



**PALESTINE IS
THROWING
A PARTY
AND THE
WHOLE
WORLD
IS INVITED**

**CAPITAL
AND STATE
BUILDING
IN THE
WEST
BANK**

KAREEM RABIE





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INTRODUCTION

IN 2008, Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad invited the world to attend a huge party in the West Bank. It was a party of a specific kind, with specific people attending, and according to Fayyad it was a rather big deal (Fayyad 2008):

Dear Investors,

The Palestine Investment Conference [PIC] promises to be a historic event. As the first high profile investment conference ever held in Palestine, PIC-Palestine will jumpstart a process of integrating Palestine into the global economy.

The time has come to invest in Palestine. The international community showed its overwhelming support of the Palestinian economy in Paris last December, and PIC-Palestine intends to continue this process of creating an environment conducive to investment-led growth.

While the conference is private sector run, the Palestinian National Authority offers its full support and is working to make the conference a success. This conference will provide an opportunity to showcase the many promising investment opportunities in Palestine while strengthening public-private partnership and reforming the economy.

We are throwing a party, and the whole world is invited. This conference is a chance to show a different face of Palestine: a Palestine conducive to economic growth and international investment. I welcome you to Palestine for a chance to enjoy our hospitality, and to learn first-hand that you can do business in Palestine.

DR. SALAM FAYYAD
Prime Minister

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MAP INTRO.1 The West Bank. Map by Meagan A. Snow.

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What is in the invitation—Palestine's integration into the global economy, the work to create the foundation for profitable investment, the admixture of public and private, the exuberance and party atmosphere—is as important as what is absent. That is, Israel and its ongoing military, legal, and practical control and integration of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza, and the Golan Heights. Fayyad's invitation captures the vision and direction established during his tenure, and the ideologies and productive practices I uncover and analyze in this book. Under the rubric of state building, his tenure marked a new phase of market-centric rhetoric and practice in Palestine. With echoes of past forms of responsibility and local control under colonization, the idea was that Palestine could build a private economy and that subsequently, eventually, a functioning and free state would emerge. Formal Palestinian aspiration was slowly translated away from nationalist politics and into practices and political economic languages that circulate worldwide. From the outside, and especially in popular and news media, the situation in Palestine is often described as a series of chaotic, violent, active moments, or as almost apolitically prehistoric. But from a wider perspective on political economic change, the situation seems more coherent and productive. As far as Palestine's relationship to Israel or capacity for self-rule is concerned, ideas and the constitution of power seem stable; significant change anywhere would probably require massive change everywhere.

In response to the failure of the so-called peace process to achieve peace (Massad 2006; Haddad 2016; Hanieh 2013b), its emergence in a period of intensifying globalization (Samara 2000), and given the nature of the contemporary global political economy, the investment conference made sense to its participants. If the peace process was a series of related international attempts to formalize and maintain Palestine vis-à-vis Israeli occupation, the state-building period did the same. But it was framed as though it were possible to circumvent politics through economic mechanisms, a subtle reorientation of political practice. And although Fayyad is gone, and we may be in a different period with a different prime minister today, forms of spatial and political concentration and economic restructuring have not been significantly altered under his successors.

Some of the ways actors in the state and private sector frame their claims about politics in Palestine are new. Instead of describing instability, they focus on potential, with Ramallah as a model. They work explicitly to attach Palestinian politics to capital growth and development by enhancing relations with outside markets, despite the pervasive subordinate relationship with Israel. In other ways this is not new: Palestine has been the target of in-

tervention since well before the establishment of Israel and the global importance of the “conflict” rendered it subject to constant international attention. As Mandy Turner and many others have convincingly argued (Turner 2011, 2012; Turner and Shweiki 2014), development and peace interventions work in concert to produce consistency within Israel’s occupation. Yet today’s interventions, ideas, and projects for Palestine’s economic growth, and descriptions and models of political change, often are based on assumptions that contradict the reality on the ground in Palestine.

Palestine is stratified and geographically fragmented. People in different places are subject to Israeli state and Palestinian violence in much different ways. Israel has long tried to outsource the directly violent parts of the occupation and maximize the distance—political and social, as understood and lived—between Israelis and Palestinians, and between Palestinians themselves. Since 2007 coalitions of Palestinians within Palestine have been openly working to cultivate that distance and enhance stability to produce common sense around practices of investment, privatization, and state building.

The practices that surround ideas and representations go a long way in producing stability and orienting ideas and frameworks around future interventions. In a Middle East characterized by the widespread resistance to autocratic governments—resistance that has often been inspired by the Palestinian struggle against colonization and Israeli occupation—Ramallah might be, in some ways and for some people, one of the more insulated and stable places in the region. In terms of class aspiration and stability, there are not many places in the West Bank other than Ramallah where a refracted image of “normal” everyday life is permissible. “Palestine” refers to less and less territory, and fewer and fewer Palestinians; at the same time, as a target of interventions, it does much more work. Economic interventions orient Palestine toward the global market (Taraki 2008a, 2008b); the Palestine of the West Bank stands in for Historic Palestine, Gaza, and the diaspora and comes to limit wider possibilities. As far as Palestinian cities are concerned, Ramallah and its surrounding areas are the primary sites for development as market building, and they exist in a vacuum enabled by the distribution of Israeli state violence elsewhere. Moreover, Ramallah is an idea and representation that circulates to further plans and interventions—it is a place and an image for aspiration and growth as politics.

If state violence in the West Bank and Gaza is part of the social and political topography there, and class aspiration is a form of safety in this framework, Ramallah presents as one of the few potential sites for partial freedom

or return. It is targeted at the national scale, whereas locality is emphasized elsewhere, and it takes on a national character in terms of consolidation inward and population growth, and state- and NGO-scale investments of energy, attention, and capital (Taraki 2008a, 2008b). It is where state-scale planning is most effectively solidifying the political situation in the present.

The same is true for Palestinian society: it is one of fewer and fewer places where a kind of Palestinian life is possible (Karmi 2015). The changes and class character there affect more general Palestinian conceptions and forms of politics and possibility beyond Palestine and Israel. As Ramallah expands at the expense of other parts of Historic Palestine, geographic Palestine is shrinking for most ordinary Palestinians. In a context already defined in large part by barriers to movement, housing debt in particular ties Palestinians to places. Many West Bank Palestinians have treated Ramallah as a “hotel city” during the workweek, and the choice to take on housing debt lessens the means for weekend travel home (Harker 2017). If debt weakens ties between Palestinians and their hometowns, it also deepens ties to Ramallah; consequently, the scale of debt and development strengthens Ramallah at the expense of other cities.

For the Palestinian National Authority (usually referred to as the PA), Israel, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), modeling after Ramallah is strategic. For Israelis and the press, it is often the practical outcome of a lack of experience elsewhere. And for Palestinians, especially those in the diaspora for whom the capacity to have a Palestinian place has shrunk drastically, it is structural and political-economic. What it all adds up to is a Palestine increasingly understood through Ramallah’s shopping malls, high-end housing, luxury hotels, building boom, its place on something the UN calls the Worldwide Happiness Index, and so on. Buildings, malls, and housing are not accidents; they are built with, and to enhance and produce, stable markets. But these spaces also incorporate people and, like the economy and the state, produce and are embedded within social relations. This has often been described as the neoliberalization of Palestine.¹

Consequently, the term “occupation” feels increasingly to have exhausted its analytical or descriptive usefulness. When I use the term here, I mean to refer to the forms of practice called “occupation” or grouped under its rubric. My goal is to concentrate and pry from it the forms of governance, practice, and state- and economy-building contained within. Those forms enable and are coproduced by law, investment, and situated forms of capital accumulation that have long since moved beyond the legal structures of international

belligerent occupation, while reforming and elaborating the forms of unequal governance and subjugation that fall under its definition. They are practical, material, and ideological.

The occupation is more like a series of localized, piecemeal fixes—routine maintenance, responses, patches—that enable wider settler-colonial imperatives in Israel. It represents one phase, one period of the power structure governing Palestinians’ relationships to Palestine, from 1967 to the early 2000s, but it is also an absolute continuation of forms of colonial control, local rule, and dispossession. “Occupation” exists in the present and is logically coherent as a type of investment and economic mechanism for political control. Although the West Bank, Gaza, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights are in very real ways occupied by Israel in practice, legally and illegally, “occupation” is not adequate on its own as an analytical framework for covering the political forms prior to 1967, nor is it adequate for the forms of mixed sovereignty that appeared after 2000 and 2008.

Moreover, “occupation” in contemporary academic usage is mainly a West Bank phenomenon. Gaza is a prison and a war zone, its residents collectively punished at regular intervals by a conquering military; the Golan is largely ignored. The temporariness that the occupation once implied has long since been solidified. But it persists in the sense of a future that is deferred and circumscribed by present geographies and possibilities.

Planning for the future in the present consists of material, ideological, and rhetorical projects and practices to shape what comes next. Doing it narrowly within the terms of the present conditions of Israeli control and Palestinian quasi-sovereignty orients those futures that might emerge. Its premise is the future, but it can mostly only function toward solidifying the present. Ideology here is an explanatory framework people have for their material conditions in the present and for orienting themselves to narratives about history and the future. What does it mean to plan for a future in a present that constantly pushes stability further into the distance, but in which states and capitalists are planning to enable specific forms of aspiration within it? In Palestine, planning is in large part a form of speculation that implies a future and a day after the occupation; yet, it does not attempt to bring that day forward. Nevertheless, institutions, places, and relations are being configured within plans in the present.

