression_id=p3_1617064803_8dSxeAxZoUVWWT1w

For example, a house in the settlement of Har Adar (הַר אֶדָר) was listed by its owners as being in "Har Adar, Israel" (see fig. 4).[220] Similarly, the owner of an house in the settlement of Giv'at Ze'ev in the West Bank misleadingly states that it is in Israel (see fig. 5).[221]

This illustrates the ways in which Netanyahu's regime has deliberately used neoliberal governmentality to distribute the risks of dwelling-based accumulation by dispossession to individuals within the Green Line. The displacement of southern Tel Aviv-Yaffo citizens can become part of the violence enacted against Palestinians as these Israeli residents in search of affordable housing move on to Palestinian land and displace them. As neoliberal violence within Israel increases, so – at least theoretically – would the incentive to offset neoliberal violence with political violence, thereby contributing to the national struggle over the homeland via settlement. The settlement project's dependence on mass settlement and deepening international pressure to reach a two-state solution required a substantial push to draw citizens to the West Bank. Airbnb even if indirectly is part of the process that aids the state of Israel in steering capital flows towards West Bank settlements both via tourism and the gentrification-colonization process.

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[220] "Home Sweet Home - Apartments for Rent in Har Adar, Israel," Airbnb, accessed March 30, 2021, https://www.airbnb.ca/rooms/23489002.

[221] "Cozy Room & Warm Hosting in Givat-Zeev, Jerusalem - Apartments for Rent in Giv'at Zeev, Center District, Israel," Airbnb, accessed March 30, 2021, https://www.airbnb.ca/rooms/22858768.

CHAPTER VI: CONLCUSION

In March 2020, tourism and much of the leisure industry were brought to a halt in nearly every country around the world.[222] The COVID-19 Pandemic has changed the structure of our everyday lives and the global impact of world events; therefore, I return to my research question with a pre-COVID and post-COVID considerations. My master's research asked the following question: *what role does Airbnb play in Tel Aviv-Yaffo's housing crisis and the West Bank settlement economy?*

Existing Israeli scholarship has proposed a number of compelling answers for this question, from policy solutions to examining the economic factors, yet the works failed to understand the gentrification process with the Israel-Palestine matrix of gentrification and colonization. To put it simply, Airbnb has accelerated the transnational gentrification process that has been occurring in Tel Aviv-Yaffo with the coming of the neoliberal era and the Israeli state-funded tourism in West Bank settlements through the introduction of new capital flows.

The State of Israel has used housing as one mechanism by which it designed the nation to serve Zionist aims. Racial segregation emerged through public housing policies and provisions, which resulted in stark socio-economic divisions between Ashkenazi, Mizrahi and Palestinian communities still seen evidence of in Tel Aviv-Yaffo today. This was illustrated by the differing demands in the 2011 Housing Protests in Tel Aviv-Yaffo as Ashkenazim activists demanded cost-of-living subsidies, while Mizrahim demanded repairs to their deteriorating neighbourhoods. While these protests occurred across the nation, they were heightened in Tel Aviv-Yaffo as the city's finances are heavily dependent on the appropriation of ground rent,

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[222] "International Tourist Numbers Could Fall 60-80% in 2020" (Madrid, Spain: United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), May 7, 2020), https://www.unwto.org/news/covid-19-international-tourist-numbers-could-fall-60-80-in-2020.

which resulted in local planning practices that are predominantly shaped by profit-maximizing considerations that direct most planning activities towards the luxury market.[223]

While the Housing Protests came to an end in October 2011, rent and housing prices have only increased since, and Airbnb has played its part in exacerbate existing neoliberal planning practices in Tel Aviv-Yaffo.[224] Airbnb converted more Tel Aviv apartments and apartment complexes into hotels than in any other major city in the world.[225] Existing Israeli literature accredits this to a lack of regulations in the city's tourism industry and real estate market and the majority of the city being made of tenants, but this does not address the larger trends in Tel Aviv-Yaffo that enabled this – transnational gentrification and the historic marginalization of Palestinian and Mizrahi neighbourhoods.[226]

Airbnb has created a "hotelization" phenomenon in the rental market, in which the majority of Airbnbs on the market are run by Airbnb entrepreneurs (multi-listings hosts) – some even renting out apartment complexes. Airbnb benefits from having professional landlords as their business commission model (in which Airbnb receives a higher commission from multiple and high-price listings), and Instant Booking feature. Airbnb also prioritizes their multi-listing hosts through their "Superhost program" in which they give these hosts more visibility, higher earnings, and bonuses for referring new hosts.[227] This results in the conversion of residential properties into commercial properties which creates housing scarcity. Evidently, Airbnb is not being used to supplement incomes in Tel Aviv-Yaffo, but rather a means of converting the low supply of residential units into illegal hotels en mass. As residential unit supply does down and