Hiba Bou Akar historicizes the mutual emergence of planning and development, and asks what can happen when planning narrows and “loses its ethical basis in socioeconomic development—that is, in efforts to address social inequality, poverty, spatial justice, and the redistribution of resources . . . it becomes little more than a tool for ordering space in the interest of those

in power, devoid of the normative attributes of equity and social justice that are usually attributed to planning practice” (2018, 147). The Palestinian context is different and in some ways more straightforward than Bou Akar’s Lebanon—planning is not about a war yet to come, but imagining a peace yet to come, that no one expects or believes will actually arrive. Planning for a privatized state means ideas of equity are already structured by class and access to aspiration; justice is distributed by the private sector and structured by its particular sense for what counts. Planning and consolidation in Lebanon are in part about protection against future losses. In both Palestine and Lebanon, planning is an ongoing process composed of messy practices and productive work being done that solidifies wider social and political economic relations.

At the scale of state formation, capital investment in the built environment enhances Israeli control as well as shrinks the possibilities to circumvent it. Targeted buildup as urban density means shrinking existing Palestinian space in terms of the possibilities for freedom of movement, association, and aspiration—limited as it is for Palestinians worldwide. The future capital seeks is one with constant growth. Deferral, perhaps the most consistent characteristic of the occupation, has in fact been a primary dynamic of Palestinian subjugation since the Mandate period: the British were to rule until the Palestinians matured enough to do it themselves yet actively destroyed the forms of governance that existed prior to it or would have made such self-rule possible. At the scale of political control of the Palestinian people within Historic Palestine, little has changed since then.

This is a book about those multiple formations of Palestine that occur within the language of temporariness or modern advancement. Occupation frameworks can sometimes obscure analysis of accumulation in favor of focus on the present conditions, and antioccupation analyses have often diverged from political economy. Instead of assuming separation and forms of occupation of the 1967 territories, I want to take the case of private development and housing to understand the productive aspects of global capital, of fixity and circulation, in Palestine.²

This is in large part also a book about the social and cultural logics of economic change. My goal is to reconcile local, regional, and worldwide scales of analysis in a political economic ethnography of private housing development in Palestine. In doing so, I hope to give a wider view of Palestine and West Bank politics today, to return capital accumulation to the anthropology of Palestine, and to understand state-form and state-scale economics more generally. I hope to draw a line that connects prior history to the ideas prev-

alent today to better explain what is happening in the contemporary period; to arrange rather than compose.

Fieldsite

On December 16, 2009, on a van ride between Ramallah and Bethlehem, I heard something quite strange on the radio. In between popular, nationalist songs, the DJ took phone calls, and listeners publicly greeted, congratulated, and wished their friends and families well. One man called about a friend's birthday, another shouted out to his hometown, and a third said he was calling from "the City of Rawabi." At the time of the call, that city's groundbreaking was months away, but the energy, idea, representation, and practical aspects had pierced the public imaginary and begun doing real work in the present. I began my exploration there: in Rawabi, an archetype and a place in the process of becoming. It is a massive new town nine kilometers north of Ramallah that has been under construction for over a decade. Supposedly it will come to house 40,000 "middle-class" Palestinians at a cost, by now, of nearly USD1.5 billion, mostly to the sovereign wealth fund of Qatar as well as to the Palestinian real estate developer Bashar Masri. Masri was educated in the Middle East and North America, and made his fortune as a developer in North Africa and as part of the aid apparatus in the West Bank. He has become a prominent public figure through Rawabi.³

Rawabi was announced at the 2008 Palestine Investment Conference, and today it is a place that ties together multiple economic, political, and social phenomena. At the 2010 conference, similar massive development projects had been planned, and Rawabi was the star, alongside Tony Blair, former US senator and peace envoy George Mitchell, and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad. Speakers referenced difficulties and instability, but emphasized investment as a political, nationalist, and humanitarian responsibility. One developer assured the assembled foreign and Palestinian capitalists that "there are returns to be made here." As one of the few noninvestors in the audience, I was surprised to hear the term "return" invoked in this register. Typically, when Palestinians refer to return, they mean the reversal of their exclusion from Palestine; they mean the return home from diaspora and exile. Politically, the idea is that Rawabi will "contribute calm" (Maan News 2015). An interlocutor of Masri's in the conservative *Jerusalem Post* argues, "What is needed is not more walls, but more Rawabis and more Bashar Masris" (Evyatar 2016). With state support and enormous size and scope, Rawabi ties together ideas of so-

cial and political stability, and welcomes the rest of the world to participate not through the moribund peace process, but as investors or buyers.

Between 2008 and 2017, I studied the state- and economy-building projects in the West Bank through Rawabi. It is both the vanguard and the cornerstone of a suite of changes to governance, the economy, and the land in Palestine carried out under the rubric of state building. Rawabi is more than an idea: it is a real location, produced through massive political economic interventions and changes, and it both represents and serves as the type of place where Palestinians increasingly hang ideas of their future, politics, and aspiration. New developments are places where stories written in future tense become demonstrably real in buildings that symbolize the future and growth (Searle 2016). Whether or not Rawabi succeeds or a state emerges, new forms of economy, aid, and governance might forever alter how Palestinians live in their homes and their homeland. Rawabi has garnered a lot of attention, but it is just one relevant or interesting aspect of these political economic developments; if not the most important, it is certainly the biggest. And the process of its coming into being makes it easy to see the widespread shift in intervention by actors who understand West Bank political problems to be potentially ameliorated by the deepening of contemporary capital relations. It is the practical application of the ideological work to make accumulation and economic development possible, logical, and sensible.

How does all of this touch the ground in Palestine? Housing and cities are physical manifestations of priorities and possibilities, sites where they are synthesized and combined. Large-scale development and the new city in particular is a place for emerging forms of governance and social life in Palestine. On the ground, the new city entails a few things: investment leading politics, the physical “spatialization of class” (Zhang 2010, 3), investment linking Palestinian individuals to markets in real but subtle ways, and the creation of a site that allows certain forms of politics and aspiration but disables others. The new city is a real place and form where people, ideas, and capital are reconciled; where society and common sense are reproduced. Within a shrinking territory, it helps establish precedents and models for the future of Palestine. In orienting international priorities toward economic aspiration, it renders other experiences outside of what counts or is politically solvable.

Rawabi is located on a previously empty and unprofitable hill in Area A, where Palestinians purportedly have civil and military control; surrounded by Area B under Palestinian civil and Israeli military control; and Area C

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INTRODUCTION ■ 9

(more than 60 percent of the West Bank) under Israeli control. As I show in subsequent chapters, Rawabi is a lens through which to see much wider processes. It could not exist without concerted effort by capitalists, NGOs, and politicians to establish the idea of its necessity; a state to enable new forms of economic practice and aid as well as new forms of land tenure; donors and investors to fund Rawabi on a massive scale; and people to live there. The PA state and institutions are not parts of a monolith, but on this issue they work with developers to shape government priorities for growth and capital accumulation. In the following chapters on planning and national priorities, I describe how movement at the top orients practice, even if it does not eradicate debate or disagreement. Not only can the PA work towards its goals for ideological and financial consistency, it incorporates many West Bank Palestinians through its scale as an employer (and through its ability to garnish wages for loan payments and prohibit its employees from certain forms of speech and protest). A significant focus is on bureaucrats and the employees tasked with carrying out government priorities. I do not mean to place undue burden or agency on them, but to try to trace the ways human activity is shaped by and produces wider contexts for ideology and practice, and how the PA and its allies in the private sector work to expand what is possible and who can benefit under current conditions.

Months and years before anyone had moved in, Rawabi was the site and embodiment of new forms of investment, personal aspiration, and political organization. It physically anchors new political economic ideas and priorities in the landscape. Moreover, Rawabi changes laws and sets precedents that enable ongoing interventions. Backed by international aid, the Palestinian Authority and Israel, along with the Palestinian capitalist class, are actively trying to create the kinds of economic and political stability necessary to insure ongoing profit and growth, organized by the idea of an eventual state. The process of state building—and what emerges around and through that process—is as relevant as whatever may or may not ultimately result. The state unfolds over time and emerges in, and makes and remakes, specific places and modes of production through the actions of various actors and coalitions. The form it takes is the outcome of the struggles and projects to form it. This is a perpetually forming state: the “condensation of the changing balance of forces in political and politically-relevant struggle” (Jessop 2014; Poulantzas 1980), rather than a static outcome. The aggregated practices of working to make a state, the ongoing cycle of political intervention, and the strategies organized around the idea of the state shape what is happening in Palestine and among Palestinians. And those practices orient what

might happen in the future. Markets are ideological projects as well as legal regimes; but they are produced through and with laws that govern more than economic practice. The seemingly exceptional Palestinian case illuminates general relationships between states, aid, and national economies. The Palestinian state is a hybrid of government, aid imperatives, and private initiative. Some aspects of state building are built on fantasy. But others are more exaggerated than in different kinds of state-scale political formations.

Coalitions of actors create new forms of economic life and market participation; they do not simply emerge from nowhere. They can exist in new places like Rawabi, where developers influence and cultivate consumers and incorporate participants. At the international scale, aid is being reconfigured as funding for the private sector *through* the government. In response to growing privatization and available credit, not to mention decades of exhausting political and social circumstances, consumers are taking on increased debt burdens for the chance to live in the new town. Those loans are backed by international aid organizations, insulating lenders as part of their political imperative to keep Palestine stable. Almost as in aspic, Palestine—the idea of Palestine, the administration of Palestine, Palestinians—is today suspended by and within Israeli political, economic, and geographic imperatives. Many forms of human intervention, international aid and global investment, local projects, and forms of agency work to differentiate Palestine and Israel yet maintain them as part of the same whole—one in which Palestine is a subordinate state, territory, and market within Israel. Private development as a form of state and economy building is one such project.

And that is why Rawabi became a big deal so far in advance of its physical manifestation; for different types of actors, interests, and classes, it has already become an idea and a site on which to cultivate new forms of political organization, economic investment, and class aspiration that had previously lacked clear forms or outlets. And, although there is constant movement, the process has a stabilizing function at the scale of its relationship with Israel. Rawabi fixes ideas from a specific moment in time on the ground, in the law, and in the polity, to orient the structure of possibilities for future initiatives and activity. As a mechanism for class stratification and accumulation, private housing—much of it debt-financed—is itself a site for international intervention. As such development projects become a national priority for the PA and donors, they are altering the experiences of those Palestinians inside and out who are unable to afford to participate or are otherwise outside its scope. Plans premised on class aspiration are potentially inclusive as well as terminally exclusive. Absent the right of return for Palestinians, and return

being contingent on affordability, class is a vector for return and a primary way diaspora relations to Palestine are being shaped.⁴ This is one unintended consequence for the nation.

Political Economy, Geography, and the Study of Palestine

State building in the West Bank comes out of the Oslo period, but its logics do not begin there. It is, I argue, part of a longer-term project to stabilize Palestine within Israel and to reconcile contradictory imperatives. First is the overarching Israeli imperative to control the Palestinian territories and to do so with as little labor and capital as possible. The earliest European Zionist settler colonists consciously imagined and produced a land without a people, an idea reiterated in practice and historiography that persists despite all evidence to the contrary. Jewish colonists knew they had much to gain from a subordinate and exploitable indigenous population, and they subjected the Palestinians to their power (Lockman 1996). Arab Palestinians and European Jewish Zionist colonists share intertwined histories and lifeworlds. Palestinians and Israelis are separated geographically and physically. They are separated by political formations—the occupation and otherwise—that necessitate specific forms of state and civilian power and authority. Yet there cannot be occupation without occupier, and the massive state structures and institutions that are produced within the occupying state—the generational political, racial, legal, military, and economic mechanisms to police the boundary—are coherent. They are constituted by and constitutive of the settlement, colonization, and occupation of Palestine. Empires are social formations and places (Wilder 2005); that is also true of settlement, state building, and occupation. Israelis and Palestinians are bound in place, and through occupation, by social, political, and economic relations. One of the implications of state building is orientation of work and energy around the assumption that it is possible to build Palestinian markets and institutions separate from Israel. But the context is messily cohesive and better understood through the wider lens of global political economies of settlement, colonialism, and accumulation rather than through an imaginary of separateness.

Central to the Palestinian historical imaginary prevalent in some anthropology and in much political writing is a vision of rural peasantry separate from Israel or the state. Although it might imply something anticapitalist, it does not engage capitalism as a process or set of social relations. And it does not enable broader analysis of the contemporary moment. In chapter 8, I trace that narrative and the ways it is shared and operationalized by both cap-

italist developers and their critics. It obscures something fundamental that historians such as Beshara Doumani (1995), Roger Owen (1993), and Alexander Schölch (1993) have long since demonstrated—Palestine is and has been incorporated into the world economy. It has a history of capital integration and competition, industrial production, money lending, land tenure and commoditization of land, capture of surplus production, and rural-urban economic relations.

Instead, the histories mobilized have too often been written through the logics of present fragmentation. Part of my goal here is to write against the ways that Oslo has been treated as a moment of rupture, or the occupation as a coherent framework or clearly comprehensible system. Narratives of progress and backwardness, rural and urban, and mechanisms for political and economic integration into the world are neither new nor reflective of the present realities. Many forms of economic practice and aspiration today may seem or be convincingly described as novel, but they have analogs, build upon the past, and putting them into a longer historical framework can illuminate possible directions for the future. Many histories of Palestine take Palestinians to be the objects rather than the subjects of history. There are often good, political, antioccupation reasons to do so, but the typical story accepts definitions of occupation that imply a kind of Palestinian innocence ruptured by the menace of Zionist colonization and modernity. Or it accepts the meaning of occupation in the terms of the contemporary material struggle for state.

In his study of China, Prasenjit Duara argues that while the territorial nation-state is shaped through relations in a worldwide system, representations of political community are shaped by the “transactions between historical narratives and the discourses” of the state itself (1995, 81). In *The Urban Revolution*, Henri Lefebvre (2003) discusses “the urban reality” and “the urban phenomenon” with its specific contours of space and time, but also the concomitant concepts, feelings, and impressions it brings with it. The Palestinian geographer Omar Tesdell (2019) often works against the common argument that “the world is now 50% urban,” responding that it means “the world is also 50% rural.” True enough, and what Lefebvre was talking about, and what I think the case of private housing development shows, is how they are bound through the same continual processes. The urban phenomenon has more generally shaped forms of economic and spatial consolidation and transition. Changes in Palestine in terms of dense housing are spatial questions; labor and reproduction and productive capacity questions; questions of social change and internal distribution. Urbanism is in part morphological, and the

urban phenomenon is part of the explanation for the town-country distinction. Moreover, the urban for Lefebvre means the substitution of customary norms by contractual obligations, so it is also about polity and governance—the relationships of people to place and to categorizations of human activity, potential, and power, as well as place-dependent labor and development. For him, the urban phenomenon is dialectical, and it means change, incorporation, and a much wider unity *through* that change. The urban is a logic that means consequent and relational alteration elsewhere—as a state emerges in Palestine through city-scale urban development and in service of investment in the landscape of Palestine, it also structures a polity and forms of incorporation beyond that investment.

With that in mind, capital accumulation, state building, and private development can be understood as related forms of political consolidation. Once again, they are not new. As part of the Ottoman reform process, land became visible through one of the first attempts to regularize title and create a land market (Owen 1993; Rashid Khalidi 1997). Other parts of Historic Palestine experienced massive dispossession of a rural peasantry through consolidation and market reforms. Early Zionist colonization relied on markets and economics. Palestinians were dispossessed as part of the capitalist accumulation process, which rendered land available for Zionists to purchase as they began to immigrate to Palestine in larger numbers. In all colonial and settler-colonial geographies, land is central as an idea, a mechanism for control and exclusion, and as a commodity. The Zionist historian Yossi Katz (1994) demonstrates how land sales were a vital part of early Zionist colonization of Historic Palestine. There has always been opacity in land markets; private ownership and property have long been parts of how Israeli land control has operated.

Racial separation is fundamental to the Zionist movement, and it too is bound up with processes of market creation and capital accumulation. British economic policy during the Mandate sought to encourage a Zionist industrial sector and contributed to building up more and more separate Jewish and Arab sectors. British support of Jewish immigration occurred in terms of both laissez-faire attitudes and active support through favorable tariffs and monopoly protection—favorable terms for accumulation for a class defined on the basis of its religion and ethnic origin. More specifically, the British allowed Zionists to discriminate against Arab Palestinians in hiring, which spurred the importation of a Jewish laboring class. A growing Jewish working class, which was better paid than Palestinian Arab workers, led to an increase in the cost of living in mixed areas and downward pressure on employed Palestinian laborers (who themselves secured social reproduction with peasant

subsistence). The growth of that Jewish working class further excluded Palestinians from participation in new labor markets, and manifest physically in patterns of housing, labor, and movement—the class, race, and spatial bases for a Zionist “state within a state” were created (B. J. Smith 1993).

Beyond labor, capacity for economic growth was inflected by racial and colonial politics, and there was a kind of simultaneous downward pressure on elite Palestinians and on Palestinian capital. Palestine experienced extremely rapid economic change, the emergence of an urban merchant class, and consequent proletarianization of the peasantry. New private property regimes under the British Mandate remade the landscape to enable as well as to limit the scope of Zionist land purchases. This changed ideas of land; it was a site of struggle in terms of ownership and property intertwined with racial and political claims, justice, and rights (Fakher Eldin 2008). Market creation and accumulation are social and political projects, but they have never been about absolute openness. Alongside growth, expulsion—of certain people, crafts, and forms of economic practice—has been central to the formation of global capitalism (Mathew 2016). As certain peoples are excluded, new practices penetrate social and economic life. One way to think about the new forms of building in Palestine is through the ways that Israeli political and territorial control—occupation and otherwise—has aided accumulation. Land in Palestine is empty for very clear reasons related to governance regimes and registration, military intervention, Israeli prohibitions, and so on. Yet, local Palestinians started to oppose the movement and transfers of ownership; Sherene Seikaly (2015) shows how a group almost entirely ignored in histories and historiographies of Palestine—an already established Palestinian bourgeoisie—combined accumulation with a nationalist project of “modern arrival” in the Mandate period. For the Palestinian bourgeoisie then as now, accumulation could be nationalist.

Once a wider perspective on land and state is adopted—one that emphasizes market relations, production, circulation, and class—it becomes clear, as Michael Fischbach (2003) points out, that 1948 was among other things an utterly massive, transformative redistribution of wealth from Palestinians to Jewish colonists and to the state.⁵

It is due to the prevalence of the moment of occupation and separation in historiography of Israel and Palestine—and the consequent sense of exceptionalism—that capitalism can sometimes come to seem like a new phenomenon. Palestine has been one of the most historically important places in the world during the biblical, colonial, and contemporary periods. Simply put, it has never been isolated. Second, if there is a moment when changes

to economic structure took material form in the West Bank, it may not have been around Oslo but rather in the early 2000s, during what the artist and geographer Samir Harb described to me as “the siege period.” The siege of the West Bank by the Israeli military led to a possibility and an opportunity to remake physical space and to open markets; during that period, the fantasy of a peace process morphed into ideological practices centered around markets as political solutions. And it was when changes to the political economic landscape and the built environment became visible, especially in Ramallah. The analytical point I hope to emphasize here is that linkages and histories produce the context in which further changes can occur and in which individuals’ capacities for life and social reproduction take place alongside and through modes of production.