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[223] Schipper, "Urban Social Movements and the Struggle for Affordable Housing in the Globalizing City of Tel Aviv-Jaffa," 526.
[224] Vardi, "A Decade After Social Protests, Affordable Housing Remains A Dream For Many."
[225] Elster and Nesher, "הצעה לרגולציה מיטבית של Airbnb בתל אביב-יפו."
[226] Elster and Nesher; Beirach Barak and Yifat, "השלכות על שוק הדיור"; Yaniv, "נכסים להשכרה לתיירים לטווח קצר בישראל ובעולם תמונת מצב ואפשרויות הסדרה [Properties for Short-Term Rent to Tourists in Israel and Around the World]."
[227] "Airbnb Superhost Program Details."

demands for short-term rentals goes up, this places upward pressure on rent prices. Then, the "gap" between actual and potential returns increases which creates an increasing incentive for real estate capital to direct new investment flows (see fig. 3), which attracts affluent newcomers into the neighbourhood. Local businesses that would create ties with residents are then replaced with businesses that target the tourist market. Since tourists are willing to pay much more for a cup of coffee and groceries than residents, businesses in the area increase prices to meet their new market. In particular, Airbnb presents itself as the affordable option for short-term accommodations, so many of the Airbnb listings are in neighbourhoods with cheaper rent; thus, Airbnb disproportionally affects marginalized neighbourhoods in south Tel Aviv-Yaffo populated with mostly Mizrahi Jews, Yemenite Jews, and Palestinian Arabs.

In the West Bank

In the 1980s, as the welfare state shrank within the Green Lines, funding and benefits grew for West Bank settlements.[228] While the Israeli state was involved in supporting the settlements from the very beginning, by providing military security and other basic means, the neoliberal era created new incentives for the Israeli governments to dedicate substantial financial support for the Israeli settlements in the West Bank. These incentives were as considerable as they were diverse: Israeli government-subsidized building costs, cheap land, government-subsidized mortgages, suburban environment, and approximately 93,000 NIS in annual payments from the State of Israel.[229] In this same period, increasing numbers of Tel Aviv-Yaffo residents

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[228] Algazi, "Matrix in Bil'in"; Alfasi and Fenster, "A Tale of Two Cities," 359; Yael Allweil, "Neoliberal Settlement as Violent State Project," *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies* 19, no. 1 (April 15, 2020): 70–105; Gilat Benchetrit, "A Decade Without a Housing Policy: The Israeli Government's Withdrawal from the Housing Market and the Social Protests of 2011," Policy Paper (Jerusalem, Israel: Taub Center for Social Policy Studies in Israel, January 2014), https://taubcenter.org.il/wp-content/files_mf/adacadewithoutahousingpolicy.pdf.
[229] NIS 93,000 is approximately the value equivalent of CAD 350,000. Swirski, "The Burden of Occupation The Cost of the Occupation to Israeli Society, Polity and Economy"; Hareuveni, "By Hook and by Crook"; Slemrod, "The Economics at the Heart of Israeli Settlements"; Allegra, "The Politics of Suburbia"; Newman, "The Territorial Politics of Exurbanization"; Newman, "Colonization as Suburbanization."

from displaced and marginalized neighbourhoods have begun moving into West Bank settlements.[230]

Moreover, the State of Israel has dramatically increased its funding for tourism in the West Bank settlements over recent years. As a result, in 2019, more foreign visitors have visited the West Bank than they had the Dead Sea region.[231] More importantly, Netanyahu announced subsidies will be given to the "establishment, conversion and expansion" of all short-term accommodations, including Airbnbs, in West Bank settlements.[232] These developments have resulted in more tourists booking Airbnbs in West Bank settlements than ever – knowingly or unknowingly. Israel's tourism industry and Airbnb in the West bank deliberately conceal their location or falsely state their settlement location as "Israel" rather than the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Whether by subsidizing tourism or housing, all such practices by the Israeli government and Airbnb work to normalize the occupation. However, as the tourism industry around the world has come to a pause due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, Tel Aviv-Yaffo's and the West Bank's future seem uncertain.