The differences between the images and renderings of wealth and aspiration in the new city and the general reality for most Palestinians under occupation are stark and obvious. But Rawabi is a part of the work being done to make one seem like the other. In the West Bank and with consequences for Palestine and Palestinians, a new city is being made in the image of a political promise and future quite unlike the long-term lived experiences of its prospective residents. Housing is being designed and governed in service of economic and social life formed in relation to an open market and in ways that could only contain a small number of Palestinian subjects of Israel. Modernist and state-scale planning, and architectural programs, are created in service of a specific kind of politics around opening and integrating the Palestinian market and reframing national political agency as market participation; antioccupation political rhetoric and capital accumulation are bound through this project and in this place.

City-State

How then to locate and study the tangled mess of Palestine today? First of all, a kind of state building is happening. And it is happening in the present context, within the contemporary forms of political control, and creating the foundation for a future consonant with them. Second, a context in which there is free movement of capital and information, but not for goods or people, can tell us about neoliberalism and the necessary roles states have in organizing space for capitalist production, distribution and accumulation. Drawing on Lefebvre (2009), what I have in mind here is a state mode of production. As a new state-scale market organization emerges in the West Bank, this adds up to a political, social, and economic situation that appears

as a frontier for capitalist investors and a project for opening and integrating the Palestinian market into more general circuits of capital circulation. Socially, it has the potential to reorient national political agency as market participation. It is also monopolistic, given the political and legal institutions forming around state building, and the precedents and barriers it creates for subsequent interventions.

West Bank Palestinians' relationship to Palestine substantially changed after the 1993 Oslo Accords and the PLO leadership returned from exile in Tunis and elsewhere. In 1994, the Palestinian National Authority was created and was expected to function for an interim term of five years, during which time negotiators would iron out the "final status" issues of borders, settlements, Jerusalem, and the Palestinian right to return. More than twenty-five years later, the PA still exists, and final status issues remain unresolved. Oslo also created the idea of a Palestinian interim government operating with meaningful sovereignty at some later date. Second, it carved the West Bank into the A, B, C archipelago of territorial control.

In 2007, in the midst of that holding pattern, the former International Monetary Fund (IMF) official Salam Fayyad became minister of finance, partially at the behest of donor countries. Later that year, at the time of the split between Fatah and Hamas, the Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas appointed him prime minister. The last time the Palestinian Legislative Council convened was also in 2007. The split and Fayyad's ascendance were the basis for new kinds of pro-privatization initiatives in the West Bank, and governing could happen relatively unencumbered by law, in effect setting precedent as it went along. Fayyad focused on calling in capital and encouraging investment and reform at the national scale. He established an economic agenda based on the need for profit and growth and worked toward a national economy that would encourage stability, investment, and ultimately the state. In a celebratory column on Palestinian moderation and economic growth, Thomas Friedman (2009) coined the term "Fayyadism" to describe it.⁶ But it is a mistake to give Fayyad all the credit or the blame. The year 2007 marks an important shift in the political economic orientation of Palestine: it was the year that many large-scale private economic development and stabilization projects were formulated.⁷

If history is a question of narrative and representation, and it shapes the land, ideas of the land, and what might be possible on that land, then representation and representational space is vital. Representation is an important aspect of this analysis: What needs to happen to make interventions into physical space seem possible and coherent? What work needs to be done?

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Who benefits now and in the future? The Palestinian case allows me to shed light on the ways economics is understood as a means for political stabilization and improvement. Such a context, where a territorial state is unlikely to emerge, demonstrates crucial features of the neoliberal state and the ways states can organize markets even without production or well-defined territorial relationships. Ideas, institutions, and practices of state can be productive even without territorial sovereignty. Moreover, the geographies of political and economic control, occupation and otherwise, enable new forms of intervention and accumulation. In my analysis, I aim to go up to the general scale and political organization, and down to the landscape, and tell stories that are at once discrete and connected. Taken together, they help clarify the bigger picture in Palestine today. Although the concept of scale has ebbed and flowed in human geography, I want to keep and maintain a basic part of it. Scale is spatially productive, and it implies, utilizes, and is constituted by political and geographic interrelations. Neil Smith describes the urban scale, the scale of centralization; the global scale, the scale of the world market; and the nation-state (1984, 189). The erosion of the nation-state through the world market has multiplied roles and capacities for governance and economic organization at the urban scale, and cities have been made and remade as objects and containers of economic and social activity. Investment in housing, I believe, is a place where general dynamics of spatial production and Palestine's strange market and politics are apparent. Moreover, it is a local node for regional and worldwide economic processes and for making and remaking ideas about economic, cultural, and political universality.

In this period of globalization and absent a national economy or clear nation-state territory, city-scale governance is increasingly important, and the emerging state may not have a straightforward relationship to its territory. The nested state political organization in Palestine emerges upon, by, and for the benefit of the market—not simultaneously, as in Karl Polanyi's (2012) formulation, but because one necessitates the other. Capitalism implies, seeks out, and produces markets, and it necessarily incorporates different territories in different ways. The universalizing tendencies of capitalism do not equalize or render uniform.

Capitalism and neoliberalization are worldwide, dynamic processes of unequal incorporation. As Andy Clarno (2017) has described it, neoliberalism is a context-specific process of political economic and social change. It is, after all, a form of capitalism. In this text I emphasize features like accumulation, differentiation, aspiration, and so on, rather than using the broader category as shorthand; it seems more fruitful to parse than to lump. The scholarly lit-

erature on neoliberalism is huge, and a handful of features are most relevant to my study. First, privatization is part of the continuous formation of the state, governance, and state–civil society relations, and it is often a response to administrative and political problems (Hibou 2004). Second, neoliberal forms of capitalism extract labor value but do not replenish social reproductive capacity either through wages, types of infrastructure development, or state forms of aid such as health care (Peck 2010). Third, the reproduction of labor power has cultural and social dimensions (N. Smith 1984). Finally, the nation-state, while it never was totally self-sustaining or bounded, is now almost entirely a node in a global political economy (Harvey 2007). The inherent capitalist imperatives for accumulation presuppose certain kinds of states and relations between them; neoliberalism means the responsive reformation and repurposing of the state in line with those imperatives.⁸

The state in this account is an ongoing question. What that means is that as the idea of a state is forming, it does what states always do—draws boundaries between people and the state, between the public and private spheres. It reiterates, strengthens, and realizes the idea of a state itself. If the state is political power in territorial form (Jessop 2016), I want to separate state power from sovereignty, for reasons that are obvious in the case of the subordinate authority presently managing state building in Palestine. To dig down a bit further, I want to emphasize jurisdiction as a mode of the exercise of legal power over people and population in place (Pasternak 2017). Here, the ways state power and jurisdiction exist in the absence of sovereignty do not weaken the idea of a state; in the contemporary global political economy the state is now more than ever a mode of managing and organizing power and possibility. And if a primary reason for having a state in the first place is to operate in relation to the network of nation-states, then contemporary forms of communication, capital flow, uneven development, and labor mobility mean that a state can operate through market organization and concomitant political power over local market participants. It does not require strict boundaries. One of the primary mechanisms of the state is to produce the idea of itself as it obscures its operation and fundamental aspects; it is a historically-constituted social fact (Mitchell 1999; Abrams 1988; Trouillot 2003; Watson 1990; Allen 1990).

Moreover, the state is the scale of political organization that operates within what Bob Jessop calls the “world of states” (2016, 194). In this period, it does not at all disappear or lessen its hold over a polity; instead, it pivots. As for the state in the West Bank, I show one part: how capital comes in and becomes fixed as a way to circumvent the political stagnancy of this particu-

lar territory and translate it into nodes, infrastructures, and political relations that enable and ensure the local necessities and global relations for capitalist accumulation. The world of states is coproduced by, within, and through states themselves and is part of the continuous management of the relations between state, territory, and market. Like Karl Marx's commodity, it is an object that not only conceals relations, but translates them into common form to enable communication, circulation, and motion (Marx 1990).

This is what state building means in Palestine: the creation of a scale of economic practice that replaces liberation and moral claims with modernization so as to stabilize local jurisdiction over a territory within Israel. The economy has not replaced the state, but the state project is one to create a national economy that can be made in lieu of a state.⁹ But state and market are parts of the same whole, the same ensemble of characteristics, and one could never supplant the other. Today, and in ways that make sense in the contemporary global political economy, the West Bank state can be weighted almost entirely toward producing a market. I use language of accumulation, aggregation, and solidification to try to understand how these things come together in this place, and what it can tell us about general phenomena. Accumulation is an individual question, but it can also be much larger and organize political forms and geographies. This state is an accumulation strategy (Jessop 2014); in Harvey's terminology following the French Regulation School, it is a regime of accumulation that is at once economic and political, but just as importantly, a social, cultural, and human relation (Harvey 1990; Aglietta 2016).

My point here: I emphasize the imperatives of accumulation that drive the state-building process and marketization through urban development. It is piecemeal, it is not monolithic, it is in part spatial, and the ways that combinations of its attributes appear are not inevitable. It is a "worldwide" process rather than a unified global phenomenon (Lefebvre 2003; N. Smith 2002). It is a process of becoming. Critical work on Palestine has tended to emphasize capitalists over capitalism, and development over class. I hope to explain the modes of exercise of power rather than its location (Roitman 2013).

Contemporary ethnography has tended to emphasize messiness and contingency at the expense of wider phenomena, and recent economic anthropology has often paid more attention to moral or ideological economies or questions of historical development than to social and structural relations under capitalism. There has long been a greater ease assuming difference in context; consequently, differences are framed in ways that demonstrate a lack of structure. As a question of method, there is, I believe, a way to understand structural links and social life without being overdetermined, but it requires

assumptions about human activity and social reproduction. The strange exceptionality of Palestine, both real and as presented, helps clarify the complex interaction between local context and dynamic processes of capital accumulation and market creation.

If state building is an explicit goal intertwined with economic liberalization and market creation, how does the state come to exist, and in what form? The state emerging in Palestine—here shorthand for both the process of change organized in its name as well as the set of political institutions for managing the polity—is part of what accounts for the longevity of the complex political and ideological forces lumped into the “occupation” terminology. On multiple occasions during my years of fieldwork, I was told that “there is no state,” that it is a “fantasy,” or worse, it is “bullshit.” While each is correct in its way, those descriptions are partial. The state, even if it is fantastical, is formed through market logics and solidifies not only as a set of laws and institutions that manage things like infrastructure and development, but as a scale of political and economic relations with Israel and other states. It establishes and formalizes priorities at the scale of the state. Within that state, the idea frames—but does not determine—social relations among a people and a polity.

Political rationality takes the form of the state process in the West Bank, subjects are incorporated, and new laws are written to govern practices and relationships. In nonsovereign Palestine, law is malleable, often more descriptive than proscriptive, but the laws that coalesce as part of the state have material effects. Housing is one place where these multiple dimensions of political, economic, and social life can be understood; it is simultaneously an effect of and precursor for much wider relations. Drawing on Antonio Gramsci’s framework, Louis Althusser (2006) describes those aspects that are part of the state but operate primarily through ideology rather than repression. Crucially, these “ideological state apparatuses”—the media, schools, family, political parties, and so on—are part of how the state becomes obvious to its subjects and reproduces existing social and political economic relations. For Althusser, social and cultural organization is fundamental to how state power, distinguished from a repressive state apparatus, operates. Analytically, a clean separation between public and private is impossible here and anywhere else. Housing is fundamental for establishing the political and cultural contexts for social life and reproduction, in providing shelter for people, and to shaping conditions for jurisdiction. Targeted private developments like Rawabi are produced as the image of political economy at the scale of markets and the network of national economies, manifested into the landscape, and productive of future capacities there.¹⁰

Charles Tilly (1990) famously described the state in Europe as a form of organized crime, and what he meant was that state formation involved protection, violence, and extraction in service of capital accumulation. States also formalize legal relations in part to establish geographical and economic consistency and predictability. One of the primary ways this happens between Israel and Palestine is through laws that formalize geographical separation *within* Israel. One of the important outcomes of housing in the West Bank today is its practical elaboration of jurisdiction. Jurisdiction, as Shiri Pasternak explains, is about how authority is established and managed in ways separate from sovereignty. She points toward a question Harvey asks about how “the territorial logics of power, which tend to be awkwardly fixed in space, respond to the open spatial dynamics of endless capital accumulation?” She argues that “forces of accumulation and state formation that seek to integrate Indigenous lands into the capitalist economy have in turn been shaped by Indigenous assertions of jurisdiction of their lands” (2017, 26). If state power consists of the capacity to organize and order relations of production (Gilmore 2007), what happens when the most authorized indigenous articulations become about formalizing and stabilizing politics through markets and state building? When the question for Palestinian governance becomes about how to invest and profit in this unstable environment? How do these changes inflect social life and change?

In the West Bank, the fluid relationships that neoliberal capital and states have to territories and national markets are not fundamentally at odds with the present conditions of occupation, military rule, and colonial control. Moreover, state- and economy-building projects work to create stability at the scale of the national economy and the relationship with Israel (upward), but they may distribute instability socially (downward). As a question of capitalism and neoliberalism, the territorial state was successful . . . until it stopped being so. Capitalism is both crisis prone and resilient; the ways that it regulates itself and overcomes contradictions are sites for analysis of its persistence and ongoing formation (Boyer 1990; Boyer and Drache 2005). Power is exercised as a series of endless patches on a tire. But the wheel keeps moving. Unintended consequences continuously appear as both new problems and new opportunities. In *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, Perry Anderson (2013) suggests that histories of above are no less important than histories from below. I hope that this ethnography of the above emphasizes the continual production of the state and the local contexts in which a general political phenomenon is formed and reformed.

Housing and the Topography of Class

The PA state is suspended within an Israel that works to maintain its limited practical responsibility to the Occupied Territories, while maximizing its territorial control, jurisdiction, and sovereignty. For the PA in the West Bank, there is a body of state law forming around state practice, practical authority, and moderate independence—jurisdiction and increased stability. For developers like Masri, occupied Palestine presents either a “ticking time bomb, or an opportunity” for accumulation (Cuen 2017). Housing is a form of fixed capital, and those spaces that dominate and shape everyday life are made through and in the image of capital under occupation.¹¹ Value is appropriated and created in space and spatial arrangements. If urban environments require and necessitate fixed capital, and if they incorporate people—people who live real lives beyond the abstraction with which they are targeted as consumers or through national plans—then the scale of human habitation is bound to imperatives, ideology, and movements of capital. Worldwide and international political economy and events at multiple scales can bear directly on individuals’ lives.

In complicated and murky ways, international aid has also been reoriented as investment, providing loan guarantees that insulate Palestinian banks from potential default. This, in turn, makes foreign investment in housing development feasible—risk is minimized in the name of political and economic development. Attempts to create stability in a colonized territory through foreign investment, class consolidation, and capital accumulation lead to little change in the broader context of political and territorial control, but increasingly orient individual practice toward class aspiration and servicing debt. As ideas about open markets inflect government practice and form the basis for new government institutions, those ideas materialize in plans and the stuff of housing developments. Mundane, everyday qualities of life are produced through wider political economic and social relations. Housing is as much a commodity and vehicle for accumulation and circulation as a place for people to live (Madden and Marcuse 2016). Given a PA focus on international investment over local capital, and the distorting and separating effects it has on the Palestinian economy (Samara 2000), what happens to the dynamics of control, nation, and state when Palestinian and foreign capital come together? Forms and ideas about politics—empowerment and resistance—change along with and through the wider context (Kuttab 2010).

Adam Hanieh (2002, 2008, 2013a), Toufic Haddad (2016), and others have charted the complex connections that Arab capitalists and certain wealthy

families have to different regional political regimes and the ways they work toward ongoing accumulation. For Hanieh, it is through spatially productive and regionally and internationally oriented market building; and for Haddad, this is through neoliberal state- and peace-building efforts. Tariq Dana describes the role that Palestinian capitalists have had in shaping the national political movement, through funding and political mediation, but who have, since Oslo, become beneficiaries of the occupation. He describes how PA monopoly protection and support of accumulation through banking reform “enables capitalists to pressure the PA” (Dana 2014).

This is true, and taking the PA as a moving target—with actors and interests continuously shaped through a different scale of market imperatives—shows both pressure and cooperation. My goal here is less to define class and interest than to look at how ideas and priorities are generalized, established, and made meaningful through interventions and plans. Class is an ideology, an identity, and a set of practices that shift along with politics and modes of production (Bhattacharya and Vogel 2017). Palestine itself changes as ideas about the future are incorporated into the landscape and as new spatial arrangements take off, start to exist, or otherwise gain legitimacy.

Investment into private housing for a burgeoning middle class implies questions of social change and class orientation. There is little consensus on what exactly the “middle class” consists of in Palestine. In an interview, the sociologist Jamil Hilal told me that 38 percent of Palestine is “middle class” as defined by a unity of cultural values. I have also heard the argument that, in the absence of productive sectors and without a working class, *all* Palestinians are middle class. There is also the opposite argument that, given the economic difficulties and occupied economy, it is not worthwhile to describe *any* Palestinians as middle class. Where does that leave us?

Hilal outlines the ways the Palestinian middle class emerged under the Mandate, was stagnant for decades under Israeli de-development, and is re-emerging in the present, with difficulty and barriers imposed by the current iterations of Israeli settler-colonial imperatives (2006, 2014). Although it is vague, the “middle class” invoked via development means essentially two things: first, it refers to the kinds of educated people who live mostly in Ramallah and who work in the PA or development sectors (or are potential employees of the high-tech sector long-desired by the same classes and actors brought together in the Rawabi project). Second, and perhaps more importantly for my account, it refers to a potential or aspirational middle class, the people targeted by Rawabi and people with the desire to orient themselves, their families, and their lives in relation to the political, economic, and con-

sumerist promises that Rawabi makes. The idea of Rawabi as a private form of governance, and the fact of its existence, provides a site for the spatialization of a middle class defined through it.

Moreover, middle class is the population that is targeted as a class, produced by and through interventions that enable it. Within a local node of global political economy, class is being made in an environment in which labor, wage, and property ownership are not determinative in ways they might be under different state-scale political economies. Because of political instability and lack of production, in an environment where public sector employment, remittances, and development aid are foundational, place and changing social relations are crucial for understanding class. Even where there are already-formed states to speak of, these problems are exacerbated by neoliberal governance schemes in which states no longer prioritize social reproduction. Here as elsewhere, political economy requires a concept of class that emphasizes relations and the cultural and social aspects of circulation and fixity.