Post-Pandemic Considerations

Just as the repercussions of the 2008 financial crisis altered real estate markets globally with significant long-term effects on housing and urban neighbourhoods, the COVID-19 pandemic will now also significantly impact the future of Tel Aviv-Yaffo.[233] While the post-pandemic future of Airbnb looks uncertain, the bulk of the loss is certainly felt by Airbnb hosts as the Airbnb model transfers risk through outsourcing room services to Airbnb hosts. According

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[230] "יוצאים מת"א-יפו ליישובים אחרים, לפי יישוב יעד ואזור מוצא [Leaving T.A.-Yafo to Other Locality and Zone of Origin 2018 to 2014 - Table 3.47]," Population Report (Tel Aviv, Israel: Tel Aviv-Yaffo Municipality, 2020).

[231] "Inbound Tourism Survey 2019."

[232] Netanyahu, "סיוע מיוחד לשנת 2016 לאזור יהודה ושומרון [Special assistance for 2016 to the Judea and Samaria area]."

[233] Manuel B. Aalbers, "Financial Geography III: The Financialization of the City," *Progress in Human Geography* 44, no. 3 (June 2020): 595–607, https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132519853922; Joe Beswick et al., "Speculating on London's Housing Future," *City* 20, no. 2 (March 2016): 321–41.

to one hospitality study, Airbnb hosts have lost eight times more income than they have pre-pandemic.[234] The only reason hosts' incomes have not dropped to zero is the increasing use of Airbnb's as quarantine hotels.[235] From the data mentioned in previous sections, I predict the income loss will largely impact the minority of hosts who use this to supplement their income (Single-Listing hosts), but also the Airbnb entrepreneurs (Multi-listing hosts).

According to David Harvey, the 2008 financial crisis led to state policies that emphasized a further shift to urban consumerism by promoting infrastructural investments in airports and airlines, hospitality, leisure-based activities and related industries that promote an increase in capital turnover.[236] From the 1990s and onwards, urban consumerism and urban entrepreneurialism became exacerbated trends in the context of tourism-driven transnational gentrification.[237]

However, political theorists Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson have argued that platform economics (i.e. Airbnb, Uber) have been much more influential to transnational gentrification than the rise of the tourism industry and urban entrepreneurialism.[238] Critical geographers Georgia Alexandri and Michael Janoschka explain:

> Platform capitalism has permitted a spectacular acceleration of real estate extractivism, including the transformation of local housing stock in inner-city neighbourhoods to short-term rentals. On the other hand, the temporality and intensiveness of gentrification also

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[234] Guangwu Chen et al., "COVID-19 Pandemic Exposes the Vulnerability of the Sharing Economy: A Novel Accounting Framework," *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 29, no. 5 (January 12, 2021): 1–18.

[235] Sara Dolnicar and Samira Zare, "COVID19 and Airbnb – Disrupting the Disruptor," *Annals of Tourism Research*, March 18, 2020, https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/t9n6q; Hannah Sampson, "'Our QuarBNB': How Short-Term Rentals Are Being Used for Self-Quarantines during the Coronavirus Outbreak," *Washington Post*, March 26, 2020, sec. By The Way, https://www.washingtonpost.com/travel/2020/03/26/our-quarbnb-how-short-term-rentals-are-being-used-quarantines-during-coronavirus-outbreak/.

[236] David Harvey, "Anti-Capitalist Politics in the Time of COVID-19," *Reading Marx's Capital with David Harvey* (blog), March 19, 2020, http://davidharvey.org/2020/03/anti-capitalist-politics-in-the-time-of-covid-19/.

[237] Matthew Hayes, "The Coloniality of UNESCO's Heritage Urban Landscapes: Heritage Process and Transnational Gentrification in Cuenca, Ecuador," *Urban Studies* 57, no. 15 (November 2020): 3060–77; David Navarrete Escobedo, "Foreigners as Gentrifiers and Tourists in a Mexican Historic District," *Urban Studies* 57, no. 15 (November 2020): 3151–68.

[238] Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson, *The Politics of Operations: Excavating Contemporary Capitalism* (Duke University Press, 2019).

rely on the state's capacity to impose its own rhythm on the production of and social reproduction in space.[239]

Thus, tourism and transnational gentrification develop following state interventions aiming to expedite markets for transient and highly mobile people.[240] The need for rapid capital turnovers explains why the recreation of space focuses mainly on "the outsider, the investor, the developer, businesswoman or -man, or the money-packed tourist."[241] In this regard, in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis, Georgia Alexandri and Michael Janoschka expect new coalitions between states and capital to emerge so as "to restructure the urban voids left behind by the breakdown of the pre-2020 accumulation model based on tourism and consumption."[242] In this respect, it is important to consider that international travel reached record numbers in 2019, and further growth was expected.[243] The tourism industry and transnational gentrification may stagnate, but likely return alongside social movements organizing substantial anti-tourism protests.

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