In her “Vagabond Capitalism and the Necessity for Social Reproduction,” Cindi Katz (2001) points out that, under forms of global production, as production and social reproduction are decoupled, social reproduction nevertheless must occur, and must happen in those places people find themselves:

Social reproduction is fleshy, messy, and indeterminate stuff of everyday life. It is also a set of structured practices that unfold in dialectical relation with production, with which it is mutually constitutive and in tension. Social reproduction encompasses daily and long-term reproduction, both of the means of production and the labor power to make them work. At its most basic, it hinges upon the biological reproduction of the labor force, both generationally and on a daily basis, through the acquisition and distribution of the means of existence, including food, shelter, clothing, and healthcare. (Katz 2001, 711)

Katz, in turn, offers the research strategies of topography and topographical knowledge, and the political potential of counter-topographies. In a Palestine where housing is a primary aspect of state-scale political economy and mode of production, and when housing profitability depends on filling it with people who can afford it, new housing becomes a site of a much wider form of class reproduction—mode of production appears as a place, container, and site of social relations. Fragmentation of the Palestinian territories greatly affect labor migration and labor markets (Farsakh 2005), but it also presents an opportunity for investment in physical space and aspiration. Thus, Hilal’s

“unity of cultural values” is illuminating precisely because class is not a fixed entity, but shifts in relation to wider social and political economic changes in Palestine, and through interventions like housing developments that presuppose, need, or cultivate certain forms of class cultural values. For real estate developers, the middle class means single family homebuyers, but also a form of urbanization and vernacular (J. Hilal and El-Sakka 2015).

Recent literature on political economy coming from Palestine tends to fall into two main sets. The first is the critical work I have drawn on here and throughout, on the current condition in Palestine that works to aggregate a class analysis through the deformations and peculiarities of the occupation. The other is policy-oriented analysis undertaken in concert with NGOs and guided by considerations of development, lack of development, and political barriers to development in Palestine. There, class is not often central, but when it does come in, its composition is assumed or stable, ancillary to national development. Part of the reason for the focus on development rather than class might be the legacy of a national movement that purposefully subsumed questions of differentiation and stratification to national problems. Disunities would be dealt with after the occupation ends. When class is discussed through Oslo and returnee capital, it is itself framed as a critique of Oslo and as a deformation of the national movement, a skewed form of development that produced internal differentiation and stratification. It is a discussion that occurs from the top-down and focuses on the petit bourgeoisie and capitalist classes—the most visible and expanding classes post-Oslo—and their political economic relations to Israel.

A more complex rendering emerges when political economic relations to Israel are treated also as part of Palestinian class composition. Ali Kadri (2014), Toufic Haddad (2016), and Ghazi Surani (2009) suggest that the petit bourgeoisie emerged as a kind of comprador response to the political situation, while working classes shifted toward selling their labor to Israel. Surani makes several astute arguments: that the occupation has economic and lifestyle affects; that it is a socioeconomic relation; and that Oslo was not a moment of rupture in the occupation but one that enabled a shifting and malleable conception of class, especially among a nonproductive middle class. Gilbert Achcar’s (2018) outline of Marx in this context pushes toward the argument that the forms of productive relations are themselves a barrier to development. And Raja Khalidi (2015) more hopefully argues that a nationalist bourgeoisie has extra-economic interests that can more actively aid development.

Class analysis and a focus on internal differentiation demonstrate that

economics are not simply problems of national development, but are also social relations among Palestinians. They are intertwined and constitutive, and political economy appears as a contextual social—cultural, value—relation. This is starting to become more visible with a resurgence of Marxist political economy in the Middle East (e.g., *Bidayat Magazine* 2018) that treats class structure as context-dependent and the outcome of politics, violence, and geographic relations. Such an approach can join and elaborate earlier discussions of class and labor in Palestine (Mansour 2012; Farsakh 2005) that focus not on development but on the intersection of war and colonization with capital. In his early work on agricultural labor and the de- and re-peasantization process in Palestine, Salim Tamari (1983) provides several crucial insights. First, the fluid land regime works as a form of protectionism for the Jewish market and to subordinate local Palestinian capital. Palestinian proletarianization thus tends to be at the scale of the national division of labor with regard to Israel. These trends are still evident, and tenure and landholding—property—are vectors for Israeli territorial imperatives.

Politics of landownership and markets inflect Palestinian class structure; today, the global apparatus of conflict has enabled a capitalist class in Palestine with an outward orientation and capacity to create new markets there. Internally, there is still a continual process of class building and constitution and reconstitution interceded by colonization. The topography of class is the topography of ownership and accumulation within the dynamics of Israeli settler-colonial, political, and territorial differentiation. For West Bank Palestinians, that differentiation is also the topography of both permissible growth and future aspiration, as well as consequent barriers to either growth or aspiration. In my account, class is not static; it is the context-dependent and continuous mutual production of labor, ideas, desires, and economic capacities vis-à-vis new markets in a Palestine subordinate to Israel. The middle class as a debtor class is framed through market growth and development in housing, planned and invested into existence. But growth is also a framework for both national development and personal aspiration and desire.

Politics, Stability, and Accumulation

Developers work to engage the global economy ostensibly in support of the Palestinian nation through their housing development project. Masri often presents himself as a “visionary,” a brave nonconformist against Israeli barriers, against the PA for failing to live up to its obligations and sometimes against Palestinians for their incapacity to understand what he is doing. He

has railed specifically against “left wing living rooms” for making his project difficult (Monni 2017), as well as against the Israelis for failing to establish a truly open market. Masri and the Rawabi marketing department have promoted the hashtag *#ننتحدى العالم* (#WeDefytheWorld). He is quite open about wanting to make money as one part of his politics: “We want to make money,” he says. “But more importantly, we want to make a better surrounding and life for our people. We want to inspire young people and give them opportunity” (Howard 2017).

Rawabi is a form of fixed capital and an idea in formation. It is an idea that supports capital ties between Israelis and Palestinians. The developers have close relations with Israel and liberal Jewish supporters. Masri, who became quite famous as the development’s public face, is deeply engaged with managing perceptions of Rawabi and himself. He speaks regularly with a range of supporters and stakeholders abroad and in Israel. Locally he has had public disputes with boycott and antinormalization youth activists, and in interviews he has blamed Palestinians for the lack of progress (Hamdan 2018) or the PA for failing to meet its obligations under their memorandum of understanding (MOU). Andrew Ross (2019) outlines rumors that Masri has long had obscure business dealings with Israel. Masri is adamant that he does not negotiate with Israel as a private businessman, but only through his position as a PA appointee. If contemporary political economic logics emphasize the transfer of economic forms into governance, where is the difference? Rawabi overlaps with the government in many ways, not least when negotiations for developers mean concessions elsewhere in the West Bank.

As economic development stands in for the state, why bother with the peace process at all? The answer is twofold. The peace process organizes relationships between Palestine and Israel, maintains the occupation, and suspends and sustains the market. Here as elsewhere, capital needs a state to organize free markets in relation to one another. Rather than equalizing Palestinian and Israeli markets, the occupation manages their inequality. Masri, the PA, and Israelis are working through Rawabi to project an image of a Palestine in which they would like to intervene, and subsequently intervening and working to produce that Palestine. The geography of Palestine and the peace process have enabled these actors to politicize “modern arrival” in service of accumulation within the language of an eventual state.

For real estate developers and their allies in government, what they are doing is new and important; it is a radical break. The opposition, Palestinian and otherwise, often also describes privatization as somehow a new imposition on the land and polity. My sympathies are with those who do not

view indebtedness and privatization as adequate to national politics. But in similar ways, both sides are nearsighted. Accumulation and appropriation are not new. One common version of the imposition critique is to describe Rawabi as a settlement, a type of building unsuitable to Palestine. Opponents look at its style and position on a hilltop and compare it to Israeli typology. They are correct in one respect: the Israelis pioneered homebuilding alongside state building as a strategy of land defense, something Rawabi also claims to be doing. Yet such a critique absolves Palestinian capitalists for their role in shaping the wider Palestinian political economy, and it minimizes the aspirations and desires many Palestinians have for freedom and stability through ownership. It displaces an analysis to rhetoric and aesthetics. The occupation seems as pervasive as ever and stock in Palestine is trending upward; capital is being called in; and laws are written so that more and more credit is offered (Wainer 2018). Credit incorporates ordinary Palestinians into projects like Rawabi. It is heavily backed and suspended within Israel, but who covers individual loans if projects fail to materialize in the intended way? And will the economy collapse? In a video that circulated very widely on Facebook in the summer of 2017, Palestinians visiting Rawabi asked: “Is this freedom? Could you afford it?” What constitutes success or failure from this position, when occupation is not a barrier to business, if you happen to be in the right business? Capital is not an external form imposed on Palestine, but a more general set of imperatives into which Palestine is unevenly incorporated. I try to describe the messy and complicated ways these imperatives appear on the ground in Palestine and how they might shape it in the future.¹²

Encouraging class aspiration in smaller swaths of Palestine makes it possible to map a topography of class and safety in contrast to other parts of Palestine. In his study of private land registration in the West Bank, anthropologist Paul Kohlbry (2019) argues that individual market relations contradict collective Palestinian territorial ambition. But not exclusively: as representations circulate, Rawabi and projects like it give form to those representations and collective logics. Architects Sandi Hilal and Alessandro Petti have pointed out that in Palestine, like other places under repressive regimes, home life becomes a sort of commons (2018). Home life is being transformed as a scale for smaller forms of collectivity, and at the scale of the state, homes are ancillary to the other benefits that housing provides.¹³ Housing is a general category and a question of fixed capital and commodification, but also fundamentally of representation and social reproduction. Needless to say, this raises questions about the limits of politics in a private city under occupation where planners emphasized discussions of the planned community in Columbia,

Maryland, and modernist architect Le Corbusier just as much as the upscale clothing retailer Zara, technologically advanced 4-dimensional movie theaters, and the Israeli settlement Modi'in.

Confusion arises in the Palestinian case when such politics contradict and overwrite nationalist politics. But nationalist politics cannot be assumed to be coherent, static, local questions. Characteristically as well as rhetorically, global capitalism—through its emphasis on liberalism, openness, and universality—is presented here as a kind of freedom, something Neil Smith (2003) described as the universalism embedded in the empire of capitalism. In a global context where value can be more easily appropriated through circulation and the production of space than through commodity production; in a local context in which occupation presents barriers to both, it might be both logical and transformative to see Palestinian politics increasingly attached to worldwide economic questions than to local political ones. How do these logics take hold politically among Palestinians, in the landscape, and achieve coherence? How is it that flourishing development exists within the same framework as violent repression?

Promissory Note

Palestine is not currently a territorially sovereign state and is unlikely to end up as one. One task for neoliberalism is to eradicate institutions of state and enhance the idea of the state as a relation between itself and others. In a worldwide context of uneven geographical division of labor, a neoliberal state—a state-scale of political and market governance—in a Palestine that necessarily lacks coherent territory or much national production makes a kind of sense. In its separation from Israel, the West Bank is already a scale of organization and, given subordinate market relationships within Israel, a national-scale market. If neoliberal state building means aggressively emphasizing markets and global economic links over political or territorial control, not only is nothing else suited to the Palestinian context, a nonterritorial state is a coherent outcome of neoliberal practice. International actors, Palestinian capitalists, foreign governments, the PA, and Israel are working in concert to imagine, make, and remake into existence the kind of Palestine in which they would like to intervene. This approach raises two questions that Neil Smith (1984) has asked of other contexts: What does capitalism do to geography, and what can geography do for capitalism?

Those questions drive the story I am trying to tell. It is a complicated one about convoluted, intertwined economic, political, representational, and so-

cial logics that operate at multiple geographical scales. General phenomena and things that happen far from Palestine directly impact life there. Despite the ways the occupation has often been understood as an outlier or world-historical exception—the last colonial context—this is as true of Palestine as anywhere else. Capital depends on certain configurations of state form and produces context-dependent versions of them. The state has always been intertwined with capital markets, and public-private partnerships might be contemporary language for the same kinds of political economic relations at the heart of colonialism, settler colonialism, and enclosure (Mironova and Stein 2018). With this in mind, a globally linked, occupied market state is being produced out of stateless Palestine in ways that make the relationships of market and governance to geography, territory, and polity most visible. Within a settler-colonial state, what better form of local governance could the settler regime want than one that does not affect the sovereign state, allows territorial and practical control, creates new opportunities for accumulation in Israel, and does not fully or equally incorporate native populations? With Israeli imperatives and the scale of markets in mind, the condition of governance in Palestine looks less like an anomaly in the present; it shares attributes with other contexts of stripped-down autonomy, such as Detroit under emergency management or the sovereignty of nearly state-scale governance in peacekeeping missions. It is a state based not on a territorial outcome, but the continual process toward something that Nasser Abourahme (2019) has described (in terms indebted to Mezzadra and Neilson 2013) as a post austerity shift from the sovereign moment of decision-making to the duration of management.

Palestinians, and the Palestinian middle class, are the people defined through intervention and the intertwined capacities for social reproduction—the material and social practices through which people reproduce themselves on a daily and general basis and through which the social relations and material bases of capitalism are renewed (C. Katz 2001). Those things happen in and through places. Consequently, class and production have to be taken together and conceived broadly alongside physical space. In an environment where so much is about the land, the built environment on that land is also a topography of class, a way to map capacity for aspiration and what it means for the future of land elsewhere in Historic Palestine. In the sense of building and allowing classes to emerge safely in narrowly specific parts of the West Bank, new ties to place emerge—through debt but also through desire and ideology—at the expense of others. Class is spatialized through new forms of building, and opportunities for return and for a relatively free Palestin-

ian life are narrowed; Ramallah and its suburbs flourish as other Palestinian places are disinvested, cut off, or ignored. This is a messy argument about a messy situation, but it is how place, political economy, and class aspiration are bound in Occupied Palestine today.

Over the following ten chapters, I approach the problems of state and development in Palestine from different angles, aggregating accounts into an analysis of semicoherent structural forces. First, I set the scene and introduce Rawabi. I give a sense of its scale, its placement on the landscape, and some of the experience of its emergence in the hills beyond Ramallah and Birzeit.

In the next two chapters, I present data drawn from dozens of interviews in English and in Arabic carried out with Rawabi and other private developers and financiers. I outline some of the ways that, in the context of structural and legal instabilities, they are working toward an open market for development. As international aid increasingly supports privatization, the PA increasingly serves as a funding agency for private developers, enabling those developers to extract public funding for private projects. Moreover, working specifically through housing, developers seek to create both demand and supply. They hope to represent and create new sensibilities among first-time buyers and to reconfigure people's relationships to their homes and to the land, as well as to draw potential buyers into developments through debt financing. Large-scale development is fundamental for reforming markets in Palestine—operating at a large scale, and by consolidating huge tracts of land, developers and the PA work to alter laws governing land tenure and to create a capital basis for a financial sector.

In chapter 4, I draw on Anthony Coon's (1992) work and describe the ways that planning operates as two overlapping spheres of control, one Jewish, the other Arab. After Oslo, the PA became the overseer of this framework, consolidating it under its authority and formally subsuming the whole apparatus within the occupation structure. Confusion and opacity are part of the legal system and the context for privatization. The law is something actors invoke and reference, but "the law" is vague and often contradictory. There is authority and power held by the PA under the law, but to reform laws or to call something "legal" or "illegal" is as much about strategy, practice, and prerogative as it is about jurisprudence. Planning is part of the reform process, enabling both development in the present and drawing previous bodies of law into the structure of possibility for future plans and relationships to the environment.

Chapters 5 and 6 focus on the PA ministries of Public Works and Housing (MOPWH); Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC); and Local

Government (MOLG) and their different roles in supporting and implementing Rawabi. I build on the second chapter's analysis of how the private sector presupposes an open market, to look at the ways the Palestinian Authority both actively supports and has been reconfigured by private development projects. An important aspect of how housing emerges in the West Bank is through constant document production and the idea of a housing shortage and the subsequent national priority to develop affordable housing. The shortage in Palestine is not a dearth of housing, but of affordability and priority; housing shortages and shortages more generally emerge from social relations and material inequalities, not absolute physical facts. The specific type of middle class targeted by real estate developers is one willing to maintain a standard of living through debt, and that middle class is assumed—both assumed to exist and assumed as an identity—and made in terms of worldwide norms of middle-class attainment and aspiration. In previous moments or in different places and regimes of accumulation, this is a class that may have earned well. Today, the growing middle class is the class that can take on and consistently pay down debt; its members are the targets of development, intervention, and financialization.

In chapter 7, I look more closely at the people who interact with and are transformed through their interactions with Rawabi. Diverging visions of Palestine and Palestinianness can be based in new sites and the opportunities that emerge around them. I describe the contours of contemporary critique of privatization in Palestine and argue that visions of Palestine as a small-holding, agrarian society neglect long histories of industrialization, modernization, pauperization, and stratification under colonial and occupation rule. Zionist settlement of Palestine before and after occupation drove forms of economic and spatial change: it destroyed urban Palestinian life in places like Jerusalem and Haifa and spurred internal migration. Chapter 8 narrows the focus to the shared landscape for developers and critics of development. Ideas about stewardship and who has the capacity to adequately use the land are as old as capitalism (Wood 2002; Bhandar 2018). Pervasive and ahistorical engagement with the idea and image of peasantry often neglects class, work, and history, and illuminates a common ideological framework for discussion of development and the direction of modernization.

I begin the ninth chapter with settler opposition to Rawabi and one relatively new Israeli organization, Regavim, The National Land Protection Trust. The overlapping legal and administrative structures for Jewish Israelis and Arabs that I described in the third chapter become clear in practice here. In the context of the occupation of the West Bank, the Israeli state advances control

by mechanisms that are both legal/administrative and de facto/prerogative. Given the legal confusion, one way that Israel formalizes occupation is through the extension of civil control and jurisdiction over Jewish settlers who move into areas under military rule. The interplay between people and territory is crucial to the way Israel circumscribes Palestinian capacities and encroaches on land with Palestinians on it. Chapters 9 and 10 are based in part on research I conducted with Nicola Perugini, and chapter 10 introduces Regavim's legal claims made through "mirror petitions." The languages of civil and human rights are not contradictory with Regavim's goal of maximizing Jewish land and minimizing Palestinian presence. Settlers and their opponents are using the same specific sets of human rights, yet Regavim does it to dismantle the rights of one population on the basis of race and nationality. Regavim argues that Israeli state enforcement discriminates against Jewish settlers in favor of Palestinians. It demands equal protections manifest as greater enforcement against Palestinians. Its aim is to make ostensibly universal human rights and humanity a question of Israeli practice, prerogative, and civil law and, consequently, to make Palestinian *areas* more subject to the legal jurisdiction that often follows civilian-led repression. This does not suggest that Regavim is misusing human rights; instead, I believe it widens the picture of what human rights and a liberal state can encompass. Law here is malleable, more often descriptive than proscriptive. Legally and in terms of the incorporation of a population, the state of Israel can easily contain a subject Palestinian territory and state with moderate self-rule but little to no territorial sovereignty. Like the shared ideological backdrop of the previous chapter, an expanded view makes clear some ways the state form in Israel and Palestine shapes the contours of contestation. Rights are contextual: settlement legal activism makes clear that both sides of the conflict exist on the same landscape not just mediated by occupation, but through territorial administration and race-dependent law within a liberal democratic settler state.

Taken together, these stories describe a set of phenomena that are at once physical, conceptual, ideological, and productive and that circulate and aggregate in multiple registers and places. Strands unfold and weave together throughout the following chapters. This text is less a proof than a set of descriptions that draw on and bring together discussions of Palestinian politics, human activity, history, and experience that are often assumed to be necessarily local.

Rawabi is a city based on partial accounts of history, documentary expertise, capital, and political priority rather than social life within it. It is a weird kind of hope, memory, and dream of future possibility superimposed onto

the present. Development and planning are in part about world making and imagination; I parse what is fantastic and what is real and explore how they are intertwined. Part of the way in is through the technical work that needs to be done to reconcile competing understandings of the past and disputes over visions for the future.

It often feels overwhelming to try to capture a multitude of actors and imperatives and scales together, let alone to try to think through those connections that do not always neatly overlie the narratives we might share as Palestinians, social scientists, political actors, or otherwise. A primary take-away from this account is, I hope, that there are local articulations of general phenomena, even in Palestine. I look at a Palestine that is unevenly incorporated within a settler state and where all of its racial and territorial imperatives, accumulation, security and stability, rhetoric around security and stability, state building, and class and spatial segregation all intersect. And where they aggregate is the material basis, the materiality, of place and social life today and for the future. I hope what follows serves as a provisional attempt to link wider logics to some of the details.

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NOTES

Introduction

- 1 The description can be vague, but useful accounts include Samara 2000; Hanieh 2002; Raja Khalidi and Samour 2011; and Haddad 2016.
- 2 Pasternak and Dafnos (2018) focus on the ways settler states secure capacities for circulation and how indigenous people can disrupt them. In Israel, where there are no real pockets of indigenous jurisdiction within the state, this is the flip side. The continuous privatization in the West Bank operates to solidify the context for investment and circulation, insulated from disruptive intervention.
- 3 In 2018, *Fortune Magazine* listed him as number 38 of the “World’s 50 Greatest Leaders,” a “doer . . . stepping up to meet today’s challenges.” He shares the list with various CEOs and politicians, the #MeToo Movement, the students of Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School, and Reese Witherspoon (Fortune Editors 2018).
- 4 Rawabi’s municipal structure has made the reality of the present situation visible in ways developers may not have anticipated. The preliminary results of the 2017 Palestinian census show a population of just 710 (State of Palestine, Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics 2018), many of whom I know to have been employees renting directly from the firm. One such renter I interviewed was a young foreign student. Recruited from overseas, she lived there on a three-month internship. Her primary experience of residence in shared company housing was isolation from Ramallah. She experienced a subtle kind of security monitoring, where guards prevented her and her female colleagues from walking the streets at night or told them to “sit properly” rather than recline in public. She described a place that was empty during the day, where there was only one supermarket. It was a place she had to leave in order to socialize. Her airfare was covered and her wages, as an intern, were an extremely generous USD700 a month. Rawabi’s central shopping area, the Q Center (named for Qatar), is brightly lit, clean, half occupied, and very often empty of shoppers.

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Young employees mill about circulating, socializing, and acting as promoters and tour guides. Not yet a city, it is a plan materialized, a model. It is preliminary and partial proof of concept and a demonstration of how people could become incorporated.

- 5 The land market is of course still an unsettled issue: in March 2017, Israel closed the Palestinian office that tracks land sales to Jewish Israelis, seizing the computers and arresting staff. Three days later, computers were returned, but six months after that, Israelis broke up a conference on the topic (Hasson 2017; Lieber 2017). Such closures and repression of information happen constantly in Israel, but the clear takeaway is that it does not benefit the regime to limit land sales; the more lucrative strategy is to maintain open markets that operate within systems of racial exclusion. Moreover, land has a market character, and housing can incorporate people and produce consensus about markets and ideology. The Israeli system of political control over the West Bank is cohesive and coherent but not uniform: material, ideological work needs to be done to transform its attributes into a common sense.
- 6 The contemporary critical literature tends to presuppose separation from Israel and to judge the successes or failures of Fayyadism by the extent to which it has achieved some stated goals of national development or liberation (see, e.g., Tilley 2015; Dana 2015; Tartir 2015). I believe the framework of uneven incorporation—in some ways a contemporary outcome of Walter Rodney's (1982) underdevelopment thesis and its forms of structural dependence that here produce stability and market relations rather than strictly exploitative modes of production—captures what happens at a wider scale. It presents privatization neither as an anomaly nor an outside imposition, but as part of a historical and worldwide process.
- 7 Even as the state-building and private development period in the West Bank emerges from the peace process and is, I believe, a continuation of its logic, ideas of development and land improvement have been a fundamental aspect of capitalism since it emerged (Wood 2002; Robinson 2000; Williams 1975). Moreover, within a system of colonial domination in Historic Palestine, Brenna Bhandar (2018) shows how such logics of improvement enabled property by title and culminated in a practical and juridical system of racial, colonial, private landholding. Today, state sovereignty often means market sovereignty, and a kind of poststate and nonstate authority is emerging in Palestine through economic practice and jurisdiction. The Middle East has been a central problem for global politics since before the Cold War. This is the turn toward markets and management, the late capitalist inflection.
- 8 Social scientists have long understood how the idea of separation between the economy and the state is fundamental to how both are conceived and operate. A false and productive assumption, it organizes relations between polity, the conditions of possibility and intervention, and the contexts in which social life takes place. In the contemporary global economic division of labor characterized by uneven geographical development, national production within states has be-

come less relevant than forms of circulation. David Harvey proposes relinking the state and economy as a “state-finance nexus,” an attempt to describe

the confluence of state and financial power that confounds the analytic tendency to see state and capital as clearly separable from each other. This does not mean that state and capital constituted then or now are an identity, but that there are structures of governance (such as power of the coinage of the realm in the past and central banks and treasure departments today) where the state management of capital creation and monetary flows becomes integral to, rather than separable from, the circulation of capital. The reverse relation also holds as taxes or borrowings flow into the coffers of the state and as state functions also become monetized, commodified and ultimately privatized. (Harvey 2011, 48)

Within the geographies formed through and in relation to the dynamics and imperatives of capitalism, each state has a particular form of the state-finance nexus similar to what I have described in terms of practical interventions to shape future interventions. This is an active process, and as the case of new development in Palestine demonstrates clearly, money is made not just out of production and labor, but through the creation of geographies. One manifestation Harvey analyzes is how rising prices and rents are difficult to sustain over time because fewer and fewer people can afford them. Elsewhere this might mean gentrification. In Palestine, the array of processes and politically informed investment means new forms of debt and political intervention reformulated as market stability and as state governance.

- 9 This is perhaps why some of the clearest scholars and practitioners of a legal approach such as Noura Erakat (2019) take it to be partial, an opening. The worldwide Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement to pressure Israel until it complies with international law is built out of the discourse on rights, but as a movement toward wider decolonial and anti-settler-colonial praxis. By critically embracing universalism and universal rights, they work to subvert the initial problem, context, and local situation. In doing so, they bind together and question both the statist approach in the West Bank and the Israeli settler-colonial regime. Erakat lucidly articulates the legal history and context of Israeli rule over Palestine that I also discuss in the settler chapters, and theorizes the consequences and stakes for utilizing it.
- 10 One of the most troubling questions for legal scholars of Israel/Palestine is how it feeds back into the state through law. Different bodies of law and practice incorporate and assume citizens, subjects, and politics. In his work on the legal dynamics of exclusion within Israel, Mazen Masri (2017) begins with the question, “Who is ‘the people’” that ought to be the basis for sovereignty? He winds that question through the contradictory and overlapping ideas of a state defined as ethnically Jewish as well as generally democratic. And he shows that Palestinians are legally excluded from participation and full citizenship. Who is a part of this West Bank state? And what do territory and the ongoing fluvial processes of inclusion and exclusion have to do with it?

- 11 Developers and proponents of privatization in the West Bank often discuss standards of living among Palestinians as political questions related to occupation. Are they free participants in an open market? Does the presence of wealth contradict the occupation? Can economic growth circumvent occupation? Yet such questions presuppose separation and ignore the multiple ways the West Bank is embedded in a much wider settler capitalist geography. Even the availability of credit for Palestinians is part of the fabric of licit and illicit Israeli political economy: capital circulates in Palestinian banks in part because Israelis use them to launder money (Khoury 2018).
- 12 Now generalized worldwide through what Nancy Kwak calls “consensus language,” the ideal of home ownership emerged as an “interconnected set of ideals and practical needs brought together ideas about democracy—whether through a widespread access to a consumer economy, a more diffuse sense of equality, or anticommunist dogma—with a very specific, ‘modern’ version of debt-driven, state-regulated ownership that gave at least the illusion of growing affluence and security” (2015, 2). Kwak observes, “The appearance of consensus could help governments court international aid and navigate domestic political pressures while wooing foreign investors and seeking competitive advantage in a global marketplace” (212). Through development projects, it quickly became clear that “low-income homeownership was advantageous for almost everyone except the new homeowners themselves: politicians could claim to be helping the poor without building public housing. The middle class in formation benefitted from their own second-tier investments while enjoying the moral satisfaction of their own, ‘earned’ position in the social hierarchy. Bankers and investors thrived” (206).

In Palestine as in the cases Kwak describes, local implementation is a question of negotiation, priority, and ability; and ownership is part of the story of the development of capital. The case of housing development in Palestine demonstrates how global logical consensus has been translated into local vernacular. Home ownership is a specific historical formation with differing emphasis on property, modern form, or investment in different places. Here, as a continuation of the peace process and after the global housing crisis, home ownership is coherent within political imperatives to simultaneously expand and de-intensify the occupation.

- 13 As for the land, national planning now operates to benefit development by consolidating land under clear title and opening it to the market. Sure enough, the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation was subsumed into the ministries of Finance and of Local Government in 2014—another victory of market over state.

Chapter One. The Site

- 1 See <https://machsomwatch.org/en/reports/checkpoints/22032017/morning/55130>.
- 2 A Rawabi employee described instances where, for example, the owner was under eighteen and could not sell or was abroad and could not be found. She